

# Newsletter

Embassy of Ireland Monthly Newsletter | March 2018



## Green Lines

By Ambassador Helena Nolan

*Happy St Patrick's Day, Beannachtí Lá Fhéile Pádraig,*

*After a flurry of snow, March is upon us and here in the Embassy, we are looking forward to all the events coming up this weekend and next week. Last night, I was delighted to be able to launch Seachtain na Gaeilge at The Old Oak, where we enjoyed great ceol agus craic in good company and I tried my hand at cúpla focail as gaeilge, which didn't go down too badly with the large and forgiving crowd, míle buiochas and I will try to be better next year!*

*This has been an interesting few weeks for us here in Belgium, with lots more high level visits,*



*demonstrating the increasing importance of this bilateral relationship. Our Brexit team from HQ met with their Belgian counterparts and found much in common, our Irish Aid colleagues met with their Belgian colleagues to discuss potential collaboration in Africa and Minister Helen McEntee, Minister for Europe, was here for her first Bilateral Visit to Belgium, taking in both Brussels and Antwerp over two jam-packed days with us. Many of you may have met her at the Alumni networking event, which*

*we were pleased to host at the embassy, where she spoke eloquently, both about Brexit but also on the Future of Europe and the Citizens Dialogue on which she has been leading in Ireland, encouraging our diaspora here to also engage in that debate. The Minister also met with the new Women Ambassadors Network of Brussels, which together with some of my female colleagues I have helped to establish – on 8 March for International Women's Day, Foreign Minister Reynders invited us to a panel discussion at the Egmont Palace at which he welcomed the establishment of our network. When she met the group, Minister McEntee spoke about the important role of women in politics, diplomacy and international affairs and the efforts that Ireland is making in this regard.*



*As a woman ambassador here, only our second woman ambassador to Belgium since Mary Tinney back in 1978, it was very empowering for me and indeed for all the female ambassadors who met her, to have the Minister speak and to hear her commitment to gender equality. The Minister also had some political meetings and she addressed a High Level Ireland/Belgium Brexit Summit for businesses at the iconic Port of Antwerp,*

*which we organised together with Enterprise Ireland and Beleire and our friends in Flanders Investment and Trade. I also want to thank our Honorary Consul in Antwerp Yves Rombouts for his great support in organising this event. This was a great event with over 100 business leaders and was a useful and timely exchange of views on common challenges and our approaches to preparedness for Brexit and supporting our businesses. I was especially proud to be speaking on an all-female panel at this event, together with Minister McEntee, the CEO of Enterprise Ireland, Juile Sinnamon, and Tonia Van de Vyver of FIT.*

*It's been a time of speeches, as I was delighted on Tuesday to talk with visiting business students from Waterford IT about the range of our work here in the embassy and Ireland Belgian relations. I also talked about a career in diplomacy and hopefully did not put them off considering one! As a Kilkenny woman, it was lovely to welcome some in the group from near home.*



*And last week, after the Minister and her team had left Antwerp, I headed back to The Atomium, to talk to Belgian food media and bloggers about the wonderful Irish beef that the Chef in The Atomium restaurant, Alexandre Masson, is now serving, as he has become a member of the Bord Bia "Chefs Irish Beef Club". Having sampled some of the delicious new menu, I would highly recommend it. And I can report that the inside of the Atomium restaurant was turned green for the occasion, so I will be*

*counting that as one of our "greenings" this year, along with The Grand Place in Brussels, The Celtic Cross at Fontenoy, The Belfry in Mons, the Lille Gate in Ieper, The City Hall in Dinant and the Burg in Bruges. We are proud to be participating again, with our colleagues in Tourism Ireland, in the Global Greening initiative and look forward to seeing all these Belgian icons turn green, thanks to the Belgian authorities. I will also have the honour of dressing the Manneken-Pis in his Irish costume again this year and am hoping to see many of you there on Sunday afternoon 18 March at 4:30 pm; who knows, I may even dress to match!*



*Last Friday, as the snow came down I was in the beautiful city of Ieper, to meet the Mayor and his colleagues and to visit the In Flanders Fields Museum. Once again, I was struck by the inclusive approach of Belgium to these catastrophic events of war and the important lessons which must resonate with us all today. I was pleased to learn that the Museum is considering a Summer School and a*

*Transition Year programme for Irish young people and I will be looking forward to hearing more about this valuable idea, so that the terrible losses of past wars are not forgotten and that the coming generations understand the European peace project, which has delivered the European Union in which we all now have so many opportunities to travel, work, study and prosper. We were talking about identity and place the other night here in yet another fascinating Book Club discussion and all were agreed that Belgium is a welcoming place and a place where it is possible for Irish people to feel at home. I have certainly felt that and as I approach my first St Patrick's Day here, I am feeling very grateful, grateful for my role, for my brilliant team here, for the chance to get to know some of you here and for the kindness and welcome my family and I have enjoyed since last summer from Irish friends and friends of Ireland in Belgium. So, enjoy all the St Patrick's Day celebrations and we hope to see you in the embassy at one of our events again soon.*



## St. Patrick's Day & Global Greening Campaign

### Dressing of the Manneken-Pis Statue, Brussels

**17.03.2018 | 9:00 > 18:00**

**18.03.2018 | 9:00 > 18:00 - Special ceremony at 16.30**



On the occasion of St. Patrick's Day, the Manneken-Pis, one of Europe's most visited statues and a national treasure of Belgium, will be dressed in traditional Irish clothing. Members of the Irish community and all those who wish to celebrate St. Patrick's Day are invited to join in the festivities as the Irish outfit is officially unveiled at 16h30 on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at the statue of the Manneken-Pis. The outfit will be unveiled in the presence of the Ambassador of Ireland to the Kingdom of Belgium H.E. Ms. Helena Nolan and the President of the Order of the Friends of the Manneken-Pis. (Location [map](#))



## Greening of the Grand Place, Brussels

17.03.2018 | 20:00

On the occasion of St. Patrick's Day, Brussels City Council has once again decided that the magnificent Brussels Grand Place will be lit in green as part of Tourism Ireland's Global Greening Initiative, in partnership with the Embassy of Ireland to the Kingdom of Belgium. Members of the public are welcome to join the

media to see the moment the Grand Place will be greened on Saturday 17th March 2017 at 20h00. (Location [map](#))



## Greening of The Burg Square, Brugge/Bruges

17.03.2018 | 20:00

To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the Bruges City Council has decided that the City Hall and the Burg Square in Bruges, one of Belgium's two Medieval squares, will turn green to the Tourism Ireland's Global Greening Initiative, in partnership with the Embassy of Ireland to the Kingdom of Belgium. (click [here](#) for a map of the location of the Burg Square)



## Greening of the Lille Gate in Ieper/ Ypres

16.03.2018 till 19.03.2018

The Ieper College of Burgomaster and Aldermen have decided that the Lille

Gate will be lit in green for the first time from Friday 16 till Monday 19 March 2018 as a part of Tourism Ireland's Global Greening Initiative, in partnership with the Embassy of Ireland to the Kingdom of Belgium. Of all the city gates only the original rooms of the Lille Gate were preserved. The Burgundian towers stand next to the bridge, the 14th century lock room and Gatekeeper's house. (More about the Lille Gate [here](#))



## Greening of the City Hall of Dinant & the “Irish village”

17.03.2018 | 12:00-22:00

On the occasion of St. Patrick’s Day, Dinant City Council has decided that the City Hall be lit in green as part of Tourism Ireland’s Global Greening Initiative, in partnership with the Embassy of Ireland to the Kingdom of Belgium. The City Hall will also host festivities “Irish village” from 12.00 till 22.00 on Saturday 17 March featuring the Irish music, Irish/Belgian

food and other attractions. Location: Rue Grande, 112, Dinant (click [here](#) for more info)



## Greening of the Celtic Cross in Fontenoy

15.03.2018 – 19.03.2018

The Celtic Cross in Fontenoy joins Tourism Ireland’s Global Greening for the second time to mark St Patrick’s Day this year. The Cross was erected in 1907 to commemorate the famous battle of Fontenoy in 1745. It’s a memorial to all the Irish on both sides who lost their lives in the battle. Members of the public are welcome to

see the Celtic Cross in Fontenoy which will be illuminated from 15 March till 19 March 2018. (click [here](#) for a map of the location of the Celtic Cross)



## Greening of the Beffroi/Belfry, Mons

17.03.2018 | 20:00

A proud symbol of Mons identity and an important landmark, The Belfry (“le beffroi” in French) will join iconic landmarks taking part in the Global Greening on the occasion of the St. Patrick’s Day. Listed by UNESCO since 1999, Mons Belfry is a remarkable example of local architectural history. This fabulous structure accommodates an interpretive centre dedicated to its history and its listing as a UNESCO heritage site, as well as enabling visitors to enjoy panoramic views. Members of the public are welcome to see the Belfry in Mons which will be illuminated on St. Patrick’s Day, Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018. (click [here](#) for a map of the location of the Belfry)

**We look forward to seeing you there!**

## Save the date



### St. Patrick's Day Festival

When: **Sunday March 11, 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

Where: in Parc Du Cinquantenaire, Brussels, organised by [Belgium GAA](#) and [FC Irlande](#).

Sport, music, dance, rang Gaeilge do thosaitheoiri (Irish class for beginners) and much much more.

And don't forget to get your tombola tickets in order to be in with a chance to win some great prizes! The full programme can be found [here](#).

### Charity Bridge Tournament and Afternoon Tea/Cocktail Dinatoire

In aid of projects funded by [Association Femmes D'Europe aisbl](#)



When: **Tuesday 13 March 2018**

Where: at St Anthony's Parish Centre

Av des Anciens Combattants 23-25, 1950 Kraainem (ample parking).

Registration from 13h45. Play begins 14h30 sharp. Coffee will be served between 13h45 and 14h15. Afternoon tea/cocktail dinatoire and prize-giving will follow play.

Cost: €35 per person

Information: [maeve.doran@skynet.be](mailto:maeve.doran@skynet.be) ☎ 0474 516 702 or

[maura.carroll@brutele.be](mailto:maura.carroll@brutele.be) ☎ 0477 285 762

### John Banville at Passaporta, Brussels

When: **Thursday 15 March (20:00 – 21:30)**

Passaporta will host a conversation with Irish Booker Prize-winner John Banville this Thursday 15 March (20:00 – 21:30).

Reserve your ticket here: <http://www.passaporta.be/en/agenda/john-banville>

# St. Patrick's Day Celebration March 15, 2018

## Invitation & Programme

free  
event



Culture Ireland  
Cultúr Éireann

You are cordially invited to our  
**St. Patrick's Day Celebration 2018**  
Thursday, March 15,  
at the historic Irish College, Leuven

Programme of the evening includes

- 8 pm Welcome address by Mr. David Grant, CEO of LIIE
- 8.05 pm Launch of the new EFACIS projects
- 8.20 pm Inauguration of *The Souvenir Shop* exhibition  
by artist **Rita Duffy**
- 9.30 pm Concert by **Rossa**

Drinks available. The Irish College will turn green as part of Tourism Ireland's Global Greening 2018.



This event is hosted by the Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe, the Leuven Centre for Irish Studies, and the European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies.



## Darkness into Light comes to Brussels

12.05.2018 | 04:00

Please join the Irish and wider international community in bringing the Darkness into Light fundraiser to Brussels for the first time. Wake up and walk with us **on Saturday May 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 at 4am in Parc Cinquanteaire.**

Darkness into Light began when a bereaved couple from Dublin, rose at 4am to walk into the dawn in memory of their son, who tragically died by suicide. Since 2009 the event has grown from 400 people in the Phoenix Park, Dublin to a worldwide event in over 150 towns and cities across Ireland, China, Canada, Australia and beyond.

Funds raised from the Brussels Darkness into Light Walk will jointly benefit Pieta House - an Irish Suicide Prevention organisation - and two Belgian organisations sharing similar values - Centrum ter Preventie van Zelfdoding and Centre de prevention de suicide.

**Be a part of the first ever Brussels' Darkness into Light on 12 May at 4am.**

**Further information can be found [here](#).**

**Registration opens on 14 March.**

## Irish Music in Flanders

This St. Patrick's weekend Dalkey musician William Byrne will be performing in Belgium. Willy plays Irish music but also covers from Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, Edith Piaf and more. Search for "William Byrne Dalkey" on Facebook for more.

**Friday, 16 March - Bij Jokke (Eizer, Overijse)**

**Saturday, 17 March - 't Klein Verzet (Terlanen, Overijse)**

**Sunday, 18 March - Cafe Sportecho (Gemeenteplein, Hoeilaart)**



## College of Europe Celtic Week

Each year students at the College of Europe in Bruges hold a national week to promote their countries and cultures. This year, Irish students have teamed up with Scotland, England, Galicia and Brittany to create a Celtic Week which will take place in April. The group have organised a rugby tournament, a céilí, will screen an Irish film and serve Irish food and drink.

In order to make the event possible, the group are seeking sponsors. If you think you can help or would like more information on Celtic Week, you can visit a website set up by the students at [this link](#).



## The Colorist Orchestra ft. Lisa Hannigan

The Colorist Orchestra is an unusual pop/chamber music collective founded Aarich Jespers and Kobe Proesmans. The fundamental idea is to rearrange the repertoire of an invited singer-songwriter.

On Saturday, April 7, as part of [More Music! Festival in Bruges](#), the Colorist Orchestra will be joined by critically-acclaimed Irish singer, songwriter and musician Lisa Hannigan.

For more information, please visit the [festival website](#).



### 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**.

You can also tweet us your favourite Irish heroine from history or today to be in with a chance of winning one of [these wonderful books](#)!

### The Embassy book club

The next book club choice for April is “The Heart’s Invisible Furies” by John Boyne. The date will be announced shortly.

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

*If you have received this email in error, or do not wish to receive further updates from the Embassy of Ireland please email to [brusselsembassy@dfa.ie](mailto:brusselsembassy@dfa.ie) with ‘unsubscribe’ in the subject line.*

*The Embassy is not responsible for external services and events or for the content of external websites.*

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



**Ambasáid na hÉireann  
Embassy of Ireland**