

## World War heritage

Officials tour Flemish war sites to prepare bid for World Heritage status from Unesco

► 5



## Grateful strangers

Organisation supports the families of organ donors and helps connect them with recipients

► 8

## Pick a penguin

Kiwanis raises money with auction of penguin sculptures co-created by artists and children

► 9



# Smakelijk!

**The Week of Taste returns to Flanders, bringing with it hundreds of mouthwatering events**

Alan Hope

After a year off, Week van de Smaak, or Week of Taste, is back. And it's bigger than ever. The event, a multi-genre showcase of food, takes place across Brussels and Flanders from 14 to 25 November.

The Week of Taste has undergone some changes. Last year it took a break, and it was announced by culture minister Joke Schauvliege that it would no longer be run by Faro, the government's agency for cultural heritage, but would encompass more sectors, including the food industry, agriculture and education. The government still provides support and subsidy, but the private sector, including sponsors Tienen Sugar and Spar supermarket, has now picked up more of the responsibility.

The result is that the Week of Taste now includes events all the way from Veurne in the far west to Bree in deepest Limburg, some of which cover the entire region, with others of a more local sort – appropriate, as this year's theme is the taste of home.

The **Koekjesroute** (Cookie Trail) has been going on since 19 October, when baker Brenda Keirsbilck handed over biscuit tins and recipe folders to the governors of all five Flemish provinces. The tins were filled with her own biscuits, and the job of the governors was to pass the tins and the folders on to various organisations in their own area, who would fill both in their turn with local cookies and recipes – a chain letter for the sweet tooth, in other words. The province with the biggest file of recipes at the end of the event on 14 November wins a prize.

To kick things off, the governors themselves held baking sessions with children, nurses and others – West Flanders' governor Carl Decaluwé cheated somewhat by recruiting the house baker of the Veurne museum to help out – and their recipes are all available in the events guide for each region, downloadable from the website. The tins and folders are making their way around schools, rest homes, family homes and even some bakeries across Flanders.

Five passionate foodies have agreed to act as figureheads for some of the region-wide actions taking place.

**Brenda Keirsbilck** trained in marketing and worked in advertising before finding her dream job, when she took over Juliette's Artisanale Koekenbakkerij, an artisan biscuit-maker in Bruges ([www.juliettes.be](http://www.juliettes.be)) that makes a wicked assortment of baked goods. She's



Advertising executive turned baker Brenda Keirsbilck followed her dreams to take over Juliette's artisan biscuit-maker in Bruges

## FACE OF FLANDERS

Alan Hope

## Commandant Michael Artiges



In the wildly popular 1986 film *Top Gun*, the junior aviators all have nicknames like Maverick, Iceman and Cougar, leaving the audience in no doubt whatsoever as to the testosterone level in the average fighter squadron.

In real life, meanwhile, Commandant Aviator Michael Artiges is known to his crew and colleagues as Mickey. He's a real *Top Gun*, and he's just off to train the new generation of F-16 pilots for the United States Air Force (USAF).

Last week, the Flemish airman moved into his new home on Luke Air Force Base, not far from Phoenix, Arizona. He'll first undergo a training himself that will then help him train the cream of USAF pilots to fly the F-16.

Artiges joined the Belgian Air Force in 1993, spending some time in the military police before gaining his wings in '95. Since then, he has racked up 2,450 flight hours, including 2,050 on the F-16, a formidable total he achieved by flying demonstrations for the air force for three years. The demonstration team's programme took them all over the world, and Artiges left more than a few spectators breathless with his

skill and daring.

The USAF has 10 foreign exchange officers at Luke, most of them pilots, coming from countries as diverse as Chile, Denmark, Japan and Poland. "I am almost done with my initial training," Artiges said, "which is meant to familiarise me with the aircraft I will be flying here. After that, I will start my instructor pilot training and soon after begin training incoming pilots."

Luke AFB is not new territory for Artiges. He was there in 1996, on the receiving end of the training he'll soon be handing out. This time, he's bringing his wife and children with him. "It was challenging for my family at the beginning, but now school is sorted out, and the children are in classes. My wife is also going to school to better her English. My family and I plan on taking advantage of the time we're here. We have a list of places to visit, like Washington, DC, and, obviously, Disneyland. We will make the most of our three years and hopefully expand our cultural experience."

► [www.tinyurl.com/tributetomickey](http://www.tinyurl.com/tributetomickey)

## News in brief

A café owner in Opglabbeek, Limburg province, has set a new **world record for pouring beers** non-stop. Ruth Brand of the Gildenhuis stayed behind the bar for 111 hours for her place in the Guinness World Records and raised €12,000 for charity in the process. The money will go to the To Walk Again foundation of triathlete Marc Herremans.

Consumers face paying **record high prices for potatoes** this season because of a harvest delayed by wet weather, according to the sector organisation Belpom. In parts of West Flanders, 80% of the harvest remains in the ground because the fields are too wet, and the crop is beginning to rot. Prices paid in the shops could, Belpom warned, end up two or three times higher than last year.

Employees whose children are admitted to hospital can now take **up to two weeks off work**, under a law introduced on 1 November. Also from 1 November, all new tyres sold must carry an EU quality label, while gas and electricity suppliers Distrigas and Nuon merged to form Eni, the name of their parent company. And the unemployed will see their benefits reduced more quickly – after two years in most cases, with reductions of up to 41.5%. The new rule does not affect the over-55s or people who were in employment for more than 20 years.

The Flemish Community Commission (VGC), which looks after the interests of the Flemish community in Brussels, has called on local organisations to submit **ideas for its urban policy** for 2014-2019, for which

it receives €13 million from the government of Flanders. Clubs and associations will be consulted on future policy before the VGC presents its package to the government, said secretary of state Bruno De Lille.

Hilde Crevits, Flemish minister for mobility and public works, will **take the oath as mayor of Torhout**, West Flanders, in 2016, she announced last week. Crevits stood in the recent municipal elections in the town but, like all current Flemish ministers, is committed to remain in her post until the regional elections in 2014.

There will be **no train traffic between Mechelen and Leuven** on 11 November due to tests on the line of a new safety system, the rail infrastructure company Infrabel announced. Services will be replaced by a bus.

The director of a prison in Leuven has been ordered to take a leave of absence after the prison **lost a set of keys** capable of opening 200 doors to wings of the prison and individual cells. The keys were missing for a week before the federal prisons administration was notified, it was alleged. The locks have since been changed, but the keys remain untraceable. An investigation continues.

Paul De Knop, rector of the Free University of Brussels (VUB) has proposed that the university give out **honorary doctorates in 2013 only to women**. "I mean this as a statement of intent to pay more attention in future to a balance between men and women among the candidates," De Knop said. The first list of

candidates will be presented to the council of deans of faculty this month, while the final decision on the proposal will be taken by the university's senate and governing board.

A man who brutally **raped five women in the Antwerp area** and attacked five others this year has been sentenced to 15 years in prison. The victims appeared to be chosen at random and included a 77-year-old woman and two girls of 15 and 16. The court also ordered Abdessamad S to be held at the discretion of the court for 10 years after his sentence is served, which means it could be 25 years before he is freed.

The volunteers of Gebov, the organisation for users of Brussels public transport service MIVB, are **considering disbanding the pressure group** as its core activists, who claim the introduction of air-conditioning in trams and the renovation of the passages in Central Station as successes, are becoming too old. The group is calling for new blood to allow it to continue its work.

► [www.gutitb.be](http://www.gutitb.be)

The University of Leuven in Kortrijk awarded International Monetary Fund president **Christine Lagarde an honorary doctorate** last week, in recognition of her "strong leadership and extraordinary macro-economic vision". Lagarde took the opportunity to talk about her grandfather, who was born in Flanders and died when she was a baby. "His name was Eli Carre, and I'd like to find out more about him. Any tips are welcome." Anyone with information on the matter can email [nico.tanghe@standaard.be](mailto:nico.tanghe@standaard.be).

## FLANDERS TODAY

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VERANTWOORDELIJKE UITGEVER

Hans De Loore

## OFFSIDE

Alan Hope

## Tweeting for better service

In this day of social networking, it's getting ever easier to take your complaints to the public square and drag giant faceless corporations over the coals in full view. There was a time when, if your bus was late or your train was cancelled, you sat down to write a stiff letter to the management or you seethed inwardly, perhaps taking out your frustration on your co-workers or your squash partner.

Not anymore. Twitter to the rescue. In March, ICT expert Eric Schiffers set up a Twitter account called Bad Service Belgium (@badservice\_be) to "share experiences on bad customer services". Not surprisingly, he soon found there's no shortage of complaints. The service has tweeted more than 1,300 times so far. Who are the main targets? You could probably guess: the rail

authority NMBS, bpost, the Brussels public transport authority MIVB, Belgacom, the gas company Sibelga – in short, those who are supposed to provide public services (often at quite some cost) and don't.

It's not all doom and gloom, however. Many of the multilingual posts are hilariously witty. Some

are useful in warning you who and what services to avoid. And once in a while, Schiffers scores a success by providing the complainer with details of where to go for real help, or by getting the attention of the faceless corporation on behalf of the customer. Something of the spirit of the Blitz reigns here.



© Stéphane Mignot/CC

# Smakelijk!

## From *witloof* to *speculoos*, Flemish favourites take centre stage at the Week of Taste

► continued from page 1

also written books on desserts made with *speculoos* and baking on a lazy Sunday afternoon, and another on 40 varieties of whoopie pie – an American treat also known as a BFO or Big Fat Oreo – using cuberdons, *advocaat* and other unexpected ingredients.

For baker **Tom Van Loock**, bread is literally the staff of life: He gave up a position in a top kitchen to take up baking full time, and now runs Patisserie Academie ([www.patisserieacademie.be](http://www.patisserieacademie.be)) in Bruges, which makes pastries and cakes with a modern twist. Van Loock will be baking a cake for someone special whose birthday falls during the Week of Taste, but we're giving away no secrets.

He's also heading the *Grote Thuisbak*, a home-baking event on 17 November taking place in 30 towns and villages in Flanders. The idea is for people in each municipality to get busy in the kitchen, then bring everything they've baked together to be weighed. The place with the most (pro rata according to the numbers taking part) and the best recipes wins. They then do what any sane person would do, and get together at a local feast to eat the results of their efforts.

**Hedwig Verlinden** is the perfect model for an event based on home-cooking: She's the runner-up from the last series of *De Beste Hobbykok van Vlaanderen* (The Best Hobby Cook in Flanders) on VTM, and has been through the hellfire of judging by Peter Goossens and Sergio Herman. She'll be taking part in the contest to find the favourite home-cooked dish in Flanders, from a shortlist that includes *carbonnade* (steak stewed in beer), *witloof* and ham in cheese sauce, tomato soup with meatballs and roast chicken with apple sauce.

You, too, can vote on the Week's website, and in return for your vote, you'll be sent Verlinden's version of the favourite home dish of prime minister Elio Di Rupo, which sounds delicious but isn't, as you might expect, particularly Flemish.

**Karen Depoorter** is someone else who turned her hobby into a business, making jam for the guests of her bed & breakfast, and now for the customers of Callas Confiture ([www.callasconfiture.com](http://www.callasconfiture.com)) in Ghent. Her own selection includes strawberry and rose-petal jam, pumpkin and maple butter and pink grapefruit and nougat marmalade, but she invited recipes for other people's original concoctions as part of the Week, and put together a book, *Onze receptuur voor Confituur* (Our Recipe for Jam), for the occasion. She'll be announcing the winners of a prize for the two best recipes on 14 November. The prize: a copper jam kettle and the recipes published on packets of Tienen sugar.

The thing that warms the heart of **Herman Tackaert** is ice – ice cream and sorbets, to be exact – and he gave up a promising career as a lawyer involved in international business to train in the art of *gelati* in Bologna, before opening his own ice cream parlour in Antwerp ([www.gelatofactory.be](http://www.gelatofactory.be)). He also issued an invitation to the public to come up with original recipes for ice and sorbet, and the winning entry will be revealed on 14 November, before going on to be produced in Gelato Factory.

A full programme of events is available on the Week's website, where you can also download a newspaper for your own region. Here's a tasting menu of some of what's on offer:

- **Antwerp:** Discover the delights of *gekloven nonnen* (cleft nuns), hard-boiled eggs split in two and filled with herbs and spices, a recipe that dates back to the 16th century, in the Plantin Moretus Museum, while admiring the fine porcelain of the Moretus family, on 21 November. [www.museumplantinmoretus.be](http://www.museumplantinmoretus.be)

- **East Flanders:** A range of workshops and lectures in the Huysmanshoeve centre in Eeklo on 18 November, with a history of *speculoos*, baking bread with spelt wheat and making your own cakes. [www.mmm-eetjesland.be](http://www.mmm-eetjesland.be)

- **Flemish Brabant:** Bananas are said to be the food of the future, so it might be worth learning how to make banana bread at a workshop at Yenn B&B in Leuven from 15 to 25 November. The laboratory of tropical crop improvement at the University of Leuven, you may be interested to know, is responsible for the fact that the world's banana crop is now resistant to viruses, and has an archive of 1,200 varieties. The recipe for the strange stodgy cake known as *bodding* (apparently a corruption of the word "pudding") is also thrown in. [www.yenn.be](http://www.yenn.be)

- **Limburg:** An evening workshop on pimping your cupcakes with icing, chocolate, pearls or flowers, by a professional baker. In the Bree public library on 19 November, price €3, reserve on 089.84.85.40.

- **West Flanders:** The winner of the *Beste Hobbykok* series, Claudia Allemeersch, will be visiting the famed Ter Duinen hotel school in Koksijde (whose alumni include Peter Goossens, Jeroen Meus and Gert De Mangeleer) on 15 November at 8.30 for a workshop on breakfast pastries, supervised by the school's pastry professor, Kris Pollentier. Visitors can take part in the workshop for €15, then enjoy a three-course breakfast for €36, made by some of the finest chefs of the future.



The Cookie Trail continues throughout the Week of Taste, with local recipes being added to the biscuit tin in each province and a prize for the biggest number come 14 November



Some of Tom Van Loock's creations at Patisserie Academie in Bruges

[www.hotelschoolkoksijde.be](http://www.hotelschoolkoksijde.be)

Finally, Brussels isn't being left out of the Week of Taste. On 24 November, the Royal Gallery in the city centre will be taken over from 14.00 to 17.00 by Brussels waffles, one of the city's most ancient and world-famous delicacies (and not to be confused with the heavier variety from Liège).

Each of the 19 Brussels municipalities will be represented, making waffles on the spot for passers-by to taste and try – and to vote for. Presiding over the jury is chef Albert Verdeyen and Marc Sleen, creator of the cartoon strip *Nero*, whose eponymous hero ends every adventure with a giant waffle-feast. Sleen has now passed the pen on to Dirk Stallaert, and he'll be on hand to immortalise the scene as it happens.



Waffles are on the menu on the street of Brussels thanks to each of the city's 19 communes

# Dutch to flood polder

## Action will fulfil the Westerschelde channel treaty between the Netherlands and Flanders

Alan Hope

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters said he is "delighted" at a decision by the Dutch government to go ahead with returning the Hedwigepolder (pictured), in the province of Zeeland at the mouth of the Scheldt river, to the sea. The operation, known in Dutch as *ontpoldering*, is the last step of a treaty signed between Flanders and the Netherlands over the deepening of the Westerschelde channel between Antwerp and the open sea.

Last week, the new Dutch cabinet decided the operation could go ahead, bringing to an end a dispute between the two governments that has dragged on for more than three years. The Westerschelde lies mainly in Dutch waters but is



crucial in the approach to the port of Antwerp. The two governments signed a treaty in 2005 under

which the channel would be dredged at 12 important places to allow the passage of new, larger

container ships. Dredging work was suspended when environmentalists convinced the Dutch Council of State that the works would require compensatory measures to be taken for wildlife in the marshes along the waterside, which are important breeding grounds for waterfowl and harbour some rare forms of saltwater plants. It was agreed that the Hedwigepolder would be set under water to create new wetlands as compensation. When the dredging work was completed, the Dutch refused to flood the polder due to protests from local farmers who would lose their land. Now the decision has been taken to go ahead with the agreement.

## Courts get tougher on smoking ban fines

The owner of a pub in Wachtebeke, East Flanders, has been fined €1,650 for the "systematic breach" of the ban on smoking in cafes and restaurants, after a court heard he regularly allowed staff and customers to smoke. The day after the judgement, ashtrays were openly on the tables of the café, and patrons continued to smoke.

Nico Van Hoorebeke, 40, who intends to appeal the fine, earlier tried to avoid implementing the law, which came into force on 1 July last year. He claimed that his bar, Towerbridge, was a place of worship for a religion that venerates tobacco. That attempt failed.

The fine for a first offence, following a series of

warnings, is €75, rising to €500 for a third offence within a 12-month period. Van Hoorebeke was checked on two occasions and refused to pay a fine, preferring to take his case to court.

One in five of all inspections of bars in Belgium find a breach of the law, according to the federal public health ministry. Inspectors have increased the number of late-evening spot-checks and targeted cafes that have received complaints from members of the public. At the same time, bar owners complain their regular customers are coming less often or not at all, while the non-smoking public has failed to make up the difference, particularly in outlying areas.



## Jordan bus crash claims fifth victim

A crash involving a bus of mostly Flemish tourists in Jordan has claimed a fifth victim. Willy Matthyssens from Puurs, Antwerp province, died just before he was due to travel home. Matthyssens, 69, who had undergone a two-hour heart operation after the crash, was said to be recovering and was visited by his wife, one of several family members flown to Amman by tour organiser Thomas Cook. Four other people died in the crash. The casualties, including injured cases, have since been flown back to Belgium. An investigation into the accident, which involved a vehicle towing a trailer, is under way.

## Newborn left in Antwerp's "foundling drawer"

Politicians from the leading parties have repeated calls to legalise giving birth anonymously, following the discovery of another baby left in the special "foundling drawer" in the Borgerhout district of Antwerp last weekend.

Proposals for a new law, which have the support of the four main Flemish parties, would allow a mother to give birth in a hospital under medical supervision and her identity given only to an independent service. When the birth is registered with the local municipality, the name of the mother would not be included. Later, if the child requests information, the new service would act as a contact between the various parties. They would also provide psychological counselling to the mother if requested.

The measure aims to avoid a situation that has now occurred three times in a year: a mother gives birth and leaves the baby in the foundling drawer, so that

she cannot be identified. The non-profit Mothers for Mothers maintains the foundling drawer – essentially a warm incubator behind a door that sends an alarm to the charity if opened. The new law would also help mothers avoid prosecution: Abandoning a baby, even in a safe circumstance, is a crime.

Some months ago, Mother for Mothers said, another newborn was left in the foundling drawer, without any announcement in the media. The child and its mother have since been reunited. A baby found in the drawer last summer is now being fostered.

The latest foundling, Baby Pieter – named after two of the charity's former lawyers and surnamed De Kleine (the little), as are all foundlings – was said to be in good health. He is under the guardianship of the chair of Antwerp's social aid agency, Leen Verbist, while a foster family is sought.

## FIFTH COLUMN

Anja Otte

As this publication went to press, the federal government was still trying (more or less) to balance the budget. As it postponed the job until after the local elections, it may run short of time, as the proposals still need to be voted in parliament before the end of this year.

Traditionally, the federal government searches every nook and corner for the needed extra millions. Minister for Defence Pieter De Crem (CD&V) has already announced that his department cannot do with less, as it has already economised in the past couple of years. On Monday, Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters (CD&V) also stated that the federal government need not turn to his government of Flanders.

In the past, Flanders agreed several times to build up financial reserves in order to help Belgium meet European budget requirements. Such agreements were made easier because the same parties made up the Flemish and the federal governments. As this is no longer the case, prime minister Elio Di Rupo should not expect as much effort from Flanders. N-VA, in the Flemish government but in the opposition on the federal level, hardly feels like helping out.

Peeters, too, wants to distance himself from the federal government, which is not popular in Flanders. He was swift to wipe off the table a proposal for Flanders to contribute to some competences for which it is responsible, such as Science and Development, but which are financed at the federal level. Flanders has already contributed enough, Peeters stated, by keeping its own budget balanced.

The differing coalitions and the economic crisis are not solely responsible for the federal government's troubles. Due to several state reforms, the federal government has less money than ever, as means are increasingly diverted to the regions and communities. This makes the federal government something of an empty shell.

Still, as social security and pensions are amongst its competences, it is expected to handle most of the upcoming shocks, such as unemployment, which rises every day, and the retirement of a massive generation of baby boomers.

Di Rupo is learning some hard lessons these days. Ultimately no-one is willing to pay for the challenges his government faces. Any of the proposed measures, such as raising taxes or fiddling with the index mechanism, will only leave it more unpopular. But then again, no-one ever said it would be easy for a government with no majority in Flanders.

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES

**€800,000**

subsidy approved by Flemish integration minister Geert Bourgeois for clubs and organisations in 31 municipalities that offer opportunities for non-natives to practise speaking Dutch. Bourgeois called on Flemings to refrain from speaking dialect and not to switch so quickly to French or English

**119.4mm**

of rain fell on the meteorological observatory in the Brussels commune of Ukkel in October, almost equalling the record for the month of 1998. In Koksijde, Ostend and Limburg, rainfall topped 150mm

**11,000**

visitors on the first day of the annual Boekenbeurs book fair in Antwerp, which runs until 11 November. The figure was higher than organisers expected

**€0.02**

to be added to the price of a standard inland postage stamp on 1 January, bringing the price to €0.67 per stamp when bought in books of 10. The price for post in Europe goes up €0.04, and for the rest of the world, you'll pay €0.05 more

**9,019**

(and counting) self-employed people have signed an online petition organised by Unizo, calling for more respect for entrepreneurs and business people, more efficient administration and no new taxes

► [www.ikkomopstraat.be](http://www.ikkomopstraat.be)

# We will remember them

## Flemish mission prepares bid for Unesco recognition of First World War sites

Alan Hope

For the last few months, a group of officials from the Flemish government's international office have been touring West Flanders and the adjoining French department of Pas-de-Calais. They're taking an inventory of the many sites associated with the First World War in a bid to compile a proposal for the United Nations to have the sites included in the list of World Heritage Sites – a list that includes the city of Persepolis in Iran, Uluru (formerly known as Ayers Rock) in Australia and the Taj Mahal in India.

The initiative has its eyes on 2014, when Flanders will be at the centre of a worldwide commemoration of the centenary of the start of the First World War – a commemoration that will, like the war, run for four years and leave a mark for future generations in the years to come. The sites, according to Piet Geleyns, the international policy officer for the Flemish government who took part in the field trips, cover the former southern front around Ypres and Heuvelland and the northern front around Dixmude, Ijzer and Nieuwpoort, both in the part of West Flanders known as the Westhoek, or western corner, as well as around Arras in France.

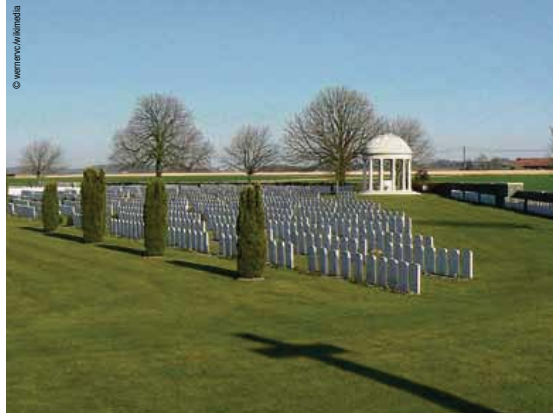
"The aim now is in the course of November to make an initial selection, on the basis of our findings and the scientific information at our disposal, of the Flemish sites we think are fit to be classed as world heritage. In all likelihood, we'll carry out the same exercise with academics and representatives of the municipalities concerned to come to an eventual consensus.

"We're working in an international context, since the submission to Unesco will come jointly from Belgium and France. That means we have to come to an agreement with our Walloon and French partners. We hope to reach that point in 2013, possibly in time for the commemoration of the First World War."

### "At the going down of the sun"

Unesco has already started the procedure for legal protection of two sites: the Bedford House Cemetery in Ypres-Zillebeke and the world-famous Tyne Cot New British Cemetery in Zonnebeke-Passchendaele, which by itself contains 12,000 graves and a memorial to 35,000 men lost in action whose final resting place is not known.

But graves are not the only element of the plans Flanders has to commemorate the centenary of the war. The Herinneringspark (Remembrance Park) 2014-2018 is a project that brings together history and landscape involving experts from the Netherlands and Flanders, including architects, landscapers, planners and even a scenographer, Terenja van Dijk from Antwerp. She



Clockwise from top left: Bedford House Cemetery in Ypres-Zillebeke - The Old Contemptibles - Tyne Cot New British Cemetery in Zonnebeke-Passchendaele - Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery



designed the opening exhibition for the Ghent city museum STAM and an exhibition in New York on the Jewish emigrants of the Red Star Line out of Antwerp.

The Remembrance Park will allow visitors – who are expected to come from all over the world to the Westhoek for the occasion – to experience the history of the war while touring in the very landscape in which it took place.

### "They went with songs to the battle, they were young"

"It's extremely important that we not only tell the story of that terrible war, but that we place it in a contemporary context," said Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters, speaking last month at a congress on remembrance education in Kortrijk. "That we need in our time to show tolerance, that war is not a solution, that wars are easy to begin, but very difficult to finish."

The need to unite remembrance and education is, Peeters said, a continuing responsibility. "There are fewer and fewer direct witnesses of the horror of war, and war is often associated with something on television, with blown-up buildings in distant lands. But we must never forget the war that ravaged our own streets, and we must teach our young

people to recognise that escalation that leads to war. That way, present and future generations will learn about themes such as tolerance and international cooperation."

The importance of teaching about the origins of conflict was also stressed by Professor Sophie De Schaepdrijver, a Flemish historian now teaching at Penn State University in the US, who also addressed the conference.

However sombre and complex the history of the war may be, she said, young people are capable of taking it in. "You should never underestimate your audience," she said. "I'm absolutely convinced people can bear a great deal of complexity, as long as it's recounted to them in an interesting way."

### "There is music in the midst of desolation"

In Antwerp, about 250,000 visitors are expected on the weekend of 4 and 5 October 2014 to walk across a new pontoon bridge over the Scheldt, commemorating the exodus out of Antwerp in October 1914 on the attack by German troops. The event will be the start of a city-wide commemoration that will include a special edition of the biennial Havenfestival dedicated to historic ships from the turn of the 20th century.

Brussels will be the scene of what must be the largest singing group ever assembled, as choirs from the more than 50 countries that took part in the conflict join with local choirs to perform "Flanders Song for Peace", a work composed by the renowned composer Philip Glass and performed by the Brussels Philharmonic in front of political and diplomatic representatives from across the world.

When British troops landed in Belgium in 1914, it was almost a century after the last time they had fought there, at Waterloo. The British Expeditionary Force was made up of career soldiers, who fought from Mons in August that year all the way to Zonnebeke in West Flanders three months later, having in the meantime lost half of their number.

They wintered at Ploegsteert, to be reinforced in the spring by a new wave of volunteers and troops from the Empire. The remnants of the regular army took on the name of The Old Contemptibles, and their story will be told by re-enactors from seven countries in August 2014 in Zonnebeke, on the same weekend as the Passchendaele Memorial Cricket Cup, commemorating a tournament that had to be abandoned in 1914 as hostilities broke out. Hundreds of those taking part in the cricket later signed up to join in the fighting.

West Flanders, as one of the main theatres of the Great War, will feature a huge number of other events, including Anzac Day and Flanders Scottish Memorial Day in April 2015; a new musical theatre production called *Lijssenthoek Terminus*, to be performed beside Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery in Poperinge; and the *Gone West* project running through 2014 and 2015 and stressing the multicultural aspect of the war and the role of troops from the colonies of Britain and France.

Leuven and Aarschot in Flemish Brabant and Dendermonde in East Flanders are the three Flemish Martyr Cities, where German troops carried out reprisals for the people's resistance to the invasion, with civilians shot or taken hostage and parts of the town burned to the ground.

The three cities plan a series of events in August and September 2014, including *son et lumière*, a performance by the Aarschot choir Scala, and a concert of a new work by Flemish composer Piet Swerts featuring international soloists.

*Quotations from The Fallen, written in 1914 by Laurence Robert Binyon (1869-1943), who served as a Red Cross orderly on the Western Front*

► [www.tinyurl.com/agendagrooteoorlog](http://www.tinyurl.com/agendagrooteoorlog)

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# Ford Genk staff to return to work

## Workers will hold a March for the Future in Genk

Alan Hope

Unions at Ford have advised workers to resume work as usual on 13 November, when the latest period of temporary shut-down ends. Otherwise the workforce would be considered to be on strike, "and that will cost our members even more money," said representative Gert Steegmans of the ACLBV.

Two days prior to resuming work, unions plan to hold "a national Limburg demonstration" in Genk, with the cooperation of the city council and the provincial governor Herman Reynders. The "March for the Future" is expected to depart from the city centre and proceed to the C-Mine complex on the site of the former Winterslag coal mine, a symbol of Limburg's renaissance after the loss of a traditional industry.

Planned concerts by local musicians due to take place outside the gates of Ford may not go ahead, however, after fears that the performing rights organisation Sabam could

present the organisers with a bill for thousands of euros. As *Flanders Today* went to press, Sabam's board was due to discuss the issue. Normally, Sabam claims a fee even for free concerts, but an exception could be made. "We realise this is a very sensitive issue," said Sabam director Christophe Depreter.

"Everyone in Limburg sympathises with the Ford workers, and on 11 November we want to offer a forum for sympathisers and their families to come together and show their compassion peacefully," said Genk mayor Wim Dries. "At the same time, the march is also a powerful call to the higher ranks of government to get together on a commitment to a new economic perspective for the future of Genk and of Limburg."

### Promotion is insult added to injury

Last week unions reacted angrily to the news that Stephen Odell, the



Workers continue to gather at a picket line outside Ford Genk, where work will resume on 13 November

CEO of Ford Europe who took the decision to close Ford Genk, has been promoted to executive vice president of the parent company. Ford announced third quarter profits of \$1.6 billion (£1.25 bn),

despite heavy losses in Europe. Odell will also become president of Ford in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"It is painful to hear that a promotion has been handed out to someone who left a social graveyard behind him," said Steegmans. The decision is "a slap in the face to the people who lost their jobs," agreed Rhonny Champagne of ABVV.

SML, which supplies Ford with engines and fuel tanks and invested €12 million in preparation for the new models expected to be produced in Genk, has agreed to stop deliveries to all Ford factories until informed about the situation of external suppliers when Ford Genk closes.

A woman from Banneux in Wallonia, meanwhile, handed over €4,000 she won in a competition to organise a street party for the unions at Ford Genk. "I couldn't be happy and throw a party while 10,000 people have lost their jobs," she told the VRT.

# Fall in start-up numbers "alarming"

Flanders saw an 11% decrease in the number of new businesses starting up in the first nine months of the year, a figure described as "alarming" by the president of the NSZ, which represents small businesses.

According to the survey by B-Information, there were 49,280 new start-ups in the first three quarters of 2012, 56% of them in Flanders. That compares with 55,349 in the same period in 2011. Despite an unfavourable economic climate, the number of new businesses had actually risen in 2010 and 2011. That trend now appears to be reversed.

Antwerp had the most new start-ups, with 16% of the total, followed by Brussels (14%), East Flanders (12%), West Flanders (10%), Flemish Brabant (9%) and Limburg (8%). Just over half were one-person operations, with 26% a limited liability partnership (BVBA). Only 1% were limited companies (NV).

"Taken together with the wave of bankruptcies that has been washing over us for months now, these figures show a retreat for enterprise," said NSZ president Christine

Mattheeuws (*pictured*). "Without fundamental stimulation measures, this trend will only continue."

Where bankruptcies are concerned, Unizo, the other organisation that represents the self-employed in Flanders, warned that current trends could lead to job losses more severe than Ford Genk. "For entrepreneurs, it's no longer the 11th hour, it's five past 12.00," commented Unizo director-general Karel Van Etvel. "If we keep going like this, we're going to beat all bankruptcy records."

A Unizo petition online calling on business people to sign in favour of measures to instil more respect for entrepreneurs has attracted more than 19,000 signatures.

According to Graydon consultancy, the last month saw more bankruptcies than any October on record, with 1,210 nationwide. This brings the total for the year in Flanders to 4,449.

### VAT increase opposed

Meanwhile, a proposal by the federal government to increase



VAT from 21% to 22% to plug a budget gap has been opposed by the managing director of the Belgian employers' organisation VBO, Pieter Timmermans. He pointed out that Belgium already has higher taxes than its competing nations and that a rise in VAT would have a negative effect on inflation. He also complained that the federal

government has so far not come forward with structural reforms to increase the competitiveness of businesses.

According to retail federation Comeos, the proposed VAT increase could cost the retail sector as many jobs as the closure of Ford Genk – an estimated 5,400 out of a total workforce of 400,000.

# Philips Turnhout to cut jobs

Lighting manufacturer Philips in Turnhout, Antwerp province, will cut 354 jobs, unions announced this week – 218 more than the number announced in June. The plant employs 1,540 people. The majority of the job losses are among executive and administrative staff.

The factory is facing a decline in the sales of light bulbs in Europe. In addition, a problem particular to the Turnhout facility is Philips' new emphasis on development of LED technology, which is based in India and China. Philips Turnhout was the company's foremost facility for

traditional lighting products.

Unions blamed the job losses on strategic mismanagement and warned there could be more redundancies in the future. Following the announcement on Monday, several divisions of the morning and afternoon shifts downed tools in protest. Prior to the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, Philips Turnhout employed 3,000 – a number that now looks like being more than halved in the third successive round of restructuring since then.



# Train strike next week

As *Flanders Today* went to press, unions representing rail workers issued an intention to strike on Wednesday, 14 November. If it goes ahead, the strike would begin on 22.00 on 13 November and last until 22.00 on 14 November, as part of the European Trade Union Confederation's Europe-wide action against budget cuts. The socialist union ACOD couldn't confirm the announcement "but if the workers want to join in with the ETUC action, this way they'll be covered by law," he said.

## THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

### Apparel

#### ► Fred & Ginger

The children's clothes manufacturer and retail outlet, based in Bonheiden, West Flanders, has acquired the Dutch Claudia Sträter apparel group to develop its sales to the adult market.

### Energy ► Electrabel

Belgium's leading electricity producer has won a €65 million contract to cover the energy requirements of the country's public authorities for 2013.

### Media ► Sanoma

Sanoma Media Belgium, which publishes magazines *Flair*, *Libelle* and *Feeling* as well as part-owning TV channels Vier and Vijf, said the advertising market for print and broadcast media in Belgium had shrunk by 6% in the three months from June to September. However the company announced third-quarter sales up 9.3% to €52.9 million, thanks to an increase in market share in TV activities.

### Parquet ► Unilin

Unilin, an affiliate of the US Mohawk floor covering group, is to acquire the Swiss Pergo group, one of its largest competitors, with plants in Sweden and the US. Unilin, based in Wielsbeke, West Flanders, is known for its Quick-Step laminated floor coverings.

### Pharmacy ► Vemedica

The stock exchange regulator FSMA announced a public bid for the shares of Kortrijk-based pharmacy chain Vemedica Pharma by the Dutch group Versailles, which is offering €2.80 in cash for outstanding shares, following an agreement to buy 78.4% of shares from major shareholders, including founder Yvan Vindevogel, in October. The remaining shares are still traded on Euronext, forcing Versailles to make a public bid.

### Retail

#### ► Marks & Spencer

British retailer Marks & Spencer is launching a dedicated website for the Belgian market giving access to some 15,000 of the company's products. The move is believed to be a test for measuring local demand ahead of the opening of one or two branches in Flanders in the future.

### Weaving ► Picanol

The Ypres-based producer of weaving equipment is heading for a bumper year with a bulging order book and the development of its affiliates in India, China and the US. About 125 additional employees have been hired since the beginning of the year and the company is seeking a further 30 staff members.

# Life after death

## The Flemish non-profit Navado brings relatives of organ donors together in times of grief

Senne Starckx

On 28 February, 2000, the Van Kempen family experienced its darkest day: Eight-year-old Kelly fell down the stairs while playing with her two sisters. Kelly's mother, Lia, drove straight to the hospital, where doctors told her that Kelly was already dead. Immediately after giving her the terrible news, the doctors asked Lia and her husband, Erick, if they would allow Kelly's organs to be donated. "We knew we couldn't do anything more for Kelly and that by allowing organ donation we could maybe give other children a chance to survive," says Lia Van Kempen now, 12 years after she lost her daughter. "So we immediately gave our permission. After that, the doctors told us about the donation procedure, but because we were still overcome by sadness, that information didn't get through to us."

### Strength and support

A couple of weeks later, when Kelly's parents were slowly trying to come to terms with what had happened, they found the business card of Walter van Donink, the transplant co-ordinator at the hospital where their daughter had died.

"We met him several times, and he explained all the details of the complicated organ donation procedure," says Van Kempen. "We asked if there was some kind of self-help group for people like us; parents whose child had passed away and who had allowed the organs to be donated. Flanders has thousands of associations for all sorts of things, but at that time there wasn't one that dealt with the needs of relatives of deceased organ donors. So we started to talk to other doctors, and with another afflicted family, in August 2004, we

founded Navado."

Navado stands for *NAbestaanden Van DONoren*, Dutch for "relatives of donors", and has 370 families as members. "We mainly bring together people who have lost a loved one and, immediately after their death, gave permission for organ donation," explains Van Kempen, who lives in Antwerp. "Most of our members are parents who lost a child in an accident." She also points out that relatives often have many questions about what has happened to the organs, who the recipients are and how problematic the need for organ donors is.

"We can bring our members into contact with a transplant co-ordinator, and we share our stories with each other. Every year, we publish a little magazine that tells the stories not only of relatives of deceased donors, but also of recipients of an organ and their specific transplant case. And we interview doctors and transplant co-ordinators. Finally, every year in October, we organise a big social event, our Relatives Day, to which all our members and organ recipients are invited."

### Grateful strangers

While Navado members are given help to find out more about organ donation, they will never get to know the patient who received an organ from their child or relative. European law doesn't allow relatives of the donor to tell the recipient – for several good reasons, one of which is avoiding a sense of guilt on the part of the recipient towards the donor's family.

However, the law does allow relatives and recipients to correspond via letter. Van Kempen explains: "Information about the



Lia Van Kempen set up Navado after her daughter, Kelly, who died aged eight, helped save the lives of five other people through organ donation

identity of the donors and recipients is kept strictly inside the transplant hospitals (who are part of the Eurotransplant network, in which the Benelux, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary and Croatia work together to exchange organs). "So as a relative of a donor, we can write to our hospital, and they will send the letter on to the recipient of Kelly's organs. We have done that several times, and they have written back saying that they are very

grateful to us. But we can't ask them to tell us personal things in their letters, not even their nationality, because every personal detail is strictly confidential. "The only thing we know is that, thanks to Kelly's organs, four children and one adult survived. However, now these children are adults, and I keep dreaming that some day, they will come round to say hello."

► [www.navado.be](http://www.navado.be)

## MAKE YOUR WISHES KNOWN

Until recently, Flemings had to sign an official document in their town hall if they wanted to donate their organs in case of untimely death. But thanks to Facebook, that procedure has become much easier now. Since September, with one mouse click on their Facebook profile, people can publish their willingness to

become an organ donor. However, in practice, when you die you are always regarded as a possible donor in Flemish clinics – unless your relatives object. But having signed an official statement or having an organ donor's profile on Facebook can help persuade relatives to allow organ donation.

## Q&A

**Professor Jan Mees is general manager of Flanders Marine Institute, which has just signed a cooperation agreement with Ghent University (UGent)**

**Why are you stepping up the collaboration with UGent in particular?**

We are negotiating with the other Flemish universities to expand our support of their activities through similar agreements. But UGent leads the field of marine and coastal research in Flanders and has now joined forces in the Marine@UGent cluster. This consortium brings together 45 professors from 24 research groups, linked to the faculties of sciences, bio-engineering sciences, engineering sciences, architecture, law and veterinary medicine. We hope that the other universities will soon follow this multidisciplinary example.

**What does the closer cooperation mean for researchers at UGent?**



In terms of infrastructure, we have set up a new laboratory at a barracks of our Marine Station research facility in Ostend and provide greenhouses in De Haan

where researchers can examine dune vegetation. Of course, the equipment is available to all universities, just like other technology is: our research vessel Simon Stevin, extensive data centre and UGent underwater robot Genesis. Furthermore, we want to make the scientific expertise more visible through publications, events and network opportunities.

**For the general public, you are organising the Marine Art project.**

During this first semester, marine researchers from UGent meet students of Ghent's Academy for Visual Arts to inspire them. On the basis of these brainstorming sessions, the students will create artworks that will be exhibited at the University Forum building in Ghent early next year.

**How would you like to see Flemish research evolve in the future?**

Flanders has to make sure it catches the "blue economy" wave: The development of offshore wind farms, wave power and tidal energy provides huge opportunities in the growing sector of renewable energy. There is also a large potential in "blue biotechnology", the under-exploited use of marine organisms to develop new drugs, improve the aquaculture environment and thus increase the safety and supply of seafood. Finally, the Flemish research world has to monitor the continuing rise of the sea level due to global warming and examine the best policy to deal with it.

interview by Andy Furniere

## THE WEEK IN SCI & ED

By using the Qu-Ant-Em, the most powerful electron microscope in the world, scientists of the research group EMAT at the University of Antwerp have **determined the position of individual atoms** in gold nanoparticles. It's an important breakthrough, because one of the functions of these nanoparticles is in the battle against cancer.

Ecover, the environmentally friendly cleaning brand, **received the Leaping Bunny certificate** of Cruelty Free International as an acknowledgement of its policy against animal testing. Ecover worked with the Belgian animal rights group Gaia to obtain this "cruelty-free" label, which promises consumers no tests on animals were performed.

The Port of Ghent is installing power supplies at its docks to provide **electrical power to ships at berth**, so the diesel engines can be turned off. Not only will the ships save fuel, the onshore power facilities will eliminate emission of toxic fumes and reduce the noise in the port.

During pregnancy, one in three women in Flanders continues to drink alcohol and **one in 10 smokes**. That is the conclusion of research by professor Karel Hoppenbrouwers of the University of Leuven. A remarkable fact is that mainly educated women drink during a pregnancy: More than one-third of women with a higher education diploma did not abstain from alcohol.

A literary historian at Brussels University College, Remco Sleiderink, has found a **valuable historical archive in the attic** of an old Brussels *schuttersgilde*, a ceremonial shooting club. The collection includes illustrated manuscripts dating from the 15th century and a silver necklace of King Leopold II. The Archives of the City of Brussels will take care of the collection.

The government of Flanders and the Flemish community commission in Brussels (VGC) are together **investing €19.5 million in four primary schools**. The budget creates 735 additional places in Dutch-language primary education. In the municipality of Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, a completely new school will be built.

Both the University of Leuven (KUL) and Ghent University (UGent) have reached **40,000 student registrations**, an unprecedented feat. KUL can accommodate around 40,700 students. UGent received just over 40,000 registrations, but students that register twice count twice in their calculations. They actually have a total of about 33,320 students. **AF**

# Pick up a penguin

**Auction will raise funds for calming space at school for disabled children**

Daan Bauwens

You can pick up just about anything at an auction these days. Art, furniture, a house – and now even penguins. On 15 November, service club Kiwanis Ghent Artevelde is auctioning 30 penguins at Ghent's International Congress Centre.

The polyester statues, elegant, detailed and large as life, are a creation of Knokke-based sculptor André Woussen and were exhibited in a dramatic setting at the sea shore of Knokke-Heist in March. The animals were then taken away and sent to nine schools for the disabled where children could decorate the penguins however they wanted.

"That was the answer to the question: How can we organise a charity while involving the ones who will benefit from it," explains Jean-Louis Coppens of Kiwanis.

"At the same time, it is a reminder of an important but forgotten piece of East Flemish history: 'Ghent Island' in the Arctic was

discovered by the Belgian expedition ship Belgica at the end of the 19th century. These penguins are the inhabitants of Ghent Island."

## Spot the difference

The penguins – one of them burned black, another one covered in mosaic, another an ode to Darwin's journey with the Beagle – were not created exclusively by disabled children. Some of them were decorated by professional artists like Denis De Gloire and Hannes D'Haese. But it is very hard to distinguish the professional ones from the children's.

In 2010, Kiwanis organised a similar auction to sell decorated pigs and raised more than €85,000. Kiwanis is hoping for the same

result this time to support projects at the nine selected schools. At De Vinderij, a school for special education in Lokeren, teachers hope to gather enough money to build a *snoezelruimte*, a place for *snuffelen* (browsing) and *doezelen* (napping). "It is a room with gentle sounds, mirrors, waterbeds and green, red and yellow water-filled tubes with bubbles," says Els Arens, kindergarten teacher at De Vinderij. "It is meant to stimulate the senses of those who are disabled to the extent that they're unable to make contact with the outside world, or to calm children who suffer from seizures. There are reported cases of children with autism who started making contact with the outside world thanks to this kind of space. For them, it is a sensory voyage." The price of the room: €35,000. "It is a lot, and it seems unreasonable compared to spendings on infrastructure for the other children, but this is the only means we have to help the weakest among us," says Danny Colman, a teacher at De Vinderij.

► [www.kiwanis.be](http://www.kiwanis.be)

# Fashion forward

**Designers breathe new life into old clothes for a very good cause**

Katrien Lindemans

Clothes make the man. But who said they had to be new clothes? To show what can be done with second-hand garments, charity organisation Spullenhulp invited a group of local designers to get creative with donated frocks. On 9 November, they will show the results at Tour & Taxis in Brussels during the 10th Second Hand Second Life catwalk show.

Every year, Spullenhulp gathers a dazzling 5,800 tons of textile and 1,500 tons of furniture. All the items come together in a warehouse where they are checked and dispatched to the Spullenhulp shops. Everything is sold at low prices, and it's no surprise that the Spullenhulp shops are popular with those looking for a bargain.

"Our first second-hand fashion show took place 10 years ago at the warehouse in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw," says Julien Coppens, Spullenhulp director. "The concept hasn't changed much over the years, but after five editions, we had to move to a bigger venue."

This year, the likes of Carine Gilson, Dirk Wynants, Delvaux, Natan's Edouard Vermeulen, Sandrina Fasoli and Tamawa gladly accepted Spullenhulp's

invitation to participate on the catwalk. "The fashion creators were invited to our centre in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw to take their pick; the other designers made their choice from second-hand material in the Brussels warehouse," Coppens explains. "Once the show is over, all the creations will be up for auction and all the proceeds will go to our charity project." This year, like last year, the money will be used for a shelter for young homeless people in the Brussels commune of Vorst. "The whole project is a €1 million investment, financed by Spullenhulp," says Coppens. "Last year, the runway show made €28,650, and we hope to raise a similar amount this time."

As always, the event promises to be a great show. "We celebrated Spullenhulp's 75th birthday in September, but as it's the 10th Second Hand



© Eventbuddy/ Delvaux

Second Life show, the catwalk will be even more special than usual," reveals Coppens, without giving away any details.

To get your hands on one of the second-hand designs, book your tickets for the show and get ready to start bidding. Tickets cost €30, or €55 for a VIP seat, and every €50 raised equals one night for a young homeless person in the new shelter, which should open in mid-December.

► [www.spullenhulp.be](http://www.spullenhulp.be)

Clothes from Spullenhulp will be on show at the Second Hand Second Life charity fashion show in Brussels

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# Homecoming

R&B singer Selah Sue returns to the Leuven stage where it all began

Tom Peeters

At this very moment, Selah Sue is touring America. But next week she'll be home in Leuven, ready to play four homecoming gigs in Leuven. The successful pop/R&B singer from nearby Leefdaal is the obvious headliner for the big opening party for the newly renovated concert hall Het Depot, where she debuted on the scene during a now legendary open mike night.

The days when the 18-year-old Sanne Putseys made her first stage appearance in Leuven's Het Depot are long gone. Now known as Selah Sue, her star has risen quickly in the six years since. Since releasing her eponymous first album nearly two years ago, she has spent studio time with internationally acclaimed soul artists such as Cee-Lo Green and Meshell Ndegeocello, opened for Prince, sold a massive 600,000 albums in Europe and signed a major US record deal, with accompanying tour.

But none of that has gone to her head. "She's far too down-to-earth for that," says Mike Naert, director of Het Depot, who was there from the start. "No, really – playing here, singing for a home audience, in front of her closest friends and family, is one of the only things that makes her nervous."

## "I was never ambitious"

It's a sunny day not long before her American tour, and I'm taking a tour of Het Depot with the 23-year-old, praised by MTV as "the heart and soul of Belgium". Het Depot, a former cinema near Leuven's train station, was nearing the end of its grand makeover.

"Shit man!" the singer exclaims, seeing an elevator, still packed in plastic, lying on its side on the ground. She takes off her trademark sunglasses, still chewing her gum. Fortunately, the yellow safety helmets we pass by are not obligatory at this point.

She later recalls her first-ever gig: "I remember having kind of a medium desire to play there. I was never the ambitious type."

That's probably tough for those familiar with her music – a refined, genre-bending blend of soul, hip-hop, funk and reggae – and her



Putting a hush on the crowd: Selah Sue

skyrocketing career to believe. But her inner circle is quite aware of this feet-on-the-ground attitude. Better still, they support it because it is helping her survive in the music business.

## Blowing them away

But let's go back in time to that first fateful open mike evening. "My brother's girlfriend was working as a volunteer at Het Depot," says Selah Sue, sipping from a Coca-Cola light. "She heard me singing once and told me I had to take part in this event for new local talent. I had written one song at the time, 'Explanations', and I could do Erykah Badu's 'Danger'. I decided to give it a go, not really knowing what to expect."

Unlike many an open mike participant, her performance took the small audience's breath away. "These nights are always informal," Naert says. "People drink beer and only when an artist is really good will they all focus on the stage. But when Sanne was performing, everyone was mouse-still."

Among them happened to be some major players in the Leuven music scene, including Jonathan "Milow" Vandenbroeck, who was hosting the event. "Afterwards, everyone came to talk to me," Selah Sue continues. Milow even promised her the opening slot at some of his shows.

"Everyone was very nice and seemed genuinely interested," says Selah Sue. "But they also reminded me about the record deal Universal had offered to me before."

## Taking her time

In fact, Selah Sue had been "discovered" four years previous. She was doing a music workshop in Dworp, where she met someone who would later record some of her singing. That recording eventually reached the desk of a Universal talent scout. "But I'm really glad I didn't sign," she says now. "First of all, their plan was crap: I had to record a single and a video clip almost immediately. But more importantly, I needed more time to figure out what I really wanted."

Thanks to her maiden performance in Leuven, the singer could surround herself with people willing to focus on the long term. Manager Christoph Cocquyt and booking agent Werner Dewachter, both respected veterans of the Flemish music business, kept the pressure low. "They even allowed me to continue my psychology studies at the university until I was prepared to really choose to pursue a music career. Of course, now I know you can learn much more about psychology by travelling, meeting people and just getting older than by reading books," she laughs.

## All about perspective

What didn't change was her easy-going personality. "Recently I had to take a plane to Austin, Texas, and

because I missed a connection, I was travelling for 27 hours. If you are a control freak, you go crazy. But I am not. I think I have the right character to be an artist."

She's also putting things into perspective in a way that belies her 23 years. "I even think having a nine-to-five job is much more difficult than what I do. Or take my boyfriend: He has two kids. That's a far bigger responsibility. Compared to that, going on tour is more like a holiday."

Though it's a holiday with a lot of management. "You know, shopping for groceries is hell for me, or putting the right bottle in the right garbage sack. I'm a real muddlehead, so I'm lucky I can count on a team that brings structure into my life."

Maybe this perspective comes from "never having this big ambition to become a singer," she says. "My world would not have fallen apart if I hadn't made it as a musician. Probably I would have become a psychologist. If my music doesn't appeal to a US audience, I will not shed a tear. No, I will think: 'Yes! Now I can finally start making my second album.' Of course, my career is important to me, but not as important as my boyfriend or my family."

That's the reason why these homecoming concerts mean so much to the young woman from Leefdaal, a small village she likes to describe to American journalists as "similar to the place where the hobbits live in *Lord Of The Rings*".

## WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Nicole Kidman arrives in Belgium this month to begin five weeks of filming for the Belgian-French-Italian co-production *Grace of Monaco*, in which she plays actress Grace Kelly, who later became Princess Grace of Monaco. **Shooting will take place in the Brussels parliament**, standing in for the offices of Prince Rainier, and in interiors reconstructed at the studios of Eurocam in Lint, Antwerp province. Prince Rainier is played by English actor Tim Roth.

Flemish artist Jan Fabre says that he was last week **attacked while jogging in a park in Antwerp** and beaten with sticks, following a widely publicised incident in Antwerp city hall where cats were thrown in the air during the shooting of a film. "I've been sleeping at a different address every night for three or four nights, out of physical fear," Fabre told a TV audience. "I was lucky. I had to run for my life." Some members of Antwerp city council are considering filing a legal complaint for animal abuse in relation to the incident.

VRT journalist Louis van Dievel has **won this year's Hercule Poirot prize**, awarded by *Knack* magazine for the best Flemish crime thriller of the year. Van Dievel's novel *Hof van Assisen* (Court of Assizes) takes place against the background of a high court trial and is told through the eyes of a number of those involved. The prize – a cheque for €5,000 and an engraved pen – was handed over by Scottish detective writer Philip Kerr.

Maria João Pires, the internationally acclaimed pianist and new guest teacher at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Waterloo, plans to **recruit children from disadvantaged families** in the Marollen district of Brussels for a choir to perform a new music project. The children will be mentored by students of the chapel, which trains promising young musicians from around the world. "Singing in a choir improves your self-image," Pires said. "Young people also practise the discipline needed to grow. Singing together comes down to listening to others and to communicating."

## HET DEPOT AFTER THE FACELIFT

After more than 18 months of renovations, Leuven's landmark Het Depot is finally reopening on 16 November. Vintage chairs from an old cinema in La Louvière and more wood in the interior recall the atmosphere of the building's original purpose as a cinema.

The main concert hall now holds 800, while the enlarged foyer can host smaller gigs. Three rehearsal

rooms, classrooms and a recording area stress the educational function of the music centre that since 2006 has attracted an average of 50,000 visitors a year.

The cost of the renovations was €5 million, of which €2.7 million was paid by the city, €1.3 million by the Flemish Community and €150,000 by the province of Flemish Brabant.

16-18, 20 NOVEMBER, 20.00

Het Depot, Martelarenplein 12, Leuven

► [www.hetdepot.be](http://www.hetdepot.be)

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# Pleasures of the flesh

## Brussels' Fine Arts Museum brings Jacob Jordaens out of the shadows

Ian Mundell

The exhibition *Jordaens and the Antique* is a rescue mission. Its aim is to search through the long, dark shadow cast by Peter Paul Rubens, locate the neglected figure of Jacob Jordaens and bring him blinking into the light. At the same time, the idea is to play down Jordaens' reputation as a sort of baroque Bruegel, best known for scenes of debauchery such as "The King Drinks" and emphasise his classical bearing.

This mission is successful, in the sense that you emerge from this impressively large show at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels with a distinct idea of what Jordaens achieved and the classical themes that recurred throughout his career. On the other hand, it still all seems a bit... Rubensesque. Which just goes to show how cruel history can be when one of your contemporaries has become an adjective. Jordaens was born in Antwerp in 1593 and trained under Adam van Noort, eventually marrying one of his master's daughters. Already working in the baroque style, in 1616 he became a collaborator in Rubens' workshop. The period he spent there is undocumented, but the influence of the older artist can be seen in the works that followed. Like Rubens, Jordaens painted scenes from Greek and Roman mythology, and, like Rubens, he had a bright, dramatic style that delighted in unveiling as much plump female flesh as possible. The chief difference between the two, in the conventional account at least, is that Jordaens had a modest



Jacob Jordaens' "Allegory of the Land's Fertility" (1623-25)

education and subsequently stayed at home, never venturing far from Antwerp, while Rubens had a thorough humanist schooling and then travelled extensively, soaking up influences from ancient art and Italian masters. When the same influences turn up in Jordaens' work, the suggestion is usually that they have been borrowed from Rubens or other well-travelled contemporaries. Jordaens also painted many of the same subjects as Rubens and adopted a similar repertoire of

nymphs and satyrs, gods and goddesses. When Rubens died in 1640, it was Jordaens who filled the gap in the market, becoming rather rich in the process.

### The world in Antwerp

This exhibition doesn't argue with the facts, but uses them to tell a different story. First of all, it argues that Jordaens didn't have to cross the Alps to immerse himself in the styles and stories of classical Greece and Rome. Artefacts, copies and detailed descriptions all found their way to Antwerp in the early 17th century. It was a busy artistic city and, crucially, a centre of book production, thanks to the Plantin-Moretus publishing house. Jordaens could not read Latin, it seems, but most of the classic texts that provided his subjects would have been obtainable in translation.

As a young artist, he was inspired by Rubens, but, more importantly, working with the older man provided Jordaens with a master class in how to incorporate classical sources into his work. From 1616 to 1620, his knowledge of human anatomy also improved immensely. If the idea was to show real people caught in classical poses – not to make them look like statues – then the first large work you see in the exhibition shows his shortcomings all too clearly. "The Daughters of Cecrops Finding the Child Erichthonius" (1617) features blocks of bare flesh but very little physical presence.

And while the title story is fairly clear if you know your Ovid (and there are crib-sheets if you don't),

there is a second story worked into the composition that hardly makes reading the whole any easier. Hanging this painting alongside two by Abraham Janssen van Nuyssen, another influence on Jordaens who was working in the baroque style, shows just how far the young artist had to go.

### Palpable presence

The difference is striking when you jump forward to a painting like "Vertumnus and Pomona" (1638). Here Jordaens has reduced the narrative clutter and sorted out some basics about the human body and dramatic staging, producing a scene full of motion.

The painting shows the moment when the god Vertumnus reveals his true form to the nymph Pomona. He's a young man, but the last traces of his disguise as an old woman still linger in his hair. Both figures seem real, their divine attributes subtly suggested in the garden scene. (Apparently the distinctly non-antique metal spade and watering can leaning against the tree signify divine strength.) The mature Jordaens turns out to be a very engaging artist, able to draw fascinating variations from a relatively narrow range of subjects. As well as the tales from Ovid and Homer, he created

endless allegories of fertility and prosperity, filling lush landscapes with abundant naked flesh.

### One scene, multiple paintings

One of the chief pleasures of *Jordaens and the Antique* is the way it draws together work from different time periods to illustrate these obsessions and progressions. The longest series of work is based on Aesop's fable of the satyr and the traveller, popularised in Flanders as the satyr and the peasant. They meet on a cold day, and the satyr sees the peasant blow on his hands to warm them. The satyr then invites the peasant home to eat, and the peasant blows on his soup to cool it. The satyr is shocked, exclaiming that he cannot trust someone who blows hot and cold with the same breath.

Jordaens shows the same moment from the story in each painting, with the satyr watching the peasant blowing on his soup. However, the scene has moved to the peasant's home, and the meal takes place with the grizzly satyr incongruously sitting among the peasant's family.

The series begins with a small painting from 1615, after which there are larger treatments from 1620-21, 1623-25 and 1645. The earliest of the large paintings is the most highly finished and nuanced in its composition, bearing a distinct and rather pleasing feeling of Caravaggio about it. The later versions are not exactly cruder, but seem earthier. The peasant gets progressively older and more buffoonish, so that in the final painting Jordaens feels closer to Pieter Bruegel the Elder than Rubens.

The work Jordaens produced after 1640 continues to owe a debt to Rubens, but the exhibition argues that before and after that event he introduced new images to his repertoire from classical sources. It's just that the treatment was so lifelike that their antique origins were long overlooked.

One of the museum's most playful ideas is to position a statue of the newly restored "Allegory of the Land's Fertility" (1623-25), so that the debt one's backside owes to the other is more than obvious. The museum's guards will have a hard time stopping people photographing the two together.



One of many versions of "Satyr and Peasant", this one from 1620-21

UNTIL 27 JANUARY

### Jordaens and the Antique

Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Museumstraat 9, Brussels

► [www.fine-arts-museum.be](http://www.fine-arts-museum.be)

## Voyage of discovery

## Latin American Film Festival

Bjorn Gabriels

The fourth Latin American Film Festival of Flanders offers a varied buffet of recent Latin American cinema. Social interest documentaries, travelogues, comedies, hyper-violent genre films and shorts both fictional and documentary are all on the menu, occasionally accompanied by live music and appropriate delicacies, or served in the presence of their directors. The hub of the festival is Cinema Zuid in Antwerp. The screenings there kick off on 17 November with *El chico que miente* (*The Kid Who Lies, pictured*), by Peruvian director Marité Ugas. She follows a young boy on a journey through Venezuela in search of his mother, who disappeared 10 years earlier in the devastating 1999 Vargas Tragedy. The film pairs stunning scenery with the grim backdrop of an immense natural disaster during which mudslides killed tens of thousands of people. The Argentinean film *Diablo* (*Devil*)

plays in an entirely different register. Nicanor Loreti's feature debut is a genre piece soaked in blood. Hilarious but not for the squeamish. Also centred on an act of gruesome violence, *Todos tus muertos* (*All Your Dead Ones*) veers into deadpan absurdity. This Colombian satire by Carlos Moreno made it into the selections of the revered Sundance and Rotterdam film festivals, yet has trouble transcending its intriguing set-up, even if absurd humour and the allegorical indictment of lacklustre and corrupt authorities plead in its favour. The Latin American Film Festival is a feast of discovery. It offers an assortment of films that are hopscotching across the international festival circuit, many of which are likely to have their only Belgian screenings at this festival. That's especially true for the documentaries and shorts. *El camino del vino* (*The Ways of Wine*) opens the festival on 8 November at a festive evening at Atlas,



Antwerp's provincial documentation centre. This Argentinean (mock) documentary by Nicolás Carreras interweaves comedy and sentiment to tell the story of real-life Uruguayan sommelier Charlie Arturaola and his malfunctioning palate.

In the Chilean documentary *El Salvavidas* (*The Lifeguard*), Maite Alberdi portrays a stringent lifeguard whose strict standards don't make him popular with sunbathers or his colleagues. Prevention is better than cure, he dictates, and he avoids

going into the water altogether. But what happens when lives are really at stake?

The festival's short films are spread out across the line-up (mostly around the screenings in Cinema Zuid), but on 13 November a selection will be presented in the Arenberg theatre in Antwerp. Each winner of the festival's four categories (fictional features, documentary features, fictional shorts and documentary shorts) will receive "el Caminante" (a bronze "traveller" statue sculpted by Flemish activist-artist Fabio Wuytack). The revenue of the ticket sales – including those of the Fiesta del Cine on 17 November – will be distributed among the winners. Surely, there are worse investments. The festival also organises screenings in Brussels and Leuven – and in Pitrufquén (Chile) and Cuenca (Ecuador), should that be of more convenience to you. All films have English subtitles.

November 8-25

Cinema Zuid and other venues across Antwerp

► [www.latinofilmfestival.be](http://www.latinofilmfestival.be)

## CONCERT

## The Broken Circle Breakdown in concert

Johan Heldenbergh's 2008 stage play *The Broken Circle Breakdown* had legs. The drama, in which Heldenbergh starred as a banjo-plucking cowboy opposite co-writer Mieke Dobbels' tattooed bohemian lover, toured Flanders and the Netherlands for three years before being adapted for the silver screen by Flemish director Felix Van Groeningen. The result premiered last month and is still in cinemas. If that's not enough, another spin-off is on the horizon. A concert tour featuring country and bluegrass songs from the film is set to kick off in Bilzen on 16 November, then criss-cross Flanders for over a month before closing in Hasselt on 21 December. Fans of the original production and the film adaptation have reason to celebrate: The hirsute Heldenbergh is once more front and centre, as is Veerle Baetens (the actress who replaced Dobbels in the film version of *Breakdown*). The two singers are joined by Belgian music luminary Bjorn Eriksen, who serves here as guitarist and musical director of a backing band that is sure to swing. **Georgio Valentino**

16 November to 21 December | Across Flanders | ► [www.thebrokencirclebreakdown.com](http://www.thebrokencirclebreakdown.com)

## MORE CONCERTS THIS WEEK

## Genk

**Zornik:** The Brussels-based rock band's marathon, two-month Belgian theatre tour calls at Genk's mine-turned-cultural-centre. The boys are promoting a new album, *Less>More*, and they have a month more on the road before taking their bow in Brussels in mid-December.

NOV 10, 20.15 at C-Mine, Evence Coppélaan 91

► [www.c-mineculturecentrum.be](http://www.c-mineculturecentrum.be)

## Roeselare (West Flanders)

**RedCoat:** The Flemish folk duo, comprised of singer Hanneke Oosterlinck and guitarist Jeroen Knapen, performs at Roeselare's monthly cultural afternoon.

NOV 10, 14.30 at De Regenboog, Sint-Michielsstraat 32

► [www.gecero.be](http://www.gecero.be)

## FESTIVAL

## Playground Festival

Two Leuven institutions – STUK and Museum M – are collaborating once more to put on the Playground Festival, a contemporary arts extravaganza which has earned a prominent place in the city's cultural agenda. Playground is a truly international festival, drawing artists from Europe, North America and beyond. The host venues have arranged a sensible division of labour, with one focusing on Playground performance and the other on Playground expo. STUK is the ideal venue for the former. Performance artists of all stripes (including American choreographer Jeanine Durning) will colonise the sprawling compound's various stages and spaces. M, on the other hand, is perfect for exhibitions. There is of course plenty of overlap between the two forms here. That's the whole point. So, for example, Israeli artist Yael Davids and her Dutch counterpart André Van Bergen's *Obliterating an Image* is a performance inspired by and departing from a photograph. Davids' installations are also on exhibit during Playground. **GV**



8-11 November | STUK &amp; M-Museum Leuven

► [www.playgroundfestival.be](http://www.playgroundfestival.be)

## MORE FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

## Brussels

**FIFI:** The 39th edition of the capital's independent film festival promises to deliver a slew of undiscovered cinematic gems from all over the world. Screenings take place at several venues, among them Flagey and Bozar.

NOV 6-10, 20.00 across Brussels

► [www.fifi-bruxelles.be](http://www.fifi-bruxelles.be)

## THEATRE

## Die Siel van die Mier

Flemish actor Josse De Pauw stars in and directs this musical monologue, whose title – *The Soul of the Ant*, in English – is meant literally. De Pauw's aged and eminent scholar condenses a lifetime of entomological research into a final, surprisingly metaphysical discourse. It turns out that we humans aren't as far removed from the world of insects as we imagine. Indeed, the roiled ant pile may be the most apt metaphor for human life. The script, by playwright David Van Reybrouck, is inspired by 19th-century Belgian Symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck, whose entomological musings (*The Life of Termites*) were plagiarised from South African poet Eugène Marais. De Pauw's reading is accompanied by musicians Jan Kuijken and George van Dam. Their live performance, electronic soundscapes and sampled voices underline the madcap professor's unsettling proofs. This two-night stand in Ghent is special for De Pauw and production company LOD; it marks the 100th public performance of *Die Siel van die Mier*. **GV**



23 & 24 November, 20.00  
Minardschouwburg, Ghent

► [www.minard.be](http://www.minard.be)

## MORE THEATRE THIS WEEK

## Antwerp

**Maldito Sea el Hombre que Confía en el Hombre:** Spanish performer/director Angélica Liddell and her company Atra Bilis bring their surreal brand of contemporary theatre to Antwerp. Expect the unexpected, including a team of Chinese acrobats. In Spanish, with Dutch subtitles  
NOV 9 & 10, 20.00 at De Singel, Desguinlei 25

► [www.desingel.be](http://www.desingel.be)

## Brussels

**Looking for Paul:** Rotterdam's Wunderbaum company plays on the controversy around US artist Paul McCarthy's gnome sculpture in Rotterdam. The production follows an outraged local shopkeeper's campaign against the artist and the Dutch government who sponsored his work. In Dutch and English

NOV 9 & 10, 20.00 at KVS, Arduinkaai 7

► [www.kvs.be](http://www.kvs.be)

## VISUAL ARTS

## Guy Mees

The Cera Collection is the product of 15 years of shrewd acquisition of Belgian contemporary art but it has spent all this time cloistered away at Cera HQ. The Belgian investment bank has partnered up this year with its neighbours at M-Museum Leuven to present its treasure trove to the public. It will take years to give the Cera Collection's 400 works (by some 70 native artists) its due. The inaugural exhibition is largely devoted to the work of Guy Mees, the late Flemish artist who was a pioneer on the post-war arts scene. He shared the minimal and geometrical sensibilities of the period but eventually moved away from the abstract in later decades. His natural curiosity led him to experiment across media, leaving an eclectic oeuvre comprised of sculptures, drawings, photographs, installations and films. The M exhibition covers all the bases. In addition, like-minded artists Marthe Wéry, Walter Swennen and up-and-comer Gert Robijns are presented alongside Mees. **GV**



Until 20 January | M-Museum Leuven | ► [www.mleuven.be](http://www.mleuven.be)

## MORE VISUAL ARTS THIS WEEK

## Antwerp

**Talking to the Deaf:** Antwerp hosts Belgian multimedia artist Delphine Boël's first solo exhibition. Boël's unconventional sculptures are inspired as much by festive folk art tradition as by urbane contemporary forms.

NOV 11 to DEC 2 at Wo-Men in Fine Art Gallery, Wolstraat 45

► [www.wo-meninfineart.be](http://www.wo-meninfineart.be)

## Brussels

**Labyrinth:** The Flemish Parliament and advocacy group Child Focus join forces to present an exhibition at the intersection of art and activism. Dozens of artists have contributed works treating the themes of disappearance and absence to raise awareness for missing children in Europe. The donated pieces will be auctioned to benefit Child Focus after the close of the exhibition.

Until NOV 17 at De Loketten, IJzerenkruisstraat 99

► [www.vlaamsparlament.be](http://www.vlaamsparlament.be)

## Ghent

**Romy Schneider:** The Ghent Film Festival marks the 30th anniversary of the cinematic icon's death with an expansive exhibition of photographs, studio kit, collector's items and documents. This is a true retrospective, covering Schneider's turbulent personal life as well as her professional career.

Until JAN 13 at Provincial Cultural Centre, Vrouwebroersstraat 6

► [www.filmfestival.be](http://www.filmfestival.be)

## CAFÉ SPOTLIGHT

Diana Goodwin

## Au Phare

## Grote Markt 21, Tongeren

The city of Tongeren proudly bills itself as "The Oldest City in Belgium", and it's got the Roman walls to prove it. Located in Limburg province, Tongeren also boasts a newly renovated market square dominated by a Gothic basilica, and the award-winning Gallo-Roman Museum, last year's European Museum of the Year. In case all that isn't enough to entice you to visit, perhaps the new brewery-café Au Phare will do the trick.

Like most Flemish towns, Tongeren was once home to many independent, local breweries. After the Second World War, only four remained; the last one closed in 1968. Bart Durler, former brewmaster at Brouwerij De Dool in Helchteren, and Davy Daniels decided in 2009 to create a new *stadsbier* (city beer) for Tongeren. They came up with a blond, top-fermented, unfiltered beer, which was an instant success.

The next step for the brewers was to open their own café. Au Phare replaces an old café of the same name that occupied the building on Tongeren's Grote Markt until 2010. The new owners gave the place a thorough renovation, keeping much of the old décor while adding new furnishings and, most importantly, the large copper kettles used to brew their house beer, Amburon.

Their extensive beer menu features bottles from other independent, local breweries like Ter Dolen, Jessenhofke and Wilderen. If you'd like a bite with your beer, Au Phare offers a full menu ranging from appetisers and small plates to mains, including vegetarian options. There's even a *bierkaart* featuring dishes cooked with beer.

Once a month, Au Phare holds a Beer Brewers' Day, when visitors can witness a "one-off" beer being created while the brewers explain the process. A few weeks later, the special beer will be available for a limited time in the brewery-café only. The next Brewer's Day is scheduled for 18 November, when Amburon Kerstbier (Christmas beer) will be produced. The resulting beer will be ready just in time for Christmas.

► [www.phare-stadsbrouwerij.be](http://www.phare-stadsbrouwerij.be)



## BITE

Robyn Boyle

## Cookie's ★★★☆

Bruges is interlaced with hidden cobbled streets, but this one alley in particular is so tucked away that it's easy to walk right past. About as central as it gets, De Garre is a small arched passageway near the Burg Square and the Basilica of the Holy Blood. At the end of it, a hanging sign marks the entrance to Cookie's, an old biscuit-baker's house dating back to 1600. This is where Kevin Koekelbergh and Kim Grenelle started their charming tapas restaurant six years ago.

Combining local products (Flemish cheeses, North Sea shrimp, blue-white beef...) with the best of the Mediterranean (Spanish and Italian ham, olive oil, seafood...), Cookie's does a fusion twist on traditional tapas. Paired with world wines, the succession of little dishes makes for a fun and unique way to eat out. Especially when you order the Chef's Tapas, a series of five dishes that changes daily. With this, we share one bottle of sparkling water and one bottle of Boer en Brit (€28), a bold, full-bodied red wine from South Africa.

Before our first tapa even arrives, we're treated to tasty green and

black olives, fresh spongy bread and a bowl of fruity olive oil for dipping. Our table is upstairs against a banister overlooking the predominately brick-and-wood

interior, complete with wood-burning stove. It's an intimate setting, romantic even, despite the full house.

First up is a platter of Hungarian



cured ham, sliced paper-thin. This traditional ham from the rare Mangalitz breed of "sheep pig", known as much for its woolly fur as for its incredibly tasty meat, is nutty and salty and literally melts on your tongue.

The second tapa consists of crusty slices of bread, lightly rubbed with garlic and topped with cubed yellowfin tuna tartare in an onion confit. The fresh raw tuna is rich and smooth, nicely offset by the toast's crunch. This turns out to be our favourite.

Our server then delivers a plate of miniature croquettes: two cheese and three shrimp. The latter are nicely presented next to a few unpeeled shrimp and a wedge of lime, atop a bed of lettuce. I prefer the cheese croquettes for their creamy, pungent filling, while my companion favours the shrimp ones for their more delicate, briny flavour.

We're both quite taken by the next dish, as it features scallops perfectly seared to a buttery finish. It's a pity there are only two of them, enough for one each. They come with a carpaccio of vegetables, or

thinly sliced raw cauliflower and broccoli and strips of red beet. The dish nicely combines a lot of subtle earthy flavours with contrasting soft and crunchy textures.

The finale offers a tip of the hat to good old-fashioned Flemish food with a strip of grilled steak, homemade creamy mushroom sauce and some thick-cut fries sprinkled with coarse sea salt. It's cooked medium rare, so barely bloody, and tastes divine with a dip in the sauce.

Wholly satisfied, we pay the even €80 bill and head back out into the Bruges night via the long mediaeval corridor.

► [www.cookiescfe.be](http://www.cookiescfe.be)

- 📍 De Garre 2, Bruges; 050.61.35.88
- 🕒 Thu-Tue, 16.00-23.00
- 💶 €10-€20
- 📖 Tapas made from a mix of top-quality Spanish, Italian and Belgian products

## TALKING DUTCH

Philip Ebels

## What the duck?

"After years of planning, town officials and Friends of the Big Duck gathered in Flanders on Thursday to cut the ribbon on the first-ever bathrooms at the iconic and beloved attraction." Thus goes the first paragraph of a story published last week on a local news website, and those who read my latest column may have an inkling what it is about. I wrote about the tiny village of Flanders in Long Island, New York, and its community mascot of a giant duck – a duck, apparently, with restroom facilities. They call it the Big Duck. One of those readers is Jack Sturiano, a retired forensic investigator from Long Island who for the past six years has been living in Ypres. "Long Island, used to have many duck farms," he tells me, and the village got its name from immigrants from the Low Countries who settled there in the late 18th century. As did Long Island, which he says used to be called Lange Eylant, an archaic spelling of *lange eiland*, long island. In fact, it is only thanks to a close call in history that the region today bears an English name and not a Dutch one. Near the end of the US revolution, according to a clip from a history book sent in by Talking Dutch reader Eric Mathé, it fell to 33 noblemen to choose the new country's official language. There were 17 who chose English; 16 chose Dutch. "Met één stem meer spraken wij nu de eerste wereldtaal!"

the author laments. "One more vote, and we would be speaking the first language of the world!" Flanders, New York, is not the only Flanders in the US. There is also a Flanders, New Jersey, and a Flanders, Connecticut. Nor is it the most charming, if Mr Sturiano's memory is anything to go by. "My experiences on Route 24 in Flanders are mostly nasty fatal car accidents and the occasional suicide or murder," he says. "It's a lovely area." Route 24 is called Flanders Road.

There is a Flanders Heating & Air Conditioning at number 1290. *De Grote Eend*, meanwhile, the Big Duck, is undergoing further restoration "to reflect the rich heritage and history of Flanders", in the words of a local councillor. It is listed in the US National Register of Historic Places. I just hope hurricane Sandy has had mercy on the creature – and its new bathrooms.

► [talkingdutch@hotmail.com](mailto:talkingdutch@hotmail.com)



## The last word...

## Right to remain silent

"Most people do this as a second job, so they're not always available. The government urgently needs to attract more people to the profession."

Henri Boghe, chairman of the association of judicial interpreters, after a suspected drugs smuggler from Brazil was released because no interpreter was available for his interrogation

## Better with age

"In 2013, I'll mark 30 years. I'm in danger of becoming a museum piece in the Flemish Parliament"

Member of Parliament Eric Van Rompuy

## Mormon makeover

"Before, the media would often focus on extreme examples, like men living on a ranch with 10 wives. Thanks to Romney we now have a more 'normal' image."

Tom De Bisschop, Mormon bishop of Sint-Niklaas

## Teething troubles

"When Karolien got up on Friday morning, her left cheek was three times bigger than normal and her whole mouth was out of shape. We actually considered the idea of pulling out of the final."

Singer Karolien Goris, 11, overcame an abscess to win the first series of Belgium's Got Talent on VTM

NEXT WEEK  
IN FLANDERS TODAY

## Cover story

Gaming is big business. We don't mean gambling or *petanque* – rather, computer games. The Flemish government has released €750,000 to support the design and development of computer gaming, including for educational purposes. We visit some gamemakers to see how they come up with ideas and get them on the screen

## Science

Would you like to learn how Archimedes figured out his theory of density by lying in his bath? What materials the Flemish Primitives used to paint? Or what biotechnology actually means? Don't miss Flanders' Science Week; we'll tell you where to go and what to do during this family-friendly, region-wide event

## Living

Against all odds, foodies in Ghent have been quick to pick up on the charms of a new social restaurant called Eetcafé Toreke. With three day platters always on offer, the fantastically designed space employs many immigrants from the neighbourhood and also puts them to work in their own garden