

Bloem in Oostende,

Press release, 30 April 2026

Bloomsday festival programme May – June 2026



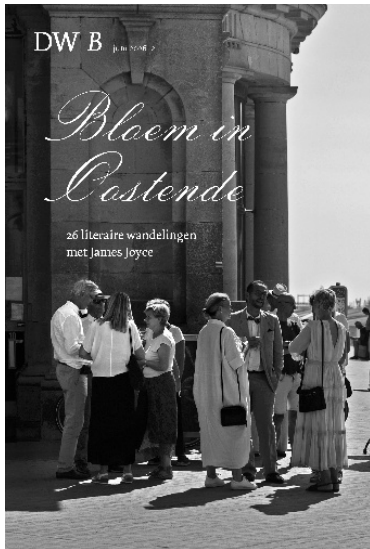
Photo: Jef Van Eynde

Bloomsday – the festival dedicated to the great modernist writer James Joyce – is celebrated worldwide on 16 June. In his most famous book *Ulysses*, Joyce tells the story of a single day in the life of Leopold Bloom, who traverses Dublin from one end of the city to the other. That particular day in Dublin – 16 June 1904 – is known internationally as Bloomsday. For the past four years, the Portiers van de Oceaen have brought people together in Ostend to celebrate this occasion: a playful, literary and festive day – and not just for Joyce enthusiasts.

Joyce's legendary book *Ulysses* was published in 1922. Four years later, in the summer of 1926, he holidayed in Ostend with his family, making it their home for a month. The Joyce family stayed at the luxurious Hôtel de l'Océan. Whenever the telephone rang in the lobby, James Joyce pricked up his ears; the receptionist would answer: ' *Ici le portier de l'Océan.*' Who wouldn't want to be that – a porter of the ocean, gazing out at the sea every day, keeping watch over its ins and outs? It's been 100 years since Joyce visited Ostend. Hence this special centenary edition of Bloomsday in 2026, which also marks the fifth consecutive year that people have celebrated it on the Belgian coast.

Who are the organizers? De Portiers van de Oceaen, namely Geert Lernout, Lieven Van Den Abeele, Helen Simpson, Xavier Tricot, Dirk Beirens, Jef Van Eynde, Hendrik Tratsaert, Philippe Braem and Koen Peeters.

Keen to know more about James Joyce in Ostend? See: Xavier Tricot, *James Joyce in Ostend*, Pandora, 2016.



LITERARY WALKING GUIDE

'Bloem in Oostende/ 26 'literary walks' [in Dutch]

With contributions by Dirk Beirens, Philippe Braem, Britt Bakker, Seppe Decubber, Heleen Debruyne, Hans Depelchin, Ignaas Devisch, Eli Elise Hoopman, Sanne Huysmans, Geert Lernout, Carmien Michels, Koen Peeters (compiler), Eric Rinckhout, Mark Schaevers, Helen Simpson, Els Snick, Lize Spit, Hendrik Tratsaert, Xavier Tricot, Flor Vandekerckhove, Lieven Van Den Abeele, Kurt van Eeghem, Rob van Essen, Jef Van Eynde (photographs), Vincent Van Meenen, Caro Van Thuyne and Erik Vlaminck.

20 euros

Order your copy online via www.dwb.be, from 6 June onwards.

Available soon at Corman, De Witte Zee and Standaard Boekhandel in Ostend.

THE PROGRAMME, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

(1) Outdoor photo exhibition at the Nieuwe Gaanderijen from 6 May to 1 July, Koning Boudewijnpromenade

Photographer Jef Van Eynde has visited all the locations that inspired the stories in the walking guide. Alongside the large-format photographs, excerpts from the literary texts are presented.

(2) Launch of the walking guide 'Bloem in Oostende/ 26 literaire wandelingen' Friday 12 June, 19.00, Bibliotheek Oostende [Ostend Library], Wellingtonstraat 17. Free. [In Dutch]

Launch of the walking guide 'Bloem in Oostende/ 26 literaire wandelingen'. With Eli Elise Hoopman, Seppe Decubber and Britt Bakker (all from De Letterie, Ostend), together with the Portiers van de Oceaan (Dirk Beirens, Philippe Braem, Koen Peeters, Helen Simpson, Hendrik Tratsaert, Xavier Tricot, Lieven Van den Abeele and Jef Van Eynde). The book will

be available for purchase during the event (20 euros). Be amongst the first to dive into its contents!

Register via the website: oostende.bibliotheek.be/agenda

[Bloem in Oostende | voorstelling wandelgids in Oostende - UiTinVlaanderen](#)



Xavier Noiret-Thomé, *Whh hrr rkkk!!*, 2026

(3) Xavier Noiret-Thomé exhibition in [BU'RO]

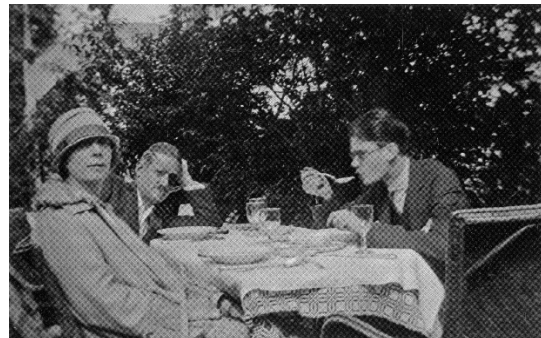
Opening on Sunday 14 June, 15.00 – 18.00

Torhoutsesteenweg 49, Oostende

Opening hours: from 14 June to 17 July, every Saturday and Sunday, from 15.00 – 18.00.

The exhibition will also be open during TAZ: more information to follow.

French artist Xavier Noiret-Thomé has lived and worked in Brussels for over twenty-five years. Since his teenage years, James Joyce's *Ulysses* has been a guiding influence on his work. For the fifth edition of 'Bloomsday in Ostend', he has created a series of paintings inspired by the neologisms, onomatopoeia and compound words that Joyce employed in his renowned book. Much like Joyce's multifaceted writing style, Noiret-Thomé's paintings branch out in diverse directions: figures, expressionist gestures, letters, near-monochrome planes and forays into abstraction. Philippe Braem, a member of the Portiers, is the driving force behind the new exhibition space [BU'RO].



(4) From 16 June, join a walking tour organized by the Oostendse Gidsenkring [Ostend Guides Association] [in Dutch]

‘Een Bloem van schrijvers en portiers voor James Joyce’ [A bouquet of writers and portiers for James Joyce], an Ostend literary walk. Organized by the Ostend Guides Association ‘Lange Nelle’, you can book this walking tour at any time via info@oostendeahoy.be, see also www.gidsenkringoostende.be.

And above all:

Bloomsday in Ostend

Tuesday 16 June, 17.00, starting at the station

The ultimate city tour!

The Joyce family – James, Nora and Lucia (admittedly lookalikes) – will be arriving in Ostend at 17.00 on Tuesday 16 June. Come and meet them at the station, where the Mayor of Ostend, Mr John Crombez, and Mr Kevin Conmy, the Ambassador of Ireland to the Kingdom of Belgium, will greet them. Accompanied by the Melody Makers brass band, the Joyce family will make their way through the city. Along the route, passages from Joyce’s works will resound aloud to the public. The parade will end at around 19.00 at the Grote Post.

A notable detail: the (non-compulsory) dress code is James and Nora Joyce, Ostend, 1926. For James, that means a straw hat, a blazer, a white shirt and a walking stick. And for the Noras amongst us: they can choose their own style.

The great Joyce in O celebration

Tuesday 16 June, 8 pm De Grote Post (De Kleine Post auditorium, in Dutch)

Tickets €15 (including a literary walking guide, in Dutch, retail value €20)

The literary legend James Joyce spent the summer of 1926 in Ostend with his family. It was a happy five weeks – exactly one hundred years ago. We are delighted to celebrate this anniversary on Bloomsday with a special programme of words and music: playful, spirited and full of joie de vivre, just as we like it. **Kurt Van Eeghem** will guide the evening in his trademark witty style.

Joyce expert **Geert Lernout** opens the programme. A distinguished group of writers has created original texts especially for the occasion, inspired by places in Ostend and by their own personal associations with the city. **Hans Depelchin**, shortlisted for the Boon Prize, producer and author **Heleen ‘Aline’ Debruyne**, philosopher **Ignaas Devisch** and

Dutch-Belgian writer **Rob Van Essen**, twice winner of the Libris Prize, each offer a unique literary tribute to this coastal city. **Xavier Tricot**, author of *James Joyce in Ostend*, and **Helen Simpson** pay homage in verse.

Leading soprano **Elise Caluwaerts** performs Benjamin Britten's radiant song cycle *Les Illuminations*, set to texts by Arthur Rimbaud, accompanied on grand piano by Lithuanian pianist **Monika Dars**. Britten greatly admired Joyce, while the music-loving writer himself was, of course, well acquainted with Britten's work.

And finally, **James Joyce** himself has the last word: an Irishman in Ostend!

After this richly varied programme, you will step into the Bloomsday night with the literary walking guide *Bloem in Oostende* tucked under your arm.

Organisation: De Portiers van de Oceaan and Exil vzw with the support of the City of Ostend.

Tickets: [Bloomsday in Oostende in Oostende - UiTinVlaanderen](#)

In close collaboration with the Irish Embassy, the City of Ostend's Culture Service, de Letterie, Exil, the Ostend Guides Association Lange Nelle, Oostende leest [Ostend Reads], the City Library and DW B.



Below: some snapshots from previous Bloomsdays in Ostend (photos: Jef Van Eynde).



The first Bloomsday in Ostend in the Belgian press, VRT news [in Dutch]. [Click here](#).

News and info about Bloomsday in Oostende, past and present, plus links for tickets and events: www.ostendiana.be

Article about Bloomsday in the Belgian national newspaper *De Standaard* [in Dutch]. [Click here](#). Article about Bloomsday in Oostende by Clare Taylor in The Brussels Times [in English]. [Click here](#).



Rechter deze publicatie, die voor-
bouwt op vroegere edities van de
voorbij 55 jaar. Na die kwart-
 eeuw kunnen we nu een coman-
 deurs bibliografie presenteren
met maar liefst 18.000 boeken- en
krantenfels. De eerste editie in
na toegepast bij de selectie van
die niet- 'vogel' Lee. Franscels die
bij zijn monnikenwerk gepost-
torend werd door zijn zonen Pieter,
Erwin Mahieu, Nadia Stubbbe,
Georges Van Duyvenstede en
Yvan Van Hyfte. 'Eik type van ar-
www.ostendiana.be/bibliografie
oostende die publicatie 'toeschild
worden voor de euro. Op 12 an-
gustus, om 19 uur, wordt de uit-
gave voorgelezen in het stadsthe-
ater en kan hier tevens de eerste
plaat afgehaald worden. (MLJ)

James Joyce-comité herdenkt de Ierse auteur op Bloomsday

OOSTENDE Uitgedost in smetteloze dresscode herdenkt het James Joyce-comité op 16 juni - op Bloomsday, de dag waarop Ierland een van haar bekendste auteurs herdenkt - James Joyce.

In de zomer van 1926 brengt James Joyce samen met zijn gezin zijn vakantie door in Oostende. Ook dit jaar organiseert het James Joyce-comité, dat zich heeft een Bloomsday Oostende. Ze konden daarbij op de steun rekenen van KAAP, de vzw East en de Irish Embassy. Voorzitter professor emeritus Geert Lernout sprak de 80 aanwezigen toe over James Joyce en de zee. Auteur Koen Peeters las in avant-première een fragment voor uit het eerste hoofdstuk van zijn in september te verschijnen roman *Georges*. Daarin heeft hij het over de bewaarde vakantie die de auteur van *Ulysses* met zijn vrouw, dochter en zoon in Oostende beleefde. Ze verbleven onder meer in Hotel de l'Océan op de dijk. Daar hoorden ze ooit hoe de portier zich aan de telefoon doodloos voorstelde als *El. Le portier de l'Océan*. Wat dan weer Joyce inspitte...

CENTENNIUM
Na een eerste editie vorig jaar plant het James Joyce-comité ook volgend jaar een Bloomsday in de stad aan Zee. En in 2022, 100 jaar na Joyce' verblijf in Oostende, een feestelijk centennium ter ere van de Ierse auteur. (MLJ)



De Standaard

vind je [hier](#).

Bloomsday: James Joyce in Oostende

James Joyce' *Ulysses*, dat is het wereldberoemde verhaal over één dag, 16 juni 1904, in het leven van Leopold Bloom, die door de straten van Dublin dwaalt. Dat én het genie van Joyce is wat literatuur liefhebbers op 16 juni vierden. Sinds 2022 eert ook Oostende de Ierse schrijver, die er in 1926 neerstreek voor een deugdloze vakantie. Dit jaar vinden de festiviteiten een dag eerder plaats en gaat de aandacht naar Nora, Lucia, Sylvia en Molly, de vier vrouwen in het leven van Joyce. Met een introductie door Joyce-expert Geert Lernout, een performance van Viviane De Muynek als Molly Bloom, Steven Van Ammel die het leven van uitgever Sylvia Beach uitspit en een streepje Ierse folkmuziek.

Op zondag 15 juni om 14 uur in Kaap, Oostende. Meer info en tickets vind je [hier](#).

