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Förkenningsnummer P708816

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Organisations breathe a sigh of relief as cultural subsidies are announced

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Architectural outburst

There's no place in Flanders quite like Antwerp's Cogels Osylei

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Antwerp harbour in August of 1914, just after the outbreak of the First World War. One in five Belgians fled the country

Leaving home

An exhibition in Antwerp illustrates the history of Flemish emigration

Bjorn Gabriels

Adapt, migrate or die was, according to Darwin, a decision every species had to make every day. In the course of their history, Flemish people, like so many others, have done all three. An exhibition in Antwerp recounts the history of Flemish migration, from the 16th-century Fall of Antwerp to the career-boosting expats of today

In terms of migration these days, Flanders mostly finds itself on the receiving end. But recent events have brought the public's attention around to the history of Flemish migration. There have been books, documentaries and exhibitions about the Flemish migration to Wallonia during its industrial heyday in the late 19th and first part of the 20th

century, and the 60th anniversary of Congolese independence in 2010 found the media and historians looking back at the wave of Flemings who moved to the former Belgian colony.

Next year, the Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp will re-open after a move and major renovations of the new space, and there have been a score of events around the famous shipping company, which played a crucial role in the massive European migration to the US at the turn of the last century.

Many of these stories are told in the travelling exhibition *Vlaminigrant* now set ashore in Antwerp's Atlas centre. *Vlaminigrant*, made up mostly of informational panels, looks at the migration history of Flemings, with the goal of making them more receptive to current migration processes. Although history offers no clear-cut solutions, it does prove that there is much

pressure on both the place of origin and the place of destination.

Settling down

Even thousands of years after the transition to a less nomadic way of life, population movements heavily influenced the development of regions. In Europe, the disintegration of the Roman Empire is strongly connected to successive waves of extensive migrations. Wandering tribes, such as the Franks, the Slavs, the Germans and the Saxons, found a more or less permanent place to live between 400 and 1,000 AD, also referred to as the period of the Migration of Nations. Their early "states" formed the foundations of what would later become the European nations.

The piece of land by the North Sea we now know as Flanders

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FACE OF FLANDERS

Alan Hope



Kaat Tilley

Kaat Tilley, one of Flanders' leading designers, died suddenly of a viral infection last week. She was 52.

Tilley was born and brought up in Kapelle-op-den-Bos, Flemish Brabant, and studied painting for a time at the Sint-Lukas University College of Art and Design in Brussels before going on to study fashion at the Antwerp Academy of Fine Arts, where she was a contemporary of the Antwerp Six. She never left her love for painting behind, and she also never entered into the side of the fashion business that concerns itself with trends. Her designs, which attracted the attention of Diana Ross and Halle Berry, were timeless in their fairy-tale aesthetic and seemed to belong to a far-off, imaginary place. As she later explained, she was not creating trends, she was creating another world.

I interviewed Tilley in 2009 on her sprawling property in the countryside near Asse, Flemish Brabant. Her home was a 12th-century mill transformed into a fairy grotto, and her workshop the former barn. There she showed me her inspiration books. At least once every year, she would take off alone to some remote, sunny place, bringing her paints and a book, usually a hefty antique tome whose pages she

would whitewash and then draw over. On her return, the book, now filled with dreamlike designs, would be turned over to a pattern-maker who would convert the flights of fancy into garments. Her fans loved her creations for their romance, theatricality and wispy fragility. Just as her home contained no straight edges, so her dresses seemed to have no seams, hems, fastenings or any other intrusive signs of workmanship – as if an idea could be conjured straight onto the body without passing through the rude process of dressmaking.

Tilley's death came as a shock, and the details are still not public. The feeling of a talent cut off in its prime is heightened by the fact that she was riding a new wave of creativity. Following years when she had fought off cancer and lost her businesses in Antwerp and Brussels, she was again producing work, not only dresses but also furniture and jewellery. Fittingly, one of the last jobs she undertook was the design of the costumes for a new Flemish musical of Peter Pan. If anyone could convince you that the too, too solid flesh of a stage actor might be able to fly, Kaat Tilley could.

Read our 2009 interview with Kaat Tilley here: www.flanderstoday.eu/content/dreams-design

News in brief

A number of families of victims of the **school bus crash in Switzerland** last March that killed 22 children and six adults were due this week to visit the scene of the accident in Sierre and to meet emergency workers involved. Two adults and 15 children from 't Stekske school in Lommel were killed in the crash, which the Swiss prosecutor has attributed to human error on the part of the driver. Lommel mayor Peter Vanvelthoven will accompany the families.

The chairs of all seven Flemish political parties **in parliament will take part in the opening lecture at Ghent University** in September given by political scientist Carl Devos. In previous years, Devos' opening lecture has attracted huge audiences with guest appearances by Bart De Wever, Herman Van Rompuy and Kris Peeters, among others. This year's event with what Devos called "the magnificent seven" takes place only three weeks before the local elections.

The number of **overnight stays in Brussels hotels rose last year** by 6.7% to more than 5.9 million, according to figures from Visit Brussels. More than half of all reservations involve business travellers. Most tourists come from elsewhere in Belgium, with growth in numbers from Brazil, Russia and China. Brussels-Capital Region government has set a target of 10 million overnights a year by 2020.

Flanders is still **on track to achieve its targets on welfare**, quality of life and sustainable economic development, despite some setbacks caused by the economic crisis, minister-president Kris Peeters told a gathering of representatives of regions from across Europe last week. Peeters

was introducing a study day on the EU's Europe 2020 strategy and pointed to successful evolutions in areas like waste treatment, water quality, industrial productivity and renewable energy. However, he said, "there is still a lot of hard work needed on several fronts". Next week *Flanders Today* brings a full report on Flanders' 2020 performance.

in Wingene, West Flanders, last January have arrested a fourth suspect – a Dutch man alleged to have helped arrange contract killers to carry out the shooting. The victim's father- and brother-in-law are still in custody, as is a friend of the elder suspect, in connection with the killing.

Cycling action groups including the Fietsersbond have requested clarity following a statement by federal transport minister Melchior Wathelet that a new road sign introduced by the Brussels-Capital Region is illegal. The new sign, currently being tested at 10 city locations, allows **cyclists to pass through a red light** if turning right or riding straight ahead. According to Wathelet, cyclists who do so will still be liable to a fine, regardless of the signs.

The education committee of the Flemish parliament has proposed a resolution calling for the introduction of a **university course on the Islamic religion**. The resolution, supported by members of the three majority parties, calls on the government to start talks with all interested parties.

Antwerp communications agency Duval Guillaume Modem took home six Golden Lions and was named **Creative Agency of the Year** at the 59th Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity last week. The agency won for campaigns for De Lijn, Carlsberg and Flair magazine, as well as a spot for TV channel TNT – "Push Button to Add Drama", filmed in Aarschot – which went viral on social media, attracting more than 35 million views on YouTube.

Police investigating the **murder of castle owner Stijn Saelens**

A plan to make **owners of solar panels pay a fee** for connecting to the electricity network is illegal, Flemish energy regulator VREG has advised. At present, users of solar panels can offload excess electricity to the grid when it is sunny and top up their own supply when it is not, but Flemish energy minister Freya Van den Bossche has announced plans to impose a connection charge. According to the VREG, the government is not authorised to intervene in the matter of energy tariffs.

The **canine brigade of the Brussels police** should be allowed to patrol on public transport to fight crime, said Brussels mobility minister Brigitte Grouwels. At present the dog patrols are restricted to metro stations, and Grouwels has called on federal interior minister Joëlle Milquet to amend the rules, as well as doubling the number of dog-handlers to 20.

FLANDERS TODAY

Flanders Today, a free weekly English-language newspaper, is an initiative of the Flemish Region and is financially supported by the Flemish authorities.



The logo and the name Flanders Today belong to the Flemish Region (Benelux Beeldmerk nr 815.088). The editorial team of Flanders Today has full editorial autonomy regarding the content of the newspaper and is responsible for all content, as stipulated in the agreement between Corelio Publishing and the Flemish authorities.

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OFFSIDE

Alan Hope

Masterpoliticians

A number of aspirants in October's municipal elections have signed on to take part in the next series of *Masterchef* on VTM, which starts on 2 July, including Hasselt mayor Hilde Claes (SP.A), Affligem mayor Walter De Donder (CD&V) and Mark Demesmaeker (N-VA), head of the party's list in Halle-Vilvoorde. They'll be put through their paces by steely-eyed superchef Wout Bru. Traditionally in Belgium, there's a moratorium on politicians campaigning in the media from 14 July to election day on 14 October. As a result, Bart Tommelein, the media watchdog of Open VLD, has called for measures to put an end to such blatant electioneering. Open VLD has no candidates signed up for *Masterchef*, though it has two who would be perfect for the show. Marijn De Valck, standing

in Brakel, East Flanders, is known across Flanders as Balthazar Boma from the sitcom *FC De Kampioenen*, in which he plays a self-important owner of a snack-food company. A place on *Masterchef* would be the role his whole career has been leading up to. Open VLD also recently announced that former model and TV presenter Phaedra Hoste will stand in Antwerp. The candidates in the show, meanwhile, are no strangers to TV: Demesmaeker is a former presenter of *Vlaanderen Vakantieland* and a former anchor for VRT news. De Donder has played both Kabouter Plop and the mayor in *Samson & Gert* (pictured). TV is for these people a natural habitat. Keeping them off the screens would be like locking party leaders away from the media for days at a time

– coincidentally, the premise of another show on VIER planned for 12 July.



Leaving home

Flanders' brain drain helped lead to the Dutch Golden Age

► continued from page 1

found itself on the outskirts of the Roman Empire and, later, the Frankish Kingdom. This peripheral status would completely change over the next centuries. With the development from settlements to (still town-like) urban areas, the county of Flanders – originally the coast region, west to the river Scheldt, including parts of current France and the Netherlands – would become one of the most prosperous regions in Europe. The increasing importance of a trade economy in the 11th to the 13th century stimulated migration, both internal and external. The cities represented a new future, beyond feudalism.

Cities and crusades

Like other regions that evolved towards "states", Flanders and its cities knew many internal struggles for power, succession conflicts and expansion wars. These all created a host of political refugees, banned from the place they once called home or seeking safety outside the dominion of the new rulers. (Often to retaliate a short time later.) In 1095, pope Urban II called out to Christians to re-conquer the Holy Land from Islamic rule. The crusades combined economic, political and religious motives and brought large numbers of kings, knights, foot soldiers, as well as commoners, from all over Europe to the Holy Land and large parts of the Orient. Well before the knight armies of the First Crusade (1096-1099) confronted the Turks, hordes of men, women and children had set out to the East. This People's Crusade drew

a trail of destruction from France and Flanders to Constantinople (Istanbul), before it was largely decimated on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The few survivors often awaited another form of migration: They were sold as slaves.

In the years to come, many crusaders settled in the Holy Land or in Eastern Europe. After the re-conquest of Constantinople in 1204, part of the Fourth Crusade, Baldwin IX, count of Flanders, was crowned the first emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

The cost of war

From the late 13th century on, the thriving Flemish economy increasingly came under pressure. Even if Bruges was a driving force behind the Battle of the Golden Spurs on 11 July 1302 (hence the official Flemish holiday) between city militias and the French cavalry, the cost of the war and the subsequent financial effects weighed heavily on a city treasury already having to cope with a sluggish local economy.

Many people decided (or were forced) to leave Flanders because of the successive wars, the decline of the cloth trade, the famine and the social unrest. A significant number of textile workers migrated from Bruges to England. By the mid 14th century, the plague worsened matters.

Although Flemish regions were at first relatively spared, the Black Death would resurface in the 1360s and leave its devastating mark. Around the time of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, Flanders had been



Flemish agricultural immigrants in Canada enjoying their favourite pastime in 1910

the most densely populated region north of the Alps. Half a century later, the population had dropped dramatically.

Brain drain

Antwerp – part of Brabant since the mid 14th century – had started to take over Bruges' role as an international commercial centre that housed and attracted travelling merchants and fortune seekers. From the late-15th to the mid-16th century, the population of Antwerp tripled, making it the first city in the Low Countries to reach 100,000 inhabitants, many of whom were migrants.

One of the most important migrations in Flemish history, though, concerns the Fall of Antwerp and the ensuing massive emigration. Once again, economic, religious and political factors intertwined. The Spanish crown (which ruled over the Low Countries) was confronted with enormous debts and decided to impose heavy taxation. In the meantime, Antwerp's close bond with the English cloth trade disintegrated, resulting in unemployment and famine, aggravated by crop failure. Trying to face the economic crisis and avoid uprisings, local governors tried to loosen the strains of Catholic repression by the Spanish Inquisition. To no avail. After the *Beeldenstorm* (Iconoclastic Fury) in 1566, the Eighty Years' War erupted. The Northern Netherlands would gain independence. The South, including Antwerp, remained under Spanish rule.

In 1585, Spanish troops recaptured Antwerp. Local protestant rebels were given a choice: convert, migrate or die.

In the following years, half of the Antwerp population went abroad, many to Amsterdam, which became

a sort of "New Antwerp". The brain drain – most migrants were skilled labourers, traders, artists etc – laid the foundations for the Dutch Golden Age.

The Fall of Antwerp forms the chronological starting point of the *Vlaminigrant* exhibition. It's a prime example of how migration impacts both the region left behind and the recipient region, for years to come. Flanders had lost its central position and would long be dominated economically and politically by neighbouring superpowers.

Crossing the ocean

Following the Second Industrial Revolution, Flemish migrants relocated to leading industrial regions: south to Wallonia or across the oceans to the US, particularly the Midwest areas.

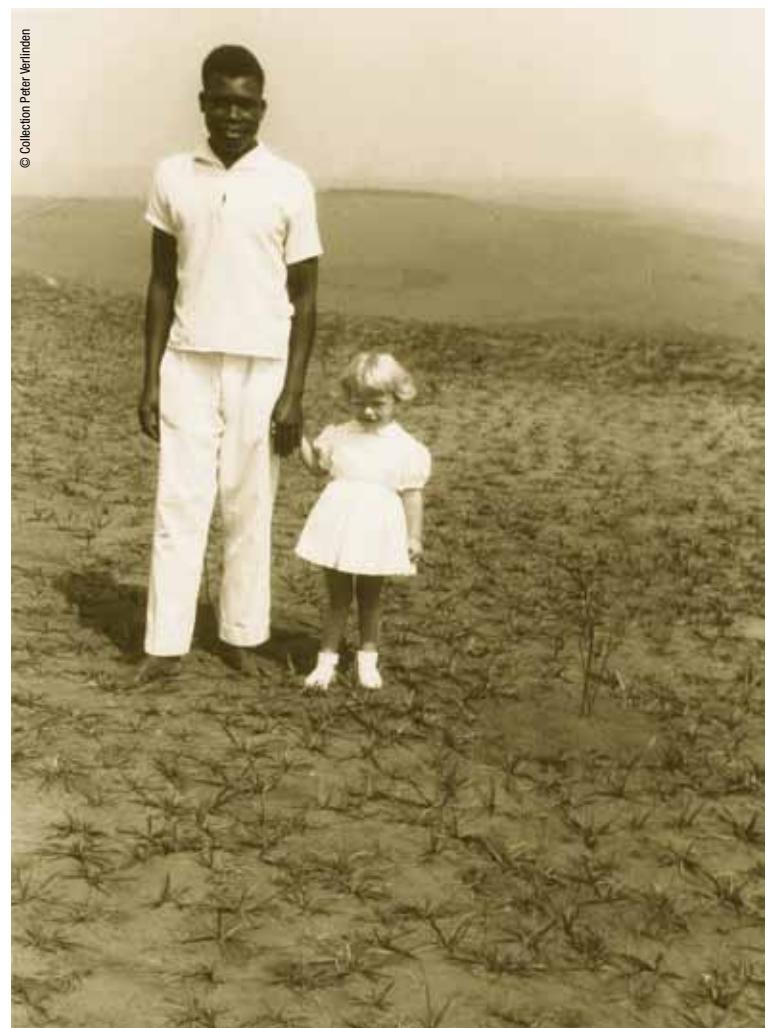
The transition wasn't always easy, says Elisabeth Khan-Van den Hove, current editor of the Dutch-language *Gazette van Detroit*, a newspaper founded in 1914 to inform Flemish migrants about their homeland. "The migrants from West and East Flanders who arrived in the Detroit area in the early 20th century and found work in the building trades or in agriculture often had trouble communicating and tended to stick together with their countrymen, much like some present-day immigrants from Asian countries."

This migration of labour came to a standstill as Flanders became

more and more prosperous after the Second World War. "Now we see mostly temporary expatriates – people who come for a few years due to their careers, like engineers, IT workers, academics – who sometimes decide to stay on. Then you have the entrepreneurs who are attracted by the 'can do' spirit of America, the opportunities and the wide-open spaces."

The situation has significantly changed over the last decades, for the Detroit newspaper as well. "The Flemish presence in the Detroit area has shrunk tremendously," says Khan-Van den Hove. "Our faithful readership is fast disappearing. You only need to count the obituaries in each issue to realise that."

In the wake of all this, the *Gazette* – approaching its 100th birthday – is trying to redefine its position. "Many migrants were forced to leave the country because of the devastation of the First World War or because of unemployment and poverty," says Khan-Van den Hove. "They tried to forget it as soon as possible by focusing on building a new life and a new identity, and often didn't share too many memories. But their descendants are curious. Genealogy has become a popular hobby and 'roots tourism' is flourishing. I think the *Gazette* can play a role there." Her successor on the editing chair will have to continue that mission, as Khan-Van den Hove is moving to India. A new migration.



Flemish children in the Belgian Congo were cared for by household personnel, often the only Congolese the families got to know personally

UNTIL 28 SEPTEMBER

Vlaminigrant

Atlas, Carnotstraat 110, Antwerp

► www.atlas-antwerpen.be

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More funding allocated to culture

Renewal of subsidies is “an enormous relief” to Flemish organisations

Alan Hope

Cultural organisations in Flanders will receive €94.5 million in subsidies over the next four years – €7.5 million more than originally expected.

Earlier this month, Flemish culture minister Joke Schauvliege made public the advice of 12 sectoral advisory committees. The recommendation was that 15 groups that had received a double-positive score – applications are judged on their financial viability and artistic merit – should still lose their subsidies due to budget constraints.

The announcement of the extra funding this week means those organisations will retain all or most of their subsidies. Among those groups are the Logos Foundation in Ghent, which receives €140,000 annually, and the International Film Festival of Flanders, which receives €700,000. “It’s an enormous relief,” said Jacques Dubrulle of the Ghent-based film festival, which is home to the World Soundtrack Awards. “This ensures the future of the festival.”

Another group of organisations were rescued because they are examples of diversity and geographic distribution, despite having received negative advice on one of the criteria. Among this group are the Ghent Jazz Festival, Theater aan de Stroom in Antwerp and the Dranouter Folk Festival, which had received the public support of former prime minister



Ghent's World Soundtrack Awards can continue, thanks to extra funding from Flemish cultural minister Joke Schauvliege, pictured with composer Hans Zimmer at least year's edition

Yves Leterme. Geographical reasons – and the general shortage of subsidised arts in Limburg – were also behind the rescue of the Kroksfestval in Hasselt and the summer opera at the Alden Biesen Castle.

Some big names did indeed lose all or part of their funding, including Musical Vlaanderen, a producer of

large-scale musical theatre, which loses its entire €2.45 million annual subsidy. “This is a very disappointing decision,” commented business director Katrien Ceulemans. “We’re now eagerly awaiting the motivation behind the decision, and, on the basis of those arguments, we’ll seek advice and see what steps can be taken.”

Those whose subsidies were stopped, including the Baroque ensemble La Petite Bande and Antwerp cultural centre Zuiderpershuis, were steered by the minister to the project subsidy round, which now accounts for 10% of the total culture budget for individual projects and which is due to take place in the spring of 2013.

Brussels and Antwerp have worst traffic

Traffic jams in Belgium are the worst in the world, according to a survey carried out by the US traffic information platform Inrix, which looked at the GPS data of 100 million motorists in Europe and North America.

Milan comes at the top of the list, followed by Brussels and Antwerp. In Belgium as a whole, the average motorist spends 55 hours a year in traffic, the worst score in the survey. In Brussels, the figure goes up to 70.5 hours, and in Antwerp 70.2. Ghent comes third in Belgium on 50 hours. The worst place to be is, apparently, in Antwerp on a Friday between 16.00 and 17.00, when you can expect your journey to take 40% longer than at other times.

Motoring organisation Touring said the figures were “the result of decisions not being thought through” and compared Belgian cities to “fortified fortresses” where traffic was held on the outskirts, with no options like park-and-ride zones.

Flemish mobility minister Hilde Crevits noted that the number of roadworks at present was not helping the problem but warned that there are



“no miracle solutions. There is a need for major investment, not only in the roads network but also in public transport, and in improving road safety so that there are fewer accidents to disrupt traffic.”

► <http://scorecard.inrix.com/scorecard>

Flemish youth best in English

Flemish young people are among the best in Europe when it comes to speaking English as a foreign language, according to a study by the EU Commission. Of the 13 countries and three regions (Belgium counted as three regions) included in the survey, Flanders shares the top spot with Sweden and Malta on speaking and comprehension, and slips into third place behind those two on reading and writing.

Flemish youth’s command of English is better than their command of French, where they score average. Only five regions took part, however, in the French-speaking portion of the study. A total of 53,000 young people were surveyed, with 3,656 from Flanders.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

9,256

number of asylum applications received in Belgium in the first five months of this year, a 4.6% decrease on the same period last year

3,200

bicycles reported stolen in Brussels in 2011, an average of nine a day and, according to police, only one-quarter of all bicycle thefts

33.9%

of new businesses were started by young people between 18 and 30, compared to 36.6% in 2002, according to a survey by the Neutral Syndicate for the Self-Employed (NSZ)

118th

place in the world rankings for the Flemish Supercomputer Centre at Ghent University, with calculating power equivalent to more than 150,000 billion calculations a second

€750,000

asking price for the villa belonging to Dexia chairman Jean-Luc Dehaene in Vilvoorde. The villa is advertised as close to the new European School, with four bedrooms and a heated swimming pool

FIFTH COLUMN

Anja Otte

BHV is split

What a difference a year makes. Last summer, many believed that Belgium was on the verge of breaking up over an obscure issue no-one really grasped to its full extent. In 2012, this very issue, the splitting of the bilingual constituency BHV, which the Flemish have been demanding for decades, is being discussed in parliament, almost without anyone noticing.

Bart De Wever, president of the N-VA, the party that stoked the BHV fire, even preferred to go on a campaigning trip, rather than sit through the discussions in the Senate. Although he did vote against the propositions “with enthusiasm”.

BHV is split. Et alors? This is how University of Leuven political scientist Marc Hooghe describes the atmosphere of almost indifference surrounding BHV these days. He sees several reasons for this. One is predictability. With the split of BHV agreed between the majority parties, no surprises were anticipated in parliament – except for De Wever’s unexpected absence. Another reason is the slightly odd position into which several Flemish parties have manoeuvred themselves. The parties that have been asking for the split the loudest – N-VA and Vlaams Belang – now vote against it because they are unhappy about the compromises made to the French speakers. CD&V, another party that has been preoccupied with BHV for years, and Open VLD, the party that caused the fall of the previous government over the issue, voted in favour. But in the light of N-VA’s growing popularity, they hesitate to present this vote as an achievement.

The third reason is the most fundamental: In spite of both the Flemish and French-speaking rhetoric on the subject, the BHV vote ultimately does not change much about people’s lives in Brussels and its periphery. It is unlikely that the French speakers living in Flanders will suddenly drop their native tongue for Dutch, or move back to the capital, just because they can no longer vote for candidates from Brussels. The only real effect will be felt by the Flemish minority in Brussels, which in the new system is too small to elect its own representative in the federal parliament – “collateral damage” that has been predicted for years.

So was BHV much ado about nothing? Actually, yes. Symbolic issues like this touch a raw nerve and stir up emotions in both Dutch and French speakers, which are often misunderstood. But in the end, even the Belgians get bored by it.

The Holocaust remembered

Flanders hosts a memorial conference ahead of the opening of a new museum in Mechelen

Alan Hope

Flanders is working to educate new generations about the Holocaust through the Belgian chairmanship of an international task force and a new museum on the site of a former transit camp

This week Mechelen hosts a three-day plenary session of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF), under the chairmanship of Belgium. The annual conference brings together diplomats, politicians and historical experts to discuss Holocaust remembrance and education.

The chairman is Jan Deboutte, a Belgian diplomat who has followed the development of the ITF closely. He was ambassador to Sweden in 2000 when the Stockholm Declaration, which outlines the principles of the ITF, was signed. "Later I returned to Brussels and took part in the discussions that led to Belgium becoming a member in 2005," he explains. "When I was ambassador in India, I followed the matter from afar. When they asked me to take the chair, I couldn't refuse." Belgium has taken over from the Netherlands, and the chance to preside over the ITF was the idea of the Flemish government, Deboutte says. In April of 2010, minister-president Kris Peeters explained to the Flemish parliament: "I took the initiative in the autumn of 2008, in agreement with the Dossin barracks. In June 2009 Belgium's candidacy for the chairmanship was accepted at the plenary meeting in Oslo."



The new Holocaust museum in Mechelen is due to open in September

The year's priorities

The Belgian chair of the ITF coincides with the opening this September of the new museum and memorial for Holocaust remembrance on the site of the old Dossin barracks in Mechelen. "The Dossin barracks is the symbol par excellence of the racist persecution in this country during the Second World War," says Peeters. "Mechelen as a venue was an obvious choice."

Deboutte sees the work of the conference and indeed of the year-long Belgian presidency, which lasts until March 2013, as a continuation of

work done by his predecessor. "Within the ITF, there are four working groups: remembrance, education, academics and communication. We are in the process of setting up multi-year work plans. In Mechelen, we hope to be able to create a general policy outline for the four main priorities: research on education about the Holocaust, the killing sites, access to archives and memorial and remembrance days. We will hopefully also reach agreement on funding of recognised specialists to carry out research. The ITF has a very small secretariat in Berlin of only three people, and financing amounts to €30,000 per member state per year. We're talking about very reasonable sums."

In the case of Belgium, the money is split between the foreign affairs ministry and the three language communities, who are responsible for education.

Other issues include the preservation of Holocaust sites (like Dossin), opening up archives to researchers and ensuring the continuity of Holocaust education, even as the events retreat further into the past; last month, a train carried 1,000 young Belgians from Brussels to Auschwitz, with some of the camp's last survivors. The trip was organised by the Belgian National Institute for Veterans and Victims of War, and a full report on their experience can be found at www.traindes1000.be.

"Unfortunately, 12 years after we

solemnly adopted the Stockholm Declaration, we cannot but note an increase in manifestations, statements and acts of racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia," Deboutte says. "To promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust in a deteriorating environment will require increased effort and cooperation from everyone, especially since the number of direct witnesses – survivors – is rapidly dwindling. The Belgian chairmanship stands ready to cooperate with all ITF members, observers and representatives of civil society to achieve our common goals."

The Dossin Museum

The Dossin barracks in Mechelen were built in 1756 and was renamed in 1936 for an army general, Baron Dossin de Saint-Georges. Between the fall of Belgium and the order to start deporting Jews in 1942, most prisoners were sent to Fort Breendonk near Antwerp, accused of breaching strict anti-Jewish laws. When the deportations began, Dossin became the main transit point for Jews rounded up in Belgium to be sent to the camps.

The operation at Dossin was carried out with startling efficiency: In a 100-day period in the summer of 1942, no fewer than 16,873 people were rounded up for deportation. Only 385 survived. In all, 28 transports were organised out of Dossin.

The building was taken over by the

army after liberation and returned to its prior use as a school for army administrators until 1973, when it fell into disuse. In 1989 it was used to store the city's archives, and at the request of two Jewish organisations, a small museum covering the barracks' history as a transit camp was installed. In 1995 it was opened officially as the Jewish Museum of Deportation and Resistance.

A new museum, an initiative of the Flemish government, was conceived in 2010. Due to open in September, it is called Kazerne Dossin Memorial, Museum and Documentation Centre on the Holocaust and Human Rights.

The message of the new institution is twofold, says Second World War historian Maarten Demey: "There is the Belgian case and the complicity of Belgium in the persecution of the Jews. And then there is the place of the individual and the significance of the masses ... attention is paid to the collective derailment of society and the place of an individual in this crowd. A mass helped by a specific context, like a government, can cause a shift of moral and political power."

As the museum puts it: "We defeat the criminals by remembering their victims. This way, the visitor works against the final goal of the guilty: the complete destruction of the victims."

► www.kazernedossin.be



Ambassador Jan Deboutte addresses the ITF at the official handover of the chairmanship from the Netherlands to Belgium in March

THE HOLOCAUST IN FLANDERS

At the start of the Second World War, there were an estimated 90,000 Jews in Belgium. From 1940 to 1944, during the Nazi occupation, 25,482 Jews and 351 Roma were rounded up and transported to the transit camp at Dossin before being sent on to the labour and death camps. Of those transported out of Belgium, 97% never returned. Up to 90% of the Jewish population lived in Antwerp and Brussels.

About 65,000 Jews in Belgium survived the war, a larger percentage than in the neighbouring Netherlands. This was for a number of reasons, including the presence of a military rather than civilian occupying administration, which carried out the Final Solution somewhat less fanatically; the presence of a great number of Jews escaping the early stages of the repression in eastern

Europe, who did not register themselves as Jews upon arrival; and the support of ordinary people, the Catholic Church and local authorities in hiding Jews and obtaining false papers for them. Belgium was also fortunate in being liberated earlier than the Netherlands, which brought an end to transports sooner.

The only successful attempt to free Jews from a transport to the camps took place at Boortmeerbeek, Flemish Brabant, in April of 1943, when a group of young men from Brussels stopped a train carrying 1,631 deportees to Auschwitz. That allowed 231 people to flee. Twenty-six were killed fleeing and 90 caught and transported later. That left 115 who escaped, the youngest being 11-year-old Simon Gronowski, who went on to survive until the liberation and still lives in Brussels.

THE WEEK
IN BUSINESSEnergy
► Electrabel

Leading energy group Electrabel is selling its 29.7% stake in Sibelga, the Brussels gas and distribution company, for up to €225 million. Electrabel is expected to resell the stake to other investors, including the Quebec Caisse de Dépôts and Placement, the Canadian fund which already owns some 30% of gas transport group Fluxys.

Food
► Puratos

Brussels-based Puratos, the world's leading supplier of ingredients for the bakery and confectionery industries, is investing up to €80 million to build a research and development centre in Groot-Bijgaarden, Flemish Brabant, to increase capacity of its Pennsauken production unit in the US and to start up its Chinese unit in Guangzhou.

Handling
► Aviapartner

The Brussels-based airport handling and ground operations group is to merge with the French Worldwide Flights Services Holding company to create Europe's leading airport services company. The new entity will employ 17,000 workers with sales of over €1 billion. Aviapartner operates in 26 airports in five European countries while WFS is specialised in freight handling in more than 100 airports worldwide.

Investment
► AG Insurance

AG Insurance group is investing €65 million in the GIMV-XLL venture capital fund controlled by the Flemish authorities. The move will allow GIMV to provide additional venture funding to Flanders-related companies. Total funds handled by GIMV-XL are in excess of €600 million.

Materials
► Umicore

The Brussels-based global materials technology group has created a new joint venture with the Japanese Shokubai chemical group to build an automotive catalysts unit in Himeji, Japan. The unit will include a research and development facility specialised in equipments for light vehicles and trucks. Umicore and Shokubai have been working together since 1990.

Property
► Montea

The industrial buildings developer Montea, headquartered in Erembodegem, is investing €50 million to buy and lease back four properties, including the future DHL building at Brussels Airport.

Flanders attracts 74 inward investments last year

Brussels and Antwerp continue to lead on foreign investments in the country

Alan Hope

The number of foreign inward investment projects in Belgium fell just slightly last year, from 159 to 153, allowing the country to retain its sixth place in the European rankings, according to the latest study on the subject by Ernst & Young. Flanders attracted 74 investment projects in 2011 compared to 108 in 2010, while Brussels doubled its projects from 20 in 2010 to 40 last year. The number of new jobs across the country, however, was down from 4,010 to 3,599, a drop of 10%, largely as a result of the sort of investment projects evolving away from industry and logistics towards less labour-intensive services and sales.

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters, speaking at a Flanders in Action study day, was not overly concerned about Flanders' performance. The fall in the number of projects last year to 74 still put Flanders ahead of the other two regions in Belgium, which together shared 79 new projects. The 2011 total was, he pointed out, a return to 2008 levels and better than 2009. Among the Belgian provinces, Brussels and Antwerp continue to hold the lead, and Flemish Brabant

and West Flanders are also in the top five.

Among potential investors, 37% said that Flanders was the most attractive region in Belgium in which to invest, while the number rose to 54% among those already present in the country. Flanders' advantages were listed as the educational level of the workforce, the presence of good sources of research and development and good transport infrastructure. However, administrative procedures are considered cumbersome and too long. Belgium as a whole, meanwhile, suffers because of salary costs, considered by potential investors as the third most important factor in making an investment decision, after the size of the domestic market and a stable political and economic climate. The main recommendation made by Ernst & Young: "Stop denying the problem of high salary costs and putting off the implementation of related measures. Hold a serious and realistic debate about the sustainability of high salary costs and the effect of indexation. Reduce the costs of creating jobs and cut the effective difference between gross and net pay."



Antwerp province leads Flanders in foreign investment projects

Bumblebees for China

A Flemish company has won a contract to sell €20 to €40 million worth of high-tech products a year to China – up to 200 million bumblebees.

Biobest, based in Westerlo, Antwerp province, is a world leader in sustainable crop management and will supply the Chinese with bumblebees to be used for the pollination of commercial crops. "Biobest is convinced of the huge market potential for bumblebees in the Chinese market, thanks to the increasing awareness of Chinese consumers about food safety and the efforts of the Chinese government in promoting agriculture and protected horticulture," the company said in a statement.

The agreement was signed in Beijing during an official visit by federal foreign affairs minister Didier Reynders and was made possible by collaboration between the federal food safety agency and the Chinese General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine.

The bumblebee is one of the 250 or so species of the genus *Bombus*, related to the honeybee. The bumblebee is an extremely important pollinator of agricultural crops, and colonies are often placed in tomato greenhouses.

According to Biobest CEO Jean-Marc Vandoorne, bumblebees can increase tomato yields by up to 30%. "Bumblebees have many



advantages over other methods of pollination, and we have no doubt that Chinese growers will find their way very quickly in using our hives. As we see in other markets throughout the world, growers quickly adapt to a more sustainable method of production, after bumblebees have entered their greenhouses. The next step to biological control lies within the use of various mites and beneficial insects to tackle diverse pests." In February, Biobest started producing commercial numbers of bumblebees for the Argentinean horticultural market, using the native South American species *Bombus atratus*.

Export Lion winners

This year's Export Lion awards for export performance by a Flemish company have gone to Skyline Communications, representing companies with fewer than 50 employees, and Waterleau for larger companies. The awards are given annually by Flanders Investment & Trade, the Flemish export promotion agency, and were handed over in Antwerp last week by minister-president Kris Peeters. Skyline Communications, from Izegem, West Flanders, develops network management software and last year saw turnover of €8.3 million, 74% of it from exports to 65 countries. Waterleau, based in Herent, Flemish Brabant, specialises in environmental technology and employs 193



Frederik Vandenbergh, CEO of Skyline Communications

people. With sales last year of €74 million, it made 77% of its income from exports.

Charges brought in fish auction case

Prosecutors in Bruges have brought charges against 11 individuals and four companies alleging fraud surrounding activities at the Ostend fish market auction. The case alleges that fish caught off the Belgian coast were sold as coming from Irish waters, in an attempt to circumvent local fishing quotas. One of the accused is the Ostend alderman Yves Miroir, who denies any knowledge of the scheme. The fraud is alleged to have been carried out by H&G International, with the support of several fishing companies. Ostend attracts boats from the waters of various

countries in the area, whose catch counts towards their own national quotas. According to reports, the investigation has taken eight years, while the fraud has been going on even longer.

Police in Mechelen, meanwhile, have arrested eight people in connection with an alleged fraud ring dealing in fish and meat, with charges of forgery of livestock passports and other documents, insurance fraud and issuing bad cheques. The case came to light last September when a truck carrying cattle was stopped by customs officers in Lummen, Limburg province.

Leuven at 4,000 metres

A new sports academy will allow professional athletes to train at high altitude

Andy Furniere

The last preparations are being made at the University of Leuven (KUL) to build the Bakala Academy, an innovative research and test centre where both elite and recreational endurance athletes, especially cyclists, can improve their performance. At the altitude centre, athletes will be able to live and train at a simulated altitude of up to 4,000 metres. The academy should be ready to open by the summer of 2013.

The Bakala Academy is the result of a long cooperation between KUL and the Omega Pharma Quick-Step Pro Cycling team owned by, among others, Czech businessman Zdenek Bakala, the main investor whose name was given to the centre. Since 2000, the team of Flemish cycling hero Tom Boonen and current world time-trial champion Tony Martin has been a client at the current centre for sports advice in Leuven that will be absorbed by the new Bakala Academy.

But the doors of the new centre will be open to all cycling teams and endurance athletes. At the research and test centre, there will be ultra-modern facilities for triathletes, runners, rowers and kayakers, who will be able to receive advice on training, nutrition and aerodynamics.

Front-runner in sports science

"With the scientific expertise of the KUL, our academy should be internationally at the head of the pack of sport performance centres," says Peter Hespel, sport physiologist and professor of the faculty of kinesiology and rehabilitation sciences. He will



An artist's impression of the new Bakala Academy, which will provide guidance and altitude training for professional and amateur athletes

lead the research and test centre. The know-how at Leuven will also benefit recreational athletes, who are welcome to come for guidance during their preparation for events such as the Tour of Flanders for cycle tourists or a marathon. "Just like the new technology developed for Formula 1 racing improves the cars we all drive around with," says Hespel.

On the second floor of the Bakala Academy, above the research and test centre, athletes will be able to live and train for weeks at a simulated altitude of up to 4,000 metres. In the altitude centre, athletes are exposed to oxygen-poor air, which causes

the body to produce more red blood cells, greatly impacting oxygen consumption and physical capacity. The centre has six guest rooms, plus recreational spaces like a sauna and fitness room.

The ambition of the Bakala Academy is to become an expertise centre with a reputation worldwide. "We want to organise annual international congresses on sports science to position ourselves as a global authority," says Hespel. "Instead of just admiring institutions such as the Milan Lab of football club AC Milan and the renowned Australian Institute of Sport, we should also

strive to make these top sport centres look up to us."

He also hopes to discover cycling talent beyond the Belgian borders. "African countries, for example, are famous for their long-distance runners, but there must also be many talented African cyclists. An enormous world power such as China is a largely unexplored but promising market as well."

The Bakala Academy will occupy around 1,000 square metres at KUL's University Sport Centre in the Leuven district of Heverlee.

Q&A



Ingrid Daubechies is an internationally known mathematician and professor at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Her native village of Houthalen-Helchteren in Limburg province just named the central tower of its new administrative building the Eye of Daubechies

the theory behind image compression and is used by the FBI to manage their fingerprint database. Are you still working on wavelets?

I'm still looking for mathematical tools to improve data analysis – of which the wavelet is one example. Some of what I now work on can be seen as an advanced form of a wavelet. I am working on applications in biology and medicine, fields of study in which data analysis has become very important. But I also develop applications of wavelets for a better understanding of arts, like the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh, for example – in search of a better way to digitalise them.

Does your work, which is highly theoretical, usually lead to a practical application?

I care about both theory and practice. I find it fascinating to learn about new applications. And sometimes an application leads to a new mathematical problem, which brings me further in my theoretical work. But I also love the purity, the so-called "inner beauty", of mathematics. Some of my colleagues believe that if you want mathematics to become useful in applications, you have to fiddle a bit, through which the result becomes less pure, less beautiful. I don't agree with that. When the first wavelets were used in image compression, they had to be adjusted – during which they lost many nice properties. Nevertheless, I wanted to find other wavelets that were both applicable and that preserved all these wonderful mathematical characteristics. I have succeeded in finding them.

What do you make of this unexpected honour?

I like the fact that besides crusaders, saints and war heroes, a mathematician like me can be immortalised in public. Although I realise my field of study is not among the most popular subjects at school, I must say that everybody benefits from a better understanding of mathematics. So a little bit of advertisement does no harm.

You became known for your wavelet theory, which is

Student travel subsidies to end

Student representatives have warned that Brussels risks failing in its ambition to become a "student city" like Leuven and Ghent because of a decision to end a subsidy allowing Flemish students to travel cheaply on public transport in the capital. It was announced last week that Br(ik), the Brussels student services agency financed by the Flemish government, was withdrawing a subsidy that allowed up to 8,000 students from Flanders to travel at half-price on Brussels public transport network MIVB. The annual cost of the subsidy was about €1 million. The subsidy was intended to cover the extra cost to students travelling from Flanders into Brussels. At the start of the programme in 2003, an annual pass cost €10. The price then went up to €45 and last year to €102. The new price – the normal annual fee for a student ticket – will now be €204. Alan Hope

THE WEEK IN SCI & ED

Researchers connected to the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB) and the Free University of Brussels (VUB) have for the first time **mapped bacteria populations on and in the human body**. They took samples from 242 volunteers and found that our bodies contain more than 10,000 types of microbes and that there are eco systems of bacteria that act similarly to animal or human populations. Bacteria can work together to break down complex molecules but sometimes also wage wars for certain nutrients. The researchers are hoping for new insights into how micro-organisms make us ill.

VSK, the organisation by and for secondary school students, is urging schools to consider **alternatives to handing out C-certificates**, the dreaded documents that mean students have to repeat the school year. VSK proposes a re-evaluation of the system of second chances through retests and summer studies, which a decreasing number of schools are using. Schools should also, the organisation suggests, allow students to graduate who are close to fulfilling the requirements but provide a personal guidance plan. The organisation says that more than 10% of Flemish students leave secondary education without a diploma, one of the highest rates in Europe.

Training in the meditation technique of **mindfulness can protect young people against psychological problems**, according to psychologist Filip Raes of the University of Leuven, who tested the effects of mindfulness on 400 Flemish secondary school students. Research had earlier proved that adults with psychological problems were less likely to relapse after mindfulness training. Raes is in favour of introducing a mindfulness course into secondary education.

Van Hulle B&C Tree Nurseries of Maldegem-Kleit, East Flanders, is working with the cancer charity Kom op tegen Kanker (Come Up Against Cancer) to **collect needles from European yew trees** in Flanders. The young needles of *Taxus baccata* contain baccatine, used to make the medication Taxol, which is used in conjunction with chemotherapy treatments.

► www.vergrootdehoop.be

Flemish minister of innovation Ingrid Lieten has allocated **€10 million to support the research on bio markers**. These substances are central to personalised health care because they indicate whether someone is at risk for a certain disease or how they will react to a certain treatment. The budget will be managed by the Flemish Agency for Innovation through Science and Technology. AF



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Publisher: Philippe Wallez, cours Saint-Michel 60, 1040 Brussels.

ING 

Fascination street

On Antwerp's Cogels-Osylei, architectural imagination has run wild

Text and photos: Anke Van Espen

Walk through Cogels-Osylei for the first time, and you might wonder whether an architect gave their talented 12-year-old pencil and paper and let them draw a couple of imaginary houses, just to give mum or dad inspiration. Houses in the street, located right outside the city's Berchem train station, were constructed at the end of the 19th century, and results include roofs that look like shallots, facades with pirate boats sailing right out of them, flower-covered cast-iron balconies, beautiful bay windows and copious amounts of mosaic designs, including depictions of the four seasons, historic battles like Waterloo and the Battle of the Golden Spurs or sometimes a still life.

Add promising (though less than humble) residential names like "Carolus Magnus" and "The 12 Apostles" to that, and you begin to understand that Cogels-Osylei was (and in a way still is) a street where citizens both affluent and flamboyant and the architects who served them all let their fantasies run wild.

You are walking a street where facades veritably shout to one another in Art Nouveau accents (or those of Baroque, Neoclassicism or Neo-Renaissance). Cogels-Osylei illustrates the absolute climax of Flanders' Belle Époque. Stroll up and down it, or in surrounding streets like Transvaalstraat and Waterlostraat, and you'll see buildings that are remarkable or utterly bizarre, sometimes beautiful and most definitely fascinating.

Industrial-turned-bourgeois

Cogels-Osylei lies in the Zurenborg neighbourhood of the Berchem district in southeast Antwerp. Railway tracks that run between the Antwerpen Berchem and Antwerp Central train stations not only split the area in two but also reflect the original idea behind the development. Around 1900, the intention was to create trade and warehouses – an economic heart just south of the recently built Central Station. Until then, the ground had been the property of Baron Osy van Wichen, hence the name.

When no entrepreneurial reaction followed, the development of the area changed into a residential building site, eventually managed by the Société Anonyme pour la Construction de Maisons Bourgeoises (Society for the Construction of Homes for the Bourgeoisie). Many of that period's renowned architects

such as Jacques de Weerdt, Jules Hofman and Joseph Bascourt made their contribution to what is now neatly called "eclecticism", and Zurenborg (then spelled Suerenborgh) became populated by wealthy bourgeoisie, with a sharp eye for detail in housing and embellishment – including the pretty front gardens. However, like many urban areas, Zurenborg experienced enormous decay after the Second World War. Houses stood empty and, like so many beautiful buildings in Antwerp, faced demolition in the 1960s to create new office space and apartment blocks. Demolition plans did not succeed, thanks to major protests by artists and activists. Many of them bought up the houses cheaply at the time. Since 1984, most of the neighbourhood's houses have been classified as protected heritage.

Café co-existence

Most of the houses in the Zurenborg neighbourhood have now been renovated, and these days Zurenborg has become a very trendy area, protecting its fashionable shabby-chic image by combining the semi-palaces and Michelin-starred restaurants with broken furniture and whole-food bistros or mobile veggie food vans.

At the other end of Cogels-Osylei from the station is Tramplein, a former tram station now transformed into a bar called the Wattman (an old Dutch word for tram driver). Trains rush past above your head while you're having a drink outside, giving you a moment to pause the conversation and have a sip.

On the other side of the train tracks is the Dageraadplaats, Zurenborg's best example of multi-cultural, multi-purpose community living. This square is almost completely covered with restaurants and cafes surrounding a playground and basketball court filled nightly with kids and teenagers from the neighbourhood.

Dageraadplaats is the place to go after your architectural tour of the neighbourhood for a reasonably priced bite to eat, or even a hug. Order the cocktail called the *knuffel* (hug) at the bar Zeezicht for a perfect summer refresher. As evening falls over the Dageraadplaats, an artificial starry sky (little lights strung across the square) mildly shines over the giant terrace.

Tours of the Zurenborg neighbourhood or just of the Cogels-Osylei are available in English and Dutch

► www.visitantwerpen.be



A view down the Cogels-Osylei



The "Herfsz" house, the old Dutch word for *herfst*, or autumn. Houses named and decorated for all four seasons are on this very special corner in the Zurenborg neighbourhood



Listen to public transport roar by between sips on the Tramplein



The four stunning Neoclassical mansions around the Cogels-Osylei's roundabout are a harmonious exception to the neighbourhoods' celebration of architectural difference

HOUSES NOT TO MISS

on Cogels-Osylei

De Roos, No 46, and De Zonnebloem, No 50, by architect Jules Hofman
De Iris, No 44, by T Van Den Bossche
Quinten Matsijs, No 80, by Jacques De Weerdt

on nearby Waterlostraat

The Four Seasons, corner of Waterlostraat and Generaal Van Merlenstraat, by Joseph Bascourt
Les Mouettes, No 39, by Jacques De Weerdt



The "Carolus Magnus" (Charlemagne) house on Cogels-Osylei



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School's out for summer

What to do and where to go to keep the kids occupied until September

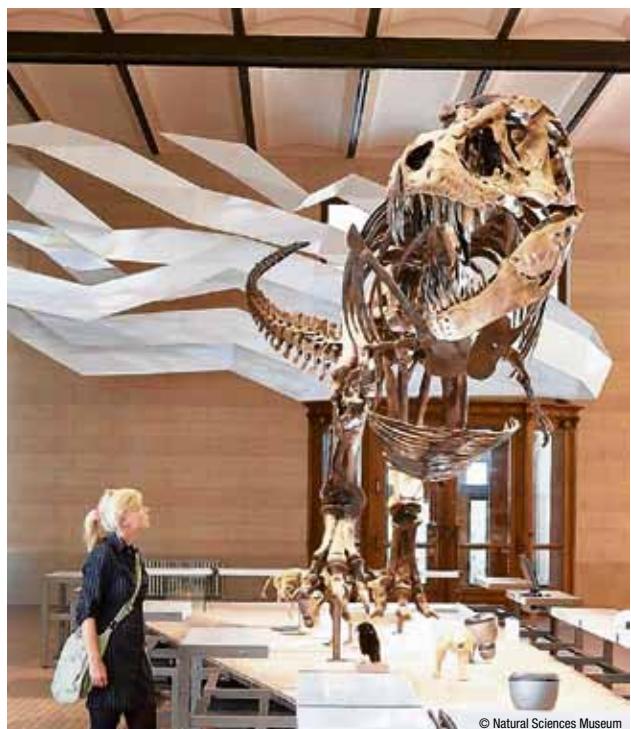
Alan Hope

The summer holidays are almost upon us, and parents everywhere will be tearing their hair out and wondering how they're going to keep the kids amused for seven long weeks. Here at Flanders Today, we feel your pain, so for the rest of the summer we'll be running a weekly feature on what to do with children in Flanders.

To begin with, we thought we'd list the blue-chips: half a dozen attractions that you can visit any time with kids of all ages.

Brussels

The Natural Sciences Museum is for many families with children the North Star that guides their outings. The permanent collection includes everything from iguanodons to hissing cockroaches, and there's a real emphasis on education through inspiration. They also lay on some of the most exciting temporary exhibitions you'll ever find in a science museum, hands-on so kids can get up close and learn through touching, smelling and hearing. By coincidence, the current exhibition is about the senses, and there's a chance to put every one of them to the test. For children six and over, with special arrangements for ages three to six. *Senses runs until 2 September. Open every day from 10.00 to 18.00*



© Natural Sciences Museum

Ghent

Nature and science are also at the centre of **De wereld van Kina** in Ghent, in what used to be a side wing of Sint-Pieters abbey. The museum was voted this year the best in Flanders by a jury of kids, so that must mean something. The permanent collection features dinosaurs, the sea and insects. A section for older children focuses on sex and relationships. And every day there's a treasure hunt tailored to the child's age group, with something special during the holidays centred on diamonds. There's so much to do you'll find yourself being dragged back more than once. *Open Mon-Fri from 9.00 to 17.00 and Sunday from 14.00 to 17.30*

► www.naturalsciences.be

Genk

Several generations of Flemish people have grown up with memories of the open-air museum and playground in **Bokrijk**, a favourite destination for school outings since 1958. The installations and buildings are all authentic, though brought together in one place from all over Flanders, and it has a genuine feel: The barns are rickety and the school-benches splintery. Employee "extras" in period dress add to the atmosphere. Bring the kids for craft demonstrations, horse-and-cart rides, pottery workshops, or just let them take their shoes off and run around like urchins. And admission is free. *Open Tuesday-Sunday from 10.00 to 18.00*

► www.dewereldvankina.be

Roeselare

Rumbeke castle is reputed to stand on the site of the fortress where Boudewijn Iron Arm brought Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, in 862. The pair were later married after the Pope stepped in, and they gave rise to the dukes of Flanders. But the current exhibition there is less concerned with the dukes than with the women of the duchy: women like Maria of Burgundy, Margaret I of Hainaut, Margarets II and III of Dampierre, Mary the Rich and so on. The exhibition and castle can be visited apart or together, with or without a visit to the 1302 museum and the nearby Wijnendale Castle. In any case, children under 13 enter all but the latter free. *Opening hours vary; contact the castle to ask for hours on the day you'd like to visit*

► www.kasteelvanrumbeke.be

Mechelen

Animal park **Planckendael** has been in the news lately, with the move of the elephants from Antwerp Zoo to a new "elephant temple". The elephants, including media star Kai-Mook, will be housed on one of the five continents that

make up Planckendael, home to 78 species of animals, from lions to the goats in the petting zoo. Planckendael also has some of the best playground activities and family terraces in Flanders.

Tip: Book your tickets online and scan them at the entrance to avoid the queues. The absolute best way to get to Planckendael is by the park's boat from the dock behind Mechelen's train station. Follow the link "Plan je bezoek" on the website. *Open every day in July and August from 10.00 to 19.00*

► www.planckendael.be

Flemish Brabant

Zomer op Straat is a festival of street theatre, so it's only to be expected that it doesn't stay in one place. Over the next two months you can find it in Landen, Tielt-Winge,



© Compagnie Cirkanto

Kortenberg, Haacht, and on it goes. A mix of adventurous amateurs and practised pros, it also includes workshops, music, food and bouncy castles. Highlights include Sofie Vandewijer, who can make anything, even clothes, out of balloons, and Compagnie Cirkanto featuring Cuban-born Truykman (pictured), a juggler who must have three hands. It's the only explanation.

► www.zomeropstraat.be

Check back for more kids' activities every week this summer

Contributions to this article were made by Olga Hope

Play my name

An Pierlé is ringing out personalised melodies on the Ghent carillon

Daan Bauwens

You may have never wondered how your name would sound being played by a full carillon, but now that you can find out, it's rather intriguing isn't it? Go to the Crowd Track Gent website, fill in your name, and a programme will turn your name into a melody on the city's tower bells. How? By using a new musical alphabet that converts the letters of your name into samples of notes on the carillon.

That's not all: If singer-songwriter and Ghent city composer An Pierlé likes your melody, she'll use it to compose a piece of music. This will be the first crowd-sourced carillon composition in the world, and is the 42nd artwork in TRACK, the contemporary art festival currently running across the city of Ghent.

For TRACK, more than 40 international artists have staged works strongly rooted in the urban fabric of Ghent but at the same time linked to global issues. During TRACK's closing weekend on 15 September, Pierlé will play the composition

from within the city's belfry tower, swapping her piano for a carillon.

Ghent's vice-carillonneur Liesbeth Janssens is teaching Pierlé how to translate her musical ideas into a belfry tune. "It's a very special instrument with a very characteristic sound," says Pierlé, who notes that it's impossible to practice on a carillon in private. "I'm a bit afraid to make mistakes, even while learning. When you practise on a carillon you are in fact playing for thousands of people! But it's fun to hit batons with your fists at full force. Playing in the top of a mediaeval tower also stimulates my imagination."

Pierlé, who is also working on a new album, will select her favourite name melodies and start composing the new belfry song next month.

► www.crowd.track.be



© TRACK / Pieter Baert

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This offer is open to the first **50 people** to register. For more information or to sign up, visit: www.MaasmechelenVillage.com/bulletin

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A voice from above

Christophe van Gerrewey recalls a lost love through a very long letter in his debut novel

Rebecca Benoot

Christophe van Gerrewey had wanted to write a book since his teens but instead of studying literature, he decided that architecture would be a more challenging endeavour. Still, the 30-year-old never lost sight of his first love.

He sent his stories to a publisher in his early 20s and eventually got published in the literary magazine *DWB*. He became a frequent contributor to magazines and newspapers such as *NRC Handelsblad*, *Streven* and *Rekto:Verso*. He won a prize for best review and essay in 2008 at an adolescent art critics awards.

Op de hoogte (In the Know) is van Gerrewey's debut novel and quite an enticing one, to say the least. An anonymous narrator writes a letter, or rather a book, to his former lover in which he reminisces about, among other things, the times when they house-sat for friends. It seems that the pair have only ever been together in other people's houses. It is our job as readers to try and find out what ultimately happened between these star-crossed lovers. *Op de hoogte* is a postmodern epistolary novel, and it's a style the author loves. "The first story that I had published was also a letter," Van Gerrewey tells me. "It's a concept that's been intriguing me for quite some time. In this novel, it creates a sense of intimacy by including the reader in something personal between two people. It's almost like you're eavesdropping, and that's why people are more inclined to believe the content as opposed to a typical novel."

It's also a narrative that leaves readers hungry for more, as you only get one side of the story. In fact, you'll be stimulated to venture on a quest in order to find out what

exactly went wrong, resulting in multiple truths – as is the case in real life and relationships.

Love in the modern world

Op de hoogte also has a bit of the self-referential: It soon becomes clear that the obsessive main character isn't settling for just a letter; he intends to write a book, increasing his audience from one lost love to the entire reading community, making *Op de Hoogte* a layer cake of metafiction and social commentary. "Writing a letter is a personal dilemma because you want to tell certain things to someone but know that there's no use in talking about it anymore," explains Van Gerrewey. "This type of storytelling allows me to do things that would otherwise seem heavy or pathetic seeing as the storyteller is rather whiny. Using this point of view, there's a playful aspect that makes it all bearable." The title of the novel, a phrase that means being informed but which also literally means "on high", can be interpreted both literally and figuratively. It refers both to a novel by 20th-century Austrian novelist Thomas Bernhard and to the narrator's inability to let go of his lover. Or of her voice, for that matter, the same way we can't get his voice out of our head as he includes us in the narrative, leading us to the question: Is love even possible in contemporary society?

"It's more difficult to sustain a relationship in this day and age because there are a lot of social issues at work," says Van Gerrewey. "Most readers initially feel that these two people don't fit together, but you can also wonder if this isn't a contemporary way of thinking. People are much more inclined now



"Love is a force of nature; you can't fight it": Christophe van Gerrewey

to look for faults and give up than they used to. Unconditional love is a thing from the past. But love is a force of nature – something you can't fight and have to accept wholeheartedly."

Op de hoogte deals with the kind of longing and pining that is now often called old-fashioned. "A lot of people believe that the narrator's behaviour is over the top," says Van Gerrewey, "because he can't seem to let her go, so much even that he writes a book about it. Some people can get over someone really quickly; others

are consumed by it. It's different for everyone."

By using an unnamed and grief-stricken first-person narrator who decides to turn his anguish into a book, Van Gerrewey as a first-time author admits that he became the topic of some speculation. "People naturally start assuming that it's autobiographical. I don't mind if people think that, but I don't believe that's the purpose of literature. When reading, I always look for a connection with my own life, not the author's."

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Internationally renowned Flemish curator Jan Hoet is in a medically induced coma in Soltau, Germany, after suffering what was originally thought to be a brain aneurism at the weekend. Doctors are now saying the problem may have been with carbon dioxide in his system, though a brain haemorrhage has not been ruled out. Among his many curatorial successes, including Documenta IX in Kassel and the current Sint-Jan in Ghent's Sint-Baaf's Cathedral, Hoet, 76, is the founder and original director of Ghent's modern art museum SMAK. He is now the director of the MARTa Museum in Herford, Germany.

Walter Weller led his final concert last week as musical director of the National Orchestra of Belgium. Weller leaves behind a five-year legacy of focusing on both well- and lesser-known composers from Central Europe and has earned plaudits in the international press for NOB's recordings of Suk, Brahms and Glazunov, among others. Weller will remain an honorary conductor of NOB and is also conductor emeritus of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, conductor laureate of the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra and associate director of the Orchestra of Valencia.

► www.walter-weller.com

"I sit and drink with it; dance around the cabin in front of it and get undressed with it." So writes *Guardian* art critic Adrian Searle about the painting "Allo!" by contemporary Flemish artist Luc Tuymans. Searle was spending the night in the Roi des Belges (King of the Belgians), a boat-shaped hotel room perched atop the roof of London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. The design and name are based on the boat Joseph Conrad steered up the Congo River before writing *Heart of Darkness*, and writers, musicians and artists have been asked to spend a night in the room and create something new through its inspiration. "Allo!", which Tuymans based on the final scene in the 1942 film *The Moon and Sixpence* (with tropical *Darkness*-inspired themes), was present in the room for one night only, and Searle's job was to write about it. The Southbank Centre hopes to put the painting, which was commissioned specifically for the project, on show to the public soon.

► www.tinyurl.com/searleontuymans

Anyone intrigued by last week's massive group yoga session in New York's Times Square can take part in the same event on 9 September in Brussels' Ter Kamerenbos. The introductory session in the open air will be led by Paris-based yoga master Sreemati and welcomes beginners, as well as experts.

► www.brusselsyogasunday.be

FRESH FICTION

Vroeger was er later (There Used to be a Future)

Vera Marynissen • De Bezige Bij

Former graphic designer Vera Marynissen's highly acclaimed debut novel *Ingewikkeld kind* (Complicated Child) was published in 2008, and now she's back with a new and powerful book inspired by her father. The author intricately describes the last months in the life of Paulus, a man in a retirement home whose wife has just died and who feels he has nothing more to do than wait. Elegant and effortlessly ironic, Marynissen ponders the big questions with her poetic prose.

Metten Marten

Geerard Walschap • Vrijdag

Walschap was one of Flanders'



literary greats until he passed away in 1989. He published poetry, plays and some 40 novels. This unpublished manuscript written between 1946 and 1953 was

recently found, making his fans and academics rejoice. *Metten Marten* is a picturesque novel in which a young boy steps out into the world with his friends looking for adventure. It is fun and fast and introduces a whole new generation to this masterful storyteller.

De vijand van binnen (The Enemy Within)

Mieke de Loof • De Geus

Former winner of the Hercule Poirot prize and Diamanten Kogel for crime fiction, Mieke de Loof has written several novels starring secret agent Ksaveri Ignatz. Set in Vienna during the summer of 1914, Ignatz goes in search of the killer of one of his fellow agents but is constantly thwarted by his superiors.

De Loof keeps you on your toes with this clever historical crime novel full of intrigue, mind games and things that go bump in the night.

De vuilnisman (The Garbageman)

Louis van Dievel • Vrijdag

Louis van Dievel's latest novel deals with the true story of the "Slager van Bergen", or Butcher of Bergen, who murdered several women during the 1990s, leaving parts of their bodies in garbage bags. The killings stopped, but the murderer was never found. *De vuilnisman* is made up of an eclectic cast of characters who frequent the bars near the station in Bergen, where the killers look for his victims. And then there's the narrator: the local garbageman.

Jan Fabre meets Michelangelo Pieta

Daan Bauwens

Michelangelo's "Pieta" is one of the most famous and adored pieces of art on the planet. To imitate this masterpiece would be tantamount to sacrilege. But it's certainly not the first time Jan Fabre has been accused of that. You can behold Fabre's variations of Michelangelo's sacred sculpture for the first time in Belgium at the beautifully renovated Park Hangar in Antwerp's Park Spoor Noord. *Pietas*, which debuted at last year's Venice Biennale, is the first exhibition at this new venue.

In spite of its name, four of Fabre's variations have – at first sight – nothing in common with Michelangelo: They are large marble sculptures of Fabre's own brain, symbolising his creativity and imagination. Fabre is well known for considering the brain to be the "sexiest" part of the human body. His fifth "Pieta" is a near-perfect copy of Michelangelo's work. Fabre's version was even sculpted out of marble from the Tuscan town of Carrara,

the same place where Michelangelo personally went to pick his pieces of stone to sculpt.

There are some rather important differences from the Italian maestro's work: In Fabre's version, Mary has the face of a skull and the lifeless figure lying in her arms is not Jesus Christ, but Fabre!

At the press preview of *Pietas*, the artist appeared in jeans and sunglasses, smoking a cigarette, against all the rules. This prompted one young French journalist who had never seen the artist before to compare him to France's notorious rock star Johnny Hallyday.

According to Fabre, the collection should be seen and experienced as "one sacral space" in which the artist is dealing with his own mortality, while the sculpture of Mary "illustrates the feelings of a mother yearning to take the place of her dead son". Although Fabre drew the models, the four sculptures of the brains were sculpted by "true professionals in Italy. I even asked

them to do it twice because I wasn't happy with the first version."

Fabre, who never fails to attract attention, such as in 2002, when he instructed his students to cover the ceiling of the Royal Palace on Paleizenplein in Brussels with 1.6 million blue, green and red wings of the jewel scarab insect. They remain there today. Fabre used the same material to create eight magical cocoons, suspended around the golden stage "as guardians but also to put my signature on the work".

The five sculptures are positioned in a geometrical pattern on a stage covered with 24-carat gold, obliging visitors to wear large woolen slippers to walk around between the statues. The stage and statues were flown in from Venice, where they were exhibited last year in the dazzling Nuova Scuola Grande di



Santa Maria della Misericordia at the 54th Venice Biennale.

Pietas is part of Antwerp's "summer full of contemporary art" initiative, which also leads visitors to the

renovated Middelheim Museum, to the work of South African photographer Santu Mofokeng at Extra City and to American sculptor Jimmie Durham at M HKA.

Until 23 September | Park Spoor Noord, Damplein 31, Antwerp | ► www.tinyurl.com/fabrepietas

WORLD MUSIC

Musiq'3 Festival

This sun-soaked festival is all about Spain. From its Golden Age to present day, the country's musical diversity is in the spotlight with more than 50 concerts spread over three days. Come and hear classical piano, cello and recitals by full orchestras, Spanish harpsichord and traditional folk music, sultry Judeo-Andalusian songs by La Roza Enflorese (pictured), fast and furious flamenco guitar and contemporary jazz trios and quartets. Not forgetting dance, such as Bolero, Fandango, Habanera, Mambo and Flamenco at every turn. Robyn Boyle



29 June to 1 July | Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein, Brussels

► www.festivalmusiq3.be

MORE WORLD MUSIC THIS WEEK

Antwerp

Murga Parade: Primarily a street theatre festival, this annual event also features world music in addition to costumed song and dance by Spanish and Italian *murga* (street musicians)

JUN 30 across Antwerp

► www.murga.be

Brussels

Couleur Café: Brussels' biggest and best-known world music festival since its first edition in 1990, featuring reggae, funk, soul, salsa and hip-hop bands from every corner of the world and steamy after-parties

JUN 29-JUL 1 at Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86

► www.couleurcafe.be

EXHIBITION

Climate Change and World Heritage

Satellite images are not only fascinating to look at, but they can also tell us a whole lot about what's happening to the planet. This three-part exhibition looks at the devastating effects of climate change on a number of UNESCO world heritage sites. Blown-up satellite photos of melting ice caps, fading coral reefs, disappearing permafrost, desertification and flooding are really quite shocking for their transparency. A glimmer of hope can be seen, however, in the display of the renovation works that took place at the fortress of San Sebastian in Mozambique, the most emblematic monument on the Island. The project, financially supported by the government of Flanders, got locals involved in the fortress' renovation and contributed to the construction of a vital water reservoir there as well. Finally, powerful satellite imagery points out the global problem of deforestation, clearly showing where trees are being chopped down at an alarming rate. It's not a feel-good exhibition, but it is one that helps you visualise the often-overused words "climate change" and serves as a reminder that urgent action is needed. RB



Until 31 July | Central Library, Ladeuzeplein 21, Leuven

► <http://www.tinyurl.com/climatechange-heritage>

MORE EXHIBITIONS THIS WEEK

Antwerp

Living Fashion: Women's Daily Wear 1750-1950: Historical exhibition redrawing the influence of fashion on the everyday lives of middle-class women in Western Europe between 1750 and 1950

Until AUG 12 at MoMu, Nationalestraat 28

► www.momu.be

De Keuze van Robert Vervoort (The Robert Vervoort Collection): An impressive collection of some 5,000 pieces of Red Star Line memorabilia belonging to the Flemish collector Robert Vervoort, including postcards, menus, playing cards, blueprints and posters

Until SEP 2 at MAS, Hanzestedenplaats 1

► www.redstarline.be

Brussels

Smakelijk: Trays, teapots, paintings, sculptures and more objects tell the story of gastronomic discoveries through the ages

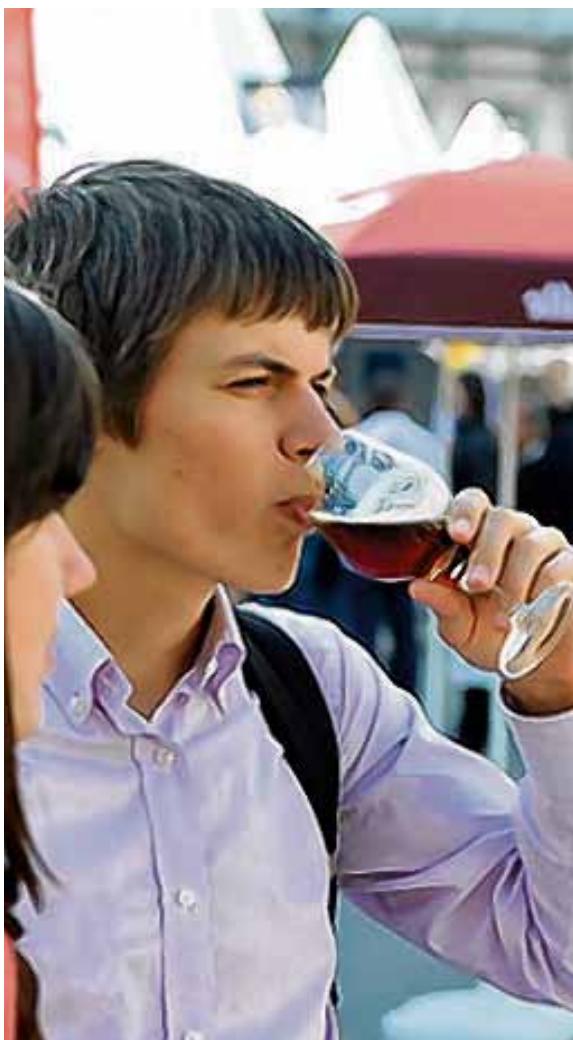
Until SEP 16 at Jubelpark Museum, Jubelpark 10

► www.kmkg-mrah.be

BEER FESTIVAL

Bierpassie Weekend Antwerp

"As long as quality breweries continue to participate, and there's room on the Groenplaats, we will continue to grow," says Flemish beer sommelier Ben Vinken with confidence. This 13th edition of Bierpassie Weekend (Beer Passion Weekend) goes to show that appreciation for unique specialty beers is on the rise. This year boasts 40 breweries spread out in stylish tents across the square, serving 200 kinds of exclusive beers, including some new ones. Cruise around with your tasting glass and try as many as you can (each beer costs €2) or take part in an informative tasting workshop at the Belgian Beer Sommelier bar, led by Vinken. Ongoing live music will set a fun tone for the weekend, with concerts by Dixieland Street Band, Vinken Zusjes, Harmonie van Melle, Dixieland Street Band and Toffe Jongens jazz band. **RB**



29 June to 1 July
Groenplaats, Antwerp
► www.bierpassieweekend.be

MORE BEER FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

Berlare (East Flanders)

Trappist Weekend: Taste all the Trappist beers (even the elusive Westvleteren) and snacks prepared with Trappist beer, plus visit demonstrations by some of the abbeys

JUN 29 to JUL 1 at Cultuurcafé, Dorp 101
► <http://trappistbier.wordpress.com/agenda>

Oudenaarde

Adriaan Brouwerbierfeesten: A regular favourite of beer festival-goers, named after a local painter. Local beer from breweries Roman and Liefmans and a line-up of live music, including De Mens, Daan, Soulsister, De Romeo's and many more

JUN 29 to JUL 1 at Grote Markt
► www.adriaanbrouwerbierfeesten.be

SPECIAL EVENT

Sanicole Airshow

Have you ever felt a tinge of excitement when a military jet soars overhead at lightning speed? Imagine, then, an entire sky filled with all types of aircraft performing astounding feats and breathtaking stunts. This Sanicole Airshow is the only annual civilian airshow in Belgium, a truly international event that attracts a wide range of military and civilian participants, plus aviation fans from all over the world.

The show kicks off with a unique sunset display on Friday evening when acrobatic duos take turns wowing the crowds with daring formation flying and colourful smoke trails. Watch out for the world's fastest warbirds, the Mustang and Sea Fury, as they twist and dive through the air in perfect synchronicity. There will also be aircrafts from the former Soviet Union, an appearance by the Dassault Rafale French Airforce team, plus the Breitling Jet Team with its seven L-39 jets, a spectacular aerobatic team and one of the world's biggest civil jet formations. Get the early bird discount of €19 or €8 (kids) by buying before 15 August. **Robyn Boyle**

GET TICKETS NOW



© Alain Ernout

PHOTO: ALLIANZ

14 September, 17.30, 16 September, 19.00

Kamperbaan 165, Hechtel (Limburg province)

► www.sanicole.com

SPECIAL EVENTS THIS WEEK

Across Flanders

Roller Bike Parade: Rollerblading, skating and bike parade through the streets, open to everyone
Until SEP 28 in Brussels, Ghent, Hasselt, Leuven and Ostend

► www.belgiumrollers.com

Bruges

Feest in het Park: Free outdoor festival featuring a children's village, workshops, world music, theatre and dance performances, world market, fair-trade bar and more
JUN 30 14.00 at Minnewaterpark and Bargeplein

► www.feestintpark.be

Sint-Pauwels (East Flanders)

Zapparade: Annual summer festival for the whole family featuring street theatre, music, creative workshops and more
JUN 30 14.00 at Roomanmolen, Pasterijwegel 1

► www.zapparade.be

Katrien Lindemans

DUSK TIL DAWN
Ostend Beach Festival

Saturday, 7 July

Summer equals sun, sand and sea... and if you're in Ostend on 7 July, beats and dance moves, too. The Ostend Beach Festival is taking over part of the coast line for its third edition. The all-Belgian line-up from last year is gone, replaced by a whopping DJ list with none other than Felix Da Housecat (US) as headliner on the main stage. The house DJ from Chicago will be playing some of his new work, but you'll probably get to hear his party classics such as "Silver Screen" and "Madame Hollywood" as well.

Before Felix hits the decks, Davidov from Culture Club (Ghent) and Sound of Stereo (Brussels) are just two of the names to warm up the beach.

As the weather gods have been rather moody so far, the festival hosts an indoor stage as well. This big tent is the place to be for Urban, Dubstep and Drum'n'Bass. From across the water, the UK boys from Sigma will be present, as well as London-based MC Garrison. Expect a lot of fresh sounds and British attitude, combined with some Belgian punch from Murdoch (Studio Brussels) and NGA Sound (Daily Dubstep).

For the third stage, the festival teamed up with Krush Club (located in the Ostend casino). Krush Club composed a line-up with some of Belgium's hottest nightlife heroes, from the lounge Latino vibes of Buscemi to the more commercial dance tracks of Dimaron.

The good news is you can party on the beach for 12 long hours, from 13.00 to 1.00. The bad news is all the cheap tickets are gone. Tickets are now €25, available via the website or in Free Record music stores.

► www.ostendbeach.be



BITE

Robyn Boyle

Fat Boy's ★★★☆

Just about anyone who's spent some time in Brussels knows where Fat Boy's is. The sports bar on the busiest square in the EU district (the infamous "Place Lux") is famous for its multiple screens, party atmosphere and American pub grub.

During the EuroCup madness, a group of friends and I manage to stake out a standing table outside with a view of the match. The place is heaving with English and French fans, alongside many other empathetic supporters like us. There's a buzz in the air, synchronised sighs at missed chances and roaring cheers with every goal.

Even now the service is incredibly attentive. Our server is calm and friendly and able to remember our order among dozens of others. We're in the mood for one thing many Americans miss from home: buffalo wings. Not only are wings the perfect thing to eat while standing up with eyes glued to the TV, but they're also highly addictive.

If you're not familiar with the term, buffalo wings have nothing to do with the giant hooved mammal but rather with the small feathered chicken and the wing thereof. The name comes from the city that made the snack famous: Buffalo, New York.

At Fat Boy's, one plate holds 20 so-called "dry" wings, which are oven-baked for a delectably crispy outer layer. On the other plate, 20 "wet" wings are smothered in a tangy sweet & sour sauce with visible specks of hot chili pepper. They pack some heat, which is tempered by the whipped blue cheese sauce and crunchy stalks of celery,

the traditional way to serve wings. Under the crispy skin is plenty of juicy white chicken meat. The combination of tangy, sweet, salty, spicy flavours is simply mouth-watering.

Nothing goes down better with a plate of hot wings and blue cheese than a round of cold pints. The beer is fresh and well tapped, no small feat on such a busy night.

In total, the 40 wings (€30) prove the perfect amount for our party of five. This is a bit unfortunate, in fact, as we would like to have tried one of the famous Fat Boy burgers



or chili fries. Our heads turn in unison to catch a look at the burgers as they are delivered to other tables. The BBQ cheddar burger stands out, with its thick patty covered in melted cheddar cheese and a dollop of smoky BBQ sauce. It comes with a sizeable salad and pile of fries. Next time, though, I'm having the bacon and blue cheese burger or, if I'm really famished, the Fat Boy's Mega, two layers of beef covered in their homemade chili and jalapeno peppers. The appetisers are equally enticing and include all the American snack classics, from breaded, deep-fried jalapeno peppers and mozzarella sticks with tomato salsa to deluxe hot dogs, caesar salads and mega portions of nachos. Desserts include chocolate brownies and pecan pie.

► www.fatboys-be.com

📍 Luxemburgplein 5, Brussels; 02.511.32.66

🕒 Kitchen: Mon-Fri 12.00-15.00 & 18.00-23.00;
Sat-Sun 12.00-23.00

💶 Mains: €10-€20

ⓘ All-American sports bar in the heart of Europe's capital with great service, cold beer and excellent pub fare

TALKING SPORTS

Tour hopes

An annual cycling ritual will take place this Saturday: the Tour de France, which long ago escaped the confines of the Gallic hexagon, will begin in Liège with a short 6.1-kilometre time trial. For more than three weeks and 20 stages over 3,500km, the riders will toil through near unbearable physical demands to that finale in Paris and the glory of the yellow jersey. But can a Flanders man claim the crown?

The last Flemish winner was Lucien van Impe from Erpe-Mere in 1976. Before that, was, of course, Eddy Merckx, who won five times. But it has been barren since then.

Not that Flanders lacks riders. Last year, the surprise package was **Philippe Gilbert**. The 29-year-old was born in Verviers but cut his teeth on an Aalst team early on, honing his craft in the Flanders mud. He was the third-placed sprinter in last year's Tour, while topping the

UCI WorldTour Ranking. But his star seems to be fading this year, and he has no such victories to claim so far. This year, it is a resurgent **Tom Boonen** sweeping up prizes, triumphing in the E3 Harelbeke, Ghent-Wevelgem, Paris-Roubaix and the Tour of Flanders. However, Tommeke, 31, is skipping the Tour this year to focus on the London Olympics.

Another recent revelation is hoping to make an impact on the Tour: **Jelle Vanendert**, 27, from Neerpelt, who last year claimed the red-and-white checked jersey for the climbers. He may well repeat, or even improve, this year but don't expect him to get near the yellow jersey, which requires strength in climbing, sprints and sheer distance.

The best hope will be someone who crashed spectacularly last year: **Jurgen Van den Broeck**, 29, who heads the Lotto team, was

forced to withdraw after collecting a collapsed lung, three broken ribs and a broken shoulder blade in a massive pile-up halfway through the contest. But he is a real contender: He was bumped up to fourth in the 2010 Tour after the disqualification of winner Alberto Contador for doping offences.

Meanwhile, **Wimbledon** has already begun. It is the last hurrah for Kim Clijsters at this major, where she has never gone beyond the semi-finals. Clijsters, recovering from injury, skipped the French Open last month, meaning that Wimbledon and the US Open in September will be her last majors ever – at least if she sticks by her long-tailed retirement plans. But Clijsters, 29, will be back at All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club for the London Olympics in July and August, which also take place at the hallowed turf.

Leo Cendrowicz

The last word...

Clouds on the horizon

"The heat wave everyone is waiting for won't break through in the next 10 days."

Weather forecaster Jill Peeters, as more and more people sign up for last-minute holiday packages

People power

"I don't know how it is that I attract people so easily. Maybe it's my bowtie, maybe it's my way of doing things. Even children come up to me. I've had kids of about seven or eight come up and tell me they voted for me."

Prime minister Elio Di Rupo

On the air

"We wanted to put up a windbreaker in the studio with a toilet behind it, but that wasn't allowed. Somebody even suggested a system with a bottle under the table, but I ruled that one out."

MNM radio presenter Peter Van de Veire broke the world record with 185 hours of non-stop broadcasting, but not without problems

Shellfish shortage

"Last year we harvested about 450 million kilos, this year it'll only be about 250 million. The shortage in supply will certainly play a role."

Mussels this year promise to be smaller and more expensive, according to industry spokesman Jos Van Damme

NEXT WEEK
IN FLANDERS TODAY

Cover story

Dystonia is the most common movement disorder after Parkinson's Disease, and yet almost no one has heard of it. We'll tell you about the Flemish woman with the disease who has spearheaded a photo essay project with Flemish photographer Lieve Blancquaert and helped establish a new lab for research at the University of Leuven

Living

We continue our love for Limburg this week with a tour of its best breweries. Don't miss the great stories behind family brewers Kerkom, Ter Dolen and Wilderen

Arts

Raymond van het Groenewoud is 62, but you'd never know it – at the Gentse Feesten, for instance, he can still be counted on to put in several hours live on stage on the final night, partying with the locals until 4.00. We talk to the leading man of Dutch-language tunes about why he's all the rage this month



Flanders' best hope for the Tour de France: Jurgen Van den Broeck