

[View this email in your browser](#)



Belgian Events - October 2015

Newsletter of the Embassy of Belgium in London

Dear readers,

In this Autumn issue of the Embassy's newsletter you can read about the latest professional events at the Ambassador's Residence. There is important consular news for Belgians planning to renew their passports. This issue also reports on news and events related to the commemorations of both World Wars and includes an interview with An Van Camp, a Belgian curator living and working in the UK. The '*Did you know?*' section highlights Belgium on the international scene and provides feedback on the growing number of our [Facebook](#) followers. As always, the cultural calendar lists details of upcoming Belgian events in the UK.

Finally, if you have any news or 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 visit



Last month, Defence **Minister Steven Vandeput** and Interior **Minister Jan Jambon** were in London and took the opportunity to attend the world's largest defence and security equipment fair (DSEI) to support participating Belgian firms. Minister Jambon visited the Belgian Navy's new patrol ship **P901 Castor** which came into service last year and acts primarily as a command platform for the North Sea emergency plan in cooperation with various police services.

During the month of September, the Ambassador's Residence in Belgrave Square has been the venue for a fundraising dinner, a national honour bestowal and several business events.

Fundraiser



A **fundraising** event was held for the **Lutyens Trust** with guest speaker Victoria Wallace (Director General of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission). Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869 – 1944) was an architect who designed many landmark buildings and memorials, among which the Cenotaph at Whitehall and a Stone of Remembrance found in many of the larger military cemeteries. The [Lutyens Trust](#) is an educational charity dedicated to preserving and

promoting the spirit and substance of Lutyens' heritage.

(Photo: Hedge Row Trench Cemetery, Zillebeke)

Award

Ambassador Trouveroy bestowed the national honour of '**Officer in the Order of the Crown**' upon **Michel Vanhoonacker** after 10 years as Chairman of the Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Britain (BLCC). The Chamber was first created 125 years ago.

Michel Vanhoonacker is very active among the Belgian community in the UK. On top of his duties at the BLCC, he is also the Honorary Consul for Belgium in Kingston-upon-Hull. Last year, he additionally provided considerable support by attracting private sponsorship for the 'Flanders Fields Memorial Garden 1914-2014' which was opened in November last year by the Belgian King Philippe and British Queen Elizabeth II.



Business Events

A '**Retail in Brussels**' seminar took place at 36 Belgrave Square presenting business opportunities in the Brussels' retail sector for British and International chains.

The Residence was also the venue for an **Investment** seminar with **AWEX** (Office for Foreign Investors Wallonia Belgium) which focused mainly on the logistics sector.



Finally, during a networking reception, a Belgian retail delegation selected by the Belgian national retail federation **Comeos** met with British service

mission of Comeos abroad, organised in the context of the e-commerce exhibition at Olympia.

Consular news

Important information for Belgians in and around Newcastle!

Since the introduction of biometric data a few years ago, Belgians are required to come to the Embassy in person to apply for a new passport so that their fingerprints, photograph and digital signature can be taken. This procedure is in accordance with several European regulations regarding the security of European passports.

To assist Belgian nationals, the Embassy organises flying kit visits to some locations in the UK where Belgians can have their biometric data taken without having to travel to London.

On 30 October, the **flying kit** will be in **Newcastle-Upon-Tyne**. More details on how to take advantage of this service can be found on the [Embassy's website](#).

Since June last year, Belgians who are still registered in Belgium can no longer apply for a new passport at a consulate abroad. It is therefore important that Belgians who intend to live in the UK for a long period of time inform their municipality in Belgium. They are also advised to **register with the consular department at the Belgian Embassy in London** where they will then be able to **renew their passport** (and ID card) if needed.



Since the beginning of this month, **Belgian children under the age of 12** registered with the Embassy can apply for a **Kids-ID**.

The ID is valid for 3 years and costs £8. More details are available on the [Embassy's website](#).

The 'Census 2011' revealed that around **236,000 Belgians** (2.35% of the total number of Belgian nationals) are **living in another European country**, with the biggest Belgian communities in its neighbouring countries and Spain. Belgian citizens in France account for almost 40 per cent of the total number of Belgians living elsewhere in Europe, followed by the Netherlands and Spain (both 12%), Germany (10%) and the **United Kingdom (9%)**. The number of men and women is more or less balanced and a majority is aged between 30 and 64. However, the average age of Belgian nationals residing in Britain is lower, while Spain has more seniors. At present, some **23,000 Belgians** are **registered** at the **Belgian Embassy in London**.

Remembering past Conflicts

World War 2

During the month of September, several events took place to remember the **75th anniversary** of the

On 8 September, Ambassador Trouveroy received a **commemorative medal** which was presented to representatives of the 16 nations that took part in the Battle.



On 15 September, the '**Battle of Britain Day**', the medal was handed over to General Van Caelenberghe, Belgium's Chief of Defence and pilot himself. Both the General and the Ambassador attended a commemorative ceremony at **St Paul's Cathedral** to pay respect to those who played a part in winning the Battle of Britain. The ceremony was followed by a reception at the Guildhall. It was on that day in 1940 that the German Luftwaffe embarked on a large bombing attack, forcing the engagement of the entire RAF in defence of London and the South East. 30 Belgian pilots participated in the Battle of Britain, of whom 18 did not survive the war. In fact, Belgium provided the largest contingent of pilots during the Battle of Britain that were not from Eastern Europe or the Commonwealth. In total 1,200 Belgians served in the RAF during the course of the second world war.

On 20 September, a religious ceremony took place at **Westminster Cathedral**, presided by Prince Charles.

World War 1

A new [website](#) containing 360,000 pages from **Belgian newspapers** published during the **Great War** can now be consulted by people across the globe.

The historically valuable website content comes from Belgium's biggest libraries and war archives. It can be consulted free of charge and is available in English, Dutch, French and German. The site includes mass circulation dailies, but also stenciled news sheets.



Some of the articles come from newspapers in German occupied Belgium and were subject to the German censor. Uncensored Underground publications are included as well. News sheets were also distributed at the front to keep the troops informed, including publications produced by soldiers themselves. The archive contains newspapers published abroad as well for the benefit of the thousands of Belgian refugees in Britain, France and the Netherlands.

In fact, the biggest flow of **refugees** ever to arrive on British shores were Belgians. An estimated quarter of a million Belgians came to Britain during the Great War. A first wave crossed the English Channel at the outbreak of the conflict to be joined by many more in the following years. On 14 October 1914 16,000 Belgians arrived - the largest number to land on one single day.

A [BBC guide](#) to Belgian refugees described the Belgians as 'plucky' and explained how Britain opened its door following the 'Rape of Belgium'. The UK think tank [British Future](#) too has devoted attention to this phenomenon on its website noting that the majority of British people have never heard about the Belgian refugees.

Events Calendar

activities with a Belgian touch. The list is constantly updated.

Interview with a Belgian in the UK



An Van Camp has recently taken up the post of Curator of Northern European Art at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford. Prior to that, she was Curator of Dutch and Flemish Drawings and Prints (up to the late 19th century) at The British Museum in London. She recently co-curated the major exhibition '[Drawing in Silver and Gold](#)' which is currently on display at The British Museum.

Click [here](#) to read the interview.

Did you know...?

Last month, Belgium reached the **Davis Cup final** for the first time since 1904 by beating Argentina in the semi-finals. The Davis Cup is the men's international team competition in tennis. On their way to the final, Belgium had already downed defending champion Switzerland and Canada.

Meanwhile, Britain also qualified for a place in the final by moving past Australia. The final between our two countries will be played between 27 and 29 November in Ghent and will give Belgium a chance to take revenge. The last Davis Cup final we played in 1904 was against the British Isles... and resulted in a 5-0 defeat.

Follow us on FB for details on where to watch the final matches in London in Belgian company.



On 5 October, [VLM Airlines](#) which operates out of Deurne Airport in Antwerp, started a thrice-weekly round trip **service** between **Antwerp** and **Birmingham Airport**. The introduction of the new route has come about thanks to a growing demand for flights from both business people and tourists. The Ambassador welcomed the first flight in Birmingham.

The Times Higher Education magazine has just published its annual **World University Rankings** which lists 800 institutions from 70 countries. Belgium counts 4 institutions in the top 200. KU Leuven ranks 35th (up 20 places), which makes it the highest-placed university in Belgium, followed by UGent (118), UCL Louvain-la-Neuve (167) and UAntwerpen (190).



In June 2013, the Belgian Embassy in London started its **Facebook** page. Last month, the number of fans topped the 1,000 mark.

Who are these loyal readers? Almost half of our fans are based in the UK and just under a third in Belgium. We also find considerable interest in the US, Pakistan, France, Australia and Canada. 40% are female and 60% male. The majority are between 25 and 44 years old.

A big thank you to all our loyal fans and we hope you spread our FB news around the globe.

Copyright © 2015 Embassy of Belgium in the UK, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
belgianevents.uk@diplobel.fed.be

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)