



Belgian Events - July 2012

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

Dear readers,

Both the Embassy's website and newsletter have been given a new look.

This issue of '*Belgian Events*' is devoted entirely to the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games in London. Information on the Games is also available on the Embassy's website: http://countries.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/united_kingdom/news/embassy_news/olympic_games

At the 2012 Games, 154 Belgian athletes will be competing in 25 different sports. During the entire period of the Olympic Games, the Belgian supporters, athletes and family are welcome at a specially set up *Belgium House* in central London. May London bring success to our sports stars. See you all at *Belgium House*!

Table of contents

- [Olympic and Paralympic summer in London](#)
- [Getting to the venues](#)
- [In case of emergency](#)
- [Belgian teams](#)
- [Belgium House](#)
- [Did you know...?](#)
- [Useful addresses and websites](#)

Olympic and Paralympic summer in London



(Image: London 2012)

For the first time in history, a city will host the Olympic Games for a third time. London also staged the Games in 1908 and 1948. The Opening Ceremony for the Olympics will take place on 27 July and the Games will end on 12 August.

The Paralympics follow two weeks later, from 29 August until 9 September. The official London Olympics website (www.london2012.com) provides a lot of relevant and interesting information on visiting the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Getting to the venues

London is a very busy and vibrant city all year round. During the Games the city will be even more crowded and experience additional pressure on its transport network.

To make sure you can get to your destination with minimum difficulty, plan your travel in advance and allow enough time for your journey. The Transport For London website (www.tfl.gov.uk) the official London Olympics website (www.london2012.com) and www.getaheadofthegames.com provide plenty of information and advice on travelling by train, tube or bus to and from the Games.

If you prefer to use a bike to get to the Olympic site, there is *Barclays Cycle Hire*. At several locations in London you can find cycle stations. You can buy casual access online (www.barclayscyclehire.tfl.gov.uk) or at a docking station terminal for 24 hours or a week.

You have to be at least 18 years old and need to provide a postal address to verify your payment card details. Usage up to 30 minutes is free.

You will not be allowed access to London 2012 venues if on arrival you are carrying any of the prohibited items listed on our website http://countries.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/united_kingdom/news/embassy_news/olympic_games

In Case of Emergency

Security at the Games is a major issue for the organisers. Visitors with concerns should in the first instance approach Games volunteers or police officers on the streets of London. The Belgian Embassy will offer Belgian citizens all assistance required. Belgian visitors are advised to carry photocopies of passport or ID card on them and leave original travel documents in a safe place. Scanned copies could be sent to personal email addresses for access if needed.

In case of loss or theft of a Belgian ID card or passport and when **outside of Belgium**, the card holder must report this to the local police. Moreover, you should block it immediately by calling the free DOC STOP telephone number **00800 2123 2123**. You will hence avoid the risk of fraudulent use of your identity document, as well as the financial consequences from any such use. DOC STOP is a **free** service, round the clock accessible 24h/24 and 7d/7. Should it not be possible to get in touch with 00800 2123 2123, dial +32 2 518 2123.

Please note: DOC STOP can only be used to block *Belgian* identity documents.

To contact the UK police, fire and ambulance services by telephone, dial 999. The operator will ask you to select a service. The single European emergency number (112) also works in the UK.

Belgian Teams

At midnight on 9 July 2012, LOCOG stopped all entries to the Olympic and Paralympic teams. The Belgian delegation counts 115 Olympic athletes and 39 Paralympians. Tia Hellebaut, gold medalist in Beijing, will be carrying the Belgian flag during the opening ceremony on 27th July. To find out who will compete in London on behalf of Belgium, please consult www.roadtolondon.be and www.supporterparalympics.be the official websites of the Belgian Olympic and Paralympic Teams.

Just before their departure to London, we interviewed two Belgian athletes who will be competing at the Games. Para-equestrian Michèle George, who won silver in 2010 at the Kentucky FEI World Championships, will be representing our country in the dressage. Hans Van Alphen is our decathlon national record holder.



Michèle George



Hans Van Alphen

When did you first know that you were selected for the 2012 Olympic (Paralympic) Games? How did that make you feel? What does participating in the Games mean to you?

Van Alphen: *I was selected in September 2011. During the final major decathlon of the year in Talence I scored 8200 points, the exact A-standard for London. This was great news since I couldn't participate in the World Championships in Daegu and therefore was left with only Talence to qualify. Setting the Belgian record as a bonus was a real boost. These will be my second Olympics. Representing your country at the world's biggest sports event is fantastic. I look forward to it enormously.*

George: *On the 5th of July I obtained my ticket to London which made me extremely happy and proud. After a serious accident a few years ago and doctors telling me I would never walk again, my dream of riding my horses and participating in the Games could not have been further removed. After a long and hard struggle, I achieved my first goal, riding again. A few months later I started competing again and after four years of hard work and training, I can now compete at the Paralympics...amazing!*

The vicinity of London will result in a much larger number of Belgian supporters than during the previous Games. Is that an advantage for the Belgian athletes?

Van Alphen: *It is always great to have lots of supporters. It gives an extra boost to know lots of people have come specially to see you compete. Unfortunately, most tickets were sold out very quickly (or very expensive, especially when combined with transport and accommodation costs). It means that a large number of Belgians are forced to watch the Games on TV. I'm really curious to see how the British athletes will perform. I expect they will do well on home ground.*

George: *I think it does make a difference... There is only one way to the top and that is "hand in hand, all together"...*

Have you ever been to London? Do you think you will have the time for some sightseeing?

Van Alphen: *I have visited London once. On this occasion, I suspect I won't have much time to explore the city. If I were to have time after my competition (8-9 August) I will try to watch other athletes. Tower Bridge, the London Eye,... will still be there long after the Olympic Games.*

George: *I've never been in London before. I'm sure that one day, I will find the time to visit abroad but for now I prefer to stick to training and competing. I need to remain focused on my sport...*

Do you notice an increased interest in the Paralympic Games?

George: *Yes, and I'm really pleased with that. I hope that the increased interest will result in stimulating more people to participate in sports, whatever their disabilities. Sport is the best medicine there is so we all should use it as much as we can...*

How did you prepare for the Games?

Van Alphen: *My preparation schedule has been the same for the past three years. Besides a 3-week break at the end of September, we train hard throughout the entire year. My main preparation was one decathlon in Götzis, host of a major yearly decathlon competition at the end of May. In Götzis I broke my personal record (8200 points) by scoring 8519 points. I set a new national record and improved my world ranking to third place. In the final three weeks before the Olympics, training is cut back in order to appear fit and fresh at the Games.*

George: *To be honest...I just kept working hard every day. I've been trying some fine-tuning but basically I never change major routines and habits, neither for myself nor for my sports partner and best friend "Fuchs" (my horse)*

What would be your dream achievement?

Van Alphen: *Of course I dream of taking a medal home. Personally, I have continuously aimed for an 8th place. This remains my objective since around 8 athletes have the potential to score +8500 points. It will probably be the minimum to win a place on the stand. Failing in 1 of the 10 disciplines could cost dearly.*

George: *For me personally, a nice medal...but I wish all my colleagues the best of luck and that the best may win!*

And finally a tricky question. How many medals will the Belgians take home?

Van Alphen: *I think we can improve our Beijing results and bet on 4 medals.*

George: *That's very tricky indeed. We have all been well coached and our federations have done a great job in supporting us as best they could. So...be aware, we're going to win as many medals as we can!*

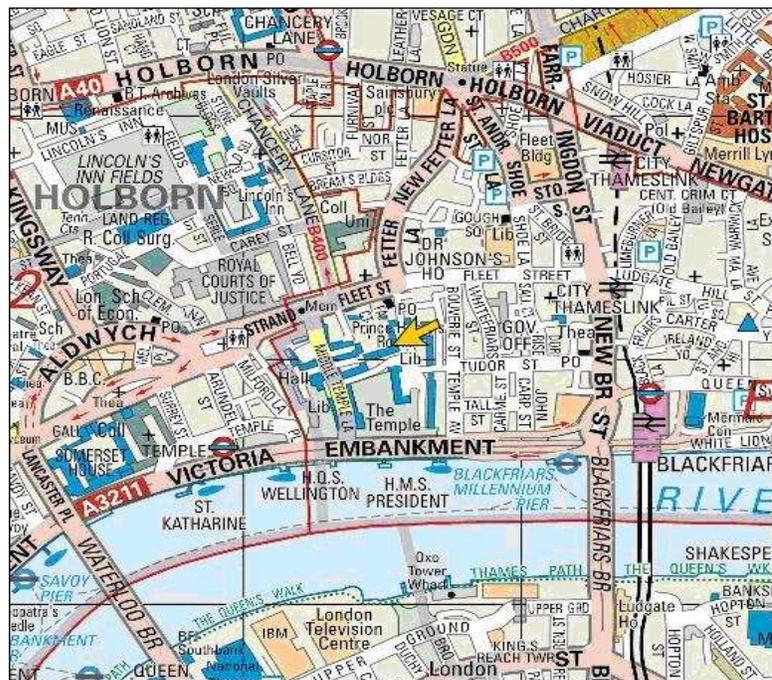
Belgium House at Inner and Middle Temple



For the first time in the history of the BOIC, a Belgian House will be set up during the Olympic Games. 'Belgium House' will be located at Inner and Middle Temple along the Thames Embankment, the legal centre of the city.

Belgium House will be open from 27 July until 12 August and will offer Belgians attending the Olympic Games a place to meet. The House will also provide a fantastic window on Belgium, its regions and provinces and will play host to the 'Belgian Cycling Paradise' initiative.

Entry tickets (£5) available to the general public will give access to the Middle Temple building and garden every day between 11am and 2am. Competitions will be broadcast live on a giant screen and the public will get a chance to meet the Belgian athletes. There will also be an exhibition focusing on Belgian athletes and former medal-winners. Food and beverages will be widely available and Belgian Olympic merchandise can be bought in the Olympic shop.



Location of Belgium House

Did you know ...



...that this will be the last Games for Belgian Count Jacques **Rogge** as **President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)**, the body responsible for organising every aspect of the Olympics. The Belgian Orthopaedic Surgeon, who participated as yachtsman in 3 consecutive Olympics during the 1970s and 80s, took up his position in July 2001 and will hand over to his successor in September next year.

Rogge leaves an impressive legacy: greater attention is now being paid to the athletes with whom, as a former athlete, he can fully identify himself; the IOC has solid finances and the Games organised under his tenure have been free of the kind of corruption scandals that previously plagued the competition. Finally, although doping and cheating is still a problem, the IOC's fight against it intensified under Rogge's watch.

...that at least 21 **Belgian companies** have secured a role in the practical organisation of the London Games. The Belgian contracts are worth an estimated total of 280 million euros, three times more than in 2008 in Beijing.

"The fact that we have bagged so many deals is partially due to our close proximity to the United Kingdom," explains Demuynck. "Moreover, the fact that many of these companies have a track record that includes previous Olympic Games, gave them a head start. But more than that, it is the result of seven years of plain hard work. As soon as it was announced that London would host the 2012 Olympic Games, we started to lobby with regular contact, visits and invitations. By 2010 it had become clear that all the footwork had paid off," says Demuynck.

Belgian media technology companies remain firm favourites. *Alfacam*, *Barco* and *EVS* have secured contracts during the event. *Barco* will provide the large screens which are crucial to an event of this magnitude, *Alfacam* will supply editing trucks and staff and *EVS* will take care of the slow motion pictures. The media technology firm *Newtec* will provide equipment to send footage via satellite to the Middle East.

LED lighting specialist *Schröder* has been contracted to illuminate the key access roads to the Olympic Village while Bekkevoort-based firm *Theuma* has delivered 25,000 doors for the village.

The biggest contract went to dredging giant *Deme*, which was involved in cleaning the polluted Stratford sites before the Games.

...that Belgian tennis star Justine **Henin** will be allocated an **Olympic underground station** in London. During this summer's Olympic Games, the 316 London stations are named after athletes who achieved Gold during the history of the Games. Each underground line will be dedicated to a particular discipline and each stop will be given the name of a champion. Henin's name will appear between Michael Stich and Serena Williams. But you can also get off at stops named after Cassius Clay/Muhammad Ali (boxing), Usain Bolt (athletics), Michael Phelps (swimming), Michael Jordan (basketball), Nadia Comaneci (gymnastics) and many others. It is also worth noting that during the Olympic Games WI-Fi will be available in some of these underground stations.

...that a temporary building for London was commissioned to celebrate the Olympic year 2012. A boat-shaped art installation-cum-hotel **A Room for London** by David Kohn Architects in collaboration with Fiona Banner was picked as the winner of an open competition and appears on top of the Queen Elizabeth Hall. The designers drew inspiration from the riverboat the *Roi des Belges*, captained by Joseph Conrad whilst in Congo in 1890, a journey echoed in his famous work *Heart of Darkness*. The one-bedroom boat is available to hire, interspersed with a programme of music, performance and theatre. Belgian artist **Luc Tuymans'** 2011 piece *Allo!* is also in display.

...that the sports fans who did not manage to obtain tickets to any of the Olympic competitions can follow all the action on giant **screens** in **Hyde Park, Trafalgar Square, Victoria Park** and **Pottersfield Park** (Southbank). During the Paralympic Games the main 'live-site' will be in **Trafalgar Square**.

...that the permanent **exhibition** 'The Olympic Journey: The Story of the Games' which illustrates the Olympics throughout time, is temporarily moving from its usual home in Lausanne to London's **Royal Opera House** where it can be visited between 28 July and 12 August.

Useful addresses and websites

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG)

www.london2012.com

The Belgian Olympic & Interfederal Committee (BOIC)

www.olympic.be

Olympic ticket sales via Suseia Flash Travel & Hospitality

www.suseia.com

Belgium House at Inner & Middle Temple

Crown Office Row
Temple
EC4Y 7HL London

Belgian Embassy

17 Grosvenor Crescent
London SW1X 7EE
020 7470 3700

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am – 1pm & 2pm – 5pm

http://countries.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/united_kingdom

london@diplobel.fed.be

Britain and London Visitor Service

London's primary tourist information centre is located at:

1 Lower Regent Street
London SW1 4XT
0)8701 566 366
www.visitlondon.com

2012 © Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

Other official information and services: www.belgium.be 

***** DISCLAIMER *****

Ce message électronique et chacune de ses annexes sont établis à l'attention exclusive du destinataire et peuvent contenir des informations confidentielles. Si vous recevez ce message par erreur, veuillez le détruire et

avertir son expéditeur.

Toute publication, reproduction, copie, distribution ou autre diffusion ou utilisation par des tiers est interdite sans autorisation expresse. L'expéditeur ne peut être tenu responsable d'une modification de son message qui résulterait de la transmission par voie électronique.

***** DISCLAIMER *****

Deze e-mail en al zijn bijlagen zijn uitsluitend voor de geadresseerde bestemd en kunnen vertrouwelijke informatie bevatten. Als u deze boodschap per vergissing toegestuurd kreeg, gelieve de afzender onmiddellijk te verwittigen en de e-mail te vernietigen.

Publicatie, reproductie, kopie, distributie of andere verspreiding of gebruik door derden is verboden, tenzij anders vermeld. De afzender kan niet verantwoordelijk worden gesteld voor enige wijziging van zijn bericht tijdens de elektronische transmissie.

[Uitschrijven / Gegevens wijzigen - Se désabonner / Modifier données](#)
[Powered door YMLP](#)