

B U L L E T I N

GENOOTSCHAP NEDERLAND-ENGELAND

www.nederlandengeland.nl



UTRECHT BRANCH

Venue: Bergwegkerk, 92B Bergweg, Zeist

**VOL. 16, No. 1
SEPT./OCT. 2006**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the new season. The Committee hope you have been able to enjoy the best of the summer's weather and not suffered too much from its excesses. We also hope you will enjoy the events programmed – please let a Committee member know what you think about them, it is only by this means we can let you have what you want; or you can write an anonymous note if you prefer it.

On the personal side, and as many of you know, I have had a difficult period health-wise. Because this has affected, and continues to affect, my ability to be effective as your Chairman, I have asked Herman Steeneken, our Vice Chairman, if we can exchange places and he has agreed to this. We intend to put this to you at the AGM in October to endorse.

The AGM is an important element in the Society's structure, it is your chance to express your opinion, and to register your pleasures and your displeasures. Please turn up in force and make your views known. The Committee is always anxious to attract new blood into the Committee, even to create a 'waiting list' for the future, so please think about it!

Neil Merrick.

From your Committee:

Herman Steeneken has provided us with our own beautiful **GNE Utrecht Branch flyer**, which we have enclosed. Please find a place in your neighbourhood to exhibit it: your own front window, your office, your school, your gym, whatever. Every new member counts.

COMING EVENTS:

SEPTEMBER, Saturday 16th,
60TH ANNIVERSARY of the Amsterdam
Branch: see leaflet enclosed.

SEPTEMBER, Friday 29th in the
Bergwegkerk at 8 p.m.

Oscar Wilde: Dandy, Artist, Plagiarist?

A slide illustrated talk by **Paul Franssen**

Until fairly recently, Oscar Wilde was not taken all that seriously as an artist: his own dictum that he had "put all (his) genius into (his) life, only (his) talent into (his) words," was taken to show that his works were merely brilliant and witty, never profound; at worst, derivative and verging on plagiarism. In recent years, Oscar Wilde's genius has been discovered, also in his works, some of which now seem far ahead of their time. Though Wilde frequently imitates and borrows from others, he does so in a way that transmutes his sources into something new. In his talk, Paul will try to show some of Wilde's genius with the help of some short excerpts from his work, provided on a handout, and tie those in with a few remarks about Wilde's life, illustrated with slides.

Paul Franssen is verbonden aan de Universiteit Utrecht en is bestuurslid van het Shakespeare Genootschap van Nederland en Vlaanderen. October, Friday, 20th in the Bergwegkerk at 7.30 p.m.

You are cordially invited to attend the AGM, (papers circulated with this Bulletin) followed by:

Llandaff Cathedral – majesty rising from destruction

a slide illustrated talk by

Anne Barrington-Ward

Llandaff Cathedral, like Coventry Cathedral, suffered extensive damage as a result of the Second World War. On the night of 2 January, 1941 a landmine exploded near the south aisle. The devastation of a large proportion of the structure and furnishings led to the interruption of the cathedral's tradition as a place of worship dating back 1400 years. It was not long before the wind and rain took their toll and grass began to grow in the exposed nave.

A forward-looking Bishop and Dean decided that the only way forward was to restore the nave in a totally modern style. Two architects, Sir Charles Nicholson followed by George Pace, achieved this by innovatory startling modern methods. Famous contemporary artists, including Jacob Epstein (work on view in the Rijksmuseum Kröller-Muller), John Piper and Frank Roper contributed works for the interior. What is so remarkable is that these modern works coexist with the Pre-Raphaelite achievements of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Woolner and William and Jane Morris. Even the 17th century Murillo hangs confidently near the arresting pulpitum carrying Epstein's soaring Majestas.

In particular three Rossetti panels were placed in a pale blue and gold frame with a Dutch influence to mark the link of the Iltyd Chapel with the 53rd Welsh Division and the liberation of 's-Hertogenbosch in October

1944. In 's-Hertogenbosch Cathedral there is a wooden cross made from the rafters of Llandaff Cathedral presented by the Friends of 's-Hertogenbosch in Wales.

Dr. A.M.H. Barrington-Ward. Awarded PhD from the University of Wales: Lampeter, for doctoral thesis on Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff. Freelance lecturer and writer and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Script writer and reader for the Living Paintings Trust. Lectures to National Trust, York University, WEA, art clubs, antiques societies and NADFAS.

RECENT EVENT: Friday 22nd April, in the Bergwegkerk

John Sutton – Portrait of a Queen.

“Vivat Eliza”. With these words John Sutton began his fascinating talk on the life and the many various portraits made of Queen Elizabeth I throughout her long and illustrious reign making her without doubt one of the most famous women in the world.

The second daughter of Henry VIII, a father she feared, due to the beheading of her mother, but who she was also in great awe of, had a feisty, strong personality and often in later life referred to herself as the daughter of Henry the VIII and a prince. She was a rebel, a non-conformist, an intellectual and a well-educated classical scholar. We think of her macho image but in reality she hated war and only resorted to it when there was no alternative. A woman ahead of her times she was always struggling to keep her position in the male dominated society of the 16th century where the function of women was considered to be to produce an heir and a spare, preferably male! If she married she was expected to become subservient to her husband. This led obviously to her statement “It shall be written on my gravestone she lived and died a virgin”.

Her vanity was well known and she hated to think of herself growing old and losing her looks. Sir Phillip Sydney wrote once of her “She blew her own trumpet mightily”. In our

times she would also be recognised as an anorexic.

John let us see some of the early portraits of her as a princess with her sister Queen Mary and her brother King Edward VI. They were mainly by William Scrots and Lavina Tierlinc. Normal portraits for that age but rather lacking lustre. After her Coronation portraits of the Queen became a form of propaganda. They were sent to all far-flung corners of her realm to let people see who their monarch was. However, Elizabeth insisted on seeing all the portraits and destroyed all those that did not flatter her.

Colours and symbols were very important in the portraiture of that time. Green denoted "hope springs eternal". Black was for religious and silver for stability. These were used in her early portraits but vanish totally as her reign progressed. A great deal of iconology was used for political ends. In one painting she is portrayed at the helm of a boat that is obviously meant to be England. Towards the end of her reign Nicolaas Hilliard begins the "Mask of youth portraits". Here the Queen ceases to age and begins to be deified. Marcus Gheeraerts the younger portrays her as a transcendent semi divine figure in his Rainbow portrait. She is now Empress of the world and commands the elements. This portrait is probably one of the best-known paintings of Elizabeth I. We were brought back to earth by the portrait painted after her death by William Rogers. He portrays her as a harpy in an excessive attire, having reptilian claws for hands and looking for all like a predatory monster.

However she may have been portrayed John left us in no doubt as to what an amazing woman she was and how England flourished and expanded its influence during her reign.

C.B.

RECENT EVENT: Friday 27th May in the Bergwegkerk

Michael Leach – Poles Apart.

Michael told us a little about his youth how he read avidly books about the wilderness and wildlife. After telling a careers officer he wanted to be an explorer and being told he

was stupid...he went on to get a degree and then became a photographer for the Bristol Wildlife Unit of the BBC. After working for five years and being totally bored. (it takes 10 months to make 28 minutes of film), he left the BBC but he now had the CV. Saying that you know David Attenborough opens many doors! He explained that 90% of the animals in the world live in the warmer regions of the planet and therefore most of his work has been done in these regions. In his humorous manner he explained how he hates bugs and how bugs see us and think...lunch! The worst bugs are the ones that pass on diseases most of which seem to be unknown to western man! He spent 9 days in a canoe trying to reach a Neolithic tribe of Pirani Indians in the jungle living mainly on Piranha fish. He wandered in the swamps in Borneo living of the forest trying to find specific apes. He illustrated with all his anecdotes why he loves going to the Polar regions, with special emphasis on the fact that with temperatures below -40 degrees the cold hurts and you ache but there are no BUGS!

After describing and showing us beautiful slides of the creatures to be found at both Poles and giving us anecdotes about Polar bears, descended from Grizzly bears, for which he has a very great respect being the only predators who eat humans, his love for the icy wilderness was apparent. Michael ended his talk on a serious note making us all aware of the consequences of Global warming. We will be affected by the rising seas but also by the loss of so much biodiversity. He claims that the possible first victims will be the Polar bears. Signs of their sad demise are already being seen and if the Artic winter begins a few weeks later than it does now there is little hope for them. His final message was to warn us of this great threat to us, our planet and all the other creatures that inhabit it.

C.B.

PROGRAMME FOR THE SEASON 2006-7

As usual, our meetings will take place at the hall of the Bergwegkerk, 94B Bergweg, Zeist, at 8.00 p.m., with the exception of October 20th, when we will start the evening with the AGM at 7.30 p.m..

2006

- September, Friday 29th. **Oscar Wilde: Dandy, Artist, Plagiarist?** A slide illustrated talk by Paul Franssen.
- October, Friday 20th. **Llandaff Cathedral** in Wales was (for a large part) destroyed during the war. Its remarkable modern reconstruction will be depicted by Ann Barrington-Ward in a slide illustrated talk.
- November, Friday 17th. **Why didn't Rembrandt become another Rubens.** A slide illustrated talk by the Reverend John de Wit, of the Holy Trinity Church in Utrecht, who studied Art History before he became a man of the cloth.
- December, Friday 15th. **Christmas Party and harp concert** by Sabrina van Sprang.

2007

- January, Friday 19th. Grimsthorpe, Rockingham & Belvoir Castle, Belton & Burghley House: **The Houses of Hidden England.** A slide illustrated talk by Ray Biggs.
- February, **MONDAY** 12th. How to **Attract Wildlife to Your Garden.** A slide illustrated talk by the experienced wildlife gardener Robert Good.
- March, **TUESDAY** 13th. **Up the Mekong to Tibet.** A slide illustrated talk by John Pilkington, exploring the world's twelfth longest river.
- April, Friday 20th. Public opinion manipulated in wartime; it's as old as the world. **Lets Hear it for Harold** is Helen Hollick's counterblast to the Norman propaganda that so effectively destroyed the reputation of the last Anglo-Saxon king of England, Harold Godwin.
- May, Friday 11th. **In Ruins, Shipwrecks and Volcanoes** A slide illustrated talk, John Gilroy looks at the enthralling topic of "Catastrophy" in the work of European Romantic poets and artists.

Belangstelling voor Engelse Taal en Cultuur?

Dan is de vereniging GNE (Genootschap Nederland Engeland) iets voor U.

Regelmatig organiseren wij (als GNE afdeling Utrecht en omstreken) voordrachten over Engeland en de Engelse cultuur in de meest ruime zin van het woord. Deze voordrachten worden in het Engels gehouden door bekende sprekers zoals medewerkers van de BBC of "The National Trust".

Middelbare scholieren, cursisten van een Engelse conversatiegroep (met docent) zijn van harte welkom.

Het programma 2006-2007 ziet er als volgt uit:

Friday, September 29, 2006, "Oscar Wilde", Paul Fransen

Friday, October 20, 2006, "Llandaff Cathedral", Anne Barrington-Ward

Friday, November 17, 2006, "Why didn't Rembrandt become another Rubens", John de Wit

Friday, December 15, 2006, "Christmas Party", Harp concert by Sabrina van Sprang

Friday, January 19, 2007, "The Houses of Hidden England", Ray Biggs

Monday, February 12, 2007, "Attracting Wildlife to your Garden", Robert Good

Friday, March 30, 2007, "Up the Mekong to Tibet", John Pilkington

Friday, April 20, 2007, "Let's hear it for Harold", Helen Hollick

Friday, May 11, 2007, "Ruins, Shipwrecks and Vulcanoos", John Gilroy

Wij komen negen maal per jaar samen in Zeist (Aula van de Bergwegkerk, Zeist)

Voor meer informatie kunt u onze website bezoeken www.gne-utrecht.nl.

U kunt ons natuurlijk ook bellen (030-6991618).

