After Armistice Day 1918; Christmas markets in Belgium; tips to get out and about[View in browser]

Hello again!

November is a month of contrasts in Belgium. We remember the terrible sacrifices of the First World War, enjoy the last of the autumn colours, and begin to look forward to the magic of the Christmas season.

This month, I've got a story about life in Flanders after the guns fell silent, ideas for getting out and about, and two wonderfully weird Belgian discoveries.

I hope you'll find something here to inspire you.

Denzil

THIS MONTH'S STORY

Coming Home to Nothing: Flanders Fields After the Armistice

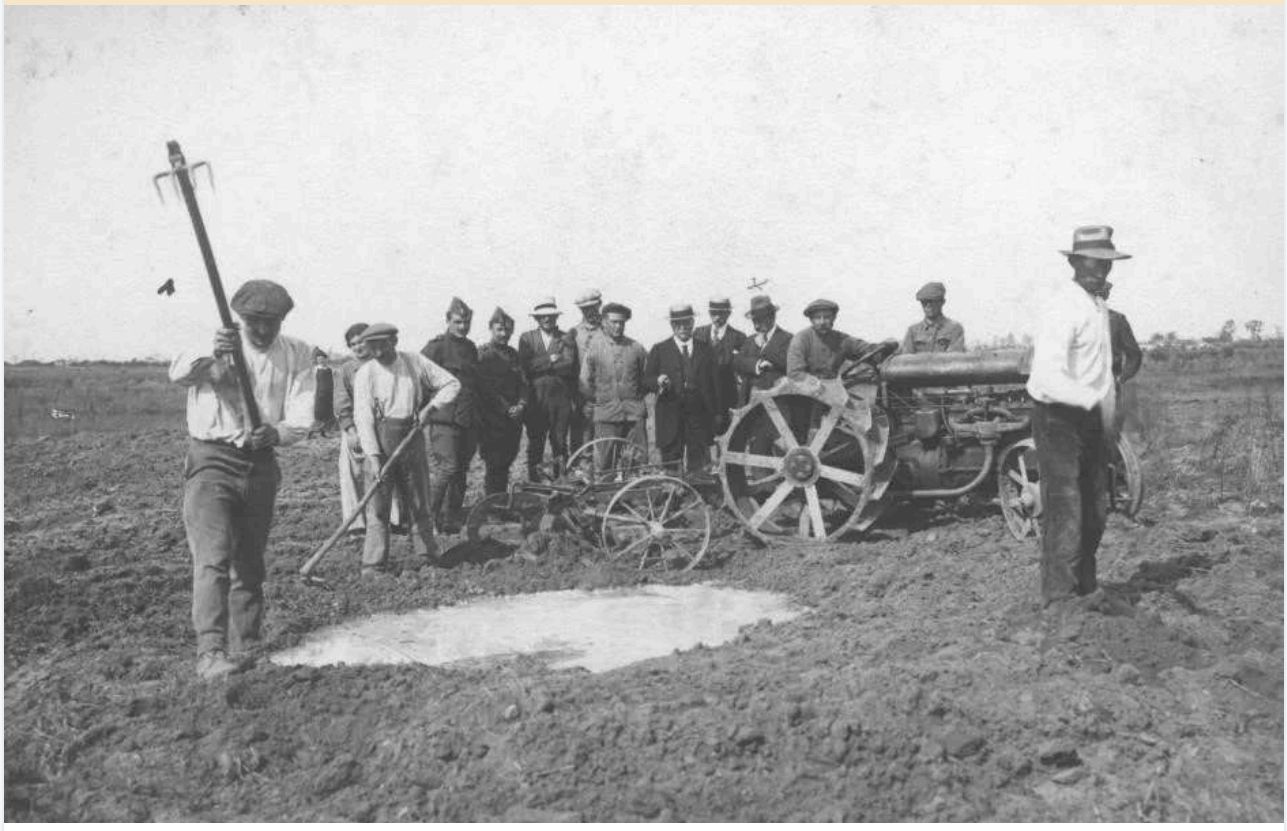
On 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent. But for the people of Flanders, the end of the First World War was only the beginning of another

struggle.

Imagine returning home after four years of war to discover that your village had vanished. Your house, your church, your familiar landmarks — all gone. And beneath the devastated fields lurked millions of unexploded shells, some still deadly.

How did Flemish families begin rebuilding their lives in a landscape that was barely recognisable? My story explores the remarkable determination of people who had lost almost everything, and the long road to recovery.

👉 **Read the story: Coming Home to Nothing: Flanders Fields After the Armistice**



Chlorine, phosgene and mustard gas had been used extensively in the region, killing livestock and vegetation as well as people.

WHAT'S IN SEASON?

Remembering the Fallen at the Menin Gate

Every evening in Ypres, the Last Post ceremony honours the soldiers who died in the First World War. It's a moving experience at any time of year, but particularly poignant around Armistice Day on 11 November.

Thinking of attending? Here's how to visit the Menin Gate and what to expect.

👉**Read more: How to Visit the Menin Gate for the Last Post**

Planning a Christmas Market Visit?

Belgium's Christmas market season begins in November, with Bruges opening on 20 November and Brussels following on 27 November. If you're thinking of visiting one of Belgium's festive markets this winter, now is a good time to explore the options and start planning your trip — especially if you'll need overnight accommodation.

👉 **Read more: Christmas Markets in Belgium**

Get away from it all for a day - and enjoy the autumn colours

Fancy escaping the crowds and enjoying some beautiful autumn scenery? Tucked away in the Ardennes near Aywaille, the Ninglinspo is a magical hiking destination. It's popular during the summer, but November can be a much quieter time to explore its tumbling waterfalls, moss-covered rocks and deep pools. Add in a few romantic legends, and you've got the ingredients for a wonderful autumn walk.

👉 **Discover this fairytale walk in the Ardennes**

The standard Ninglinspo hiking loop is 6 km long and will take you around 2.5 to 3 hours to complete

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL BELGIUM

Belgium has its fair share of famous sights, but some of its most fascinating stories are hiding in the strangest places. This month, discover a remarkable tower built by one man, and a tiny territory with a very unusual past!

👉 **The Tower of Eben-Ezer**

I promise you won't have seen anything quite like this! The Tower of Eben-Ezer is a 33-metre-high structure built single-handedly from flint by one man over more than a decade. It's an extraordinary monument filled with artistic, palaeontological and theological symbolism — and one of Belgium's most unusual sights.

👉 **The Strange Story of the Terriitory of Neutral Moresnet**

Imagine a tiny triangle of land, just 1.5 kilometres wide and five kilometres long, caught between competing European powers. Neutral Moresnet

was born out of a dispute over valuable zinc deposits. It went on to develop a fascinating history involving smugglers, its own postage stamps, and an ambitious plan to make it the world's first Esperanto-speaking state. It's one of the strangest and least-known chapters in European history!

Prepare to be amazed - and sometimes simply mystified - by the Tower of Eben-Ezer.

I hope this month's stories have given you a fresh perspective on Belgium — from the resilience of its people after the First World War to the quirky places and remarkable history that make this country so fascinating.

If you've enjoyed any of these stories, I'd love to hear from you. And if you know someone who would enjoy discovering a different side of Belgium, please feel free to share this newsletter with them.

Until next time, happy discovering!

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