

Sneak a peek behind the museum walls

SPORTIMONIUM, the sports and Olympic museum that opened its doors in Hofstade in 2004, is now the proud owner of its own, modern **museum depot**.

For years the museum had to make do with rented warehouses or depots that were too small and too primitive to preserve our precious sports heritage in good museological conditions.

Thanks to a sponsorship from the heirs of the late **Victor Boin** (1886-1974) and with the support of the government, the SPORTIMONIUM got a great impulse for the construction of its own depot, and a radically different course could finally be taken. As a result hundreds of meters of archives and thousands of objects, paintings, posters, photographs and other documents were moved to the brand new and modernly equipped **Preservation Hall Victor Boin** last month. From now on, everything is preserved in optimal conditions, so that all the collection pieces will remain in top condition for future generations and for exhibitions *intra* or *extra muros*. Not only the modern storage systems and the climate system are remarkable, but also the fact that the depot will serve as an emergency depot for the province of Flemish Brabant and that **the audience can catch a glimpse** of the Preservation Hall.

Are you curious to find out what the brand new Preservation Hall Victor Boin looks like and how it works?

Don't miss the **open day on Saturday, October 1**.

Everyone is welcome between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. to enjoy **for free**:

- Exclusive guided tours of the depot and the permanent exhibitions
- Cheerful music by the Cotton City Brass Band
- A café latte Victorio ... or a hot waffle
- A game of *beugelen* or *trabol* in the garden
- Getting to know Victor Boin
- A glimpse inside the hidden treasure chambers of the Sportimonium
- ...

MORE ABOUT THE MUSEUM DEPOT

Preservation Hall Victor Boin

The first stone for the museum depot was laid on April 21, 2012. It was an important moment, because it marked the beginning of the last phase of the entire Sportimonium project.

The laying of the first stone was a symbolic cooperation between the museum world and the sports world. Count Jacques Rogge, at that time still president of the International Olympic Committee, Carla Galle, then administrator-general of Sport Vlaanderen, Baron Gaston Roelants, representative of the (Olympic) athletes, Prof. Dr. Em. Paul Van Aerschot, architectural engineer, Mr. Jaak Jespers, project realisator, Prof. Dr. Em. Roland Renson, at the time chairman of the Sportimonium and the late Mr. Roger Boin, patron of the project, laid the symbolic first stone.

Constructing an eco-friendly building was the aim from the start. The Preservation Hall Victor Boin is being heated and cooled by a water pump installation that uses geothermal energy, coupled with floor heating. The in-floor heating limits the circulation of dust to a minimum. The ventilation system type D (with heat changer) divides the air in the depot space by means of so-called 'sockets'. The climate control system is set to four separate areas: storage space, archive space, workshops and offices.

The building is extremely well insulated and meets the applicable standards easily. That way, large fluctuations in temperature and humidity are avoided, which is very important to prevent damage to the collection.

Light, especially sunlight, has a deleterious effect on a wide range of materials. The deposit area is therefore shrouded in complete darkness. There are no windows so that light coming in from the outside is avoided and light is only lit when museum employees are at work in the depot.

In collaboration with the province of Flemish Brabant, the Preservation Hall Victor Boin will also play a regional role as emergency and transit depot for non-fragile heritage collections from the province. Should a disaster occur at a colleague collection management institution or if there's a sudden need to cope with heritage pieces quickly, the Hall Boin can provide a temporary solution. A part of the new heritage depot is made available for this purpose. The province of Flemish Brabant in return granted financial assistance for the realisation of the deposit.

A few numbers!

- The longest object in the depot: boat eight with coxswain
- 1500 medals in the collection
- 20 cycling jerseys – 3 world champions
- 1000 magazine titles
- 30.000 collection items
- ...

Partners: Fonds Victor Boin – Koning Boudewijnstichting, Lotto, Provincie Vlaams-Brabant, FOCl, Afdeling Sportinfrastructuur

Sponsor: Impermo Tegelbedrijf (Sint-Truiden)

MORE ABOUT VICTOR BOIN

Victor Boin (Brussels 1886 - Ukkel 1974) was a very versatile and talented man who excelled in many sports. He built a career in sports journalism and the army and held numerous board positions in various fields.

To keep the legacy of this sporting gentleman alive, his grandson, Roger Boin, meticulously saved his grandfather's complete sports collection and donated it to the Sportimonium in 2006. Inspired by the patron role of his grandfather, he created the Fonds Victor Boin, which is managed by the Koning Boudewijnstichting (King Baudouin Foundation), to support the Sportimonium. Thanks to this fund we were able to build this hall, including a museum depot.

As a way of thanking the Boin Family and to honour the versatile sportsman, journalist, patron and humanist Victor Boin, the building was named after him.

Sportsman in heart and soul

Even at a very young age, Victor Boin was a real sports fanatic. In 1899, at the age of 13, he finished in 2nd place at the Belgian junior swimming competition. Later in his sports career, he won many swimming competitions. He also excelled at water polo and played a lot of international matches. With the Belgian team he won a silver medal in water polo at the Olympics in London in 1908, and a bronze medal at the Olympics in Stockholm in 1912.

Victor Boin was an exceptionally versatile sportsman. He was a talented fencer, an excellent skater and a skilled practitioner of jiu-jitsu.

As a fencer, he became second at the Belgian foil fencing youth championship, where he made his debut, out of 199 contestants. Later he joined the Belgian sword fencing team several times and he won silver medals at both the Olympics in Stockholm (1912) and in Antwerp (1920) in sword fencing.

As a skater, he became European skating champion in Davos in 1904, and in 1907 he became the first Belgian jiu-jitsu champion.

Victor Boin also practiced boxing and took part in car races.

Victor Boin and the Olympics

Four times Victor Boin was selected for the Olympic Games. And with great success. He won 3 silver and 1 bronze medal in total at the Olympics in London (1908), Stockholm (1912) and Antwerp (1920).

In 1924, in Paris, he joined the sword fencing team as a reserve player. They won the silver medal, but Boin himself didn't compete. However, at the Olympics in Paris, he was the flagbearer for the Belgian delegation.

Victor Boin will first and foremost be remembered as the very first athlete ever to recite the Olympic oath. In addition to the releasing of the doves and the introduction of the flag with the five rings, the Olympic oath was a novelty that was introduced at the Olympic Games in Antwerp. As the figurehead of Belgian sports, Boin was selected to say the oath on behalf of all the contestants.

Later in his career, Victor Boin would also play an important role in the Olympic movement. From 1955 tot 1965 he was president of the Belgian Olympic Committee.

In the first place, the Preservation Hall Victor Boin is used as the museum depot for the Sportimonium. A depot is indispensable for a museum, since it is impossible to show all the objects and documents in the permanent collection. That does not mean they are not important, on the contrary. For these objects it is equally important that they are preserved in the right environment, so that we can pass them on to future generations in good condition. The objects often leave the depot for temporary exhibitions in the Sportimonium or because they are on loan for exhibitions in other museums.

Thanks to the brand-new depot Preservation Hall Victor Boin, the Sportimonium can now keep the sports heritage objects in top condition under the best circumstances. However, that does require some attention, because dangers lurk around every corner. You can read more about that in the part 'Conservation'. The greatest advantage of the Preservation Hall Victor Boin is that the collections are no longer spread out over several locations. Everything is now on the Sportimonium site itself - which has many great advantages for the collection managers.

Even though the biggest part of the Preservation Hall Victor Boin is used as depot space, the building has several other functions. Amongst other things, there is a separate storage space for exposition materials, like display cabinets, podiums, frames and plinths for temporary and mobile exhibitions. A workspace to build backgrounds for temporary exhibitions, to fabricate and maintain popular games for the loan department and the occasional sale has also been installed in the building. That loan department itself has also found a home in the Hall Boin.

The sports journalist

The sportsman also became a sports journalist. When he was only 17, he was already carrying a press pass. In 1913 he co-founded the Belgische Beroepsbond van Sportjournalisten ('Belgian Professional Association of Sports Journalists'), currently known as Sportspress. From 1923 to 1935 he was chairman of the association. On top of that, he was chairman of the Internationale Sportpersvereniging ('International Sports Press Association'). Victor Boin wrote for various magazines, such as *La Conquête de l'air, Pourquoi pas ...*

He also worked as a radio journalist. With the breakthrough of radio stations in the 1920s, Boin was one of the first to start doing live reports. For instance, he reported live from Paris-Roubaix and from the Olympics in Berlin (1936).

In addition to his contributions in the mainstream press, he also edited several voluminous works like *Het Gulden Boek van de KBVB*.

During World War II Victor Boin put all his journalistic activities on hold. For this he would receive the medal of the 'Plume brisée' after the war.

More than one ace up his sleeve

This 'man of the world' from Brussels had more than one ace up his sleeve. He distinguished himself as a fighter pilot in World War I. Shortly after the war he flew Queen Elisabeth across the Channel and after that he remained on excellent terms with the Royal Family throughout his life.

He also felt quite at home in the arts world. Boin not only wrote pieces about theatre and music, he also maintained a lot of connections in this field. Amongst other things, he became patron of the Internationale Muziekwedstrijd Koningin Elisabeth van België (The Queen Elisabeth Competition).

Victor Boin was also very active at the administrative level. He was a member of many boards of directors and an honorary member and honorary president of a series of sports organisations. From 1955 to 1965 he was chairman of the Belgian Olympic Committee. He also concerned himself with disabled athletes. In 1960 he founded the Belgische Sportfederatie voor Gehandicapten ('Belgian Sports Federation for the Disabled'), of which he would be chairman until he died. In honour of the phenomenon that was Boin, the Nationale Trofee Victor Boin ('The National Trophy Victor Boin') was created in 1974, the year of his death.

This prize is still awarded annually (at the Sportimonium) as a distinction for the best disabled athlete of the year.

Legacy

Victor Boin meticulously kept all the documents and objects relating to his numerous activities, among them many diplomas, awards and medals as well as drawings, sculptures and paintings.

This collection has been carefully preserved by his heirs and was transferred to the Sportimonium in 2006. A large part of this is arranged as a permanent exhibition, the Cabinet Victor Boin, in the Sportimonium opposite the Olympische Passage.

Show pieces are, amongst others, painted portraits of Victor Boin, one of which by Armand Massonet (1892-1979), one by Jean Laudy (1877-1956), graphic work of Jacques Ochs (1883-1971) and sculptural work by Louis Van Cutsem (1908-1992) and Pierre De Soete (1886-1948).

The personal archive of Victor Boin, which contains extensive correspondence and numerous photos, is stored in the archive section of this building. His library, with a particularly valuable set of magazines such as *La vie au grand air* and *Englebert Magazine*, is in the documentation centre of the Sportimonium and can be consulted there.

In the richly illustrated book *Victor Boin. Sport als levenskunst* (2014, 136 p.) by Roger Boin, Michel Roosens and Monique Van Rulo you can read more about the full and varied life of this remarkable man.