

# B U L L E T I N

## G E N O O T S C H A P N E D E R L A N D - E N G E L A N D

Eindhoven Branch



No 4 / Mar – Apr 2008

Dear GNE members,

Time travel has, so far, been reserved to the world of (science-)fiction and film. Moving forward and backward in time in the same way that we can go through space remains a purely hypothetical thing. Even if the theory of general relativity suggests that there is such a thing as time dilation, the laws of physics simply make it impossible. In the early nineteenth century time travel was commonly used as a plot device in novels. [Charles Dickens' \*A Christmas Carol\*](#) is considered to be one of the first depictions of time travel, as the main character, Ebenezer Scrooge, is transported to Christmases past, present and yet to come. These might be considered mere visions rather than actual time travel, though, since Scrooge only views each time period passively and is unable to interact with them. The idea of time travel became very popular with the [H. G. Wells](#) story [The Time Machine](#), published in [1895](#) (preceded by a less influential story of time travel Wells wrote in [1888](#), titled [The Chronic Argonauts](#)), which also featured a time machine and which is often seen as an inspiration for all later science fiction stories featuring time travel.

Now novelists may have their mind-boggling creations that can merge past, present and future all in one. We just have make do with our own lacklustre, down-to-earth present. However, the talk by Christian Wolmar, one of the UK's leading commentators on transport matters, on the social effects of the first subterranean railways, might kindle the flame of your fantasy and take you on a wonderful trip into nineteenth century London. Another talk by Heather Woodward of the National Trust on Ightham Mote will convey your back into the upstairs and downstairs life in a moated medieval manor house dating from the early part of the 14th-century. If we cannot offer you a real trip in our own new-fangled time machine, you could at least give your fantasy a chance to run away with you for such spells. Oh, by the way, the last trip of this season will be to Mr and Mrs Deckers' marvellous garden. Enjoy the trips.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Wednesday 19 March, 20.00 hrs</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Agnus Dei, Kon. Julianalaan 12, Aalst/Waalre</b>
<b>Lecture:</b>	<b>Subterranean Railway, A social history of the Underground by Christian Wolmar</b>



The Subterranean Railway celebrates the fantastic achievement of the Underground's pioneers who created a transport system that was not only unique in the world but also was vital in creating the London we know today. While the engineering feats of the Underground have been well documented, little attention has been given to the effect of the Tube on London. The spectacular task of building a railway underneath a built-up area, a concept so brave was so revolutionary that it took nearly 40 years for any other country to imitate it. 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 Britain's usual disdain for engineering and our inability to recognise our own achievements, we have tended to ignore the magnificent organism living permanently under our feet. Most fundamentally, the Underground allows Londoners to traverse the city in a way which would be impossible by any form of surface transport. The Underground is the way to get around town, as demonstrated by the fact that it is both by besuited City gents and their cleaning ladies. The creation of the Underground stimulated development of the city itself. This is most famously illustrated



through the expression Metroland, the area of North West London which was built and indeed marketed as a direct result of rapid access to the centre of London via the Metropolitan Line. Even earlier, right from the start, those who conceived of a railway under London realised that it would create the opportunity to build new developments around stations. More than that, the aim was that the poor would be able to afford decent housing thanks to the cheaper land available outside the centre of London. The other great impact of the Tube on London is the design and architecture. The purity of the design is encapsulated most famously in Harry Beck's map of the system, but also given expression in the architecture of numerous stations and the consistency of the use of the typeface, Johnston devised specifically for the Underground. There is barely a streetscape in the centre of the city or in most high streets served by a station which is not recognisably and demonstrably London because of a design feature initiated by London Transport. 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 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* where he worked from 1989 to 1997, mostly as transport correspondent. Although he mainly concentrates on transport matters, he covers other social policy issues, notably housing and local government. Christian has become one of the UK's leading commentators on transport matters and was named 'Logistics and Transport Journalist of the Year 2001-02'. He broadcasts frequently on radio and TV and is a regular pundit on the national news bulletins of terrestrial channels and Sky, as well as having appeared on virtually every radio news programme from World at One, to Radio One's NewsBeat. He has written 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 but now available in paperback, which has been widely acclaimed by the critics.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Wednesday 16 April, 20.00 hrs</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Agnus Dei, Kon. Julianalaan 12, Aalst/Waalre</b>
<b>Lecture:</b>	<b>Ightham Mote: Life Upstairs Downstairs by Heather Woodward</b>



Ightham Mote is one of the most beautiful mediæval manor houses which still survives in England. 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.

Heather Woodward is a volunteer speaker for the National Trust in the South East of England. By profession, Heather was a teacher of French, Senior Teacher in a Grammar School and the Head of Sixth Form - all these gave her ample practice in public speaking. When she retired, she realised that she needed to keep her brain fully active and this was when she was recruited for the National Trust.



### **In Memoriam**

Just after the release of our last bulletin we learned that our dear GNE member Mr Ferdinand A.A.E.J.M. Hengst had died on Christmas day. We remember him as a man of character, sharp wit and great intelligence and a loyal member of our society who showed great interest in various lectures and who to all appearances enjoyed coming to and giving his support to our garden events. He will be sadly missed by many of us. We wish to express our sympathy to Mrs Thérèse Hengst-de Vries and hope that before long we shall see her again at GNE meetings.

### **BBC Young Writers and Public Speaking Awards 2008**

The first preliminary round of the BBC Young Writers and Public Speaking Awards was held in Eindhoven on 1 March. Twenty pupils of several secondary schools in the south of the Netherlands took part in this and 9 of them won a place in the semi-finals, which will be held at the James Boswell Institute in Utrecht on Saturday 29 March.

The National Final will take place at 1:30 PM on Saturday 12 April 2008 in Utrecht.

Hogeschool Utrecht (University of Applied Sciences)  
Auditorium of the Faculty Economics and Management  
Padualaan 101  
3584 CH Utrecht

For travel directions see the website of the BBC Awards:

<http://www.bbcawards.com/2008/en/finale.html>

If you wish to attend the National Final, please contact our secretary, Harry Kort, before 3 April.

## Short Notice

Fortunately it only happens rarely that we have a sudden change in the programme. But when it happens immediate action is essential to keep everybody happy and contented. With only one day to look for an alternative the programme committee had to inform us that Peter MacNamara was not coming over for his second tour along some of the GNE branches. We were very grateful that our member Rita Boogaart, art historian, was prepared to help us as well as the Breda and Maastricht branches with an excellent talk on the Tudors.

## Garden Party

This year's Garden Party will be held on Saturday 31 May in the garden of Mr and Mrs Deckers (our vice-chairman). More information on this event will be published in the next bulletin, but please make sure you mark this date in your calendar already!

## Speakers for next season (2008 / 2009)

For next season we requested the following speakers from the National Programme Committee:

- Peter Goddard – The Jurassic Coast
- Leslie McLoughlin – Lawrence of Arabia
- John Pilkington – Heart of the Sahara
- James Probert – Politica dialogue is still alive
- Christine Robinson – A glimpse of Chatsworth
- Andy Thomas – The crop circle mystery

Furthermore, our GNE-member Gerard van der Laan will be giving a talk on the London Docks, which we will endeavour to combine with an English Speaking Dinner.

In the next bulletin, we will be able to give you the final list of speakers and the dates that have been selected for us.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!

The committee

The committee are:

Chairman:	Jac van den Ende	013-4682771	Treasurer:	Diny van den Ende	013-4682771
Vice-Chairman:	Françoise Deckers	040-2113493	Member:	Anita van den Hurk	0487-572771
Secretary:	Harry Kort	040-2016203			
Website :	<a href="http://www.nederlandengeland.nl">http://www.nederlandengeland.nl</a>				
Postal address:	GNE Eindhoven Branch: Bottelrooslaan 10, 5552 RB VALKENSWAARD e-mail: <a href="mailto:har.kort@planet.nl">har.kort@planet.nl</a>				
Bank details:	Penningm. GNE-Eindhoven, Postbank 11.13.061, TILBURG				