

Miracle of the roses

The two sisters Harlindis and Relindis are probably the most popular holy people in the area of Maaseik. They play an important role in the origin of Aldeneik (Later: Maaseik) in the 8th century. At a young age, the sisters expressed their wish to dedicate their lives to God. Adelhard, a Frankish nobleman who had been converted, wanted to make this dream come true and decided to build a monastery and a church for his daughters. Harlindis and Relindis were very grateful. Although noble women were not supposed to do construction work, the two sisters were eager to help building their small wooden church. One day they were caught collecting stones from the river Meuse to be used in the mosaic floor. "What are you carrying in your aprons?" Adelhard asked firmly. Harlindis and Relindis did not want to disobey and they answered quickly, in unison. "Roses, father." "Show me these roses," Adelhard ordered. Harlindis and Relindis opened their aprons faithfully and... a bunch of roses appeared. The miracle of the roses happened near a small bridge, now known as the Liar's Bridge.

The Card's Knight of Heppeneert.

In Heppeneert, a hamlet just outside Maaseik, you will find the Devil's bridge. The bridge reminds us of a local story, the legend of the Card's Knight (*Kaartridder*). Sir Riddart was a wealthy nobleman who lived in the Borckhoff castle. After his wife had died early, sir Riddart turned to gambling and playing cards. In no time he lost all his money. Completely broke, he decided to make a deal with the devil. He would sell his soul to the devil and in return, Riddart was able to maintain his life in luxury for the following seven years. Sir Riddart signed the contract in his own blood. Seven years went by and it was time for sir Riddart to invite his friends to a farewell party and tell them the truth. When he left the party on horseback to meet with the devil, his friends begged him to pray to Saint Gertrude. The devil was waiting for him at the bridge. As Sir Riddart was about to reach the bridge, Saint Gertrude appeared out of the blue. The devil fled the scene without hesitation. Sir Riddart felt sorrow for what he had done and he accepted to live in poverty for the rest of his life. When he died, he was buried at the cemetery in Heppeneert. His gravestone did not mention any name nor epitaph, it only showed three hearts and five spades. Later on, the gravestone was integrated in the church wall to keep the story alive. People of Heppeneert should never forget the importance of leading a virtuous life.