



Belgian Events - March 2015

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

Dear readers,

This issue of the Embassy's newsletter focuses on the latest Belgian ministerial visits to London. There is news on events at the Ambassador's Residence and upcoming commemorations the Embassy will be involved in. Among the consular information is news about the biometric flying kit traveling to Manchester while the cultural section highlights some exhibitions in the UK and a cultural calendar provides details on upcoming Belgian events in the UK. Furthermore, there are links to recent BBC interviews with Belgians working in this country.

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. New subscribers can provide their details via the [Embassy's website](#).

Ministerial Visits

In January, Belgium's Interior and Security Minister Jan **Jambon** was in London to discuss anti-terrorism policies with his British colleague, Home Secretary Theresa May. They focused on ways to improve their cooperation bilaterally and at EU level, including through progressing on Passenger Name Record (exchange of information on EU passengers) and cooperating on counter-radicalisation.



A few days later, Foreign Minister Didier **Reynders** attended a meeting of the anti-ISIL coalition hosted by Britain's Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond together with the US Secretary of State John Kerry. The 21 participating countries discussed ways to improve their cooperation in the fight against the terrorist organisation Daesh and to counter radicalisation.



Alexander De Croo, Belgium's Minister for Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecom and Post, was in London earlier this month in the context of his digital portfolio. He met with British Minister Ed Vaizy (Department for Culture and for Business Innovation and Skills) as well as members of the Government Digital Service, BIS, Treasury and TechCity. A luncheon was organized at the residence of the Ambassador where the Deputy Prime Minister met with Belgian digital entrepreneurs active in London.

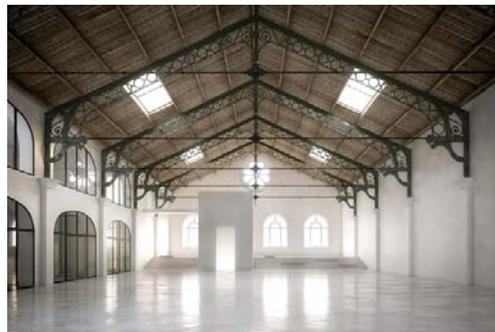


Embassy News

11/2 - To promote the exhibition 'Rubens Private', the city of Antwerp organised a press visit to London. The programme included a morning visit to the National Gallery where Rubens' self-portrait is currently being restored before its return to Antwerp. After a stopover at the Ambassador's residence where the curator of the Rubenshuis presented 'Rubens Private' to the press and representatives of the National Gallery, the journalists went to the British Museum and the Courtauld Gallery.



The unique concept of [La Patinoire Royale](#) was launched at the Ambassador's Residence. The former royal skating rink in Brussels, an historic classified monument built in 1882, has now been converted into a centre dedicated to European modern and contemporary art. With its 2500sqm of space, it is the biggest gallery in Europe. The first temporary exhibition of La Patinoire Royale will open on 24th April with the theme "The resistance of Images".



13/2 - During a ceremony at the Guildhall, Ambassador Trouveroy received **Freedom of the City of London**. It is one of the oldest surviving traditional ceremonies still in existence today. Although nowadays most practical reasons for obtaining the title have disappeared, it remains a unique part of London's history to which many people who have lived and worked in the City have been proud to be admitted. Read more about the tradition [here](#).



24/2 - [Art Brussels](#), a yearly contemporary art fair based in the Belgian capital, celebrates its 33rd edition and has become one of the most valued art fairs in terms of discovery of emerging artists and young talents. Last month, major British collectors and museum directors were among the guests at a walking dinner at the Ambassador's residence to raise the profile of Art Brussels in the UK, two months before the fair takes place.

25/2 - Together with the Flemish Representation in London, an event was set up recently at the Ambassador's residence to spotlight the world war commemorations organised by the city of **leper**, including the centenary of the first massive use of [gas](#) during WW1. The evening included a presentation on the history of 'The Last Post' ceremony (the 30,000th edition will take place in July this year) as well as the city's programme of further 14-18 commemorations.

26/2 - Level 39 in Canary Wharf, Europe's largest accelerator for technology companies, recently saw the arrival of [Swan Insights](#). This Brussels based company provides big data solutions in order for companies to improve their business performance and strategic decisions, more specifically in the field of real estate, property development and management, banks, etc. During an evening reception at the Residence, Swan Insights presented a demo of their solutions to potential British business contacts and clients.

27/2 - The Belgrave Square's residence was a dinner venue for the **Oxford University BE-LUX Society** (OUBLS). The society represents the interests of the Belgian and Luxembourg students at Oxford University and organises various academic and cultural events with the support of several companies in Belgium and Luxembourg. OUBLS also provides information and assists potential Oxford and Cambridge applicants in both countries.



26/3 - Evening reception for [Codex/+91](#), a network of CEOs and corporate executives based in the UK, creating showcase events and networking opportunities for its members.

Upcoming events at the Ambassador's Residence include:

- 16/4: Battle of Waterloo walking dinner allowing the Guards of the Household Division to thank supporters of the regiment
- 26/4: Dinner to thank all those involved in the organisation of Waterloo 200
- 19/5: Presentation of Antony Beever's book 'Ardennes 1944: Hitler's Last Gamble'

Consular News

The **visa section** of the Embassy works with an outsourcing partner ([VFS](#)) in London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Cardiff for the intake of visa applications and does so together with 12 other Schengen partners. On the 2nd of March, they moved their operations to new centres in order to provide a better service to the applicants and be prepared for the introduction of biometrics in visa later this year (expected from November 2015).

In February, one of the consuls of the Embassy travelled to Edinburgh with a **flying kit** in order to take biometric information for **passport applications**. It was the second such mission to **Edinburgh** by the Embassy and was again a tremendous success with all appointments taken up. Currently, a mission is planned to take place in **Manchester** on 16 and 17 April. More details from the embassy's [website](#).



Consul Lemarchand with the youngest passport applicant

Christiaan Sys, vice consul, was elected as **President of the Consular Corps of London (CCL)**. The CCL organises a range of activities for its membership in order for them to learn about the way things work in the UK and to provide opportunities to meet other consuls in London as well as network with civil servants, politicians and those working for charitable organisations in the fields that consuls are active in. Our fellow compatriot Professor Peter Piot has kindly agreed to speak at one of their future events.

Commemorative Events

Waterloo 200

This year sees the **bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo** where the Duke of Wellington and his army celebrated victory over the Emperor Napoleon on 18 June 1815. To mark the occasion, commemorative events are planned in both Belgium and the UK.

The official events and festivities in Belgium will run from 18-21 June, including a series of the largest **battle re-enactments** ever seen in Europe and a spectacular **sound and light show over the famous Butte du Lion**. Another significant event will be the inauguration on 17th June of the newly renovated **Hougoumont Farm**, often referred to as 'the farm that won Waterloo' because of the importance of its capture in the outcome of the battle. The site was successfully defended by the British and their allies; several thousand fighters on both sides died in the struggle. Over recent years, major rebuilding work has been taking place at the farm, sponsored by both Belgian and British public authorities and private sectors to secure the site as a world class museum.



The Embassy of Belgium in London supports and participates in the commemorations in various ways.

In December 2014, a Black Tie dinner took place at the Ambassador's Residence to thank the supporters of the restoration of the **Hougoumont Farm**. At this occasion Ambassador Trouveroy also received the **Pistrucci medal** on behalf of Belgium for its participation (then as part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands) alongside Britain in the Battle of Waterloo. The medal was presented by General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter of the UK Waterloo 200 Committee.



Ambassador Trouveroy receives the Pistrucci medal

In April, the embassy is organising two private events to support the **Waterloo 200 Committee** in preparing their 750 seat gala dinner on 17th June and to support the work of **Household Division** around the bicentenary of the battle of Waterloo, among others the Waterloo theme of this year's Beating Retreat. Additional events for those two partners will be organised in May and June.

The Belgian Tourist Office is also very much involved in promoting **Waterloo and its region as a fascinating place to visit**, be it for the commemoration festivities at the end of June or to follow the 'Napoleon's route to Wellington' for example.

For details on events in both countries, please visit:

www.belgique-tourisme.be/contenus/bicentenaire-waterloo-1815-agenda-d-evenements-et-commemorations/fr/7371.html

www.waterloo2015.org/en/programme

www.napoleonsroutetowellington.be

www.waterloo1815.be

www.waterloo200.org

www.projecthougoumont.com

Belgian Ball 2015



This year's '**Belgian Ball**', organised by the Anglo-Belgian Society under the patronage of the Belgian Ambassador, is taking place on 25 April. Since 2015 is the centenary year of Edith Cavell's execution, the proceeds of the Ball will be donated exceptionally to the Cavell Nurses' Trust of which Ambassador Trouveroy is a patron. For further details and registration, click [here](#).

Lycée Français Centenary

The **Lycée français in London** was established during the First World War to provide education to the children of the many Belgian refugees. At the time, some 250,000 Belgians had fled their country and settled in the UK. On 20, 21 and 22 May 2015, the Lycée is celebrating its **centenary**. A book published for the occasion will be presented and the Belgian presence during the first years of the Lycée will be highlighted. On 21 May, the Belgian Ambassador will participate in a ceremony which will also be attended by a member of the British Royal Family.

If you have or know about the existence of archival material related to the creation and early years of the Lycée français, please get in touch with the establishment. Click [here](#) for contact details and further information on the celebrations.

Cultural News

In Belgium:

Throughout 2015 **Mons** (together with Pilsen in the Czech Republic) marks its status as **Cultural Capital of Europe** with some 300 events, ranging from a major Van Gogh exhibition to a maze of 8,000 sunflowers. The full programme is available [here](#).

In the UK:

Luc Tuymans' exhibition '[The Shore](#)' can be visited at the David Zwirner Gallery in central London until 2 April. The paintings are Tuymans' most recent works and have been created specifically for this gallery.



He was an artist, diplomat, peace-treaty broker and even ran a Warhol-style factory. A major exhibition on '[Rubens and his Legacy](#)' is running at the Royal Academy of Arts in Piccadilly until 10 April.

Until 17 May, Cameroon artist based in Ghent **Pascale Marthine Tayou** exhibits at the [Serpentine Gallery](#) in Hyde Park. During the Summer, the exhibition will move to the Bozar in Brussels.

Events Calendar

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

Interview with Belgians in the UK

At present, some 22,000 Belgians are registered at the Belgian Embassy in London. Some of our compatriots hold impressive positions in various fields. Recently, the BBC interviewed two Belgians

working in the world of football and science. BBC Radio interviewed **Professor Peter Piot** (Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) in the series Desert Island Discs and BBC TV met up with **Katrien Meire** (CEO of Football Club Charlton Athletic). You can catch up with the interviews by clicking on the images below.



Professor Peter Piot



Katrien Meire

Publications

A **report** on the 15th **Belgo-British Conference** which took place in Brussels in November last year is now available. The conference examined the role of universities in the transfer of innovative technologies from the academic to business worlds. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

The newsletter **Economic & Business news from Belgium** highlights positive economic developments in our country (favourable statistics, success stories, etc). The texts are based on independent sources. Attention is paid to foreign investments in Belgium, contracts abroad for Belgian companies and general information on the Belgian economy. The [March edition](#) is now available from the Embassy's website.

An updated version of the brochure '**Belgium at a Glance**' which provides a comprehensive image of Belgium is available to download from the embassy's website. The publication exists in 9 languages and is particularly useful for school projects. The English version can be downloaded [here](#).

