



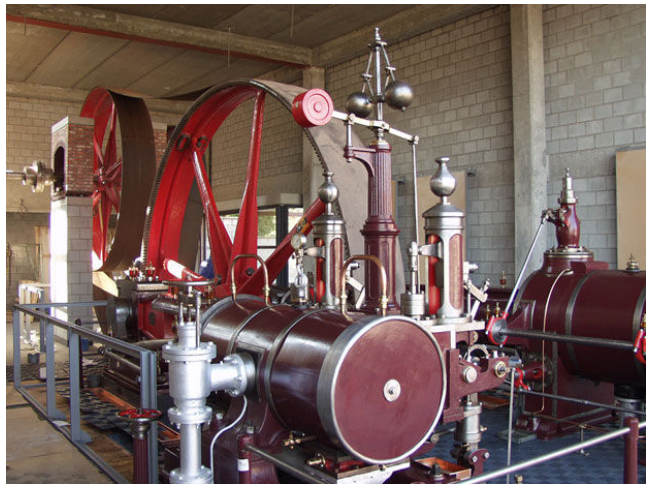
The National Museum of Playing Cards documents the history, use and manufacture of playing cards. It owns the most important collection of playing cards from Turnhout and the historic Netherlands. The oldest original pieces date from the early 16th century, but the emphasis lies on the industrial period (18th century to now). This is the period in which the card makers of Turnhout created a furore. Since the majority of their cards were destined for export, the whole world is represented in the museum.

The museum also takes a close look at technique. In a printing town like Turnhout it could hardly be any other way. The museum has authentic presses and graphic equipment. The machinery illustrates the whole of the production line, past and present, a gigantic steam engine included.

MAIN ATTRACTIONS

Steam machine

The steam machine provided continuous power and so was the driving force behind the Industrial Revolution. Ch. Nolet of Gent produced this model in 1896.



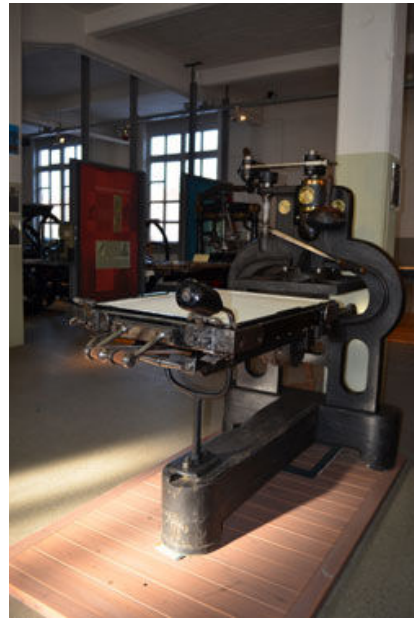
Bin 60



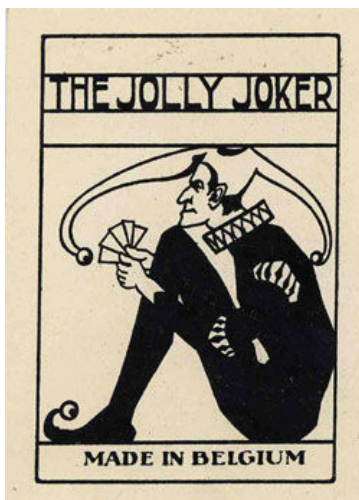
Not the prettiest, but the most popular object in the museum. The waste bin dates from 1993 and was made by Carta Mundi. Visitors can take cards from this waste bin home with them.

Stanhope Press N° 88

This printing press was made in 1829 by J.H. Bouhoulle in Antwerp. It is the first all-metal printing press, commissioned by P.J. Brepols.



Joker



This Joker, in the clear lines of the Jugend style, is still a favourite with the public. Printer: Brepols (Turnhout).

Dragon card game

Gilis van den Bogarde created this beautiful game in the Golden Age of Antwerp (1567).

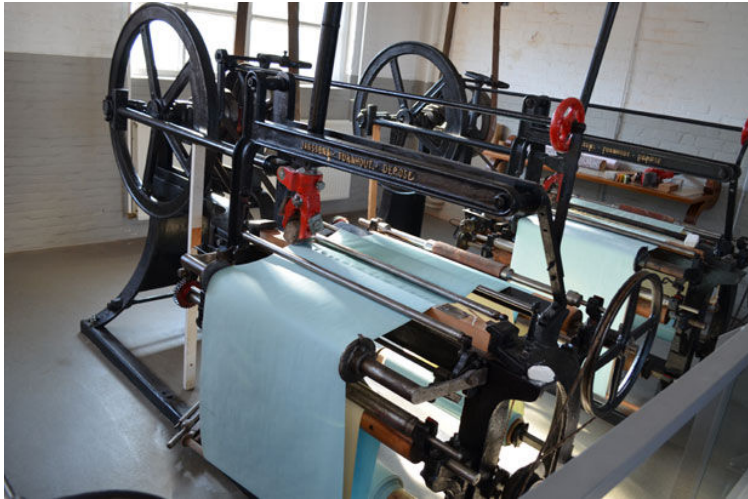


Coating and smoothing



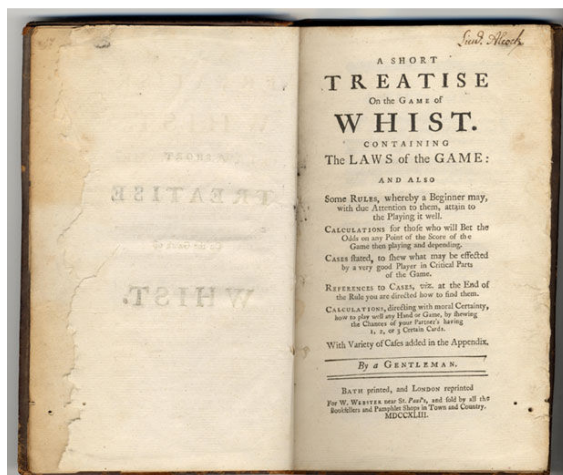
The museum shows these unique remnants of an industrial plant for putting the gloss of playing cards . (Photo left: coating, photo right: smoothing)

Coating



Smoothing

Book entitled 'A short treatise on the game of whist'



This book by Edmond Hoyle is the most famous work ever to be published about cards. It is also the first publication about winning strategies. The museum has managed to lay its hands on this very rare 1743 issue (2nd print).

EXPOSITIONS

CARDBOARD WEAPONS - Card playing during The Great War.

17 April - 24 December 2014

War can be boring. We very often remember wars because of their battles and their victories. But truth can be less spectacular. Wars consist of long periods of waiting and being bored. In hospitals as well as in camps, days can be pretty long. To pass the time, soldiers play games.



During the First World War cards were played everywhere, this was almost the only pastime one had in the trenches.

The German Government valued the immense importance of playing cards and promoted them as "kriegswichtig". They thought the making of playing cards to be as essential as ammunition.

At and behind the frontlines playing cards could pass away the time and would stimulate the soldiers' morale. Playing cards have other functions as well. They are used as educational appliances to learn military skills, or as cardboard weapons or as propaganda pro and contra. And in uncertain times they seem to be needed to predict the future. All this proves that playing cards are less innocent than you might think. The exhibition "Cardboard Weapons" looks at war from a forgotten and unknown point of view. The exhibition does not deal with the military or political history, with battles or generals, but takes the visitor into the trenches.

In six chapters the exhibition presents a lot of photos and unique, original objects, never shown. Everything on show comes from our own and Alex Clays' collection.

GUIDED TOURS

The unique Nationaal Museum van de Speelkaart tells you all about the history of the playing card in Turnhout. If what you really want is pure history, go for the general guided tour. But if you are more interested in themes, that's perfectly possible too. You can go for a tour covering subjects like the 'printing and manufacture of playing cards', 'The game of cards, history and use of playing cards' or 'Turnhout, graphic centre and town of cards'.

You can also couple your visit to the museum to the 'pressure in the museum' programme. These are demonstrations of historical printing presses. The programme is held on set days.

WITH THE KIDS

Treasure hunt

During the summer months July and August a treasure hunt helps the youngest generation to discover the museum in a fun way. This treasure hunt is also related to the Fly Route through the town. In Turnhout 6 of Fly's treasures are hidden. In order to find them children must take part in a treasure hunt in each location, which provides them with a stamp. Collected stamps can be exchanged for small presents.

Entrance to the museum is free for children and youngsters under the age of 18.

THE MUSEUM BUILDING

The museum has been in an old factory building since 1988. In fact, the museum is made up of a few buildings, located between Druivenstraat and Mermansstraat:

- Factory building, 1926, consisting of a reinforced concrete frame filled with brick, 15 m high. It is a striking, outstanding, block front to the National Museum of Playing Cards, a piece of commercial and industrial architecture and, as such, one of the first constructions of this type in Turnhout. The company Mesmaekers built this wing as an annex to house its expanding business activities as a printer and playing cards manufacturer. The building was later used to produce coloured and illustrated paper. Known locally as the "new Mesmaekers factory".
- Frontal extension, built as office space in 1955 by the firm Keuppens-Leysen. This textile producer had become the owner of the "new Mesmaekers factory".
- The "Steam house", an annex to the factory wing, structure 1998-2003, designed to house the museum's historical steam engine.
- The premises on Mermansstraat, built in 1911-1913 in the neo-Renaissance style and commissioned by the Geschied- en Oudheidkundige Kring Taxandria (Taxandria Historical and Archaeological Circle). Design: architect Jules Taeymans. The premises remained the home of the Taxandria Museum until 1993.

The factory building was thoroughly decorated and refurbished as a museum between 1999 and 2003 under the guidance of architect Vittorio Simoni (Hasselt). The sleek, distinctive building was to bring a new dynamic to what was once a working neighbourhood. At some point in the future there will be a museum square at the heart of this old, industrial part of town.



ORGANIZE YOUR VISIT

Opening hours

Tuesday - Friday: 10 am – 5 pm / Saturday – Sunday: 11 am – 5 pm
Closed on Mondays, December 25-31

Tickets

- Entry: EUR 5 – concessions: EUR 3 – under 18: free
- Guided tours: EUR 50 + EUR 5 expenses – 1,5 hours, available in English
- Guided tours can be booked via the UiT-desk: +32 14 44 33 55 – gidsen@turnhout.be
- Combiticket to include the Taxandria Museum and Beguinage Museum: EUR 7,50

Every Thursday in July and August, admission to the museum is free

Where can you reach us?

Nationaal Museum van de Speelkaart, Druivenstraat 18, 2300 Turnhout

Car

You can park

- in the museum car park (free - limited number of spaces)
- in the Muylenberg Car Park, Sint-Jozefstraat, 2300 Turnhout (opposite the museum).

On foot or by bike

The Nationaal Museum van de Speelkaart is a 5-minute walk from the Grote Markt. The museum is also easy to reach by bike.

From the Grote Markt enter Otterstraat.

150 metres further along, turn right into Beekstraat.

Follow Beekstraat until you reach Druivenstraat.

Train

The National Museum of Playing Cards is a 15-minute walk from the station.

Leave the station via the station building.

Cross Stationstraat and enter Merodelei.

Make your way down this street and then join Gasthuisstraat.

Cross the Grote Markt and enter Otterstraat.

150 metres further, turn right into Beekstraat.

Follow Beekstraat until you reach Druivenstraat.

Bus

Lots of service buses stop at the Grote Markt. From there it is a 5-minute walk to the National Museum of Playing Cards.

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