

B U L L E T I N

GENOOTSCHAP NEDERLAND-ENGELAND

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The weather was not exactly favourable for a good turnout at our February meeting with Roy Skan. But although not many members had come, a fair number of guests had been attracted by announcements in the local and regional media of Roy Skan's subject *The English language, emphasising its debt to Dutch* and the size of his audience gave no reason for embarrassment. The electronics were unfortunately not very cooperative, but even without the aid of a digital projector our speaker succeeded in presenting a lively and entertaining account of the history of English against the background of a general history of mankind, and we had a good time.

We hope weather circumstances will be more propitious for our March meeting, which will be held on

Tuesday, 9 March, at 8.15 p.m.

at our usual venue, 't Gorechthuis, Hortuslaan 1, Haren.

Louise West

will give us an illustrated talk on

Living with Jane Austen's legacy at Chawton



About her subject, Louise West writes: *The talk covers how we work to pass on Jane Austen's legacy at the museum and will include the work we do with educational groups, particularly schools. It will also include how we use the museum displays and the objects that we have. The talk will touch on interesting, and sometimes famous visitors and include a couple of readings from the novels.*

The photo shows the house in the tiny village of Chawton in Hampshire where Jane Austen lived the last eight years of her life, and which now is a museum.

Louise West was educated in Cheshire, then went to college in London and took a degree in English Literature. After that she began her career in museums, first as a volunteer in Chester and Manchester, then as a paid employee for Hampshire Museums. There she was employed with making an archaeological and biological record of the county of Hampshire. Louise then had four children and returned slowly to work doing adult education courses in English Literature. When she was forty-one Louise took a Masters degree in Museum and General Education. Following that she worked freelance for several years before coming to Jane Austen`s House in 2002.

In our January newsletter we wished GNE a prosperous year. However, there are developments which give some cause for concern about the future of GNE. The National Committee has a few vacancies which have proved hard to fill. The GNE branch in The Hague has ceased to exist. Moreover, all three members of the national Programme Committee, which organises the visits of British speakers to GNE branches, have indicated that they wish to step down. This will have no direct consequences for this season`s programme or for that of the next season, but in the long run we shall need to rethink how we organise our meetings and how we can continue to make them attractive for our members and guests. The National Committee is also busy thinking about new ways in which GNE could continue to be a meeting place for all who are interested in English culture and in things British. There are attempts underway to set up a Programme Committee new style. One direction which is being explored is to make use of Social Networking Sites on the internet such as LinkedIn or Facebook. Things are still very much in an exploratory phase. When there is more news, we shall keep you informed.

The direct future of GNE may be somewhat uncertain, we do have something to celebrate. This year marks the 90th anniversary of GNE nationally as well as of our Groningen branch. This calls for a festive celebration. By now you will have received an invitation for a celebration of our 90th anniversary on Saturday 24 April in Hotel De Keizerskroon near Apeldoorn and in Paleis Het Loo which is next door. We hope many of you will come and take part in the festivities. The programme is certainly attractive enough.

You received this invitation directly from the National Committee. A few weeks ago at their request we sent them a list of our members with their home and e-mail addresses, but without your telephone numbers. However, we have received assurances that telephone data will be used only if under extreme circumstances an event or a meeting should need to be cancelled. If you object to your telephone number being revealed to the National Committee, please mail or write us.

A GNE activity which is flourishing is the BBC Awards, under which heading come the Public Speaking Competition and the Young Writers Awards. Both competitions have now again started. A preliminary round of the Public Speaking Competition for students of secondary schools will be held on Saturday 6 March in the Gymnasium Celeanum, Zoom 37, 8032 EM Zwolle, starting at 1.30 p.m. You will find a visit worth your while. There is no entrance fee. More information on the website www.bbcawards.com. You will also find a visit to the GNE website www.nederlandengeland.nl informative.

We have informed you earlier this season that Jill Collinge, who was to talk to us on The Origin of Pub Signs on Tuesday, April 13, has been obliged to cancel her visit. We are happy to tell you that our member Jan Posthumus has agreed to fill the gap by telling us on that date about his work on dictionaries past and present. Jan is to receive his doctorate for a dissertation on dictionaries at the Vrije Universiteit on March 10 at 1.45 p.m. The original date for his doctoral ceremony was in December, when it had to be cancelled because our roads were largely snow-covered and it would be difficult for many actors in the ceremony to reach Amsterdam in time. We wish Jan much success and a festive day.

We hope to see you all in good health on Tuesday 9 March to listen to Louise West. - Your committee