

Newsletter

Embassy of Ireland Monthly Newsletter | February 2018



Green Lines

By Ambassador Helena Nolan

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2018. If it's not too late, I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year. I was in Ireland for Christmas and celebrated the New Year back here in Brussels. Before I left here in December, I spent a fascinating day in Antwerp, stopping first at the Plantain Moretus Museum, which is well worth a visit, especially if you love books, as I'm sure you've all noticed that I do! Seeing the last surviving printing presses in the world was quite an emotional moment for me, which I know that all book lovers will appreciate, as well as that particular smell of old books - what is it about that? But most of all, I was struck by the ingenuity, craft, artistry, imagination and utter determination that were required to survive and thrive in the early days of printing. I came away so impressed and, reflecting on the treasures in our own Irish libraries, was struck once again by the heritage of creativity and imagination that Ireland and Belgium continue to have in common and which will reinforce us as we face the challenges and opportunities ahead.



This was a theme I took up in a very engaging meeting with the Governor of Antwerp, who I was delighted to learn is a James Joyce fan and we are both looking forward to the Joyce Symposium at the University of Antwerp in June. The Embassy is delighted to support this event and news of more Bloomsday celebrations here will follow.

It's great to see that a new Museum of Irish Literature/MOLI, is getting ready to open on St Stephen's Green, a new neighbour for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, this will I am sure be a wonderful visitor destination in Dublin, just like the EPIC Museum of Irish Emigration which has rejuvenated the CHQ Building and is a really exciting and innovative approach to sharing our history in a bold, new, thematic, inclusive and interactive way - a visit is highly recommended.

High-Level Seminar
 Preparing businesses for Brexit
 Views from Ireland and Flanders - Belgium

SAVE THE DATE

Join us for a lively, insightful debate at an iconic location.

 Antwerp Port House
 February 28th, 2018
 1:30 pm - 5:00 pm

With confirmed participation of

 Helen McEntee TD, Minister for European Affairs
 Julie Sinnemont, CEO Enterprise Ireland
 Tonia Van de Vyver, Director General, Flanders Investment & Trade
 Helena Nolin, Irish Ambassador to Belgium

Supported by




But to get back to Antwerp, there I had one more treat in store, a meeting with the authorities at the iconic Port House which is a stunning design, recently shortlisted for ‘World Building of the Year’. This building is a spectacular example of beauty and industry combined, of the old and the new working together. I am delighted that it will be the venue for a High Level Brexit Seminar for Irish and Belgian businesses which we are jointly arranging together with Enterprise Ireland and their colleagues in Flanders

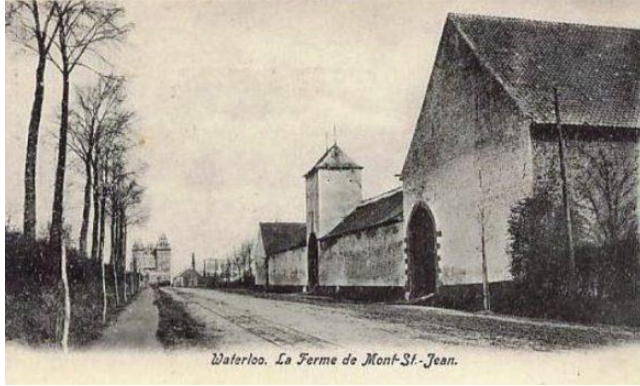
Investment and Trade and Beleire, and which will be addressed by the Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee TD at the end of this month.

We are looking forward to the Minister’s visit and to enhanced bilateral engagement with Belgium at political and official levels this year, as well as continuing a range of cultural activities and promotional events relating to trade, food and tourism, developed and delivered in collaboration with our fantastic Local Market Team here – Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and Tourism Ireland. The whole team here and I have lots of great ideas for the year ahead in Belgium. Our ambitions are limited only by time and resources! To help all of our Embassies with strategic planning, there was a gathering of Ambassadors back in Dublin for a few days in mid-January, where we exchanged ideas and best practice, reviewed strategies and received briefings and updates. On my return, our Secretary General and some colleagues visited their Belgian counterparts here and had really excellent exchanges, so we now feel very reinforced in our plans for the year ahead.

As part of this work, we want to continue to improve our services to citizens and visitors and to open a conversation with our Diaspora here, so we welcome your feedback, as always. One of the items in the calendar that we really look forward to now is the Embassy Book Club, which goes from strength to strength and is always an enlivening conversation. And I think that, one of our most engaging events since my arrival was our celebration of St Brigid’s Day on 1 February, when we took the opportunity to honour early Irish female entrepreneurs. Antonia Hart’s talk was fascinating and the discussion that followed was just as interesting. We have taken note of the enthusiasm for these type of events.



This week, I was delighted to visit the Mont-Saint-Jean Farm and Museum at Waterloo, which is a working brewery but also commemorates the location of the field hospital for that battle, in which so many Irish died and, like all commemorations here in Belgium, this one is inclusive and founded on the lessons of history for peace and for the European project. The small but beautiful museum is



clearly a real labour of love and is well worth a visit.

It is only by understanding and valuing the lessons of the past that we can truly prepare for the future, something I felt very deeply when I had the honour to attend the Nobel Peace Prize in December as a guest of the winners, ICAN, with whom I had worked closely in my former disarmament role, and something I have also felt during each of the Commemorations events I participated in here last year. Belgium and

Ireland may be among the smaller nations in the EU and at the UN but we also have big ideas and share a common commitment to multilateralism, to peace building and to our future in Europe. It's surely no accident that we are both seeking one of the rotating seats on the UN Security Council in consecutive years 2019/20 and 2021/22, another good thing that we have in common. But, of course, as we recall the past and strive for the future, we must also remember to delight in the present. So, I want to wish you all a spring and a whole year that is filled with delights and let's look forward to sharing some of them together!

SAVE THE DATE



The Irish Universities Alumni Network Belgium event with Helen McEntee T.D., Minister for European Affairs

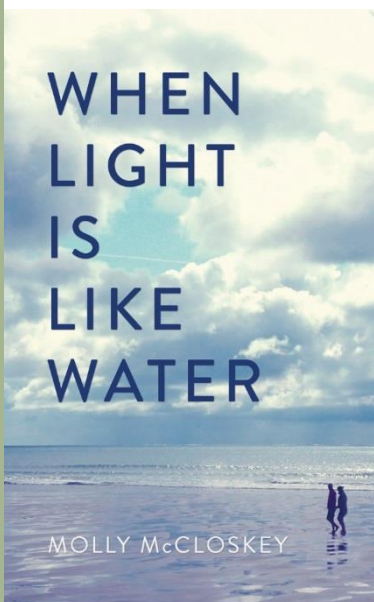
27.02.2018 | 18:30 > 20:00

Where: Embassy of Ireland | Rue Froissart 50 | 1040 Brussels

The Irish Universities Alumni Network Belgium is delighted to invite you to a networking event hosted by the Embassy of Ireland, which will be addressed by the Minister for European Affairs, Helen McEntee TD.

Registrations: Please register [here](#) to attend the event.

Embassy of Ireland Book Club



6.03.2018 | 18:00 > 19:00

Join us **on Tuesday 6 March** (18:00 – 19:00) for the third meeting of the Embassy of Ireland Book Club. The Book Club is reading books by contemporary Irish authors writing in English today, and meets every 6 weeks.

For the next meeting we will read the book of **Molly McCloskey – “When Light Is Like Water”**.

You can get a copy of the book in **Waterstones Brussels** – mention the Embassy of Ireland Book Club for a 10% discount!

We hope that you’ll join us!

Registrations: Please register [here](#) to attend.

EuropArt Festival

The Embassy of Ireland is delighted to support the 7th edition of chamber music festival EuropArt festival which takes place from **3-11 March** in Brussels. The festival will see the LAPS Ensemble premiere a composition by Irish composer Peter Fahey on 6 March. For details and tickets see <https://europart.brussels/festival/>.

Europeana Migration

Europeana Migration will hold a story collection day event at the House of European History in Brussels from **15-17 March**. People are invited to join and share their family history, personal stories and memorabilia related to migration. The stories will be part of an online testament to Europe's rich history of migration, freely available for anyone to discover and use for education, research, inspiration and pleasure. The campaign is also part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.



Bliain na Gaeilge 2018

Tá 125 bliain caite ónar bunaíodh Conradh na Gaeilge agus ónar cuireadh tús le hAthbheochan na Gaeilge in 1893. Is féile bhliana ar son na teanga í Bliain na Gaeilge 2018 le comóradh a dhéanamh air seo, agus tá áit do dhiaspóra na hÉireann agus do bhaill den diaspóra dáimhe ag croí an cheiliúrtha phobail seo. Is féidir teacht ar gach eolas faoi Bhlain na Gaeilge 2018 ar-líne ag www.gaeilge2018.ie.

2018 marks 125 years of the Gaelic Revival since the founding of Conradh na Gaeilge, also known as The Gaelic League, in 1893. Bliain na Gaeilge 2018 is an international commemoration of this, and the Irish diaspora and affinity diaspora are at the heart of these community celebrations. All information on Bliain na Gaeilge 2018 can be found online at www.gaeilge2018.ie.

Twitter competition

Did you know that the Embassy is on Twitter? Follow us on Twitter and retweet this competition and you could be in with a chance to win a fantastic prize of 2 tickets to

Epic: The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin!

The winner will be announced on **Monday 19 March**.



[@IrishEmbBelgium](https://twitter.com/IrishEmbBelgium)



<https://epicchq.com/>

Online Adult Passport Renewals

Apply Online to Save Time!

Did you know that you can now renew or replace your Irish passport **online**? Check out our FAQs below:

Who is eligible to use the online application service?

Existing Irish passport holders, who are aged 18 years or over, can now **renew or replace** their lost/stolen/damaged passport using the Online Passport Application Service. No paper application forms, witnesses or printed photos are required.

What do I need to apply online?

You will need a digital photograph, an email address and a credit/debit card.

Can I renew my passport online if I live in Belgium?

Yes. Your new passport will be sent directly from the Irish Passport Office via registered post – the online application facility allows you to enter your home address and a dispatch address for daytime delivery (if different).

Can I also apply for the Passport Card at the same time?

Yes. If you get a Passport Book and Passport Card together you will save €20.

How long does the process take?

Online applications usually take 10 days plus postage time.

Where can I find out more information?

Check out dfa.ie/passportonline for more details.



Citizens' Registration

Irish citizens travelling or living overseas are encouraged to register their contact details with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This information will only be used to make contact in emergency circumstances and is separate from the Embassy mailing list.

For more information or to register, go to the TravelWise app or on the [Citizens' Registration page](#).

The Irish Ball 2018

featuring

DAMHSA

17th March 2018

Steigenberger Wilheer's Hotel

To book contact:

Irishball2018@gmail.com ☎ 0476 71 33 29

ICB Members €89. Non-Members €99

Dress code: strictly black-tie. Over 18's



IRISH CLUB
OF BELGIUM

Follow the Embassy of Ireland Twitter for information and updates on events
[@IrishEmbBelgium](#)

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*Those who wish to be added to our **mailing list** can register [here](#)*



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