

HURRAY! OFF WITH WET FEET!

A TREK CRISS-CROSS THROUGH THE CITY
ALONG THE BANKS OF THE DYLE



----- **STOP!** ----- This booklet contains two walks. If Mechelen is completely new to you, then quickly turn this booklet upside down and back to front, where you'll find a walk through the city centre. You choose if you want to walk with a colourful collection of animals or whether you turn over the page to explore Mechelen's water's edge.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET?

Below, you will find some **markers** that recur during the walk. They help you identify the different parts of the text:



always indicates **the way** you should follow



refers to the many fun **things you can do** during the walk, marked on the **Big Plan**. Get stuck in!



GAME INCENTIVE

If you see  , a difficult word is explained.



The **boxes** contain many **fun facts** about houses, places, people and animals you will come across along the way.

It's best to allow a **whole morning or afternoon** for the walk. Of course, you don't need to spend as long at each stop, and you can also skip tasks. The walk is as long or as short as you make it!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE PRESENT TO YOU... **THE DYLE!**

From the very outset, this river has played a lead role in the city of Mechelen. In fact, you could go so far as to say that without a river, there would not have been a city!



Via the Dyle, all kinds of people and things entered the city walls. In fact, many townspeople worked and lived along the banks of the river. What a bustle!

The Dyle will be our tour guide, revealing many of its secrets along the way.



Your adventure along the Dyle starts in front of LAMOT, the immense brick building that sits on the water like a steamer.

LAMOT is not just the name of this building, but also a famous beer! Up until 1994, **LAMOT** was a brewery, and when you study the building closely, you will spot many traces of that era ... For the brewery, it was dead handy to be so close to a river. All the **waste** could be dumped directly into the river, and to brew **beer**, you need **water**, of course. But not only that... **Wheat** is an essential **ingredient** of beer and was shipped across the river. Honestly, where better could a brewery be located than on the banks of the Dyle?



!. **ingredient** - everything you need to make a recipe

If you pop into **LAMOT**, you'll notice that this building is no longer a brewery today.

In 2005, LAMOT was given a face lift. Not overnight, of course! First, the old brewery had to be re-built completely. And as they were digging up the foundations, the **archaeologists** decided to have a good rummage for **objects from the past** that tell a **story** about this place.



!. **downstream** - with the flow of the river



It was not just breweries, of course, located along the Dyle. Soon, you'll come to a spot where once stood flour mills, for example. If you thought that all those companies could simply pick their favourite spot on the banks of the river, then you're wrong! The most polluting factories had to be built **downstream**. That way, the filth they dumped into the Dyle did not have to cross the city, but ended up in the water in a location where the river had already left the city.

And so, the land you're standing on right now was full of secrets! While digging, the archaeologists stumbled upon a real **tree trunk well**, pieces of **fish skeletons**, bones of **wild animals** and left-over food of **suckling pigs**. The finds were no less than **ten centuries** old! Mechelen was then a major **port** where goods were brought from and taken to other ports throughout Europe.



Today, the area around the Dyle is a lot quieter, like an **old lady** who, after a very busy life, has now decided to shift down a gear. Only the reflection of the buildings in the water remind her of her youth and the important role she has played in the history of her city ...

!.. **archaeologist** - someone who looks for remnants of long ago, to understand how people lived then

!.. **tree trunk well** - a hollowed-out tree trunk used as a water well



Walk up the quay in front of **LAMOT**.
You're now on the **HAVERWERF**.

WHARF is an old word for **quay**. A long time ago, ships moored here that carried and traded in **oats**. In exchange for a few square metres of storage, the skippers had to pay the city of Mechelen a sum of money. All those taxes ended up in the city's coffers and later in the pockets of the developers who used the money to embellish the streets of Mechelen with beautiful **houses**. Three of those houses await you at the end of the **HAVERWERF**.

But, ladies and gentlemen ... before we go there, I'd like to draw your attention to the photo beside this text: In the olden days, it was not just **wheat** and **oats** that were unloaded here. For **mussels**, too, this was the end of a long journey across the water. They were lifted onto wheelbarrows in large bags, and that's how they continued their journey further inland. From the **HAVERWERF** all the way to the nearby towns on foot!





Nearby are some **steps** that take you to the Dyle.

Can you find them? Look carefully, they're under a footbridge.



Anyone who thought that **washing machines** have always been around should take a good look at this photograph. 100 years ago, women were toiling away on those steps to do the **laundry**.

I think I'd prefer a washing machine after all!
You press a button and wham... Fresh clothes in no time at all! What luxury...



Mechelen cabinet-makers

Gosh, that **Haverwerf** was a busy place! Women did not simply do their laundry here. 100 years ago, Mechelen was known as Belgium's **furniture city**. And it was, once again, the Mechelen women who, for a pittance, wove the **wicker seating** for the **chairs** for which Mechelen was renowned far beyond its borders (and still is today, in fact). Usually, they were working outside their houses where there was more light, because in those days, most people didn't have electric lighting, of course! Meanwhile, they could keep an eye on the little ones and do a few household chores ...

A perfect time, by the way, to have a good old **natter** (**Flemish: lamméren**) with the neighbours!

05

06

!. **lamméren** - a Mechelen dialect word for chatting/gossiping

Who knows, you may have one of those **Mechelen chairs** in your front room!? Or would you like to make one yourself, just like the women of Mechelen did?



How do I make my own **Mechelen seating**?

- find some straw
- soak the **straw** in the Dyle
(making sure you don't fall in)
- beat the soaked straw until it's tender and pliable with a flat wooden mallet on the edge of the quay
- arrange the straw according to the **pattern** you see here:



In order to inject some fun into the long working day, the ladies would often sing **folk songs** while making the seats.

Do you know an old folk song? This song is perfect for where you are now.

Fill your lungs with Dyle air and treat the banks of the Dyle to the resounding songs like before!

ON THE BANKS OF THE DYLE...

On the banks of the Dyle
Deeply hidden in the reeds,
Sat a small young frog
On his mother's knees!



'You see there', so said the mother,
'You see there that stork,
'He killed your father,
He ate him with a fork.'

'Well I never,' spoke the little one,
'Did that moron really do that?
Wait when I'm older,
I'll slap him tit for tat!'

Many years went by
And that frog is no more,
But that stork's face
Is still sore.





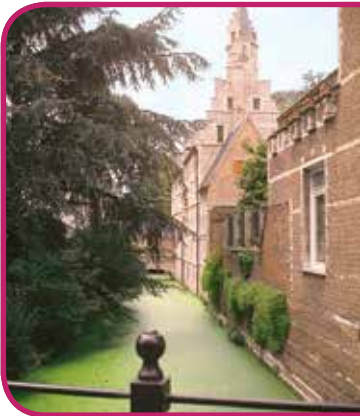
Walk further along the **HAVERWERF**, away from **LAMOT**.
Can you see a small **opening** between the houses on the other side?

This is where, long ago, a **virulet** started. Lots of those little streams ran like **veins** through the city. You can find them especially across the Dyle, and if you stop to think for a second, you'll probably know why ...

07

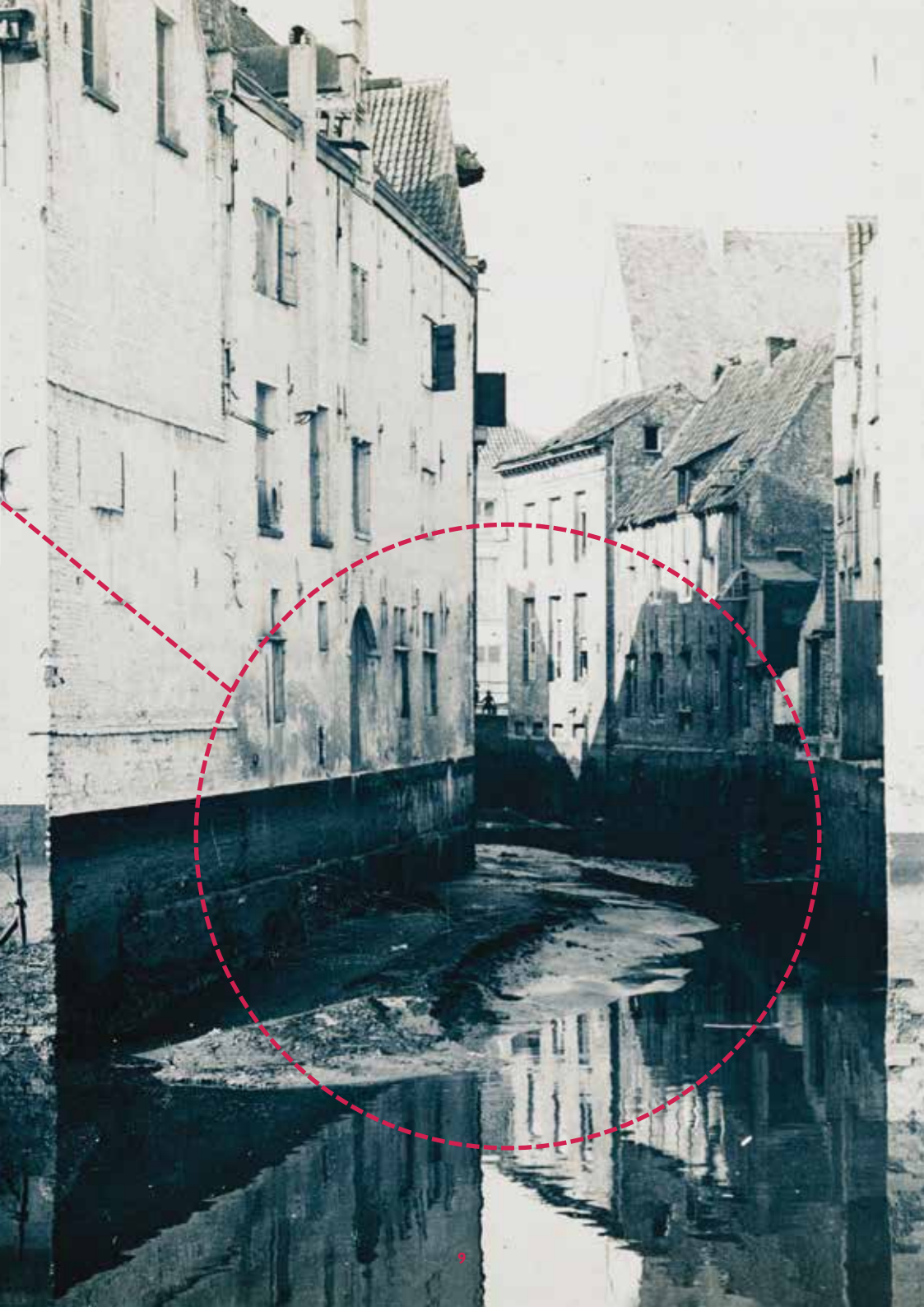
That's right! Water flows from high to low. The place where you're standing is higher than the other side of the Dyle. When the water in the Dyle was dangerously high because of the rain, people and the houses on the lower bank side were threatened by **flooding**. To absorb that water, small canals - **virulets** - were dug on the lower bank of the Dyle.

08



In former times, major **epidemics** would break out that cost the lives of many people. The virulets were, of course, ideal for the bacteria to spread in the city and infect everyone in no time. That's why all the virulets were either **overarched** or filled in. One virulet escaped this regime: 't Groen Waterke [The Green Water] in the city centre. Meanwhile, a few of the virulets have been re-opened, because water in the city creates atmosphere. On the Big Map, you can see where! And don't worry, you won't catch anything now: there's now **sewerage** everywhere.

- ! **virulet** - manmade canal where water can flow into and that helps prevent flooding
- ! **epidemic** - infectious disease that affects many people
- ! **overarch** - cover
- ! **sewerage** - a maze of underground pipes to drain rainwater and waste in a safe and healthy manner





Your tour continues,
until you see three very different houses to your left.

09

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The house on the left was built in the 17th century, while the other two are 100 years older. The façade of each house gives away its name. Have you noticed why the first house is called **St Joseph**, the middle one **The Little Devils** and the third **Little Paradise**?



People used to **name** their houses instead of giving it a number. In some remote countries, this is still done today. Of course, you need to find another way of making your house recognisable to the postman or visitors. That's how the idea grew of applying characters or names on the façades.

There may well be another reason why houses did not have numbers. It was once thought that some numbers were unlucky. **Imagine living at No. 13!**

That is also why, in fact, **counting-out rhymes** were used. With those funny nursery rhymes – for example **eeny meeny miny moe** – you could count the number of people or animals of a herd without having to use numbers. That way, nobody was stuck with the unlucky number 13. And it remains a devilishly useful way to decide whose turn it is!



Take a closer look at the two coats of arms on **Little Paradise**. You don't have to be a **heraldry expert** to work out that they're different from one another! Coats of arms with a **diamond shape** \blacklozenge pointing **upwards**, are for **ladies**. On the façade of the house you're now facing, the coat of arms is that of **Eleonora**, Charlemagne's sister. On the other coat of arms, you will notice **horizontal lines** $-_--$ those tell you that the coat of arms belonged to a **man**. Indeed, this coat of arms belongs to none other than **Charlemagne** himself!



!. **Heraldry - Heraldry** knows everything about coats of arms. A coat of arms is a colourful depiction on which you can recognise a family, a city or country. You can find them on flags, weapons or on buildings, like here on the house **Little Paradise**.

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Family coats of arms - In the Middle Ages, nearly every major family had a **coat of arms** with **symbols** representing who they were. The symbols told you, among others, the family's **profession**. For example, a banker's family would have coins on its coat of arms. You could work out where the family lived from the **colours** on the coat of arms.



Charlemagne - Does that name ring a bell? He was born in Ghent in the early 16th century and raised in **Mechelen** by his auntie **Margaret of Austria**. To us, Charlemagne is best known as the Emperor on whose empire the sun never set.





Wait a moment to cross.

You could make a movie about the neighbourhood across the bridge! Not so long ago, **Keerbergstraat**, a little further, was **the throbbing artery of this working-class district**. There was always something to do.

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Every year, the **Gebuere Fair** would be held here, an extraordinary street party. For three to four summer days, you could take part in all kinds of folk games, ranging from sack races, tugs-of-war to sausage biting. During this **Gebuere Fair**, **Keerbergstraat** would be turned into the scene of a very strange race, entitled, **on ter 't schoenste kaffedrinken** ... [drinking coffee in the most elegant manner]

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The competition ON TER 'T SCHOENSTE KAFFEDRINKEN

Only **ladies** could enter this competition (sorry gentlemen ...) On the morning of the competition, those taking part would furiously clean the pavement in front of their house and brighten up their windowsills with garlands of flowers. They would cover a table, using their prettiest tablecloth and their most precious coffee cups, don their best frocks and would finally sit down and wait for the gentlemen of the **jury**.



They would go from table to table, check whether the candidates could hold a civilised conversation and - the decider - **how elegant their coffee drinking was**. The lady who drank her coffee in the most sophisticated manner would win the contest. Perhaps an idea for a birthday party?

⚠️ **On ter 't schoenste kaffedrinken** (in the Mechelen dialect) - drinking coffee in the most elegant manner

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And now... the **KRAANBRUG** ! [CRANE BRIDGE]



Crane bridge?! Exactly! Six hundred years ago, there was an enormous **crane** just past the house **The Little Devils**, on the other side of the bridge, which would unload and load the ships that docked here. In order to operate the crane, people had to walk in the **giant wheels** of the crane! Those people were called the **crane children**.

!. **crane children** - adults who moved the crane by walking in a wheel



Cross the **Kraanbrug**, but be careful, the bridge is also used by cars leaving the city. Bear right, into **Persoonshoek**, and to the **MELAAN**.

Welcome to the MELAAN! The melaan was one of the last visible **virulets** in the city and was not filled in until 1913. But that changed again in 2007. Since then, you can stroll along the water again. And when the windows of the music academy are open, you get some background music on top!

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GAME INCENTIVE

Have fun with this
Game Incentive!



Via **Drabstraat**, you come to the **FISH MARKET**.

Just about in the middle of the **FISH MARKET** there's **Hotel Vé**. This site was formerly a **herring smokehouse**. Fish used to be smoked to **preserve** it better, because there were no fridges in those days, of course!



8 ways to preserve foods

Can - Smoking - Ice cellar - Fridge - River -
Cooler - Salt - Sugaring - ...
Can you think of any more?





Walk up to the water and look at the the bridge called the **GROOTBRUG** which, to the left of **LAMOT** connects the two banks of the Dyle.

This is the oldest stone bridge of Mechelen: it is **700 years old** no less! The **GROOTBRUG**, also called **HOOGBRUG** has **4 arches**, but, as you can see on the drawing below and you will soon see from the **Salt Wharf**, one of them was **bricked in**. Along that fourth arch, there was once a **virulet** into the city.



Across the Dyle, against the bridge, there's a **toll booth**. Anyone who wanted to enter the city centre, had to pay **toll** here. This white house has a funny nickname. The townspeople refer to it as **het overschotje [the leftover]**. It seems to **hang** (like a remnant or leftover) from the adjacent house, as if it can end up in the Dyle at any time ...

!. **toll** - a sum of money you need to pay before you can cross a piece of road/bridge

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Continue to walk,
into **NAUWSTRAAT**.

Look for the **animal** that hides in the name of a café in this street.

Tip: it's the animal that, until after World War II, was on the wooden shelves of the covered fish market only to end up in Friday's stew, and then the stomachs of the Mechelen residents!



Also, the square that is called the **Fish Market** today, was not always the fish market! In former times, the seafood was sold on the **Ijzerenleen**, further along. Later on, the fish was briefly sold on the **Salt Wharf**, in front of the **guildhall** of the fishmongers, until the new covered fish market on the current **Fish Market** was ready.

Caution: do not go looking for it, because this covered fish market disappeared fifty years ago!!

∴ **guildhall** - house where people practising the same profession came together



Walk out of Nauwstraat, into IJZERENLEEN and stand in the middle.

You're actually walking on **water** now! You are! There was once a virulet here - you know, the virulet that once flowed under the fourth arch of the **Grootbrug**. In those days, covered seafood stalls were on a wooden floor above the water.

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Note the **iron railings**, which lent this street its name. Since the 16th century, these railings offer some support to weary passers-by. Before, they made sure that you didn't fall in mainly!

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Continue on IJZERENLEEN. Stop when you get to the fish fountains.

Can you see the **fish fountains**? They're here for a reason! Long ago, fragrant fish would be displayed in the fishmongers' stalls.

These fountains are the work of **Jean-Paul Laenen**, who also designed the last Belgian five-franc coin in the days before the euro! Here, you can see what that coin looked like, which Belgian children of your age would have used to get chewing gum out of the gumball vending machine.





Retrace your steps. Just before the Grootbrug, turn left, into LANGE SCHIPSTRAAT.

In the first section of the street, at No. 13, is the **Watchmakers Museum**. This museum displays no fewer than **1,000** timekeepers, some of which are **400** years old! Ranging from the ancient sundials and hourglasses to the pocket watches your **great-great-grandfathers** would sport, right through to the latest wristwatch models. If it exists, you'll find it here in the collection of Jozef and his daughter Elke!

!. **great-great-grandfather** - your grandfather's grandfather

Caution: the museum can only be visited with a guided tour.

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Can you remember where the GROOTBRUG is? Cross this bridge and walk along the DYLE TOWPATH. Can you find the steps that lead to it?

So that everyone can enjoy the Dyle to the maximum, the **DYLE TOWPATH** was constructed.

Via this wooden footpath on the water, you can cross Mechelen.

Meanwhile, you can smell the saltiness of the Dyle and you can hear and feel the bangkirai boards under your feet creak. Except for the whistle of moorhens, yellow wagtails and other waterfowl, it's quiet here, because bicycles, skeelers and skateboards are not allowed on this stretch.

Feast your eyes and admire the **stylish lofts and old buildings** backing onto the water.

Along the banks, you can discover plenty of wallflowers and plants, including **black spleenwort**, **hart's-tongue fern**, **water pepper**, **bugleweed** and **small-flowered Winter cress**.



From April to September, you can also discover the city by **boat on the Dyle**.

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Continue walking along **THE DYLE TOWPATH.**

All that walking is bound to have given you an appetite, no? **Mmm...** Mechelen has many **delights** that will have you salivating at the mouth. Just take a look at the menu pictured here. **Hungry?** Not long to go now! After the walk, you will undoubtedly find your way to the centre to try out all these delicacies in one of the many shops and restaurants...

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The typical Mechelen menu

- Mechelen cuckoo
- Maneblusserkes
- Mechelen asparagus
- Gouden Carolus
- Mechelen peppers and tomatoes
- Tower biscuits

...



Have you reached the end of the **Dyle Towpath?** Take the stairs to get to the the next street, called the **VIJFHOEK.**



GAME INCENTIVE

Have fun with this
Game Incentive!



Finished playing? Leave **Vijfhoek** behind you and walk through the tall **VAN PITZEMBURG GATE.**

There is a building on your left that is now a **school**. But did you know that **the knights of Pitzemburg** stayed here at one time? Later on, the buildings served as a **hotel** for important people who spent some time in Mechelen.





Continue walking into the **BOTANICAL GARDEN**.



Belgium, Where Chips Rule!

Did you know that the first potato from America ended up in Mechelen via Spain and was planted here in the **BOTANICAL GARDEN**? So this is where it all started for Belgium, Land of the Chips.



Turn left.

You walk past a **statue** of **two people** in a tender embrace. They don't seem to be bothered about the curious passers-by and stand in the middle of the grass, oblivious to the world around them.



Continue your journey through the **Botanical Garden** and stop for a moment at the park's most remarkable **tree**.

Like a giant **albatross** that spreads its cumbersome wings on the ground, so does this **beech** seem too languid to lift its sinuous branches up to the sky. Imagine if that was you – **one hundred and seventy** is a respectable age, and then you're entitled to lower your arms, surely? On a dark autumn's evening, though, you will probably put your foot down when you cycle past. With its long branches which seem to thrash about indiscriminately, this tree is a bit more threatening than ...





Say goodbye to the tree – it’s quite alright now that he’s looking old and wise in daylight - and walk up to the **BOTANICAL GARDEN**. (Oh yes! In the **Botanical Garden**, there’s also a real herb garden!)



The garden is safe under the watchful eye of Mechelen’s great herbalist, Mr **REMBRECHT DODOENS**. But ... do you see it, too? He’s missing something! And judging by his looks, people with dishonest intentions had better stay away.

A herb for every ailment

Your great-grandmother may have taught you: a cup of linden tea so you don’t have to count sheep, a cup of camomile tea for stomach ache, mints to cure indigestion or some marigold ointment for itchy skin, ...



REMBRECHT DODOENS knew all about it. He was one of the greatest herbalists of the 16th century and wrote a genuine “**Cruydenboek**” [**Herb Guide**]. A goldmine for grannies looking for an effective remedy for **gout** or high blood pressure. These days, we immediately resort to the pharmacy, but in the past, people tried to remedy ailments using **herbs**. In fact, not that much has changed. Most of our modern medicines are still being made using medicinal plants, right?!

Tip! Does anyone in your family still have **herbal recipes**? Ask around and note down the recipes. Fewer and fewer people know which herb cures which ailment. That way, you make sure that all that precious knowledge of the past is not lost!

∴ **gout** - joint pain



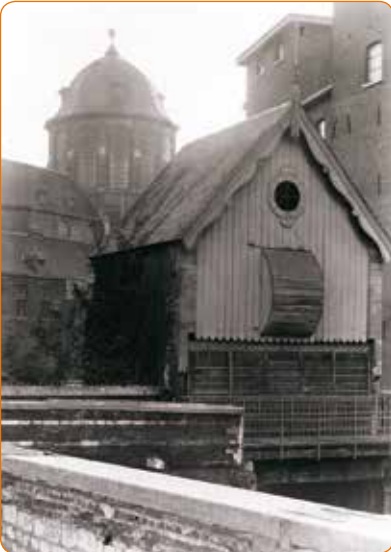


Greet Mr Dodoens and return to the path in front of the **Botanical Garden**.

Feel like stretching your legs? On your way to the exit of the park, there's a playground waiting for you!



Climb the steep slope, out of the **Botanical Garden**, and turn right, onto the bridge next to the **VOLMOLEN**.



In the 15th century (600 years ago!) this **water mill** formed part of a gigantic complex of **seven** water mills. All those water mills used the Dyle water for their hard work. The **VOLMOLEN** was a proper working mill until **1907**. It's Mechelen's only water mill that has stood the test of time.





Continue your journey to the **Raghenoplein**, turn right, into **Hanswijkstraat**, and walk up to the **CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF HANSWIJK**.



Take a look inside the church (**shhh!**). Pleased to meet you. Here, you find one of Mechelen's most famous ladies: **MARY OF HANSWIJK**, cradling **baby Jesus**. In their gold and silver-embroidered robes, they both look their Sunday best. Is the church closed? No problem. To the right of the main gate, there's the silent chapel, where you'll find a statue of Mary with baby Jesus.

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A very long time ago, I entered Mechelen on a ship along the Dyle. Suddenly I gave a sign... I just had to stay at this very place! The ship could only sail on after I was brought on land. This church was then built as a house for me.



In 1272, Mechelen was ravaged by the **plague**. The desperate city dwellers struck upon the brilliant idea of carrying the statue of Mary through the city whilst praying. **Miraculously**, the disease stopped!

Since then, the Lady is carried in a **colourful procession** through the streets of Mechelen. Many of the local children are involved in this Hanswijk procession, either as choirboys or on the floats. If you happen to be around the Sunday before Ascension, you may want to ask your parents to come and watch the procession!



Leave the Church of Our Lady of Hanswijk and walk down HANSWIJKSTRAAT.

Between the houses with the numbers 33 and 35, there was once a **water alley**. In the Middle Ages, it was not unusual for Mechelen's alleys to flow into the Dyle. Particularly useful in the case of **fire** when fire water had to be brought to the scene! Since there were no fire engines in those days, people would form a human **chain** and would pass on **buckets** of water from the river banks to extinguish the fire.

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At the end of the **Hanswijkstraat**, cross the **Vijfhoek** and turn Into **ONZE-LIEVE-VROUWESTRAAT**.

The side of No. **102** boasts a very appropriate **fish commercial**, dating back to the day before illuminated signs. In Mechelen, the Dyle is never far away!



A little further, you come to the **CHURCH OF OUR LADY-ACROSS-THE-DYLE**.

Step into the church and look for the **painting** on which you see the same animal as on the fish commercial a moment ago. The painting was made by the famous painter **PIETER PAUL RUBENS** and is called **The Miraculous Draught of Fishes**. The men of the Mechelen **fishmongers craft** commissioned this painting on which they wanted to see their profession immortalized! If the church is closed, you could come back in the afternoon, or you can view the painting below.

∴ **fishmongers craft** - association of fishmongers





The Biblical story that inspired the painting ...

Jesus walked by a large lake, where two boats were moored. On the shore, a few fishermen were flushing the nets. Jesus walked up to one of the fisherman and asked him to walk into the lake and cast out his nets. Surprised, this fisherman, called Simon, told Jesus he'd been fishing all night without catching anything, but he called his friends to do what Jesus had asked him. And believe it or not, the nets were barely cast when they were packed with fish!



Walk out of the church and continue your journey along **ONZE-LIEVE-VROUW**STRAAT, up to **MAALDERIJ**STRAATJE on your right.

Up to 50 years ago, there were **flour mills** on this spot where quite a bit of flour was milled! Even before that, there was an **oil mill** and a soap factory. Not surprising that both factories appreciated being near the Dyle. They needed the water to moor the **barges** with cereal or **raw materials** very near the factory.

⚠️ **oil mill** - factory where oil is extracted from seeds

⚠️ **barge** - vessel used to transport cargo from ships to the shore

⚠️ **raw material** - unprocessed material





Maalderijstraatje will take you to the ZOUTWERF (Salt Wharf). Turn left.

In the Middle Ages, ships would moor on this quay which brought **salt** to Mechelen. The three beautiful houses a little further down the **SALT WHARF** each have a name. The first house is called **The Sturgeon**, the second one **The Scales** and the third one **The Salmon**. Can you remember why people in the Middle Ages **named** their houses?

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GAME INCENTIVE

Have fun with this
Game Incentive!



There's a number on the third house, just above the door, though. This house was therefore extra recognisable, which was actually quite handy, because **The Salmon** was the **guildhall** of the **fishmongers**. Right, the very same fishmongers who commissioned **The Miraculous Draught of Fishes** which you saw in the Church of Our Lady-Across-The-Dyle a moment ago!



Just like the three façades on the Haverwerf at the start of our journey, the façade of **The Salmon** tells its own story. Just by examining the house in great detail, you will notice that this house was built for people who had a close affinity with **water**: a **mermaid** on the blue front door, a giant **salmon** above it ... **The Sturgeon** and **The Scales**, too, deserve your brief attention.



If you look closely, you will notice that both houses **lean** into the street the higher you go.

Do you happen to know why?

There are a few reasons for this:

- It was a way to **protect** the underside of the façades from the **rain**, which, in humid regions as this one was definitely not a luxury!
- These houses were located in the centre of the port district. Sometimes, **heavy loads** had to be lifted from the quay into the attic, and then it was not a bad idea when the lower floors were set back a little so that they were less likely to be damaged.

031

SALMON Some claim that this pink animal used to swim around the Dyle at one point. One look at the water will be enough to conclude that that is certainly no longer the case: salmon seek running water, while the water of the Dyle is stagnant! That has been the case since 1900, when it was decided to direct the flow of the river around the city to reduce the risk of flooding and epidemics.

Turn around and take a close look at the **Grootbrug**. If you paid attention at the **Fish Market** just now, then you'll remember what the **fourth arch**, which you can spot well from here, was for before it was bricked in.





Walk up to the corner of the **Zoutwerf**, cross **Guldenstraat** and take **Van Beethovenstraat**.
Continue walking until you get to **STOOFSTRAAT** on your left.

It's hard to imagine what it must be like to live without **hot water** coming out of the tap as soon as you switch it on. You probably don't think twice about being able to take a hot **shower** in the morning in a bathroom that is steps away from your bed...



That was completely different a while back! Ask your great-grandmother ... Not everyone had a bathroom in those days, let alone a real bathtub or a shower! Bathrooms are an invention of our time. Your great-grandmother had to sit in a **cast iron** tub, into which kettles of piping hot water were poured. Sinks didn't exist either. Instead, you had to have a wash above a **bowl** on an iron stand, which came with an **ewer** to fill the bowl with water.

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Even longer ago, in the **Middle Ages**, you would go to the **bathhouse** for a thorough wash. Men and women used to bathe together and one thing led to another, of course... Besides a wash, you could also fix a date with one of the **girls of pleasure** who were stationed there. In some cultures, people still frequent the **Hammam** or the bathhouse. They are very rare in Belgium, and usually in places where many **Muslims** live, who brought this tradition to Belgium (without the girls, of course).

So there's very little left of Mechelen's medieval bathing culture. **That's a pity**, because those are the places where people meet in order to share the latest news and gossip. Not unlike a café, but then in the water. You have to admit, you probably don't have so much fun in your bathroom.



At the end of Van Beethovenstraat, you end up at LAMOT again, the start - and also the end - of your journey along the Dyle.

THIS IS WHERE YOUR TREK ENDS.

With your head full of pictures and stories about Mechelen past and present, you can return home or else head into the city to try one of the specialities which were described in this booklet.

Do you have any tips or ideas for the authors of this booklet, or would you like to share a story with them - something that happened during your trek or something you liked so much that it will stay with you for the rest of your life? **Please share it with us!**

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GREETINGS FROM MECHELEN!

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