

# TRIP TO BRUSSELS FROM THE 1<sup>ST</sup> TO THE 3<sup>RD</sup> OF MAY 2009

This time the trip went to Brussels, which is the capital of Belgium.

Belgium is a small country with only about 10 million inhabitants. It didn't become independent until in 1830. It is divided in 3 regions: Brussels, Flanders (where they speak Flemish that is a Dutch dialect) and Wallonia (where they speak mostly French, but German also).



Belgium's position in Europe



Belgium's flag



Belgium's coat of arms

Brussels is the capital of Belgium and is one of the three federal regions. The region has 1 018 000 inhabitants (2006), while the City of Brussels has a population of 142 853. The region of Brussels and its communities are official bilingual with French and Dutch.

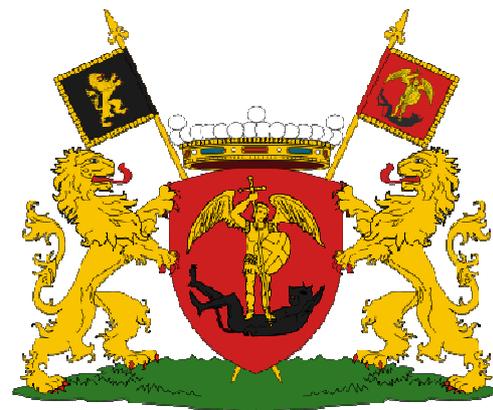
Brussels is also the capital of EU, the seat of the European Commission and the European Parliament. In addition NATO's headquarter lies in the city. Brussels has been a host town for the World Fairs in 1897, 1910, 1935 and 1958. Atomium was built for the World Fair in 1958.



Brussels position in Belgium



Brussels flag



Brussels coat of arms

We travelled with



and we flew with this type of airplane, an Avro RJ85.

Brussels Airlines started their aviation at 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2007.



This is a view of the airport in Brussels



The airport is named Brussels Airport and lies about 11 km northeast of Brussels. It was in the start built by the Germans in 1940. After this it has been enlarged in many stages.

Today it serves about as may passengers yearly as Gardermoen, and lies on 24<sup>th</sup> place in Europe.

In 2005 the airport was elected as the best airport in Europe, based on a survey among over 100,000 passengers world wide.



The departure hall

We decided to take the train from the airport into the center of Brussels. It is called Brussels Airport Express and need only about 10 minutes. This line was built in 1955 and was official opened by King Baudouin the 15<sup>th</sup> of May.



We had booked at Hotel `la Madeleine. It was right below the train station and right in the center.



This is in the reception



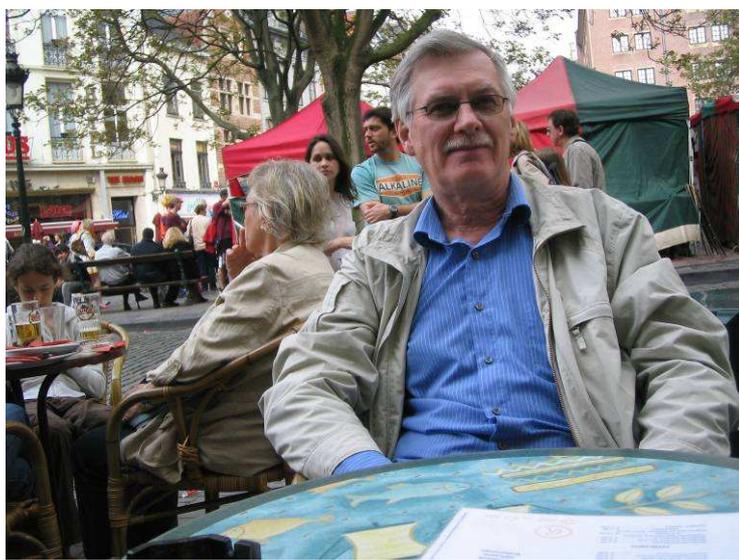
The hotel was right beside a little square, Spanjeplein



Here we see a little more of the square



The first thing we did was to eat an omelet with some wine at an outdoor restaurant at the square before we started the sightseeing.



Kjell is waiting for the food



There was street musicians here too



Then we went over to Grand-Place. There are a lot of nice houses around this place and it is listed on UNESCO's world heritage list. The house in the middle is the Kings house where the city museum is. All the costumes for Manneken-Pis are here



Another nice facade



There were a lot of street restaurants here



This is the town hall or Hôtel de Ville. It is from the 1400's and is Brussels landmark. The spire is 96 m high and at the top is standing a weathercock shaped as St. Michael. There are 150 statues on the facade



There are many ways to make money. This guy should be the painter Vincent van Gogh and he wanted two Euros for letting us take this pictures.



Kjell is studying the map to find his way.

This is Manneken-Pis. The statue was made in bronze in 1619 and is only 55 cm high. It has become the city's trademark. There are 654 different costumes, which can be used at different occasions.



There are many who want to take pictures.



Once the river Senne went straight past this church. Today there are just houses.



It is named Église Notre-Dame-de-bon Secours and is from the 1600's. It was not much to look at at the outside, but it was nice inside.



After having walked so far, we had to have a beer.



Here it comes.



Special threes



Still another street musician



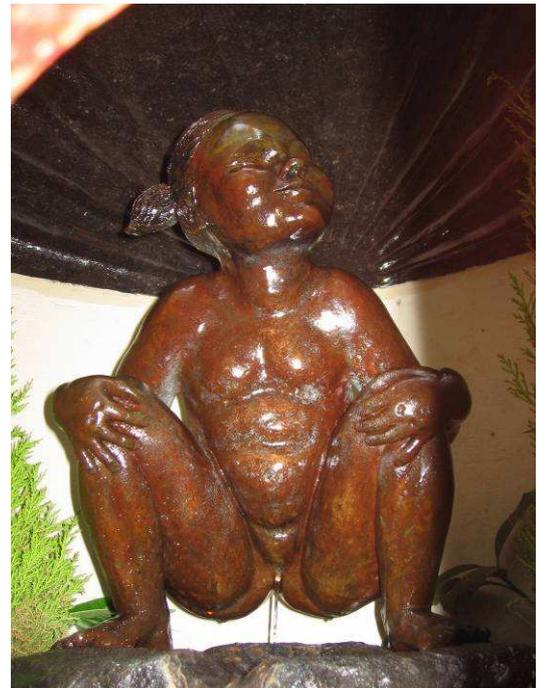
This is the stock exchange, which is in a building from the end of the 1800's.

There are a lot of sculptures on then facades, as this lion.

It is popular to sit in at the stairs in the sun.



This is Église Saint-Nicolas. The church is just as old as Brussels, that is from the 1000-1100's. It is devoted to St. Nikolas, who is the merchant's tutelary saint.

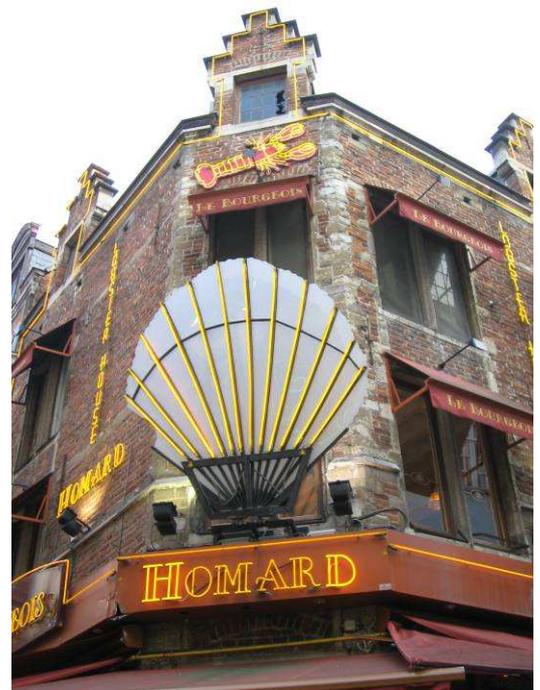


What many people don't know is that Manneken Pis has a female counterpart. Jeanneke Pis is a statue (and fountain) that was erected in 1987.



Now it was so late in the evening that we were hungry. Here we are looking for a place to eat.

Here we have found a place and we are studying the menu. Anne Berit went for salmon and Kjell had mussels.



The next day wed decided to go by the Metro to a place called Bruparck. It is a big fun park and there is also a display of lot of the sights in miniature from all over Europe (EU-counties). It is called Mini-Europe.

We considered buying tickets in a ticket machine, but we found out that we didn't have a suitable amount of coins, so we bought the tickets in a kiosk.

What?? No tickets??



Here we at last get the tickets



Mouse house



While going with the Metro we looked right across to the Koekelberg Basilica, which is the world's fifth biggest church. The basilica is 89 m high and 167 m long.

The basilica was built to celebrate Belgium's 75 year's anniversary as an independent state. King Leopold II laid down the first footstone in 1905 and in 1971 the building was finished.



This is the entrance to Bruparck.

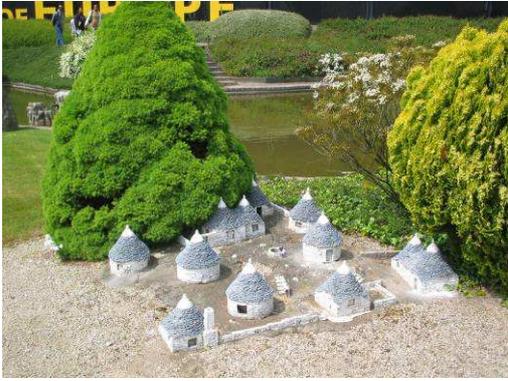
In the background we can see Atomium, which was built for the World Fair in Brussels in 1958 and represents the atom in crystalline iron, magnified 165 billion times. The monument is 103 m high. Nine steel balls with a diameter of 18 m are linked together with up to 35 m long tubes.

Windows at the top of the monument gives a good view over Brussels. The monument should originally have been there during the World Fair, but have been standing there since and has become famous as Brussels answer to the Eiffel tower.

Below follow a number of pictures from Mini-Europe.







After having walked in this big park, we had become hungry and we had to have something to eat. In connection with the park there were many restaurants and we choose to eat some light food at this restaurant.



Inside the restaurant was a somewhat special lamp

Here we are on our way out of the park



We took the bus back to the city. Along the route we saw a tractor that was ploughing a field with a Kverneland plough.



Just outside Bruparck is a vast exhibition area, Brussels-Expo, which was made for the World fair in 1935. Each year there are 60 fairs and 90 other arrangements here.



Here we are back in the centre and are walking in Parc de Bruxelles



This is also in the park



This is one of the entrances to the park



Right outside the park is the palace, which has been the residence for the Belgian monarchs since 1820



Here we are standing at Place Royale taking a picture of the church St. Jakob of Koudenberg.



In the middle of Place Royale stands a statue of Godfrey of Bouillon who was leader of the first crusade in 1096.



Here we are going from Place Royale and are looking towards Place de l'Abertine



Here were neat cut hedges



This church, Madeleine Magdalena, was right besides our hotel



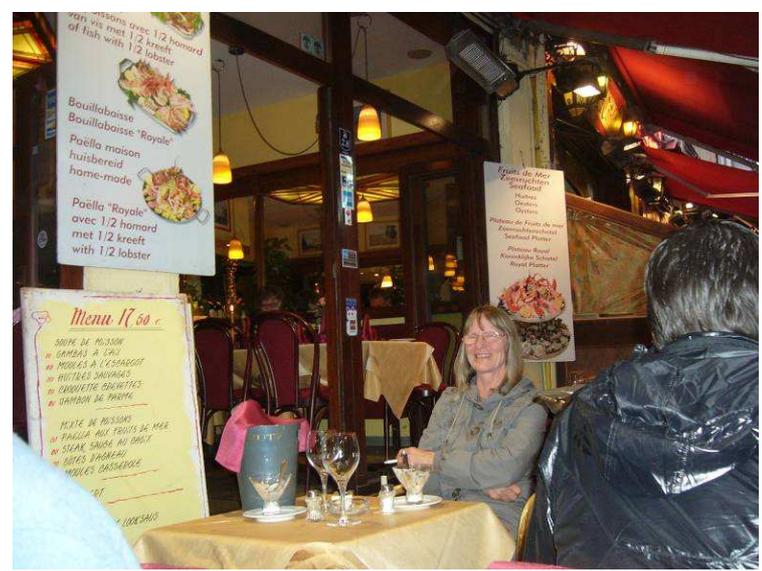
When we came back to the center again, we could not resist trying various Belgian beers. We also got some cheese chunks besides.



It was not only us who tried this



When we had finished the beer tasting we were hungry and on the way to a suitable restaurant we went past more musicians.



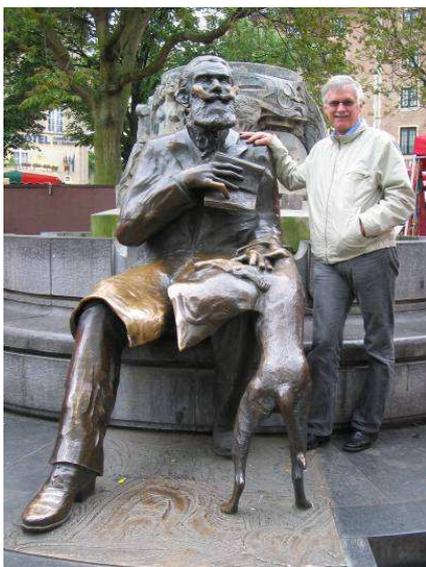
Here we are at restaurant eating steak. They couldn't do proper steaks here. They had destroyed it.



The next day it was time to go home. We took a picture of the breakfast room before we left.



We had some spare time before we had to go to the airport so we strolled around for a bit. Here we are in a shopping centre where we didn't buy anything.



This is the mayor in Brussels in the years of 1881-1898



A mirror with trademarks from various beer producers