



Belgian Events - June 2016

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

Dear readers,

This Spring issue reflects on the Brussels attacks and the reactions they brought about in the UK. The visit of Minister Maggie De Block to London and the latest events at the Ambassador's Residence as well as various World War 1 commemorations are also highlighted. You can read an interview with the Belgian surgeon Professor Ernest Schilders. The *'Did you know?'* section covers various topics related to our country. As always, the *cultural calendar* lists upcoming Belgian events in the UK.

Finally, if you have any news or suggestions, do not hesitate to share them with us via belgianevents.uk@diplobel.fed.be. New subscribers can provide their details via the [Embassy's website](#).

Brussels Attacks

The coordinated bombings on 22 March at **Brussels Airport** and **Maelbeek metro** station, close to the European Headquarters, shook the Belgian capital. Three days of national mourning were proclaimed by the federal government.

[Brussels Airport](#) has meanwhile resumed its activities, the [public transportation](#) network is again fully operational and the railway station at the airport also re-opened.

Vigil in Trafalgar Square

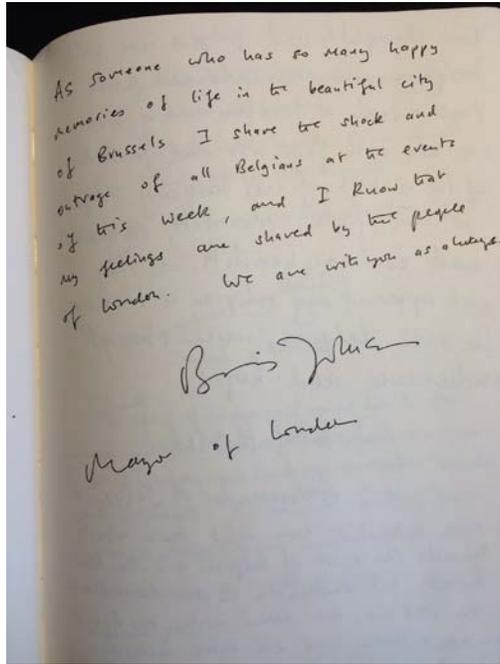
In the presence of the Belgian Ambassador, a **vigil** was held in London's **Trafalgar Square** to pay tribute to the victims of the terrorist attacks in Brussels. Flowers, candles and flags were displayed as signs of solidarity with the Belgian people. Several London landmarks were lit up in the colours of the Belgian flag.



Condolence Book

A **Book of Condolence** was opened at the Ambassador's Residence for officials and members of some Belgian organisations. Many expressed their sympathy and their support to Belgium, among them the (then) Mayor of London Boris Johnson, the Foreign Secretary

Philip Hammond and the leader of the Scottish National Party in Westminster Angus Robertson.



The Embassy also greatly appreciated the condolences expressed by HM the Queen and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. Hundreds of kind messages of support from the British public, our compatriots and other sympathisers were received and the entrance hall of the Embassy was decorated with flowers, candles and notes.





Many flowers and messages of support were laid at the entrance of the Embassy

An online Book of Condolence was also made available to the public by the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. The messages were published on [its website](#).

Ministerial Visit

Last month, Belgium's Minister for Public Health and Social Affairs **Maggie De Block** visited London. Her visit focused on the financing and organising of hospital care. In the morning, she was key-note speaker at the ICHOM Conference ([International Consortium for Health Outcomes Measurement - ICHOM](#)). Afterwards she had bilateral meetings with the British Minister for Public Health Jane Ellison, Minister for Care Quality Ben Gummer, and with Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt. Over dinner at the Ambassador's Residence, the Minister exchanged views with British, Belgian and international health care managers, academics and physicians.



Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt and Minister Maggie De Block

Events at the Ambassador's Residence

During the past few weeks, the Ambassador's Residence in Belgrave Square has again been the venue for various business, cultural and academic events.

Business Events

MEETING WITH SECRETARY-GENERAL LIM OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION

On March 7, Belgium became the most recent country to ratify a key international measure for environmental protection, the **Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention**. Aimed at preventing the spread of harmful and invasive aquatic species in ships' ballast water, the BWM Convention requires ships to have procedures in place for ballast water management. The BWM Convention will enter into force 12 months after ratification by 30 States, representing 35% of world merchant shipping tonnage.



Ambassador Trouveroy handed over the instruments of accession during a meeting with Secretary-General Lim at the Ambassador's residence. To visit the IMO official website, click [here](#).

PAUL DE GRAUWE: 'STAGNATION IN THE EUROZONE AND HOW TO GET OUT OF IT'



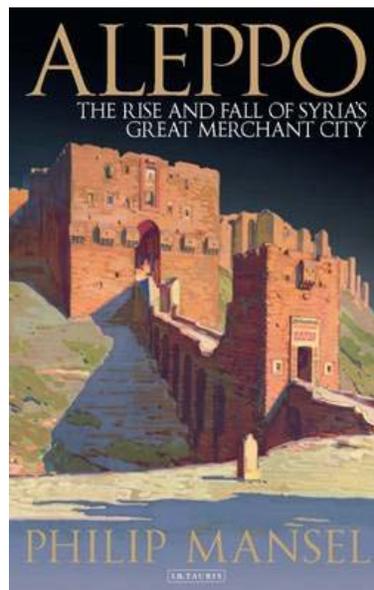
On May 25, the Belgian economist and LSE **Professor Paul De Grauwe** presented his views on the **stagnation in the Eurozone** and what can be done about it. He addressed top Belgians active in the UK's financial, commercial and high tech sectors.

Paul De Grauwe is Professor in European Political Economy at the London School of Economics and Political Science as head of the European Institute. He is also Professor Emeritus in International Economics at KU Leuven and former member of the Belgian Federal Parliament.

Cultural Events

BOOK LAUNCH 'ALEPPO' BY PHILIP MANSEL

On 15 March, the book '**Aleppo: The Rise and Fall of Syria's Great Merchant City**' by the British historian **Philip Mansel** was launched at the Ambassador's Residence. Philip Mansel is the author of several books about France and the Middle East. In 2012 he was awarded the London Library Life in Literature Prize, and in 2013 he became a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres*. In his latest publication 'Aleppo: The Rise and Fall of Syria's Great Merchant City', Philip Mansel takes the reader on a journey through Aleppo's History and depicts an elegant portrait of one of the most ancient and grandest cities of the region, that has now been completely devastated by the Syrian civil war.



GOURMET CULINARY EVENING

To promote Flanders as a destination for meetings, incentives, conferences and events, **VISIT FLANDERS (London)** organised a **gourmet culinary evening** at the Ambassador's residence on 28 April. A special 4-course dinner was prepared by Bernard Bonte, one of the chefs of the **Flanders Kitchen Rebels**, a collection of 25 outstanding young chefs with an irrepressible love of Flemish gastronomy and fresh ingredients.



Academic Event

LUNCH WITH THE KING'S COLLEGE DIPLOMATIC SOCIETY



On 29 March, the Ambassador received the **King's College Diplomatic Society** at his Residence. The Society brings together students with a keen interest in diplomacy, international negotiation and foreign policy. During a lecture organised for the occasion, the members had the opportunity to ask several questions to the Ambassador about his diplomatic career and the role diplomacy can play to tackle the major challenges that our society currently faces, such as Brexit and terrorism. The members showed great enthusiasm and interest during this fruitful discussion. For further information about the KCL Diplomatic Society, please visit their [official website](#) or their [Facebook page](#).

World War 1 Commemorations

Cavell Nurses Trust Scholarship Awards

On May 18, the yearly **Cavell Nurses Trust Scholarship Awards** took place in Central London. The Cavell Nurses Trust continues the legacy of Edith Cavell, a British Nurse celebrated for saving WW1 soldiers' lives on both sides of the fight. Because she helped 200 Allied soldiers reach freedom from German-occupied Belgium, Edith was arrested, found guilty of treason and sentenced to death on 12 October 1915.

During the ceremony, the **Outstanding Academic Achievement Award**, sponsored for the second consecutive year by The Belgian Embassy in the UK, was presented to Jane Carpenter (photo), a student of Midwifery at Oxford Brookes University. She received a £1,500 prize fund which she will put towards attending the International Conference for Normal Birth, taking place in Australia late this year. As Runner Up, Rachel Cummings received a laptop. Both students joined the Ambassador on stage to collect their awards.



100th anniversary of death of Gabrielle Petit

On 2nd April, a plaque and tree were dedicated to **Gabrielle Petit**, a member of the **Belgian Resistance**, in the Allied Special Forces Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. A representative from the Belgian Embassy attended the ceremony.



The next day, a ceremony was organised in Brussels to mark **the 100th anniversary of the death** of Gabrielle Petit. Queen Mathilde decorated Petit's statue with a wreath and attended a musical performance depicting the last moments of the Belgian heroine's life.



At the outbreak of World War I, Tournai-born Gabrielle Petit volunteered to serve the Red Cross before being hired by the British Intelligence Service to spy on the German enemy.

In 1916, the 23-year-old was betrayed and imprisoned at the Prison de St. Gilles, where she was sentenced to death. Executed by firing squad on 1 April 1916, she never revealed the identities of her fellow agents. Gabrielle Petit has now become an emblematic figure of the Belgian resistance as well as a symbol of bravery, ambition and feminism.

Outsider's contribution - Belgian Refugees in Cheshire



During World War One, as many as 250,000 Belgian citizens fled the Nazi regime and found shelter in the UK. This Belgian exodus was the largest influx of refugees in Britain's history. 205 Belgians were housed in the county of Cheshire, in North West England. Alan Lowe, a

member of the Northwich and District Heritage Society, gives us a detailed insight into the daily life of the Belgian refugees in Cheshire and how they mingled with the local population. Read the full article [here](#).

Interview with a Belgian in the UK

At present, some 23,000 Belgians are registered at the Belgian Embassy in London. Some of our compatriots hold impressive positions in various fields. This issue focuses on Belgian medical expertise with **Professor Ernest Schilders**.



[Professor Schilders](#) is an internationally recognised and leading expert in the diagnosis and treatment of adductor and hip problems in athletes. After training as an **orthopedic surgeon** in Belgium and the United States, his professional career started at the University Hospital in Antwerp. In 1999 he took up a post as Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon in Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS. Since 2010, he works in the Wellington Hospital and the Fortius Clinic, FIFA's medical Centre of Excellence, both in London.

He has successfully treated players from the majority of Premiership and Championship football clubs, as well as top athletes in other sports disciplines. He pioneered new surgical and rehab techniques helping athletes to make a faster and more consistent return to their sport. Professor Schilders is also one of the founding members of the Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine UK and has been Visiting Professor in Sports Medicine at Leeds Metropolitan University since 2008.

Recently, he was appointed Full Professor in Orthopedic Sports Medicine at Leeds Beckett University. He runs a large study for FIFA on acute groin injuries in football using a unique cloud based data collection system.

We interviewed Professor Schilders recently at the Wellington Hospital in North London. Click [here](#) to read the interview.

Events Calendar

In our [listing of upcoming events](#) you can find details on exhibitions, lectures, concerts, films and other activities with a Belgian touch. The list is continuously updated.

Did you know...?

Founding fathers of Europe were Belgian

Researchers from Harvard University analysing DNA from humans who lived 45,000 to 7,000 years ago, have discovered that **all Europeans** come from a single founding population which lived around what is now **Belgium** some 35,000 years ago and persisted through the Ice Ages. The new genetic data were published in the journal [Nature](#) on 2 May.

Further reporting on this topic in the [Daily Mail](#) and [TechTimes](#).



UAntwerp 11th best of world's youngest universities

Antwerp University (UAntwerp) has been **placed 11th** in a ranking of the world's best universities established in the past 50 years. The [ranking](#), called 150 Under 50, is compiled by the UK's Times Higher Education magazine. The criteria used for the ranking include performance relating to education, research, citations, industrial revenue and international reputation.

'Coins of Hope' Campaign

The Brussels-based non-profit organisation [Child Focus](#) has launched a **'Coins of Hope'** campaign featuring missing children. Its first Coin of Hope is a €2 piece bearing the likeness of Liam Vanden Branden, a two-year-old who disappeared near Mechelen 20 years ago this month. Liam was the youngest child ever to disappear in Belgium and represents all the country's missing children in the one million coins bearing his image.



Child Focus has also launched a campaign on social media with the hashtag [#CoinsofHope](#), inviting anyone who has a coin to post a photo when it changes hands.

Belgium, a happy country

On the occasion of the UN World Happiness Day on 20 March, the [World Happiness Report 2016 Update](#), which ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels, was released in Rome. It seems the Belgian people are pretty much satisfied with their quality of life : Belgium is ranked **18th happiest country in the world** according to the Report!

Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective

Hercule Poirot, Agatha Christie's greatest character, is said to be based on a Belgian refugee she met in her hometown of Torquay during World War I. As mentioned on the [author's official website](#), Agatha Christie was working as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment), and encountered on a daily basis Belgian refugees arriving in England from the continent. Searching for a detective for her first novel, she set upon the idea of creating a **Belgian detective** who had been "a former shining light of the Belgian police force", before being forced out of his country.



“Why not make my detective a Belgian?...I could see him as a tidy little man, always arranging things, liking things in pairs, liking things square instead of round. And he should be brainy – he should have little grey cells of the mind.”

(Agatha Christie - An Autobiography)

DEME, the Belgian leading company in tidal energy industry

It is official : the Belgian offshore construction specialist [DEME Group](#) has just acquired a 2% stake in the Tidal Power Scotland Ltd development company owned by the tidal power giant Atlantis. With its £2 million investment, DEME will be in position to share its experience and expertise with the offshore renewables sector for the benefit of the Scottish company. According to Atlantis CEO Tim Cornelius, DEME is a strategic investor as well as a respected global leader in offshore renewable energy installation. This new partnership will undoubtedly contribute to the success of the Belgian group and help it be at the forefront of the growing tidal energy industry.

Watch the Belgian football team live at Riley's Sports Bar

The Euro 2016 tournament is fast approaching and our Belgian football team deserves your support! Join the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce members and other supporters at Riley's Sports bar Haymarket in London to watch the first-round mid-week games of the European Championship 2016.

- Belgium-Italy (13 June 2016, kick-off 8pm)
- Sweden-Belgium (22 June 2016, kick-off 8pm)



In order to secure a place, please book on [Riley's website](#). Riley's has guaranteed exclusive use of the top floor if we have over 200 registrations so mention "Belgium" in the special requests box upon registration. Entry is £5/person plus a small booking fee.

(The match between Belgium and the Republic of Ireland on 18 June is not included in this arrangement)

Belgian photographer in the limelight at the Sony World Photography Awards



Rhino, Maroesjka Lavigne ©

On 21 April, Belgian photographer [Maroesjka Lavigne](#) was named Professional Landscape winner at the [Sony World Photography Awards](#) 2016 in London for her "Land of Nothingness", a powerful series capturing the subtle scenery of the vast salt pans and dunes of Namibia. Fellow Belgian Annick Donkers came 3rd in the Professional Sport category. Donkers' series "Lucha Libre Extrema" documents a hardcore wrestling match, forbidden in Mexico City where the photographer is currently based.

The Sony World Photography Awards, created by the World Photography Organisation, annually recognises the world's best photography. A record-breaking 230,103 entries from 186 countries were submitted to this year's awards.

Upon being selected for the award, Maroesjka commented: *"I'm very pleased that I have the opportunity to share my view of this world by doing what I love most. I hope my images momentarily take the viewers out of their daily routine to appreciate the beauty of these desolate landscapes."*

Following an exhibition of all the winning, shortlisted and commended photographs from this year's competition at London's Somerset House which ended on 8 May, the Sony World Photography Awards exhibition is now traveling to various other locations.

Ginius, prize-winning Belgian gin



Everyone knows that some of the best beers in the world are brewed in Belgium. But did you know that our country also produces some world class gins? Several **Belgian gins** were awarded prizes at the recent [San Francisco World Spirits Competition](#), among them **gold medal winner 'Ginius'** designed by Frederik van Duüren from Oostduinkerke. Read more in the latest edition of 'Discover Benelux', www.discoverbenelux.com.