

LAARNE , A WEALTH OF FLOWERS

THE HISTORY OF LAARNE AND KALKEN

In the Early Middle Ages, to the east of Ghent, a vast wood extended between the rivers Scheldt and Durme: "nemus intra Scaldam et Dormam".

As early as Roman times, small areas had been brought under cultivation but traces of settlement however are few: only in Kalken archeological research has given indications to that effect.

The name "Kalken" may even date from pre Roman times.

The absence of material as well as written sources about Laarne and Kalken may point out that early farming-land and settlements, if any, were overgrown by natural woodland vegetation once more.

The oldest writings about Laarne date back to the 11th century, those about Kalken to the 12th century

Until the late 19th century, both municipalities above all focussed on agriculture and home weaving as a secondary activity

Early traces of industrialisation date back to the end of that century

From the 1970s on, the creation of new residential quarters in the centre of both villages , lead to a growth of population.

In the 1990s local industry was relocated..

1.THE CASTLE OF LAARNE (13th-14th century)

The chief object of interest in Laarne is the castle, part of a medieval circle of fortresses, erected to defend the city of Ghent

After decades of decay, full restoration and refurbishing started in 1962.

Nowadays this historical watercastle houses one of Europe's most important collections of silverware as well as paintings, frescos, hangings and furniture

2.THE MALT-HOUSE

This edifice was built as part of a local brewery. Its size shows the importance of the then beer industry. Later on a distillery was added to the malt-house, but midst the 20th century all activities stopped.

3.THE CHURCH OF SAINT DENIS

The village green of Kalken is dominated by the church of Saint Denis.

Its octahedral tower dates back to the 13th century. During the 17 th century two rather narrow side-aisles were raised.

Amongst other objects of art, one can admire the 17th century painting "The adoration of the Magi" by Casper de Craeyer, a confessional chair from 1676 and icons of the Stations.

The La Haye organ from 1712 is the villagers'pride.

4.FOLKLORE

Numerous folkloristic events such as the annual procession and all kinds of fairs and markets regularly attract large crowds

5.THE KALKEN WATERWAY

Since the middle of the 16th century, this channel connects the village and the river Scheldt.

In order to improve the economic situation and to manage the outer marshes, the brook was deepened and broadened.

After World War I the waterway lost its economic importance and since 1958 it is unnavigable.

6.THE AUMAN MILL

The original windmill dates back to 1805-1806.

In 1891 a steam engine was installed and in 1928 the wings were removed for good and all.

Ever since the mill is electrically driven.

In 2000 it was restored and up to the present day it still belongs to the Auman family.

7.THE KATTENHEYE FARM

In Gallo Roman times there may already have been agricultural activity in this aera.

In late medieval times, a leading family from Ghent had a large lease farm erected here.

The impressive gateway dates from the 18th century.

This huge farmstead is still occupied by a young family and a lot of horses.

8. NATURAL SCENERY

The "Poelen" (ponds) at the Meerskant and the famous "Damvallei" constitute a true paradise for a wide range of birds.

Walkers as well as fishermen regularly enjoy the tranquility of the outstanding countryside

9.THE CHURCH OF SAINT MACARIUS

This late gothic church is dedicated to Saint Macarius (of Antioch), who once was archbishop of Constantinople.

The leaded windows that decorate the choir depict important moments in his life.

Members of the Van Vlisteren family, lords of Laarne in the 17 th century, rest in the sacred grounds of this beautiful edifice

The precious Langlet organ dates back to 1672. It was renovated in 1982 and is regularly played on ever since.

10.THE KLOPPERS CHAPEL

This small chapel was built in honour of Our Lady of Comfort by Siska Schepens , daughter of Stien Schepens , nicknamed “Klopper”, in 1890.

11. WINTER IN LAARNE

12.MANSION IN THE VROMONDSTRAAT

This classisist residence was built to the order of Amelie De Weirdt in 1855 and later occupied by the Cremers ,a family of brewers.

Its plan shows similarities with The Roman Plan of Andrea Palladio and is erected after the instructions of the golden section .

The characteristic symmetry is clearly visible outside in windows , aisles and chimneys as well as inside in rooms ,corridors ,doors and authentic furniture;

Later on , the De Buck family acquired this mansion and built a medical cabinet to the right aisle..

Up to the present day , members of this family still dwell in this stately house.

13.TOURISTIC INFORMATION

Laarne is 10 km to the east of Ghent, easily attainable via motorway E 40 and E17 (Ring R4 exit 5 Laarne)

Tourist Information

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e-mail : gemeentebestuur@laarne.be

website : www.laarne.be

14.ROUTES FOR WALKERS AND CYCLISTS

~Path of the Knight Laarne (12km)

~Path of the Heron Laarne (9km)

~Path of Monuments Laarne – Kalken (15km)

~Path for mountainbikers (23km)

~Path of the Belt Laarne – Kalken (35km)

~Path of the Castles Laarne – Destelbergen

~Bridle-path (42 km)

~Municipal walking and cycling –map (topographical map)

Most maps are available at the village-hall

Other routes are on the topographical map

Info : Internal affairs and communication

15.LAARNE AND KALKEN : NATURAL SCENERY

In Laarne we find distinct traces of late medieval landscape with alternation of woodland marshes and moors.

The “Poelen” where once peat was dug are now the ideal habitat for a wide range of waterplants such as flowering-rush and branched bur-reed; even more rare are marsh lousewort (red rattle), water-soldier , freshwater sponge and greater spearwort The Path of the Knight takes the walker through the “Viergemete” where grassy meadows alternate with dry land with herbs and grasses.

The “Kalkense Meersen” , between the meanders of the Old Scheldt are famous for tens of black-tailed godwits that sit on eggs in the lower meadows.

This watery land is about 2000 acres of which about 1125 acres are on territory of Kalken..

Walkers , bikers as well as fishermen highly appreciate the outstanding beauty of this unspoilt landscape.

16.THE BERLINDE CHAPEL

This chapel dates back to the 1670s.

Its construction was financed by the local parishoners and in 1774 a bell tower embellished this lovely edifice.