



Belgian Events - March 2013

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

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Umicore, most sustainable company in the world



Umicore was declared the most sustainable company in the world during the World Economic Forum in Davos last week. The Canadian independent media and investment research company *Corporate Knights* put the Belgian business at the top of their latest Global 100 ranking, nabbing the gold from Brazilian cosmetics company *Natura* and the Norwegian oil company *Statoil*.

Umicore specialises in recycling technology and manufactures catalysts for cars which reduce pollution. It also recycles materials like gold, copper, nickel and rare metals such as palladium from used car batteries and printing plates.

Ecological efficiency is high on the agenda of the company, which plans on-site wind turbines and aims to reduce its level of CO₂ emissions by 20% in 2015 compared to 2006. The fact that the corporation has a one-to-five ratio of female representatives on their board of directors and a CEO (Marc Grynberg) who earns 'only' 34 times as much as the average employee, ensured *Umicore's* exceptional score as far as the social component of the index is concerned.

In 1989, Umicore was set up after the merger of mining giant *Union Minière* and the lead-processing plant *Metallurgie*. The company became one of the most spectacular and successful industrial reconversions in Belgium and has gradually managed to position itself as a global player among major recycling businesses.

www.umicore.com

www.global100.org

Golden Bridge Awards

The sixteenth *Golden Bridge Export Awards* were presented by the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain (BLCC) and, for the first time, in cooperation with the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium. The award for outstanding achievements in exporting between the UK and Belgium was won by *Primus Laundry* from Kortrijk. The prestigious award was handed over by H.E. Johan Verbeke, Ambassador of Belgium to the United Kingdom during a Gala Ceremony on the 15th November in central London.



In the SME category, consultancy company *Solutions-2* from Bachte-Maria-Leerne received the award from H.E. Alphonse Berns, Luxembourg Ambassador to the United

Kingdom.

The two British winners, *SuperGroup* (fashion retailer) and *Netshield* (IT services), received their awards from HE Jonathan Brenton, the British Ambassador to Belgium.

The Golden Bridge Export Awards 2013 will be held in Central London on Thursday 21 November.

www.britcham.be

www.blcc.co.uk

Wallonia's creative economy

Wallonia and Tuscany are the two European regions selected by the European Commission from among 44 European regions for their exemplary strategy of supporting the creative economy as a driver of economic change.

In October 2010, the Walloon government launched the framework programme 'Creative Wallonia' designed to place creativity and innovation at the heart of Wallonia's economy and society. Following two years of implementation, the European Commission considers this ambitious strategy to be exemplary and has awarded Wallonia the title of 'European Creative District' – one of the first two of its kind in the European Union.

Creative Wallonia consists of five Walloon stakeholders at the cutting edge of innovation and creativity : SPW/DG06, Wallonie Design, St'art Invest, l'Agence Wallonne des télécommunications and ID campus. The cluster TWIST and Infopole TIC are also associated partners. Each stakeholder is in charge of one or more actions according to its speciality fields.

From January 2013 to July 2015, the project will help to position Creative Wallonia as a European reference plan, develop trans-regional partnerships and increase cooperation opportunities for Walloon public and private stakeholders. It will also help define good practices for other European regions.

www.creativewallonia.be

Belgian companies are innovative

Thomson Reuters, the world's leading provider of intelligent information for businesses and professionals, has announced its 2012 Top 100 Global Innovators list, honouring corporations and institutions around the world that are at the heart of innovation as measured by a series of proprietary patent-related metrics. The Belgian chemical company *Solvay* features in the non-ranked alphabetical list. The list predominantly features American (47) and Japanese (25) companies.

The full report is available on www.top100innovators.com.

Meanwhile, 61% of all Belgian businesses consider themselves to be innovative. Hence,

our country ranks among the top three in Europe as far as innovation is concerned. This is the conclusion drawn from figures by the European statistical service *Eurostat* following a comprehensive survey on innovation concerning products and procedures, organisation and commercialisation among European businesses. The data, collected during the period 2008-2010, shows that more than half the respondents in the 27 member states launched innovative activities. At 79% Germany tops the ranking list, with Luxembourg at 68% in second place and Belgium in third place with 61%.

About 26.5% of all innovative businesses in the EU collaborate with corporations, universities or researchers in other countries. Here too, Belgium ranks among the top at 42.3%.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Innovation_statistics

BELGIUM AND THE WORLD

Holocaust remembrance at the Residence



In the context of Belgium's current chairmanship of the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance* (formerly *International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research*), Ambassador Johan Verbeke organised on 13 February an evening of remembrance and discussion about Holocaust education at his residence.

The evening started with the screening of *'Children without a shadow'* (by Belgian writer/director Bernard Balteau), a moving documentary about Professor Shaul Harel (Charlie Hilsberg), now an eminent paediatric neurologist in Israel, and other Jewish children hidden in Belgium during World War II. The documentary was followed by a panel discussion and a testimony from Mrs Regina Sluszny, Chair of *'Les enfants caches de Belgique'* who was herself a hidden child in Belgium during the war. Moving young persons' perspectives came from Lucy Hamwijk and Callum Devine, acting young ambassadors for Holocaust Education. Sir Andrew Burns, UK Envoy for post-Holocaust issues and Ambassador Jan Deboutte, current Chair of the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*, also took part in the discussion.



The evening was attended by some 60 guests, among whom representatives of the *Holocaust Educational Trust*, *The Anne Frank Trust UK*, several holocaust survivors and representatives of the diplomatic community in London.

Belgo-British Conference

The annual Belgo-British meeting has become a high-level event supported by the British and Belgian governments to discuss issues where the two countries have shared interests, if not always common policies and approaches. It brings together some 100 politicians, business people, academics, journalists, and other opinion-formers to explore differences, compare methods and look for common ground for progress bilaterally and, in partnership, within the European Union. An important product of these conferences has been a particularly active network which enriches bilateral political and cultural relations between the two countries.



The 13th edition of the Belgo-British conference took place last November in the Brussels' Egmontpaleis and focused on the theme '*Two countries, how many Europe's? A Belgo-British dialogue*'. During the plenary sessions, the consequences of the crisis in the Euro zone for the EU as a whole, for the European external policies and for the relations with its citizens were taken a close look at. Particular attention was devoted to the bilateral aspects and the respective Belgian and British visions, positions and policy options.

Belgian students world champions in diplomacy

On 5th November, a Belgian student team was welcomed at the Belgian Residence in London for an interactive meeting with the Belgian Ambassador in preparation for the 22nd edition of the World Model United Nations Conference which will be held later this month in Melbourne.



Last year, the Belgian team took home its fourth gold medal in a row at the 21st edition of the Conference in Vancouver, Canada. A total of 2,200 students from 270 universities of more than 65 countries participated in this official world championship in diplomacy. Debates and negotiations were held on major international events, according to the UN rules, in an international setting with delegations from all around the world.

The Belgian team was made up of skilled members from various Belgian universities. A long and thorough preparation period preceded the Belgians' participation in this prestigious model UN conference. They won gold thanks to their sound reasoning talents, their in depth dossier knowledge and language skills and the quality and structure of their arguments.

<http://www.worldmun.org>

<http://www.munsocietybelgium.org>

SPORTS NEWS

Belgian footballers score well in the English Premier League



Vincent Kompany (second right) with Premier League stars Kevin Mirallas (far left), Mousa Dembele (second left), and Simon Mignolet (far right)

Belgium's current generation of footballers is capturing the imagination of football fans worldwide. In England, an all-time high of 16 Belgian players are featuring in the Premier League clubs.

Vincent Kompany, nicknamed Vince the Prince, is proud to be part of a generation of players proving that there is more to Belgium than beer, chocolates and waffles. The formidable Manchester City defender and inspirational captain is also Belgium's national

team's skipper. "There are almost too many Belgian guys to name now in the Premier League," he says. "When I signed four and a half years ago I was the first, then Fellaini (Everton) came and Vermaelen (Arsenal). Ever since, a growing number of Belgian players is having an impact on the English Premier League. I hope that soon we will showcase our talent at international level too. We have a side now that deserves success, not just because of the quality, but because of the type of players we have. We have the character, the personalities."

The current crop includes exciting players like Eden Hazard and Romelu Lukaku (Chelsea), Moussa Dembélé (Fulham) and Christian Benteke (Aston Villa). The next batch of Belgian stars is already preparing to take on the Premier League. Chelsea appear to be the side which will benefit the most, with winger Kevin de Bruyne (on loan at Werder Bremen) and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois (on loan at Atletico Madrid) due to join Stamford Bridge this summer.

Whether the current talent is evidence of a kind of youth academy utopia is debatable. Many of Belgium's current international side have grown up as footballers outside the country. Hazard, for instance, flourished in France at Lille's academy, as did Mirallas (Everton); Vermaelen and Vertonghen (Tottenham) developed in the Netherlands at Ajax.

However, following a period of dismal performances during the early 2000s, Belgium's Football Association realised that its youth development was structurally poor. Jean-François de Sart, Belgium's under-21 national team head coach from 1999 till 2011, explains that the Belgian football federation decided to open seven regional training centres for spotted young talents to receive additional and more structured practice. "Since then, the Belgian league has gradually become a reservoir of talents for leagues all over Europe. We've never produced so much football talent at once," says de Sart. Additionally, Marc Wilmots, the new national coach, has managed to dissipate the friction that existed between the young prodigies and national team veterans.

Belgium certainly has the potential to qualify for the 2014 World Cup and the European Championships in 2016. Given that almost the entire Belgian team core is employed in England, it seems strangely fitting that its players' schooling in the Premier League may well help Belgium to return to the world stage.

CULTURE

'War and Trauma' exhibition sets WWI commemorations in Flanders rolling



'War and Trauma' is a thematic exhibition on medical care during World War I that will run in Ypres' *In Flanders Fields Museum* on the eve of the Great War Centenary (2014-2018).

"In times of war, huge leaps are often made in many fields, including the medical terrain," says museum coordinator Piet Chielens. "This also happened during World War I. In 1914, nobody was prepared for the vast influx of injured soldiers in need of medical care. By 1917, the medical services had managed to streamline their organisation and provide much more thorough, hygienic and effective care. Perhaps the most important breakthrough in the medical field during this period was the recognition of mental trauma."

A number of other exhibitions this year will focus on the Great War from various different angles, among them an exhibition on German helmets which is already running at the museum café. Another one covers American president Herbert Hoover's efforts to supply provisions to occupied Belgium during the war. An exhibition opening in the spring will focus on the trip of television producer Arnout Hauben during the making of his programme '*Ten Oorlog*'. For this programme, Hauben embarked on a walk from the Belgian coastal town of Nieuwpoort to the Greek place cold Gallipoli to retrace the European front during the Great War.

For more information on the Great War Centenary (2014-2018) in Flanders, please consult: www.vlaanderen.be/int/sites/iv.devlh.vlaanderen.be.int/files/documenten/The%20Great%20War%20Centenary.pdf

National Dance Award for Royal Ballet Flanders

During the 13th National Dance Awards ceremony on 28th January 2013 at The Place in London, the 'Award for Outstanding Company' went to *Royal Ballet Flanders*. The prize was accepted by two principal dancers of the company, Aki Saito and Wim Vanlessen, who had appeared in William Forsythe's *Artifact* at Sadler's Wells last summer.



Considered by many as one of the most comprehensive lists of dance achievements, the awards are decided by the 60 members of the Dance Section of the Critics' Circle after an extensive round of nominations and voting. This year's awards celebrated a broad spread of dance performances in Britain, from hip hop to narrative ballet.

Christian Wijnants wins International Woolmark Prize in London

The Antwerp-based Belgian designer Christian Wijnants is the winner of the *2013 International Woolmark Prize*. He beat a shortlist of five other labels, chosen by a panel including Diane von Furstenberg, Victoria Beckham, Donatella Versace and *Vogue Italia* editor-in-chief Franca Sozzani, following a catwalk show staged at the ME Hotel in London on Saturday 16 February.

"Christian invented a new shape and made it possible with an industrial production process," explained Sozzani. "His designs are flattering, feminine and sexy, a modern

interpretation of wool."

Besides a cash prize of £65,000, Wijnants' winning collection will be placed in leading international stores - including *Harvey Nichols* in London and *Bergdorf Goodman* in New York. The designer worked with one type of Merino wool yarn to create seamless hand-dyed garments.

"*The International Woolmark Prize* seeks international outstanding and emerging talent, and we saw exceptional artisanship and design presented last night," said *Woolmark Company* managing director Stuart McCullough.

Based on an article from www.vogue.co.uk

INTERVIEW WITH A BELGIAN IN THE UK

Tim Driesen, West End actor, singer, writer



Belgian actor, singer and writer Tim Driesen trained at Laine Theatre Arts in Epsom where he graduated in Musical Theatre. He is currently performing in the popular West End show 'Rock of Ages' at the Garrick Theatre.

What made you decide to come and study in London?

I had visited London as a kid and loved it. London's musical theatre culture in particular attracted me. At 17, I attended a Summer school at Laine Theatre Arts in Epsom and realised that they provided the best training in musical theatre in Europe. The college had been successfully preparing its students for the past 25 years whereas in Belgium this type of training had only just started. So the following year, I started a 3-year-course at the theatre college in Epsom. Fortunately, I managed to secure a grant from the Arts Council because a professional training in musical theatre is very expensive, costing around £10,000 a year. The language was the main barrier at first but I had a decent base and quickly improved. I qualified and was offered jobs in London so I just stayed.

Have you always wanted to be an actor?

Absolutely. Even as a kid I loved to act, dress up, sing and cook. I still enjoy cooking but a chef's life is not for me, so I had to go into acting. From a young age, I went to acting classes in Antwerp and toured around Belgium. My parents have always supported and encouraged me. I'm so grateful they allowed me to go abroad to study. They come to all my shows and are very proud of what I've achieved.

Why do you think 'Rock of Ages' is such a popular show?

It's just a feel good show with lots of 80s and early 90s classics. It's silly but also a lot of

fun. Especially these days, you need entertainment, you need to escape...and our show provides just that. Even people who don't normally like theatre tend to enjoy 'Rock of Ages'. If you're looking for theatre with depth, this is not for you. But if you want to have a good time, this is it. Every day is a party for the audience as well as the actors.

In what way, if at all, has London's theatre world been affected by the economic crisis?

When tourists book a weekend in London, they want to visit the typical sites such as Big Ben and Buckingham Palace, but a night out to the theatre is usually also included. The government uses London's theatres to promote the city as a tourist destination, yet it provides hardly any sponsorship and grants for young people to train as actors have been cut or scrapped altogether.

Although a lot of shows in London and other regions are still running, in the latter years there have been fewer jobs due to the recession. More shows have closed and there have been less new productions. There is less mobility, actors tend to hang on to their jobs rather than move around as before which then creates fewer opportunities for newcomers. It has become a lot harder for actors to find employment so it's vital to fight for opportunities and keep believing in your abilities.

You also write and perform your own songs. Can you tell us more?

My passion for musicals does not stop at performing. I've always written songs and have had ideas for performances. I wrote a musical version of Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' when I was still at college. It wasn't exactly a success but it started me off as a writer for musical theatre. Then I wrote a show called 'My super girlfriend' which is being redeveloped at the moment and will hopefully be produced next year.

I was at an audition recently where a girl performed one of my songs. For me, seeing and hearing someone else perform something I created somehow excites me more than going on stage myself. That's the pinnacle of creativeness. A friend and I recently wrote a song for charity which became an instant hit on YouTube. That one day in the studio with all these West End musical performers recording my song gave me such a boost that carried me through the entire Christmas period. It's changed my ambitions from performing in West End musicals to producing material for musical theatre. I'm working on 2 shows at the moment and my ambition for 2013 is to see one of my productions being performed.

How do you go about getting your shows performed?

I developed my last show together with *Perfect Pitch*, a company sponsored by the government to help create new British shows. With the help of a production company run by two friends, we're now trying to redevelop the show and attract funding. That's the hardest, especially now. You have to virtually guarantee success or they won't invest in you unless it's based on a movie, a band or a famous person has written it. My issue with this is that considerable sums have to be paid in rights when a show is based on something that already exists. The returns for a producer on an entirely new production, if it works, will be significantly higher.

Do you enjoy living in London?

Although London is an amazing city, it can be a very lonely place too. I found that particularly on my return from working abroad for 2 years. A lot of my friends had moved

on and some of the others were so busy working that you almost had to book an appointment to meet up. Particularly in my field and in this time of recession, you tend to work really hard when the job is there because you know that there will be career gaps which you have to bridge financially and London is not a cheap place to live, especially as far as accommodation is concerned.

At least once a month I like to do something touristy in London even if it's going on the London Eye, visit a park or go to the National Gallery, to remind myself that I'm living in such an amazing place.

Do you think you will ever return to live in Belgium?

If you'd asked me this a few years ago I would have said 'no' because for me this has become my hometown by choice. But now, ...I was recently working in Antwerp for 4 months and I just spent Christmas in Belgium so I got to see all my family, including my baby niece, and I miss that. I also love the pace of life, the Belgian gastronomy, cycling without the fear of getting knocked off your bike... I find it easier to meet up with my friends. If there was suitable work for me in Belgium, I might consider going back for a while. So I'll no longer say 'never' when people ask me. I can see myself moving away from London but it doesn't necessarily have to be to Belgium.

DID YOU KNOW?

Where is the best place to be born in 2013?

If you had the choice, where you like to be born? The British publication *The Economist* may be of assistance. Back in 1988, it ranked 50 countries according to where would be the best place to be born. Twenty five years later, its sister company the *Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)* has attempted to measure which of these 50 countries will provide the best opportunities for a healthy, safe and prosperous life in the years ahead.

The *EIU* has Switzerland comfortably in the top spot followed by Australia. Small economies dominate the top ten, half of them European. The Nordic countries in particular shine, whereas the crisis-ridden south of Europe (Greece, Portugal and Spain) lags behind. Belgium remains in 15th place whereas Britain falls from 7th in 1988 to 27th position in the latest ranking. The US languishes back from 1st in 16th place. Despite their economic dynamism, none of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) scores impressively.

Based on 'The lottery of Life', *The Economist*, 21 November 2012

Belgium won 34 medals at Winter Games?

During the 2013 Special Olympics Winter Games in South Korea (29 January – 5 February) our 20 Belgian participating athletes managed to win no less than 34 medals. A total of 3,200 participants from 110 countries competed in alpine skiing, cross country skiing, figure skating, short track speed skating, snowboarding, snowshoeing, floor hockey, and demo sport floor ball. Belgium did particularly well in the snowshoeing and alpine skiing disciplines.



The first Special Olympic World Games took place in 1968 and since then they have evolved into a two-yearly world-class sporting event. Alternating between Summer Games and Winter Games, Special Olympics World Games focus on the talents and capabilities of athletes with intellectual disabilities, helping to change attitudes and break down barriers.

Wikileaks movie is 'made in Belgium'?



The Belgian production company *FBO* will be involved in the making of *'The Fifth Estate'*, an international film production which depicts the foundation and early days of the controversial website *WikiLeaks*.

The movie will largely be filmed in Belgium. Bill Condon, who earlier directed *'Dreamgirls'* and *'Twilight'*, will direct the film. Co-producer Hilde De Laere of *FBO* will be responsible for the production side of the project with 38 shooting days planned in Belgium. The British actor Benedict Cumberbatch will play Julian Assange (picture), the founder of *WikiLeaks*.

Shooting on *'The Fifth Estate'* has just started in Iceland. In addition to Belgium, shooting will also take place in Berlin. The motion picture should hit box offices in the autumn of this year.

BELGIAN CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS

The Anglo-Belgian Society promotes Anglo-Belgian friendships and culture and organises a variety of social, cultural and sporting events. New in the UK or interested to meet other people? Come and join us for our monthly First Tuesday Drinks, the perfect place to meet and network. Registration and information about the Society and its events on our website: www.anglobelgiansociety.com

The Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce is a one-stop shop for businesses and individuals wishing to export to or invest in the UK. For information on our Business Services, Events and Club House facilities in Central London, contact the BLCC at 8 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BY, tel. 0207 127 4292, fax 0870 429 2148, www.blcc.co.uk, info@blcc.co.uk

Belgian Tourist Office, Brussels-Wallonia, 217 Marsh Wall, London E14 9FJ, tel. 0207 531 0391, www.belgiumtheplaceto.be, info@belgiumtheplaceto.be

Tourism Flanders-Brussels, Flanders House, 1A Cavendish Square, London W1G 0LD, tel. 0207 307 7730, info@visitflanders.co.uk

Vlaamse Club Londen, organises activities for Flemish and Dutch-speaking people in the London area, thus creating a meeting place and a network opportunity for the many Flemings in the UK, www.vlaamseclublonden.com, info@vlaamseclublonden.com

Vlamingen in de Wereld, representative in the UK Mr David Vermylen, davidvermylen@yahoo.co.uk

Union Francophone des Belges à l'Etranger, representative in the UK Mr Didier Denayer, 20 West Heath Close, London NW3 7NJ, ufbe_uk@yahoo.co.uk

Vlamingen in Surrey organise meetings and events for Flemish people living in the Surrey area. Contact: Brit Deckers-Beckers, Chase Manor, Kingfield Road, Woking, GU22 9AA, tel. 01483 726 760, britbeckers@yahoo.co.uk, www.vlamingeninsurrey.co.uk

Orde van den Prince promotes the unity of the Dutch language and culture, stimulating cooperation between Flanders and The Netherlands. Bimonthly meetings in London. Enquiries: An-Sofie Meirsschaut, an-sofie_m@yahoo.com, tel. 07919 394959

BELGIAN HONORARY CONSULATES IN THE UK

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

19 January - 9 March

Belgian artist Pieterjan Ginckels introduces himself in the UK with his S.P.A.M. OFFICE

exhibition at ANDOR, Hackney Road, London. www.creativeandorcultural.com

30 January - 13 April

First solo show in the UK of the Belgian painter Philippe Vandenberg (1952-2009) at Hauser & Wirth London, Piccadilly, www.hauserwirth.com

from 1 February

UK release of the Belgian film '*Bullhead*' (Rundskop), directed by Michaël Roskam and starring Matthias Schoenaerts.

28 February - 2 March

Boris Daenen, a.k.a. Netsky, brings his Netsky LIVE! D&B show with full band. <http://netskymusic.com>. 28/2: Leeds University - 1/3: HMV Forum London - 2/3: O2 Academy Bristol

1 March

Lecture 'Belgium is the heaven over the earth and Antwerp is its sun: Descriptions of Anwerp in the 17th century' by Professor Raingard Esser (univ. Groningen), Senate House, Court Room, Malet Street, WC1, 5.15pm. www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/131

5 March

ABS: First Tuesday drinks with Professor Bart Vanhaesebrouck at BLCC Club House, 8 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2, 6.30pm, www.anglobelgiansociety.com

11 March

The Belgian theatre company 'Nevski Prospect' performs 'Hop' at the Belfast Children's Festival, 6pm. <http://youngatart.ticketsolve.com>

14 March

Trio Oxymore (Liège) concert at St Pancras Parish Church. www.oxymoretrio.org

17 March

Screening and discussion of 'The Kid with the bike' (J.P. & L. Dardenne, 2011) in the series *The depiction of childhood in European cinemas* organised by the Institute of Psychoanalysis at the ICA, The Mall, London SW1, 10am - 1.30pm. www.beyondthecouch.org.uk

17 March

VIS: Easter feast and walk, www.vlamingeninnsurrey.co.uk

20 March

'Semaine de la Francophonie', Novecento, l'Institut Français, Edinburgh

21 March

'Semaine de la Francophonie', Novecento, Alliance Française, Glasgow

21 March

The author Nicole Malinconi is invited to a seminar on Belgian literature at the University of Edinburgh

22 March

'Semaine de la Francophonie', les vins wallons, l'Institut Français, Edinburgh

23 March

Belgian Ball, www.belgianball.com

19 - 21 April

Grégoire Polet at the Festival Littéraire Franco-Irlandais, Dublin

28 April

VIS: Walk in London, www.vlamingeninsurrey.co.uk

ANNOUNCEMENTS



ANGLO-BELGIAN SOCIETY

The *Anglo-Belgian Society* is an organisation which aims to maintain and develop the friendship that has always existed between the British and Belgian peoples. The Society, evolving from various Belgian groups in London at various points in time, traces its origins to the 1920s.

Most recently in 2012, the social, cultural and sporting activities of the Anglo-Belgian Club were integrated with events historically organised by the Society, to create a rejuvenated Anglo-Belgian Society. The Society is thus now able to boast increased dynamism, continuity and a shared life previously only known separately within the Anglo-Belgian Society and the Anglo-Belgian Club.

The Society's regular key event is the First Tuesday Drinks. We meet informally from 6.30-8.30pm at Club Quarters, 8 Northumberland Avenue, off Trafalgar Square. We strive to arrange something special for each First Tuesday, whether it be celebrating the arrival of the Three Kings in January with a cake and hidden bean with a prize for the winner, an interesting guest, a beer tasting, a theme, St Nicholas (December), etc.

Our annual events include the Belgian Ball (23rd March 2013), a yachting weekend (May), Royal Ascot (June) and a Summer Reception and barbecue (July) to celebrate the Belgian National Day.

Every year, members of the Society are invited to take part and represent the Society at the historical Belgian Parade at the Cenotaph (July) and the Kindling of the Torch at Westminster Abbey (November).

Adhoc events are also organised. These include lectures (currently the series "Episodes in the History of the Belgians"), sporting activities during the summer, cultural visits, wine-tastings, social gatherings, etc.

Society members are wide-ranging in age and have diverse backgrounds. This leads to interesting discussions and surprising encounters when we get together. The atmosphere is relaxed, open-minded and welcoming.

www.anglobelgiansociety.com

Belgian Ball



Join us on Saturday 23 March for the annual Belgian Ball, organised under the patronage of the Ambassador of Belgium and Mrs Verbeke to the benefit of the Royal Belgian Benevolent Society.

The theme of this year's Belgian Ball will be 'The 1920s'.
The musical entertainment will be provided by a live band followed by a D.J.

www.belgianball.com

Plans for bi-lingual primary school in Bromley

A group of local parents and teachers are planning to open a bilingual primary school offering an English and French education for children in and near Bromley. The Bromley Bilingual Primary will be a free school and if approved, open from September 2014 for reception, year 1 and year 2.

For more information and registering your interest in the project, please consult <https://sites.google.com/site/bromleybilingualschool/home>

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Other official information and services: www.belgium.be **.be**