

20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

of the

*Friends of the Countryside*





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## Details

### 1.06

- Château St Gerlach, Joseph Cornelli allée 1, 6301 KK Valkenburg aan de Geul (NL)  
**[www.stgerlach.nl](http://www.stgerlach.nl)**

- Kasteel Amstenrade, Hoofdstraat, 6436 AP Amstenrade (NL)

### 2.06

- Kasteel Hex, Kasteel dreef 1, 3870 Heers  
**[www.hex.be](http://www.hex.be)**

### 3.06

#### Yellow:

- Château de Scy Sanssouci, rue Hector Montjoie 6, 5361 Scy
- Château de Ramezée, 5370 Barvaux-Condroz

#### Blue:

- Wijnkasteel Genoelselderen, Kasteelstraat 9, 3770 Riemst
- Hamal, 3700 Rutten

#### Green:

- Château de Westerlo, Polderstraat 51, 2260 Westerlo
- Château de Vogelsanck, Kasteeldreef 1, 3550 Zolder

#### YFCS:

- Kasteel Schoonbeek, 3740 Beverst
- Commanderie Alden Biesen, Kasteelstraat 6, 3740 Bilzen
- Kasteel Bétho, Mulkerstaart 2, 3700 Tongeren

PDF Programme on [www.friendsofthecountryside.org](http://www.friendsofthecountryside.org)  
and <https://elo.trustedarea.com>

**Château St Gerlach staff will help you to order your taxi for Maastricht or airports.**



# Natural Capital Private Management

Dear Friends of the Countryside,

With great pleasure we present you the program of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside, this time taking place at Hex Castle in Belgium. It will be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and look back at 20 years of history of Friends of the Countryside.

During that time, we strived to support the economic, social and environmental management of the countryside throughout Europe and we can look back at joyful/successful moments and aims we achieved.

For the next 20 years to come we still have many objectives and challenges ahead of us that we can hopefully approach with the same strong attitude we could display until now.

**Michael Prinz zu Salm-Salm**  
**President**



**20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the  
Friends of the Countryside**  
**BELGIUM - June 1 to 3, 2017**

# How it Began



"When Johan Nordenfalk, Giuseppe Visconti, Alain Nougier and I came to the conclusion that urgent action was needed to promote the many private contributions to the countryside, it was founded on the strong belief that its future is dependent on the individual decisions and rights of millions of private landowners. Any sustainable future depends on strong, fair and progressive

working relationships between the public and private sector, not on all kinds of burdensome rules and expropriations. The European countryside is not a museum to be visited by an increasingly urban population. We will never create value, deliver innovation or protect biodiversity if we start pretending that it ever was or ever should be.

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Now, more than ever before, Europe sees the need to make our land management sustainable. I am proud to say that the Friends of the Countryside was one of the earliest to see these problems and the Anders Wall Award is part of our response. These ideas have been central to the extraordinary evolution of the ELO; from one staff member in 1997, there are now 30. Together with the decisive support of the growing Friends of the Countryside network, we will continue to demonstrate the extraordinary power of the private sector, and impact and influence these debates.

For the last 20 years, the Friends have visited more than 20 European countries, including Russia and the Ukraine. We have proudly shown the flag for private entrepreneurship in Dresden, Kiev, Oxford, Skone, Vilnius, Toledo and many other places.

On these visits, combining our shared experiences and different views have provided extraordinary value when we develop our thinking and our policies. In the next twenty years, it is crucial that the Friends continue to share their vision for a prosperous, democratic European society. Grounded in our fundamental belief in property rights and the private sector, our vision is not founded in myth, but based on the reality of today, and the promise of tomorrow. "

**Thierry de l'Escaille, Secretary General**





"Mid 1990s. The European Landowners' Organization half asleep. Three new boardmembers – Alain Nougiers, Thierry and myself – decided something must be done. An office was set up in Brussels. Intense lobbying began.

Soon ELO was recognized as a voice from the countryside to be listened to. Also individual landowners noticed and asked if they could join. But no, ELO was to be kept as a body for the national landowners' organizations, not for individuals.

So the idea was born to form a separate organization for individuals, Friends of the Countryside. It was to be an exclusive organization for prominent persons with knowledge of the countryside who could contribute both financially and with ideas. But ELO would still do the lobbying towards EU.

I am happy that now, 20 years later, both ELO and FCS and our partnership are very vital indeed.. Without ELO and the support of FCS the situation for the landowners and, for that matter, the whole countryside would indeed be a lot more endangered.

In this work the General Assemblies of FCS play an important role. Landowners with knowledge of a variety of actual problems and possibilities get together and discuss. We exchange views with representatives for EU and other political institutions. And get the opportunity to visit interesting estates and learn from other landowners. And we have fun! So do not miss the opportunity to participate and combine useful work with pleasure!

Happy anniversary Friends of the Countryside!"

***Baron Johan Nordenfalk, Honorary President***



"World looks more dangerous and complicated since the founding Congress of FCS in Florence: uncertainty and worry are the predominant sentiments.

But whatever may happen our group of European landowners (including Britons) stands on a solid basis of shared principles which will resist in the future.

Respect of nature, food production for the increasing world population, preservation of a living countryside in a restless effort of promoting, within a framework of freedom and solidarity, better life conditions for future generations.

This was, still is, and will remain our noble commitment as landowners."

***Don Giuseppe Visconti, Honorary President***

# Foreword

Dear Friends,

It's a great pleasure for the Belgian delegation of the Friends of the Countryside and Young Friends to welcome you all in our beautiful country for the 20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly where we will discuss about Natural Capital and Private Management. Belgium, located at the crossroads of many cultures, rich in its history is one of the most open countries in the world; due to its place at the heart of the European Union and its active role in international institutions, our country plays a leading role in the formulation of policies for sustainable development and environmental protection.

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We prepared a rich programme to show you a range of estates from North to South. You will meet with families and entrepreneurs who are managing their estates and businesses on an innovative and sustainable way. You will discover the hidden treasures of our houses, the diversity of the landscapes of Wallonia and Flanders, the particularity of the Polders, the rich past of our cities. You will have the opportunity to share and exchange on our common concerns with landowners who will show good examples of what can be achieved on our estates.

Hex, our family estate is famous for its gardens and roses. The collection of roses started from the early days of the estate and became the estates crown jewel thanks to the passion of the successive generations. The collection is estimated to consist of more than 1000 roses from more than 500 different species which you will be able to see.

We thank all the families who accepted to open their estates and houses to welcome you in Belgium.

**Ghislain d'Ursel**  
**FCS Board member**



*Thursday, June 1*

*Welcome at Château St Gerlach in Valkenburg aan de Geul (NL), owned by the family Oostwegel.*

**04:00 pm - 07:00 pm** Info desk open

## **For FCS Board Members: Château St Gerlach - de Selys de Fanson room**

**04:00 pm** Welcome in the Bistro courtyard  
**04:30 pm - 06:30 pm** Board meeting  
**08:00 pm - 10:30 pm** Board dinner (dress code, dark suit)

## **For FCS Members: Kasteel Amstenrade**

**06:45 pm** Meeting for bus at hotel lobby (Departure 07:00 pm)  
**07:30 pm - 11:00 pm** Visit and informal dinner hosted by Mr and Mrs Henri van Lith de Jeude

*Kasteel Amstenrade - Hoofdstraat, 6436 AP Amstenrade (NL) - 14km from Château St Gerlach.*

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# Friday, June 2

Breakfast is served from 07:00 am

## FCS Members

08:00 am

Meeting for bus at hotel lobby

08:15 am *Sharp*

Departure for the General Assembly

09:30 am - 09:45 am

Welcome at Hex castle, hosted by Count and Countess Ghislain d'Ursel

09:45 am - 11:00 am

**20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Friends of the Countryside**

11:00 am - 11:15 am

Presentation of the WEW-Welcoming Estates Website by Hein Van Beek

11:15 am - 11:45 am

Coffee break

11:45 am - 12:00 pm

Welcome address Dr. Heinrich Henckel von Donnersmarck,  
CEO LGT Bank (Switzerland) Ltd.

12:00 pm - 01:10 pm

**Conference "Natural Capital, Private Management"**

- Welcome by Ghislain d'Ursel, FCS Board Member
- Keynote by Janez Potočnik, chair of FFA, Former commissioner DG Environment, *"The Challenge - Natural Capital, Private Management"*.

Responding panel moderated by Jurgen Tack, Scientific Director, ELO

- Janez Potočnik, chair of FFA, Former commissioner DG Environment
  - Karel Pinxten, European Court of Auditors, *Private "Conservation in Farming Land"*
  - Humberto Delgado Rosa, DG ENVI, *"Europe Concerns on Environment"*
- Discussion / Q&A

01:10 pm - 01:20 pm

Conclusion remarks, Michael Prinz zu Salm-Salm, FCS President

01:30 pm - 03:00 pm

Buffet lunch

## Partners

09:45 am

Meeting for bus at hotel lobby

10:00 am *Sharp*

Departure for Maastricht

10:45 am

Meet with Mrs Louise van de Werve for a guided tour at **Bonnefanten Museum**,  
with the presence of the Director of the museum

12:30 pm

Departure for Hex castle

01:30 pm - 03:00 pm

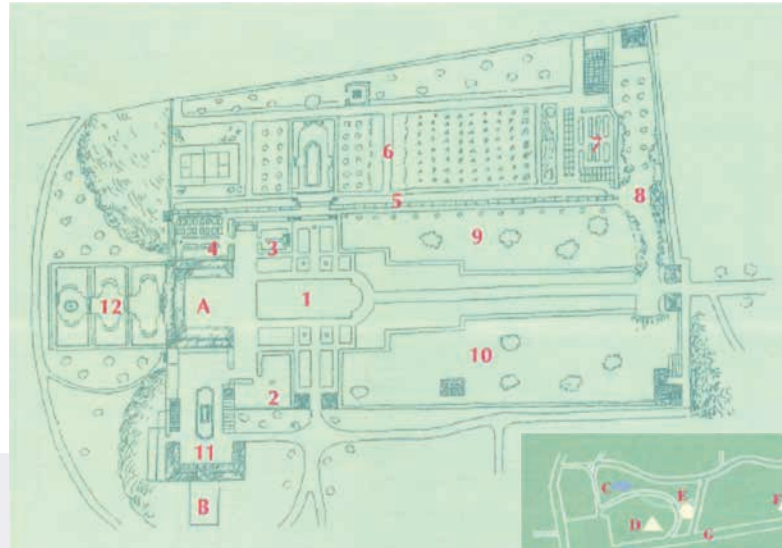
Buffet lunch

# Afternoon at Hex castle

**03:00 pm - 05:00 pm** Guides will be there to show you around or you can discover by yourself.

## The house

- The French garden (1)
- The old rosary (2)
- The Chinese garden (3)
- The Prince's garden (4)
- The vegetable garden - organic horticulture (6)
- The nursery (7)
- The bee garden (8)
- The paddocks (9 & 10)
- The stable courtyard (11)



## The English Park

- (C) The pond
- (D) The fake ruin (grotto)
- (E) The column of alliance
- (F) The "Philosopher"
- (G) The alley of Plane-Trees



## Farming

Deutz Fahr machinery and explanation by Agriland management company.

## Out door activities for FCS and YFCS

Archery and shooting stand.

**05:00 pm** Departure for Château St Gerlach and Maastricht (YFCS)

**Optional** (only if pre-registered): **Tongeren- Basilica, Teseum Museum**

**03:00 pm** Meeting at the carriage hall, departure for Tongeren

**05:00 pm** Back to Hex and then Chateau St Gerlach

**08:00 pm** Gala dinner, Anders Wall Award and Famigro Award at Château St Gerlach - Belgica hall, welcomed by the owners Mr and Mrs Camille Oostwegel

Hex

The château and grounds at Hex are surrounded by gardens as well as parks, farmland, orchards and forests.

Hex dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and has, over time, managed to preserve its atmosphere, its traditions and its unique character.

The gardens and grounds are maintained by professional gardeners who want to show and share the intricacies of their art to an interested public. The historical gardens and landscapes park open twice a year to the public; once in early June and again the second weekend in September.

Hex castle was built by Prince-bishop of Liege, Franz-Karl von Velbrück, between 1770 and the year of his death in 1784. Velbrück attracted the best craftsmen in from Liège, Lorraine and Italy. The castle was built according to the plans of the Liège architect Etienne Fayen.

The estate came by inheritance to the family Marchant d'Ansembourg and later to the family d'Ursel. The current residents are the second and third generation d'Ursel administrating the estate in the mind of the builder.

[www.hex.be](http://www.hex.be)





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# Saturday, June 3

**Breakfast is served from 07:00 am**

**08:45 am**

Meeting for bus at hotel lobby

*Our hosts received the list and numbers per group, changes will not be possible*

**09:00 am** *Very sharp!*

Departure for Yellow and Green Tour

**09:30 am**

Departure for Blue Tour

**10:00 am**

Departure for Young Friends of the Countryside Tour (Kruisherenhof-Maastricht)

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## **Yellow Tour: “Agriculture and Forestry, dendrology books exhibition, hunting estates in Wallonia”**

- Scy castle and estate, lunch, hosted by Mr and Mrs Eric Speeckaert
- Ramezée and Somale castles and estate, hosted by Mr and Mrs Vincent Berghmans

## **Blue Tour: “Historical places, modern farming, wine castle in Limburg”**

- Genoels Elderen vineyards and wine castle, lunch, hosted by Ms Joy Van Reness
- Hamal castle and estate, hosted by Count and Countess Alexandre de Hemricourt de Grunne

## **Green Tour: “Entrepreneurship in historical castle, wildlife estate and biodiversity”**

- Westerlo castle, hosted by Prince and Princess Simon de Merode
- Vogelsanck castle and estate, lunch, hosted by Baron and Baroness Claude de Villenfagne de Vogelsanck

## **Young Friends of the Countryside: “Young entrepreneur to be ready to take over the estate”**

- Betho estate, guided by Count Gaetan de Briey
- Commanderie of Aldenbiesen, YFCS General assembly, visit and lunch
- Schoonbeek estate, guided by Count William de Hemricourt de Grunne

**06:30 pm**

Back at Château St Gerlach

**08:30 pm**

Informal dinner at Château St Gerlach (not Kruisherenhof as previously planned)

# Yellow Tour

Scy

Agriculture and Forestry  
Dendrology books exhibition  
Hunting estates in Wallonia

*Hosted by Mr and Mrs Eric Speeckaert.*

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The oldest known document mentioning the Castle is the Ferraris Map (1777), on which can be observed the existence of a castle or a farm on the west side (the location of the pyramid), as well as water plans of a longitudinal shape. The second castle called «the great castle of the Count d'Espiennes» was built around 1815. Badly damaged, it had to be destroyed in 1967. The park was then left as it was, without major construction, for close to 25 years.

Scy is an ancient seigneurie and is tightly integrated in the village, in the spirit of the old castle which made its appeal. The present house was achieved between 1993 and 1995 according to the architect Emmanuel Callataÿ's plans. This new building is directed towards the South and erected on the highest point of the park so to give the owners a pleasant in-dept view of the landscape.

Two remnants of the old castle have been reintegrated into the park. The barn of the castle, burned in 1992, has been preserved as a romantic ruin and the family vault, which was under the chapel, was restored and covered by a pyramid symbolizing the respect due to the creators of this park. Scy is one of the biggest estates in Belgium.

# Ramezée and Somal

*Hosted by Mr and Mrs Vincent Berghmans.*

Both estates were owned by different families and reunified by the family Berghmans in the 90s.

The lordship of Ramezée, a Luxembourg enclave in Liège, reached the Baron Pierre Grégoire de Vivario in the eighteenth century, the burgomaster of Liège. The latter had acquired a few years ago the lordship of Somal, neighboring that of Ramezée. His descendants sold Somal at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Ramezée in 1939. It was bought by the Borel family of Bitche and was sold to the current owner in 1995. Isolated at the top of a hill that marks the limit of Condroz and Famenne, the southern façade was completed in 1789. The east wing and the outbuildings were built during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The current park was redesigned by the landscape architect Jean-Noël Capart at the end of the 90's. The family is embellishing the estate by creating ponds and managing the forest on a sustainable way.



## *Genoelselderren wine castle in Limburg*

*Hosted by Joy Van Reness.*

In 1990 the family van Rennes renewed the centuries old wine culture in the area. The wine castle is with its 25 hectares of vinyard, the largest wine domain in the country, and welcomes every year some 15.000 visitors. Guided visits are organized around the park, the rose gardens, the distillery, the press house and the cellars from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Genoelselderren wines are very appreciated by connoisseurs and restaurants.

[www.wijnkasteel.com](http://www.wijnkasteel.com)

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# Hamal

*Hosted by Count and Countess Alexandre de Hemricourt de Grunne.*

The Hamal estate has been known since the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The robust square tower dates from this period and is mentioned for the first time in history in 1214, when the Emperor Frederick II receives the submission of the Duke of Brabant and that of the Duke of Limburg, made prisoners.

The fortress of Hamal was besieged and destroyed twice by the Liégeois: in 1346 and 1364. This second destruction led to a reconstruction which caused the castle to lose a large part of its military character. This castle remained in the Hamal family until 1568, when it was sold to Canon Conrad de Gavre, who handed it to his nephews and their descendants. They lived in Spain; One of them, Charles, died in Madrid in 1693. Hamal was then inhabited by tenants who suffered the destruction of Louis XIV.

It was in 1730 that their ancestors acquired the estate, the land (85 hectares) and the castle of Hamal. In 1747, King Louis XV encamped in Hamal during six weeks during the War of Succession of Austria. After his stay, he gave the canon of Haxhe the great wall-clock which is preserved in the drawing-room. This same canon embellishes and enlarges the castle in 1770. The whole of the north façade, the decorations of the drawing-room and the frescoes of the great staircase painted by Caldelli date from that period. The English park was planted in 1820 to replace the old French gardens. The Neo-Gothic style chapel dates from 1880.

# Green Tour

Westerlo

## Entrepreneurship in Historical castle, Historical park, Arboretum, Wildlife Estate and Biodiversity

*Hosted by Prince and Princess Simon de Merode.*

Locals call it “Oud Kasteel” (Old castle). The castle has been the home of the House of Merode since more than five centuries. The central donjon was built in local brown stone in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It probably replaced an older fortress on the same spot. Other parts of the building date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The castle was adapted, extended and restored several times. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards it was transformed into a more luxurious noble dwelling and gradually lots of fortified character. Several restorations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave it back a more “romantic” medieval appearance.

In 2006 on the initiative of the family Merode were created the “Vrienden van Kasteel van Westerlo” (the Friends of Westerlo Castle) in order to develop the visibility of the estate, to organize events as “Christmas magic” or historical spectacles for all ages public. In 2012 was signed a partnership with la Fondation Roi Baudouin.

The mission of the association chaired by Prince Simon de Merode is:

- Contribute to the protection, preservation and restoration of the castle of Westerlo and its Park.
- Contribute to the enrichment of collections through the protection, repair and acquisition of furniture and art works.
- Explain this national historical heritage by organizing cultural activities and events with an educational purpose.
- Mobilize patronage actions in favor of Westerlo’s recovery through affiliated companies.

**[www.kasteel-westerlo.be](http://www.kasteel-westerlo.be)**

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# Vogelsanck



*Hosted by Baron and Baroness Claude de Villenfagne de Vogelsanck.*

Originally the castle was a hunting lodge built by the Counts de Looz early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

From the 15<sup>th</sup> century the castle is starting to change towards what it looks like now.

The castle is located in the middle of ponds and forms more or less a quadrilateral, with a courtyard where one can distinguish four styles: Mosan Renaissance, Mosan classicism, Louis XV and finally Tudor style galleries built in 1875.

Several dendrology companies have been interested in the English park and pinetum around the castle. The recent reports are mentioning trees planted from 1780 to date. The collection counts black pines of Austria (40m high), pines of Corsica, blue cedars, a "cedrus brevifolia", a liquidambar (maybe the highest of Europe) and different species of oaks, magnolias, catalpa, Weymouth pines, cypress and a weeping pear tree (n° 1 in Belgium).

The estate is part of the 3Water project coordinated in Midden-Limburg with ELO during 4 years from 2011 to 2015, bringing together landowners and supporting organizations to work together on the management and the use of the Natura 2000 areas.

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The aim of the 3Water project:

- The improvement of Natura 2000 protected areas, in particular the situation of the target species the bittern and the tree frog as wet and dry heathland, wet grassland and ponds
- The enhancement of the partnership between private and public landowners
- A sustainable regional development thanks to the progressive approach implementing a synergy between Ecology, Economy and Education
- An enhancement of the awareness of natura 2000, the project area and its value, public-private partnerships among local stakeholders and the project itself among the general public.
- An inspiration for other Natura 2000 projects thanks to a private-public partnership
- The promotion of rural activities

[www.3water.eu](http://www.3water.eu)



# Stay in Gent & Bruges

From June 4 to 7

## Post Tour

### Sunday, June 4

08:45 am *very sharp* Departure from Château St Gerlach  
10:30 am - 02:00 pm Heihuyzen  
03:30 pm - 05:30 pm Bornem  
07:00 pm Check in at Sandton Reylhof hotel in Gent  
08:30 pm Ooidonk

### Monday, June 5

09:00 am - 11:00 am Walking tour in the historical center of Gent  
11:00 am - 01:30 pm Hotel Falligan  
02:00 pm - 03:30 pm Laarne  
04:30 pm - 06:30 pm Nokere  
07:30 pm Dinner at hotel  
09:30 pm Boat tour on the Gent's waterways

### Tuesday, June 6

09:15 am - 12:00 pm Tour around the Mystic Lamb and van Eyck brothers  
01:00 pm - 04:00 pm Engelendaël  
05:30 pm Check in at Duke's hotel in Bruges  
07:30 pm Adornes Domein

### Wednesday, June 7

10:00 am - 12:00 pm Loppem  
01:00 pm - 03:30 pm Damme  
04:00 pm - 06:00 pm Oostkerke  
7:00 pm End of Post tour

# Sunday, June 4

Heihuyzen



## Forest and farm estate restoration and management.

*Hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Lenaerts,*

Winners of the Anders Wall 2014 and the Wildlife Estate Label.

The Heihuyzen Estate belongs to the Lenaaerts family and is located in the North of Belgium, about 40 km from Antwerpen. The domain is composed by the small castel, caretakers's house and a couple of farms. Outside the family, the domain is regularly used by many organizations such as Natuurpunt, scouts, droppings, Cycling supporters Club Malle, MTB Rather Downhill and many more. The lands surrounding the domain are mainly used for livestock and agriculture, trying to improve habitat of wildlife and being concerned by the water issues.

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Bornem

## Visit of historical castle, fine art collection and tips on how to maintain good relations with the administration.

*Hosted by Count John de Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde.*

The owner, Count John de Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde is the 14<sup>th</sup> count of Bornem considering the estate of Bornem as a duty to keep intact and enrich it to pass it to the next generation.

The castle was renovated by the architect Henri Beyaert at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He kept the superb proportions of the renaissance castle built by the Spanish nobleman don Pedro Coloma. The guided tour focuses on the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the wonderful paintings of Margaret of Austria, the emperor Charles V and Philip II carry the visitor away to this troubled but exciting era of the history of the Low Countries.

The castle possesses a collection of 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture, splendid engravings by Pieter Breughel the Elder, a lace cabinet and a room with antique dolls. The lay-out of the collection is testimony of the passion of the owner to host visitors in this exceptional space.

To complete the visit there's a permanent exhibition on Philip de Marnix, secretary to William of Orange. It pays tribute to the author of the Dutch national hymn, the "Beehive" and who was also mayor of Antwerp and courageous defender of the city against Alexander Farnese and his men.

In the annexes a charming carriage museum shows a collection of perfectly preserved antique carriages.

People like to walk around or cycle in the very green environment surrounding the domain.

[www.chateaumarnixdesaintealdegonde.be](http://www.chateaumarnixdesaintealdegonde.be)

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Ooidonk



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One of the finest historical places of Belgium, restoration, fine art collection and new ways of supporting a family estate.

*Hosted by Count and Countess Henry t'Kint de Roodenbeke.*

At the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Ooidonk was thought to be a farm. It's only in 1230 when Nikolaas van Hoendunc fortified the building that it became the Ooidonk Caste.

Its location is perfect: a couple of kilometers away from Ghent, surrounded by the river Leie, its park and moat. The estate is composed of forest and farmland.

However, the peace full environment of the estate is hiding his harsh history. Indeed, over the centuries, the castle has been destroyed twice. During its first reconstruction it took a Renaissance style. Nowadays, even with all the renovations and restorations, Ooidonk is more than ever splendid and flamboyant.

Today Ooidonk is the property of the 6<sup>th</sup> Count t'Kint de Roodenbeeke and his family. The castle is a classified heritage open to the public. The visits take place from April to September. The "French gardens" are open all year round. The rest of the time, the estate is hosting private and public events.

[www.ooidonk.be](http://www.ooidonk.be)

# Monday, June 5

*Gent*

## Historical walking tour in Gent, Prinsenhof, Patershof, old Harbour on the river Lys and St Elisabeth (Old beguinage)

The beguinages were classified Unesco World Heritage in 1998. These architectural sites, nestled in the middle of urban centers represent oases of peace, have managed to maintain their integrity throughout the centuries.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the religious movement developed especially by Saint Francis of Assisi and the mendicant orders rose against the corruption and secularization of the clergy. This movement wanted to re-emphasize the message of charity .

The countess Jeanne of Constantinople, countess of Flanders and Hainaut, created in agreement with the pope several “beguinages” and hospitals in order to cure and protect the most destitute. The movement continued throughout the centuries and regained a moment of glory during the reign of Archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621) during the counter-reform.

The “beguinages” of the southern Netherlands are arranged around a church and are made up of several small similar houses protected by a small garden, an infirmary, some more important houses (the Grande Demoiselle, the convents, etc.), a large central lawn. The whole is usually walled or surrounded by canals, a large door closes in the evening and prohibits access to foreigners. They welcomed unmarried and very devout women. These women did not make vows: they kept a form of independence, worked, cultivated their garden and prayed; living soberly and chastely.



## Kouter and Hotel Falligan

Founded in 1802, the LITERARY ROYAL SOCIETY "Club Falligan" is a private Gentlemen's Club located in the historical center of Ghent.

The Club, established for more than 200 years in the Hotel FALLIGAN - one of the most prestigious buildings in the city - offers its members, in addition to the daily use of its classified lounges, a varied program of activities as well as the possibility of benefiting of a reputable table.

Laarne

*Hosted by Association Royale des Demeures et Jardins Historiques de Belgique.*

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The castle of Laarne is situated close to be a bend in the Schelde River, to the east of Gent. Its architecture fuses characteristics from both medieval fortress and a stately residence from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It's a palace at the end of the Eight Year's War that ravaged the southern Netherlands during the 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The oldest parts of the building, which have been constructed in an almost regular pentagon date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Of this remain the keep and the round stone towers topped with stone pyramid roofs to make them invulnerable to fire. In the central courtyard, a pretty brick façade extends horizontally contrasting with the yellow Balaghem stone. In fact the castle was entirely reworked in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Square entrance is demarcated by four identical pavilions, destined for the order, the milliner, the coachman and the gardener. And arched bridges, built out of stone and bricks leads to the main entrance and is focused in a straight line on the church of Saint Macharius in Laarne.

In 1953 the castle was bequeathed to the Association Royale des Demeures et Jardins Historiques de Belgique by Count Robert-Christian de Ribaucourt. The Association renovated the castle and it was opened to visitors in 1963. The castle houses an exceptional collection of silverware collected by Mr Claude Dallemagne. It is composed mostly of silver tableware and honors the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the cosmopolitan Europe of his time.

[www.slotvanlaarne.be](http://www.slotvanlaarne.be)



*Hosted by Baron and Baronness Casier.*

Already mentioned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the lordship of Nokere was detained by the lords of Pamele-Oudenaarde until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and then by the family of Gavere-Hérimez. The tombstone of Jacob van Gavere (+1551), who commanded the troops against the Turks under Charles V, is now sealed in the castle's postern. In 1566 the property came to the Vichte family and Marriage to the family of Grass.

A wall and an entrance defended by a tower was destroyed by a fire in 1596. But it was restored and enlarged into a castle typical of the renaissance tower belvedere by Johan de Grass. Thus it is represented by Sanderus in 1641 'wederom fraai opgebouwt' (nicely rebuilt).

Mathieu-Xavier de Ghellinck, who bought the castle in 1727, transformed it into a regency-style holiday in the Sanderus edition of 1735. The most important two-storey wing covered by a roof Croupe, was equipped with a new front facade with pediment in semicircle. To the right and left of the latter, there were symmetrical lower wings with characteristic mansard roofs. During this phase, the belvedere tower still existed.

It was finally Jean-Baptiste de Ghellinck who in 1772-1778 gave the castle its current neoclassical homogeneous form. The tower disappeared, the plan became a perfect rectangle and the whole building was raised to two floors and placed under a large hipped roof where, however, still behind the triangular pediment is still the departure of the structure of the "Old roof".

The estate was bequeathed in 1850 by the last Ghellinck of Nokere to his nephews Auguste and Victor de Kerkhove of Denterghem. Auguste lived in the lower castle and Victor erected the neighboring castle. The lower castle remained in the hands of the heirs of Augustus and deteriorated before finally being acquired by the baron and the baroness Jean Casier (1908-2008) who made a project of life of restoring its ancient qualities to all Estate and the layout of the castle in 18<sup>th</sup> century style.

The very characteristic plan of the main building corresponds entirely to the French 'distribution'. The large central vestibule is followed by a large summer lounge on the left of which is the reception apartment with a central antechamber (currently an office), the "green salon" and the "Chinese living room". The right-hand part of the castle includes, among other things, the staircase of honor and the dining room which was endowed during the restoration of elegant woodwork in Louis XV oak. The layout of the upper floor with its alcove rooms and chapel are still entirely original. Everywhere were preserved superb stucco in Louis XVI style, attributed to the Moretti brothers.

The magnificent park is partly a restoration and partly a creation initiated by Baron Jean Casier, assisted by landscapers René Péchère and Paul Deroose. It includes a formal part and an English park that extends harmoniously into the surrounding landscape. It regularly serves as a setting for equestrian and horse-drawn carriage activities, of which Nokere is an important center. Apart from the old postern and the stables, there are various sheds that house a collection of famous carriage cars. Some of the many garden statues come from the family estate of Ter Beken in Tronchiennes.

*Nokere*

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## Tuesday, June 6

### Gent History



## The Mystic Lamb of the Van Eyck brothers (15<sup>th</sup> century).

26 The masterpiece painted by the brother Van Eyck was completed and hung in the chapel Vijd of the St. Bavo Cathedral (in the time of the Church of St. John) in 1432. The sponsors and donors of the painting were Ludovicus Vijd and his wife Elisabeth Borluut. Their wealth from the production and distribution of wool was colossal. Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, appreciated greatly the work of Jean van Eyck: he sent him on a diplomatic mission to Spain and Portugal, notably to discuss the marriage of the duke with the Infante Isabella of Portugal. Van Eyck painted what he saw. Not in order to reproduce reality but to recreate it in the image of divine creation. Inventor of the atmospheric perspective, fervent devotee of the new devotion, the brothers van Eyck are truly at the turning point of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The Mystical Lamb is triumphant and stands on the altar in the midst of the earthly Paradise according to the text of the Apocalypse of Saint John. Imagine that in the table no less than 74 kinds of plants, trees and flowers have been identified: Exceptional because botanical studies are rare in the Middle Ages. The theme of the garden is very much appreciated in the Middle Ages: the garden of Eden, of course, but also the "Hortus Conclusus", sacred space devoted to Mary. Reflecting the glory of the Flemish primitives during the reign of Philip the Good, the polyptych of the mystical Lamb is extraordinary in many respects: High quality pigments, virtuosity of drawing, application of new drying techniques for oil painting, The work also brings together several genres of Western painting: portrait, landscape, still life ... A major restoration campaign was undertaken in 2012. After discussions between several international institutions and museums, a workshop was designed at the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent to welcome the different panels of this masterpiece. In October 2016 after four years of restoration in the museum, the exterior panels of the painting reintegrated the cathedral. The interior panels, for their part, were moved in their turn to the museum's workshop. The completion of restoration work is scheduled for 2020.

### Hoeve Engelendael

Hosted by Mr and Mrs Marc Govaert.

Winner of the INBEV Baillet-Latour piece 2011.

The farmstead was built during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and restored to become a happy place to organize various events. The green and peaceful environment makes the place perfect for party, wedding and so on. The authentic room takes place in the former attic of the barn. The "hoeve" is also very famous expert in growing cherries.





# Adornes

## Private domain in Bruges, a fine historical and cultural experience.

*Hosted by Count and Countess Maximilien de Limburg-Stirum.*

Located in the heart of Bruges, the Adornes Domain belongs to the de Limburg-Stirum family since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This beautiful and medieval estate was built in 1429. Originally, the estate belonged to the Adornes, an Italian family who moved from Genoa to Flanders in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Quickly they got an important role to play in the economic and administrative life of the city. That led them to manage a couple of buildings including hostels. Through the years the estates remained a family business which is reflected in the atmosphere of the place. Adornes is a must-see in Bruges.

**[www.adornes.org](http://www.adornes.org)**

# Wednesday, June 7

## Castle of Loppem

### Exemplary management to increase visitor's number.

*Hosted by the family van Caloen.*



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With his neogothic style from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the castle of Loppem will make you travel back in time. The estate is owned by the family van Caloen and located a couple of miles away from Bruges. It will charm you with its English garden and even more with its maze. The castle houses a very rich collection of pieces of art and the finesse of the furniture fits perfectly with the architectural style.

On many occasions, the castle of Loppem hosted the King Albert 1<sup>er</sup> and his wife Elisabeth (who stayed there several weeks during the first World War) but it was also the theater of many events such as the introduction of the universal suffrage for men. With its high historical and artistic value, the castle has been classified as a historical monument. This makes the place perfect to organize weddings, parties, etc...

**[www.kasteelvanloppem.org](http://www.kasteelvanloppem.org)**



# The unique and very specific Polders' landscapes and open gardens

*Hosted by Baron and Baroness van der Elst.*

*Oostkerke Estate*



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The story behind the castle of Oostkerke reflects its strength through the years. Indeed it suffered from numerous occupations, looting and so on. Some of them really endamaged the building which afterward benefits from a renovations. The oldest foundations of the buildings go back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Surrounded by a moat, a wall and some additional towers, it was a perfect protective place for the lords of Oostkerke. The estate used to be composed by the upper court and the lower court. Today only the latter remains and served as a current residence for the van der Elst family. The family also redesigned the gardens after the Second World War. They took the form of several separates gardens in giving value to the medieval foundations that have been found during the construction of the new gardens.



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## Betho

*Hosted by Count Gaetan de Briey.*

The property is part of the natural park of beukenberg, located near Tongeren.

The estate was successively called Betoe (1267), Betouve (1412), Bethem (1507), Bethoven (1582) and finally Betho (1657).

Betho is a castle farm composed in two parts. The chateau consists of 4 wings around an inner courtyard and a farm built in a U around the second courtyard.

The south corner tower dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the other parts are the result of serious transformations in the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Several families succeeded, the place sheltered for a time a boarding school of young girls held by nuns, until 1920 when the family de Briey settled there and brought remarkable restorations that it is at the house and the gardens.



A scenic view of a pond with reeds and trees in the background. The pond is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding greenery. In the foreground, there are tall reeds with brown seed heads. The background shows a line of trees under a blue sky with some clouds.

## Alden Biesen

The story of Alden Biesen begins in 1220, when the Teutonic Order founded the great commandery. This order was divided into 12 bailliages or provinces. Alden Biesen became the seat of the bailiwick of Biesen, itself composed of 12 subordinate commands. The centerpiece, Alden Biesen, was owned by the great commander. The estate of the castle reached its apogee between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was at this time that the great commandery was transformed into this luxurious residence that we know today.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the French Revolution put an end to this luxuriant period by expelling the Teutonic order. The estate was sold at auction. The purchase of the estate and the castle by Guillaume Claes was the beginning of two centuries of private property and degradation. After the fire of 1971, the domain of Alden Biesen was bought by the Belgian State and, at present, Landcommanderij Alden Biesen is an international cultural center of the Flemish Community.

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## Schoonbeek

*Hosted by Count William de Hemricourt de Grunne.*

In the fourteenth century Schoonbeek was a watchtower surrounded by water. Then became a gentleman's house as seen in the paintings of Flemish painters. Several families succeeded each other, including the Preston (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century) of Irish origin, then the Renesse and now the family de Grunne who moved about twenty years ago, in 1991.

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