

BULLETIN

GENOOTSCHAP
NEDERLAND-ENGELAND

www.nederlandengeland.nl



UTRECHT BRANCH

www.nederlandengeland.nl

VOL.17, No.4 MARCH-APRIL-MAY 2008

Venue: Noorderlicht Church, 92B Bergweg, Zeist.



This is the last Bulletin of the season but there are three more Branch events to look forward to and don't forget our national one, the **BBC Young Writers and Public speaking Awards**, now in its 21st year. Of course, we hope to meet you at all of these events, but for those who obviously are unable to make it, have a splendid summer holiday with the best of weather and see you in September at the start of the next season.

The **preliminary rounds** will be held on Saturdays in March 2008 at four different locations throughout the Netherlands:

1 March 2008

Plein College Bisschop Bekkers, Eindhoven; www.bbekkers.nl

8 March 2008

Etty Hillesum Lyceum, location Het Vlier, Deventer; www.ettyhillesumlyceum.nl

8 March 2008

Rijnlands Lyceum, Wassenaar; www.rijnlw.nl

15 March 2008

Revius Lyceum, Doorn; www.revius.cvog.nl

From each round two speakers will go through to the **semi-finals**, to be held at the **James Boswell Institute, Utrecht** (www.jbi.uu.nl) on **Saturday 29 March 2008**.

The **National Final** of both the **Young Speakers** and the **Young Writers** competitions will take place on

12 April 2008 in Utrecht and will again be hosted by **Aldith Hunkar**, newsreader for NOS journal.
Venue: **Hogeschool Utrecht (University of Applied Sciences), Auditorium of the Faculty Economics and Management, Padualaan 101, 3584 CH Utrecht.**

The international team of judges will be chaired by our patron **H.E. Lyn Parker**, British Ambassador to the Netherlands.

You are most welcome to attend one or more of the **preliminary rounds** and the **semi-finals**.

However to attend the **National Final** you are requested to notify our Secretary (030 6991618) before 24th March. The preliminary rounds as well as the semi-finals and the final will commence at 1:30 PM.

COMING EVENT: MARCH, Friday 14th in the Noorderlicht Church, Zeist, at 8.00 p.m.

SUBTERRANEAN RAILWAY by Christian Wolmar



While the engineering feats of the London Underground have been well documented, little attention has been given to the effect of the Tube on London. But the achievements of the Underground go way beyond its mere construction. Its role in the development of London and its institutions is probably greater than that of any other invention. Without the Underground London would just not be, well, London. Oddly, that is recognised more often abroad where the famous roundel, the "logo" of the system created long before that word was ever in common parlance, is the emblematic image of the English capital.

Here, with the usual British disdain for engineering and our inability to recognise our own achievements, we have tended to ignore the magnificent organism living permanently under our feet.

The other great impact of the Tube on London is the design and architecture. Other important achievements of the Underground include the establishment of a brilliant system of transport management, which, in the 1930s, became a world-class model, envied and studied around the world. Another little told story is how after the war, London Transport changed the demography of the capital by recruiting directly in the Caribbean and Africa for cheap labour to run the Tube and the buses at a time of full employment among the native population. Taken together, it is no exaggeration to say that the Underground helped build the London we know today almost as much as the other way around and this lecture highlights that history in a way that has never previously been told.

Christian Wolmar is a writer and broadcaster specialising in transport. He has spent nearly all of his working life as a journalist, and lately was at The Independent Newspaper where he worked from 1989 to 1997. Although he mainly concentrates on transport matters, he covers other social policy issues, notably housing and local government. He is currently a freelance, working regularly for a variety of publications including the Evening Standard, the Daily Express, The Independent, The Observer and Rail magazine, in which he writes a fortnightly column on the rail industry. He also has a bi-monthly column in Public Service Local Government (PSLG). His publications include two books on the London Underground: *Down the Tube*, an account of the Public Private Partnership, published in 2002, and *The Subterranean Railway*, published in 2004 and now available in paperback.

COMING EVENT: APRIL, FRIDAY 18th in the Noorderlicht Church, Zeist, at 8.00 p.m.

ART and the ANARCHISTS by Martyn Everett

“Art and the Anarchists” explores the relationship between members of the artistic avant-garde and the anarchist movement since the friendship between artist Gustav Courbet and the anarchist Pierre-Joseph

Proudhon. Using many illustrations the talk examines the images of anarchism including many posters, book and magazine examples produced by artists ranging from the Post-Impressionists to the Surrealists. Anarchist ideas about the social role of art and their attraction for avant-garde artists in many countries are explained. Among the artists whose work will be discussed are: Gustav Courbet, Theophile Steinlen, Maximilien Luce, Camille Pissarro, Juan Gris, Kees Van Dongen, Frans Siwert, Gerd Arntz, Constant, George Grosz, Pablo Picasso and Enrico Baj.

Historian and freelance-journalist Martyn Everett, M.A., worked as a librarian in a Victorian Studies Centre for many years. His publications include: *The Buildings of Saffron Walden* (2004), *Saffron Walden: A Pictorial History* (1998), *War and Revolution: the Hungarian Anarchist Movement in World War I and the Budapest Commune, 1919* (2006), *Saffron Walden and the English Civil War* (1994). Recent articles are listed online at: <http://martyn.everett.googlepages.com/>

COMING EVENT: MAY 16th in the Noorderlicht Church, Zeist, at 8.00 p.m.

IGHTAM MOTE: LIFE UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS by Heather Woodward

Ightham Mote (pronounced "item moat") is one of the most beautiful medieval manor houses that still survive in England. Just off the A25 road, it nestles in a wooded valley in the countryside of Kent, about nine miles from Sevenoaks and nine miles from Tonbridge.



Given to the National Trust in 1985, a huge programme of restoration and conservation, lasting almost twenty years had to be undertaken. Now the whole place is able to be seen in all its glory. It is not a large stately home - it has always been a real home.

The house was built in the 1320s and all subsequent owners have been very sensitive to its mediæval origins. This means that the house has features from a very wide range of architectural periods.

The slides show almost all the rooms of the house and some of the gardens and the talk looks at the lives of some of the people who have lived and worked at Ightham Mote over the centuries. Almost everyone who comes into contact with Ightham Mote falls in love with it and the talk therefore tries to convey why so many people do love the place.

Mrs Woodward is a volunteer speaker for the National Trust in the South East of England. This is a very large region and so she does a great deal of traveling to go to her various venues but she finds it is always worth the effort - she loves meeting and learning from her audiences.

Heather has enjoyed doing all the research involved with developing new talks and has much appreciated the access she has had to National Trust historical archives - not to mention the visits to so many beautiful properties. She currently speaks on twelve varied subjects, mainly focusing on the social history side of the stories.

RECENT EVENT: JANUARY 18th in the Noorderlicht Church, Zeist:

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN AND THE ENGLISH BAROQUE, a slide illustrated talk by Andrew Lacey

At the grand age of 91 in 1723 Sir Christopher Wren died peacefully in his sleep. A man who's life had spanned one of the most turbulent periods in the history of England. A man who was to architecture what

Shakespeare was to literature. A man whose inheritance and genius we can still see today in England including debatably his most well known creation St Paul's Cathedral in the heart of London. So began our Speaker's talk about this modest, private man born during the reign of Charles I and whose career spanned the reigns of five monarchs and the Civil War.

Following his formal education at Westminster school in 1646 he went to further his studies at Magdalen College Oxford. In a world that had been turned upside down by the Civil War, Wren was a very modern thinker; he believed that mathematics were the only form of truths that could sink into the minds of men. He was drawn to the classical style of architecture which he felt was not only beautiful but was firmly based on mathematical knowledge. He felt that architecture should be aimed at eternity and not at fashion. In 1660 with the restoration of the monarchy his uncle asked him to design and build a chapel for Pembroke College. Wren designed a simple but elegant building in the neo classical style. He next designed the Sheldonian theatre in the Greek Roman style and by using the principles of engineering and mathematics built a domed roof without using supporting pillars.



In 1665 he went to Paris and met Bernini. Following the great fire of 1666, in which most of the commercial area of London was totally destroyed, Wren was appointed as a member of a Commission, and later in 1669 as Surveyor General, (a position he held until 1718!), with the task of rebuilding London. There were 55 parish churches, 25 of which still remain standing today, needing to be rebuilt. Each Church was unique, built in brick for speed but with stone facades, the towers and spires often being built later and all reflecting the desires of the different parish councils. His crowning glory was of course St Paul's though the latter was a compromise between

his vision and the ideas of the Dean and Chapter, however he did achieve his dream of a central space with a great dome which we can all wonder at today. Wren also designed other famous buildings including The Chelsea Hospital, The Naval Hospital in Greenwich (which later incorporated the Royal Naval College, itself now part of Greenwich University), including the great colonnade built so that the view from Queen Anne's House would not be obscured. He also designed The Royal Observatory above the House which, with the House, now forms the Greenwich Maritime Museum. Parts of Hampton Court and the Library at Trinity College Cambridge were also designed by Wren. His designs for the buildings were meticulous but also details were carefully worked out showing thoughtful and creative innovations for those who would use the buildings.

A wonderful and fascinating talk about a genius who has left his unique mark on London.

C.B.

RECENT EVENT: FEBRUARY 8th in the Noorderlicht Church, Zeist:

ENGLISH MUSIC: AN ILLUSTRATED MYSTERY TOUR by Lyn Parker

On Friday 8 February 2008, the Utrecht branch of GNE was honoured by a visit from our patron, the UK ambassador to the Netherlands, Mr. Lyn Parker. Although after his talk Mr. Parker also answered questions on the nature of his job as a diplomat, the topic of his address was one of his hobbies: English music. In an argument illustrated not, as usual, with slides, but with short musical fragments ranging from the 15th to the 20th century, Mr Parker proved wrong the verdict of the German music critic Oscar Schmitz, that England was "the country without music," as well as Heinrich Heine's similar remark that

English music was in such a lamentable state that only English painting was any worse. It was not always thus, Mr Parker showed. In the 15th century, for instance, the church music of John Dunstable had been influential all over the European Continent, as had that of many of his compatriots throughout the Middle Ages, when England was at the forefront of musical developments. Sadly, much of this medieval music has been lost due to the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, and again during the English Civil War of the middle of the seventeenth century.

Although church music remained a central concern of English composers for many centuries, its international influence waned after the fifteenth century, not in the last place because of the convoluted history of the religious conflicts that began with the English Reformation under Henry VIII in the early 16th century, and lasted until the late 17th. Contrasting early and late fragments from the works of Thomas Tallis (1505-85), for instance, Mr. Parker showed how his style was simplified under the pressures of the Reformation: as the Latin was replaced by English, the early polyphonic style gave way to a much simpler and modern sounding style based on harmonics. Apart from the Reformation, also the tradition of madrigal singing, imported from Italy, influenced English music, even church music, from the Elizabethan age onwards. This led to a dance-like rhythm that tended to break up its otherwise mostly conservative form. William Byrd, a composer who remained a Catholic in spite of its political undesirability, for instance, wrote madrigals as well as Church music influenced by these madrigals.

The English Reformation also entailed a shift away from religious music to secular music, under the influence of shifting sources of finance. With the dissolution of the monasteries, and the seizing of many of the assets that used to belong to the Roman Catholic Church, the Court of Henry VIII and the succeeding Tudors remained as the main source of commissions for musical works. Many musicians were therefore in the employment of the court, or strove to obtain posts there. One of these was John Dowland, the lutenist whose love songs, usually in the minor key, brought him fame on the Continent, too. Also musicians that are less well-known today, such as Thomas Simpson and Robert Johnson, were famous throughout Europe around 1600, largely for their instrumental music.

The English Civil War period meant another break in the continuity of English music; however, with the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, a new era began. And once again the financial underpinning of music underwent a change. Charles II and his brother James II were always penniless, and when the Dutch Stadtholder William III acceded to the throne after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the situation hardly improved. William was a Philistine, who did not see the sponsoring of music as a function of the Court. Consequently, music became a matter of private enterprise, with Henry Purcell as a shining example. Having started out as a composer of church music, and later a court musician, Purcell ended up writing operas for the public playhouses. In the process, he innovated English music by mixing it with the art form that England is perhaps most rightly famous for: drama. In composing operas for the general public and relying on box office receipts, he was ahead of the Continent, where court patronage was still the rule. At the same time, in its employment of counter-tenors or castrati for the female roles, the English opera scene was behind even the regular theatre, where actresses had been allowed on stage ever since the Restoration.

In his role as purveyor of operatic music for the masses, Purcell was followed by the German-born composer Georg Friederich Händel, who, in spite of his thick German accent which he never lost until his death, so won the hearts of the English public that circa 1724/25 he is said (by some musical historians) to have taken British citizenship, but he certainly anglicized his name at that time to George Frideric Handel, and has been regarded an honorary Englishman much as Shakespeare was accepted in Germany as “*unser Shakespeare*.” Though much of his work was written in



