

# ANGLO-NETHERLANDS SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

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Winter 2020-21

President: The Rt Hon. the Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE

Hon. Newsletter Editor: Mr Hans Neher

Vice-President: The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Chairman: Mr Dick van den Broek

Administrator: Mrs Carine Williams



One of five designs for our first-ever remote-guidance workshop, by our member Adrienne Monteath-van Dok, "Make your own Christmas Wreath", on 6 December

*Please be aware that mail sent to the office may -due to Covid-19- not be acted on for a while, which would include not paying-in cheques. Members who can do so are advised to pay by way of an internet banking transfer.*

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### New Members since May 2020

We welcome:

Mr James A. and Mrs Bernice A.	Mr Laurence H. Rev Bruce J.
Mr Graham B. and Mrs Gillian B.	Ms Tanja M. Mr Donald N.
Mr Laurens de B. and Mrs Lucy de B.	Mrs Pia R. Mr Robert S.
Mr Adrian C. Ms Eveline D.	Dr Brenden T.-M. and Dr Julian N.

### Annual General Meeting

*As recently advised by e-mail on 14 November, and in our letter dated 16 November 2020 to members for whom we do not have an E-mail address, the Society's AGM on 10 December at 7pm will take place via a Zoom video conference. Pre-registration via [events@anglo-netherlands.org.uk](mailto:events@anglo-netherlands.org.uk) is required. The Agenda, Minutes AGM 2019 and Accounts 2019-20 can be downloaded from the website, at [www.anglo-netherlands.org.uk/members-page](http://www.anglo-netherlands.org.uk/members-page)*

## Chairman's Message: looking back, and forward.

This year our Winter newsletter, extended to some 16 pages, is being issued before Christmas which will hopefully allow you to spend more time reading it. I am convinced we will all reflect on one of our most turbulent years, in one way or another, with very different personal experiences. I can only express the hope that you all will be able to find at least some peace this coming Christmas.

Not surprisingly, our Society also experienced some new challenges this year, caused by the impact of Covid-19. We decided, obviously with great reluctance, a few days before the Centenary reception and Book launch planned for 17 March at Kensington Palace to postpone this long- and well-planned event, just a few days before formal Government restrictions came into play. We in Council were, however, reassured to receive the full understanding and support from many of our members for this very difficult decision. The very popular annual Unilever Lecture arranged for April required a similar decision soon afterwards. Let me just stress, these were and are postponements; we will get back to you as soon as circumstances permit.

When our Hon. Secretary, Paul Dimond, suggested towards the end of 2018 that our Centenary in 2020 warranted a very special book, Council obviously supported that idea. However, what he and his editing team were able to put together and get ready for the planned Book launch at the Centenary reception in March bordered on the impossible. A compilation of some 30 essays on all sorts of subjects and activities where the British and the Dutch meet in many walks of life. Very disappointing that this Book could not be launched at this reception, after so much effort. It was only with some heroic effort just before lockdown closed the Embassy (where the Books are stored) that we were able to get your free copy for members at the time ready for despatch, helped by the mailroom at Shell Centre. Some 400 copies were distributed then, around 75 have followed since, and another 75 are presently on order, ready for despatch. This Book is not for commercial sale; it is a limited edition. Some more left for a perfect Christmas present for family members and friends- see page 6.

With the Netherlands Embassy (where the Society has continued to receive great hospitality) in lockdown and with UK Government restrictions in place, we were obviously unable to organise our regular monthly "live" events and produce our hard copy newsletters. Members of Council and the Events Committee had to move into their respective "homes" to think and discuss how to keep the Society alive, in whatever format. Our Events Committee suggested setting up zoom-type events which would be announced through monthly issues of e-News. An excellent idea which rapidly became popular with our membership, reflected in the rising number of

participants. We also set up an Instagram account which is being followed by an increasing number of people.

Other articles in this special newsletter will provide much more detail of what we have been doing since the beginning of 2020 (see pages 4-5) and some insight into our finances, which continue to be healthy (see page 8). Our Awards scheme for undergraduates in Dutch studies at Sheffield University and at UCL continued, in somewhat different formats, an initiative much appreciated by both students and faculties. The winning essay at UCL can be read on pages 13-15. Under the chairmanship of our Hon. Secretary, Paul Dimond, the essays were judged by our enlarged Panel of volunteers. Many thanks to them; a time-consuming exercise over more than a weekend, but also rewarding, I have been told.

Looking forward, we expect having to continue with our monthly e-News and zoom events. We will start organising "live" events as well as soon as circumstances improve and allow. However, with the success of our recent zoom events in mind, I would not be surprised to see our forward programme of events becoming a mixture of "live" and zoom events. The latter have resulted in a much larger part of our membership participating in our events. A somewhat unexpected benefit! We have a resourceful Events Committee, but do not hesitate to come forward with suggestions.

I am sure you are all keen to hear of our plans for the major events postponed earlier this year. It will no doubt be realised that the Centenary reception requires careful alignment according to the availability of our Centenary special guests (who have indicated their willingness to attend in principle), the preferred venue, members' perceptions of a Covid-19 safe environment and Government regulations. Against that background, Council has recently started some soundings for this event to be held in October 2021. The Unilever Lecture will require less "alignment", but will still be subject to some of the constraining factors mentioned. Whether the Lecture will have the same subject will have to be seen.

A vibrant Society constantly requires new members and volunteers for committees. There is always a natural attrition in membership, but some 45 new members have joined the Society during 2020, so our membership keeps growing. However, there are many potential members around, including family members and friends with interests in Anglo-Netherlands matters. Please do not hesitate to extol our merits when meeting them. Special subscription rates for younger members have been





introduced which may be of particular interest to children of members (see page 8). There is also the possibility of gift membership, already used by some members.

I referred earlier to “volunteers”. Our Society cannot do without them. Our Events Committee, led by Connie Sangster, has had a particularly challenging time these last nine months. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of them. They have willingly faced the various new challenges, coming up with new ideas and suggestions, and that all from their respective homes (not limited to the UK). You will read about some of the events they organised later on.

Our Hon. Editor Hans Neher might have had a slightly quieter year with fewer hard copy newsletters, but this has not really been the case. We have had two of these including this extensive Christmas newsletter, as well as a number of somewhat shorter electronic versions. In addition, he has always been either in the background or forefront with advice and help with our monthly e-News. As ever our very many thanks to Hans for his continued and vital work as newsletter Editor. By the way, Hans also manages our website where you can find old newsletters, details of activities and other items of potential interest. Username and Password for the Members’ page can always be found on the back page of our newsletters. Any suggestions to improve the user-friendliness of our website would be most welcome. A review of our IT arrangements including our website will start in 2021.

Our Advisory Committee met twice during 2020, both via zoom. We had firmly arranged a “live” meeting at the residence of H.E. Simon Smits for late March where we had planned to thank him for his strong support of the Society during almost five years. Unfortunately, that also had to be cancelled and our thanks had to be expressed to him in a more limited way. We are most grateful that the new Ambassador, H.E. Karel van Oosterom, has already attended the most recent meeting of this Committee, expressing his strong support for the Aims and Objectives of our Society. You will find an interview with him further in this newsletter; see pages 9-11.

At the forthcoming AGM we shall be saying farewell to some longstanding members of this Committee, whose support and advice has been appreciated for many years. John Boldero, Karen de Segundo and our Honorary member Rineke Weatherill felt that after so many years some other members should take their places. A heartfelt thank you to them and at the same time a warm welcome to Jane Fenoulhet, Emeritus Professor of UCL, and new representatives of some of our Patrons, Gerben Dragt (ABN AMRO), Mark Moffat (PwC) and Peter ter Kulve (Unilever).

Having written these words of thanks and welcome, I would like to express a very special thank you to our President for the last 22 years, Sir Michael Perry, who with his wife Joan has been such a great supporter of our Society, in many different ways. He had indicated his

wish to stand down a while ago, but that moment did arrive at the meeting of the Advisory Committee held in November. We hope to be able to express in more personal and intimate surroundings the Society’s great appreciation when circumstances allow. You will find Sir Michael’s epitaph (as he calls it) on page 6.

Council is delighted that Lord Taylor of Holbeach has agreed to take on the role of President. He has been much interested in British-Dutch affairs for many years and with his wife Julia has been a member of the Society for many years. They consider our Society as one of the best activities with which they could become involved. A warm welcome to them! Council is looking forward to working with him and for his advice. Read his Salute on page 7.

I would like to express a sincere thanks to our Administrator, Carine Williams, who has been your regular “interface” with the Society for quite a few years. Because of the lockdown of the Embassy her role became more challenging as many of these administrative matters had to be handled from home without having the benefit of files and a full data base. She has continued to support the Society as well as she could, occasionally helped by other volunteers.

Finally, a deeply felt thank you to my colleagues in Council. Indeed, this has been a challenging year. First of all with the planning of our Centenary reception and Book launch, for which we met almost every week at the Embassy. Subsequently regular Council meetings via Zoom. For me, it has been a great pleasure and honour having been a member of such a strong team. Thank you. We have welcomed during the year a new member of Council, Ros Burgin. A brief CV was already provided in an earlier e-News; we very much look forward to working with her.

After well over 30 years of membership of Council and the Events Committee, Sylvia Knight has decided to stand down at the next AGM. We can only express our deep appreciation for the many years of her support of the Society. Her expertise with Society matters and loyalty has been of tremendous help. Fortunately, Sylvia has agreed to join the Advisory Committee so that we will continue to benefit from her experience.

This has become a fairly long Chairman’s message for which I apologise. However, with fewer opportunities at present to speak with many members personally, I felt a few more written words might be welcome. I hope you will enjoy reading the variety of articles in this extended newsletter. May I wish you all a peaceful Christmas. Hopefully, better times will come soon when we can meet in person again to enjoy our events. Perhaps Father Christmas with a vaccine might help?

**Dick van den Broek; Chairman.**

*Vaccine, by Gerry Dunn. 2020. Watercolour.*



## From the Events Committee

### Report on selected Events

It has been a challenging year for all of us. In the light of the Covid-19 pandemic we had to cancel or postpone all our activities, starting with the Centenary Reception in March and the Unilever Lecture in April. Many of us were disappointed by the absence of events. After some brainstorming in the Events Committee, in close co-operation with Council, alternatives were considered and it was concluded that the best way forward was to offer a monthly online e-News with information, links to items of interest and virtual events via Zoom. This new cloud-based video communications app allows us to set up virtual video and audio live chats, meetings and lectures. There is no need to open an account to attend a meeting and nearly anyone can access it. Many of us had little or no experience with Zoom but some of us got to grips with it during the lockdown as a way of keeping in touch with family and friends. We hope by now that the majority of our members have been able to access our online events, the online presentations and enjoy the monthly e-News. To increase our flexibility ANS opened its own Zoom account.

Having virtual events has afforded us a new and unusual opportunity to have members attending activities all over the UK and even abroad. Interestingly enough there are quite a few members participating who rarely joined the normal live events we have been organising for years. A pleasant and unexpected side effect of Covid-19!

It was very pleasing to be able to organise our first ANS online lecture in June on **Dutch Landscape**



**paintings by art historian Andrew Taylor.** He talked us through Dutch landscape paintings and how these paintings influenced English painters and collectors during the Golden Age. A successful first online lecture with at least 50 members attending. A link to this recording is still available for our members.

It was followed by a lively first-time book club discussion on **The remarkable journey of Mr Prins by Aletta Stevens.** In July we explored London's vibrant entertainment district with an exclusive private virtual walk **Inside Covent Garden by Karen Pierce-Goulding,** winner of the prestigious Blue Badge Guide of the Year Award. A second book club discussion on **The Salt Path by Raynor Winn** was much enjoyed in September. With all safety measures in place, we were able to organise a first post-lockdown outdoor event with a select group, a **guided tour of Fulham Palace.** The very knowledgeable guide and the good disposition of the weather Gods made it an unforgettable day.

A virtual lecture on **Dutch Heritage Tulips by London**

**based Dutch fine artist**

**Tanja Mödersheim** was very much appreciated. The artist herself gave us a short history and a modern-day

interpretation. A special link to this recording is available for our members.

Another fascinating online event in October was the lecture on **Music in the paintings of Dutch Masters by Peter Medhurst.** The presenter, scholar, bass-baritone,



harpsichordist and organist brought this subject really to life through his explanations and musical demonstrations. These October presentations were each attended by over 35 members.

A virtual guided walk: **Mayflower Voyage: The Mayflower Pilgrims' Origins, Journey and Settlement by Emily Laurence Baker,** a descendant of four passengers of the Mayflower, was hugely enjoyed in November. The guide was unique with her own

background and perspective from the USA side of the story. We are looking forward to a live walk, hopefully in Spring next year.



An online interview by **Marina Mathon with Selma van de Perre on her book "My name is Selma"** took place on Wednesday 25 November. It turned into a fascinating evening. It seemed that over 40 attendees were glued to their screens and we all could have listened to her for a much longer time. A remarkable autobiography from a

courageous woman. When she appeared on the Netherlands' popular talk show, she became an immediate sensation. The memoir of this eloquent Ravensbrück survivor and Resistance Fighter went straight into the bestseller list.



Now, at ninety-eight, Selma remains a force of nature. Full of hope and courage. It was a privilege to hear her story in her own words. Within seconds after

the interview, we already received heart-warming emails from members of the audience who admired her talk enormously.

A unique story in her own words ! A link to access the recording of the interview is available for our members and is included in this Newsletter.

This month an afternoon of Christmas fun by making your very own Christmas Wreath whilst enjoying the comforts of your own home, organised by one of our Events Committee members for 6 December, and a **private virtual London's Christmas Lights Walk with a Dutch Touch** will this year precede the Society's 2020 virtual AGM on 10 December.



We will continue with a virtual programme but as soon as circumstances permit, we will resume with normal live events again. Some interesting online events to look forward to in the New Year: A book club discussion on *The discomfort of the Evening* by Marieke Lucas Rijneveld (winner of the prestigious International Booker Prize). A Big London Music Quiz and a possible lecture on Royal Blue – William and Mary's finest Delftware. In the meantime, check out your online e-News and Newsletter.

The Events Committee has continued to meet via Zoom throughout the lockdown. To bring you a little cheer during these extraordinary and difficult times the number of events has increased when compared to the normal events in the past. In other words, a lot of work and a lot of fun. Many thanks to all committee members for their contribution. We are all volunteers and help each other in a friendly and

supportive way. A special thanks must go to Chantal Tjon who decided it was time for another challenge and left the committee after seven years. Chantal was a dedicated and enthusiastic member and friend who will be missed. Wishing her all the best and we hope to see her again at our forthcoming events.

We are delighted to welcome new committee members soon.

Thank you all for your understanding, warmth and ongoing support.

**Events Committee:**  
*Evelien Hurst, Connie Sangster, Marietta Freeman, Adrienne Monteath-van Dok, Marianne Denney*



Clickable links to recordings of past ANS Zoom lectures: (click anywhere in each of the texts below to open ...)

[Lecture by Andrew Taylor on Dutch Landscape paintings, 24 June 2020](#), the passcode is: **2p!#B+\*?**

[Lecture by Tanja Mödersheim on Dutch Heritage Tulips, 7 October 2020](#), the passcode is: **\*uW5#31b**

[Interview with Selma van de Perre on her book \*My name is Selma\*, 25 November 2020](#), the passcode is: **0+eGc+MK**

## Poems on the Pandemic - 2020

Heleen Mendl-Schrama

### DOWNSIDE OF LOCKDOWN

Lockdown is a bit like prison  
 Though there are no bars on the windows  
 And there is no guard at the door  
 So you can leave if you wish  
 But whereto?  
 No restaurants, clubs or shops are open  
 (apart from chemists, people need their drugs)  
 There is no access to  
 Doctors, dentists, dermatologists,  
 Cardiologists, chiropodists and  
 Barbers or hairdressers.....  
 There are three numbers to ring  
 If things get too bad, but  
 It is best to grit your teeth,  
 Wait for things to change  
 And suffer in silence and isolation.

### UPSIDE OF LOCKDOWN

Primarily there is peace, few cars, and cleaner air  
 Causing fewer deaths from air pollution....  
 Endless offers of opera and music on the internet;  
 Good old BBC Radio 3 a permanent companion with  
 A bounteous variety of music, including Donald on  
 Beethoven!  
 TV was even more appreciated, unmissable  
 The Arts programmes presented by  
 Andrew Graham-Dixon, Travel by Train by  
 Michael Portillo, and exciting trips by  
 Simon Reeve, to mention a few,  
 Painting Classes by dear Bob Ross, long dead,  
 And then, truly important, you found out  
 Who your real friends are, those  
 Who cared for you in your solitude!

*14 and 20 June 2020*



## From the Society's Past President, Sir Michael Perry GBE

Valete ...

My links with the Anglo-Netherlands Society stretch back about thirty-five years, to the time soon after returning from residence in Japan, the last of several overseas postings covering 23 years of my 39 years of Unilever service. The first such posting had been to the Netherlands, for two years I was told at first, but which in the end expanded into eight, during the course of which Joan and I had added three new members to the Perry family, and in so doing established links with Rotterdam, South Holland and the Netherlands that would last a lifetime.



I think it was Unilever colleague Patrick Acheson-Gray who first drew the Society to my attention. I had joined the Board of Unilever in 1985, and soon afterwards Patrick, then

a member of the ANS Council, suggested I ought to become involved. I was also joint chairman of the Netherlands-British Chamber of Commerce around that time, alongside the late Arie de Geus of Shell, so the net was closing in, and drawing me back to my early Dutch links. Thus began more than thirty years of involvement with the Society, attending events when my diary allowed, which was not often until I retired in 1996, joining Council and eventually becoming President in 1998 on the retirement of my illustrious predecessor Sir Peter Vanneck. After the introduction of the new constitution of the Society at the beginning of this century, I continued in my role of President of the Society, a role which I have enjoyed tremendously.

We have witnessed many changes in our membership ranks over those thirty years, particularly from among the thousands of Dutch temporary residents in the UK, especially in London, for whom the Society has been a welcome means of meeting others in similar circumstances, and of providing a much appreciated entry point to the life and culture of the UK. Against this backdrop of frequently changing membership, all-important stability has constantly been provided by a steadfast group of permanently resident members, either Dutch families fully integrated here, or British members with strong personal ties to the Netherlands. This group, whom I shall call the beating heart of our Society, provides the glue that binds us all together as a sustainable body, enabling us to cater to the differing needs of all our members.

The wider context of Anglo-Dutch relations has changed several times during my lifetime, be it in war or peace,

and it is about to change yet again. The entry of the UK into the European Union in 1973, and the subsequent integration of so many



aspects of our mutual endeavours, increased the flow of Dutch business families into London, and stimulated the flow of goods and services in both directions. As a consequence, Societies like ours have had an important role to play in assisting social integration, and our membership has steadily grown as a result. Whatever happens after the turn of this year, the broader context of Anglo-Dutch relations will change, and possibly not for the better, depending on the terms of the UK's departure from the European Union.

Either way, the re-introduction of national borders, tariffs, duties and other formalities, however modest the effects in practice, will mark a step-change in relations, and it is very important, in my view, that our Society plays its part, modest as always, in ensuring that any negative impact on inter-personal relations between the citizens of our two countries is kept to a minimum. We must do this, as always in the hundred years of our existence, by celebrating the ties that bind us, by staying relevant to the evolving needs of our members and by representing in our actions the highest standards of mutual respect and regard. I may be retiring as President of the Advisory Committee, but I shall continue to play my part as an active member as long as I am able, supporting the Society as it meets the new challenges and adjusts to new realities. I am delighted that Lord Taylor has agreed to take my place as President, and I look forward to assisting him in any way I can.

### A perfect Christmas gift: the ANS Centenary book

There is an excellent Christmas present waiting for your family members and friends: a copy of our much appreciated Centenary book.

Cost per copy £20 incl. UK postage; Larger orders may attract a discount. Please contact [administrator@anglo-netherlands.org.uk](mailto:administrator@anglo-netherlands.org.uk)



## From the Society's New President, the Rt. Hon. Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE

Salute!

I shall be truly honoured to succeed to the Presidency of the Advisory Committee of the Anglo-Netherlands Society, taking over from Sir Michael Perry. I shall never emulate the service he has given to the Society over more than 30 years, and his 22 years as President. That would prove an actuarial challenge at my age.

We share a similar love for the Netherlands and its people, even though we know it from very different occupations. He was captain of one of the great Anglo-Dutch industrial giants, Unilever, and I come from a family farming and growing business. But, although different, we both share our affection not only for the place and people, but also the common values and energy of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

I was born, grew up and still live in an area in which many Dutch people have settled. It was no coincidence that it is called the Parts of Holland. In 1919 my grandparents and their two sons settled on an ex-serviceman's smallholding in Holbeach. They came from London, after realising that city life was not sensible following him being gassed in World War I. With only 4 ha., he grew flowers and bulbs. There was already flower and bulb growing in the Spalding area and in time the few pioneers, including some Dutch families, were joined by more Dutch horticulturalists and growers.

At the start of World War II and the invasion of the Netherlands, a number of them were here in England, where they joined the Princess Irene Brigade within the Allied Forces. I was born during the war and grew up with friends from Dutch or Anglo-Dutch parentage. For example, the father of Johnny Walkers came to work for my grandfather before the war and brought up a large family in Spalding. The parents spoke Dutch and the children English in this amazing bilingual household. Johnny, himself, until recently headed up our Chelsea Gold Medal winning subsidiary. My best friend, John Nell, was a 'hybrid'. Van Egmond, Slooten, Geerlings, Verdegaa, and of course van Geest, are only some of the names to be found.

Our own home was a place where Dutch bulb salesmen would call. Supplying bulbs to growers such as ourselves and the flower production industry under glass. In the famous Spalding Tulip Fields, the acreage of bulbs, daffodils and tulips, increased with the ending of trade quotas. Although I had a choice of career, there was only one thing I wanted to do and that was follow my father and be a bulb grower.

I left school at 17, went to work back at home and then went to work in the Netherlands. I worked first in a forcing nursery at Rijnsburg near Leiden and then on a



typical Dutch bulb growing enterprise at Sassenheim, a little further north in the Bloembollenstreek between Leiden and Haarlem. In both cases I lived with a Dutch family and learning Dutch was a convenience it was difficult to avoid. This was particularly so in Rijnsburg, where reading out loud from an old family bible at the midday meal was taken in turns. Sassenheim was more fun and also facilitated a great social life and so it was not just biblical and workplace Dutch that I heard and learned.

A lot of opportunities developed from this short period in my life. I returned home to work in the bulb industry, assisting in setting up a bulb growers co-operative, a show garden at Springfields in Spalding and working for a Dutch owned company – including John Nell's father, Gerard Nell and Petronella Keeling's father, Leonard van Geest.

Taylor's Bulbs grew out of this experience on my return to the family firm. It has developed into the leading supplier of English and Dutch bulbs to retailers in the UK and Ireland. Now run by my son Adam and nephew Sam, it is a flourishing family business in Holbeach and in Lisse, notwithstanding the particular challenges of 2020.

All along, I have had a parallel interest in politics which took me to the House of Lords in 2006. Until I retired as a member of the Government last year, I had been a minister for over nine years, including five years as Government Chief Whip and Captain of Her Majesty's Gentlemen at Arms, which goes well with the Royal Warrant we have held for many years.

We are living through testing times with Covid-19 and Brexit but our relationship with our North Sea neighbours is in so many ways more important than ever. I will do my best to support the Chairman and the Society for this purpose.

I conclude by thanking Sir Michael and Joan for their encouragement, giving Julia and me, and us all, an example of how to do the job well.

## A financial pre-view of our Annual General Meeting on 10 December

please register by 8 December for a Zoom-meeting event link and passcode via [events@anglo-netherlands.org.uk](mailto:events@anglo-netherlands.org.uk).

Members who will be unable to attend the forthcoming Annual General Meeting will hear that we ended the Society's financial year on 30 April 2020 with a strengthened balance sheet that will carry us forward through these difficult times. Our reserves had increased to nearly £93,000 by the end of the accounting year in spite of the costs we incurred in preparing for the Centenary reception and Book launch which had to be postponed at very short notice in March, for reasons well-known.

We can therefore programme activities with confidence and, by maintaining a low membership subscription rate – for the fourteenth successive year – Council intends to sustain and build the Society for the future. We also encourage younger members to join with a concessionary subscription rate (for details please see the Subscriptions 2021 notice, or email the administrator).

During the last year, our membership numbers continued to grow and, supported by an attractive programme of activities, subscription income was almost 10% higher than the previous year.

For some years, members' subscriptions have largely funded our basic administration costs, the Newsletter and the ANS Awards to essay prize winners on the Dutch programmes at University College, London and Sheffield University. Events have both covered their own costs and generated a small surplus that has contributed to the general administration costs.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck, our programme had to stop immediately and we lost the benefit of the activities planned for the final two months of the financial year, including the Royal reception and the annual Unilever lecture, both of which were oversubscribed. While the outcome was a significant drop in our overall surplus for the year compared with the previous year, we mitigated the impact by cutting costs just as quickly

We had to pay almost all our Centenary reception suppliers in full before the day. They hold those deposits (shown under Debtors in the accounts for 2019/20) and, though constrained by exceptionally challenging circumstances, they have expressed their willingness in principle to support our rescheduling as soon as is practicable. We do appreciate the understanding of the many members who paid in advance to attend the Royal reception and the Unilever lecture and are waiting for these to be rescheduled (these payments are shown under Creditors in the accounts).

In the meantime, we hope that the recent programme of frequent virtual events will continue to be attractive to members, especially those who prefer not to travel to London sites. Our pricing policy, with several events offered for no fee, is designed to provide maximum pleasure to ever more members.

*David Glassman, Hon. Treasurer*

## Subscriptions 2021

Council is pleased to announce that Subscription rates for 2021 will remain unchanged, for the 14<sup>th</sup> year running. Our subscription year is based on a calendar year and we would be most grateful for internet banking transfer payments early in 2021 from those members who do not pay by standing order. The latter is the most used method of payment and our preferred way for economic and administrative reasons. Standing orders can be set up easily through your bank account. The account number of the Anglo-Netherlands Society with NatWest is 05 40 98 45, the sort code 50-41-02.

Our membership level continues to increase and Council would like to see that trend grow further. Family members and friends with interest in Anglo-Dutch matters who can identify themselves in the Aims and Objectives of the Society (see back page) are most welcome. Just provide the Administrator with names (and addresses) and we will send a sample copy of our newsletter.



David Eccles. 2020. Linocut.

Subscription rates for 2021:	Greater London*	Country*
Joint membership **	£30	£25
Single membership	£23	£20

Members under 35 years old may apply to pay a reduced rate (£10 single or £15 joint), please contact the administrator.

\* A Country rebate is available for members whose address is outside a radius of 50 miles from Hyde Park Corner

\*\* Two members at a single address, receiving one copy of each mailing.

## STOP PRESS ...

For members who have customarily paid their annual subscription by cheque posted to the office, may we request that you pay the 2021 subscription through the banking system as the office is closed to us for the foreseeable future due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

A standing order would save your administration time each year while leaving control with you. The process can be initiated online by you or please ask the Administrator for a mandate form.

Alternatively, you could transfer the 2021 subscription by interbank transfer to the Anglo-Netherlands Society NatWest account, number 05 40 98 45, sort code 50-41-02.



## A warm welcome to the Netherlands' Ambassador, Mr Karel van Oosterom

H.E. Karel van Oosterom took up his new assignment as Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Court of St. James' in late August. Sir Colin Budd, member of our Advisory Committee and knowing the Ambassador quite well from his earlier days as UK Ambassador in the Hague, and the Chairman had intended to interview the Ambassador in person soon after his arrival. However, lockdown interfered as with so many other activities and it was decided to do this by

means of an initial list of Q&A, followed by a discussion via Zoom.

The result can be read below. We look forward to meeting the Ambassador and his wife Anna "live" at some of our events as soon as circumstances permit. The Ambassador instantly accepted our invitation to become our Vice-President, as many of his predecessors were, and already attended his first meeting with the Advisory Committee.

### Interview with the newly arrived Netherlands' Ambassador, by Sir Colin Budd and Dick van den Broek

*Welcome to London! Have you had previous connections with the UK?*

Thank you! I am very pleased to be posted in London, also on a personal level. My father worked as an interpreter for the British troops. He received a life-long membership of the British Council, and even changed his name from 'Teun' to 'Tom'. In my career, I have worked with the British on many levels – and always enjoyed the interactions and especially the sense of humour. Another personal connection that is worth mentioning is my taste in music: I am a huge fan of Wire and Magazine and other British New Wave and Punk Bands. Being Ambassador in the UK for my final posting makes everything come full circle.

*Not looking like the easy ride that some of your predecessors have had. With all the challenges you currently face, what do you most hope to achieve while here?*

Short term, my team at the Embassy and I are working very hard to support Dutch citizens and companies with post-Brexit preparations. About 150.000 Dutch people are living and working in the UK, many of them are worried about their status. That's why we address their questions and organize webinars on what they should do to secure their rights as EU-citizens, to live and work in the UK. In cooperation with other EU Embassies here in London, we have lobbied for an easier registration process on the side of the British authorities – and with a positive result!

We've also been busy with businesses. Deal or no deal, things will change for Dutch and British companies from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021 onwards. We are actively informing Dutch entrepreneurs on what steps they need to take to secure a smooth flow of goods and services when the transition period ends this year. We need to make sure the Dutch bell peppers and tomatoes – picked in a Dutch greenhouse today and lying on the shelf at a Sainsbury Local tomorrow – will continue to be popular products in the UK.

What do I want to achieve? In the short term I want to ensure that we are there for Dutch citizens – living, travelling, working in or with the UK. In the long term, I aim to strengthen and further expand our partnership with the UK, as great North Sea Neighbours. Our cooperation, from military to trade to culture, is pivotal to bridge the sea between us.

*How do you see the future of the UK/NL bilateral relationship?*

The British may have left the EU, but we will remain North Sea Neighbours. Because of Brexit, it is now more important than ever to invest in our bilateral relationship. As neighbours, we have a lot to offer each other, such as cooperation on the climate agenda, cyber, and other political-security issues on which the UK and the Netherlands are reliable partners on a world stage. Think of partnerships between Dutch and British universities on key emerging technologies. At the moment, Dutch scientists are working on diagnostics and Dutch doctors leading IC's here in British hospitals with Covid-19 patients. In the world we live in today, there are ample fields in which it is in both our interests to work together. We aim to do so with our friends across the channel, at the British Embassy in the Netherlands. My counterpart, Joanna Roper (HM Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands) and I have joined forces by interacting with Dutch and British businesses in webinars together. In September, our teams even organised a "North Sea Neighbours Clean-up" as part of World Clean-up Day 2020 – picking up plastic on both sides of the channel: my team at the foreshore of the Thames, and Joanna's team at the beach in Scheveningen.

Yes, with Brexit things will change – but Brexit is not a goodbye. It's a new chapter, in which our bilateral ties play a stronger role. I am pleased that my government has entrusted me with the task of setting this bilateral relationship on a new footing.

*How far is Covid-19 complicating UK/NL relations? Clearly not easy, for you or our Embassy in The Hague. Are Ministerial exchanges adversely affected?*

I would describe diplomacy under Covid-19 as playing football on a wet beach. You can still play the game, but it takes more energy to score. Work goes on, of course, as there is much to do with regards to the pandemic, Brexit and other pressing issues. Ministerial exchanges are, of course, not taking place physically right now, but we



manage with digital means. For example, later this month Dutch and British parliamentary members are coming together digitally. Our support of Dutch businesses also continues. Nowadays, we are organizing webinars and digital match-making sessions for entrepreneurs from both countries to get connected. The only difference is that they now have to arrange that cup of coffee themselves.

***How much damage will Brexit do to UK/NL trade? Are there new commercial links in the works, providing fresh opportunities for the future?***

My Prime Minister Mark Rutte has been clear: the departure of the UK is bad news for Europe and the Netherlands in particular. Numbers don't lie: in 2018, the Netherlands exported for some 60 billion euros worth of goods and services to the UK. The UK is our most important market after Germany. Also vice versa: after Ireland, the Netherlands is the foreign country most closely connected to the British economy, responsible for 7% of its total trade. These numbers show why the Netherlands is one of the countries that will be hard hit by Brexit.

Nonetheless, although we regret the UK's decision to leave the EU, we respect the democratic process. At this stage, it is important to reach an agreement on future trade. At the same time, we must be realistic. It is impossible to predict whether we will get to a deal or not, nor how future trade relations will shape up. Therefore, the Netherlands has started preparations – and advises its businesses to do the same.

***Between 1970-3 Nederland did a great deal, as you know, to help the UK from within the EEC. In the different circumstances of today, can some version of that cooperation now be rebuilt, albeit with different objectives, to help keep UK/EU relations as warm and productive as possible?***

It goes without saying the Netherlands and the UK will continue to be strong allies in a multilateral context: in NATO, the OSCE and the UN in New York. The Netherlands and the EU are aiming for a broad and ambitious agreement to safeguard a warm and productive relationship, that is also in the interest of the UK. Nonetheless, because of the departure of the UK from the EU, the depth and intensity of our cooperation within the frameworks of the EU has declined. We see a correct and complete implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement offer the right base and trust for future agreements, both bilaterally and from an EU-perspective.

***How much scope is there for continuing UK/NL cooperation in international organisations? [UN/NATO/OPCW/G20/Council of Europe etc]. Presumably, there is common ground on Climate Change, not least in preparing for COP26 in 2021?***

As I said, we will continue to be strong allies in a multilateral context: in the UN in New York, in NATO, the OPCW, OSCE, etc. We are still North Sea Neighbours. Geographically we are as close as we always were, with shared interests on the global agenda. Therefore, the UK

and the Netherlands are reliable partners on a world stage. Climate is a prime example of this. We have been ambitious partners on the climate agenda. 2021 is an important year for both our countries, with the Netherlands hosting the Digital Climate Adaption Summit in January 2021 and the UK hosting the COP26 in Scotland in November next year. Looking at our cooperation on the climate agenda, I am confident that our relationship will remain fruitful – on this and many other shared issues.

***No doubt the longstanding cooperation between the UK and NL Armed Forces, especially the Marines and the Mariniers, will continue as before?***

Without a doubt. The Netherlands and the UK are both maritime and seafaring nations, this is part of our shared history – as well as our future. I have joined a FOST-training at Dutch frigate, HMS Evertsen, in September. It was impressive to see our men and women of the Royal Netherlands Navy and the British Royal Navy working together so closely. It embodies that we are really great North Sea Neighbours, as reliable partners on a world stage.

***Will there still be a role for Dutch medical staff in the NHS post-Brexit?***

This depends on the new skills-based immigration system of the British government, that will be introduced in 2021. Dutch citizens who are currently working as doctors, nurses or other medical jobs – like other citizens from the EEA-region – will continue to do so, as arranged in the Withdrawal Agreement. If the EU and the UK will not agree on a deal, Dutch citizens active in the medical sector that wish to work in the UK from 2021 onwards are – like other citizens from the EEA-region – dependent on this new system.

***What role do you see for the ANS in supporting UK/NL relations? We do as much as we can to work with and through your local Consuls, round the country.***

I've recently learned that the Anglo-Netherlands Society was founded in 1920, making it one of the oldest Dutch foreign societies. Especially in this period of a global pandemic, bringing people together – across regional and national borders – is more important than ever. The ANS has an important role to play in bringing the association of 'British' and 'Nederlanders' together. From social gatherings to cultural or scientific events, the Dutch and British have much in common. It's great to see how the ANS as a 'bottom-up' or civilian initiative – and the Embassy as a governmental body representing Dutch citizens and companies – can join hands for a common purpose: bringing our two great countries together. Unfortunately, in 2020 the celebration of the ANS centenary, in the presence of HRH Princess Beatrix and HRH the Duke of Gloucester at Kensington Palace, had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 situation. Let me express the hope that in 2021 that celebration will be held anyway.





### *How do you see the future of Dutch Studies in the UK, and UK Studies within European Studies in NL? Plus other academic links between the UK and Dutch universities?*

Because of Brexit, there is a great need for the exchange of knowledge and experiences – both between students as well as Dutch-British academics. Therefore, the Embassy has launched a network of Dutch Academics in the UK last year (DANinUK), “DANinUK” has successfully been launched by the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences (KNAW). DANinUK has now developed as an independent community linking Dutch and British Science and Higher Education. Both from a historical perspective, and looking at the Anglicisation of the Dutch language we see today, Dutch Studies is one of the many interesting academic fields that I hope will continue to be taught for many years to come. The much-appreciated Awards Scheme for students (set up by the ANS at Sheffield University and UCL) fits very well in this context.

At the same time, I encourage British people to familiarise themselves with and experience Dutch literature and culture. An example is the English translation of the book “My Name is Selma”, written by the inspiring Selma van de Perre – a holocaust survivor, now 98 years old. I understand she is also a member of the ANS. I joined the launch of the English translation at the Dutch Church in London in September. The book not only underlines the

importance of remembrance but also highlights the strength of joined commemoration – especially on a topic like WWII. Your interview in late November also contributes to this. That’s why I believe in both preserving language and culture, as well as crossing borders by reaching out to one another: connecting, listening, and inspiring. As Dutch Ambassador to the UK, I hope to do just that.

### *What are you most looking forward to during your time here? Parts of the UK you most wish to see, as and when possible? Your favourite hobbies/pastimes?*

When my wife Anna and I lived in New York, we had one agreement: we would go to at least one cultural event every weekend. Whether it’s an art gallery, a museum or walking by street graffiti or murals – we enjoy all of the cultural offerings of a city like London. With the current lockdown, this proves difficult of course. The same goes for travelling. I look forward to getting to know the country and visiting Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Once allowed, I am sure I’ll spend most of my free time exploring!

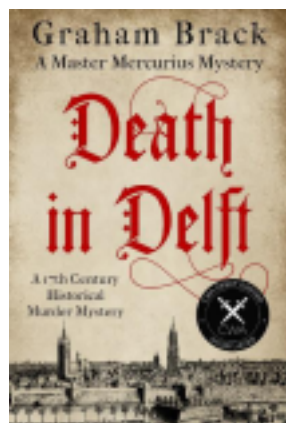
Karel J.G. van Oosterom is the Ambassador for the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Kingdom. From 2013 to 2020, he was Permanent Representative for the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN in New York. A period which included an elected membership of the UN Security Council in 2018. He wrote a book on his experiences, “With an Orange Tie”, providing the reader with insights into the functioning of the Security Council and the work of diplomacy at the highest level. Previously, ambassador van Oosterom was posted in Beijing, Ottawa, Damascus and The Hague.

## **Death in Delft**

a 17th century historical murder mystery, set in the Netherlands, by Graham Brack, review by Marietta Freeman

A Golden Age hidden treasure found reading in lockdown, “Death in Delft” by Graham Brack!

Initially attracted by the cover picture on the first book in this series, I was completely drawn into the story and atmosphere of 17th century Delft and the wonderful University academic and cleric Master Mercurius who is unwittingly drawn into a murder investigation. His dry humour, self-effacing manner and descriptions of the local characters make this a very enjoyable read.



I thought I would see if the author himself, who is British, would like to say a few words himself, and Graham kindly forwarded this!

**Marietta Freeman**

It is 1671, and three young girls have been abducted from their homes in Delft. The body of one has been found in a shallow grave. The other two are still missing and the bitterly cold January weather makes it doubtful that the other two girls are still alive.

The mayor and his council are struggling to make any progress in the investigation, so the mayor writes to the University of Leiden asking the Rector to send the cleverest man he can spare to help them – and that is Master Mercurius, a cleric and philosophy lecturer.

Assisted by Jan Vermeer and Antoni van Leeuwenhoek,

Mercurius tries to find the remaining girls and track down their killer before he strikes again.

Graham Brack has had ten crime novels published. Graham and his wife are regular visitors to the Netherlands, a place which has held a fascination for him ever since his father worked in Rotterdam over fifty years ago. The old cities lend themselves to storytelling because so little has changed over the centuries, and Graham has found a large amount of source materials, though he admits that his ability to read 17th century Dutch handwriting could do with some improvement.

His books weave real historical characters into his fiction and he has been especially pleased by the response from Dutch readers around the world. Among these was a member of the ANS Events Committee who wrote him a particularly generous note. He assumes she doesn’t do this to just anyone who writes books set in the Netherlands.

Mercurius seems to be a figure that Dutch people are proud to claim as one of their own – intelligent, perhaps a little stubborn, compassionate, squeamish but by no means worldly-wise.

You can find out more about Graham (and Mercurius) at [www.grahambrackauthor.com](http://www.grahambrackauthor.com) or via his publishers, Sapere Books ([www.saperebooks.com](http://www.saperebooks.com)).

H.E. The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has traditionally accepted the Society's invitation to be our Vice-President ex-officio. We are delighted to welcome H.E. Karel van Oosterom's article in this issue. This is an opportunity also to remind our readers that, from our birth in 1920, H.M. Representatives at The Hague and their colleagues in London have also been hugely supportive of the Society.

Indeed, our first Chairman from 1920 to 1931 was Sir Walter Townley, who had been Minister at The Hague from 1917 to 1919. Sir Neville Bland, our Chairman from 1951 to 1983, who had been appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Netherlands from 1938, remained with the Netherlands Government in exile (in London) through the War. His posting was upgraded to Ambassador in 1942, he re-opened the Embassy at The Hague in 1945 and remained there until 1948.

## From Mr Simon Shelly

Senior Research Analyst for the Benelux at the FCDO

I am delighted to contribute to the Anglo-Netherlands Society's Christmas 2020 Newsletter. The ANS performs a vital role in promoting understanding and cooperation between our two countries. While we surely all would agree that the UK and the Netherlands are close, likeminded allies who enjoy a strong bilateral relationship, it's worth reminding ourselves where this close friendship came from.

Our current excellent relations come from a long past with many positives but, alas, some bumps along the way, too: the two countries fought no fewer than four wars between 1650 and 1790. The Netherlands, however, had offered a safe haven to British Pilgrims for up to 12 years before they ultimately set sail for the 'New World' in 1620 from Leiden, via a change of ship to the 'Mayflower'. The 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 saw perhaps our closest ties ever, as Mary acceded to the British throne with her Dutch husband, William of Orange.

A succession of periods of foreign rule of the Netherlands ended with Napoleon's final defeat in 1815, after which Britain played a key role in the creation of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands (roughly, modern-day NL plus Belgium). Britain continued to offer protection and support throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the Kingdom played a positive strategic role for Britain by blocking outright any chance that another, less friendly mainland European power might seek a presence on the North Sea coast directly facing England.

The bilateral relationship strengthened further in the Second World War. As mainland Europe fell to the Nazis, so Britain offered refuge to the Dutch Royal Family and their government. In wartime London, the heads of government of the three Benelux countries agreed a

In more recent times, Sir David Miers, Dame Rosemary Spencer and, currently, Sir Colin Budd, all former Ambassadors at The Hague, have all been on our Advisory Committee. Sir Geoffrey Adams and his successor the Rt Hon Peter Wilson, as the most recent Ambassadors, have been most encouraging to us and we much look forward to welcoming the recently appointed Ambassador, Joanna Roper, at a Society event in 2021.

At what is now the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Society has enjoyed an excellent relationship with successive Desk Officers for the Netherlands Simon Harris and Matt Gray and with Simon Shelly, the Senior Research Analyst for Benelux and author of the following article.

*Paul Dimond*

These links to Facebook and Twitter may prove useful:

**Netherlands in the UK:** <https://twitter.com/NLinUK>  
**UK in the NL:** <https://www.facebook.com/UKinNL>

Benelux Union: a treaty-based tri-national organisation that still flourishes today. When peace came, our two countries became founder members of the United Nations, NATO and the Council of Europe. We are firm defenders of the rules-based international order and the values and principles which underpin it. The UK/Netherlands relationship is on firm ground.

The future of our mutually beneficial bilateral relationship, however, lies in continuing to work together politically, commercially and economically, recognising the many similarities and respecting the fewer differences between us. We appreciate our Dutch friends' willingness to speak and work in English, but recognise the need perhaps to raise our own game, to gain a broader understanding of vibrant Dutch culture and the 'not so difficult when you really put your mind to it' Dutch language.

The excellent Dutch Studies departments at UCL and Sheffield University produce a small but significant cohort of graduates each year. And, of course, we as they recognise the value of the ANS's generous support to these Universities through your Annual Awards schemes. Such work and gestures symbolise another powerful means of uniting our two countries, at every level: people-to-people links, beyond the world of politics and business, including through the arts, education, sport and culture.

2020 has been a turbulent year of uncertainties. So let us all keep working together, into 2021 and beyond, to nurture the certainty of the constant friendship and cooperation which underpin the long, fruitful bilateral relationship between our two countries.



## Magdalena Mania, winner of the ANS Award to students of Dutch at UCL

The October e-News carried the details of the Society's UCL students essay Award to Magdalena Mania. While reminding our readers of our standard disclaimer about contributors' content not implying a Society view, we think that many of us will find resonance in the theme of Magdalena's winning essay that follows, given the close awareness both Dutch and British members will have of the historical Battle of Arnhem and the commemoration of it in the annual events at the Oosterbeek Cemetery and elsewhere in the area.

The Market Garden operation has been deeply

researched, chronicled and debated by eminent scholars, historians and journalists over the ensuing decades and no doubt will continue to be. We commend Magda for her participation and success in the competition and welcome her choice of this theme as a demonstration of the recognition of the significance of those events among her own, younger generation of students.

We wish her and all her fellow participants in the ANS competitions at both Sheffield and UCL our warmest wishes for their further studies and future careers.

*Paul Dimond*

### De burger gaat naar het gevecht kijken

The Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery and Dutch memory of the Second World War, by Magdalena Mania.

#### Introduction.

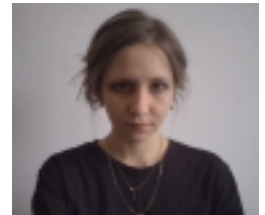
The Second World War is frequently perceived as a decisive turning-point for the 'Western' society: the economic and political consequences of the conflict, as well as the memories of the sorrows it brought, have, for many decades now, been actively influencing many generations. This includes not only the generation of those who lived through the conflict, but also those who never got to know a reality different than the one marked by the legacy of that war. The memory of the mass destruction of the years 1939-1945 is constantly being re-evaluated, be it in monuments, school textbooks, museums, or films, to name but a few. This essay investigates the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery. Looking at the context of its creation, and the various war commemoration practices it showcases, this essay aims at assessing its function as a very powerful site of memory for contemporary Netherlands.

#### Operation Market Garden and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Before looking into how the cemetery investigated has been shaping the memory of the conflict, it is worthwhile to summarise the particular moment in history which it commemorates. The Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery (the Airborne Cemetery) is the final resting place of 1,770 soldiers who lost their lives in the Battle of Arnhem (17-25 September 1944). As far as the west European front is concerned, it was undoubtedly one of the turning points of the war. In a very brief summary, the military actions undertaken by the Allies in the area of present-day southern and central Netherlands were inspired by their successes in Normandy in the summer of 1944 (Schoenmaker, 2005, p.162). American, British and Canadian troops had regained Northern France and Belgium at lightning speed, liberating Brussels on 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Antwerp on 4<sup>th</sup> September (ibid.). What followed was an operation codenamed Market Garden, designed by British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. Essentially,

the operation meant that a large portion of strategically key bridges along the many rivers and canals cutting through the Netherlands would be taken over at one fell stroke. The sheer abundance of these very rivers and canals posed considerable tactical difficulties for ground troops; consequently, the plan involved the engagement of airborne divisions (Schoenmaker, 2005, p.164). The plan proved unsuccessful. The Southern Netherlands were liberated, but "the jump over the Rhine in Arnhem failed" (Woltjer, 1993, p.132). Operation Market Garden has gone down in Dutch collective memory as the military failure of the war, which subsequently caused the sorrows of the 'hunger winter' of 1944-1945, which cost about 20,000 lives.

The loss of life of the many Allied soldiers on this piece of Dutch soil is commemorated at the Airborne Cemetery, situated on the edge of the now peaceful village of Oosterbeek, just outside of Arnhem. It was established in 1945 by the Imperial War Graves Commission. Founded in May 1917, the actions of the Commission themselves illustrate the extent to which commemoration practices can become a powerful political instrument. Scholars have investigated how the establishment of cemeteries for Allied troops both in Europe and across the Empire during the interbellum shaped memory and identity of the Empire's subjects (Edwards, 2018). In locations such as e.g. India or South Africa, they were essentially a means of exercising "soft power" on these areas at a time when self-determination of the Empire's subjects was strengthening. The Commission changed its name to Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1960—a clear indication of the loss of United Kingdom's "hard power" over these locations (Edwards, 2018, p.272). The Airborne Cemetery in Oosterbeek showcases the neo-classical design of the Commission cemeteries: long rows of white marble headstones stretch vertically to the left and right of the entrance gate, changing into horizontal rows towards the Cross of Sacrifice at the opposite end. Additionally, there is a row of headstones immediately to



the left and right of the entrance gate where 73 Polish soldiers who also fought in the battle are buried. Overall, this particular cemetery is not only a memorial to the loss and suffering brought about by the failure of Operation Market Garden, but also a site of a politically laden, dynamic interaction of the British and Dutch collective memories of the Second World War.

## 76 years of le lieu de mémoire.

Having provided a short and succinct overview of the particular historical event that the cemetery commemorates, as well as considering the context of its creation (especially the institution that commissioned it), it is time to investigate how this lieu de mémoire has been shaping Dutch memory over the past 75 years. It should not be overlooked that the members of both Dutch and British royal families hold the memory of Arnhem in high regard. HRH The Prince of Wales regularly participates in the commemorations, especially during the 50th anniversary of Operation Market Garden in 1994, and the 75th anniversary in 2019 (Goudriaan, 1994; Battle of Arnhem, 2019). The annual encounter between the people of Arnhem and the neighbouring towns on the one hand, and the members of royal households on the other hand changes the Oosterbeek cemetery into a site of memory that is truly alive.

Newspaper coverage of the 1984 commemoration ceremonies offer interesting insights into the dynamics of these encounters. A two-week-long commemoration took place in September 1984, crowned with a royal visit: as reported in Trouw (24 September 1984, p.3), “koningin Beatrix, prins Claus en prins Charles van Engeland als erekolonel van het Britse Parachute Regiment namen met zo’n duizend veteranen en hun familieleden deel aan een oecumenische dienst op de begraafplaats.” (Queen Beatrix, Prince Claus and Prince Charles (as Colonel-in-chief of the British Parachute Regiment), together with around a thousand veterans and their family members, participated in an oecumenical service at the cemetery.) The ceremonies on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem were also an opportunity to reflect on the role of the local population in the battle. As mentioned by Joop Meijnen in Het Parool (24 September 1984, p.3) many of the Allied battle veterans appreciated the presence of the members of royal families, but at the same time they felt that the attention these personas claim meant “dat er voor veel mensen die ons in September 1944 hebben geholpen en aan wie velen van ons hun leven hebben te danken, geen plaats is tijdens de herdenkingsdienst.” (that there is no place in the

memorial service for the many who had helped us in September 1944, for those whom many of us owe their lives to). Crucially, the commemoration ceremonies of 1984 provided a dynamic encounter between very personal memories of those who had participated in the battle, both soldiers and civilians, and the symbolic visit the royal figures, whose presence in Oosterbeek was of an immense significance—national, international, and political. The newspaper coverage of the events gave the whole of the Netherlands an opportunity to witness how (surely still quite vivid) memories were gradually being moulded into a grander historical narrative.

Interestingly, three years prior to this, on 5th September 1981, a comprehensive contribution entitled Slagveldtoerisme (which translates into English as ‘battlefield tourism’) appeared on page 6 of the Saturday Supplement of NRC Handelsblad, a newspaper of record in the Netherlands. The author, A. Korthals Altes, investigates the phenomenon of tourist interest in locations marked by death and other calamities, noting: “Uiteindelijk biedt 't slagveld de toerist vooral de kleine sensatie, de lichte huiver. Dat gevoel moet worden



opgewekt door een speciaal facet: door doelbewuste conservering van het slagveld.” (The battlefield ultimately offers a tourist the small sensation, the light chill. This feeling has to be awakened by a special aspect: by the purposeful conservation of the battlefield). In this way, the author draws attention to the fact that this form of tourism connected with the ‘chase’ after

sites of memory, and sites of gruesome memory in particular, emerged somehow by virtue of specific locations being presented as such: fenced off, described, imbued with history. In point of fact, one of such sites mentioned by the author is Oosterbeek. Korthals Altes contrasts: on the one hand, he describes the nature of this later, more controlled encounter with history provided by an institutionalised site of memory that the Airborne Cemetery is; on the other hand, he recalls his individual memories of Oosterbeek from the summer of 1945, which was a much more organic confrontation with the aftermath of the calamity at this interesting moment when the dust had not yet settled, when history still manifested itself in present perfect tense.

And finally, it is worthwhile to also zoom in at a more contemporary contribution on the topic from outside the Netherlands. The 2009 commemoration ceremonies were attended by a correspondent of The Times, Michael Binyon. In his contribution the author illustrates how the new generations of people of Arnhem and Oosterbeek take over the task of maintaining the memory of September 1944:



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*All weekend there were wreathlaying ceremonies, church services, receptions and fervent displays of gratitude to the veterans, their wives, widows, sons and daughters who come on the annual pilgrimage. All along the main road of Oosterbeek flags fluttered from houses, shops and lampposts. Hundreds of young British and Dutch men re-enacted the wartime events dressed in period uniforms and the maroon berets of the troops. Hundreds of historic military vehicles cruised the streets as crowds lined up to cheer.*

Even though the vast majority of people Arnhem described by Binyon in 2009 most likely did not have any direct memories of 1944-1945, those events had shaped their identity in many ways: from the stories told by their parents and grandparents which they grew up listening to, to the many commemoration ceremonies that were taking place over decades, ceremonies that surely often changed their tone in context of the ever-evolving historical and political narrative. The Airborne Cemetery in Oosterbeek is a paradoxical site of memory: marked by death in the most literal way possible, it is also very much alive. Because every dialogue exchanged between veterans, every wreath being laid down by a child, every grave candle lit by a family member—although often immaterial, these are all unique lieux de mémoire.

## Conclusion.

Over the past 75 years, the Airborne Cemetery has become a knot where countless threads of memory and history are tied together: the historical narrative of the 1939-1945 conflict of the Allies of World War II; personal memories of veterans, children and grandchildren; collective memory of the city of Arnhem. One should also acknowledge the hard work that the Dutch authorities in

Arnhem and the neighbouring towns put every year into the organisation of commemoration ceremonies—by doing so they make sure that future generations remember about and reflect upon the ghastly events of Market Garden, which further serves as a powerful and very much needed stimulus to reflect on the nature of issues such as sacrifice, war, conflict. Reflections that have been, and will always be, of crucial importance.

Historical narratives, personal memories, collective memories—all of those are in a state of constant, dynamic interaction, and will certainly change further in the coming years. And the marble graves at Oosterbeek will most certainly be there to witness it.

## Selection from the list of Works cited:

[Editor's note : the full list is included in the 'as submitted' PDF, which can be downloaded from the Awards section on \[www.anglo-netherlands.org.uk\]\(http://www.anglo-netherlands.org.uk\)](#)

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## SIGNPOSTS

### For a Chance to Forget: how two people and a nation changed over three years; a debut novel by Donald Nicolson

September 2001: Sannie van Dijk, a graduate with a passion for travel, writes in her diary of wanting a chance to forget a tragedy she watched on television in a café in Utrecht. John Mackenzie, an enthusiastic and principled journalist doing an interrail tour of Europe, is asleep in her bed. Their love feels true and eternal. But as the world around them quickly recalibrates, struggles in their professional lives challenge their relationship.

*For a Chance to Forget* focuses on culture, travel, race-relations, and politics. It is uniquely told through emails, diary and travelogue entries, letters, SMS, and newspaper publications. It shows how relationships are formed and maintained through the written word. It is the story of how two people and a nation changed over three years.

### The Journey of the Mayflower, film, on the [Vimeo](#) platform

Award winning vocal ensemble [Stile Antico](#) is thrilled to announce the release of *The Journey of the Mayflower*, a film marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sailing of the Pilgrims from Plymouth on 16 September 1620. This hour-long performance breathes life into the story of the Pilgrims and the Mayflower crew. The drama is woven around extracts from 'Of Plimouth Plantation', the diary of William Bradford. Bradford was the colony's first governor, and wrote a detailed account of the Pilgrims' journey from the North of England, via the Low Countries, to New England. The script, by dramatist Katharine Armitage, gives voice to other characters whose words do not survive, seeking to shine a light on other aspects of this important and complex story – including the consequences for the native Wampanoag tribe of the Pilgrims' arrival. Interspersed with the spoken text are full-length performances of some of the finest vocal music of the time, which bring this extraordinary tale to life with passion and immediacy.

## SIGNPOSTS

### Artemisia Gentileschi Exhibition

at the National Gallery, until Tuesday 12 January 2021.

The National Gallery makes available an online 30-minute curator-led tour of the exhibition for £8. It offers a fascinating insight into the life and works of the most celebrated woman artist of the baroque period in Italy. So although we may not see our guide Letizia Teves 'live', we can still appreciate her tour of the Exhibition.

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/whats-on/artemisia-curator-led-exhibition-film>

### Netherlands Government Guidance to businesses and people:

[www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/brexit](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/brexit)

provides information in Dutch to both British and Dutch businesses and subjects in the UK and in the Netherlands

<https://government.nl/topics/brexit>

offers essentially the same information, in English;

[https://business.gov.nl/running-your-business/](https://business.gov.nl/running-your-business/international-business/brexit/brexit)

[international-business/brexit/brexit](https://business.gov.nl/running-your-business/international-business/brexit/brexit)

information from Chambers of Commerce, the Enterprise Agency, the statistical and other offices to businesses.

### UK Government Guidance on providing services and travel to The Netherlands for business from 1 January 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-netherlands-providing-services-after-eu-exit>

### Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Dutch Church, Austin Friars, Tuesday 8 December at 6.30pm



This year the Dutch Church will celebrate its traditional Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols under Covid-19 restrictions. The service will be in English and Dutch and is led by ds. Bertjan van de Lagemaat. Carols will be sung by a double quartet of professional singers, the *Vocaal Ensemble* directed by Greg Hallam.

Under Social Distancing rules only a few places are available, one needs to book: [info@dutchchurch.org.uk](mailto:info@dutchchurch.org.uk). Or watch the live-stream at <https://www.facebook.com/nederlandsekerk>, or afterwards via a link on the church website at <https://www.dutchchurch.org.uk>

## Anglo-Netherlands Society

Established 1920, incorporated 2002

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### AIMS and OBJECTS

The Anglo-Netherlands Society exists to promote the social, artistic, literary, educational, scientific, and other non party-political interests in common to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Apart from publishing this Newsletter, the Society reaches its members by organising social functions (including dinners, lectures and recitals) and by arranging visits to exhibitions, concerts, and places of interest. The Society relies on voluntary workers.

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Any person or organisation desirous of promoting the objectives of the Society is eligible to apply for membership, subject to acceptance by the Society's Council. More information is available from the Administrator.

### PRESIDENT

The Rt Hon. the Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE

### VICE-PRESIDENT

H.E. the Netherlands Ambassador

### COUNCIL

Dick van den Broek (Chairman)

Paul Dimond (Hon. Secretary)

David Glassman (Hon. Treasurer)

Sylvia Knight

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Ros Burgin

### EVENTS COMMITTEE

Connie Sangster (Chair)

Marianne Denney Marietta Freeman

Evelien Hurst Adrienne Monteath-van Dok

### CORPORATE PATRONS

The Society has for years been fortunate in having the help of several organisations. To recognise this support, which has often been sustained for decades, the following organisations are termed Corporate Patrons:

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ING Bank

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PricewaterhouseCoopers

Rabobank

Royal Dutch Shell

Unilever

### CORPORATE MEMBERS

Carpenters' Company

### Members' page at [www.anglo-netherlands.org.uk](http://www.anglo-netherlands.org.uk)

username: removed password: removed

Members can download duplicate event registration forms and various other papers as follows: surf to the Members' Page, click the link for the required document, then enter the username and password in the relevant boxes in the pop-up window.

Alternatively, please request a paper copy from the Administrator.

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