



## Belgian Events - December 2014

### Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

Dear readers,

This final 2014-issue of the Embassy's newsletter focuses on the inauguration of the Flanders Fields Memorial Garden, the recent Belgo-British Conference in Brussels and the winners of the 18th Golden Bridge Awards in London. There is news on events at the Ambassador's Residence and the latest First World War commemorations the Embassy has been involved in. The *'Did you know?'* section highlights Belgium on the international scene while the cultural calendar provides details on upcoming Belgian events in the UK.

Don't forget you can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and if you have any suggestions, don't hesitate to share them with us via [belgianevents.uk@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:belgianevents.uk@diplobel.fed.be). New subscribers can provide their details via the [Embassy's website](#).

### Royal News

On 6 November, HM King Philippe was in London where He and HM Queen Elizabeth II inaugurated the **Flanders Fields Memorial Garden** in Wellington Barracks near Buckingham Palace.



The creation of a 'Flanders Fields 1914-2014' Memorial Garden is an initiative of The Guards Museum (Andrew Wallis) in conjunction with Flanders House in London (Nic Van der Marliere), the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain.



The garden was designed by renowned Bruges landscape architect Piet Blanckaert; its soil was collected last year by UK soldiers and Belgian and British schoolchildren from 70 battlefield cemeteries in Belgium. Click [here](#) to find out more about the project.

## Conference News

This year's **Belgo-British Conference**, which is hosted yearly in turn by Belgium and the UK, was officially opened at the Egmont Palace in Brussels on 20th November by Belgium's Minister for Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders and Professor Robert Grimes, Chief Scientific Adviser to the British Foreign Secretary. The Conference aims to enrich both countries' mutual interests in areas as varied as politics, economy, culture, media and academia.



The central theme of this year's 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Conference was the role of entrepreneurial universities in the development and transfer of technology and their place in regional, national and European high-tech innovation systems. Didier Reynders said: "The Conference this year will look at how creativity and innovation can be used for a better future. The role innovative technologies play in sustainable development and in our economy should be permanently stressed."

Topics for discussion included university-driven hi-tech innovation in Belgium and the UK, innovation support systems and what makes creation and business work. The Conference hosted several high-profile speakers including academics, business people and policymakers such as Professor of Technology and Innovation Management Koenraad Debackere of the Catholic University of Leuven and Professor Stephen Caddick Vice-Provost of Enterprise at University College London.

## Economic News

The winners of the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Golden Bridge Trade & Export Awards** were announced in London on 20 November. The Belgian companies to receive awards were BRUSSELS AIRLINES (Golden Bridge Award), LIMELCO, specialised in chilled desserts and milk products (Best Medium-Sized Company Award), packaging firm DECAPAC (Best Small-Sized Company Award) and photovoltaic company IKARIOS SOLAR (Best Newcomer).



Winners BRUSSELS AIRLINES

For more details, click [here](#).

## Embassy News

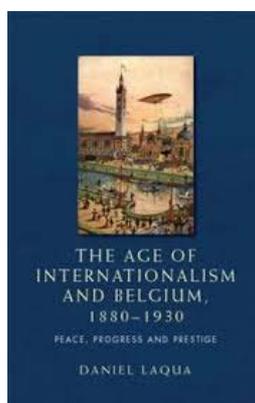
The majority of the recent events at the Ambassador's Residence have been related to **WW1** or **business**.

### **WORLD WAR ONE**

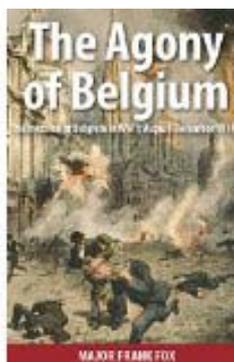
Ambassador Trouveroy organised an event on 9 October to help raise funds for a statue commemorating **Elsie and Mairi**, two British women who ran a First Aid Post at the Belgian front during WW1. The bronze statue, designed by Belgian sculptor Josiane Vanhoutte, was unveiled in Ypres on 22 November.



**Dr Daniel Laqua**, senior lecturer in European History at Northumbria University presented his research on 19th-20th history with a special emphasis on international associations and the role of Belgium during a lecture on 23 October at the Residence. Dr Laqua is the author of 'The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880-1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige' (2013).



On 12 November, Dr Charles Goodson-Wickes presented a new print of the 1915 book '**The Agony of Belgium**' written by his great grandfather **Sir Frank Fox** who was British War Correspondent attached to the Belgian Army in 1914.



### **BUSINESS**

On 28 October, the official launch of **Ed Gruwez' book 'Presentation Thinking and Design'** (FT Publishing) took place in collaboration with the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce. Business communications expert Ed Gruwez is CEO of Ogilvy Internal Communications.



On 18 November, the Residence was the venue for a **Breakfast Seminar** organised by **Barclays Bank** and Flanders Investment and Trade on doing business in Belgium.



There was a **customer event** in collaboration with FIT on 27 November for West Flanders family transport company **SITRA** which recently opened a new warehouse near Dover.

Upcoming events at the Ambassador's Residence include:

- 4 December: Fundraiser with dinner to raise the profile of the charity ['Never Such Innocence'](#)
- 8 December: Reception prior to the yearly [GENESIS biotech Conference](#) on human health (in collaboration with *FIT*)

## World War Commemorations

During the past few months, the Belgian Embassy has been closely involved in the 100-year commemorations of World War 1. Besides the opening of the Flanders Fields Memorial Garden and the Elsie and Mairi fundraiser mentioned earlier in this newsletter, here are some further illustrations of the Embassy's involvement.

During the weekend of 11/12 October, the Embassy was represented at commemorations honouring **Edith Cavell** at her statue in London's Trafalgar Square and her grave in Norwich.



Also in October, the Ambassador attended the preview of "The Waterways on the Western Front" exhibition at the [London Canal Museum](#) and later that month the Embassy was represented during a

dinner in **Worcester** to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gheluvelt.

In November, the Embassy witnessed the unveiling of a commemorative plaque at **Charlton Athletic Football Club**, owned by Belgian businessman Roland Duchâtelet and participated in ceremonies in **Hereford**, one of the first cities to welcome and care for Belgian refugees during WW1 and in **Twickenham** where a large community of Belgian refugees settled at the time. Consequently, the Twickenham/Richmond area became known as 'le village belge sur la Tamise'.



Ceremony in Twickenham

The Ambassador was also present at the yearly rekindling of the Eternal Flame at **Westminster Abbey** together with British Defence Secretary Michael Fallon .

More details on the WW1 commemorations in both Belgium and the UK are available on the [Embassy's website](#).

## Did you know?

### International Rankings

The **Belgian Red Devils** have progressed to 4th place (among 209 teams) in the [FIFA rankings](#), their highest ranking ever!



Belgium has one of the world's most **innovative economies**, according to the German Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW). Out of the evaluated 35 developed countries, Switzerland is the most innovative, according to the report, followed by Singapore, Finland and Belgium. In 2010, Belgium ranked tenth in the [ZEW's Innovation Indicator](#). This year, Belgium's fourth place puts it ahead of neighbouring countries, Germany (6th), the Netherlands (8), and France (17).

According to the researchers, Belgium is a leader in innovation and research and development thanks to a strong sector of independent small businesses, as well as a competitive high-tech industry.

For the first time, Belgium has entered the top ten in the World Economic Forum's **Global Gender Gap Report** which benchmarks national gender gaps of 142 countries on economic, political, education and health-based criteria. Click [here](#) for the full report.

Our country has moved from 13th to 9th place according to the [English Proficiency Index](#) which measures

the knowledge of **English as a second language** in 63 countries and territories. Belgian women tend to score better than men. The Danes top the list followed by the Dutch and the Swedes.

## Belgian Presidency Council of Europe

Belgium is holding the chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from 13 November 2014 to 19 May 2015. At the meeting of the Organisation's Strasbourg headquarters, the new Chair of the Committee of Ministers, Didier Reynders, presented the priorities of the Belgian chairmanship. Belgium took over the position from Azerbaijan.



Ministers Reynders taking over from Azerbaijan

The Council of Europe is the oldest European organisation, having been founded by 10 Member States on 5 May 1949. Today it covers virtually the entire European continent and numbers **47 Member States**. The main purpose of this international organisation is to serve as an overarching legal and democratic body that ensures respect for certain core values, such as the protection of **fundamental rights** and respect for **democracy** and the **rule of law**. It also seeks common solutions to major societal problems.

## Mons, European Capital of Culture 2015



Since the European Union began awarding the title of 'European Capital of Culture' in 1985, there have been 50 ECCs. In 2015, the honour has been granted to the cities of Mons and Plzen (Czech Republic).

MONS 2015 will play the platform for more than 300 events that leverage the talents of 5,000 artists, 400 organisations, 22 partner institutions, and 17 other participating towns and cities. The city in Wallonia received the ECC go-ahead five years ago. "For us, ECC status is more about transformation than about any short-term earnings we will make from the various events," said Natacha Vandenberghe, the director of the Mons Office of Tourism.

That transformation is already apparent with two new concert halls, an across-the-board renovation programme that has brushed up such structures as the Art Nouveau jewel *La Maison Losseau*, five new museums, a new Conference Centre designed by the architect responsible for Ground Zero in New York, and a rail station currently under construction. Mons has three UNESCO recognised heritage touchstones, which include a Neolithic slate mine, Europe's only baroque belfry, and the Doudou, a religious feast that dates back to the 14th century and includes a re-enactment of St George's fight with the dragon, every year on Trinity Sunday.

The celebrations are beginning on January 24. The full story can be found at [mons2015.eu](http://mons2015.eu).

## Belgians among Wildlife Photography Award Winners

The 50th edition of the '[Wildlife Photographer of the Year](#)' competition took place at the Natural History Museum in London. The award ceremony was led by HRH the Duchess of Cambridge and Sir David Attenborough. Among the winners were 2 Belgian competitors. Michel d'Oultremont (photograph below) received the Special Award: Rising Star Portfolio and Tristan Moës was a Young Awards finalist in the category 11-14 years. An exhibition of the selected photographs can be visited at the Natural History Museum in Kensington until August 2015.



## 'Belgian Owl' Whiskey scores well

According to British whiskey expert Jim Murray, the [Belgian Owl Single Malt 64](#) is Europe's best whiskey. The latest rankings by the expert can be found in the new edition of Murray's yearly Whiskey Bible.



## Koen Kessels appointed Music Director at Royal Opera House

Belgian conductor Koen Kessels has been appointed [Music Director of The Royal Ballet in London](#) from next season and has become Music Director Designate with immediate effect. Kessels will also continue in his role as Music Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet.

## BBC series filmed in Belgium

The current BBC series ["The Missing"](#), about a British boy who disappears whilst on a family holiday in France, was mostly filmed in Brussels, Charleroi, Hal & Huy with British and Belgian actors. The title song "Come Home" is by Belgian band Amatorski.

## Events Calendar

[Click here](#) for a listing on the Embassy's website of upcoming events with a Belgian touch.

## Music Competition Announcements



The yearly 'Queen Elisabeth Competition' is holding a session for violinists from 4 to 30 May 2015. Musicians who have completed their training and are about to embark on an international career can apply until 10 January 2015.

All application details and regulations are available on [www.cmireb.be](http://www.cmireb.be).

### ***International Composition Competition Harelbeke for Wind Band***

The Belgian city of Harelbeke is presenting the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of its International Composition Competition

Harelbeke for Wind Band. Dead line for applications is 7 April 2015.

All details can be found on [www.harelbeke.be](http://www.harelbeke.be).

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