



A TOUCH OF DUTCH

Maritime, Military, Migration and Mercantile
Connections on the Western Third 1616–2016



Coordinating Author

NONJA PETERS



Dutch Journeys to the Western Edge, Guest Curator Nonja Peters
Image Courtesy: State Library Western Australia (SLWA) Photographer

Nonja Peters

Nonja Peters was born in the Netherlands at the end of the Second World War and migrated to Australia with her parents in 1949. She is currently Senior Lecturer and Director of the History Of Migration Experiences (HOME), located in the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSP). In 2000 Nonja gained a PhD on Immigrant Enterprise. In 2002, *Milk and Honey But No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia 1945-1964*, UWA Press was short-listed for three Australian Premiers' Literary Awards. In 2006 *The Dutch down under 1606-2009* was published for the 400 years Australia-Netherlands bilateral commemorations, followed in 2009 by *From Tyranny to Freedom: Dutch Children from the Netherlands East Indies to Fairbridge Farm School 1945-1946*, Black Swan Press. In 2010, she published *We Came By Sea*, WA Museum. Nonja is also a curator of museum exhibitions on migration.

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Digital Print on opaque white film
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NOVA ORBIS TABVLA, IN LUCEM EDITA, A.F. DE WIT.



Frederick DE WIT, Nova Orbis Tabula in Lucem Edit, c.1680
Courtesy: Private Collection, Perth.

A TOUCH OF DUTCH

Maritime, Military, Migration and Mercantile
Connections on the Western Third 1616–2016





Duyfken on her way: Courtesy: Dutch Maritime Artist, Leentje Linders www.leentjelinders.nl.

*This book is dedicated to
Rupert Gerritsen, friend and colleague,
who worked tirelessly to preserve
Dutch-Australian maritime history.*

Daily Life in NL in the 17th Century.
*Inside the home with women putting away
 linen*, Pieter de Hooch, 1663
 Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



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My gratitude too to Dr Sue Summers and Dr Christina Houen both from Curtin University who were at various times the book's project managers. Thanks also to volunteer Roz Melville-Buck who spent a great deal of time photocopying letters for the author. However, I am especially grateful to Nicola Coles whose editing and organisation helped evolve the manuscript to the publishing stage. I am appreciative also of the support given to me by Geert Snoeijer, friend and colleague, for his expert input into the book's photographic management. Brian Richards is also thanked for restoring to 'useable' some of the lower quality black and white photos.

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Thanks too to my sons and their wives Bradley, Natalie, Richard and Michaela and my grandchildren Danica, Jessica, Samantha, twins Jaeger and Minaida, Mira and identical twins Octavious and Raffael. They enriched our lives with lighter moments in the most difficult years of Robert's battle with Multiple Sclerosis and finally his death from cancer. These included the years I was also trying to progress this book. It was so good to see it finally come to fruition.

Nonja Peters

October 2016



Stadsgezicht, (cityscape)
Jacob Vrel, 1654 – 1662
Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



FOREWORD BY ANNEMIEKE RUIGROK

Former Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Australia

The relations between Australia and The Netherlands are manifold. They go back to the era of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, whose captains explored the seas around present-day Indonesia and some of whom landed on Australian soil. Based on these first encounters more than 400 years ago, our countries developed strong cultural, people-to-people and historical links and a rich shared cultural heritage.

Within the scope of these ties between Australia and the Netherlands, a special connection exists between Western Australia and the Netherlands. And this book, edited and co-written by Dr Nonja Peters, shines a new light on this special bond. This connection found its source when the VOC vessel *De Eendracht*, under her captain Dirk Hartog, landed on the Western Australian coast in 1616. The arrival on this island at the West side of Shark Bay, now aptly called Dirk Hartog Island, marked the beginning of a period of over 150 years, in which many Dutch VOC ships explored and mapped the coastline of Australia before the arrival of Captain Cook in 1770.

Over time many of the hundreds of thousands of Dutch migrants who came to Australia, once known as New Holland, made a new home in Western Australia, especially in the aftermath of World War II; a war that strengthened the ties between our countries through our military alliance. After the war, the Dutch became a part of the Western Australian society, many of them starting up businesses and consequently leaving traces of mercantile heritage.

Dr Nonja Peters and her co-writers have assembled an amazing collection of stories and memories about this Dutch-Western Australian connection. Through her untiring efforts, Dr Peters has become an indispensable source of energy in the preservation and promotion of the Dutch-Australian Cultural Heritage.

As we look forward to the celebration of 400 years of historical ties that bind Western Australia and the Netherlands in 2016, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Nonja Peters for keeping our shared cultural heritage alive.

Annemieke Ruigrok

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Australia
2016

FOREWORD BY BRETT MASON

Ambassador of Australia to the Netherlands

The links between Australia and the Netherlands stretch back more than four centuries - back to those chance encounters by sailors of the Dutch East India Company, or VOC to give it its Dutch acronym. Driven off course by the elements, these seafarers became the first recorded Europeans to make landfall in Australia. And in so doing, Dutch cartographers, quite literally, drew Australia onto the map of the modern world.

These unexpected encounters initiated a pattern of contact that was to develop and evolve down the centuries. However, throughout that period and right up to the present day, Australia's "Western Third" as Dr Peters terms it, has remained central to that engagement. It is no surprise that Western Australia for so long held the name New Holland, and that so many place names up and down its coast proudly proclaim their Dutch origin.

These early contacts were followed by successive waves - which Dr Peters dubs the four M's - of mariners, merchants, military and, in the aftermath of World War II, migrants. The merchants are with us still, in the form of Dutch investors in the energy and gas sector, while those migrants, now through their children and grandchildren, continue to enrich and shape modern Australia.

As we approach the four hundredth anniversary of Dirk Hartog's landing at Cape Inscription in 1616, I am delighted to welcome this new volume which chronicles the contribution of the Dutch to Western Australia. It is a unique strand of Australian history that deserves celebrating.

Delving into history and reaching out to the community, Dr Peters and her co-authors have brought together stories and experiences which detail the diversity and richness of Dutch influence in Western Australia.

Australia and the Netherlands share a close affinity. And it is thanks to works such as this, that we are better able to appreciate our shared heritage and common values.

The Honourable Dr Brett Mason

Ambassador of Australia to the Netherlands
2016



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Figure 1
400 years of Dutch maritime, military, migration and mercantile links with Western Australia 1616-2016. Courtesy: 1. Stephen Brady, 2. Rupert Gerritsen, 3. Peters Family Collection 4. Rene de Kok.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Nonja Peters

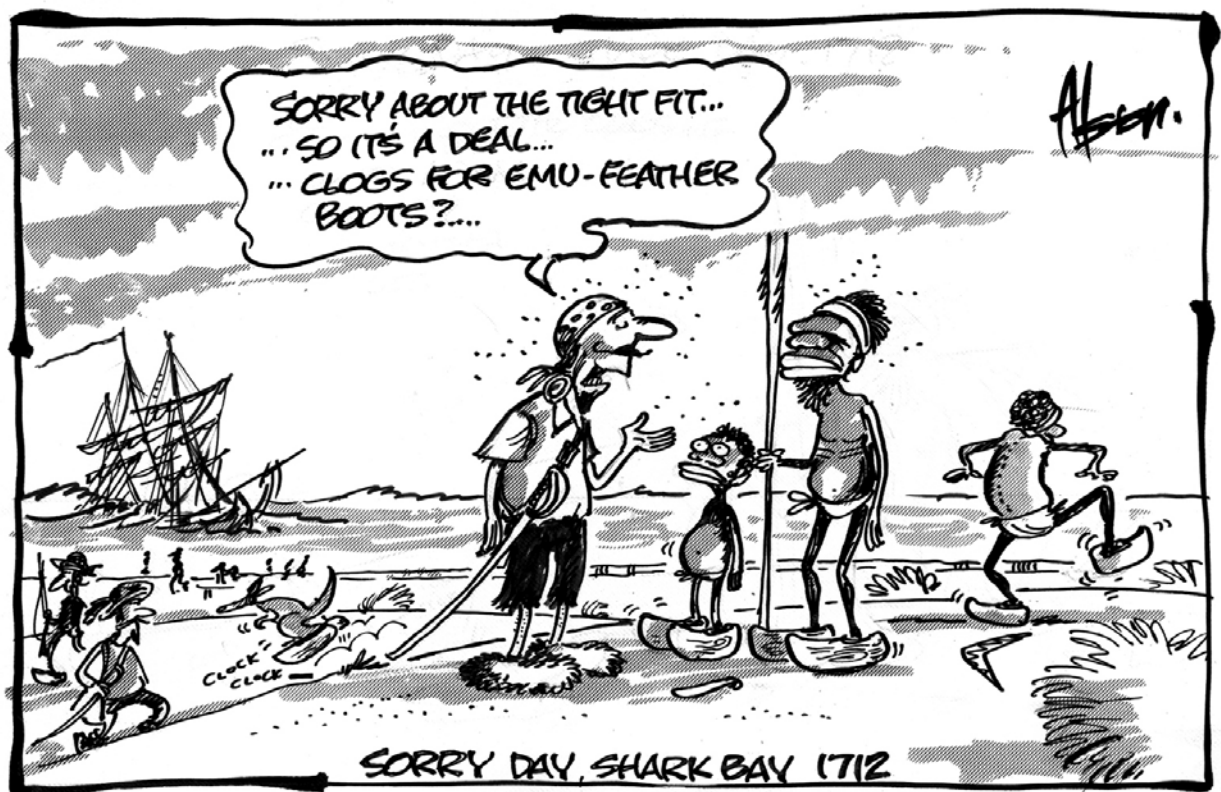
This edited volume with contributions from 34 authors is the first ever comprehensive history of the Dutch in Western Australia (WA). It is structured around four main themes – maritime, military, migration and mercantile as these best characterise the 400 years that the Dutch have had links with WA. This period of contact began on 25 October in 1616, with the landfall, at Shark Bay, of Skipper Dirk Hartog and the crew of the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC or Dutch East India Company) trading vessel *Eendracht*.

From the late 15th Century the ‘trading routes’ into Europe, from countries along the Indian Ocean Rim, shifted from being land-based to ocean routes. The shift was spearheaded by the Portuguese, who as a result maintained a stranglehold on the Spice Trade until other European countries found their own way around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean. Throughout the period which we now call the ‘Age of Exploration’- the Dutch, having established their own ocean route at the end of the 16th Century, began expanding their trading relationships by establishing trading posts at either the request of some countries wanting to rid themselves of the Portuguese or by force in others. The latter, being particularly the case in the area that we now call Indonesia. The ultimate outcome of these trading relationships was Colonialism, which in Indonesia if viewed from the Dutch perspective, lasted from the early 1800s until the end of 1949.

The history of the VOC exploits relating to WA and the rise of an ever-growing Dutch mercantile culture - known globally to have intensified during the Dutch ‘Golden Age’ - is noted in Section I of this book. The various VOC activities had also provoked sizeable numbers of Europeans to migrate in pursuit of wealth in far-flung places. Their trading activities, settlements and ‘love relationships’ with Indigenous peoples, generated many of those activities that we now associate with ‘shared cultural heritage’ and cultural heritage tourism. The shipwrecks along the WA coast are a prime example. The maritime connections were superseded in importance by the military relationships developed in defense of Australia and Colonial holding in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) during WWII, and these form the basis of Section II of this book. The upheaval of the second World War, in turn generated the post-war mass migration scheme that brought a large influx of migrants to Australia, including a significant number of Dutch. Elucidating and clarifying various aspects of the migration story is the focus of all authors in Section III of this book. The mercantile behaviours of Dutch-Australians and Dutch corporations based in the Netherlands - with a subsidiary in Australia - underpin the chapters in Section IV. The contributions that Dutch have made to the Dutch community - past and present, to the Australian

Arts scene, in Archives and also possibly the Indigenous 'gene pool', is the subject matter of Section V.

The authors in this book, who highlight the Dutch influences on the socio-cultural and economic development of WA from 1616, include experts in the fields of business, forensic science, the arts, cultural and physical anthropology, maritime archaeology and maritime and social history. Their chapters are interspersed with vignettes – stories by the lay public – whose insight offers a personal perspective on the themes raised in the chapters written by the academics. The opinions stated are those of the authors - they have not been modified.



The Dutch East India Company (VOC) was all about trade not settlement which this cartoon captures in one frame. ©Dean Alston - West Australian Newspapers Limited.



SECTION ONE:

MARITIME

Nonja Peters

Between 1616 and 2016, the Dutch have at various times had maritime, military, migration or mercantile connections with Western Australia. The strong mercantile culture that had evolved in Europe by the late 16th Century, motivated the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC), in competition with other European East India Companies, to venture into the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in hot pursuit of the lucrative Spice Trade. Known as the 'Age of Exploration' it played a central role in interconnecting the earth's peoples, cultures, economies and politics, and begot the riches that stimulated the economic, technological, scientific and socio-cultural development of that period in Dutch history which we call 'The Golden Age'. Two criteria emerged that also had the VOC attract the nomenclature world's first multinational - it issued shares and operated in more than one country. In fact its trading posts sprang up all over Asia alongside those of the Chinese, Javanese, Tamils, Gujaratis, Armenians and others.

Adapting quickly, the Europeans learned the commercial *lingua franca* of the area and mastered the rules of the local market. They also entered into relations with local women, and many trading posts were soon peppered with their offspring. Most of these children remained in the country of their birth and were subsumed into the local community or else entered the service of the European merchants and companies. The VOC made good use of such people, born and brought up locally they could speak the language of their birth country and understood the conventions. As such they proved excellent middlemen for the Europeans. For the same reason, these Eurasians were also extremely useful to the Asian rulers. For indigenous populations, European exploration was often associated with violence and disempowerment. Even today, some of these groups in South Africa, Indonesia and Western Australia are reinventing their sense of identity and belonging with reference to a level of *Dutchness*.

The VOC eclipsed all of its rivals in the Asia trade. Between 1602 and 1796, it sent some 4,785 ships to various ports throughout Asia (around 653 were lost to shipwreck, fire or piracy). The VOC ships carried almost a million Europeans to work in Asian trade. Their efforts netted more than 2.5 million tons of Asian trade goods. By contrast, from 1500 to 1795 the rest of Europe combined sent only 882,412 people. The fleet of the English East India Company, the VOC's nearest competitor, was merely a distant second to its total traffic with only 2,690 ships and a mere one-fifth the tonnage of the goods carried by the VOC.

VOC activities in the IOR led to the first European 'encounter' with Australia – the *Duyfken* in 1606 and Dirk Hartog in Western Australia (WA) in 1616. These happenings literally put Australia (*Terra Australis Incognita*) onto world cartographic maps. The stories of WA coastal happenstances include the naming of Dirk Hartog Island, the *Zwaan Rivier* (Swan River) and *Rotte nest* (Rottnest) island by Willem de Vlamingh in 1697, the town of Guilderton in honour of *Vergulde Draek* (Gilt Dragon) shipwreck in 1656; the town of Leeman after the incredible survival story of Andrew Leeman 1658; the Leeuwin Lighthouse after the *Leeuwintje's* encounter with the coast in 1622 and the Geelvink Channel after the sister ship of Willem de Vlamingh (1696) - to mention but a few. The four VOC shipwrecks on the WA coast (the Batavia Coast) are noteworthy landmarks in our national historical narrative. They also contribute significantly to WA's heritage tourism.

The chapters and vignettes in this section by Wendy van Duivenvoorde, Rupert Gerritsen and Daniel Franklin provide a comprehensive overview of the 400-year maritime connection of the Dutch with Western Australia.

Four coins of the East India Company, 1644-1645, anonymous, 1700 - 1799
Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



CHAPTER ONE

DIRK HARTOG WAS HERE! HIS 1616 INSCRIPTION PLATE AND DUTCH SHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Wendy van Duivenvoorde

Located at the northern tip of Dirk Hartog Island in Western Australia, Cape Inscription is one of the most significant recent cultural heritage sites in Australia.¹ It marks the landfall of Dutch skipper Dirk Hartog and his crew on 25 October 1616. Today, the historical events and the physical remains of Hartog's landing in Western Australia are firmly embedded within the context of European activity in the Indian Ocean region and, more specifically, Dutch exploration of the Australian coastline in the seventeenth century.²

This chapter provides an historic overview of Dirk Hartog's life and seafaring activities. It also places his arrival in Western Australia into the broader setting of seventeenth-century Dutch exploration. Finally, it investigates the archaeological and historical context of the Hartog Inscription Plate, emphasising the nature of similar monuments left by European explorers in the Indian Ocean region and contemporary ship communication practices.

THE PATRONYMIC HARTOGSZOON [HARTOOCHZ OR HARTOGSZ]



Figure 1
Dirk Hartog's signature from his marriage certificate 5 February 1611. Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Ondertrouwregisters 1565–1811, DTB 412, p. 476 (OTR00009000254).



Figure 2
Dirk Hartog's signature from a freight contract for his ship *Dolfijn*, 11 December 1612. Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief van de Notarissen ter Standplaats Amsterdam, access no. 5075, inv. no. 8, (Jan Franssen Bruijningh), no. 130 (Minuutacten en afschriften: Band 68: 4 December 1612–4 May 1613), p. 6 (A20106000011).

Dirk Hartog holds a place in the history of exploration, but only scant evidence testifies to his existence. What we know is derived from historic documents, an inscribed pewter plate, and charts and geographic names that credit his arrival with *Eendracht* on the western shores of Australia. No portraits of Dirk Hartog exist. The only tangible evidence that remains today is his signature on official documents. Hartog spelled his own name as *Dijrck Hartoochz[s]*, as seen on his marriage certificate (5 February 1611), a letter in the National Archives of the Netherlands (11 June 1616), freight contracts (3 March 1612, 11 December 1612, and 15 May 1615) and an affidavit (31 December 1618) (Figures 1–3).³ His contemporaries were less consistent—notaries, church officials, civil servants and the scribe of the pewter serving plate spelled it in a variety of ways. They wrote it as *Dirck Hertochsen*, *Dierck Hartoghsz*, *Dirck Hatichs*, *Dirck Hartoghsz*, *Dierick Hartogz*, *Dirck Hartogs*, and *Dirck Hartochsz*.⁴

His surname is the patronymic *Hartoochz* or *Hartogsz* (son of *Hartooch* or *Hartogs*), pronounced as *Hartogszoon* (transl. Hartog's son). Dirk's surname refers to the given name of his father and is, therefore, not a proper family name. Although his name as used in this chapter, then, is technically incorrect, the most common form found in modern scholarship.

DIRK HARTOG'S PERSONAL LIFE AND CAREER

Born from the marriage of Griet Jans to skipper Hartog [Harich] Krijnen, Dirk Hartog was the couple's second son and one of at least four children; his older brother Willem was born around 1575, his sisters Trijntje around 1578 and Neeltje in 1584. The siblings grew up in the Smaksteeg near the Korte Nieuwendijk in Amsterdam. After the death of his father, his mother Griet raised her children alone and managed to teach them arithmetic, reading, and writing.⁵

Dirk Hartog was raised in a nautical family, all members of which had strong ties to the shipping industry. Brother Willem became a ship's carpenter, while both sisters married sailors.⁶ On 5 February 1611, Dirk Hartog married the 18-year-old Meijsnsje Abels in the Calvinist Oude Kerk (Old Church) in Amsterdam.⁷ Their marriage certificate decree states: 'Dierik Hertoghhs varengselle oud 28 Jarens wonende bij de Nieuharlemmersluys geassisteert met Griet Jansdr zijn moeder ter eenre Ende Meijnsngen Abelsdr oud 18 Jaren woonende op de Lijnsbaensgrafft geassisteert met Abel Albertsz haer Vader ter andere zijde', which translated reads: 'Dirk Hartogson, skipper, 28 years of age, living at the Nieuw Haarlemmersluis [Haarlemmerstraat, Amsterdam], accompanied by his mother Griet Jan's daughter on one side, and Meijnsngen Abel's daughter, 18 years of age, residing at the Lijnbaansgracht [Amsterdam], accompanied by Abel Albertszoon, her father, on the other side'. Hartog and Meijsnsje took up residence at the Brouwersgracht in Amsterdam.⁸ Assuming that his marriage certificate is correct and he was in fact only 28 years of age in 1611, then he was born in 1583. The only baptism record with his name states that Dirk Hartog was baptised in the Calvinist Oude Kerk (Old Church) of Amsterdam on 30 October 1580.⁹ The latter may have been an older brother and namesake who died in infancy—a frequent occurrence at the time.

Little is known of Hartog's training to become an able seamen and of his formative years at sea. Before his marriage to Meijsnsje, he spent some years in Southeast Asia as a 'stuurman' (=navigator or steersman) for the Dutch East India Company, or VOC (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*). A notary document dated to 8 September 1609, authenticates that he had just returned from Bantam in north-west Java on VOC ship *Ter Veere*.¹⁰ A few weeks later, on 22 October, he made an official statement about the drowning of an Andries Mertens in Ternate. At the time of the incident Hartog served on VOC ship *Enkhuizen*, which ran aground off Halmahera Island in the

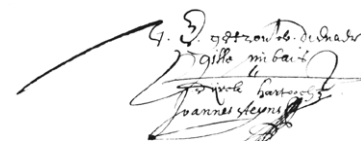


Figure 3
Dirk Hartog's signature from a letter written while en route to the Dutch East Indies on 11 June 1616. NA, Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, reference code 1.04.02, item number 1059, folio 329.

Moluccas on 1607.¹¹ He travelled on *Ter Veere* from Bantam to Wielingen between 16 November 1608 and 7 August 1609.¹²

In 1611, Hartog purchased the ship *Dolfijn* of 120 *lasten* (240 metric tonnes) and sailed as an independent shipowner for Wessel Schenck, a merchant of Amsterdam. His first voyage took him south to Dunkirk to collect a cargo of 140 *lasten* (280 tonnes) of salt from Brouages. From there he continued northwards into the Baltic to Danzig, after which he sailed to Genoa, Italy. This charter paid him 11 ducats of 11 Spanish reals per ducat per *last* (2 tonnes) of cargo.¹³ In his contract with Schenck, Hartog agreed to arm his ship with six iron cannon, four small swivel guns for stone shot, a shotgun, firelocks, spears, gunpowder, lead, bullets and other suitable armament.¹⁴ In 1612, he also freighted merchandise for Casper van Ceulen and Gijsbert Tholincx.¹⁵

Experienced in traversing European waters, Hartog made his last lengthy and dangerous voyage with *Dolfijn* to the harbour of Archangel in northern Russia (in the White Sea). On this trip, his 240-ton ship was fitted with eight iron cannon and five small swivel guns for stone shot.¹⁶ Dutch shipping and trade with Archangel required expert seamen who were willing to undertake the lengthy voyage around the northern Cape of Scandinavia to a harbour that was ice-bound for all but a brief period of time each year. The Dutch acquired agrarian and forestry products at Archangel, such as hemp, Russian leather and tallow, fur from sable, marten, and polar fox, moose skins, masts and sawn timber, potash and tar.¹⁷ Hartog sailed in the service of Margarieta Valckenburch – widow of Marcus de Vogelaer – and Adriaen Sybrecht Faes of Amsterdam with an unknown cargo valued at 2,660 Dutch guilders.¹⁸ In Archangel, Hartog loaded a cargo of wheat at the end of August for his homebound voyage to the Netherlands. Upon his return, he sold *Dolfijn* to Jelmer Jebbes, an Amsterdam merchant, on 7 November 1615.¹⁹

DIRK HARTOG'S JOURNEY TO THE INDIES IN 1616

A few months later, as part of a fleet of five ships, Hartog set sail as skipper of the 700-ton ship *Eendracht* in the employ of the Dutch East India Company.²⁰ *Eendracht* was a brand-new ship from the VOC's Amsterdam shipyard and proved the best sailing ship of the fleet. It carried a compliment of 200 men and was fitted with 32 cannon.²¹

Hartog and *Eendracht* set out from Texel on 23 January 1616 along with VOC ships *Trouw* (500 tonnes, Amsterdam Chamber) and *Bantam* (800 tonnes, Enkhuizen Chamber).²² Senior merchant Pieter de Carpentier, the future Governor-General of the East Indies, sailed aboard *Trouw*. They joined up with VOC ships *Gouden Leeuw* (500 tonnes, Rotterdam Chamber) on 31 January and *Westfriesland* (800 tonnes, Hoorn Chamber) on 1 February in the English Channel. *Gouden Leeuw* had departed from Rotterdam's Maas River on 21 January,²³ while *Westfriesland*, under the command of Kornelis Franszoon van der Beets, had made way a day later.²⁴

For several days prior to commencing their journey, *Eendracht*, *Trouw* and *Bantam* had been icebound while at anchor at Texel. A letter written on 3 February 1616 by Gillias Mibais and Joannes Steijns, *Eendracht*'s senior and junior merchant respectively, informs that twenty-one seamen and eight soldiers had deserted the icebound ship. The runaways included even the senior barber, which had caused much restlessness among the crew. To make amends, he was replaced by a junior barber serving aboard one of the other ships. The merchants deliberated that had *Eendracht* remained icebound for three or four days more, they would have been in peril of losing their entire crew and compliment of marines. Fortunately, however, the ice broke and the three ships managed to sail away on 23 January.²⁵

For nearly all the ships in this fleet, the journey was their maiden voyage in service of the VOC; only *Bantam* had made the trip previously. The ships all took the so-called Brouwer Route, which was soon to become the preferred route for all VOC ships sailing to Southeast Asia.²⁶

The fleet sailed south together, passing Madeira on 9 February, and arrived at Maio Island in the Cape Verde Archipelago on 21 March where the ships took on fresh water. By this time scurvy had broken out. The ships sighted the island of St Thomé (now São Tomé) on 20 May and arrived on 27 May at Cape Lopez in the Gulf of Guinea.²⁷ Here, *Gouden Leeuw* and *Westfriesland*

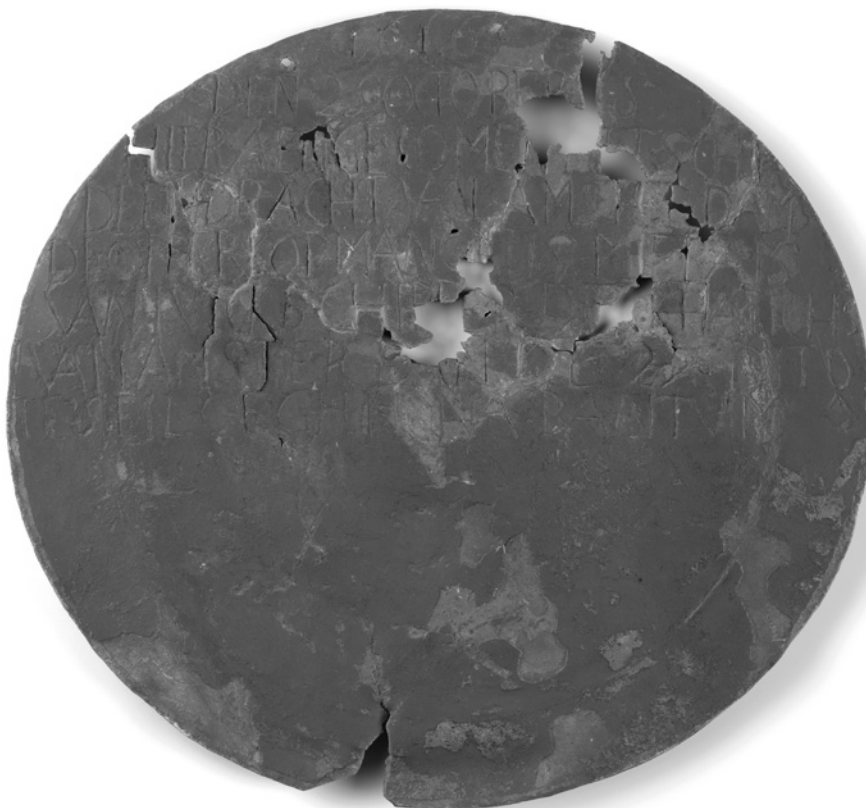


Figure 4
Hartog Inscription Plate, 1616. Rijksmuseum collection, object number NG-NM-825.

separated from the other ships. *Eendracht* continued to the island of Annaboa (modern-day Annobón), where the crew intended to take on fresh fruit, i.e. oranges and limes; Spanish wine; and other provisions.²⁸ *Eendracht* failed to anchor at Annaboa as the other vessels witnessed how it drifted out of sight.²⁹ Strong currents and lack of wind often delayed ships in the Gulf of Guinea and it took the ships three months to sail from Cape Lopez to the Cape of Good Hope. The heat, the poor living conditions aboard ship, and the endless delays waiting for favourable sailing conditions resulted in the death of 14 crew members. *Eendracht* and *Trouw* were the first ships of the fleet to reach the Cape, finally arriving at Cape Town on 5 August 1616.³⁰ *Eendracht* continued eastward on 27 August, but was slower on this leg of the journey and was the last ship to arrive in the Indonesian Archipelago. De Carpentier, for example, arrived at Bantam in north-west Java on 24 October 1616, by which time Hartog had only reached the Western Australian coast.³¹ Whether Hartog arrived there by accident or design is a matter of contention.

In 1617, the VOC officially endorsed the Brouwer's Route, a 'nautical highway' first encountered by Hendrik Brouwer five years earlier, as the preferred itinerary for its East Indiamen.³² From the Cape of Good Hope, ships headed south to between latitudes 35°S and 45°S, where they caught the strong westerly tail winds known as the Roaring Forties. With these winds astern, they followed this passage for some one thousand nautical miles before turning northward with the Southeast Trade Winds, which carried them directly into the Strait of Sunda. It is uncertain, however, whether Dutch navigators would have used the old German mile of 3,152 Amsterdam fathoms (c. 5,358 m) or the new Snellius mile (c. 7,158 m).³³ This route provided the shortest distance to the East Indies, expediting the sailing time by several months and allowing the ships to circumvent Portuguese territory in Asia.³⁴

Navigators were still unable to determine longitude, which could be problematic for ships following this route due to the earth's diminishing curvature. In addition to the varying strength of the trade winds and inability to calculate longitude, miscalculations often caused ships to miss the designated point to turn north. Hartog could have simply passed the right longitude or he may have sailed too far south before running with the Roaring Forties, leading to *Eendracht's* arrival on the shores of the Great South Land. The frequency of this occurrence played a major role in Dutch reconnaissance of the Australian coast, and led to the European discovery and exploration of this vast continent.

Hartog and his crew were the first Dutch seamen to experience the challenging sailing conditions close to the Western Australian coast, where treacherous reefs, strong currents, unpredictable winds, and shallow waters were at times coupled with a rough and inaccessible shore. Given such hazardous navigational conditions, it is surprising that so few VOC ships were lost in these waters in the nearly two hundred years of the company's existence, from 1602 to 1795. These shipwrecks include *Batavia* (1629), *Vergulde Draak* (1656), *Zuiddorp* (1712), and *Zeewijk* (1727).

Dirk Hartog and his crew found themselves on the Western Australian coast when they arrived at Shark Bay on 25 October 1616. They anchored *Eendracht* at the northern tip of the island now named after him (Dirk Hartog Island) and left an inscribed pewter serving plate with flattened rim nailed to a wooden post that they stood upright atop the cliff. The inscription (Figure 4) is legible over the entire width of the plate, however, the last three lines have all but eroded away. It is possible that the names of Joannes Steijns and Pieter Dooke were added to the inscription as they are inscribed much more lightly (Rijksmuseum collection, object number NG-NM-825). The inscription reads³⁵:

1616
 DEN 25 OCTOBER [I]S
 HIER AENGECOMEN HET SCHI[P]
 DEENDRACHT VAN AMSTERDAM
 DE OPPERKOPMAN GILLIS MIBAIS
 VAN LVICK SCHIPPER DIRCK HATICH'S
 VAN AMSTERDAM DE 27 DITO
 TE SEIL GEGHN NA BANTVM
 DE ONDERCOOPMAN IAN STINS
 DE OPPERSTIVIERMAN PIETR DOO
 KE VAN BILL

On the 25th of October 1616, the ship *Eendracht* of Amsterdam arrived here with senior merchant Gilles Mibais of Liege, skipper Dirck Hatichs of Amsterdam, the 27 [October], the ditto made sail for Bantam, the junior merchant J[o]an[nes] S[te]ij[n]s, the first steersman Piet[e]r Dooke van Bill.

The plate that Hartog's crew left behind provides tangible material evidence of European arrival on the coast of Western Australia. Prior to Hartog, in 1606, the *Duyfken* expedition under the command of Dutch explorer Willem Janszoon had sailed from Indonesia into northern Australian waters. Despite some speculation on a possible earlier discovery of Australia, *Duyfken* made the first recorded European landfall on Australian soil. The journey may have been a planned expedition to the South Land or an opportunistic enterprise resulting from Dutch shipping and trade conditions in South East Asia.³⁶ Hartog's encounter, ten years later, however, was entirely accidental—at least, from the VOC's point of view.³⁷ Unlike the *Duyfken* crew who thought themselves in New Guinea, Hartog was probably aware that he set foot on the, until then hypothetical, Great South Land (or *Terra Australis Incognita*).

Hartog briefly explored Shark Bay with his senior merchant, Gilles Mibais, but they both seemed indifferent to their finding of the South Land. They anchored their ship at the northernmost point of the island, which is now called Dirk Hartog Island. VOC ships were typically manned by a skipper and senior merchant, the former being responsible for all nautical aspects of the journey (navigation, sailing, rigging, and manning the crew), while the latter was accountable for the profitability of the voyage. Ultimately though, the senior merchant out ranked the skipper in decision-making.³⁸

From Shark Bay, *Eendracht* continued its journey north and sailed into the Flores Sea through “the narrows between Bima and the land of Endea near Guno Api (Goenoeng Api) in the south of Java (Sapi Straits)”.³⁹ The ship finally arrived at Makassar on the Island of Celebes (Sulawesi) on 14 December 1616. Unaware of the current hostile status of Makassar, and the VOC’s decision to vacate this trading post eighteen months earlier, Hartog witnessed sixteen of his crew being massacred by the local ruler.⁴⁰ Two English ships assisted him and provided *Eendracht* with provisions and protection, although a subsequent Dutch inquest into the matter concluded that the English were actually to blame for the casualties.⁴¹ The ships escorted *Eendracht* from Makassar and Hartog arrived at the Banda Island in the Moluccas in the first days of January 1617.⁴²

The VOC Council of the Indies was unimpressed, maybe even disgruntled, with Hartog’s landing on Celebes. His late arrival had negative financial implications for the availability and distribution of funding.⁴³ On 22 August 1617, Director-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen sent a letter to the Netherlands from his seat in Bantam, in which he specifically states: “it is said that the skipper of *Eendracht* deliberately planned it, and it did not happen accidentally”.⁴⁴ He elaborates that *Eendracht* sailed some 800 to 1,000 miles from the Cape of Good Hope at 26° to 28° degrees south where its crew encountered “many islands, but did not observe the presence of people”.⁴⁵ He does not mention Hartog by name, simply referring to him as “the skipper” of *Eendracht*, which indicates his insignificant status.⁴⁶ Hartog’s arrival in Makassar, by accident or intention, is curious, since he indicated on the pewter plate left on Dirk Hartog Island that he was setting off for Bantam, where the other ships in his fleet had arrived.

During his time in the East Indies, Hartog was active in the intra-Asiatic trade. After *Eendracht*’s arrival in Banda it must have sailed to Bantam next, possibly via Ambon.⁴⁷ He then made a round trip to Ambon from Bantam.⁴⁸ In Indonesian waters, *Eendracht*’s hold carried such diverse cargoes as money, cloth, cloves, spelter (a mixture of lead and tin) and passengers. Documents mention specifically that *Eendracht* transported two women from Bantam to Ambon and a Portuguese prisoner who managed to escape.⁴⁹ In September 1617, the ship arrived in Bantam with a cargo of cloves from Ambon weighing 900 *bhaar*⁵⁰ (about 222 metric tonnes).⁵¹ On this trip, *Eendracht* was dangerously overloaded and barely made it to Bantam.⁵² *Eendracht* probably remained in Bantam from where Hartog and his crew departed to the Netherlands on 17 December. Hartog and his ship arrived in Zeeland on 16 October 1618.⁵³

Zuider Eendracht

In 1614, Isaäc le Maire established the Australian Company (*Australische Compagnie*), ostensibly to trade with the recently discovered *Terra Australis*. The true intent of the company, however, was to thwart the twenty-one-year trade monopoly granted to the VOC for the area east from the Cape

of Good Hope and west from the Strait of Magellan. He and other Dutch merchants begrudged their commercial exclusion from this expanse, which they deemed too large to be controlled by a single company.

On 14 June 1615, a ship also called *Eendracht* (360 tonnes) and the yacht *Hoorn* (110 tonnes) set sail from Texel on the only journey made by the new company. Their reported purpose was to establish trade relations with the inhabitants of the South Land, but in secret they were instructed to find the western route to the Indies around Cape Horn.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, *Hoorn* never made the Cape, as it caught fire on 19 December 1615 when its crew was careening its hull in Port Desire [modern-day Puerto Deseado, Argentina]. *Eendracht* continued the voyage to South East Asia, successfully navigating Cape Horn and arriving in Ternate in the Moluccas on 17 September 1616, one month before Hartog reached the Western Australian coast.

Having learned of the voyage's intent to trade in the East Indies, the VOC confiscated the ship on 2 November 1616 and renamed it *Zuider Eendracht*. The ship's crew were given the choice of working for the VOC or being sent back to the Netherlands.⁵⁵ Upon their return, a lengthy legal dispute ensued between the companies, which prevented the Australian Company from flourishing. The ship *Zuider Eendracht* remained in South East Asia and served in the intra-Asiatic trade; it capsized off Bantam in May 1620 and subsequently was burned.⁵⁶

Hartog's life upon return from the East Indies

After his return from the Indies, Hartog and his wife had their will notarized by Frederick van Banchem. Having 'contemplated the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the hour' and being without children, they appointed each other as legal heir on 28 December 1618. They declared to bestow their personal possessions on their immediate family. Hartog, for example, bequeathed all his linen and woollen clothes to his brother Willem, 25

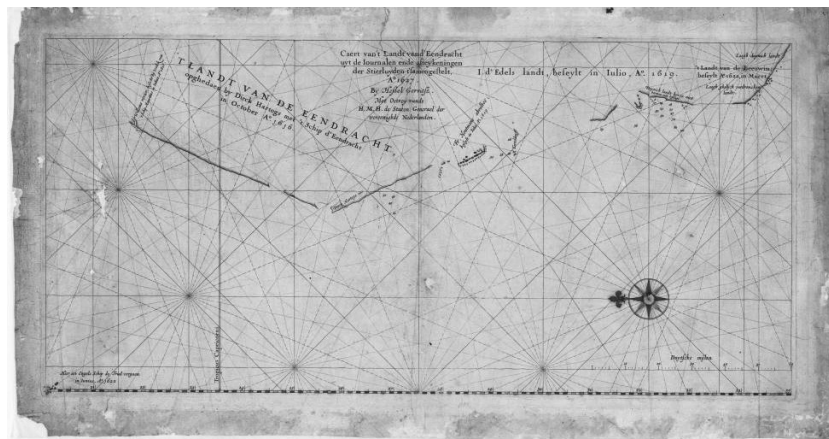


Figure 5

The land of *Eendracht*, discovered anno 1616 [*'t Land van d'Eendracht, ontdekt Ao 1616*], detail of the chart of the Malay Archipelago and the Dutch discoveries in Australia. Caert van't Landt van d'Eendracht uyt de Journalen ende afteykeningen der Stierluyden t'samengesteld. Cartographer: Hessel Gerritszoon, 1618–1627. National Library of Australia, MAP RM 749 (<http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-rm749>).

guilders to the child of his older sister, and 12 guilders each to his sisters Trijntje and Neeltje. His wife Meijnsje conferred all her linen and woollen clothes and her golden and silver jewellery to her two sisters. To her three brothers, she bequeathed 12 guilders each.⁵⁷

Upon return in Amsterdam, Hartog also signed an affidavit on 31 December 1618 to confirm the paralysis of Claes Ellerts, steersman of VOC ship *Dolfijn*, after an accidental fall in ‘Kasteel Amboina’ in Ambon, the Moluccas.⁵⁸ Then, in September 1619, Hartog entered the service of Jacques Nicquet and Elias Trip, for whom he set sail to the Adriatic Sea with his newly acquired ship *Gelukkige Leeuw*. There he aided in the defence of the city of Venice against Hapsburg, Spanish, and Uscocs attacks.⁵⁹

Hartog died young, in his late thirties, and was buried in the New Church of Amsterdam on 11 October 1621.⁶⁰ He may have fallen ill on his last homeward voyage, because he passed away shortly after his return.⁶¹ His ship *Gelukkige Leeuw* was sold on 23 October 1621 to pay for an outstanding advance of 1,800 Florins.⁶²

His widow Meijnsje remarried on 25 March 1623 to Jelis Claeszoon of Weesp, also a seamen and skipper of an inland trading vessel, with whom she had at least three or four children: Abel, Anna, Annetje, and Claes. The name Abel occurs three times in the Amsterdam baptism registers and Claes twice, perhaps indicating additional children that died in infancy.⁶³ Meijnsje passed away at the age of 63 and was buried in the New Church in Amsterdam on 18 September 1656.

Ship logs, crew manifests, and charts of Hartog’s 1616 voyage

The ship logs of *Eendracht*’s voyage to Asia and its intra-Asiatic movements no longer exist, nor do its crew manifests.⁶⁴ The latter are mentioned in the correspondence sent by the Director-General to the Netherlands. Coen commends the manifests of both *Eendracht* and *Westfriesland* and considers them in “perfect” order.⁶⁵

Historic information about the 1616 journey of *Eendracht* to Southeast Asia mainly comes from four letters written variously by Dirk Hartog, senior merchant Gilles Mibais, and/or the junior steersman, Joannes Steijns, and part of a ship’s log by Steijns detailing events from 10 to 30 December 1616. These letters and the log, all in the collection of the Dutch East India Company archives of the Netherlands National Archives,⁶⁶ were transcribed and published by Hermanus Hartogh Heys van Zouteveen in 1888 for the *Algemeen Nederlandsch Familieblad*.⁶⁷

VOC policy required its skippers to keep extensive journals and notes, which upon arrival were handed over to the authorities. The company had a special unit that would extract useful data from these classified records for charts and pilots. VOC cartographer, Hessel Gerritszoon used Hartog’s ship journal and notes when creating the first chart detailing the west coast of Australia from 1618 to 1628.⁶⁸ He noted Hartog’s initial landing site and coastal

explorations on the chart and labelled that region of the north-western coast “The Land of *Eendracht*” (*t Land van d’Eendracht*) (Figure 5).

In the years following Hartog’s three-day exploration of Western Australia, the VOC dispatched several expeditions to further explore the Australian west and south coasts for the creation of accurate nautical charts and instructions.⁶⁹ Navigational knowledge of this perilous coast was of paramount interest to the VOC, since so many of its ships would pass this vast continent when sailing between the Cape of Good Hope and Southeast Asia. The company ordered the commanders of these exploration fleets to attempt contact with the indigenous inhabitants of the South Land and to explore and evaluate the resources of the region.

Hartog Inscription Plate: Postal Stones, Tablets, and Trees

While exploring new regions or while travelling over the world’s oceans, European seafarers often left formal inscriptions to mark their presence on distant shores, either in the form of landmarks to assert their nation’s claim to the land or as postal stones to convey messages and intelligence to other ships.⁷⁰ The text on Hartog’s pewter plate did not make any direct claim to the discovered land, but merely confirmed Hartog’s encounter with the new land and served as proof to subsequent seamen that he had visited Shark Bay. The text is consistent with inscriptions found elsewhere on postal stones, tablets and trees; it provides a short account of Hartog’s voyage in case *Eendracht* should suffer some misadventure and its crew be unable to return to civilization and report on the voyage themselves.⁷¹

Archaeological remains of postal stones are found on St Helena Island in the South Atlantic, the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, and Nosy Mangabé in the Bay of Antongil in Madagascar. All of these date to the seventeenth century, between 1601 and 1657.⁷² Messages left by Dutch, English, and French seafarers include details such as names of the ship, skipper, senior merchant, company officials or higher-ranking crewmembers, dates of arrival and departure, and other particulars. Postal stones were basically rupestrian letters for crews of other ships. They are visual reminders of the earliest Dutch voyages into the Indian Ocean, as well as tangible links to individual ships, voyages and persons.

The European postal stones from St Helena Island and Cape of Good Hope survive as large chunks removed from their original location—many more undoubtedly have been reused as building material.⁷³ In contrast, the postal stone inscriptions at Nosy Mangabé in Madagascar remain in situ and are exclusively Dutch.⁷⁴ It is the only known in situ European poste restante in the Indian Ocean.

In his 1726 book on the Cape of Good Hope, François Valentijn describes the early common practice of leaving letters underneath stones, the locations of which were supposed to be known only to Dutch seamen. This practice was well known to Hartog and his crew. In the letter written during their

time at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa (August 1616), for example, Dirk Hartog, Gilles Mibais, and Joannes Steijns state how they found two letters underneath a large stone on the beach, in the vicinity of a river. They included copies of both letters in their own correspondence; one was left by the crew of the vessel *Hart* on its way to Bantam and the other by the men from the ship *Mauritius* en route to the Netherlands.⁷⁵ The Dutch, however, soon realized that other nationalities arriving at the same location were confiscating the Dutch mail and the intelligence it contained. The VOC then resorted to using the local population for the exchange of company mail.⁷⁶

Soon, however, trading posts like Batavia (1619) and Cape Town (1652) grew into well-organized communities with permanent populations, facilities for re-provisioning ships, proper shipyards for maintaining and repairing vessels, and designated postal services for crews and company officials.⁷⁷ Thereafter, the need for the more remote and uninhabited anchorages, which served also as post restante, waned and ships visited them less frequently—and, then, generally only in emergencies.

The post restante at Nosy Mangabé remained an important remote anchorage. It provided shelter, fresh water, and pineapples when in season. Here, on a small beach, still known today as *Plage des Hollandais*, crewmembers with masonry skills cleared and prepared rock faces and chiselled messages. At the base of these rocks, they also left letters, carefully wrapped in layers of canvas and tar and sealed inside lead envelopes. The crew of the next Dutch ship to anchor in that place would note the message on the rock and collect the letters.

Amongst all inscriptions found on postal stones, four Dutch and two English inscriptions refer specifically to paper letters deposited under the stone or in the immediate vicinity. The following inscription from Nosy Mangabé, for example, states that a letter was placed beneath it. The actual letter was collected by the crew of a subsequent Dutch ship and taken back to the Netherlands, where it now resides in the National Archive in The Hague.

The ship *Goes* arrived
here in September 1610
and departed on
24 September,
heading to Mauritius,
with merchant Steven Coteels
and skipper
Cornelis Reynierszoon.
Hereunder [lies a letter].

1610
HIER GEARIVT
SEPTEMB
HET SCHIP DER GOES
EN VERTROCK DEN
24 NAER MA[URITIUS]
COOPM STEV[EN]
COTEELS SCHI[PPER]
CORN REY[NIERSZ]
HIER OND[ER]

These inscriptions are part of a communication system, and they show how European ships relayed information about their whereabouts when far from home. They are the forerunners of the modern-day mailbox. In absence of

stone, other materials were used. When François Leguat and his companions arrived on the Island of Rodrigues, east of Mauritius, in 1693, for example, they found:

...the Names of some Dutchmen, who had Landed there before, Written on the Bark of some Trees, with the date of the Time; and this put us in mind of doing the same when we left it. We therefore wrote an Abridgment of our History in French and Dutch with the date of our Arrival, the time of our Abode, and our Departure.⁷⁸

By the same token, in 1749, Michel Adanson described baobab trees on the Magdalene Islands off Cape Verde on the Senegal coast bearing the names of Europeans carved deeply in their bark. His companions added their own information to the trees, while he contented himself:

For my part, I was satisfied with repairing two of them, which were old enough to deserve the trouble: one was dated to the fifteenth and the other the sixteenth century. The letters were about six inches long; but in breadth they occupied only a very small part of the circumference of the trunk.⁷⁹

Such trees probably no longer exist and undoubtedly have been felled and, like many of the postal stones, used as construction material. Trees, wooden tablets, or pewter plates, like the Hartog Inscription Plate, were thus suitable alternatives when stone was unavailable.

Other Dutch Postal Inscriptions along the Australian Coast

Hartog was not the only Dutch seafarer to leave a postal inscription along the Australian coast in the seventeenth century. Jan Carstenszoon's expedition of 1623, for example, erected a wooden tablet somewhere in the south-eastern corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria.⁸⁰ In January 1623, Carstenszoon had set sail with the ships *Pera* and *Arnem* from Ambon Island in the Moluccas to explore the South Land.⁸¹ His ships took a route similar to that of *Duyfken* in 1606 and, like Janszoon before them, also failed to find the Torres Strait. From 12 April 1623, Carstenszoon sailed down the west coast of Cape York, travelling farther south than Janszoon.⁸² The account of his journey is the earliest surviving journal of a Dutch explorer and gives us the first European description of any part of Australia. Carstenszoon reached a river on 24 April that he named Staten River, after the States-General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands. In his journal, he states:

...since by resolution it has been determined to begin the return-voyage at this point, we have, in default of stone caused a wooden tablet to be nailed to a tree, the said tablet having the following words carved into it: "Anno 1623 den 24n April zijn hier aen gecomen twee jachten wegen de Hooge Mogende Heeren Staten Gen." [A.D. 1623, on the 24th of April, there



Figure 6

Cliff top at Cape Inscription with the two modern wooden posts that mark the approximate location of where Hartog and De Vlaming left their posts and plates, northern end of Dirk Hartog Island.

Photographer: Patrick Baker, Western Australian Museum.

arrived here two yachts dispatched by their High Mightinesses the States-General].⁸³

Some have suggested that the tablet was erected in the vicinity of what is now known as the Gilbert River and *not* the present-day Staaten River, which runs slightly to the north.⁸⁴ The wooden tablet left by Carstenszoon has not survived, probably because it was placed on inhabited land. Likewise, the natural environment here, especially the moist climate and white ants, is detrimental to the preservation of wooden artefacts. Similar to the formula of other ship communications, the tablet included the mention (if not the actual names) of the vessels, the date of their arrival, and other particulars.

De Vlaming's Crew Find the Hartog Inscription Plate in 1697

The Hartog Inscription Plate survived because, unlike Carstenszoon's wooden tablet, it was placed on an unpopulated island away from human activity. More than eighty years later, on 3 February 1697, Willem de Vlaming's crew found the plate, which had fallen from its deteriorating wooden post.⁸⁵

De Vlaming had set out from Texel on 3 May 1696 with a fleet of three ships—*Geelvink*, *Nijptang*, and *Wezeltje*—to explore the Western Australian coast and to search for the lost ship *Ridderschap van Holland*.⁸⁶ The fleet anchored at Dirk Hartog Island on 1 February of the following year, upon which some of the crews set out in the ship's boats to explore ashore and to erect a wooden postal tablet to mark their passage. The journal kept on the ship *Nyptang* provides the following details:

On the 3rd, Vlaming's chief pilot [Michiel Bloem from Bremen] returned on board; he reported that he had explored eighteen leagues, and that it was an island. He brought with him a tin plate, which in the lapse of time had fallen from a post to which it had been attached, and on which was cut the

Figure 7
The Departure of a Dignitary from Middelburg,
Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne, 1615.
Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



name of the captain, Dirk Hatichs, as well as the names of the first and second merchants, and of the chief pilot of the vessel *Eendracht*, which arrived here in the year 1616, on the 25th October, and left for Bantam on the 27th of the same month.⁸⁷

On 11 February, the crew replaced Hartog's flattened pewter plate with a new one inscribed with Hartog's original words along with new text detailing the arrival and departure of the De Vlaming expedition (Figure 6).⁸⁸ The 1697 plate states:

1616
OCTOBER 25TH HERE
ARRIVED THE SHIP EENDRACHT
FROM AMSTERDAM, THE SUPERCARGO GILLIS
MIEBAIS OF LUIK, SKIPPER DIRCK HATICH
OF AMSTERDAM, THE 27 DITO LEFT FOR BANTAM
THE JUNIOR MERCHANT JAN STINS, THE FIRST STEERS-
MAN PIETER DOOKES OF BIL, ANNO 1616.
1697 FEBRUARY 4TH HAS HERE ARRIVED THE SHIP
GEELVINK OF AMSTERDAM, THE COMMANDER AND SKIPPER
WILLEM DE VLAMING OF VLIELAND, ASSISTANT JOANNES
BREMER OF COPENHAGEN, FIRST STEERSMAN MICHIL
BLOEM OF THE BISHOPRIC BREMEN, THE HOOKER NIJPTANG
SKIPPER COLAART OF AMSTERDAM, ASSISTANT THEODORIS
HERIMANS OF DITO, FIRST STEERSMAN GERRIT
GERITSEN OF BREMEN, THE GALLIOT
WESELTJE, COMMANDER CORNELIS DE VLAMING
OF VLIELAND, STEERSMAN COERT GERRITSEN
OF BREMEN AND SET SAIL FROM HERE WITH OUR
FLEET AS FORESAID, THE SOUTH LAND
TO EXPLORE FURTHER AND DESTINED
FOR BATAVIA
XX_{12A}
VOC⁸⁹

During their voyage to the South Land and prior to placing the new marker at Cape Inscription, De Vlaming's crew had left several wooden tablets with similar inscriptions along the coasts of Tristan de Cunha Island and on Amsterdam and Saint Paul islands.⁹⁰ This was much like Carstenszoon's practice—and undoubtedly that of many other Dutch seafarers—from decades prior of leaving wooden tablet markers. Skipper Jan Jacobszoon of VOC ship *Nachtglas*, for example, wrote in his journal that on 10 January 1656 he had set an inscribed wooden tablet to confirm his arrival and departure on Tristan de Cunha.⁹¹ The two tablets that De Vlaming left on the islands of Saint Paul and Amsterdam were recorded by the crew of another ship in his fleet that was following a day behind. The tablet on Saint Paul Island read:



Figure 8
The Two Plates, commemorative plaque,
Dirk Hartog Island, Shark Bay.
Courtesy Alec Coles.



Figure 9
Detail of the South Land as discovered by Willem de Vlaming showing the location of where his expedition found the Hartog Inscription Plate (alhier de tinnen schootel gevonden=found a pewter plate here). Orientation: North is left.

Cartographer: Victor Victorsz, 1697.
Nationaal Archief, 4, Vel 509.

Eastward: Ship the *Geelvink*, Skipper Willem de Vlaming, Ao 1696

Westward: The Hooker the *Nyptang*, and the Galion the *Wezeltje*, on the way to the South-land
November 29 [1696].⁹²

The inscription on the tablet posted on Amsterdam Island read:

The Ship the *Geelvink*. [16]96. Willem de Vlaming. The Hooker the *Nyptang*, and the Galion the *Wezel*, the three ships on their way to the South-land, the 3rd December.⁹³

De Vlaming recognised the historical significance of the 1616 Hartog Inscription Plate and chose the exact same location to erect his own post and inscription plate; the existing crevice in the cliff rock providing the perfect location for such a marker. His chief cartographer, Victor Victorszoon, recorded the location of the Hartog Cape Inscription on a chart and a coastal view of their exploration along the Western Australian coast (Figures 7–8). He marked the location of where the pewter plate was found with cross on the chart and a small post on the coastal view, and labelled both with the text “een tinnen schotel gevonden” (a pewter plate found here).⁹⁴

De Vlaming took the Hartog Inscription Plate to Batavia, wherefrom it was sent to VOC authorities in Amsterdam. In the accompanying letter, Governor-General Willem van Outhoorn details the find and expresses his astonishment that the plate survived so well, being subject to the influences of the natural elements.⁹⁵ The Hartog Inscription Plate is listed on the cargo manifest of the great cabin of VOC ship *Lands Welvaren*:

1 pewter plate found on a post at the South Land, which according to its inscription was affixed to it by the authority of the ship *Eendracht* anno 1616.⁹⁶

Lands Welvaren set sail from Batavia to the Netherlands on 30 November 1697 as part of a fleet under Commander Klaas Bichon.⁹⁷ In the Netherlands, the Hartog Inscription Plate was eventually accessioned into the collection of the Rijksmuseum in 1883.⁹⁸ The story of the Hartog Inscription Plate and its

Figure 10
Coastal profile of the northern end of Dirk Hartog Island as observed during Willem de Vlaming's expedition. On the right, the location is marked where the expedition members found the Hartog Inscription Plate (Een d'tinnen schootel gevonden=found a pewter plate).

Cartographer: Victor Victorsz, 1696. Maritiem Museum Rotterdam, object number K268-5.



loss and recovery between its retrieval by De Vlaming and its accessioning in the museum has been recorded elsewhere.⁹⁹

Cultural Heritage in the Seventeenth-and Eighteenth-Century World

De Vlaming's recognition of the cultural heritage value of Hartog's pewter plate is noteworthy, and should be considered alongside other examples of a growing recognition of the value of such objects for historical record. The aforementioned example of Michel Adanson restoring the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century carved tree inscriptions can be considered in the same light. During his visit in 1710, the Dutch naturalist François Valentijn happened across a postal stone at the Cape of Good Hope. It was displayed in a public street and bore the following inscription:

Jacob Dedel, councillor of the Indies, Martinus Sonck, treasurer,
Jacob Lodesteyn, skipper, arrived with the ship *Amsterdam* on
20 May, departed to Batavia on 14 June [1619].¹⁰⁰

Valentijn highlights the historical significance of the stone and states that, had the stone been lighter, he would have taken it with him in order to preserve it as an antiquity from the Cape.¹⁰¹ The inscription refers to the historic voyage in which Jacob Dedel and his *Amsterdam* crew had set sail from the Cape and came upon the south-western coast of Australia, which they explored. That region subsequently was named after him, becoming known as *d'Edelsland* (Figure 5).¹⁰² Valentijn's words testify to a growing appreciation for the value of postal stones as cultural heritage objects of historical significance regarding early European contact with and exploration of newly discovered lands.

Inscriptions to Assert Territorial Claims

Carstenszoon's wooden tablet and the Hartog and Vlaming pewter plates do not specifically make any claim on behalf of the VOC to the land upon which they were posted. They functioned only as confirmation of that particular expedition's presence in Australia—testimony to their ships anchoring at Staaten River and the Dirk Hartog Island anchorage.

Historic examples of inscription markers that assert territorial claims demonstrate a much different nature. For example, Carstenszoon claimed Aru Island in the Indonesian Archipelago while his ships *Arnhem* and *Pera* were en route to the South Land. His journal clearly states that a wooden column was erected on 1 February 1623:

It was decided and allowed that a wooden column, for lack of stone, be nailed to the bailiff's office in the village *Wodgier* on said island; and carved into it the following words:

"Anno 1623 primo Febr. the yachts *Pera* and *Arnem* arrived here in *Aru*, commander Jan Carstensz., merchants Jan Bruwel and Pieter Lintges, skippers Jan Sluijs and Dirck

Melisz., navigating officers Arent Martensz. and Jan Jansz., by order and commission of Ed. Hr. Gener. Jan Pietersen Coen, in name of the High Mightinesses the States-General, of his Excellency the Prince of Orange etc. and of the Lords Managers of the United East India Company of the United Provinces, and also on the 4th the island is taken into possession of the aforementioned Lords; also they, the orancais and the people, pledged obedience and subjection to the aforementioned Lords and have received the Prince's flag."¹⁰³

The wooden tablet declared specifically that the VOC of the United Provinces of the Netherlands claimed Aru Island in Indonesia, and served as notice and record of possession of the land. According to Peter Sigmond, references to territorial claims were not a standard element of Dutch seafarers' instructions, and he states that no such provisions can be traced to the early seventeenth century.¹⁰⁴ Such instructions do exist, however, as exemplified by the 29 September 1622 instructions for the yachts *Haring* and *Hazewind*, which stipulate the following regarding their exploration of the South Land:

Of all which places, lands and islands, the commander and officers of these yachts, by order and pursuant to the commission of the Worshipful Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen, sent out to India by their High Mightinesses the States-General of the United Netherlands, and by the Lords Managers of the General Chartered United East India Company established in the same, will, by solemn declaration signed by the ships' councils, take formal possession, and in sign thereof, besides, erect a stone column in such places as shall be taken possession of; the said column recording in bold, legible characters the year, the month, the day of the week and the date, the persons by whom and the hour of the day when such possession has been taken on behalf of the States-General above mentioned.¹⁰⁵

Similar instructions were given to Abel Tasman when he commenced his 1642 and 1644 expeditions to Australia. On the first voyage, Tasman sailed around Australia and discovered New Zealand and Staten Island, which, subsequent to his discovery, was later named Tasmania. His instructions were to take possession of all lands and islands that he should discover, call upon, or set foot on, in the name of the States-General as the sovereign of the United Provinces.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, he was required to erect a stone in commemoration of such. The orders for Tasman's second journey, to the north coast of Australia, also included specific instructions to erect a stone or wood displaying the arms of the Company and inscriptions, cut or carved, detailing the year and date that each land was discovered and claimed in the name of the Netherlands.¹⁰⁷

In the first half of the seventeenth century, VOC instructions to at least three known voyages of exploration to the South Land conveyed explicit orders to claim discovered lands. It is obvious as well that these instructions would have

led to the erection of marker inscriptions that detailed the company's specific assertion of title to the land. Such inscriptions were of a different nature than the Hartog Cape Inscription and all other postal inscriptions on stones, trees, and wooden tablets from both archaeological and historical contexts.

This chapter clearly demonstrated that the Hartog Cape Inscription was part of a maritime communication system employed by Dutch seafarers in the seventeenth century. While there have been numerous papers and discussions published regarding the inscribed pewter plate left by Dirk Hartog, this chapter sought to lay out the historical or archaeological evidence of other wooden tablets, postal stones, and inscribed trees of similar purpose. The Hartog Plate is the humble, tangible evidence of the short visit by *Eendracht's* crew to an uninhabited island off the Unknown South Land. If Hartog had erected his inscription on the inhabited mainland and on a wooden tablet, like so many others did, it almost certainly would not have survived. De Vlaming's landing on Dirk Hartog Island and his discovery of the inscription plate has reinforced the importance of Dirk Hartog's discovery and allowed the plate to enter into the archaeological record and, eventually, the museum system. The plate and other such artefacts are important to understanding the early communication methods of sailors far from home before more official means of communication were established.

The Cape Inscription Site on National Heritage List

In 1991, Dirk Hartog Island was included in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area in recognition of its outstanding natural universal values. Some fifteen years later, on 6 April 2006, the site of the Hartog and De Vlaming Inscription Plates was added and declared to the Australian National Heritage List. The site is unique, as modern-day visitors can locate the site precisely and stand in the exact spot where Dirk Hartog, Willem de Vlaming, their crews and other European explorers once stood. This characteristic is what gives this site such a special heritage value beyond its historical significance.

In the Amsterdam neighbourhood of seafaring heroes, a street named after Hartog - Dirk Hartogh Straat - honours the skipper's legacy (Figure 10).



Figure 11
Brett Mason Australian Ambassador to NL standing in front of the street sign of 'Dirk Hartogh Straat' in the so-called seafaring-heroes neighbourhood, Amsterdam's Westerpark area, Netherlands.
Courtesy: Australian Embassy in The Hague.

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Figure 12
 'The Golden Age' *Man Handing a Letter to a Woman in the Entrance Hall of a House*, Pieter de Hooch, 1670.
 Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

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Figure 13
Dorpskermis (Village Fair) ca. 1610 – During
Dirk Hartog's lifetime. Willem Isaacs. van
Swanenburg, after David Vinckboons, 1595 -
1612 Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



CHAPTER TWO

ABORIGINES AND SHIPWRECKS - THE
ARRIVAL OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST IMMIGRANTS

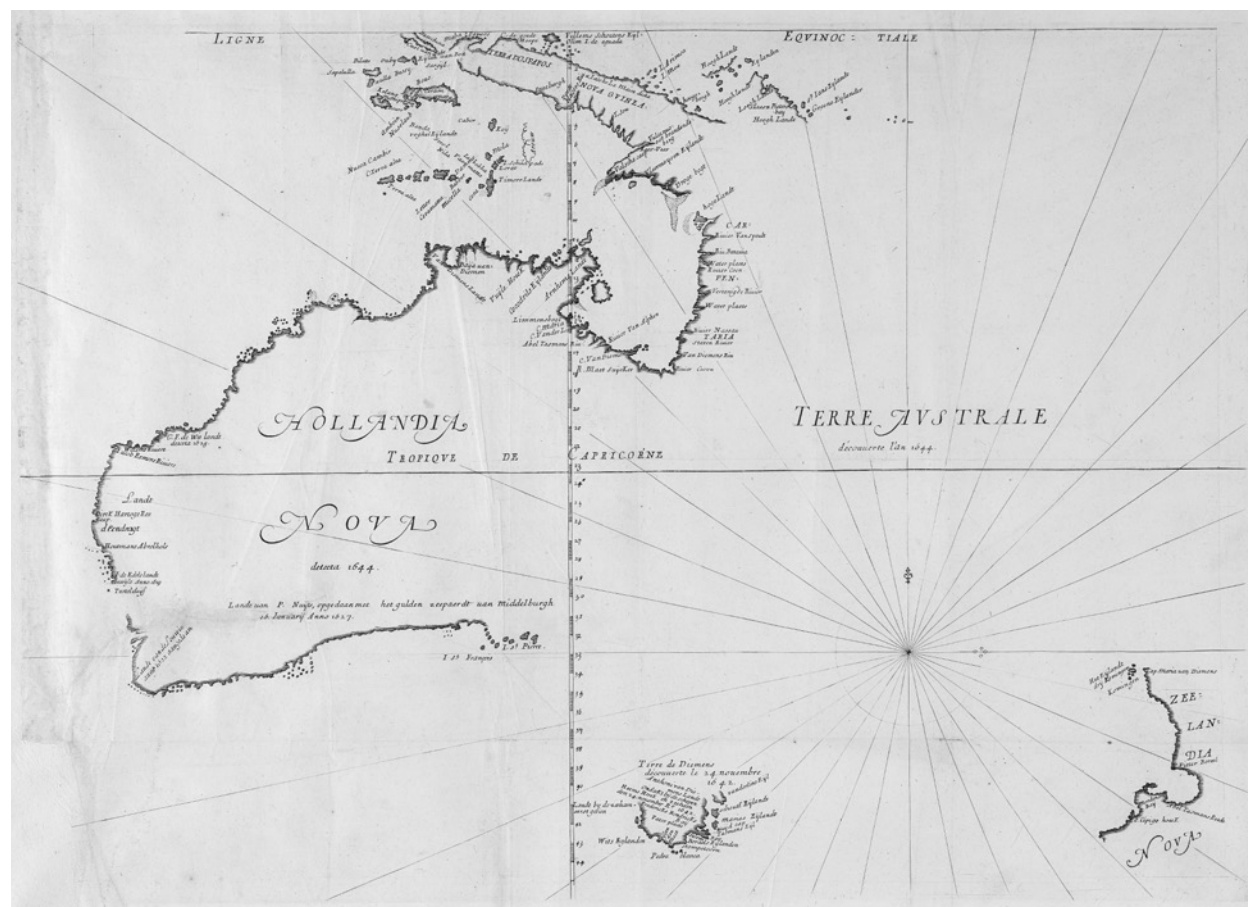
Rupert Gerritsen

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The Dutch have a unique place in Australian history, even if that is not always realised or acknowledged by the wider national community. When the pinnacle or 'jacht' the *Duyfken* was directed by Frederik de Houtman to sail east from Bantam in November 1605 in search of new trading opportunities, they did not realise that the 250 kilometres of coastline they mapped the following March, was part of a new continent. Yet this was the first documented contact between Australia and people from other lands. For Australia's Indigenous population, it was their first recorded experience of Europeans.¹

The Dutch can also lay claim to being Australia's first European immigrants.

Figure 1
Melchisedec Thevenot,
Hollandia Nova/Terra Australie, 1672
Courtesy: Private Collection Perth.



Who were these Dutch, and how did they come to be living in Australia 169 years before British settlement?

All were travelling on *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC)/Dutch East India Company vessels. Most were mariners — gunners, soldiers, cabin boys, officers, cadets, cooks and the like — but some were also passengers — company clerks, wives on their way to join their husbands in Batavia, wives of crew members, their children, their maids and their relatives.² The circumstances in which these unfortunate Hollanders and some from other nationalities, unwillingly and dramatically commenced new lives in Western Australia, are surprisingly well documented. What became of those folk, probably exceeding 200 in number, is more of a mystery and their ultimate fate is not known with any certainty. Nevertheless there is reason to believe some did survive and prosper.

THE EVENTS UNFOLD

There was no single event responsible for leaving this noteworthy number of people marooned forever on the coast of Western Australia, but rather a series of events between 1629 and 1712. The first occurred around noon, on 16 November 1629, when the VOC vessel *Sardam*, sailed into Broken Anchor Bay, a shallow inlet at the mouth of the Hutt River, 450 kilometres north of present day Perth.³ The captain of the *Sardam*, Francisco Pelsaert, noted that this had been the same ‘small Inlet where on 8 June when in the long boat searching for water, we thought to run in’.⁴ Pelsaert decided that, ‘At this good opportunity, I have ordered the two sentenced delinquents, to wit, Wouter Loos and Jan Pelgrom de By van Bemel, with a Champan provided with everything, to sail to this land.’⁵ Hence they became the very first Europeans to take up residence in Australia. Why this happened is as remarkable as the event itself.

Loos and de Bye had been crew members on board the ill-fated *Batavia*,⁶ which had tragically run aground on Morning Reef in the Wallabi Group of the Abrolhos Islands in the early hours of 4 June 1629. Those who could, scrambled off the wreckage and made their way to nearby islands in boats, on flotsam and by swimming. These survivors’ first priority was to find water. Other nearby islands were searched, but without success. Pelsaert then decided to take a yawl, with about 40 crew to the mainland to continue the search. Just as they approached the coast on 9 June, a winter storm struck and they nearly sank. They rode out the storm and headed north, but still could not find water. In the end Pelsaert and his crew decided to make for Batavia [Djakarta]. Suffering great thirst and hunger they arrived there on 7 July 1656. Pelsaert was given command of the *Sardam* and aimed to



Figure 2
Wiebbe Hayes Fort – West Wallabi Island:
Courtesy: Wendy van Duivenvoorde, WA
Maritime Museum.



Figure 3
A 1647 engraving showing the Beacon
Island massacre of survivors of the
Batavia shipwreck.
Courtesy: WA Museum.

go back as soon as possible, to find the approximately 230 people who were left behind. However, it was not until early September that it was possible to leave Batavia.

On arrival along the Western Australian coast, he spent three frustrating weeks trying to locate the islands where the *Batavia* had gone down. When he finally found them, he was confronted by unspeakable horrors that had taken place in his absence; 125 of the survivors had been murdered by a small band of cut throats and mutineers.

The *Batavia* Mutiny was a plot hatched and led by the Under Merchant Jeronimus Corneliszoon. Initially he and his confederates acted secretly, managing to trick a body of soldiers into going to a nearby island, East Wallabi where they thought they would die of thirst or starvation. With most of the soldiers out of the way, Corneliszoon and his fellow mutineers then engaged in an orgy of rape and bloodshed. However, the soldiers they had abandoned, rather than dying, had all moved to West Wallabi Island where they found water and prospered, having also found birds' eggs, seals and tammar wallabies. The Defenders, as they became known, were then joined by a handful of individuals who had managed to escape from the mutineers and to warn them about what was taking place. The mutineers subsequently launched three attacks on the Defenders, who, ably led by a soldier named Webbie Hayes, stoutly resisted. The first two attacks were completely inept and resulted in the Defenders capturing Corneliszoon. The mutineers then elected one of their number, the 24 year-old soldier Wouter Loos, as their new leader. He now led the third and most effective attack, in the midst of which Pelsaert, after his weeks of searching, miraculously appeared in the *Sardam* and put down the mutiny.⁷

The next two months were spent in salvaging what they could from the *Batavia* and interrogating and trying the mutineers.⁸ On 2 October, seven mutineers were hanged, most having hands chopped off prior to their execution. One of the condemned men, an 18 year-old cabin-boy Jan Pelgrom de Bye, pleaded for his life and was given a last-minute reprieve because of his age. Wouter Loos also escaped execution because of a lack of evidence, the result of his ability to resist the application of judicial torture, a normal



Figure 4
Hangings *Batavia* shipwreck
Courtesy: WA Museum.

part of investigations at the time.⁹ Pelsaert decided instead to maroon both on the mainland, ‘in order to know once, for certain, what happens in the Land’, with the view to retrieving them in the future.¹⁰ Abel Tasman was instructed to look out for them on his second voyage to Australia in 1644.¹¹

The ‘delinquents’ were given a flat-bottomed boat and provisions and told to:

‘put ashore ... [and] to make themselves known to the folk of this land by tokens of friendship. Whereto are being given, by the Commandeur, some Nurembergen [wooden toys and trifles], as well as knives, Beads, bells and small mirrors, of which you shall give to the Blacks only a few until they have grown familiar with them.

Having become known to them, if they take you into their Villages to their chief men, have courage to go with them willingly. Man’s luck is found in strange places; if God guards you, you will not suffer any damage from them, but on the contrary, because they have never seen any white men, they will offer all friendship.’¹²

What happened to these two men thereafter remains a mystery. We shall probably never know, but there are certainly some interesting coincidences that could be associated with their abandonment.

For example in 1839, Lt. George Grey and other members of his expedition set out to seek a site for settlement in north-western Australia. They noted on 4 April, following a series of mishaps at Shark Bay and Murchison River, and when struggling back to Perth on foot, that they had come across some yam fields, many square kilometres in extent, [and] ‘as far as we could see’. According to Grey the location [of these] was a little to the North of Hutt River.¹³ He even commented that ‘more had been done here to secure a provision from the ground by hard labour than I could believe in the power of uncivilised man.’¹⁴ Explorer and surveyor Augustus Charles Gregory (1819-1905)¹⁵ later reported that the people from this region, the *Nhanda*, ‘never dug up a yam without replanting the crown in the same hole’.¹⁶

Grey’s party also noted when they reached Hutt River on 5 April that they had passed the first of:

‘two native villages, or, as the men termed them, towns, — with huts ... larger, more strongly built, and very nicely plastered over the outside with clay, and clods of turf ...’.¹⁷

The first village was in fact only a matter of 200 metres or so from where the fresh water was located by Pelsaert’s crew on the day when they abandoned the two mutineers.¹⁸

Following the Batavia Mutiny, it would be another 27 years before more passengers and crew from a VOC ship found themselves stranded on the Western Australian coast, with little hope of salvation.

The next event occurred in the early hours of 28 April 1656, the *Vergulde Draeck*, with 193 people on board, struck a reef a little over five kilometres off the coast, south of what is now known as Ledge Point, 100 kilometres north of Perth. Little is known of what actually happened, though it appears only 75 made it to shore. Whether they were just the sailors, or included wives and children, as there were a number of women on board, is uncertain. It is known however, that they were experiencing considerable difficulties; 'nothing was saved' from the wreck, and they were subsisting on the 'very few provisions thrown on the beach by the waves.' A '*schuyt*', a boat with sails manned by the Under-Steersman and six sailors, was sent to sail back to Batavia for help and miraculously reached its destination on 7 June.¹⁹ The sailors informed the Governor-General of the Indies in Batavia, that the 68 people left on the shore were 'about to go looking for provisions and drinking water inland'²⁰

Two ships, the *Witte Valk* and the *Goede Hoop* were immediately despatched to attempt to locate and rescue the stranded survivors. The *Witte Valk* returned without having even landed a shore party because of the wild winter weather.²¹ The *Goede Hoop* did, however, have greater initial success, and 'landed on the mentioned latitude [30° 40'S] with the boat.' The shore party had proceeded 'several *mijlen* inland', presumably through the dense wattle and coastal heath found in the area, only to lose three sailors in the bush.²² The next day, when they sent a boat with a crew of eight to look for the lost sailors, it overturned close to the shore.²³ Later, the skipper landed and found that the boat had been '*aan stukken geslagen*' ['broken to pieces']²⁴ on the beach, but there was no sign of the crew. As it is quite possible a number of the boat crew survived, they added to those who had been lost in the bush. With the weather worsening, the *Goede Hoop* was forced to sail away, leaving the 11 missing sailors to their fate.

It would be another two years before another search was mounted for the 68 survivors from the *Vergulde Draeck* and 11 sailors from the *Goede Hoop*. The *Waeckende Boey*, under Captain Volkersen, arrived in the area in February 1658. It seems that the crew found part of the wreck of the *Draeck* still above water, and on 26 February a shore party lead by Upper-Steersman Abraham Leeman discovered 'a number of pieces of planking had been put in a circle with their ends upwards.'²⁵

This appears to have been the abandoned campsite of the survivors from the *Vergulde Draeck*.²⁶ On 21 March another structure was found on the beach, 'a deal plank 8 to 9 feet long [2.4-2.7m] and a foot wide [30cm] put upright in the earth and round it 12 to 13 struts of similar planks, also stuck in the sand',²⁷ in the locality of the wreck site. One can only speculate, but it is quite possible, given that it seems to have been found to the north of the wreck of the *Vergulde Draeck*,²⁸ that it may also have been constructed from the wreckage of their ship by the 68 stranded crew and passengers, presumably as a sign to those they hoped would at some point come searching for them.

In a cruel twist of fate, only days later Leeman and thirteen others of his shore party found themselves in the same predicament as those for whom they had been searching. While the shore party was on one of its forays, the *Waeckende Boey* was forced away from the coast by wild weather. On 28 March it reappeared in the gathering dusk. The shore party, on the Green Islands just offshore south of Cervantes at the time, quickly lit a bonfire and the ship appeared to respond by firing one of its cannons. The shore party then lit another fire, in expectation of being re-united with their comrades. But then, inexplicably, the vessel set sail and was gone. Leeman and his men were devastated. However, rather than ending up as another group of unfortunates compelled to live out their days as permanent residents of a strange and forbidding land, Leeman and some of his shipmates managed to save themselves by undertaking of one of the most remarkable voyages in history (see Leeman vignette).²⁹

Little is known about the final unsuccessful search for the survivors from the *Vergulde Draeck* and *Goede Hoop* by the *Immenhoorn* in early 1659.³⁰

Since that time a number of objects and artefacts have been found, which may be associated with these two groups of exiles, hinting at their survival. The first of these was a spectacular 'incense urn', supposedly handed over to the New Norcia Mission in 1846 by some *Juat* people, who had found it at a well about 20 kilometres south of where the *Vergulde Draeck* was wrecked.³¹ The second were two curious 'Circles' or 'Rings of Stones' - one with a long radiating line, and these were seen in both 1875 and 1938 in very inaccessible country, 160 and 200 kilometres north of the *Vergulde Draeck* wreck site. These structures are thought to have possibly been constructed by the survivors from that ship.³² The original Indigenous population in those areas, the *Juat* and *Amangu*, do not appear to have traditionally constructed stone arrangements and they are unlike any other Aboriginal stone arrangements in south Western Australia. Furthermore, unlike most Aboriginal ceremonial sites, they are in quite inhospitable locations. It is thought that perhaps these structures were created to indicate that the survivors had been there, and the direction in which they intended to proceed.

In 1890 kangaroo shooters stumbled on a mast, 'about 40ft [12m]' long, 25 kilometres north of the wreck site, presumably more wreckage from the ship. Of greater significance was a large rusty iron pot of about 50 litres capacity, a couple of horn spoons, a copper shovel and two crescent-shaped hatchets which they found there as well.³³ These indicate that it may have been one of the survivors' campsites. An extremely weathered, crumbling skeleton found in 1931 in a small cave at Eagles Nest which showed signs of having been occupied, was another potentially significant find. This skeleton, along with a clump of coins, found in dunes to the south of the *Vergulde Draeck* wreck site at the same time, are presumed to have some relationship to the wreck or its aftermath.³⁴ Potentially more revealing was the reputed discovery of another coin on the banks of the Moore River, 65 kilometres inland, in 1957, although the circumstances are vague.³⁵

Around 54 years would pass before another mishap occurred. This happened in 1712, when the *Zuiddorp* was wrecked in devastating circumstances. The *Zuiddorp* had departed from the Cape of Good Hope on 22 April, with up to 286 people on board.³⁶ Of the 286 on board when the ships left the Netherlands, 112 died en-route to the Cape and another 22 were sick on arrival. The *Zuiddorp* waited at the Cape for the same 22 to be nursed back to health and replenished the numbers lost en-route from the local garrison.³⁷

Although the exact composition of the complement on board is not known, it appears that there was a mixture of nationalities, with Dutch making up perhaps only fifty percent of the total. The remainder came from other European nations, mainly Germans who were attracted by the economic possibilities for employment generated by the Golden Age. There were also a small number of passengers, and these probably included women and children.³⁸ However after leaving the Cape, the *Zuiddorp*, instead of arriving in Batavia, simply 'disappeared' and it would be another 215 years before any further sign of it was found.

The fate of the *Zuiddorp* and its passengers and crew first came to light in 1927. Wreckage and artefacts from the ship were allegedly found by stockman Tom Pepper on a cliff-face about 60 kilometres north of the Murchison River, although he may, in fact, have been directed there by members of the Drage family.³⁹ However it was not until 1959, that the identity of the wreck was confirmed by Dr Phillip Playford.⁴⁰ It appears that the *Zuiddorp* had struck the rocky platform at the base of the *Zuiddorp* Cliffs (580 km north of Perth), swung side-on and had come to rest against the same platform, eventually breaking up into three sections.⁴¹ The discovery of a considerable amount of material from the wreck on both the scree slope and at the top of the cliffs, established that a proportion of the ship's complement had managed to get off the stricken vessel and on to shore. This material included coins, nine 11 kilogram cannon breech-blocks, 27 kilograms of lead sheeting, large bottles, navigational instruments, the remains of chests and barrels, a brass dish, clay pipes, callipers, pins, writing slates, a pistol and musket balls.⁴² Two or possibly three campsites appear to have been established at the time in close proximity to the wreck site, and indicated, along with the ashes of a large fire beacon, that the survivors were present in the area for some time following their misfortune.⁴³

Exactly how many people survived the disaster is quite uncertain and estimates vary from 30 up to 180.⁴⁴ It is presumed that the collision with the cliffs occurred at night, as they are highly visible for a considerable distance out to sea in the daytime. The amount of material brought on to the cliff top indicates that there may not have been a large number of survivors. Conversely, the fact that objects such as the breech blocks and lead sheeting were brought ashore at all, suggests that they had time to retrieve non-essential items. This is consistent with a scenario of the wreck remaining accessible for some time, enabling most of the survivors to make it to the shore, with their initial efforts being directed to retrieving perishables

such as food and water. It should be noted that at least 87 per cent of the passengers and crew of the *Batavia* managed to survive the initial disaster, even though they were wrecked in the middle of the night in storms and were hundreds of metres from their nearest refuge.

What actually became of the survivors of the *Zuiddorp* after they left the wreck site, is a question that is yet to be answered. In 1869, a single Spanish coin, a *ducaton*, identical to those from the *Zuiddorp*, was given to Charles Gill a station manager at Shark Bay by a man named War-du-marrah. He seems to have found it at Woomerangee Hill, 40 kilometres north of the *Zuiddorp* wreck site.⁴⁵ In 1971, photographer Tony Bell claimed to have found a stone cross laid out on the ground, graves, fragments of green bottles and a 'roofless stone hut' to the north of the wreck site,⁴⁶ but it is difficult to link these to the survivors with any confidence. An inscribed brass tin, known as a 'Leyden Tobacco Tin', similar to those found at other wreck sites, was discovered at Wale Well, 55 kilometres north of the *Zuiddorp* wreck site in April 1990. It is thought to possibly have come from a survivor of that wreck,⁴⁷ but how it got there is uncertain. An unusual grave at that location, found at the same time as the tobacco tin,⁴⁸ could have some connection, but that too is uncertain.

OTHER POSSIBLE CASTAWAYS

While there were a number of well-documented incidents that led to passengers and crew from Dutch ships becoming marooned on the coast of Western Australia, there were other occurrences that may have swelled their numbers. For example, as they anchored in Broken Anchor Bay on the day the two mutineers were abandoned, Pelsaert observed smoke rising from the land and sent a yawl to investigate, 'to get dependable information about this place and the smoke'. This was not successful because, as he reported, 'the Blacks kept themselves hidden',⁴⁹ In actual fact Pelsaert was not just seeking contact with the local people, but he was hoping to relocate the five sailors lost in a boat near the Abrolhos Islands on around 13 October. They had set out to retrieve a barrel of vinegar from an island to the north of the wreck site, when a southerly gale blew up. This is a common occurrence in these waters at that time of year and the sailors and their boat were not seen again.⁵⁰ Pelsaert had sailed slowly up the coast for about six or seven hours on 15 and 16 November, in the hope of finding some sign of these men,⁵¹ before depositing the two mutineers and finally departing.

Intriguingly in January 1697 at 'Wittecarra Spring', a shore party from the '*de Vlamingh*' expedition encountered a hut 'made of clay with a roof sloping down two sides'.⁵² This was quite unlike the dome-shaped permanent shelters seen by Grey at Hutt River in 1839,⁵³ or the more temporary shelters of branches, bark or grass which were common in most other parts of Australia. Theoretically, the lost boat crew could have reached the coast, become stranded and subsequently built the hut in question - however without any supporting evidence, this must remain mere conjecture.

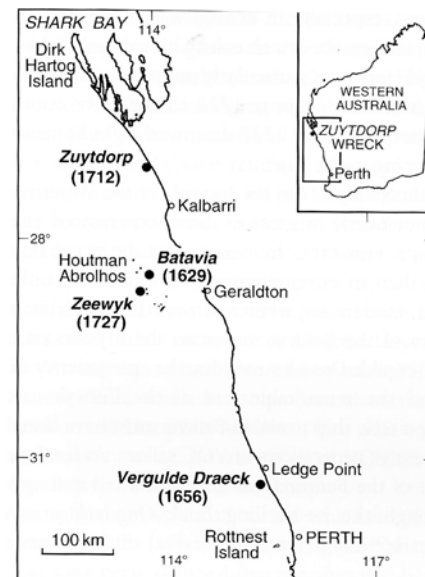


Figure 5
Map of Western Australian Dutch
East India Company wreck sites.
Courtesy: Dr Phillip Playford.

Another group, which could be added to the list of mariners and passengers who ‘disappeared’ in the vicinity of the west coast of Western Australia during the 17th and 18th centuries, are 12 sailors from the *Zeewijk*. The *Zeewijk* foundered on Half-Moon Reef in the Pelsaert Group of the Abrolhos Islands on 9 June 1727. Over half of the ship’s complement perished before they found refuge on nearby Gun Island. After regrouping on 10 July, they sent 12 sailors, under the command of Upper-Steersman Pieter Langeweg, off in their longboat, to make for Batavia to get help.⁵⁴ Nothing further was ever heard of those sailors and their vessel, which may have come to grief further north on other islands or on the mainland coast. After waiting months for their salvation, the 88 remaining people realised that there must have been some mishap, built a new vessel called *Sloepie* from the remnants of the *Zeewijk*,⁵⁵ and successfully sailed back to Batavia.⁵⁶ Before leaving, they had abandoned two crew members found in a homosexual embrace on separate islands – to die.

Nothing has emerged since then to provide any further indication of the fate of the longboat crew. Part of a ship’s boom and a couple of planks erected on the beach in the Champion Bay area (Geraldton), were reported by several observers between 1830 and 1840,⁵⁷ and an upright plank was seen at the mouth of the Gascoyne River in 1851.⁵⁸ These could have some link with the missing men from the *Zeewijk*’s longboat, but there is really nothing definite to connect them to these objects. There remains the possibility that other seafaring folk, of whom we have no certain knowledge, also became stranded on the coast of Western Australia during this period.

Four Dutch ships, the *Zeelt* (1672), *Ridderschap van Holland* (1694), the *Fortuyn* (1724) and the *Aagtekerke* (1726), as well as an English ship, the *Whale* (1621), are now known to have vanished without trace following their departure from the Cape of Good Hope.⁵⁹ Where they went and what became of them and the people on board is a complete mystery. However, there does appear to be an as yet unidentified Dutch shipwreck, the remains of which are to be specifically located, situated just north of Busselton in the south west of Western Australia. Here, in 1846 Frank Gregory, a surveyor, and later an explorer of some note, reported in 1861 that he had come across:

..remains of a vessel of considerable tonnage ... in a shallow estuary near the Vasse Inlet ...which, from its appearance I should judged to have been wrecked two hundred years ago...⁶⁰

In the 19th century, a number of observers reported this wreck, which has come to be known as the ‘Deadwater Wreck’. In 1876 the ‘Receiver of Wrecks’, Worsley Clifton, who also claims to have also seen the same wreck in 1846,⁶¹ stated that it was ‘covered with water, sand and seaweed to the depth of about fourteen feet’, that it was ‘evidently ancient’ and ‘must have been a very large ship’. Clifton further noted that ‘two ancient coins’ and ‘about 70 lbs [32 kg] of quicksilver [mercury]’ had been found in the vicinity.⁶² By collating and consolidating all available information, it was concluded that the vessel in question had been relatively large, possibly 30 metres or more long, was of ‘considerable tonnage’ and had been built in the period between 1650 and

1750, being probably of Dutch origin.⁶³ It could possibly have been one of the five unaccounted-for ships.⁶⁴

Conclusion

In summary, it is an established fact that 73 individuals from Dutch ships were last seen alive on the shores of the coast of Western Australia between 1629 and 1656. Between 1629 and 1727, a further 25 individuals disappeared near the same shore (the boat crew from the *Goede Hoop*), or in close proximity to the coast (the boat crews from *Sardam* and *Zeewijk*). In addition at least 30, and possibly as many as 180 people are presumed to have survived the sinking of the *Zuytdorp*, with potential survivors from other wrecks also contributing to these numbers.

Background contestation

The lines of research about survivors of VOC shipwrecks along the Western Australian coast have been pioneered principally by Phillip Playford and Rupert Gerritsen (deceased 2013). As Gerritsen noted, 'by its nature such research invites controversy, but one worthy of the significance these 'first immigrants' have for Australian history'. The main difference between Playford's and Gerritsen's viewpoints, is the actual geographical location of where the two recalcitrants involved in the mutiny on the VOC flagship, the Batavia, were abandoned by its Skipper Frans Pelsaert. Playford's position is Witticarra Creek, whereas Rupert Gerritsen has opted for the Hutt River. The information in this chapter written by Rupert Gerritsen, presents the Hutt River perspective. Nonja Peters

Endnotes

- 1 Of course archaeological evidence and historical records show Melanesians from New Guinea, Torres Strait and islands to the east had been coming to Cape York to visit, trade or engage in conflict for at least 2-3,000 years.
- 2 See F Pelsaert, 'The Journals of Francisco Pelsaert', in H Drake-Brockman, comp. *Voyage to disaster*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1629/1963, pp. 105-254.
Of the 165 identified individuals on the *Batavia*, 27 (16%) were passengers. (Pelsaert, 1629, pp. 107-III.)
- 3 This reconstruction is based on R Gerritsen, 'The debate over where Australia's first European residents were marooned in 1629 — Part 1', *Hydrographic Journal*, vol. 126, 2007, pp. 20-25, and R Gerritsen, 'The debate over where Australia's first European residents were marooned in 1629 — Part 2', *Hydrographic Journal*, vol. 128-9, 2009a, pp. 35-41.
- 4 Pelsaert, 1629, p. 237.
- 5 *ibid.*
- 6 There are a number of detailed accounts of the sinking of the *Batavia* and the subsequent mutiny. See for example: H Drake-Brockman, *Voyage to disaster*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1963; H Edwards, *Islands of angry ghosts*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1973; M Dash, *Batavia's graveyard*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 2002. P FitzSimons, *Batavia*, Random House Australia, North Ryde, 2012.
- 7 Gerritsen, R, 'The *Batavia* Mutiny: Australia's first military conflict in 1629', *Sabretache: Journal and Proceedings of the Military Historical Society of Australia* vol. L(4), 2009b, pp.5-10; Gerritsen, R, 'The first naval confrontations in Australian waters - in 1629?', *Journal of Australian Naval History* vol. 9(1), 2012, pp.100-119.
- 8 See R Gerritsen, *Australia's first criminal prosecutions in 1629*, Batavia Online Publishing, Canberra, 2011a, for an analysis of the trials from a legal perspective.
- 9 Pelsaert, 1629, pp. 222, 224-225; Gerritsen 2011a.
- 10 Pelsaert, 1629, p. 237.
- 11 A Van Dieman, C Vanderliijn, J Maetsuijker, J Shouten & S Sweerts, 'Instructions for Abel Jansen Tasman', in J Heeres, comp., *Abel Janszoon Tasman's Journal*, pp.147-154, Frederick Muller and Co, Amsterdam, 1898, p.150.

- Although Tasman mapped a considerable portion of the north and north-west coasts of Australia he never actually reached as far south as the location where the mutineers were abandoned.
- 12 'Instructions for Wouter Loos and Jan Pelgrom de By van Bemel, 16 November 1629', in Pelsaert, 1629, p. 230.
 - 13 Grey, G, *A journal of two expedition in north-west and western Australia during the years 1837-39*, volume 2, T & W Boone, London, 1841, p.12
This was the first of numerous yam fields that existed at the time of British colonisation in the river valleys of the Geraldton region.
 - 14 Grey, 1841, p.12.
 - 15 <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gregory-sir-augustus-charles-3663>.
 - 16 Gregory, AC, 'Memorandum on the Aborigines of Australia' in HL Roth, 'On the Origin of Agriculture', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 16, 1887, p.131.
Gregory had in fact first reported this the previous year: see AC Gregory, 'Inaugural address', *Proceedings of the Queensland Branch of the Geographical Society of Australasia*, vol. 1, 1886, p.23.
 - 17 Grey, G, 1841, p.19.
 - 18 Gerritsen, R, *Nhanda villages of the Victoria District, Western Australia*, Intellectual Property Publications, Canberra, 2002: Recent research indicates that this settlement, made up of permanent dome-shaped dwellings capable of accommodating ten people, had an estimated population of 290.
 - 19 'Resolution of the Council for the Indies, 7 June 1656', Lous Zuiderbaan, 'Part One: Historical background', in Jeremy N. Green (comp. & ed.) *The Loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie Jacht VERGULDE DRAECK, Western Australia 1656*, pp.48-50, Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, 1977, p.48
 - 20 'Letter from Governor-General and Council to the Council (Chamber of Amsterdam) of the VOC, 4 December 1656', in J Henderson, *Marooned*, St George Books, Perth, 1985, p.55.
 - 21 'Letter 4 December 1656'.
 - 22 *ibid*
 - 23 'Sailing Orders for 'Emeloordt' and 'Waeckende Boey', 31 December 1657', in Zuiderbaan 1977, p.50.
 - 24 Stapel, F. W. 1943 *De oostindische compagnie en Australië*, Amsterdam: P. N. Kampen & Zoon, p.98.
 - 25 'Day Register by Samuel Volkersen of Waeckende Boey — 26 February 1658', in Henderson, 1985, p.96
 - 26 Gerritsen, R, *Selected transcriptions, translations, and collation of information for a textual analysis relating to material evidence from the Vergulde Draeck and the 68 missing crew and passengers from that vessel, reportedly found on the coast of Western Australia in the period 1656 – 1658*, Batavia Online Publishing, Canberra, 2011b.
 - 27 Leeman, A, 'Journaal of te dag register van mijne voyagie gedaan met de fluyt de "Waeckende Boey" in compe van de fluyt "Emeloort" van Bata naer 't Suylant, om nae 't schip "den Vergulden Draeck", 1656 aldaar verongeluckt, te vernemen', Battye Library MS PR 8818/GIL/4 - o/77 (<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/No-273-Leemans-Journal.pdf>)
 - 21 March 1658.
 - 28 See Gerritsen, 2011b, pp.55-56.
 - 29 For a translation of Leeman's journal see C de Heer, 'My shield and my faith'. *Westerly* No.1 April, 1963, pp.33-46. For a fuller account of his remarkable journey, see Henderson, 1985.
 - 30 The *Immenhorn* was sent early in 1659, see PA Leupe, *De reizen der Nederlanders naar het Zuidland of Nieuw-Holland, en de 17th and 18th eeuw*, G. Hulst van Keulen, Amsterdam, pp.146-147.
 - 31 Gerritsen R, *And their ghosts may be heard*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, South Fremantle, 1994, pp.49-50.
 - 32 *ibid*, pp. 237-243; Gerritsen R, 'Marooned mariners and mudmaps: The search for the Ring of Stones', *The Globe* vol. 64, 2010, pp.17-25.
 - 33 Gerritsen, R, 1994, p.52; p.35.
 - 34 *ibid*, pp. 53-54.
The sites in this area have been subject to ongoing investigation, see G Flowers, *Gilt Dragon terrestrial investigations: Skeleton and coin sites, April 2001*. Maritime Archaeology Association of Western Australia, Innaloo, 2001; Gerritsen, 2010, pp.35, 54-56.
 - 35 Wilson, Stan, 1964, 'The significance of coins in the identification of old Dutch wrecks on the West Australian coast', *Numismatic Circular* 72(9):193; *The Independent: Magazine*, 15 June 1969, p.3; Gerritsen, 1994, p.293n31.
 - 36 Playford, PE, 'Wreck of the Zuytdorp on the Western Australian coast in 1712', *Journal and Proceedings of the Western Australian Historical Society* vol. 5(5), 1959, pp.5-41, p.36; PE Playford, *Carpet of silver: the wreck of the Zuytdorp*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1996, pp.61, 200.

- 37 VOC Correspondence file Zuiddorp 'Heeren Resoluties van de Caap 1712', Nationaal Archief, The Hague
- 38 Playford, PE, 1996, pp.41-43. Other nationalities may have included Germans, Norwegians, Swiss, Latvians, Swedes, Indians and Belgians.
- 39 There has been considerable debate about who first found the wreck in modern times. See Playford, 1996, pp.82-100; G Henderson, *Unfinished voyages: Western Australian shipwrecks 1622 - 1850*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 2007, pp.47-48.
- 40 Playford, 1959.
- 41 Playford, 1996, pp.115, 201-203.
- 42 Playford, 1959, pp.28-35; Gerritsen, 1994, pp.36-37; Playford, 1996, pp.82-84, 120-27.
- 43 Playford, 1996, pp.120-24.
- 44 Gerritsen, 1994, pp.37-38 (40-180 survivors); Playford, 1996, pp.203 (30 survivors).
- 45 *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 12 May 1869, p.12; Playford, 1959, pp.38-39.
- 46 *The Sunday Times*, 23 May 1971, p.4. But see Henderson, 2007, p.48.
- 47 Playford, 1996, pp.214-216.
- 48 *The West Australian*, 8 September 1990, p.6.
- 49 Pelsaert, 1629, p.237.
- 50 *ibid*, pp.215-216.
- They were last seen on 13 October about 9 kilometres NNE of the Wallabi Group.
- 51 Pelsaert, 1629, pp.234, 236-237.
- 52 N Witsen, 'Nicolas Witsen's account of de Vlamingh's voyage', in G Schilder, (ed.) *Voyage to the Great South Land: Willem de Vlamingh 1696-1697*, pp.216-221, Royal Australian Historical Society, Sydney, 1985, p.218.
- 53 Gerritsen R, 2002, pp.13-15.
- 54 Edwards, H, *The wreck on the Half-Moon Reef*, Robert Hale and Co, London, 1971. ; Henderson, 2007, pp.63-71.
- 55 As far as is known the *Sloepie* was the first European vessel built in Australia.
- 56 Edwards, H, 1971, pp.86-168; C Ingelman-Sundberg, *Relics from the Dutch East Indiaman 'Zeewijk' foundered in 1727*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, 1977, pp.7-10; Gerritsen, 1994, pp.38-39.
- 57 Preston, Lt W, 'Expedition to explore to the northward of Fremantle Nov. 23rd 1830', in *Exploration diaries*, vol. 1, 1830, p. 224; *Perth Gazette*, 6 December, 1834, pp. 402-3; Commander Dring, 'Extract from the journal of HMC government schooner *Champion* on a voyage from Swan River to the mouth of the Hutt', in *Exploration diaries*, vol. 3, 1840, p. 632; *Perth Gazette*, 8 February 1840, p.24.
- 58 Helpman, F, 'Extracts from a report of a voyage to Sharks Bay & Exmouth Gulf in colonial schooner *Champion*: April 7, 1851', in *Exploration diaries*, vol. 4, 1851, p.268.
- 59 Henderson, J, *Phantoms of the Tryall: Australia's first shipwreck 1622*, St George Books, Perth, 1993, p.28; Henderson, 2007, pp.14.41-45, 53-54, 57-63, 69.
- 60 Gregory, FT, 'On the geology of a part of Western Australia', *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society of London*, vol. 17, 1861, pp. 475-483.
- ibid*, p.482.
- 61 It seems Clifton, a teenager at the time, had accompanied Resident Magistrate of Bunbury, George Eliot, on an inspection of the wreck.
- 62 'W Clifton to Colonial Secretary 25, 29 April 1876', quoted in R Gerritsen, *An historical analysis of wrecks in the vicinity of the Deadwater, Wonnerup, Western Australia*, Western Australian Maritime Museum, Department of Maritime Archaeology, Report No. 97, Fremantle, 1995; *ibid*, p.49; Alfred Burt, surveyor, and later Registrar of Titles and Deeds, saw the wreck in 1876 and stated it had 'a high stern built in an olden style' (DC Cowan, 'Mystery ship of the south west', *Western Mail*, 19 December 1929, p.7).
- 63 Gerritsen, R, 1995, pp.13-32; R Gerritsen, 'The mystery of the Deadwater Wreck', *International Hydrographic Review*, vol. 9 no.2, 2008b, pp.8-18.
- 64 Henderson (2007, pp.82-88) takes a different view regarding this wreck, arguing that it is the wreck of the *Geographe's* chaloupe [longboat], lost in the same area on 6 June 1801.

THE REMARKABLE VOYAGE OF ABRAHAM LEEMAN IN 1658

Rupert Gerritsen

A 1977 article by Tyler and Ross¹ on Leeman noted:

Few coasts in the world can be more inhospitable than the western coast of Australia. Festooned with off-shore reefs, arid, with no natural all-weather anchor-ages for well over eight hundred miles, subject to on-shore winds from several points of the compass for the greater part of the year, the European nations avoided close contact for as long as political considerations allowed them. Those shipmasters who encountered the coast did so by accident, largely owing to their inability to calculate longitude sufficiently accurately, and this factor was largely responsible for the loss ...in 1656, of the wreck of the armed merchant-man *Vergulde Draeck* on an off-shore reef about five miles SSW of what is now known as Ledge Point (p.38).

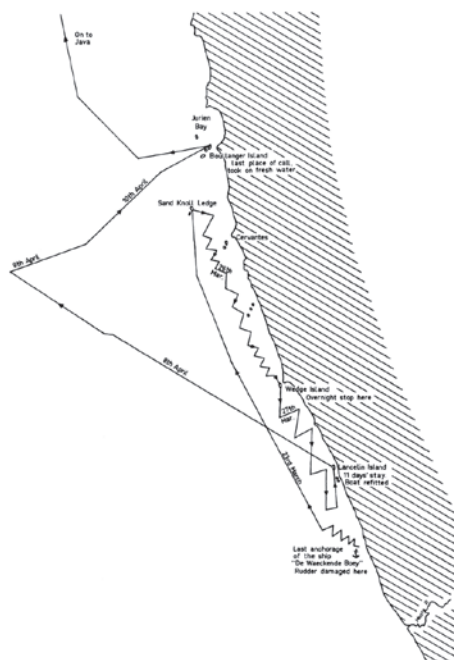


Figure 1
Leeman's travels to Batavia diagram from
Tyler and Ross, Westerley, No.1,
March, 1977, p.34.

The *Vergulde Draeck* (Gilt Dragon) sailed from Texel bound for Batavia (Jakarta), under Pieter Albertsz, carrying trade goods and eight chests of silver to the value of 78,6000 guilders. On 28 April 1656 the Gilt Dragon was wrecked just south of Ledge Point about 150 kilometres north of modern day Perth. Seventy five of the 193 aboard made it to shore. A small boat was sent with the Understeersman and six others to Batavia, (now Jakarta), arriving 40 days later. Upon arrival there, they reported that as they sailed away, they saw the other survivors were trying to refloat a larger boat that had capsized in the surf while landing. Two vessels were sent south in search, but in the difficult conditions failed to sight either the wreckage or the survivors. Eleven men and a boat were also lost during the same search. In January 1658 two more ships were sent out to investigate further but they also proved unsuccessful. In searching for any survivors, the yacht *Goede Hoop* and the *Waeckende Boey* lost their long boats and 10 men. Another longboat commanded by Abraham Leeman also disappeared, arriving in Batavia nearly six months later. This is his story.

Abraham Leeman was on the ship the *Waeckende Boey*, one of the Dutch East India Company vessels sent in January 1658 to look for survivors of the Gilt Dragon. However, when the weather changed it had set sail for Batavia, leaving Abraham Leeman, 13 more men and a longboat all stranded on the WA shore.

From dawn the following morning, Leeman and the men pursued the *Waeckende Boey* in a longboat in vain, for most of the day. In his journal Leeman noted that on returning to land, he 'climbed onto rocks and looked out to sea, praying to God for help and succour with weeping eyes, not

knowing what he should do'.² Two days later, realising that Volkersen would not return, they began preparations to sail to Batavia. Seals were killed, the meat was roasted and dried and the skins were used to raise the sides of the boat. They dug another well in the sand which yielded better water than the first, its brackish water having previously made them all feel ill. On 8 April, the 14 men set sail in a badly leaking boat, carrying 75 litres of precious water. Leeman, relying on his memory, had carved a map in the stern of the boat, recording the little information that was known at the time about that part of the 'Southland'.

With fitful breezes they made their way north. They went ashore on Middle Island in the Southern Group of the Abrolhos Islands, 70 kilometres almost directly west of Geraldton, where they managed to find more water and replenish their supply. Then onward past the Zuytdorp Cliffs and Point Inscription at the tip of Dirk Hartog Island – the most westerly point of Australia. They continued heading for Java, constantly baling out water, terrible thirst crushing their strength; if 'a drop was spilt we regretted this extremely.'³ Blows were exchanged as they fought, even over the drinking of their own urine. On 19 April the first man died, 'constantly calling out for water but we could not, nor dared we, help him,' wrote Leeman.

On the eighteenth day at sea, 26 April, two more men died of thirst. Yet their torment continued further and two days later they were down to their last ration. Leeman promised a noggin of water to the first man to sight land. In the early afternoon the quaking voice of the lookout called, 'Land!'⁴ It was Java. They had come over 2000 kilometres across open ocean and had reached the eastern end of Java. But they still had to get to shore, and Batavia was still 800 kilometres away. Leeman instructed seven of the remaining crew to swim ashore to get water, so that they could continue their voyage in the boat. Once ashore, however, they frantically gathered coconuts, completely ignoring the men remaining in the boat. Frustrated, Leeman then put ashore himself, but could not find the deserters. After replenishing with water and coconuts, he and the three remaining crew attempted to put to sea again, only to have the boat wrecked by the surf and a monsoonal storm. They made it back to shore, half-drowned, ate palm shoots and in the face of another storm 'crept into the sand together and remained lying like this until the next day.'⁵

After spending some time recovering, they set off to walk to Batavia. For five weeks, the four men, living merely on coconuts, were forced to struggle along the coast, much of it being rugged, jungle-covered mountains and cliffs. They came across a small deserted hamlet, where a tiger threatened them. Then they found two unattended '*proas*' [fishing boats], but were

unable to launch them as the sea was too rough. Shortly afterwards, some Javanese appeared in another *proa* and Leeman managed to communicate to them about their plight. These men took Leeman and his crew to their house and fed the emaciated castaways with bananas, coconuts, rice and maize. While Leeman and his companions rested, the local chief was consulted and they were told they would be taken to Batavia.

Firstly they were taken to a local village, then the town of Calamprit, where they were greeted by the local chief and placed under guard. Three weeks later they were taken to the city of Mataram and were interrogated by Prince Tommagon Pati for two weeks. Once satisfied with their story, the Prince's men took them to a house to wait for a visitor. Another week passed when finally Michiel Zeeburgh appeared. It seemed they were being held for ransom. Lengthy negotiations took place and finally on 23 September, they were reunited with their countrymen at Japara.

Their incredible adventure had come to an end, they had overcome some of the greatest perils any human had ever faced, but they had made it home! Leeman wrote, 'Our joy was so great as if we were going to Heaven'.⁶ It was indeed a remarkable test of courage and endurance. This was acknowledged when on 16 June 1961, the area of the Snag Island settlement, north of Jurien Bay, was officially gazetted as the town of Leeman.⁷

Endnotes

- 1 Editor N. Peters quoting, Phillip Tyler and Keith Ross, 'Abraham Leeman –Castaway', in *Westerly* 1 March 1977, pp.34-60.
- 2 Leeman, 29 March, 1658.
- 3 Leeman, ca. 15 April, 1658.
- 4 Leeman, 28 April, 1658.
- 5 Leeman, 30 April, 1658.
- 6 Leeman, ca. 23 September 1658.
In the aftermath of the miraculous survival of Abraham Leeman and his crewmates, the Council of the Indies of the Dutch East India Company reported that there had been a mishap with the boat of the *Waeckende Boey*, and that Volkersen had left 'writing off the same too thoughtlessly, as has become apparent since.' An examination of the Log showed Volkersen had indeed tried to cover up the fact that he had abandoned the boat and its crew. But Volkersen was never punished, he died several weeks before the Javanese prince released Leeman and his comrades.
- 7 Tyler and Ross 1977, p.40; Editors' note: Leeman's main claim to fame lies in the fact that he is the first European to have left a detailed account of his struggles in one of the most treacherous stretches of shoalwaters known, the four-mile-wide belt stretching nearly one hundred and eighty miles between what are now Jurien Bay and Trigg Island on the Western Australian coast.

'Figure 2 (opposite)

This painting of the houses in Delft, in the area known as 'The Little Street', by Johannes Vermeer, ca. 1658, illustrates the Holland the VOC crews and passengers left behind.
Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



CHAPTER THREE

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSES OF HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BATAVIA MUTINY OF 1629

Daniel Franklin

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the early seventeenth century, the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) ship *Retourschip Batavia* was one of the largest and finest armed vessels of the time. Commissioned to take advantage of lucrative trade opportunities in Asia, the *Batavia*, carrying a complement of approximately 316 people, embarked from Amsterdam on 29 October 1628, destined for Batavia (modern day Jakarta). Cramped on board were men, women and children of various socio-economic backgrounds and nationalities, including VOC officers and crew, in addition to naval cadets, passengers and soldiers.¹⁻³ As the *Batavia* was to sail alongside six other vessels, the highest ranking officer on board, Francisco Pelsaert, was appointed *commandeur* of the fleet.⁴

The journey was to include a stop at the Cape of Good Hope, from which point it was envisioned that the *Batavia* would round the Cape and then sail east, as far as the longitude of the Sunda Straits, before navigating north for Batavia.⁵⁻⁶ This was termed ‘Brouwer’s Route’, which was in common use after 1610, and took advantage of the strong westerly winds known as the ‘roaring forties’.⁷⁻⁸ The speed advantage, however, came at great cost, as slight navigation misjudgements likely contributed to the wrecking of several Dutch vessels off the coast of Western Australia (e.g. *Vergulde Draeck* 1656; *Zuytdorp* 1712; *Zeewijk* 1727).⁹⁻¹⁰ This route, in combination with the growing dissent of certain high ranking officers, would prove to be the catalyst for the ultimate downfall of this fine vessel and her unwitting crew.

After almost six months at sea the *Batavia* reached the Cape. This eight day stop-over provided the much needed opportunity to replenish depleted supplies of food and freshwater. It was at this time that the ship’s skipper, Adriaen Jacobsz, accompanied by Zwaantie Hendrix (maid to one of the more privileged female passengers) and Jeronimus Cornelisz (next most senior officer to Pelsaert) left the ship without permission. Whilst enjoying the hospitality of other vessels in the fleet, Jacobsz became increasingly inebriated and both verbally and physically abusive. The following morning Pelsaert was informed of his unauthorised shore leave and indecent behaviour, and had little choice but to publicly reprimand him. Jacobsz and Cornelisz later confessed that this was a deciding moment in their desire to mutiny.¹¹⁻¹³

The plan to seize control of the *Batavia* would involve manipulating the crew into joining forces with Jacobsz and Cornelisz, with whom they would murder any opposition, and then sail away from the convoy to seek their fortunes on the high seas.¹⁴ Whether preoccupied by his planned insurrection, or just

plain negligent, Jacobsz's immediate mutiny plans were never realized; the *Batavia* became separated from the fleet, and subsequently wrecked on Morning Reef in the Houtman Abrolhos off Australia's west coast on 4 June 1629 (Figure 1). Desperate attempts to float the ship free of the reef (including throwing all cannons overboard and putting down the main mast) failed and only damaged the ship further.¹⁵⁻¹⁶

Realising that it would only be a matter of time before the ship broke apart, Pelsaert decided to put ashore 180 survivors on nearby Beacon Island, a small coral island devoid of freshwater (Figure 1). Approximately another 40 people (Pelsaert included) were landed on one of the smaller islands early the following morning, leaving around 70 to 80 survivors on the ship. Of those people still aboard, approximately 40 were reported to have drowned attempting to swim from the wreck to land.¹⁹⁻²¹ The situation following the wrecking was dire as limited food and water supplies were not being rationed. Pelsaert decided to take a group of 48 people (including Jacobsz) in search of freshwater on nearby islands and the main 'Southland'. Unsuccessful in their search, Pelsaert resolved to attempt the hazardous voyage of more than 1,900 kilometres to Batavia.²²

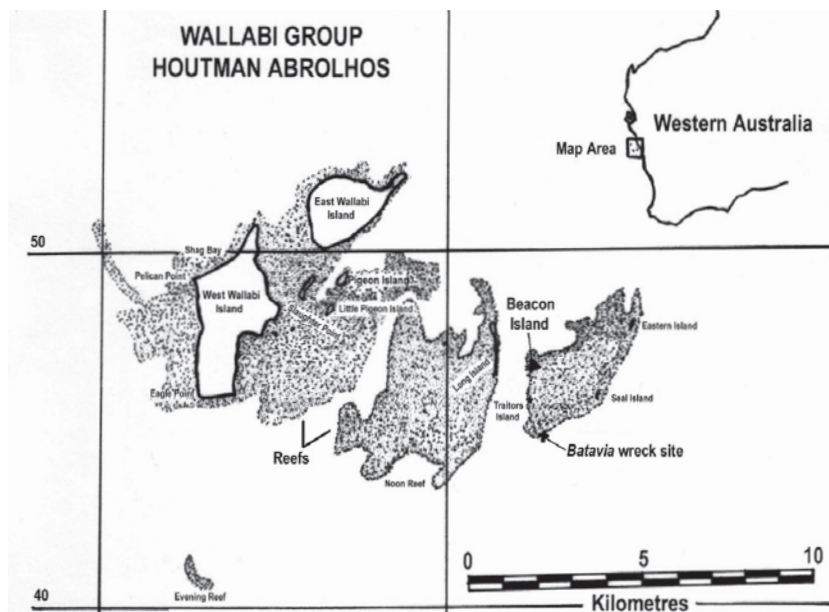


Figure 1
Wallabi Group, Houtman Abrolhos Islands, showing locations of East and West Wallabi Islands, Beacon Island (▲) and the Batavia shipwreck (+) location (following Franklin & Freedman¹⁷, after Green¹⁸).

During Pelsaert's absence, Cornelisz remained on Beacon Island and managed to establish his own 'ruling council', and with the aid of his followers began to murder all who opposed him. Cornelisz planned to reduce the total number of survivors to 40, with whom he planned to hijack the anticipated rescue ship. The first murders of the stronger men of distrusted loyalties occurred on the night of July 3. Initially by night and stealth, and later by daylight reigns of terror, victims were strangled, drowned, or killed with weapons. Although the means taken to dispose of the victim's bodies is not always entirely clear, there are records of prepared holes being used for burials.²³⁻²⁴

As these gruesome events on Beacon Island were unfolding, Pelsaert had managed to safely navigate his way to Batavia, where he was promptly ordered to return to the Abrolhos in command of the *Sardam*, to retrieve any survivors and salvage valuable cargo. Arriving at the wreck site on 17 September 1629, Pelsaert was horrified to learn that during his absence Cornelisz and his accomplices had managed to murder at least 125 men, women and children. The mutineers were quickly captured, tried and most were duly executed on purpose-built gallows erected on Seals Island (present day Long Island); two lesser offenders were stranded on the mainland as their punishment.²⁵⁻²⁶ The primary sources of information documenting these events are survivors' accounts including the manuscript 'Droevige daghaenteyckeningh int verliesen van ons schip *Batavia*', usually known as the 'Pelsaert Journal'.²⁷⁻²⁸

The *Batavia* shipwreck and associated land sites represent some of the earliest pre-colonial European activity in Australia and are thus of considerable national significance. At present the skeletal remains of ten individuals have been found on Beacon Island;²⁹⁻³¹ four single burials were discovered between 1960 and 1964 and a further six individuals were recovered from a multiple grave excavated between 1994 and 2001. Those remains bear witness to the gruesome events that transpired almost 400 years ago and offer a unique research opportunity to provide new information about the victims and aspects of their deaths and daily lives in the 17th century.

Following a brief account of the discovery and excavation of the burials thus far recovered on Beacon Island, the remainder of this chapter presents a brief description and interpretation (using forensic, archaeological and historical sources) of the human skeletal remains associated with the *Batavia* mutiny. Age, sex, stature, general state of health and trauma is assessed in each skeleton, in order to postulate on who the individuals may have been, and to rule out other potential burials that occurred during the mutiny.

BEACON ISLAND BURIALS

1960 – 1964

The first documented discovery of human remains on Beacon Island was in 1960, when resident fisherman, 'Pop' Marten, unearthed a skeleton while burying some rubbish south of his hut. The skeleton (M3901) was buried

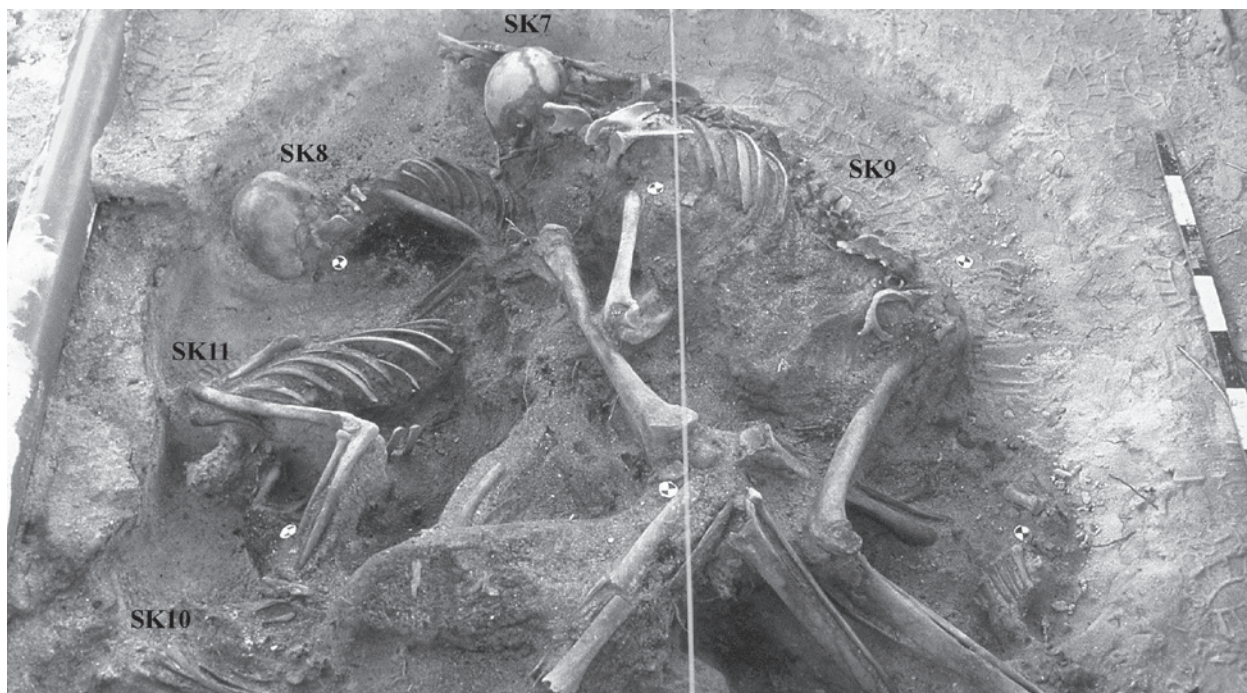
face upwards, apparently with arms folded across the chest.³²⁻³³ The area was sifted, but no associated artefacts were found. The next known discovery was a human skull (A15831) found by Max Cramer in May 1963. Two months later a postcranial (headless) skeleton (A15508) was recovered in the same region and is believed to be associated with the same individual. The postcranial skeleton was apparently found with a lead musket-ball in the chest region.³⁴⁻³⁵ This burial was recovered from the south-west side of the Johnson hut (situated several meters south-east to the hut where skeleton M3901 was discovered). In August 1963, a joint expedition, including journalist Hugh Edwards, discovered a complete skeleton (A15507) lying on its back in a shallow pit. Next to this skeleton, mostly under the concrete slab of the Johnson hut, were the remains of another individual (A16316). Returning a year later in December 1964, Edwards dug under the north-west corner of the hut and removed the skull of the second individual.³⁶⁻³⁷ The burial position of the postcranial remains of this skeleton were re-established by Franklin in July 2014 during the monitoring of demolition works on Beacon Island; it was subsequently excavated in February 2015 (see **Postscript**).

1994 – 2001

In 1993, Philippe Godard reported the discovery by John Gliddon of a skeleton, while digging a hole for a 'septic tank' near his hut (formerly 'Pop' Marten's hut) in 1990.³⁸ The concern for potential damage by souvenir hunters, due to the relatively precise location provided by Godard, supported

Figure 2

Four of the individuals uncovered *in situ* during the 1999 excavations; the bones of SK9 were removed at an earlier stage of excavation. Courtesy: Western Australian Maritime Museum.



by Gliddon's declaration under the Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Amnesty (1993-1994), provided the stimulus for the Western Australian Maritime Museum to investigate the nature and extent of the disturbance to the burial site. Excavation of the site established that at least two skeletons were significantly damaged during the leach drain construction; two adult crania (the skull without the lower jaw – SK5 and SK6) were identified – fragments of SK5 were recovered for analysis and SK6 was left *in situ*.³⁹⁻⁴⁰

The degree of prior human disturbance, together with the risk of future vandalism, led to the decision to fully excavate the burial site in 1999. An excavation grid was set up and the 1994 squares were reopened and extended further south. The excavated area was now found to include five individuals (three adults and two children) who had been laid against each other within a circular pit; these individuals were designated SK7, SK8, SK9, SK10 and SK11 (Figure 2). The crania identified in 1994 (SK5 and SK6) were believed to be associated with two of these individuals (bringing the total sample to five skeletons).⁴¹ The skeletal remains were found over, under, or in, a large deposit of black dense matter possibly of organic origin. The bones embedded in this deposit were left *in situ* and those removed were poorly preserved.⁴²

Subsequently in 2001, the black deposit was excavated and 16 deciduous and 2 permanent teeth were discovered underneath.⁴³ This, the sixth individual recovered from the multiple burial, was designated SK12. None of the bones of this individual were recovered, although it is well known that the lighter and more delicate bones of a child, compared to those of a fully grown adult, are much more likely to decay over a long period of time.⁴⁴⁻⁴⁵

ANALYSES OF THE HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS

The following section summarises selected aspects of the physical examination of the skeletal remains of the victims of the *Batavia* mutiny; those readers seeking a more thorough treatment and specialist description of the specific methods employed are directed to consult Franklin & Freedman.⁴⁶

DEMOGRAPHICS: DETERMINATION OF SEX, AGE AND STATURE

The basic demographic profile of each of the skeletal remains, including estimated sex, age and stature, is summarised in Table 1. It is important to note that attempting to determine sex in the juvenile (non-adult) skeleton is very difficult and unreliable, until such time that they have undergone puberty.⁴⁷ This is because it is not until puberty that the morphological features in the skeleton that distinguish males from females, begin to develop. For this reason it was not possible to conclusively determine the sex of the youngest of the mutiny victims – SK9 and SK12 (Table 1). From Table 1 it is also evident that the estimated age ranges are greater for adults (e.g. A15507) compared to juveniles (e.g. SK9). The reason for such a difference is because the juvenile skeleton grows at a relatively predictable rate; once

growth ceases, as in the adult skeleton, it becomes increasingly difficult to estimate age with the same level of confidence.⁴⁸

Individual	Description	Sex	Age-range [*]	Stature [†]
	Individual Burials			
M3901	Damaged calvaria + postcranial skeleton	Female	18-20 yrs	1.61 m
A15831 / A15508	Skull + postcranial skeleton	Male	19-21 yrs	N/A
A15507	Skull + postcranial skeleton	Male	20-34 yrs	1.82 m
A16316	Cranium	Male	20-34 yrs	N/A
	‡Multiple Burial			
SK5 / SK11	Damaged cranium + postcranial skeleton	Male	35-49 yrs	N/A
SK6 / SK10	Damaged cranium + postcranial skeleton	Male	35-49 yrs	1.79 m
SK7	Skull + postcranial skeleton	Male	20-34 yrs	1.76 m
SK8	Skull + postcranial skeleton	Likely male	15-16 yrs	N/A
SK9	Skull + postcranial skeleton	?	5-6 yrs	N/A
SK12	Deciduous + permanent teeth	?	8-9 mo	N/A

Table 1
Main features of the *Batavia* skeletal material including proposed associations (/) of cranial and postcranial skeletons.
^{*}yrs = years; mo = months; [†]reconstructed mean stature; [‡]following Franklin.⁷⁸

Of those individuals for whom skeletal sex could be ascertained, it was apparent that most appeared morphologically male, with the exception of M3901 (Table 1). Such a sex bias is not unexpected given that the *Batavia*’s complement comprised mostly males, who were regarded by the mutineers as the greatest threat, and were thus the primary targets in the initial murders. Analysis of skeletal age markers indicated that the age-at-death distribution of the sample ranged from 8 months to no older than 49 years (Table 1). There appears to be no older adults (50+ years), but this is probably not unusual given the generally shorter life expectancy in 17th century Europe, compounded by the shipboard conditions endured by a career sailor serving aboard a VOC vessel.⁴⁹⁻⁵⁰ Statures were calculated from the reconstructed lengths of damaged leg and arm bones; the average adult male height was 1.78m, somewhat taller than the mean male stature (1.72m) of 18th to 19th century individuals exhumed from the Spitalfields burial crypt in London.⁵¹

PALAEOPATHOLOGY: BONE INJURIES AND ABNORMALITIES

Trauma

Evidence of violent trauma is apparent in the skeletal remains of each of the single burial individuals. A15508 was apparently recovered with a lead

musket-ball in the chest region; M3901, A15507 and A16316 all show sharp weapon trauma in the skull, likely to have occurred at, or around, the time of death – the cut marks on A16316 being particularly brutal (Figure 3).⁵²

⁵³ In almost total contrast, there appears to be no evidence of these types of trauma in any of the individuals recovered from the multiple burial.⁵⁴ The only evidence of possible violent trauma in the multiple burial victims, although certainly not contributing to the death of the individual, was in the cranium of SK6, where the upper right central incisor has been forced through the upper jaw into the nasal cavity, likely the result of a heavy blow against the teeth (Figure 4).

There are also incidences of old injuries. In the postcranial skeleton of SK11 the shaft of the left ninth rib was broken near the costal angle. This injury appears to have occurred a significant time before death, as the rib has healed, but at an obviously abnormally acute angle. The relatively poor alignment of the rib fracture may attest to low quality or no medical attention to the injury, although the bone has healed well, which is a general indicator of good health.⁵⁵



Figure 3
Lateral and posterior views of the cranium of A16316 showing trauma (cut marks) indicative of a fatal attack. The injuries were produced by a heavy sharp-bladed instrument with a force so severe that the cranium was fractured and the lambdoid suture split open (arrow).

**Figure 4**

The damaged cranium of SK6: arrow points to impacted upper right central incisor. Photo by Patrick Baker, Western Australian Maritime Museum.

Developmental Stress Indicators

Macroscopic (visible with the naked eye) hypoplastic defects (pits and/or continuous lines or grooves) on tooth enamel and Harris lines (zones of high density bone that are visible under x-ray) in arm and leg bones, are generally considered useful indicators of temporary cessation of growth processes due to disease, malnutrition, or other metabolic insults.⁵⁶⁻⁵⁷ Enamel defects (grooves consistent with hypoplasia) were observed on the teeth of M3901 and A15831. Harris lines were present on SK7, M3901 and A15507. The presence of enamel hypoplasia and Harris lines may indicate that these individuals suffered from a period of childhood nutritional deficiency, stress or illness, probably not uncommon in 17th century Europe.⁵⁸⁻⁵⁹

Nutritional Related Deficiencies

Approximately one-quarter of the upper end of the left tibial shaft (around the knee joint) of SK7 is markedly roughened and porous, a pattern indicating a deficiency in bone production and calcium deposition.⁶⁰⁻⁶¹ A shell of layered new bone on the surface appears to be attached to the original bone by a web of more porous bone, which has completely obliterated the nutrient foramen (opening through which blood vessels pass). This implies some metabolic disturbance in the immediate period before death and this has been tentatively identified as possibly being scurvy, a condition caused by a deficiency of vitamin C.

Scurvy was common in sailors of the period, and is a plausible diagnosis because affected individuals are susceptible to bleeding due to abnormal blood vessel development. This bleeding often results in the formation of porous bone lesions, most commonly observed on the skull, but also documented in the long bones (legs in particular).⁶² Since bleeding and the resulting changes to surrounding bone tend to occur in regions where blood vessels are stressed by muscle activity, the porous structure of the tibia around the knee joint is probably not unusual.⁶³⁻⁶⁴

INTERPRETATION

The ultimate goal of research of this nature is to help answer the question of who had been buried in the single and the multiple burials. As tentative identities of the single burial victims recovered in the 1960s have been previously suggested,⁶⁵⁻⁶⁶ the focus here is on the interpretation of the more recently excavated multiple burial only.

From Pelsaert's Journal it is apparent that there are at least two groups of murder victims buried in multiple graves on Beacon Island; the first was a group of sick individuals, the second the *Predikant's* (the *Batavia's* official minister) family.⁶⁷ There are, however, many other instances where multiple burials might have been made, among them the large number of people reported to have drowned attempting to swim from the wreck to land.⁶⁸⁻⁶⁹ The following analysis considers two possible interpretations of the Beacon Island multiple burial: the first that they were the family of the *Predikant*; the second that they were drowning victims. I suggest that both interpretations appear to be improbable in consideration of the anthropological, archaeological and historical evidence currently available, and propose another more plausible theory backed by supportive evidence.

The Family of the *Predikant*

The *Predikant's* family, including his wife, maid and six of his seven children (two girls, three boys and a baby), were beaten to death on July 21. The historical accounts of this murder describe 'the beating in of the skull of the wife and that of one of the children'.⁷⁰ The evidence excavated from the multiple burial clearly does not fit the profile of the *Predikant's* family; although all of the skeletons discovered in the 1960s show markers of violent trauma, there is no such evidence in the skeletal remains excavated from the multiple burial. Further, the number of individuals in the *Predikant's* family and their stated ages and sexes clearly do not match the profile of the individuals exhumed from the multiple burial (Table 1).

Drowning Victims Following the Wrecking

It would appear very unlikely that the multiple burial represents the deliberate interment of those individuals who drowned attempting to flee the wreck. The skeletal remains were obviously hastily thrown into the pit, without due care or consideration of religious beliefs (Figure 2). Although

their situation was dire, it would seem improbable that the survivors would abandon their religious and social values so soon after the wrecking. Even when facing lethal epidemics such as the ‘Black Plague’, there are well documented examples of burials that were organised methodically and with care.⁷¹ This burial is in fact analogous, albeit on a small scale, to crude and hasty modern mass graves associated with the murder of civilians in regions such as Argentina, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.⁷²

A Probable Scenario: Early ‘Sick’ Victims of the Massacre

Around 10 July, Passchier van den Enden (a gunner), Jacop Hendricxsz (a carpenter), Jan Pinten (an English soldier) and a cabin boy, all of whom were ill and could offer little resistance, had their throats cut by Cornelisz’s accomplices.⁷³⁻⁷⁴ At least one body was dragged into a ready made pit, although it would be reasonable to assume that all four bodies were disposed of simultaneously. There are what appear to be three male adults (SK5/SK11, SK6/SK10 and SK7) interred in the multiple burial pit (Table 1). The apparent lack of violent trauma on these skeletons is consistent with historical accounts of the throats of these victims having being cut; relatively poor preservation conditions could explain the absence of any evidence of such trauma.⁷⁵

Interestingly, the mutineers asked to spare the life of Jacop Hendricxsz, for he was ‘a good carpenter’. Cornelisz, however, was adamant in his orders, and reportedly replied that he was ‘only a turner, furthermore, his is half lame’, so he must be killed.⁷⁶

If by ‘lame’ Cornelisz meant that the carpenter was physically disabled in some manner, it is worth considering that SK7 very likely had some degree of pain and/or movement impediment due to the infection in his left tibia. Skeleton SK8 was estimated to be around 15 to 16 years of age, close to the typical age of a cabin boy (Table 1). So, after reconciling historical accounts with biological evidence, it would seem reasonable to suggest that the four individuals described above are those recovered from the multiple burial pit.

Approximately two days earlier than the murder of the sick individuals (July 8), the six-year-old daughter of Hans Hardens was strangled;⁷⁷ SK9 is approximately the same age and does not display any visible evidence of trauma (Table 1). There is no mention of how this body was disposed, but with the pit available, the body might well have been buried there as well. This murder took place before the first ‘public’ murder on 14 July, thus the body would have required concealment until it could be permanently disposed. SK12 is approximately 8 to 9 months of age (Table 1); this individual cannot be directly accounted for from historical accounts, but there were several children of unspecified ages murdered and how their bodies were disposed of is not always recorded.

CONCLUSION

Dutch activity in Western Australia in the 17th century was generally accidental in nature, resulting from navigational misjudgements or other unfortunate circumstances. The wrecking of the *Batavia* and other VOC ships led to expeditions to recover survivors and valuable cargo, which concurrently initiated further exploration of Australia's west coast. Archaeological sites, both underwater and on land, are an important source of information on the earliest Dutch activity in Western Australia.

The recent excavation of a multiple burial on Beacon Island recovered more victims of the *Batavia* mutiny. This burial appeared to have been hastily dug by hand, in order to conceal victims killed in the early stages of the mutiny. Analysis of their skeletal remains indicated that most were male; the age-at-death distribution ranged from about 8 months to no older than 49 years; and up until the point of their premature demise, these individuals were mostly healthy, with relatively little evidence of serious disease, illness or trauma⁷⁸.

POSTSCRIPT

Demolition Works on Beacon Island (2014)

As part of a Community Heritage Programme grant and an Australian Research Council Linkage grant, (Shipwrecks of the Roaring 40s: A maritime archaeological reassessment of some of Australia's earliest shipwrecks – LP130100137⁷⁹), the Western Australian Museum, Fisheries and associated industry and academic partners are involved in a large-scale programme to return Beacon Island to its natural state, and ultimately provide visitor facilities and security to the island. The latter programme necessitates the monitored demolition of structures on Beacon Island in the immediate vicinity of archaeological sites known to be associated with the 1629 mutiny of the *Retourschip Batavia*.

The supposed burial of the postcranial remains of A16316 lie directly in an area that would be subjected to disturbance from heavy machinery during demolition works. To mitigate the high risk of damage to the remains, a small test excavation (50cm x 50cm) was performed in the most likely region of the burial in the attempt to rediscover its exact location⁸⁰. The area excavated was determined based on the interpretation of previous archaeological research that initially identified the presence of a burial in the region of the north-west corner of Johnson's Hut⁸¹.

Excavation proceeded to a depth of 40cm, at which point a distal right human femur was revealed. This burial was designated SK13 until it could be conclusively identified as belonging to the skull of individual A16316. The femur was left undisturbed *in-situ* and backfilled; appropriate protective measures were then established to secure the burial site⁸².

Archaeological Excavations (2015)

A multi-disciplinary collaboration of national and international partners performed a series of targeted excavations on Beacon Island in January and February of 2015. The aim was to excavate the known site of the burial of SK13 (see above), in addition to excavating an area where Mr Bob Sheppard (Honorary Associate Western Australian Museum) visually located a human molar during a metal detector survey in May of 2013. Teeth and bone fragments can be brought to the surface by burrowing animals (in this instance Shearwater – commonly known as muttonbirds) and can thus indicate the presence of buried remains. The latter discovery proved to be fortuitous; excavation revealed more human teeth and miscellaneous human bone fragments, culminating in the discovery of an intact human burial (designated SK14) at over one meter in depth. Further excavation in the area to the immediate north of SK14 led to the discovery of a further two individuals buried in direct association, one on top of the other; these are designated SK15 and SK16 respectively (Table 2). Interestingly, many of the teeth and bone fragments recovered above these burial do not appear to belong to SK14, SK15 or SK16; it is perhaps possible that there may have once been, or there is an as yet undiscovered, grave in close proximity.

Preliminary analyses suggest that SK13 is 20-34 years of age, of male sex (see also A16316 – above) and was approximately 1.70m tall – the skeleton is in an excellent state of preservation. SK14 is approximately 12-14 years of age and of indeterminate sex – the skeleton is highly fragmented due to the influx of water into the grave, which erodes the organic component of bone. SK15 is likely of male sex, 20-34 years of age and had a living height of approximately 1.68m – there is some degree of damage, mostly in the facial region of the skull and the articular ends of the long bones. SK16 is likely of female sex, 20-34 years of age and had a living height of approximately 1.60m – most of the face of the skull is missing and the articular ends of most long bones are damaged. This individual also suffered poor oral health in life, with numerous caries and abscesses. Cause and/or manner of death of SK14, SK15 and SK16 are not immediately apparent and forms part of ongoing investigations led by the University of Western Australia, the Western Australian Museum, and other partners.

Individual	Description	Sex	Age-range*	Stature†
*SK13	Postcranial skeleton	M	20-34 yrs	1.72 m
SK14	Skull + postcranial skeleton	?	12-14 yrs	N/A
SK15	Skull + postcranial skeleton	likely male	20-34 yrs	1.68 m
SK16	Skull + postcranial skeleton	likely female	20-34 yrs	1.60 m

*yrs = years; †reconstructed mean stature; *Postcranial skeleton of A16316 originally discovered by Hugh Edwards.

Table 2
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discoveries made during 2014-15.

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MOLECULAR ANALYSES OF HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS OF THE *BATAVIA* MUTINY VICTIMS

Daniel Franklin

INTRODUCTION

Evidence from bones alone, especially when poorly preserved, provides a particularly limited insight into an individual's life history; the combination that data with molecular evidence (e.g. DNA and bone chemistry) offers the opportunity to delve deeper. The possibility of undertaking molecular osteological analyses of the *Batavia* mutiny victims, however, has been a tantalising objective that has only recently been achieved with provisioning of research funding by The University of Western Australia and the Australian Research Council. The purpose of the present *vignette* is to very briefly describe the results and implications of recent research into the *Batavia* victims and contribute further information complementary to the previous chapter; more detailed descriptions of the molecular studies are available in the published literature.

The focus of the molecular studies was directed towards seeking clarification and/or quantification of two issues:

- i) to establish if any maternal familial relationships exist between the multiple burial victims (whether they share a common mother); and
- ii) to conclusively reassign the disassociated skull of individual A15831 with the postcranial skeleton of A15508.

The first study is especially important in placing the multiple burial in its correct historical context; although the osteological and historical evidence strongly infer that it is highly unlikely that these remains are those of the family of the *Batavia*'s *Predikant*, the only conclusive answer is in their DNA.¹

The second study was designed to quantify strong anecdotal evidence that the skull of A15831, and postcranial skeleton of A15508, belong to the one individual using a trace element analysis (evaluating concentrations of elements in the bones, such as iron, lead and strontium); this has direct bearing on reassociating those remains – the skull is stored in the Western Australian Maritime Museum (WAMM – Fremantle) and the postcranial skeleton was formerly on display in the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM – Sydney).

DNA ANALYSIS

For this study, a single molar was extracted from five of the multiple burial individuals (SK5/11; SK6/10; SK7; SK8; and SK9); the teeth of the sixth individual (SK12) are too immature for viable analysis. Following mounting and decontamination, the pulp chamber of the teeth were drilled (Figure 1) and the powder obtained was used in the DNA extraction procedure. The

methodology for DNA extraction, PCR amplification, DNA sequencing and analysis, in addition to the steps taken to avoid contamination, are detailed in Yahya et al.² Sample contamination, most likely from the positive control, meant that it was not possible to derive any conclusions regarding the familial relationships of SK5/11, SK6/10 and SK7. It was, however, possible to examine familial relationships, using the HV1 and HV2 regions of the mtDNA sequence, for individuals SK8 and SK9.

Variations in those sequences can be used to exclude the possibility that the sequences come from the same source or maternal lineage; in other words, these two individuals are not maternally related. This suggests that these two individuals cannot be members of the *Predikant's* family. It must be noted, however, that the results of this study have yet to be replicated by a second independent analysis; this is not a high priority in the immediate future given the cost and destructive nature of such analyses. Irrespective, with regard to placing the multiple burial in its correct historical context, in light of this new preliminary molecular evidence, the theory that the multiple burial victims were sick individuals killed early in the massacre, remains more plausible.

TRACE ELEMENT ANALYSIS

For this study three bones from the postcranial skeleton of A15508 (left scapula, right ulna and fibula) were sent from the ANMM (Sydney); those bones, in addition to the cranium and mandible of A15831 in the WAMM (Fremantle) were sampled (Figure 2). It is also worth noting that the colour and condition of the postcranial bones and mandible are visually an extremely close match (Figure 2; Plate A). Prior to drilling, any debris was carefully removed from the surface of the bone sampling sites; 50 to 100mg of bone material in total was removed from each bone using a 3 and 4mm drill-bit. The specific method followed for sample dissolution and analysis (Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry – ICP-MS) is fully detailed elsewhere.³

The resulting elemental association patterns (concentrations of the specific elements analysed) for all the bones are remarkably similar; only seven of the 54 analytes were significantly different between the five bones analysed (Figure 2; Plate C). While the comparison of the elemental signatures of these bones cannot be said to be definitive (because during the period of inhumation there is obviously a significant possibility of diagenetic alteration – exchange of elements between the bone crystal and grave soil³) the extremely close comparability of these elements between all bone samples definitely implies a co-provenance of the remains. This means that the remains were originally in the same, and not in two different, grave sites.

CONCLUSIONS

Although it was possible to extract viable DNA from all of the teeth sampled, it is clearly apparent that sample contamination was a confounding factor. Nonetheless, the study did provide previously unknown insights towards establishing the identity of the multiple burial individuals. The lack of a maternal genetic relationship between two individuals, strongly infers that the multiple burial does not hold the remains of the *Predikant's* family. This obviously supports, what is the extremely strong supportive evidence, derived from the anthropological, archaeological and historical data that was discussed in the previous chapter.

The results of the trace element analysis demonstrates the distinct probability that the bones analysed all belong to the one individual.³ The strong circumstantial case for such an association (colour, condition, anthropological profiles and historical evidence – see previous chapter) all further support this result. On this basis, therefore, an appropriate resolution is to recommend that the appropriate museum records are updated to record their association; whether those remains are repatriated into the one institution is at the discretion of museum authorities.

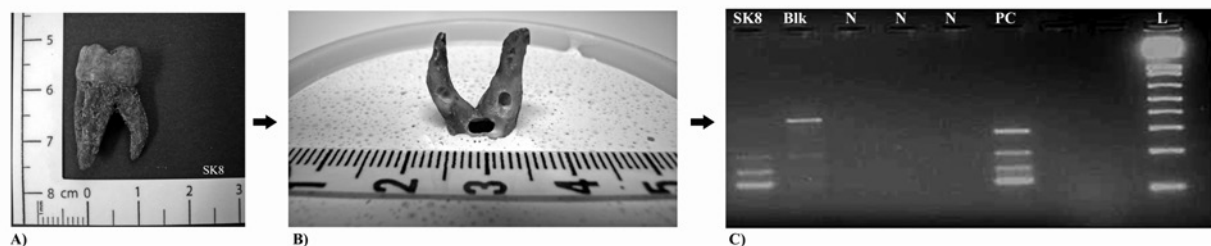
The opportunity to undertake invasive sampling of the *Batavia* skeletal remains afforded a valuable opportunity to re-evaluate previous findings based on the analysis of anthropological, archaeological and historical data.

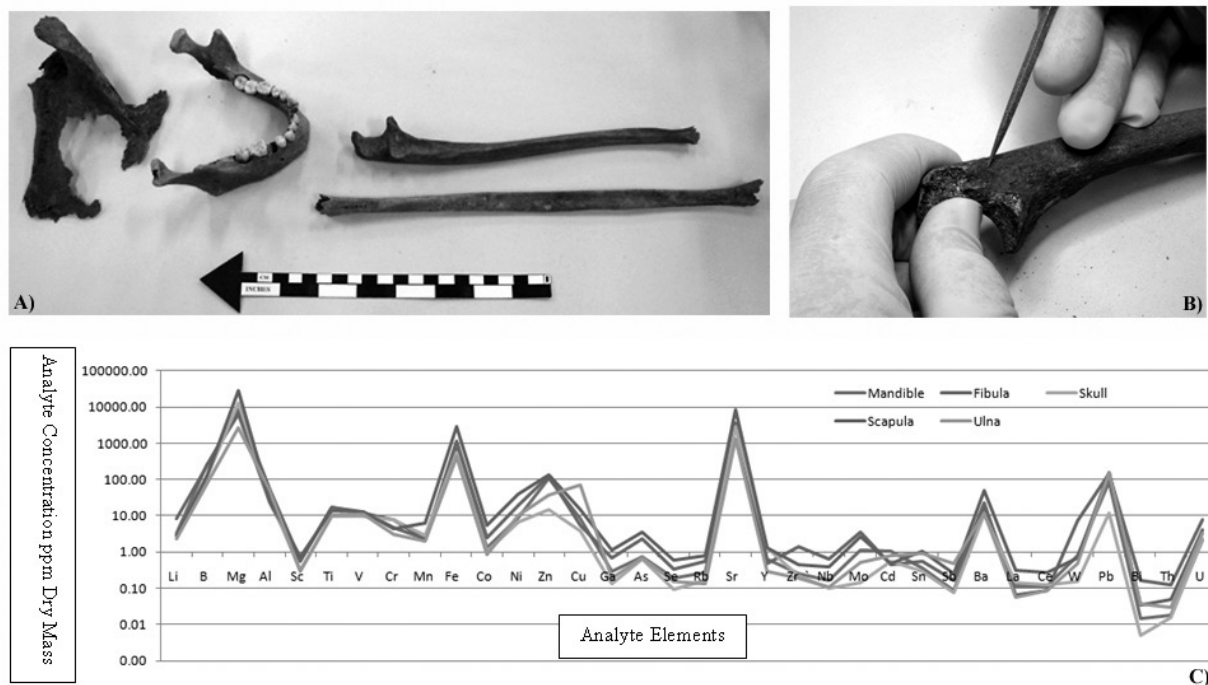
Figure 1

Selected steps in the process of obtaining and analysing DNA from individual SK8. Plate A: distal view of right upper third molar prior to decontamination and preparation; Plate B: the molar following mounting and drilling; Plate C: DNA amplification products of mtDNA analysis using the multiplex primers for sample SK8.

Key for Plate C:

Blk – extraction blank;
N – negative control;
PC – positive c.





ENDNOTES

- 1 Franklin, D., Scadding, C., Stanbury, M., and Watling, J., 2010 ICP-MS trace element analysis for the potential reassignment of separated skeletal remains of a *Batavia* mutiny victim. *Bulletin of the Australasian Society for Maritime Archaeology* 34:1-8.
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Figure 2

Selected steps in the trace element analysis of A15831 and A15508.

Plate A: post-cranial bones from A15508 (left scapula; right ulna; right fibula) and the mandible of A15831 – note the similarity in colour;

Plate B: location of ulna drill sites;

Plate C: comparison of the elemental association patterns of all five bone types.



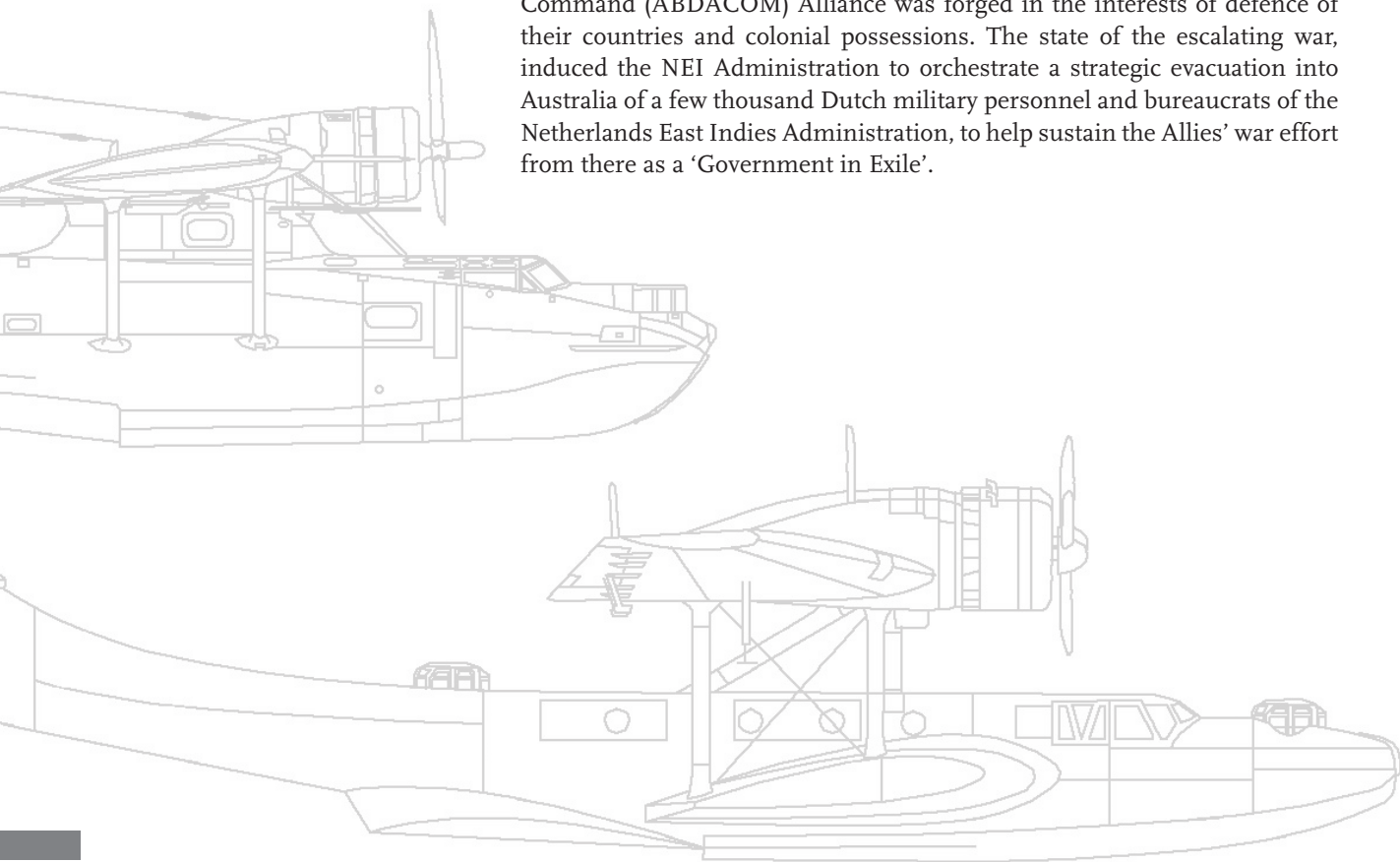
SECTION TWO:

MILITARY

Nonja Peters

This section, explores the Dutch military connection with Western Australia during the Second World War. World War II broke out in Europe on 1 September 1939 when, without a declaration of war, Germany invaded Poland. The Netherlands (NL) faced a similar situation on 10 May 1940 when, despite it having declared its neutrality, Nazi Germany invaded and it became an Occupied country for the next five years. This set of circumstances left its colony, the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), unsupported and also not well prepared for war.

As Japan's incursion into the South East Asian and Pacific Regions became ever more aggressive the American, British, Dutch and Australian Command (ABDACOM) Alliance was forged in the interests of defence of their countries and colonial possessions. The state of the escalating war, induced the NEI Administration to orchestrate a strategic evacuation into Australia of a few thousand Dutch military personnel and bureaucrats of the Netherlands East Indies Administration, to help sustain the Allies' war effort from there as a 'Government in Exile'.



The Allies' losses had been particularly heavy after the fierce warfare of the Java Sea Battle on 27 February 1942. History has described this event as the decisive naval battle of the Pacific campaign of World War II. For during it the Allied Forces suffered a disastrous defeat at the hand of the Imperial Japanese Navy and in secondary actions over successive days.

An important player in this war arena was the *Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij* (or KPM)¹, a Dutch shipping company that maintained the sea connections between the islands of the NEI from 1888 and services that included Australia, New Zealand and Africa. At the outbreak of war in SE Asia, it had 140 ships in service. These ranged from small vessels to passenger vessels that included the famed trio of *Boissevain*, *Ruys*, and *Tegelberg*, which operated the South Africa, Java /Japan route, as well as the *Nieuw Holland* and *Nieuw Zeeland* who took passengers to Australia and New Zealand. During the war the KPM lost a total of 98 ships.²

The Australian War Memorial, records how from 1942 - 45, the vast majority of all supplies reaching Allied troops in New Guinea were carried by the 30 Dutch freighters of the KPM that had managed to make it to Australia. In Australia they were converted to 'Defensively Armed Merchant Ships' under the auspices of the US army, via the Allied Consultative Shipping Council (ACSC). These Dutch vessels including the *Bantam*, *Bontekoe*, *VanHeemskirk*, *VanHeutz*, *Karsik*, *Swartenhondt*, *Tasman*, *Japara* and *s'Jacob* to name but a few – became an essential part of the Allies' (American, British, Dutch, Australian) offensive operations from Australia. Transport vessels were at a premium and the 'DEMS', as they were familiarly known, carried Australian gun crews on board for protection.

All the Chapters in Section II of this book focus on various aspect of the Dutch military connection with Australia and SE Asia before, during and immediately after WWII. The authors contributing to this section: Jung, Eaton, May, van Velzen and Wills, Summers, Appleyard, Houen and Peters, explore the impact – on the lives of Dutch resident in Australia or the NEI – of the highly dangerous often volatile and even extreme socio-political situations and relationships roused by the war.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The KPM was founded by the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland (SMN) and the Rotterdamsche Lloyd (RL) on 1 January, 1888 and took over the ships and lines from its predecessor the Nederlandsch Indische Stoomboot Maatschappij (NISM) founded in 1865 by William Mackinnon (British India Steam Nav. Co.) and on 1 January 1891 started the service with 29 ships, 13 Dutch new buildings and the 16 ships of the NISM.
- 2 <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/kpm.shtml>



Figure 1
Dem, Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij
Hofman Ship in Lae PNG early 1944.
Courtesy: Aart Ritse Hofman www.daaag.org

CHAPTER FOUR

ONE-WAY FLIGHT TO HELL: NEI DUTCH REFUGEE EXPERIENCES OF THE JAPANESE AIR RAID AT BROOME, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 3 MARCH 1942

Silvano Jung¹

INTRODUCTION

I remember that any information or instructions about the Allied flying boats on the bay were not given till we found them in the bay of Broome, and our great fruits of battle were beyond expectations.²

An often forgotten aspect of the Dutch presence in Australia during World War II relates to dangerous evacuation shuttle flights that brought out bureaucrats and military personnel from Java, in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI — now Indonesia), to continue the war effort from Australia.³ First landfall in Australia, after a seven-hour flight, was the small pearling town of Broome, Western Australia. Unluckily, the last flying boats from Java were caught at Broome and all of them, 15 in total, were sunk during a Japanese air raid on Tuesday 3 March 1942 – Australia's third most devastating air raid. The wreck sites of the flying boats today provide a remarkable archaeological record that is linked to some of the most tragic stories of the Pacific War. Some of those stories are recorded in this chapter.

The Java to Broome shuttle was occasioned by the outbreak of the Pacific War on 7 December 1941, which also marked the beginning of a three and a half year alliance between the American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) military in the interests of the defence of the region including Australia. The Allies, however, were ill prepared for the Japanese advance. On land, they were no match for the Japanese armies, battle hardened since 1931. At sea, they were powerless in the face of the Japanese navy. Consequently when Japanese forces, swept through the region, leading to the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, the fate of Java and the NEI was sealed. Civilians began evacuating Java on any sea worthy vessel they could purloin. The luckier ones were taken to Broome by air-shuttle. However, this window of opportunity was limited and all shuttle flights stopped on 28 February 1942, with the loss of the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) Short Empire flying boat *Circe* (G-AETZ) on the day after the Battle of the Java Sea, which saw a valiant attempt by the combined Allied fleet to stop the invasion of Java. Following the Japanese invasion of Java on 1 March 1942, the *Marineluchvaartdienst* (Royal Netherlands Naval Air Service, or MLD) were forced to evacuate their flying boats. The decision to leave, gave the boats' crews and their families, a few remaining VIPs and some of the Java Sea battle orphans and widows a last chance to exit the NEI. It was, the final flight for nine of these MLD flying boats and in essence a one-way journey to Australia (Fig. 1).⁴

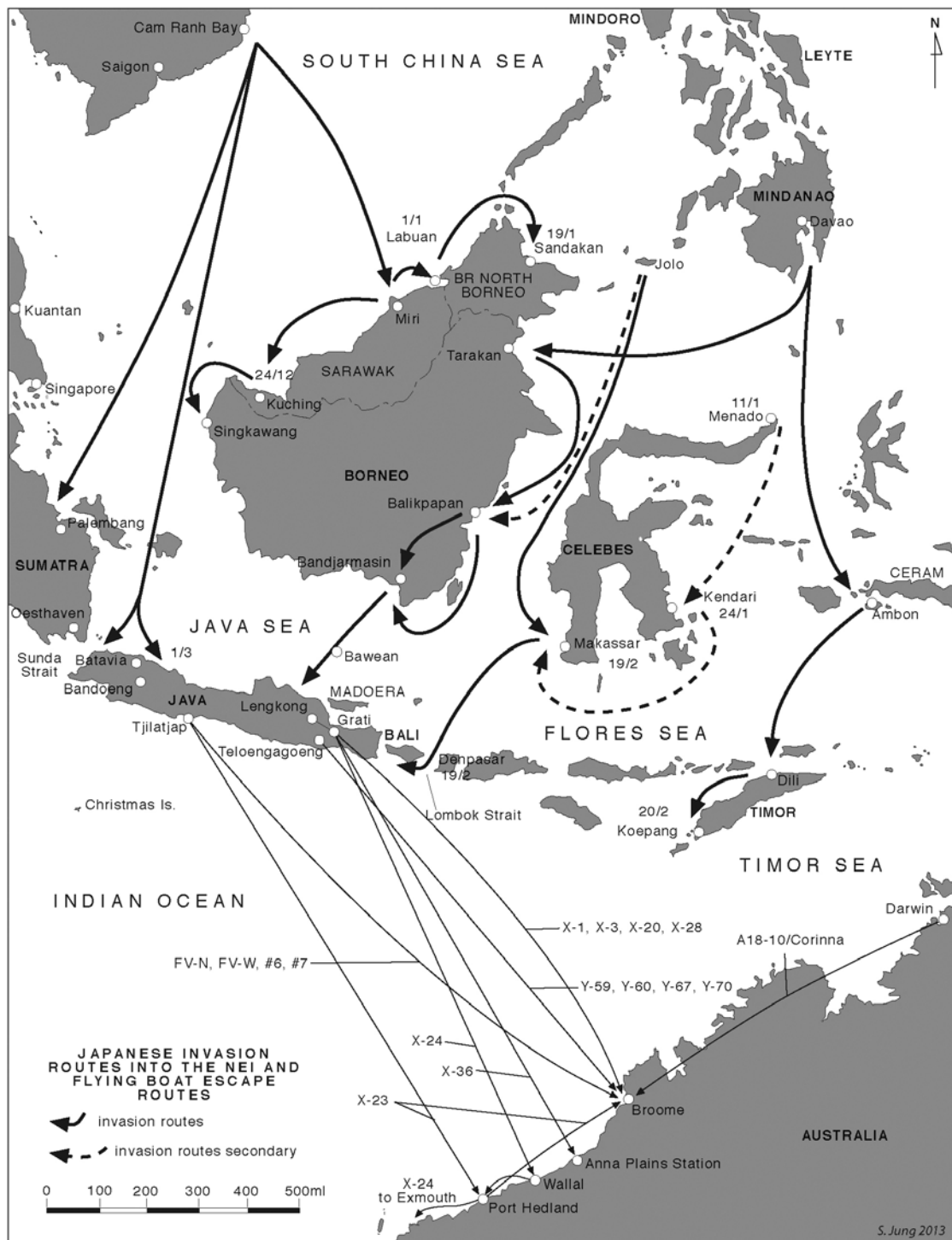


Figure 1
Map showing Japanese invasion routes into the NEI and flying boat escape routes (After Shores *et al.* 1992:473).

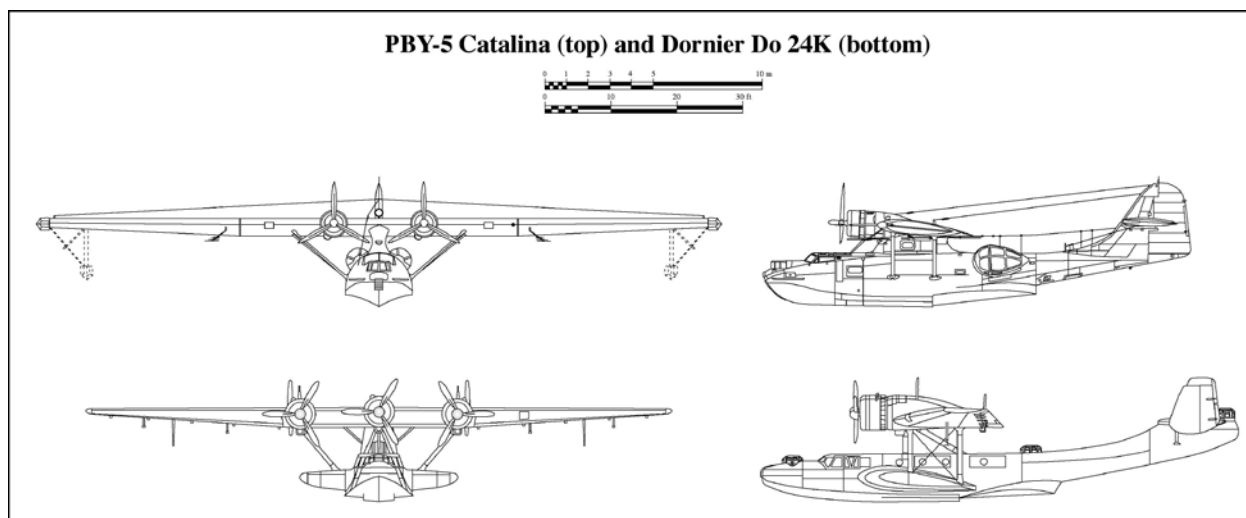
The *MLD*'s flying boats destined for the trip to Broome, consisted of five Dornier and four PBY-5 'Catalina' flying boats. These two types of flying boats were known as 'X' and 'Y' boats, after their serial number prefix 'X' for Dornier and 'Y' for Catalina (Fig. 2). Of the 30 people on the Y-59, half would be killed. On the Y-70, thirteen of the twenty-five on board would die in the air raid. The Dorniers X-1, X-20, X-23 and X-28 would suffer much lower casualties (only eight in total). Approximately 50 Dutch evacuees, mainly women and children, are recorded to have died in Broome. Over 80 Dutch are either known to have been killed, or are missing – believed dead.

There were another six flying boats of the United States Navy (USN), Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), lying at anchor on Broome's Roebuck Bay, waiting to refuel for their flight down south to Perth and other Australian capital cities. A veteran of Singapore, the RAF's Catalina FV-W suffered six crew killed out of a total of 17 on board. There were no casualties on the other RAF and USN flying boats, but an additional 20 people were killed after a United States Army Air Force B-24 Liberator was shot down off Cable Beach, just after take-off. The Japanese lost only one pilot. Posthumously awarded the rank of Lieutenant junior grade — Lt (jg), Osamu Kudo is believed to have crashed somewhere in the sea near Broome.

The *MLD* departed the NEI by stealth, during the night of 2 March 1942, from secret hiding places — Lake Grati, Lengkong (Lengkung) and Teloengagoeng (Tulungagung) in east Java, as well as Tjilatjap (Cilacap) on the island's southern shore. They arrived in Broome the following morning. Not long after coming to rest, nine Japanese Zero fighters entered Roebuck Bay airspace and on sighting the boats proceeded to levy a brutal attack on the unprotected aircraft and their human cargo. It is estimated that over 100 people were killed during the air raid, with the greatest number of casualties coming from the *MLD* flying boats.⁵ While military personnel lists are well documented, the names of the refugees are not. In the frantic escape from Java, there was little time for formalities such as drawing up passenger lists. In this chapter I reconstruct *MLD* crew and passenger lists from known data and new documentation sourced from the National Archives in the Netherlands and Australia and the Australian War Memorial.¹ My main focus will be on the passengers and crews in the *Groep Vliegtuigens* (aircraft groups - *GVTs*) that are known to have had refugees on board: *GVT-7* and *GVT-17* (Table 1 and Fig. 3).⁶

BACKGROUND TO THE AIR RAID

Broome was not the ideal terminus for a major aerial evacuation out of Java. The small town had only two moorings, which were used by BOAC flying boats during the shuttle flights of February 1942. Refuelling was limited by the few vessels available; the big tidal differences made going ashore problematic for flying boats moored or anchored a long way offshore, and there was no accommodation in town. With the recent devastating surprise air raids of 19 February 1942 at Darwin, this Northern Territory town was too



dangerous for a major evacuation operation out of Java. Broome would have to make do as the hub for the world's greatest airlift of people in history up until that time. A hub where many of its permanent residents had already been evacuated, certainly few of its women and children were left in the town.

Reconnaissance flights by the Japanese were recorded over Broome at 1500hrs on 2 March 1942 and again at approximately 0400hrs on 3 March 1942.⁷ These Japanese pilots had most probably seen three flying boats on the water — the RAAF's A18-10 and two USN Catalinas. The reconnaissance of 2 March 1942, found eight large aircraft on the aerodrome at approximately 11.10hr. A USN seaplane would have been in Roebuck Bay too, but the *MLD* flying boats had not yet arrived. Throughout the night and early morning of 2/3 March 1942, a further eleven flying boats, including two RAF Catalinas, alighted on Roebuck Bay. Now in Australia, the Dutch refugees thought they were safe from the Japanese because Broome was considered out of Japanese fighter aircraft range ... or so they thought.

THE JAPANESE

In reality the Japanese had been moving steadily and stealthily into the region since the fall of Singapore, for the purpose of carrying out long-range missions that included Australian ports. For example, when on 2 March 1942 Colonel Shibata ordered two of his chief pilots: Lieutenant Zenziro Miyano to attack Broome and Sub-Lieutenant Toshitada Kawazoe to attack Wyndham, they had been located in Kupang (West Timor) since 23 February, and their aircraft groups had been fitted with long-range fuel tanks, which enabled them to strike targets at great distances from their

Figure 2
Flying boats sketch - Line drawings of a Dornier Do 24K and a PBY-5 Catalina flying boat, two types of flying boats used by the *Marineluchtvaartdienst* (After van Wijngaarden and Staal, 1992; Scarborough, 1983).

base. Consequently, when they departed 335 Air Base, Penfoei aerodrome (near Kupang) at 07.05hr, they were clearly in a position to inflict serious damage on Australian facilities and to effect attacks by complete surprise.⁸

THE AIR RAID

When the nine Japanese ‘Zero’ fighters entered Roebuck Bay on 3 March 1942, their pilots were shocked to find 15 flying boats on the water, with no discernible means of defence. There were no fighters at the aerodrome to scramble for interception, nor were there any anti-aircraft guns. Even so, the ensuing conflict was not a one-sided affair. Roebuck Bay became a battlefield, with fierce machine gun exchanges between sea and air conducted from a number of the flying boats. The attack at the aerodrome was focused on the array of allied military aircraft lined up along the airstrip, and in amongst the exploding aircraft and black smoke, a young pilot by the name of Lt Gus Winckel, grabbed a machine gun and while holding the barrel in his left hand, fired off round after round directly in front of him across the air strip, (he could not wield the heavy machine gun with any accuracy). One of the low flying Zeros attacking the aerodrome flew into Winckel’s deadly stream. While no one saw Lt (Junior Grade) Osamu Kudo crash, it is believed that Gus shot him down, since he saw the Zero that he hit, trailing smoke. Kudo was the only Japanese pilot on the Broome mission, recorded not to have returned to base.

If the Allies were unlucky to have been caught on ‘the ground’, it could equally be said that the Japanese were lucky to have escaped the mission with the few casualties that they sustained. All of the attackers, with the exception of one Zero, were damaged in the air raid and another was missing, but its pilot, 1st Air Private Yasuo Matsumoto, was rescued several weeks later after he was forced to ditch near the island of Roti. The Battle of Broome was a spontaneous and fast-played-out encounter that is generally believed to have lasted for no more than twenty minutes, with both protagonists unaware of the other’s presence and disposition until the moment of contact. It is important to consider that although, as a result of previous reconnaissance flights, the Japanese knew that Broome was being used as the aerial evacuation point, they were unaware of the presence of so many flying boats on Roebuck Bay until the morning of the air raid.

The Japanese mission that day was to destroy all Allied aircraft at the Broome aerodrome, as well as any other Allied aircraft in the area. The raid was never intended to attack Broome itself. On the aerodrome were eight large aircraft, one of which was shot down shortly after take-off. In total, 26 aircraft were destroyed that day, including a Japanese Zero, a DC-3 at Carnot Bay just north of Broome- shot down by the departing Zeros and a B-24A ‘Liberator’, shot down off Cable Beach, with approximately twenty-one people on board — there was only one survivor.⁹ For the Dutch, it was the darkest day in the history of the *MLD* (Fig. 3).¹⁰

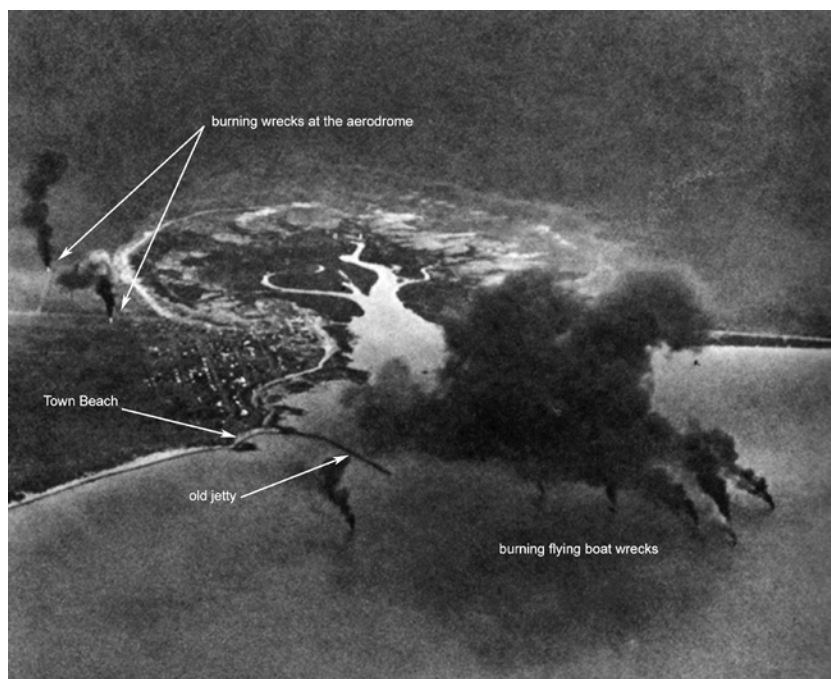


Figure 3
View of Broome and Roebuck Bay showing the aftermath of the air raid, taken by the 'Babs' (After *Ashai Shimbun* n.d. via Willy Piers 2005).

ACCOUNTS OF LOSS – THE X BOATS

End of the prototype – X-1's battle and tragic defeat

From the Japanese account of the air raid, some flying boats were moving in Roebuck Bay when they arrived, but as will be discussed in this and other sections, not all were necessarily taxiing to leave, some were just arriving. One machine, the X-1, was taxiing to find an anchorage in the now crowded area south of the jetty. The following account is from that aircraft's pilot, Henk Hasselo (Fig.4).¹¹ On the night of 2 March 1942, while still in the NEI, he had been ordered to take on as many refugees as his aircraft could hold. Hasselo recalls that in an aircraft designed to take only six or seven crew, the additional personnel made life on board the flying boat extremely uncomfortable. The flight itself, however, was uneventful, although the machine guns had been deployed in case the Japanese spotted them.¹²

Upon arriving in Broome, Hasselo began to look for a suitable spot to anchor. After they had stopped, people were urged to get outside and to take in the fresh breeze by sitting on the *stummels* (sponsons, or wing stubs attached to the fuselage) under the shade of the wings. Hasselo went to the rear of the flying boat to supervise the children and to make sure that they didn't fall into the water by accident. Shortly afterwards, he would be pushing them into the water to save their lives! They had not been anchored long, when the Japanese began their attack. The Japanese were spotted before they attacked the *MLD* flying boats (they attacked the large four-engine Short Empire



Figure 4
Henk Hasselo, pilot of Dornier
Do 24K Registration X-1
Courtesy: Broome Historical
Society Museum.

flying boats first), which gave some of them precious seconds, enabling many people to escape. This also gave Hasselo time to man the machine gun in the tail turret of his Dornier and fire back at the Zeros. He was in the flying boat for a considerable amount of time, before it took on a list that made it impossible to continue training the machine gun on the Japanese aircraft. He abandoned ship when the water began to rise in the flying boat, but not before he scored several non-fatal hits on the Zeros, and was himself wounded by shrapnel.

Hasselo took off his shoes and dived into the water. While in the water, he urged on a boy to keep swimming for the shore. The boy soon tired, but Hasselo and the X-1's co-pilot, Jan van Persie, who was swimming in the same direction, supported him and pulled him along with them. Fortunately, the trio was soon picked up by the refueling lugger *Nicol Bay* which had been chartered the month before by BOAC to service the Short Empire flying boat shuttle flights. Hasselo believes that he wouldn't have survived, if *Nicol Bay* hadn't arrived when it did. He had not slept for two days and was quickly tiring in the water while supporting the child. The identity of the boy, unfortunately, was not recorded. More people were hauled aboard *Nicol Bay* before the vessel then made its way to the jetty, where Hasselo was treated for his wounds. *Nicol Bay's* captain, Harold Mathieson, had the Order of Oranje Nassau bestowed on him by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, for his rescue of many Dutch at Broome. For his bravery in helping Dutch survivors in the water, an Aboriginal man, Charles D'Antoine, and a sailor on the *Nicol Bay*, received the Medal for Humane Actions in bronze by the Dutch Queen.

However, not all the passengers on Hasselo's X-1 flying boat survived. Crew member, Jan Ruiter recalls the horror of the loss of the wife, Cornelia Gerardina Elisabeth and two sons, Cornelis and Frans of crew member Sergeant Jan Piers (Fig. 5):¹³

I will never forget the screaming and the crying of the Jan Willem Piers calling for his wife and children. Not for the rest of my life.' He had jumped into the water and tried to persuade his wife and children to do the same, but she couldn't swim and was afraid to jump, also because there was fire everywhere. She decided to stay on the flying boat (probably near the opening of the door) and was holding her sons against her. He even tried to get on the boat again that was already burning like the flames you can see when phosphorus is burning, but the current was too strong. Two members of the crew had to take him away from the boat by force. Thanks to these men he reached the shore but he was crying and screaming all of the time.¹⁴

The three were the only losses on X-1. All the other 18 crew and passengers survived.

It is impossible to swim against a 4 knot current; the massive tides at Broome were flooding the harbour. Jan was carried away from the horror of witnessing the death of his family. It saved him, but only to suffer the memories for the rest of his life.

The other Dornier loss in the aircraft group GVT-7, the X-20, did not involve such a tragic loss of women and children, although three of the aircraft's crew were killed; Johannes Blommert, Joseph Henricus Wolters and Albert Kweekstra. It was the MLD Catalinas of GVT-17, however, that suffered the heaviest casualties.

THE LIEUTENANT AND HIS FAMILY, SURVIVING THE LOSS OF THE X-20

There are no first-hand accounts of the sinking of the Dornier X-20. However, the son of the X-20's Captain recounts how his father, Lieutenant (2nd Class) Bastiaan Sjerp, had saved him (Fig.6). David Sjerp was only 16 months old at the time of the air raid, but he holds dear the account related to him by his father:

The flight to Broome probably was uneventful and the next day, after the aircraft was refuelled, people were waiting for further instructions. Then the raid came and we ended up in the water. My mother was not a good swimmer and had she not been helped by one or two crew members of my dad, she would have drowned. On the contrary my father was a very good swimmer and took care of me ... I was told that his wedding ring kept going over his knuckles and to be able to keep me, he had to throw it away and never ever wanted a replacement ring.¹⁵

No further information is known about this flying boat's passengers, but it would appear that they all survived, as none of the known persons on board were listed as having been killed.

HEAVY CASUALTIES – LOSS OF THE Y BOATS

Catalina Y-59 and Y-60

The MLD Catalinas of GVT-17 suffered the greatest number of casualties during the air raid. A list of those known to have been on board is found in Table 2. Accounts of the loss of the Catalinas have been found for three machines, with the exception of the Y-60. The first account related below is from Frits van Hulssen (Fig. 7), who recounts the final moments in Java and in Broome and the loss of the Catalina Y-59, in response to questions posed to him by the Dutch aviation historian Prudent Staal in 1995:

The attack began about 9.30 am. The Zeros (nine of them) were coming from land towards Roebuck Bay. The period the



Figure 5
Back L-R: Jan Willem Piers (Jantje), Jan Willem Piers. Front L-R: Frans Piers, Cornelia Piers-Morien and Cornelis Piers. Courtesy: W. Piers, 2005.



Figure 6
LTZV 2 Bastiaan Sjerp, commander of GVT-7. Bastiaan saved his son David by swimming with him on his chest until they were rescued. David's mother, Alida also survived. Courtesy: D. Sjerp, 2005.



Figure 7
Fritz van Hulssen in Broome 2001
Courtesy: Jon Davidson, 2001.

Zeros were over Broome, I imagine was about 20 minutes. I have no recollections of the attack itself. Everything happened so quickly. But I remember that the Zeros made a slow fly past with open cockpits. I was injured in the raid ... Of the crew the 2nd pilot van Emmerik and 2nd engineer Spreeuw were killed instantly ... I believe that a number of the passengers were killed by bullets and many were wounded. The situation after the attack was chaos. Many survivors were trying to swim to shore, but by this time the tide was really going out. My recollection of that day is total shambles. It was noon when I was picked up. It was impossible to swim to shore because of the strong outward current. Thus remaining in our position was the only hope to be rescued and that is what many of the survivors did. How many people were killed or injured is something I don't know.¹⁶

As I mentioned above, there is no account of the attack from anyone aboard the Y-60. Significantly, the only reference to the flying boat in the National Archives of Australia (NAA) is the immigration papers for Klasina Polak. Her papers record that she was a passenger in the Y-60.¹⁷ This is the only known direct mention in any of the NAA records that links the Broome air raid survivors with the machines that they flew in, apart from the tragic loss of four children of the same family in the Y-70 (see below). There were three Polaks in the Y-60 and fortunately they all survived. The only other Y-60 passenger details are the immigration papers for Elizabeth Cathleen Höfelt, who, as Staal records, was on board the aircraft with her husband and daughter Marianne, both of whom also survived.¹⁸

More data has been sourced about the Hebly family, who were on board the Y-60 when it sank; there is an unpublished family history of a *Koninklijke Nederlandsch-Indische Luchtvaart Maatschappij* (Royal Dutch East Indies Airways – *KNILM*) pilot, John Gyzemyter, who was a family friend of the Heblys. This family suffered the loss of husband and father, Sgt Hendrik Johannes Hebly and a two-year-old child named Henny J, while the wife Corrie Hebly-Hooghuis was severely burnt. Gyzemyter writes about his meeting with Corrie and describes what had happened to her since the air raid:

In Sydney one of the *KNILM* ground engineers gave me an identification disc with the name Hebly on it. He thought he had heard me mentioning the name, and said he had found it in one of the Lockheeds, which had ferried people, injured in the Broome [sic] disaster, to Perth. We did not know that the Heblys had been amongst the group of Navy personnel in Broome, but now I decided to go to Navy Headquarters in St Kilda Road in Melbourne and make some enquiries, the next time Dr van Mook wanted to go there.



Figure 8
The photo was taken for an article in *Woman's Home Companion* of January 1943 on Theo Doorman's mother, with the title *Escape from Java*.
Courtesy: T. Doorman 2005.

That happened within the next few days. When I presented myself at Headquarters, one of the officers was Beugeling, one of my old flying instructors. I showed him the identification disk, and he confirmed that the Heblys had indeed been on board one of the flying boats. His file showed that Henk, my old flying mate, had been killed. His son, aged two years, was missing, presumed killed, while Corrie, his wife was in hospital in Perth with severe burns. I told him that we would contact the hospital to find out how she was and how we could be of assistance. He appreciated that, and he showed me the wedding ring they had taken off Henk's finger. He said if I wanted to sign for it, I could take it with me to give to Mrs. Hebly at some future date.

... One day a letter came from Corrie Hebly, who was still in hospital in Perth, saying that she would be released soon, and that she would love to take up our invitation to come and stay with us in Sydney.

... Corrie received an invitation from the Dutch Navy to travel to Port Jackson in the USA, all expenses paid, where she could consult a plastic surgeon and skin graft specialists to see what could be done for her burn scars. She left before us and we promised to contact her as soon as we arrived and knew where we were going to stay.¹⁹

This account provides a vivid reminder of the impact the air raid had on its survivors. No further information is known about what became of Corrie, except that she remarried and that her last name became Speelman-Hooghuis.²⁰

Catalina Y-67

The loss of the Catalina Y-67 is one of the best-documented accounts of any of the flying boats' losses. Two detailed accounts are from Isabelle Doorman-Herligus (the second wife and widow of Rear Admiral Karel F.W. Doorman) and her son Theo Doorman (Fig. 8), who was six years old at the time of the air raid. Theo Doorman recounted his experiences of the air raid in an email to the author in 2005:

... Suddenly there was shouting, the roar of engines and the rattle of bullets piercing the aluminium. My mother grabbed me and shoved me under the bunk. Shortly after, when the plane was on fire, we climbed up to the flight deck. Mrs. Lacomblé, the wife of the Captain of HNMS 'De Ruyter', had been wounded and lay huddled on the starboard side. Apparently she told my mother to go on as she could not swim anyhow. We jumped into the water from a hatch near the starboard pilot seat. I lost sight of my mother and I was sucked

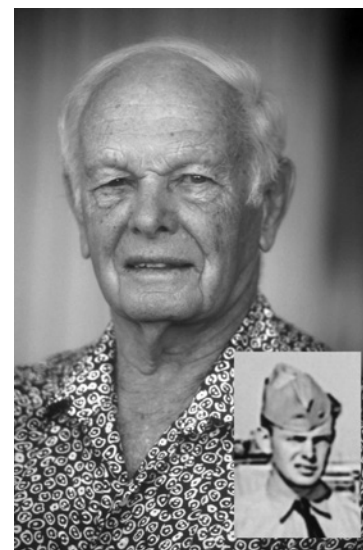


Figure 9

Y-70 crew member Albert van Vliet in Broome 2001. Inset: van Vliet at Corpus Christi, Texas 1942. Courtesy: Jon Davidson, 2001. Inset: Courtesy: van Hulssen, 2003.

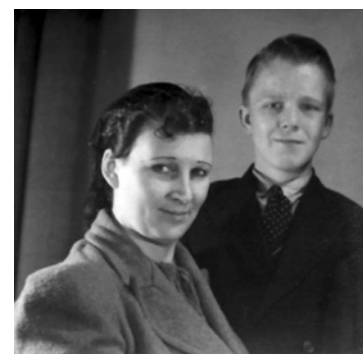


Figure 10.

Y-70 passengers Jeannette Lokman with one of her two surviving sons, Johan Hendrik Jr. (11 years old) in Melbourne (Four Lokman children died in Broome, two children and both parents survived). (Series number: B6531. Control symbol: Left Commonwealth/1938 - 1945/Lokman Jeannette, NAA).



Figure 11.
Y-67 and Y-70 passengers – 'Left to right: Mrs. Hendrikse (died at Broome), my grandfather captain K.W.F.M. Doorman, his (second) wife I.J.J. Doorman-Heijligers (mother of Theo, survived Broome), Commander P.J. Hendrikse, he had the command of the navy airfield Morokrempangan at Soerabaja from 1937-1942 and was ... killed at Broome'.
Courtesy: Jan Maarten Doorman, 2005.



Figure 12.
Y-67 and Y-70 passengers 'Hendrikse giving a speech, Admiral Doorman is seated to his right. Officer to the left of Hendrikse with his eyes closed is Commander J. Schraever, second in command of Morokrempangan'.
Note: Schraever's wife Caroline Schraever-Kam, is seated far right at the end of the table.
Courtesy: Jan Maarten Doorman, 2005.

under the burning starboard wing by a fairly heavy current. I managed to swim free and after a while I saw another boy, who later appeared to be 12-year old Rob Lacomblé. Together we dived underwater whenever we heard the roar of the Zeros.²¹

Isabelle was relieved to see her son being picked up together with Rob Lacomblé by a USN barge. Eventually she herself was rescued after having been in the water for over an hour, fighting the now outgoing tide — high tide was at 11.15hrs. She fought fatigue as her arms got tired, but she wouldn't give up and kept swimming for the shore.²² A further account of the loss of the Y-67 details the horror of the slaughter. Lt. Commander Henri Jutas's account of the air raid tells of the passenger's suffering while withering under the Zero's cannon and machine gun fire, but what stands out is the pathos of picking the survivors out of the water. Probably the same boat that rescued the Doormans, rescued the Jutas as well. The following is an extract from Jutas's account:

I then heard the sound of a motorboat and a few minutes later I was hanging on the transom, utterly exhausted, whilst a Yank was pulling my wife over the gunwale.

The Yank turned out to be a pilot and the sole occupant of the boat. Up front in the boat was a young girl with a badly damaged wrist caused by machine gun fire. In the middle lay a rubber dinghy at the bottom of which were puddles of blood.

The Yank took a knife from his belt, grabbed a can out of the carton, punched two holes into it and handed it to my wife saying: 'You better drink some of this juice: it is the only thing I have' and to me he said: 'You are the second – I found her', pointing to the girl, 'all alone in that dinghy'.

I looked at the girl with pity. Her wound was shocking and a tourniquet was placed on her upper arm. The Yank noticed that I was looking and said: 'I think it was the last thing her parents did for her before putting her in the dinghy. They are both dead'.

We continued on and heard many calls for help. I drank some of the fruit juice and felt my strength slowly returning and assisted to help the Yank pulling in bodies at times and did not know whether or not they were dead or alive. Amongst them were men and women with totally burned faces, some with their hair burned and I noticed one human body with the inside hanging out.

It was not long before the boat became overcrowded and in order to make further space, I chucked out the dinghy. Even though it was only partly inflated, she floated well and could carry at least 2 or 3 persons. We pulled in more survivors and as the boat was now straining under the load and barely afloat,

I decided to switch to the dinghy. One of the English Catalina crews followed my example, thus lightening the boat by two people.

The American now made it clear that he wanted to return to the jetty. The boat was full and the wounded needed urgent medical attention.

... Our overloaded boat with its burden of groaning and perhaps dying wounded slowly crawled along and it took another 20 minutes before we reached the jetty.

Arriving at the wooden stairway alongside the jetty, my English colleague and myself got out of our dinghy as fast as we could in order to help carrying the wounded up the stairs.

My second load was a young woman who did not show any sign of life. She was dressed in black slacks, a blue blouse and a blue head cloth. The remarkable thing was that there was not a trace of a wound. Another girl helped me carrying her up the stairs and once on the jetty I carefully put her down on a trolley. I turned the body over on the stomach and pulled up her blouse in order to loosen any tight-fitting garments. I could have saved myself the trouble because near her shoulder blades I discovered 2 neat bullet holes more or less going straight to the heart.

This shook me a lot and I will never forget that scene: a beautiful sunlit bay with here and there some smoke plumes; the heat of the sun and a jetty full of human misery and wrecked bodies, some of which were naked. I looked again at the dead body of this beautiful young woman and thought what a senseless world.²³

Catalina Y-70

There is one account of the loss of the Y-70, which is from Albert van Vliet, a crew member who did not know which flying boat he was on at the time of the attack (Fig. 9).²⁴ It was van Hulssen who told him years later, which aircraft he was on. Van Vliet was not a regular crew member of the Y-70 and was posted to the aircraft for its final fight. The suddenness of the attack, gave van Vliet no time to do anything except to slide off the cockpit canopy where he was sitting. The Y-70 fire, but not during the first pass:

... on the first run the plane didn't catch fire, I thought, maybe I'll swim back to the plane and then the next Zero came over again and [the plane] caught fire and that was it and we started swimming to the jetty.²⁵

The Japanese pilots, it would appear, were launching simultaneous attacks on the flying boats. The occupants of the Y-70 had no warning of the attack



Figure 13
65th air raid Commemoration Ceremony at Notre Dame University, Broome campus. Peace has finally come to David Sjerp (left) and Theo Doorman (right).
Courtesy: Jung, 2007.



Figure 14
Elly and Peter Koens Doeland who swam to safety with their parents.
Courtesy: Doeland Family.

until bullets started flying around them. The lack of warning, together with the large number of people on board, resulted in this flying boat having the second largest recorded number of casualties after the Y-59, with 13 people killed.

There were eight people from the Lokman family on board the aircraft, two parents and six children.²⁶ The loss of four of the children is perhaps one of the greatest recorded tragedies within one family in the air raid on Broome. The bodies of Hendrika, Jeanette, Jan and Johannes Lokman were never recovered. Their father, J.H. Lokman, had requested their death certificates in 1950, but was not given them then because their bodies were not recovered.²⁷ The death certificates were eventually released and record that the family was on the Y-70. Jeannette Lokman survived the air raid with two of her sons (Fig. 10). She is believed to have had another son and a daughter after the war. She died in the Netherlands in 1989.²⁸

Two photographs have been discovered, courtesy of Jan Maarten Doorman, Theo's nephew, one showing Rear Admiral Doorman and his second wife Isabelle together, and one of KTZ Pieter Johannes Hendrikse and his wife Jenny Hendrikse-van der Putte, as well as KLTZ Jorinus Schraever at a dinner party in Java on 4 May 1940. The dinner was held at the navy club called 'Modderlust' at *Marinevliegkamp* (Marine Flying Base) Morokrembangan in Surabaya (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12). The Hendrikse couple died probably because of drowning. Jenny could not swim and it was reported that she and Pieter were found dead, wrapped together in an embrace.²⁹

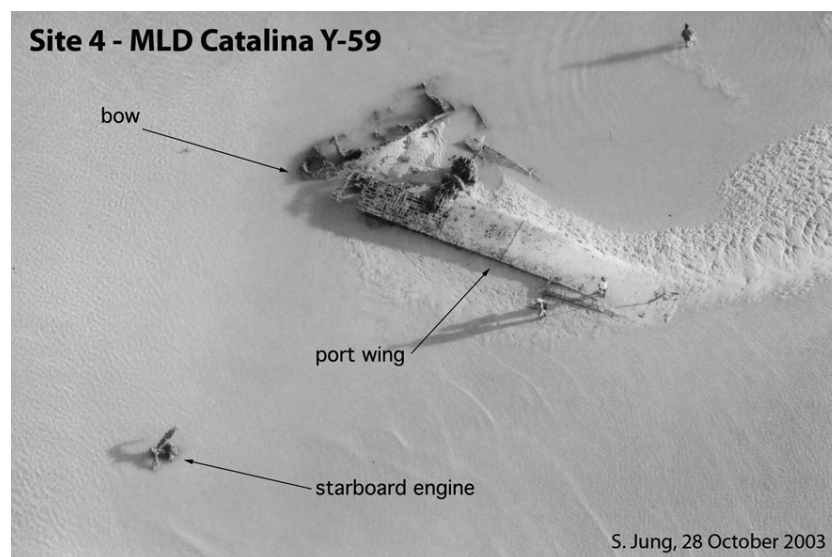


Figure 15
Site of Flying boat wrecks at Broome.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

This has been a brief overview of the impacts the air raid had on the survivors of five of the nine *MLD* flying boats lost in Broome's Roebuck Bay. These were carrying refugees, but the others only had their crews on board and with one exception, they did not suffer loss of life. There were another six (seven including a USN seaplane from the USS *Houston*) flying boats on the bay and with the exception of one machine (the X-23), they all escaped the air raid without loss of life. An aeromedical flight by a United States Army Air Force B-24A 'Liberator', however, suffered the heaviest casualty rate of any of the aircraft lost that day in the Broome area. Like some of the flying boats, its wreck site is yet to be discovered.

The accounts of the Broome air raid survivors in this chapter have provided insights into what the air raid was like; these significantly change previous perceptions of the events that occurred on 3 March 1942. The destruction of the flying boats on Roebuck Bay was a battle, albeit a one-sided battle, with many Allied casualties. This chapter has identified whom most of the Dutch refugees in Broome were during the air raid, from documented sources and from accounts provided by the survivors themselves. For the first time in 74 years, images of some of the passengers have been discovered, and show the human face of the event. Records relating to these people in the NAA also help to establish the circumstances of their arrival in Australia as refugees.

The outcomes of this research indicate the potentialities and limitations of determining who the refugees were that transited through Broome in February/March 1942, with recent research questioning the number of people evacuated by air out of Java in February 1942.³⁰ The accounts of the circumstances of these previous arrivals in Australia, however, would be equally informative about the nature of the evacuation flights. What sets the Broome flying boat refugees apart from these nameless and faceless masses, however, is that the event of their arrival left behind a remarkable archaeological assemblage in Roebuck Bay, that is, the flying boats themselves and the artefacts of the refugees and crews that they contain. It is only recently that archaeologists have begun the process of discovering, documenting and analysing this assemblage. Broome and its flying boats, therefore, have an enduring link with this aspect of its past, and this link still brings back the survivors of the air raid in pilgrimages to Broome. It is now important to give these people, their families and people interested in Australian aviation history, an authentic interpretation of the flying boat wreck sites, which still remain an enigma. As with the people that were on the flying boats, historians and archaeologists may never discover all of the machines that were lost on that fateful day March 74 years ago (Fig. 13). To date, ten of the fifteen flying boat wrecks have been located, but Broome, for all its tourist attractions, holds a deeper significance to passing and future generations that can be enhanced by understanding Roebuck Bay's unique archaeology.



Figure 16
Gus Winckel 1943.
Courtesy: Mykeljon Winckel.

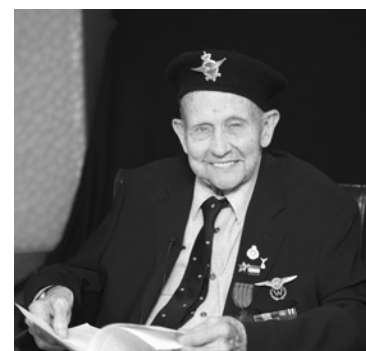


Figure 17
Captain Gus Winckel c2012.
Courtesy: Mykeljon Winckel.

Table 1

Crew and passenger details per
MLD flying boat on 3 March 1942.

GVT	Flying boat	Crew	Passengers	Total	Killed
6	X-3	11	0	11	0
	X-23	1	0	1	1
	X-28	2	0	1	1
7	X-1	10	11	21	3
	X-20	10	7	17	3
	X-24 [▽]	?	?	?	0
	X-36*	?	?	?	0
17	Y-59Minaidao8	15	16	31	14
	Y-60	11	13	24	4
	Y-67	11	18	29	9
	Y-70	10	16	25	13
Totals		81	81	162	48

[▽]Flew to Port Hedland and then to Exmouth. Became A49-6 in the RAAF

*Burnt by crew at Anna Plains Station, south of Broome approximately 40 people on board.

Table 2

Crew and passengers GVT-17, Y-59 (Staal 2004).

No.	Serial No.	Rank or Title	Name
Crew			
1.	15920/D	MILMATRVGMR	ALBINUS C.F.J. †
2.	11013	SGTVGMR	AGGELEN Johannes Gerardus van †
3.	?	LTZ 2 KMR	BORSCH Maarten †
4.	?	LTZV 2	BRUIJN J.M. de
5.	13424	VGMRMT	BRUINSMA Lukas
6.	20508	VGMRMT	CATS Volkert
7.	12519	SGTVGMR	EMMERIK Bart van †
8.	?	VGTLGMT	HULSSEN Frits Adriaan van
9.	?	LDST.ST.OM	KWINKELBERG K.J.H. van
10.	20550	LTZ STK	MULLER Johannes Jacobus
11.	?	LTZ 3 KMR	POLDERMAN H.
12.	20171	VGTLGMT [FE2?]	SPREEUW Emmanuel Gustaaf Adolf †
13.	9025	SGTTLG	TOUR Albert van †
14.	13409?	KPLVGMRM	WEEHUIZEN Henk T.H.
15.	?	LTZV 2	WISSEL F.J.

Civilian passengers					
16.	Ms.	ARENDZ Judith M. † (verl. [engaged] POLDERMAN)	24.	Mrs.	BORSCH-BAARS Johanna G. †
17.	Child	ARENDZ	25.	Child	BORSCH Hans
18.	Mrs.	AGGELEN van – Kooten van †	26.	Mrs.	EMMERIK-BOER Frericka Wilhelmina van
19.	Child	AGGELEN Josina van	27.	Child	EMMERIK Bernhard Adriaan van †
20.	Mrs.	BRUIJN-GIELES Hendrika Johanna de [wife of Bruijn J.M.?)	28.	Mrs.	TOUR-KLAPPER Sophia van
21.	Child	BRUIJN Klaas. de [son of above]	29.	Child	TOUR Catharina (Ina) van †
22.	Child	BRUIJN Arina Anke de † [daughter of Bruijn J.M.?)	30.	Child	Vermeij Judith † (daughter of Doctor van J.M. Arendz?)
23.	Child	BRUIJN Hendrik de † [son of Bruijn J.M.?)	31.	Mrs.	Wissel-Reis E.

† - killed in the air raid

ARCHIVAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

National Archives of Australia, series number: AA1966/5, control symbol: 146, title: Enemy air attacks, item barcode: 1351508, Canberra, A.C.T.

– series number: A12508, control symbol: 20/973, title: HOFELT Elisabeth Catharina born 23 August 1918; Marianne age 1 month; nationality Dutch; arriving in Perth on 5 March 1942, Canberra, A.C.T.

– series number: B6531, control symbol: left Commonwealth/1938-1945/Hofelt Elizabeth C, title: HOFELT Elizabeth Cathleen: nationality - Dutch: date of birth - 23 August 1918: date of arrival - 5 March 1942: arrived by aircraft: certificate number - 318: date of issue - 15 April 1942: first registered at Bourke Street West [contains 1 black and white photograph], Victoria.

– series number: B6531, control symbol: LEFT COMMONWEALTH/1938-1945/LOKMAN JEANNETTE, title: LOKMAN Jeannette: nationality - Dutch: date of birth - 25 July 1911: date of arrival - 3 March 1942: arrived by plane: certificate number - 1252: date of Issue - 14 May 1942: first registered at St Kilda [contains 1 black and white photograph], Melbourne, Victoria.

– series number: B6531, control symbol: LEFT COMMONWEALTH/1938-1945/POLAK KLASINA, title: POLAK Klasina: nationality - Dutch: date of birth – 17 October 1908: date of arrival – 5 March 1942: arrived by aircraft: certificate number-42: date of issue – 4 June 1942: first registered at Heidelberg [contains 1 black and white photograph], Melbourne, Victoria.

– series number: MP742/1/0, control symbol: 76/1/143, title: [Mr J.H. Lokman: request for death certificates for four children killed at Broome in March 1942], Melbourne, Victoria.

– series number: PP246/4, control symbol: Dutch/Hofelt E C, title: Hofelt Elizabeth Catharina, nationality: Dutch - arrived Perth per (unknown) 5 March 1942, Perth, Western Australia.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Dr Silvano Jung, Ellengowan Enterprises, Principal, Archaeological Consultant, 57 Britomart Gardens, Alawa, NT 0810.
- 2 Matsumoto, Y., 'Mervyn Prime Collection, volume 1, section 8: Japanese personnel correspondence and interviews, 17 July 1978', Broome Aircraft Wreck File, 54/02. Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Museum, Fremantle, Western Australia.
- 3 Rorrison, J., *Nor the years condemn: air war on the Australian front 1941-1942*, Palomar Publications, James Ferguson Pty Ltd, Hamilton Central Queensland, 1992, p. 243; D Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force, 1939-1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p. 464.
- 4 Connaughton, R., *Shrouded secrets: Japan's war on mainland Australia 1942-1944*, Brassey's, London, 1994; C Shores, C Cull, and Y Izawa, *Bloody shambles, volume two: the defence of Sumatra to the fall of Burma*, Grub Street, London, 1992; Rorrison, *Nor the years condemn*.
- 5 National Archives of Australia, series number: AA1966/5, control symbol: 146, title: enemy air attacks, item barcode: 1351508, Canberra, ACT.
- 6 Today, pilgrims and tourists flock to the wreck sites of these flying boats, some of which are exposed at very low tides in Broome. The wrecks have been investigated by archaeologists from the Western Australian Museum. The team conducted a side-scan survey there in 2001 and excavated one wreck

- site; this was the first archaeological excavation of an aircraft wreck in Australia. On the basis of artefactual evidence, the site was determined to be one of the MLD flying boats, the Y-59; S Jung, 'Artefacts from Broome's World War Two flying boat wreck sites: a survey of data collected 1979-2001', *The Bulletin of the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology*, volume 28, 2004, pp. 63-80.
- 7 Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force*, p. 465.
 - 8 Shibata, T., 'Mervyn Prime Collection, volume 1, section 8: Japanese personnel correspondence and interviews, 14 July 1977', Broome Aircraft Wreck File, 54/02. Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Museum, Fremantle, Western Australia.
 - 9 Prime, M., *Broome's one day war: the story of the Japanese raid on Broome on 3rd March 1942*, 6th ed., Broome Historical Society, Broome, 2004.
 - 10 Hooftman, H., *Van Farman tot Neptune: Vijftig jaar Nederlandse Marine Vliegtuigen. Alle Vliegtuigen van de Marine Luchtvaart Dienst (M.L.D.)*, volume 1, Romantiek van watervliegtuigen en vliegboten, La Rivière and Voorhoeve, Zwolle, 1964, pp. 170-171.
 - 11 Prospero Productions, *Shipwreck detectives*: Henk Hasselo Interview – Dornier X-1, copy held at the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Museum.
 - 12 Fifty-nine years after the air raid, Henk Hasselo (Fig. 4) was interviewed in 2001 by Prospero Productions, a Perth-based documentary film-making company, which recorded Hasselo's military history and his experience of the air raid at Broome.
 - 13 E Doeland-Koens, via N Piers, pers. comm., 2 February 2004.
 - 14 Fig 14 is Elly & Peter Koens Doeland who swam to safety with their parents.
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Figure 18

A group of young Dutch airmen evacuated into Australia from the Netherlands East Indies to keep up the war effort in 1942. Stationed at Batchelor NT, 1942. Courtesy: Willemsen Family Collection.



Figure 19

No. 191 Squadron ground crew prepare a Mitchell for a bombing raid. Batchelor, NT Australia, 1943. Courtesy: Willemsen Family collection.



Figure 20

Flying boats on the way to Broome, March 1942. Courtesy: <http://www.avonmorebooks.com/images/content/jmag-Mavis-flying-boats-photo.jpg>.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DIAMOND MYSTERY

Marianne van Velzen and Juliet Wills¹

On 7 December 1941 Pearl Harbour is attacked by the Japanese. It is the beginning of the war in the Pacific. In the following months the Japanese invade countries in South East Asia: Hong Kong, the Philippines and Malaya. On 10 January 1942 the invasion of the Dutch East Indies begins and Singapore falls on 15 February. At the end of that month the Japanese destroy a combined Dutch, British, Australian and American fleet during the battle of the Java Sea.

As any hope of effectively halting the Japanese advance shrivels, the Dutch High Command in the Netherlands East Indies decides to move selected military material, personnel and evacuees to the safety of Australia.² Because Darwin had been under attack from the enemy, the small town of Broome³ is chosen as a landing site for flying boats and aeroplanes. Some 8000 refugees pass through Broome in barely two weeks; the small town is not set up for so many people, with only one hotel and one refuelling boat. An American lieutenant, John Rouse, commented later that 'Broome resembled La Guardia airport at its busiest.'⁴ On 1 March enemy troops land on the north coast of Java.

At a quarter to midnight on 2 March 1942, pilot Ivan Smirnoff waits on the tarmac of Bandung's Andir Airport. Captain Smirnoff was Russia's fourth highest ace in WWI. He was awarded a string of decorations, including the Order of St. George – the Russian equivalent of the Victoria Cross. As a member of the Imperial Army, he was forced to flee Russia after the revolution, later becoming a naturalised Dutch citizen and a senior pilot for KLM.⁵

Smirnoff, who has seen many battles, realises that Java may fall at any moment. He can see the Japanese bombs exploding in the distance and he is desperate to get his planeload of refugees out. The passengers on the DC-3 include Maria van Tuyn (a Dutch pilot's wife) and her 18 month old baby Johannes, Joop Blaauw (the mechanic), Jo Muller⁶ (the radio operator), Daan Hendriksz, Pieter Cramerus and five others.⁷ Maria and her baby sit in the co-pilot's seat, as all other seats have been removed to make room for cargo and passengers.

Just as the party receive clearance for take-off, the cabin door unexpectedly opens and an airport official called Wisse makes his way into the cockpit. He thrusts a brown paper bag at Smirnoff, demanding that the captain take good care of it. 'It's very valuable,' the man insists, and informs Smirnoff that the Commonwealth Bank of Australia will pick up the package in Sydney. The agitated Smirnoff throws the bag nonchalantly into a cabinet. 'Guard it safely!' the man repeats; clambering back over the passengers he leaves the plane. The pilot starts the engines and the plane creaks and groans into

take-off position. Smirnoff's Douglas Dakota will be one of the last planes to leave Java.

As the Dakota flies over the Indian Ocean, its passengers doze, but Smirnoff remains on the lookout for Japanese fighter planes. As dawn breaks, the coastline of Australia emerges in the distance. A few hours later they reach the coast. If all goes well, they will land in Broome in less than an hour. After refuelling, they will resume their journey, first to Perth and then on to Sydney. In the distance Smirnoff sees what looks like smoke on the horizon around the location of Broome. 'Is there any signal coming from Broome?' he asks his radio operator. 'The safe signal is on,' Muller replies, looking puzzled. At that instant the Dakota is strafed by a shattering round of staccato machine-gun fire.

Unknown to the crew and passengers of the Dakota, enemy planes had launched an attack on Broome in the early morning hours. Japanese reconnaissance planes had run a survey of Broome's port and airfield during the past days and had noticed the heavy traffic. At 7.05 am, nine Japanese Zero fighters and a Babs reconnaissance plane under the overall command of Lieutenant Zenziro Miyano take off from Kupang in Timor, heading for Broome.

That morning Roebuck Bay, the town's port, is littered with flying boats, most of them Dutch and carrying refugees, widows and orphans from the Battle of the Java Sea just days before. The refugees are crammed into the hulks of the flying boats waiting for the lugger, Nicol Bay, to refuel the aircrafts. Each boat takes forty minutes to refuel, but with the low tide the lugger cannot reach the boats. The passengers have been waiting for hours, but they believe they have reached a safe haven. There is relief among those who have been lucky enough to squeeze on board.

Nearing Broome, the Zeros take up attack formation and in the ensuing air raid, the aircraft on the bay become exploding fireballs and dozens of men, women and children die. After raiding the bay, the Zeros set course to the airport, where they destroy every plane on the tarmac.

Leaving behind carnage, bewilderment, fear and misery, the Japanese squadron is returning triumphantly when they intercept the Dutch DC-3, approaching the western coastline near Carnot Bay, some eighty kilometres to the north. The cumbersome unarmed aircraft is no match for the agile silver fighters. Bullets spray into the aircraft. Maria van Tuyn is hit and her baby cries hysterically. The cockpit windows are shattered and Smirnoff is hit in both arms as well as his legs. Still, he is able to fling the plane into evasive manoeuvres, ducking and weaving the craft away from his attackers.



Figure 1
Captain Ivan Smirnoff. Courtesy: Broome Historical Society.

One of the passengers, Pieter Cramerus, describes the seconds that follow as ‘the greatest flying show anybody in the world will ever see.’⁸ As the port engine burst into flames, Smirnoff knows the fire will spread to the fuel tanks and explode. Their only chance is a hasty beach landing. He brings the plane down in a tight spiral, pushing the control column forward and side-slipping close to the dunes. As the DC 3 rolls to a stop, the wing dips into the surf, effectively dousing the burning engine. Zeros circle above, still strafing the beached plane. Hendriksz and Maria van Tuyn are bleeding badly and as Joop Blaauw pushes the cabin door open, bullets hit him in both knees. Of the twelve who had boarded the Dakota in Java, Van Tuyn, Blaauw and Hendriksz are badly wounded, Smirnoff has been hit in arms and legs, Cramerus and Vandenburg have suffered wounds to their back and arms and the baby’s foot has been shattered.

Figure 2
Initial grave-site for the victims of the
Broome raid. Courtesy: Broome Historical
Society.

After the Zeros disappear, the survivors carry the wounded to the shore and set up camp on the remote beach. There is some food and water taken from the aircraft, and the parachutes are used to set up a makeshift camp.



Remembering the package, Smirnoff sends one of his crew back into the aeroplane to retrieve it, but the fumes and the water made it almost impossible to get into the cockpit. After two unsuccessful attempts to salvage what is left in the aeroplane, the loss of the package is pushed to the back of Smirnoff's mind as he is forced to deal with more pressing issues of survival. In the hours and days that follow, Hendricksz, Blaauw and Maria van Tuyn die. The survivors bury their bodies in shallow graves on the beach. Water is rationed. What affects the marooned passengers most is the pleading voice of the child constantly asking for water. After a few days Smirnoff sends four of the fittest survivors out to search for help. They head south. They do not realise that the closest settlement is a mission post at Beagle Bay, forty kilometres to the north.

On the fifth day the baby dies and Smirnoff buries the little boy next to his mother. The men sit on the beach, frustrated and exhausted.

In the south, the four men split into two groups, hoping that this will enhance their chances of finding help. After stumbling through the bush for three days, Cramerus and Muller run into a party of Aborigines. Despite their lack of English, exhaustion and dehydration they are able to explain that their plane has crashed and there are others stranded on the beach. The Aborigines warn Brother Richard Bessenfelder of the Beagle Bay Mission, who sets out with a few men and a donkey cart. Following instructions from Muller and Cramerus, Bessenfelder is able to locate the stranded and her survivors.⁹ The men are brought back to the mission to recover from their ordeal. As word travels to Broome, an Australian National Airways representative makes a DC-2 available to Smirnoff and the survivors. They are taken to the hospital at Port Hedland.

A few days later a Broome resident, larrikin beachcomber Jack Palmer, sails north, hunting for dugong.¹⁰ As he passes Carnot Bay he notices the stranded Dakota. He cannot resist the temptation to take a look inside the wreck to see if there is anything he can salvage. Wedged behind the fuel tanks he discovers a brown paper package. Returning to his lugger, Palmer opens the sealed package and gazes spellbound as hundreds of glistening diamonds blaze back at him. 'I'll never have to work again', he reportedly declares to his Aboriginal workman.¹¹

At Pender Bay Palmer meets up with two Broome acquaintances who are also escaping the war. He offers Jim Mulgrue and Frank Robinson some of the diamonds, but later that evening, the men get into a brawl and Palmer demands they hand the stones back.

In the days that follow, Jack becomes very generous with the diamonds and before long, he trades them for tobacco, uses them in card games and gives them as gifts to the many Aboriginal women he has befriended. About a month later Palmer decides that he would like to join the army. He is not a young man anymore; when he enters the office of Major Gibson in Broome, he hopes to receive a reward and an enlistment. He has a salt- and pepper-shaker full of diamonds; Gibson stares dumbfounded as the dishevelled,

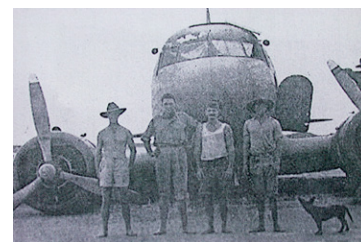


Figure 3
Dakota plane with Crew. Courtesy: Broome Historical Society.



Figure 4
The wing of the Dakota. Courtesy: Juliet Wills.

bronzed beachcomber empties it out on his desk. Palmer tells Gibson that he found the package in the water near Carnot Bay.¹² According to Palmer the package fell apart as he picked it up and most of the diamonds were lost in the surf. What he has emptied on the Major's desk is what he was able to salvage, he claims. For his honesty, Palmer is appointed as a coast watcher at Gantheaume Point.

Because there were no documents sent along with the diamonds, no one knows exactly how many were lost. Diamonds are counted in 'lots.' Documents of The Commonwealth Bank reveal that there must have been some sixty-five lots.¹³ Jack Palmer has handed in only twenty-four. A search is organised and Jack Palmer is asked to return to the crash site with a search party to recover any stones that may have been overlooked when he opened the package. Nothing is found. As the search for the lost diamonds intensifies, quantities of diamonds start showing up around the Kimberley. According to police reports¹⁴, an officer finds a matchbox full of diamonds in his car, an amount of diamonds is found in the fork of a tree and Aborigines, fearing retaliation, begin throwing any diamonds they have into the wells around Beagle Bay. A Chinese tailor from Broome is charged with possessing diamonds when he lands in Perth. In his luggage police find 460 diamonds.¹⁵

In May 1943 the news of the diamonds hit the headlines. Jack Palmer, Jim Mulgrue¹⁶ and Frank Robinson are arrested for the theft of the missing cache. They are taken to Perth and on 12 May a trial is held. Among others, Smirnoff, Gibson, Mulgrue and Robinson take the witness stand. Palmer never takes the witness stand, possibly because his lawyer prevented it, though the trial transcripts do not reveal why.¹⁷ In summing up, his lawyer describes Palmer as a poor simple fool who, after removing the diamonds from the plane, had no idea of their value. His lawyer appeals to the jury and points out that Palmer 'has proved himself a good and loyal soldier; he is the type the Australian Army wants'. It takes the jury thirty minutes to make up their minds. They acquit Palmer, Mulgrue and Robinson. In his biography, Smirnoff recalled the judge summing up:

You have been lucky with this finding. Whether your conscience will come up with the same conclusion I cannot judge but I can tell you this, that under circumstances such as these, the sudden discovery of these immeasurable riches in the wreckage on a lonely beach would have been too great a temptation for any man.¹⁸

In the end, the diamonds returned to the Netherlands East Indies Trade Commissioner have an estimated value today of over A\$20 million. An even greater amount has never been recovered. Frenzied searches have been held over the years, but nothing has been found. Several expeditions have dug up wells at Beagle Bay, but no diamonds were unearthed.

Jim Mulgrue returned to Broome, working in various stores, and Robinson travelled the world going from port to port, never staying in one place long. As for Diamond Jack . . . he became known as the 'richest man in Broome'.

After the war, he bought a blue Chevrolet and a house in Walcott Street, both of which he purchased outright.¹⁹ Residents in Broome remember the day that Diamond Jack gave a group of wharf labourers their entire wages from a roll of notes he pulled from his pocket when their pay was late arriving at the jetty office.²⁰ He worked now and then, but mostly continued what he liked doing best: fishing, beachcombing and hunting for dugong.

Palmer died in 1958, taking with him the secret of the lost diamonds.²¹ Rumours have it that Jack died with a suitcase full of money under his bed, and residents of Broome believe that Jack hid the bigger part of the missing diamonds somewhere in the region of Broome. Treasure hunters still visit the remote north-west coast in the hope of one day finding them.

At Broome's town beach, a small graveyard sits atop a grassy hill. A small modern plaque marked 'Diamond Jack' is the only memorial to the larrikin who sailed the northern shores and found a great treasure.



Figure 5
The new memorial at Smirnoff Beach opened by the Dutch Ambassador in 2013. Courtesy: Juliet Wills.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE DUTCH TURN UP DOWN UNDER

Sally R May

INTRODUCTION

In 1995, the WA Maritime Museum held a conference in Fremantle to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the transfer of flag in March 1945. The event marked the winding up of Fremantle as a World War II Allied submarine base, which had contributed so successfully to countering the Japanese offensive in Southeast Asia. The Commander of the Royal Netherlands Submarine Service, Captain Hans van der Ham, in his address to this conference, described the Dutch submariners who made it to Fremantle as ‘exiled, exhausted but not expired’. He said that these submariners had left an enduring legacy, although it was not as well known as that of Dirk Hartog and the Dutch shipwrecks on the Western Australian coast. This chapter gives a brief overview of the sojourn of the Royal Netherlands Submariners at Fremantle during WWII. Its focus is the impact of this war on the vessels and the Dutch submariners who visited Fremantle.

THE WAR

After Japan’s aerial attacks on bases in Pearl Harbour, Philippines and Malaya, the United States of America and its Allies declared war on Japan in December 1941. British, Dutch and Australian Allied commanders had underestimated Japanese military, aerial and naval strength and capabilities. This pronouncement, rendered naval bases situated in the Southeast Asian colonies under America (Philippines), Britain (Singapore and Malaya) and the Netherlands East Indies (NEI - now Indonesia) vulnerable to Japanese aggression. With obsolete submarines and scant reserves, the Dutch held off Japanese aggression before the Allies were forced to retreat to Western Australia.

The USA commanded twenty-nine submarines based at Cavite near Manila. The first of the naval bases to fall was the American base at Manila, forcing their submarines to seek refuge in Allied bases in Surabaya, Java, and Darwin on the north coast of Australia. The Royal Netherlands Navy had operated submarines from Surabaya since World War I, and after December 1941 their fifteen submarines were deployed defending their bases and British Singapore, where two British submarines, the *Truant* and *Trusty* were based.

By early February 1942, Japanese invasion of Malaya had advanced and the British had withdrawn to the ‘unassailable’ fortress at Singapore. On 13 February, the Allies fought unsuccessfully—in the Battle of Palembang—to prevent the Japanese from capturing the major oil port in eastern Sumatra. Singapore fell two days later on 15 February 1942. On the night of 19 February, an Allied force attacked the Eastern Invasion Force off Bali that

became known as the Battle of Badung Strait. On the same day the Japanese First Air Fleet attacked Darwin's harbour and airfields to successfully stop the Allies using these bases against their planned invasions of Timor and Java. Throughout February and March, the Australian ports of Darwin, Broome, Derby and Wyndham and the northern ports of New Guinea, Bali in Indonesia, Burma and Timor all suffered air raids or invasion.

On 27 February 1942, Japanese amphibious forces gathered to strike at Java. The main American-British-Dutch-Australian Command (ABDACOM) naval force, under Doorman, sailed northeast from Surabaya to intercept the Japanese convoy, in what is now known as the Battle of the Java Sea. The battle comprised a series of attempts by Doorman's Combined Striking Force to attack the Japanese forces over an intensive seven-hour period, but the Japanese rebuffed every attempt and inflicted so much damage on the Allies that their naval operations in Asia were severely curbed.

These heavy Allied losses enabled Japanese land forces to invade Java on 28 February. Although the Dutch troops, aided by British remnant forces, fought valiantly for another week, Japanese strength inevitably won the battle of attrition and the ABDA forces surrendered on 9 March. The Americans and Dutch retreated from Southeast Asia with the intention of using Darwin as a base. On arriving at Darwin the American submarine commanders found that it was unsuitable as a naval base as it was vulnerable to air raids and the harbour was subjected to semi-diurnal tides (up to eight metres). The town also lacked the necessary infrastructure and was isolated. The submarines retreated to Exmouth Gulf and finding it similarly unsuitable they consequently retreated to Fremantle.

The arrival and subsequent submarine patrols out of Fremantle were a tightly guarded secret. Even the submariners who served at Fremantle during the war were unaware of the size, extent and success of submarine operations undertaken until *Fremantle's Secret Fleets* was published in 1995, followed by a documentary of the same name.

THE VESSELS

After declaration of War, Britain, United States, The Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand were involved in strategic defence negotiations. The Allies looked to the US, British and Dutch naval bases in Southeast Asia to resist Japanese aggression. However, neither the British nor the US Navy were well prepared for war in Southeast Asia.

In 1950, Admiral C.E.L. Helfrich, a wartime commander of the Dutch Navy based in the NEI and Australia, when reflecting on his Southeast Asian war commission, noted that the Dutch Navy, despite its elderly submarines, was better prepared to retaliate against the Japanese. Dutch submarines were deployed in forward defence just two days after the attack on Pearl Harbour. However backup assistance was frustratingly slow in arriving and when it did arrive, it was simply too late.

At the time, the Royal Netherlands Navy operated a total of thirty submarines. Some were based in Europe, the rest being in the NEI. After the Blitz and invasion of the Netherlands by the Germans, the Royal Netherlands submarine fleet dispersed to British ports, where unserviceable submarines were scuttled and operational submarines placed under British Command. In the Gulf of Siam, seven Dutch boats were placed under British operational control. Another three were stationed at Borneo under Dutch command.

Before the war, a number of Dutch submarines were built for operation in tropical waters (K-class) and assigned to the Netherlands' colonies (Kolonie). Their newer O-Class submarines were built to operate in both cold and warm water environments. When war broke out twelve K-Class and three O-Class submarines operated out of Surabaya, but only eight of these fifteen submarines were less than eight years old. The other seven submarines were more than eight years old and because they needed a lot more maintenance, several had been decommissioned. However with the exigencies of war, *KVII*, *KVIII*, *KIX* and *KX* were recommissioned and returned to service.

In December 1941, the Dutch submarines, commanded by Lieutenant-Admiral Conrad Helfrich, sank and damaged twelve Japanese ships, two small warships and four transport and troop ships. This earned them the reputation of being the 'Ship-a-day Helfrich boys'. In the same month the Dutch losses were also heavy. *KXVI*, *KXVII*, *O16* and *O20* were lost in action in the South China Sea. *KVII* and its entire crew were lost in an air attack on Surabaya in February 1942. Prior to the Japanese invasion of Java, the Dutch had already lost a large part of their Air Force, Navy and many of their servicemen in the war against Nazi Germany.

It was a huge blow to the Allies' defence to have to fall back to Surabaya and Tjilatjap, Java. Moreover with the continued Japanese air raids, plus failing



Figure 1
World War II Dutch submarine veteran.
Crew of HNMS O21 (with Willem Broetjes on
the LHS) in the forward torpedo room.
WA Museum, MHA4592/18, Courtesy:
Willem Broetjes.

repair and support facilities, it was clear that they could not hang on much longer. As the Dutch retreated, they destroyed any facilities that may have assisted the Japanese. *KVII*, *KX*, *KXIII* and *KXVII* went with the British submarines to Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and three came to Fremantle, where they operated under United States command.¹

FREMANTLE

On 3 March 1942 when the Allied Navies' Southeast Asian submarine fleets began arriving, Fremantle was totally unprepared for its role as the Allies' largest submarine base outside of Pearl Harbour. By 10 March, there were twelve submarines being repaired and serviced there. These submarines were in extremely poor condition. *KIX*, which joined the Royal Australian Navy for anti-submarine training, served thirty-one days at sea with the Royal Australian Navy and holds the distinction of being the only Australian submarine operated and commanded by the RAN during World War II.

KVIII was scrapped after being stripped of anything useful. The bronze conning tower was removed and installed on Fremantle's pilot boat, *Lady Forrest*, but this was removed in the 1960s and scrapped. *KVIII*'s main motor was installed in the winch house of the No 1 Slipway at the West End of Fremantle Harbour and used to haul submarines and ships up the 3,000-ton slip. The hull was towed to Jervois Bay, South of Fremantle, and later destroyed. The motor remains an important element of the main winch room of the No 1 Slipway. *KXII* was sent to Sydney for repairs and continued in service. At the end of the war, it was sold to a syndicate of Australians who had it placed on display in Lavender Bay, Sydney, next to the entertainment park, where it provided the park with power.

Seven of the European based Dutch submarines also eventually operated from Fremantle from July 1943 to August 1945. The Dutch submarine war in the Far East was conducted from Fremantle, principally under the operational control of Admiral Christie and later Admiral Fife, United States Commanders of Submarines, South West Pacific, and later under the operational control of the Royal Navy Submarine Eighth Flotilla, tendered by HMS *Maidstone* and HMS *Adamant*, after it arrived in Fremantle.²

The Dutch submarines that operated out of Fremantle included *O21*, which came from Colombo and operated periodically from 1943 to 1945. It was followed by *KXV* in February 1944 and *KXIV* in April 1944. Both of the latter undertook patrols for the Netherlands Forces Information Service (NEFIS). In September 1944 *O19* survived damage caused by depth charges on its way to Fremantle to operate with the Eighth Flotilla. In July 1945 while on its way to set up mines and ammunitions for a new base in Subic Bay, it ran aground in the South China Sea. The crew was picked up by USS *Cod* and *O19* was then destroyed.

Zwaardvisch arrived in Fremantle in September 1944, working with the Eighth Flotilla. *Zwaardvisch* sank a large Nazi German submarine that was

carrying the latest German military technology to Japan. The Nazi Officers were taken prisoners and interrogated at Fremantle by the Americans before being interned. *Zwaardvisch*'s commander received the Netherlands' highest military award for bravery (MWO) and the crew also received citations.

In 1995, according to Captain van der Ham, the Royal Netherlands Submarine Fleet Commander, *Zwaardvisch* returned home safely, 'with the broom in top'. This is a tradition established in the 1600s and 1700s by Admiral Tromp, a famous Admiral in the Golden Age of Holland, when the Netherlands had four wars with England. The Dutch thought the British were very arrogant and that: 'they really thought they ruled the waves'. Every Dutch ship was required to greet other ships in international waters, but when it came to English ships, Admiral Tromp refused. Instead he hoisted a 'broom in top.' This was a way of saying 'I sweep you clear from the ocean.'

KXI arrived at Fremantle in March 1945 and was in such a poor state of repair, that it was decommissioned and the hull sunk off Rottnest Island. *KXI*'s gun was installed at Freshwater Bay Yacht Club, where it remains today. *O24* arrived in Fremantle in April 1945. *Tijgerhaai* (ex *Tarn*) arrived in September 1945 after the Victory in Japan. *KXV* was the first Dutch submarine to return to Batavia in the NEI in September 1945, followed in October by *KXIV*. *O23* arrived in Fremantle in September 1945, too late for active war duty and went on to Java.

THE SUBMARINERS

The Royal Netherlands Submarine Service ended its final chapter of World War II in Fremantle. After being forced out of the NEI, the submarine crews were deeply depressed but on arriving in Western Australia they were

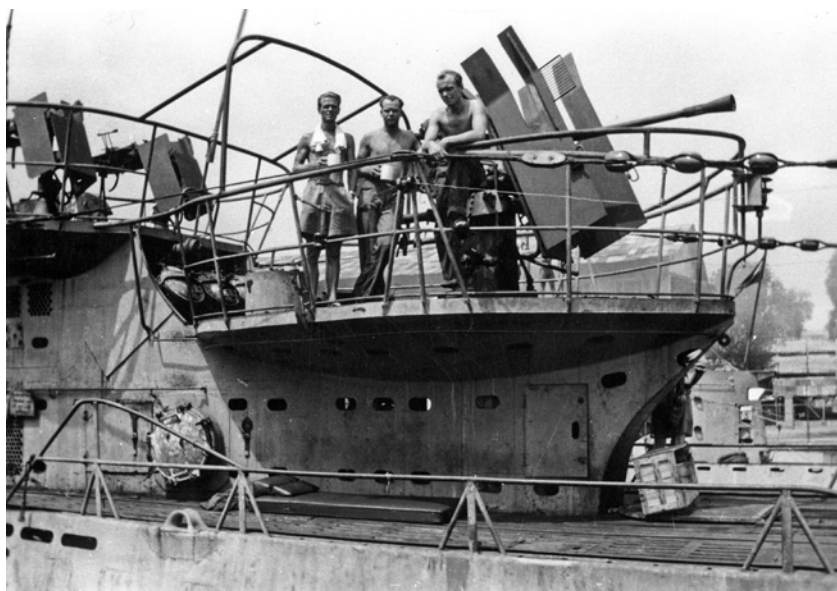


Figure 2
World War II Dutch submarine veteran.
Dutch submariners on board a captured but unidentified Nazi German submarine at Batavia (Jakarta). WA Museum, MHA4592/25, Courtesy: Ary Jongejan.

impressed by the expansiveness of the country, the good life its residents appeared to have and the heartening hospitality of the Western Australians.

In March 1942, when *KVII*, *KIX* and *KXII*, reached Fremantle, the crews were bereft. Some of the men spoke of feeling both isolated and lost as well as robbed of their personal dignity, because they were forced to evacuate from Java, to help continue the war effort from Australia, and leave their wives, young children and all their possessions in chaos and danger and to an unknown fate. Duty had forced them to depart without being able to make arrangements for the protection of their loved ones. Arriving in Fremantle after experiencing so much loss and trauma, it was an enormous relief to these Dutch servicemen to find that life was going on peacefully somewhere and that the Fremantle and Perth citizens embraced them so warmly.

Johannes Loep, who arrived here in March 1942, recalled the reaction of the men on board the Dutch submarine supply ship *MV Jansen* when they first sighted the beautiful WA coastline and Fremantle Harbour. They had left Tjilitjap after the Java Sea Battle and the voyage to Fremantle took ten days. For seven of those days they had had little to eat and they were all hungry. The ambulances were waiting to take the wounded men to Hollywood Hospital.

Coming ashore was like coming home, we received a hero's welcome, at least it lifted our self-esteem. We all received a £1 note [and] the first thing we did was go to a restaurant for a meal. Before taking an order the waitress placed a plate with a dozen slices of bread on our table. Within a couple of minutes, we asked for another helping. She was so amazed to see the bread gone, [so] I explained to her that we hardly had anything to eat for the last week. After a good meal which cost us 1/6 each, we left for the pub. Wherever we went we were treated like heroes and didn't have to pay for any drinks. At the end of the day I still had 18/6 in my pocket.

The Dutch submariners were initially housed aboard *MV Jansen*, but when it was due to leave Fremantle port, the submariners were transferred to the *Wang Phu*, an old merchant ferryboat that had escaped China in the early days of the war. The vessel was chartered to provide the Dutch servicemen with accommodation and stowage of their belongings. Johannes Loep recalls some of the lighter moments of living on the *Wang Phu*:

... As the ship was moored in the middle of the harbour, a boat had to deliver our stores. In the Dutch navy everyone is entitled to a bottle of beer [a day while] in port. ... the Americans ferried all our men and stores, but refused to carry any beer. This [situation almost] started another war. Anyway, after much discussion, the Yanks eventually gave in [and] the Bosun on their Liberty boat who had first refused was then quite happy to comply.

After unloading the first cases of beer we invited the boat crew for a drink. They left some time later in a very happy mood. As an ex-Merchant seaman I could speak English so I went with the Chief Bosun to arrange for our daily food supply from the American navy. Our chief was a bit of an old grump, used to peace-time navy rules. Everything had to be weighed, etc, until the Yankee storekeeper told him you can only get sides of beef or pork, no weighing. The Yank got me on side and said come and have a drink (even if it was against all navy regulations). He liked his Bourbon.⁴

After a while we went back in a happy mood. Our Dutch chief asked me if I had a drink. I reminded him that there was no alcohol on board American ships!

Jan Van Hattem recalled the funnier moments created by language differences:

Boats coming from the UK, as a rule, spoke English reasonably well. They knew that to learn a language, you [had to] get yourself a girlfriend who speaks it and no other language. After all, unless you talk, you don't get anywhere, wherever that may be. Boats coming from the Indies had greater difficulties, but generally caught on [to English] very quickly.

We had all heard that in Australia you could call a dark horse a fair cow and be understood. Everyone knew that a bison was what an Australian Liday washed her fice in. There were difficulties in sorting which was Hay Street and which was High Street, and the old chestnut of the man in hospital waking up and asking: "Was I brought here to die?" and being answered, "Oh no, yesterdie."⁵

In the years before the War, the Netherlands Navy ships and submarines paid regular visits to Australian ports, especially Fremantle which was a vital refuelling depot before their final Indian Ocean leg to Java. After March 1942, Fremantle and Perth helped to revitalise the lives of their Dutch visitors. Although the American Command provided hotels, rented for servicemen to use on their leave, which was usually only one or two weeks, the Dutch submariners never needed to use them. Many Dutch crew lived ashore as guests of Australian families who had taken them in.

Jan Van Hattem recalled that:

Accommodation for Dutch submariners was found in a building in the grounds of UWA [University of Western Australia] near Crawley Bay, previously used by the American Patrol Wing 10 Flying Catalinas. I believe it still stands today, hidden by other buildings. Built entirely of corrugated iron, with very little insulation against the heat, it could become terribly hot. To provide some sort of relief, a sprinkler system was erected on the roof,...As it was not allowed to use scheme

water for [the sprinkler system], the [water] tank was refilled every now and then from the river. ...

Other buildings in the grounds of UWA were a garage, and the officer's club, "Coca Cola". A large part of the income of this club was provided by two slot machines, leased from a "gentleman" who appeared every morning to count the takings from the previous night, and share them 50-50.

When I came back from the *O19* disaster, having no ship to go to, one of my duties I was appointed to, [was to] check on those dealings. I don't think the operation was quite kosher, but we were not likely to be raided by the police. Whenever the owner decided the machines were not producing enough profits for him, he made a few alterations involving a screwdriver to rectify this, benefiting us as well.

Officers were housed in the American Bachelor Officers' quarters, a wooden building on the site where Currie Hall now stands, near King's Park opposite UWA. Several other buildings in Perth and Fremantle were in use for various purposes, amongst which a torpedo workshop, shared with the British, and in Mouatt Street was an office for the engineer in charge of mechanical supplies. Whilst in Perth one floor of the CML building was taken over for administrative purposes. At that time this was the tallest building in Perth and quite clearly visible from a distance.⁶

Jan Van Hattem became third officer on board *Zwaardvisch* after serving on the ill-fated *O19*. At Fremantle some of the men were accommodated on the *Zwaardvisch* and his job was to act as paymaster, 'looking after all the needs of the inner man', plus to keep the books and arrange accommodation while the submarine was in Fremantle. 'Looking after the needs of the inner man' required Jan to organise a truck and volunteers to sample, select and fill some beer barrels with wine for the Dutch submariners. However, 'After about four wineries, all wine tasted the same so we decided on one, and filled the barrels.' Jan recalled that '[the wine was] fairly young and potent stuff, as only the Yugoslavs there could make it. Certainly not everybody on board drank it, but it was reasonably successful. It was certainly better than Panadol [sic] if you wanted a good sleep in noisy surroundings.'⁷

As far as accommodation was concerned, the British-built boats were superior to the Dutch, but the Dutch boats were much faster. Some worthwhile alterations had been made to *Zwaardvisch* when she was being built. For example, the grill was taken out of the galley stove and replaced by a large boiler for potatoes. A large Turbo fan was installed, primarily for emptying ballast tanks..., but as a bonus, it acted as an air conditioner [when the submarine was] under the surface of the sea. Air from inside the boat was compressed, and thereby

treated. This hot compressed air was then cooled with seawater. On expansion it cooled considerably and was returned to the inside of the boat, thereby producing a large amount of fresh water, used for washing and cleaning. That meant that there was never a shortage of water for drinking. There was a very large freezer on board so that there was meat for about six weeks, a luxury unknown on the Dutch built boats.

When *Zwaardvisch* was built, her first provisioning was done by the shipyard according to British Navy rules. Among the provisions were twelve half gallon jars of rum. They disappeared the first night from a shed where all provisions were stored. It took me six months to write them off with the kind help of Supply Chief petty officers on board submarine mother ships. Whilst browsing through the Dutch Navy regulations re provisioning submarines in tropical waters I found that among the daily rations were 4 fluid ounces of red

Figure 3
HMAS Stirling, Garden Island, WA.
Dutch submarine Naval Base, Crawley
Bay, Nedlands, WA on 5 March 1947.
WA Museum, MHA/4561/24, Courtesy:
Command Public Relations.



wine per man per day, probably to provide vitamins for those who did not see daylight during a patrol, notwithstanding the fact that vitamin pills were supplied.⁸

Life on shore in WA was therefore a welcome relief from life onboard a submarine. Dutch submariners when on leave, were under strict orders not to discuss any of their missions and movements. Not that this prevented them from enjoying themselves as Jan Van Hattem explains:

Life ashore in between patrols was a very different matter [from life onboard]. Various relationships sprang up very quickly, quite a few with marriage as the result. A few days after the arrival of *Zwaardvisch*, I was invited to a wedding reception in the Orient Hotel, Fremantle. The bride approached me and said,

“You have known ---- whoever it was ---- do you think I am doing the right thing?” What could I say? Mateship and all that. They are still married. Some six months later *Zwaardvisch*’s engineer officer decided to get married. There was a mandatory two months notification period, to allow naval authorities to make whatever enquiries they want to make. He could not observe this, and all sorts of excuses were made to explain why not, and he got away with it. But when a few days later I announced my intention to do the same thing, I was told by the CO that they could not make the same excuses twice, and as due punishment for not giving the required two months notification, but only two weeks, I got two days confined to barracks, which I was allowed to take on the days I was on duty anyway, so that was no great pain.

One of the weekend papers *The Mirror* specialised in writing up the more colourful events of the week, with great emphasis on divorce cases. It specialised in lurid headings and headlines in the form of the most frightful puns. One example comes to mind: “He Gave Her a Ring. But it was Only a Phony”, referring to a breach of promise case, the relationship being terminated over the telephone. Another instance springs to mind of a judge sitting in judgement on a series of divorce cases. After three cases in which three successive Dutch servicemen were cited as co-respondents, the learned judge remarked, “My, my - the Yanks will have to look to their laurels!”

For entertainment there were the cinemas, dance halls such as the Pagoda in Como, which still stands, night clubs like the Cabarita, United Services Club and the Lido. On many occasions ships’ parties were held, quite a novelty for us, where Dutch, British and American submarine crews partied together as shown in photographs that have survived these last 50 years. One memorable party was held by the combined crews of *O19* and *Cod*. Streets in Perth and Fremantle were,

for the most part, pretty safe - certainly in comparison to what they are now.

There were numerous canteens where dancing took place, like the Government House ballroom and the Perth Town hall. Eating places such as the Florentino Cafe, The Green Gate, The Silver Buffet - to name a few - where food and cheap meals were enjoyed. The latter was one of several that was manned by volunteers. There was the well-loved Bernie's, where you toasted buns and barbequed your steak, but if you preferred a crayfish roll, Bernie or one of his helpers prepared it for you. The dining rooms of most hotels provided good meals, and there were Chinese restaurants in James Street, Perth, and High Street, Fremantle. Molinari's, a roadhouse somewhere near Karrinyup, which in those days was almost in the country, where Italian food was served, their specialties being squab pigeons, home grown and cooked to perfection, and Zabaglione, which was superb. For those with their own transport there was the Olde Narrogin Inne in Armadale. Undoubtedly there were many more, but best of all was the hospitality which we received in the homes of the people throughout Western Australia. Proof of this is the great number of visiting servicemen who lost their hearts to West Australian girls, which culminated in many happy and enduring marriages. I speak from experience.⁹

However, life was not all canteens, dancing and romance. A total of nine Dutch submarines were lost by enemy action, scuttled or grounded, and four were paid off before the end of the war. Some 136 men lost their lives in



Figure 4
Wedding photo of Joy and Ary Jongejan in
Perth, Western Australia. WA Museum,
MHA4531/27, Courtesy: Ary Jongejan.

action and more were lost on transports returning to Europe. Between 1942 and 1945, the Dutch submarines made 84 Southeast Asian patrols. Twenty-seven patrols originated from Fremantle as well as 50 special missions.¹⁰ The presence of the Dutch submariners in Western Australia during World War II was, for some of the servicemen, a temporary transition before returning to their homeland, and for others a place they chose to make their home. Their Western Australian encounters, some brief and others enduring, remain an important historical legacy of those turbulent war years.

Although Dutch submariners and servicemen generally integrated well into Western Australian ways of life, political attitudes began to change after the war when the Dutch began making arrangements to return and govern the NEI. Due to the great distance between European ports and Fremantle, vessels going to the NEI were forced to re-fuel at Fremantle but under the leadership of Paddy Troy, at Fremantle, the waterside unions boycotted the servicing and refuelling of Dutch vessels. Troy's tactic was to delay the return of the Dutch to the NEI, in order to give the Indonesian independence movement time to organise against the return of the Dutch. Although the actions of the unions were politically divisive, they did little to undermine the strong social bonds formed during the war years between Western Australians and their Dutch guests.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Hans van der Ham, Captain, Commander, Royal Netherlands Submarine Fleet, "Dutch Submarines Down Under, Exiled, Exhausted but Not Expired", International Submarine Convention, WA Maritime Museum, 1995, held by the Maritime History Department, Western Australian Museum.
- 2 Cairns, Lynne, *Secret Fleets. Fremantle's World War II Submarine Base*, Western Australian Museum, Perth 2011. Published with the assistance of the Australian Association for Maritime History, p. 167
- 3 H. van der Ham, "Dutch Submarines Down Under, Exiled, Exhausted but Not Expired".
- 4 Johannes Loep, RNLN Retired, comments recorded during the International Submarine Convention, WA Maritime Museum, 1995, held by the Maritime History Department, Western Australian Museum.
- 5 Jan Van Hattem, "Dutch Submarines that Operated from Fremantle", International Submarine Convention, WA Maritime Museum, 1995, held by the Maritime History Department, Western Australian Museum.
- 6 *ibid*
- 7 *ibid*; PS: Panadol was not available until after World War II, Bex and Asprin were most popular brands.
- 8 *ibid*
- 9 *ibid*
- 10 *ibid*

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE REMARKABLE DEFENCE:
SHELL TANKER *ONDINA***Reginald Appleyard**

Prior to Japan's entry into World War II, Nazi German raiders and warships had sunk many Allied warships and merchant vessels in the Indian Ocean. Japan's entry is most notably associated with its attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbour and the sinking of two British warships, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* during December 1941, with the loss of nearly one thousand lives. Japanese raiders and submarines were equally effective in their attacks on merchant shipping from a network of bases that they had established in the Indian Ocean region.¹

A major step in Japan's harassment of Allied shipping was the departure from Penang during the autumn of 1942 of two so-called auxiliary cruisers — the *Hokoku Maru* and the *Aikoku Maru* — both bound for the central Indian Ocean. Shell oil tankers plying the route between oil-source countries in the Middle East and Australia were especially vulnerable to attack.

One such Shell tanker was the Netherlands motor vessel *Ondina*, 9070 dw tons, speed 10.5 knots. During November 1942 she left Fremantle for Abadan carrying a small consignment of wheat and 150 tons of oil to refuel the small corvette *Bengal* that accompanied her. The Australian-built *Bengal* was armed with only one 7.5 cm gun; her maximum speed was 15 knots.² *Ondina* had a modern quick-firing American four-inch gun, manned by ratings from the Royal Australian Navy's DEMS (Defensively Equipped Merchant Ships) unit.³

When approximately 1400 miles north-west of Fremantle, both vessels encountered the two Japanese raiders. The *Aikoku Maru* had been launched in 1940 as a passenger cargo ship. However, with her smaller sister ship the *Hokoku Maru* she was later acquired by the Japanese navy and converted into an armed merchant raider. With maximum speeds of 21 knots, the two vessels had between them sixteen 5.5 inch guns as well as torpedo tubes and float planes. *Hokoku Maru* (hereafter referred to as Raider 1) initiated the attack on *Ondina* and *Bengal*.

Agreement has never been reached on the role and achievements of each Allied vessel in the short battle that ensued. The 'accepted version', prepared by Royal Australian Navy officers, was based on accounts given by Australian, Dutch and British participants aboard *Ondina*. In summary, it concluded that on recognising the two raiders, the master of *Bengal* ordered *Ondina* to turn away and proceed independently. He also gave her a rendezvous for 24 hours later. Raider 2 (*Aikoku Maru*) remained in the background, confident that her sister ship could 'handle' a small corvette and a cumbersome tanker. *Bengal* returned fire but the shots from her small gun fell well short of the target. Then, five minutes into the action, *Ondina*, yet to turn away, opened fire on Raider 1. Her fifth shot hit Raider 1's aft, causing a 'violent explosion'.

She continued firing, as did Raider 1, which shot away *Ondina*'s topmast and main aerials, but *Ondina*'s shots were more effective and Raider 1 began to sink.

Disagreement concerning the respective contributions of *Ondina* and *Bengal* in this remarkable action stems from reports made by officers of *Bengal* on their return to India, who claimed it was *Bengal*'s sixth shot that hit Raider 1's ammunition store.⁴ However, Japanese archives, based on the final entry in Raider 1's log, record that a shot from *Ondina* striking its spare torpedo was the cause of her sinking.⁵ Dutch officials, whom I interviewed in 1971, were adamant that *Bengal* was simply not involved in the battle and that when the first shots were fired she 'ran for cover'. Norman Wilkinson's painting of the battle scene includes *Bengal* in the action (Figure 1), but the Shell official in whose office the painting hangs agreed that while it is a nice painting 'it would be accurate if *Bengal* wasn't in it'!

Wilkinson was a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Navy during World War I and a marine artist during World War II. His 'dazzle painting' technique was a new method of disguising ships at sea. The *Ondina* battle, painted c. 1945, is held at the Shell Company Office, The Hague, Netherlands.

There is less disagreement concerning the second phase of the battle. With her sister ship sinking Raider 2 came after *Ondina*. Her ammunition exhausted, *Ondina* surrendered by hoisting two white sheets. But Raider 2 continued the attack, one shot hitting the bridge and killing Captain Horsman (Figure 2).

The crew abandoned the vessel in lifeboats and Raider 2 fired two torpedos into *Ondina* at 400 yards, causing two large holes below the waterline. She listed 35 degrees and, as the official report notes, must have 'appeared to the raider to be doomed'. Raider 2 then opened fire with machine guns on survivors in the lifeboats, killing three and wounding another three, before rescuing crew from Raider 1, many of whom were alive in the water.⁶

With Raider 2 gone, the crew, some badly wounded in *Ondina*'s lifeboats, which were leaking from gunfire, and hundreds of miles from the Australian coast, decided to try and board the burning, listing ship. They were surprised that, despite clouds of smoke streaming from the vessel, the fire was essentially superficial and, most importantly, the engine room had not been damaged. *Ondina*'s list was rectified by flooding empty tanks opposite those through which the torpedos had entered. Severe damage to the bridge required the ship to be steered initially from the emergency wheel located aft above the rudder. Thus, by nightfall, *Ondina* was underway, headed for Fremantle which she reached on November 18, seven days after the battle.



Figure 1
Norman Wilkinson's oil painting illustrates the battle, mid-Indian Ocean during November 1942, between Shell Oil tanker *Ondina*, and the Royal Indian Navy corvette *Bengal*, and two Japanese raiders, *Hokoku Maru* and *Aikoku Maru*. *Ondina* is seen firing at *Hokoku Maru*, already ablaze. *Aikoku Maru*, yet to engage in the battle, is on the horizon. *Bengal* is also engaged in battle. Courtesy: Royal Dutch Shell plc.



Figure 2
 "Near where the tanker's captain was killed".
 Courtesy: The Shell Company of Australia
 Limited, *Fifty Years in Western Australia 1908-1958*, written and edited by Frank A. Bird, WA
 Newspapers Periodical Division, 1958, p.42.

Local Shell officials who met *Ondina* as she entered the harbour accompanied by four (or five) navy vessels, could hardly believe what they saw: '... a gaping hole through which two buses could be driven', said one of them. 'God knows how she made it.' 'Everyone was surprised to actually see us', said one of the crew. 'They'd been told, in a message from *Bengal*, that we'd been sunk'.

Back in India similar celebrations as those held in Fremantle were arranged for the crew of *Bengal* '... which recently made history in the Indian Ocean by sinking a heavily armed Japanese raider nearly ten times her size', declared the *Times of India*.

Though damaged but safe alongside North Wharf (Figure 3), the hardly-seaworthy *Ondina* was in need of extensive repairs. However, in 1942 Fremantle Port was not noted for its facilities to repair damaged vessels. The port had several small slipways but no dry dock, so repairs had to be done while the ship was tied up at the wharf. It was a huge job, recalled Alan Chalmers, then a young employee at Fremantle Foundry & Engineering Company, which had won the repair contract. McLarty's boilermakers, according to Don Monteath and Norm Hugo, former employees, never stopped working on *Ondina*. The State Implement Works was also involved because it had the kind of equipment necessary to complete the job.

To the credit of these participating companies and their workers, *Ondina* was ready to sail by mid-1943. By then, the fortunes of war had moved slightly in favour of the Allies, and submarines based at Fremantle (located in pens close to the railway bridge), had to travel increasingly further northwards to confront Japanese vessels in south-east Asian waters. However, their limited capacity for fuel storage restricted the distance that they could travel from Fremantle. They needed a re-fuelling base en route. As the military base at Exmouth Gulf was an important cog in strategic plans to defeat the enemy, it was decided to send *Ondina* to the Gulf where, at anchor, she would refuel or 'top-up' submarines on their journeys from Fremantle to the war zone and also on their return journeys.

Accompanied by a small American XP boat, *Ondina's* voyage to Exmouth Gulf was unduly long due to her condition. Anchored about three miles offshore (Figure 4⁷), she was protected by an anti-submarine net. When an



Figure 3
 Aerial starboard side view of the Dutch
 tanker *Ondina*, North Wharf, Fremantle.
 Courtesy: the Australian War Memorial,
 Neg: 303731.

allied submarine approached for fuel, one of the YP boats would take hold of the protective net and swing it away so that the submarine could enter and refuel. *Ondina* also had a supply of aviation fuel taken by smaller vessels to seaplanes.

In mid-1943 oil tankers were in very short supply and so it was decided to send *Ondina* to the United States. She took an incredibly long ninety-four days to reach the Panama Canal. Repairs and re-construction were made at Tampa, Florida, and for the remainder of the war *Ondina* transported aircraft across the Atlantic, an extra deck having been added to accommodate them⁸. At war's end she was repainted in peacetime colours and served Shell until broken up in 1960. On 12 February 1956 she returned to Fremantle. As she slipped quietly into the harbour, few Western Australians were there to recall her dramatic entry under vastly different circumstances during November 1942.

Of the battle itself, one can only applaud the courage and discipline of *Ondina's* gun crew, hopelessly outnumbered in terms of guns and ammunition, and also the skills of the officers who brought her back to Fremantle and, in particular, the Chinese quartermaster, Ah Kong, who remained on the bridge throughout the battle when the Master had been killed alongside him⁹. The Shell Company is understandably proud of its officers. Prominently displayed at the company's Rotterdam headquarters is *Ondina's* bell, mounted on an ornate stand. Fremantle's boilermakers worked incessantly for seven months to get the vessel seaworthy and play an important role at Exmouth Gulf. Not only did the loss of Raider 1 contribute to the Japanese government's decision to abandon raider warfare,¹⁰ but the outcome of the battle lifted to new heights the sagging morale of the Allies, at a time when almost every news item reported losses on land and sea.

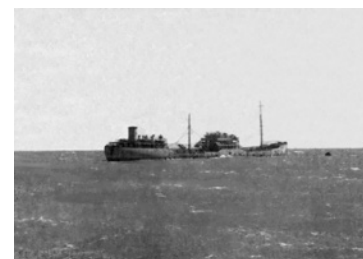


Figure 4
Ondina at anchor several miles off shore, Exmouth Gulf. From the personal album of Commander Dulm, The Hague, Netherlands.

ENDNOTES

- 1 This paper is essentially a summary of an article by the author titled, "The Ondina Saga, November 1942" in *Early days*, volume 12, part 2, 2002, pp.141-154.
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- 3 Davies, Lloyd., "A remarkable victory", mimeo, 2002, p.3.
- 4 Australian National Archives, B614/3, 1644.
- 5 Australian War Memorial Archives, file 419/114/029
- 6 Stanton-Hope, I. W E., *Tanker Fleet. The war story of Shell tankers and the men who manned them*, London, Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, 1948, p.82.
- 7 Grateful thanks of appreciation to Barry Sullivan, Royal Western Australian Historical Society (RWAHS), who digitally restored the plates presented in this article to a quality suitable for publication.
- 8 National Archives of Australia, Series B 6121/3, item 1644, folio 38f; Alex Marcus, DEMS, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1986, p.120.
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CHAPTER EIGHT

OPERATION POTSHOT: DUTCH AIRMEN IN
THE DEFENCE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1944

Charles S. Eaton and Silvano Jung

Although only an insignificant footnote in the history of the Pacific war, one incident, known as ‘Operation Potshot’, proved to be an unexpected excitement for two Netherlands East Indies Air Force (NEIAF) Squadrons. Indeed, some of the Dutch airmen of 18 NEI Squadron (Sqdn) of B 25 Mitchell bombers and 120 NEI Sqdn of Kittyhawk fighters, referred to the whole exercise as being one of a ‘bizarre kind’.¹

Potshot was approximately six kilometres north of the present day airstrip at Learmouth on Exmouth Gulf, Western Australia. The base was originally named ‘The Potshot Venture’ by the United States Navy (USN) and it was initially used for refuelling submarines.² Later, the base would be serviced by seaplane tenders, which provided support to Catalina flying boats of the United States Navy’s (USN) Fleetwing Ten.³

In March 1944 there was a major and sudden re-deployment of the RAAF’s 79 Wing, based in Batchelor in the Northern Territory, to Potshot; 18 NEI Sqdn was a unit of that wing. Earlier that month, Japanese aircraft carriers

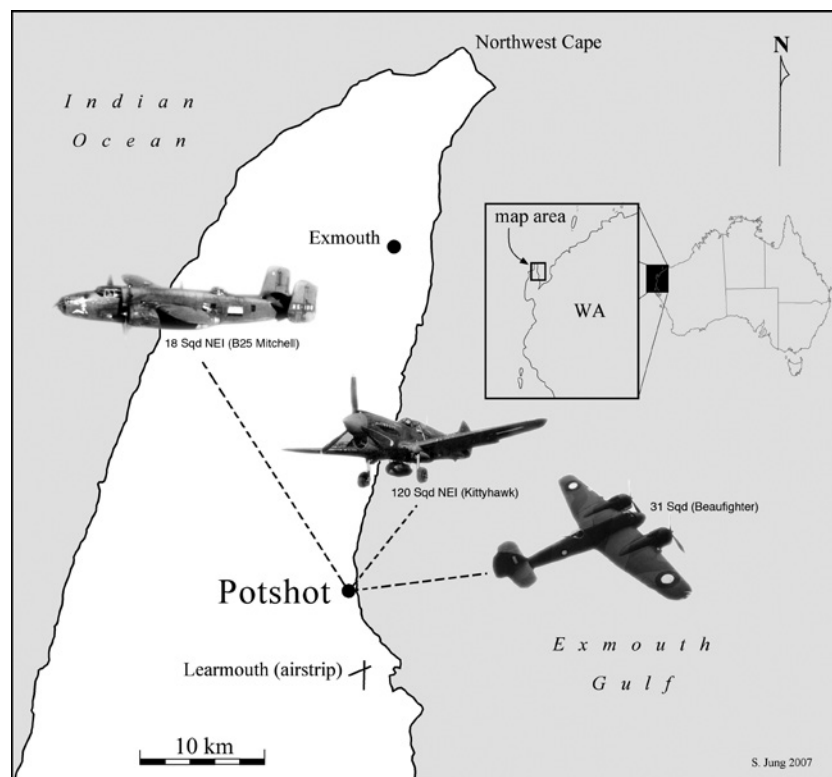


Figure 1
Potshot location map (After McNabb, 1995).

had been seen to arrive in Singapore harbour and some of their capital ships were reported to be in the Indian Ocean.⁴ As Japan had suffered a series of defeats elsewhere, it was thought that they might try a face-saving diversionary attack, either on the air bases around Exmouth Gulf, or on the port city of Fremantle.⁵ The Australian High Command did not want to be caught off-guard, so it ordered two squadrons of 79 Wing — 31 (Beaufighter) Sqdn and 18 NEI Sqdn — *post-haste* to Potshot airstrip in the Exmouth Gulf to repulse any Japanese attack. In addition 120 NEI (Kittyhawk) Sqdn, although based in the eastern states, was seconded to 79 Wing to act as fighter protection for the bombers.

The order was given to Group Captain Charles ‘Moth’ Eaton, Commanding Officer of 79 Wing, by the RAAF’s operational command to transfer his headquarters and the two squadrons to Potshot at 7.30 pm on 8 March 1944. Eaton was a permanent RAAF officer, who had been both a soldier and a reconnaissance pilot in WWI. In 1918 he was a fellow inmate with Captain Charles de Gaulle in the dungeons of *Festung Neun*, a German fortress that specifically catered for ‘undesirable’ prisoners of war. After participating in the first air survey of India, Eaton migrated to Australia where he commanded two dramatic searches for lost airmen in the Australian desert prior to WWII.⁶

By 10 am the next day, 18 and 31 Sqdns left Batchelor and Coomalie Creek and landed at Potshot that afternoon.⁷ Eighteen transport aircraft were employed just to transfer the Wing’s equipment and ground personnel. The aircraft arrived in the middle of a tropical cyclone, but as urgency was essential in response to what was considered a serious threat to Australia’s security, the weather factor was disregarded. The historian of the Dutch war effort in Australia, Douglas Hurst, wrote that the cyclone was so powerful, with winds up to 200 kilometres per hour, that when landing, some of the 18 Sqdn’s bombers had to put on ‘power to avoid being blown backwards and landed almost vertically, like a helicopter’.⁸

On landing, all aircraft were confined to the airstrip’s apron, to move off the tarmac would have resulted in ‘bogging’ in the saturated earth. The cyclone had ‘converted the airfield and camp into a swamp’.⁹ One of 18 Sqdn’s Australian guards, LAC Clive Digglmans, had vivid impressions of Operation Potshot:

Well, what a panic there is today, they have given us about two hours to get ready to move, we don’t know where we are going, but FO Curtis says he does not like it at all, and that we are going to a very hot spot and the whole Squadron is going by plane ... so things don’t look too good ... I have written to Mum and told her not to worry about me. We left at about 10 a.m.... We landed at Wyndham, the weather was very rough on the way over ... the plane was wallowing all over the sky ... I have never seen so many close shaves in my life.¹⁰



Figure 2
RAAF and NEIAF airmen of 79 Wing
Exmouth Gulf, March 1944. Second from
left, later General Dirk Ajses of the Royal
Netherlands Air Force (Photo. No. P920775,
Charles Eaton Collection).



Figure 3
Kittyhawk of No. 120 NEI Squadron, Potshot, March 1944 (Photo. No. P920782, Charles Eaton Collection).



Figure 4
Beaufighter of No 31 Squadron at Potshot March 1944 (Photo. No. P920783, Charles Eaton Collection).

Once the squadrons and their support staff were established in Potshot, Eaton immediately drew up an elaborate network of defences for the Wing's temporary base. Perhaps his experiences as a Lance-Corporal in the trenches on the Western Front in 1915 and defending Vimy Ridge a year later, helped form his defence planning, as his trench layout and machine gun deployment strategies were purely 'army'. Eaton's defence orders were outlined as:

INFORMATION

- I. Enemy Forces. Hostile Forces may be expected to make attacks on this Base in the near future by means of low flying aircraft, airborne troops or a naval force. These attacks may be heavy and might be simultaneous.
- 2 Own Forces. Available to defend this base in such an eventuality are the following aircraft and personnel of 79 Wing and 72 O.B.U. [Operational Base Unit]

79 Wing HQ consisting of 12 personnel of all ranks. O.B.U. 98

18 Sqdn 76 consisting of ground staff, all ranks together with 15 B 25 A/Craft complete crews.

120 Sqdn (N.E.I.) consisting of 94 ground staff, with 8 Kittyhawks, complete with crews.

31 Sqdn (RAAF) consisting of 89 ground staff, with 11 Beaufighters, complete with crews.
3. Defence Equipment available consists of 14 .50 cal. M.G.s, two Bren guns, and all personnel armed, in the case of Officers, with pistols, and of other ranks, with Tommy guns, rifles and bayonets. There is an adequate supply of ammunition for all weapons, the .50 M.G.'s are sited to cover the runways and dispersal areas, the Bren Guns are in a position to cover the Camp Area. Of the personnel of 18 Sqdn there are two fully equipped and trained Security Guard sections, totalling 23 men.

INTENTION

- I. This base will offer the most strenuous resistance to any form of attack¹¹

Eaton had just 369 Dutch and Australian men of all ranks, including himself, to defend Potshot airstrip from a possible Japanese land invasion. He strengthened his defence network by strategically deploying anti-aircraft and machine guns with their respective arcs of fire, organising perimeter and beach patrols twenty-four hours a day and providing adequate ammunition, food supplies and back up medical services with first aid posts. Mobile teams were appointed in case of enemy breakthroughs, trenches were dug, and all

ranks were issued with either pistols or Tommy guns, emergency rations and full water bottles. In a central and well-guarded storage area, Eaton ordered that there be a week's provisions and water for 370 men. In his demolition and evacuation orders, Eaton listed twenty-six possible eventualities and what action each section leader should take.

In spite of the weather, aircraft of Eaton's two Dutch squadrons and 31 Sqdn RAAF managed sea reconnaissance flights, but no Japanese ships or aircraft were sighted. After ten days, 'Operation Potshot' was called off after what was described as 'a very tough ten days'. Eaton gave his officers and airmen relaxation and recreation time to trawl off the fish-rich coastline of Exmouth Gulf. After returning to their home base, Batchelor was a very welcome sight for some of the Dutch airmen: 'our humble tent camp seemed like El Dorado in comparison to Potshot.'¹²

Hurst wrote, that one Australian engineer attached to 18 NEI Sqdn concluded that the whole operation was 'a waste of time' and influenced his Dutch pilot to fly a Mitchell bomber to Perth for 'essential repairs'. Although the repairs were unsuccessful when trying to 'fix their troubles', it gave the young engineer ample opportunity to see his wife and newborn baby! Hurst continued: 'Once repaired there (in Boulder), they then flew back to Batchelor, having completed one of the best executed exercises in international co-operation held during the war'.¹³

It is not known if his wing commander 'Moth' Eaton was aware of the questionable validity of the Mitchell's 'essential repairs', but Eaton also flew down to Perth in a Beaufighter of 31 Sqdn at the same time.¹⁴ Charles Eaton was later honoured when Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands bestowed on him the prestigious decoration of 'Knight Commander of the Order of the Oranje Nassau with Swords', perhaps for his efforts in 'international cooperation' in welding the RAAF and NEIAF into efficient fighting units of 79 Wing.¹⁵⁻²⁰ In late 1944 Charles Eaton was appointed Air Officer Commanding Southern Area and in 1947 he became Australia's representative on the UN Consular Commission, that supervised the cease-fire of hostilities in Indonesia. He was to become the last Australian Consul General appointed to the Netherlands East Indies and in December 1949 he was appointed Australia's *Chargé d'Affaires* to an independent Indonesia.

While many believed that 'Operation Potshot' was a waste of time, the deployment was efficiently carried out in shocking conditions and it was a miracle that no serious damage was recorded by the squadrons involved. In 2005 it was revealed by Professor Hiromi Tanaka, of Japan's National Defence Academy, that the Japanese had between five and ten spies stationed on small islands around the Australian coast during the war. Furthermore, in 1944, 17 suspected Japanese informers masquerading as 'ethnic Chinese from Japanese-occupied Java', were picked up on board a boat named the *Bandoeng Maru* only three miles off the coast of Western Australia.¹⁶ The Japanese were fully aware of the airstrip at Potshot and of other airstrips on the west coast, some of which were bombed. The possibility of a surprise



Figure 5
June 1944. Fishing at Potshot. L-R: Unknown, Maj. Dirk Ajses, G/Cpt Charles Eaton (Photo. No. P920789, Charles Eaton Collection).



Figure 6
No. 79 Wing HQ at Potshot, March 1944 (Photo. No. P920774, Charles Eaton Collection).

decoy attack in 1944 by the Japanese forces on the west coast of Australia was very real. Furthermore, if the Japanese had made an attempt to destabilise the Allied war effort by attacking the west coast of Australia, and no effort had been made by the Australian High Command to counter that threat, the political fallout would be deafening right up to the present day.

ENDNOTES

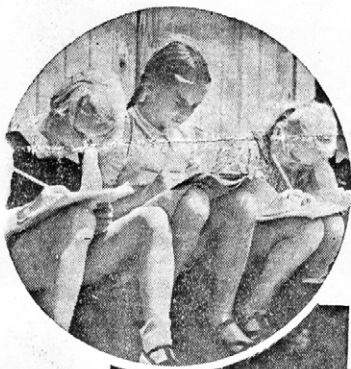
- 1 Eaton, C S., 'Cross in the Sky' <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4007270?searchTerm=&searchLimits=l-publictag=Gilbert+Eric+Douglas>.
- 2 McNabb, E., *Pot Shot profile 1942/1946*, published by the author, 1995, p. 5.
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- 4 McNabb, Appendix H.
- 5 Powel, A., *The shadow's edge: Australia's northern war*, Melbourne University Press, 1988, pp.150,152.
- 6 Eaton, C S., 'Cross in the Sky', as above.
- 7 National Archives of Australia, series number: A11243, control symbol: Z1, title: '[No 79 (GR/Bombers) Wing] - [Operation] Potshot Report — copy number 5', National Archives of Australia, Canberra, ACT; National Archives of Australia, series number: A11243, control symbol: 3/5/int, title: '[No 79 (GR/Bombers) Wing] — Operational data', National Archives of Australia (NAA), Canberra, ACT.
- 8 Hurst, D., *The Fourth Ally: The Dutch forces in Australia in WWII*, Canberra. 2001, p.103.
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- 16 H van Beuge, Personal Correspondence, 19 April, 2002.



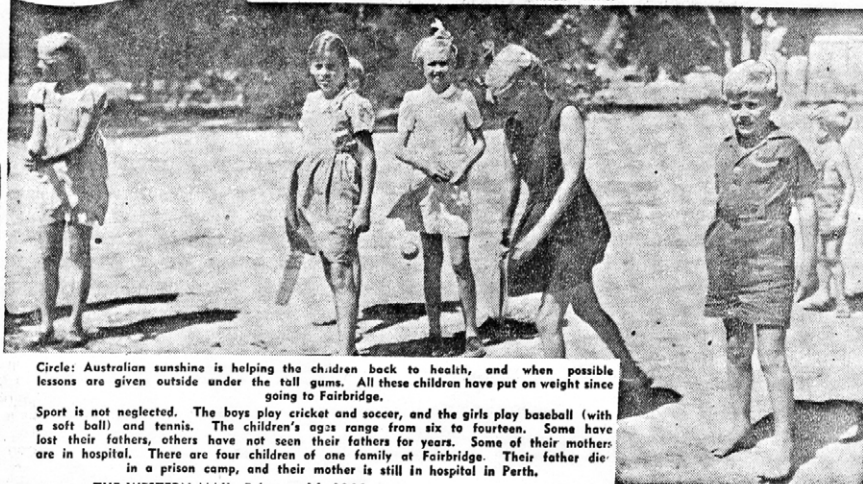
BACK TO HEALTH

DUE to the co-operation of the Fairbridge Farm School Council, more than fifty Dutch children who have suffered all kinds of privations in Japanese prisoner of war camps are being restored to health at Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra. The number will shortly be raised to seventy. Some children suffered severely through under-nourishment, but perhaps the worst feature of their captivity was the Japanese ban on teaching of every kind. In the healthy surroundings at Fairbridge the children are rapidly putting on weight and are forgetting the squalid conditions which they had to suffer for several years.

Lessons occupy two hours morning and afternoon. Children learn Dutch and English, arithmetic, drawing, history. Older children learn more about Australia, and girls are taught needlework. One child of ten cannot yet read or write, and most who were young when imprisoned have had no teaching except what their mothers were able to give them secretly.



These interested Dutch boys and girls are learning basic English. Their teacher is Mr. M. R. Kirkpatrick of the Education Department. In two hours they had learnt a number of simple words and understood directions such as "go in," "come out," "put down your pen and pencil." The boys had typical Dutch names such as Hans, Pieter, Jan, Klaas and Dickie. Some of the girls were called Marietje, Anne-Liesje, Truusje and Marianne. The letters "je" mean "little."



Circle: Australian sunshine is helping the children back to health, and when possible lessons are given outside under the tall gums. All these children have put on weight since going to Fairbridge.

Sport is not neglected. The boys play cricket and soccer, and the girls play baseball (with a soft ball) and tennis. The children's ages range from six to fourteen. Some have lost their fathers, others have not seen their fathers for years. Some of their mothers are in hospital. There are four children of one family at Fairbridge. Their father died in a prison camp, and their mother is still in hospital in Perth.

20 Twenty-Two — THE WESTERN MAIL, February 14, 1946

The young evacuees are introduced to a schooling and health rehabilitation regime as boarders at Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra WA 1945-1946. Courtesy: *Western Mail* February 14, 1946.

CHAPTER NINE

NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES DUTCH: EXPERIENCES OF WAR, OCCUPATION, REVOLUTION AND EVACUATION, AND REHABILITATION IN AUSTRALIA 1942-1946

Nonja Peters

INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers snapshots about the impact of World War Two (WWII) and its aftermath on the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and Western Australia (WA). It is based on archival documentation and oral history interviews with those Dutch who experienced the war in the NEI and were rehabilitated in WA, before being repatriated to the Netherlands (NL) or the NEI, and the Dutch who later settled in WA. The majority of Dutch in Australia during WWII and immediately afterwards came from two sizeable evacuations out of the NEI. The first, which began February 1942, ended a few weeks later on 3 March, just in front of the Dutch capitulation to the Japanese at *Kalidjati* Java on 9 March 1942 (see Jung's chapter).¹ The NEI had become a Japanese target, when in July 1941 they stopped the export of oil, tin and rubber to Japan in a bid to curtail Japan's advances into the region.² The second evacuation, commenced in November 1945, in the aftermath of Japan's surrender to South East Asia Command (SEAC) on 15 August 1945³, following the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This chapter is concerned with the impact on the lives of people reluctantly caught up in these events. In particular, the NEI Dutch the Japanese interned in civilian or POWs camps and the *Buitenkampers* (literally 'outside of camps' meaning not interned) who were mainly the Eurasian Dutch the Japanese left to fend for themselves without access to daily necessities.⁴ Although the Eurasians retained their freedom throughout the Japanese Occupation, they had little else - including sufficient food to eat. The Japanese noting their generally stronger loyalty to their Dutch, rather than Indonesian heritage, had harassed them remorselessly, often brutally, even closing off bank accounts. *Buitenkampers* survived and generated money for foodstuffs by selling their furniture, clothes and jewellery.⁵ However, some women were forced to enter into prostitution, simply to feed their families. The chapter also provides a brief contextual overview of Australia's involvement in the war as a member of the short-lived American, British, Dutch, Australian (ABDA) Alliance, as the host of the NEI government in exile and of the activities of the Australian Unions, which supported the Indonesian Revolution for Independence.⁶ By 1943, NEI government evacuees in Australia also included around 500 'radical' Indonesian 'Nationalists',⁷ and political prisoners which the NEI Government in exile brought across from the political prison camp for radical Nationalists at Tanah Merah, New Guinea (NG).⁸ Released on Australian soil at the behest of unions, the Nationalists set about enlisting support for

Indonesian Independence from these said unions who, in turn enlisted the support of the Australian Communist Party (ACP).

The second evacuation in 1945-1946, took place at the close of WWII in the Asia Pacific Region, and as a result of Australia becoming the rehabilitation setting for some 6000 NEI Dutch.⁹ Most of these Dutch had experienced up to 36 months in Japanese internment camps - the majority in Java or Sumatra. In the immediate months following the Declaration of Independence - during September 1945 through to April 1946 - which included the most violent months of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence, these same Dutch had become the target of extremist youth freedom fighters (*Pemuda*). This time was known by these Dutch as the *Bersiap period*, and although the exact date range remains controversial, most would agree that it started in the weeks after Sukarno's Declaration of Independence on 17 August 1945, which was some six weeks before SEAC arrived to formally accept Japanese surrender and to effect caretaker governance. It was thus well before the arrival in mid 1946 of the large contingent of Dutch troops to the NEI. It should be mentioned here that in contrast to the limited research on the *Bersiap period* - neither at all in Australia and only recently in NL, a plethora has been written about the aggression of some Dutch soldiers during the 'Police Actions' of 1947 and 1948. However, I would stress here that these 'Police Actions' took place a considerable time after the Dutch - who are referred to in this chapter - had left the NEI for rehabilitation in Australia. The advancing Japanese incursion into SE Asia in 1942 also had an immediate and powerful impact on overseas boarders, who were travelling on the *Blue Funnel Line* ships to homes in Asia for the Christmas holidays. For when the attacks on Allied colonies took place in December 1941, their ships were directed to turn around immediately and head back to Fremantle. Although they did not know it at the time, most of these children would not see their parents for another four years, some tragically never again, as many parents would die in Japanese POW and civilian internment camps. Nor would they yet appreciate that this, their last trip, was amidst 'the dying embers of European Empires' in the NEI, Malaya or Singapore.

THE FIRST EVACUATION INTO AUSTRALIA - FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1942

The first evacuation therefore also included Dutch children, who were boarders at private WA schools. WA has had a tradition of educating overseas children since the 1920s. The most popular schools in this scenario were St Hilda's, Wesley College, Scotch College, Penrhos College, Methodist Ladies College, Presbyterian Ladies College, Aquinas and Guildford Grammar. These children were transported from plush, colonial lifestyle homes in the Colonies to Fremantle and back home - on either the *MS Centaur*,¹⁰ *MS Charon*, or *MS Gorgon*.

In *Schoolship Kids of the Blue Funnel Line*, Juliet Ludbrook records these children's pranks - their seasickness, fun, romance and games, as well as



Figure 1
Netherlands East Indies Administration
Logo. Courtesy: Peters Collection.



Figure 2
Emblem of the 18th Squadron. Courtesy:
Peters Collection.

the 'not so nice name-calling' that also took place, which included the benign 'Dutchie' and the racially laden Javanese 'Boong'. The latter was possibly directed at children of mixed-race who were considered Dutch in the NEI, but not in Australia where the White Australia Policy reigned supreme from 1901 to 1973.¹¹ The lives of these Dutch boarders and their families in the NEI changed dramatically when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. However it was the unimagined 'Fall of Singapore' on 15 February 1942, and following that, the inevitable Japanese occupation of the NEI from 9 March 1942 to 15 August 1945, which prompted the first evacuation into Australia that would change the lives of these children and their families forever.

The attack on Pearl Harbour was also the event that secured the entry of the United States into the war arena and generated the ABDA Alliance. Established to defend the Asia Pacific Region, it proved powerless against the aggressive manoeuvres of the far more powerful and rapidly advancing Japanese Army and Navy.¹² As planned, only those government and military personnel with relevant skills, (such as knowledge of warfare and the equipment to sustain it) and who could help continue the fight from Australia, had been given permission to leave the NEI.¹³ In addition, where possible, bachelors in uniform (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army *Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger* - KNIL) of Dutch - 'Indo (Eurasian) or Indonesian origin' had to leave, in preference to married men who were to stay on with their families in the Occupied Zones. The evacuation, that began two days after the 'Fall of Singapore', came to an end with the Japanese attack on Broome on 3 March 1942 (see Jung's chapter).¹⁴

The most prominent members of the first evacuation into WA - in front of the Japanese invasion in March 1942 - were therefore Navy and Air Force personnel, bureaucrats and civilians of European, Eurasian and Indonesian origins who were employees of the NEI Dutch Government in exile, and a few Dutch families. They entered Australia from Java by air and sea. They joined evacuees already here, that included many ethnic Indonesian merchant seamen, whose ships were stranded in Australian harbours when war broke out, and the personnel on the Dutch submarines and war ships that would operate missions out of Fremantle throughout the war years (see May's chapter).

Although numbers remain contentious, what can be said with certainty is that on arrival in Australia, the NEI government in exile appointed an Ambassador for Canberra and administrative personnel to supplement those of the existing Consul General in Melbourne. By April 1942, they had also formally created the NEI Commission for Australia (NICA) and NZ to also look after NEI commercial interests in Australia. The Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS) and the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service (NIGIS) were organised, once the Administration-in-exile had settled in Melbourne. Following this organisation, they assembled the airmen and established special squadrons - the first being Squadron

18 (NEI), which was formed in Canberra on 4 April 1942. Made up mainly of Dutch nationals, the RAAF supplied many co-pilots, air gunners, bombardiers, photographers and ground staff to the missions. The US provided supplies and equipment (see Eaton's chapter).¹⁵ Many of these men were sent to the airbase established at Batchelor, NT, for the sole purpose of flying missions into Japanese occupied NEI and Timor.¹⁶

Although a relatively large-scale evacuation out of the NEI had been an important part of the planning, a general evacuation was never a consideration.¹⁷ This was largely because too many of the population - 280,000 in fact - (80,000 Dutch and 200,000 Indo-Europeans) were of Dutch origin - and thus far too many to evacuate. It was also due to the fact that the Dutch thought Japanese Occupation would be similar to what happened in Europe under the Nazis, where the majority of the Dutch population remained living in their own homes, but under the victor's thrall. An additional consideration in the NEI case, was that Dutch authorities considered it to be the duty of military personnel to fight to the end.

Given this context, it was natural that the Governor General of the NEI *Starkenborgh Stachouwer* would give orders that, wherever possible, Dutch civil and military officials should remain behind to share a common fate with the Indonesians.¹⁸ Moreover, from a Constitutional perspective - the NEI being part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands - an official evacuation would be deemed as abandonment of home territory. Besides, few NEI-born Dutch would actually wish to abandon their homeland.¹⁹

Once settled in Australia, the NEI Administration also called on young Dutch-Australian women to assist the war effort by joining the NEI Women's 'Army Corp'.²⁰ WA girls who responded to the call, were sent overland by train to the NEI Administration Headquarters in Melbourne until 1944, when they began operating from Camp Columbia - an army base at Wacol, Queensland - which the NEI Administration had acquired from the American Military.²¹



Figure 3
Batchelor airbase, NT, established for the sole purpose of flying missions into Japanese occupied NEI and Timor. Courtesy: R. Williamson.



Figure 4
Troops of the Netherlands East Indies Army, Swanston Street during the United Nations Flag Day march through Melbourne 14 June 1943. Courtesy: AWM Collection 139054.



Figure 5
Women's dining room Netherlands East Indies Administration (NICA) at Camp Columbia Wacol, Queensland. Courtesy: David van Embden.



Figure 6
Joan Butler and colleague at Camp Columbia Wacol, Queensland. Courtesy: Ena Butler.

AUSTRALIANS AND NEI DUTCH REMEMBER THE WAR

Ella Bone, a 16-year-old Western Australian girl who had recently graduated from Presbyterian Ladies College, Perth and who had - at her father's behest - volunteered to help the Red Cross, found herself "right in the thick of it". She recalls:

As soon as war was declared in the Pacific, hundreds of naval and air force service men in military transport ships or aircraft: Dutch, British and American Military - started to make their way to WA. All were welcomed by the Australians with open arms, including the ethnic Indonesians among the NEI forces.²²

The Red Cross women sent Ella to Princess May - Fremantle Girls' High School (now the Film & Television Institute WA), to help prepare sustenance for the refugee servicemen. Ella recalls the women cooking what must have been "miles of sausages" for the men, who were arriving there in dribs and drabs at all hours of the day and night. The women were constantly calling out for Ella to "make some more tea, or do this or do that...". The lasting impression Ella retains of those times was of "Chaos and confusion, that nothing was organised as nobody had really anticipated the Japanese entering the war to this extent." Also her memories are of trying to establish a system to assist evacuees and of coming to terms with her best school friend joining the Dutch women's military corp.²³

When Japanese Occupation Forces took control of the NEI, from around 9 March 1942 to 15 August 1945, the vast majority of those Dutch with strictly European origins, which included Dutch residents and military personnel, were interned in vast civilian and Prisoner-of-War (POW) internment camps. These camps were created by encircling with barbed wire fences surrounded by bamboo cladding, the whole of some residential districts of Batavia and of other cities throughout Java and Sumatra. Death rates were high as disease became endemic in these over crowded compounds. The Japanese had set out to specifically humiliate the 'white man' – in full view of the indigenous peoples of the region – in order to make it very clear that the days of European domination were over.

Vera Rado recalls the day the Japanese entered the area of Java where her family lived:

It was 8 March 1942...The oil tanks on the south western edge of the city were blown up by the Dutch to prevent the precious fuel from falling into the hands of the enemy. From early morning there was a huge pall of black smoke hanging over the city, and against this ominous backdrop we watched the occupying army's progress through our streets. First the tanks with their red/white flags flying, then armoured carrier trucks and masses of soldiers on foot and on bicycles....we were trembling with apprehension peeking through the Louvres of our front windows ...What would happen to us? We were

totally at their mercy – no laws no constitution, no army or police to protect us.²⁴

Some weeks later the Rado family were ordered to pack and be ready to be interned. Luckily Vera's mother had the presence of mind to upend a drawer of patent medicines - including quinine and sulphur tablets - which helped to save lives. The family spent the night in the local overcrowded lock-up, where a hole in one corner had to be used as a squat-down toilet, and mats on the stone floor served as beds. At 6pm the doors were banged shut and they heard the click of the padlocks. As Vera notes in her diary, "We were left in no doubt as to our status. We were prisoners of war of the Japanese. But for how long?" Vera continues:

A while later we were moved to Darmo - [a women's camp set up in one of the suburbs of Surabaya and formerly a Dutch army barracks]. It held about 6000 women and children whose husbands had been interned in POW camps. Here we lived for a year on hard work and diminishing food rations. The daily menu consisted of one ladleful of glutinous sago porridge for breakfast plus a five centimetre wide piece of unleavened bread made from cornflour. Half of this piece was meant for our evening meal. At midday we received one cup of boiled rice and a scoop of watery vegetables. Occasionally, with luck, we found one or two small cubes of meat floating in our tin plates, but mostly we had to be content with the taste of that meat. If we complained, the Japanese became incensed, claiming that food was in short supply and telling us we should be grateful for what we got.²⁵

Conditions were worse in camps with brutal commanders. Tomas Verwer recalls how the "lunatic", Captain Kenichi Sonei, terrorised the inmates of Tjideng - a camp near Jakarta West Java - by beating and hitting women when the moon was full:

As a six-year-old I saw with my own eyes how he destroyed a soup kitchen by kicking over the big pots, hurling the huge lids at the women, throwing water on the kitchen fires and finally shaving the women. There were roll calls at the most ridiculous times. These lasted a long time and we had to bow endlessly to the Japanese flag. Sometimes we were woken in the middle of the night and had to walk around the camp. Once he had a truckload of bread tipped into the sand and we were forced to watch without being allowed to eat it. Standing for hours in the hot sun, the constant lack of food, the ordeals never seemed to end. We suffered real hunger. My mother sent me to catch snails and frogs. I got whooping cough and bronchitis and without medicine barely survived the attacks. Because of the lack of food, I did not grow. I was seven years old at the end of war, but no bigger than a four-year-old....²⁶

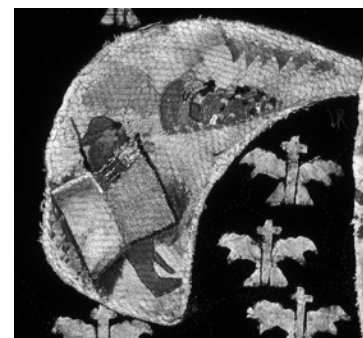


Figure 7
Captivity, Bowing to the Japanese, internment camp Java 1942-45. Courtesy: Vera Rado and Frances Larder, Odyssey Quilts.

The camp where Vera Rado was interned also came under Sonei, as she notes:

Every three months or so we had to line up on the *tenko* field, where we had roll call every morning, while Sonei and his interpreter would enter and he would climb up on a dais to elevate himself above us, miserable captives. At a command, we bowed deeply to acknowledge his supremacy over us, and then he would start ranting, raving and shouting at us for about an hour. His diatribe was always the same: We owed deep gratitude to his Divine Emperor for his bounty in providing us with food and shelter. Any complaints and any breaches of rules would be severely punished. The moment we all came to dread was when he stopped when the moon was full, then he would sweep us with a malevolent glare, pick out someone at random from our ranks, gesture for her to come forward and begin beating and hitting her. Some women died afterwards from their injuries.²⁷

Lieutenant Nicolai Read-Collins, the Allied Officer in charge of food supplies for the Internment camps after the Japanese capitulated, noted in his report about his first visit to Tjideng:

My first impression was of [being] someone who had landed on another planet and who had to talk to people already dead. I got the feeling these were not normal human beings and their reactions did not fit with what one could expect of normal adults.²⁸

Vera Rado recalled that after the war, Sonei was tried by a Dutch court in Java and executed by a firing squad as a war criminal. The *West Australian* Newspaper confirms this in the article 'Camp: Dutch to try Japanese Commander':



Figure 8
Henk, Eduard, George, Nora and Ella Bone, small boy unknown evacuees from NEI rehabilitating at Fairbridge Farm School 1945. Clothing was in short supply and US army togs distributed. Courtesy: Eduard Lumpken.

The Netherlands Indies Government Information service reports that the Japanese Captain Sonei, who was commanding officer of the Tjideng internment camp for women in Batavia (present day Jakarta), will be tried by a Dutch military court. This is one of the results of the recent discussion at Singapore between juridical staff members of the Supreme Allied Command in South-East Asia, and the Dutch authorities....²⁹

Eduard Lumkeman recalls another poignant camp memory:

....is the time of great commotion when girls were selected to be prostitutes for the Japanese. My sister had time to make herself as ugly as possible and luckily was bypassed. I believe a sort of compromise was reached with two women who slept near us, who after some deliberation decided to volunteer for the job. After the war we heard these girls were totally worn out.³⁰

However, Eduard remembers most the particularly fearful times when boys were separated from their mothers:

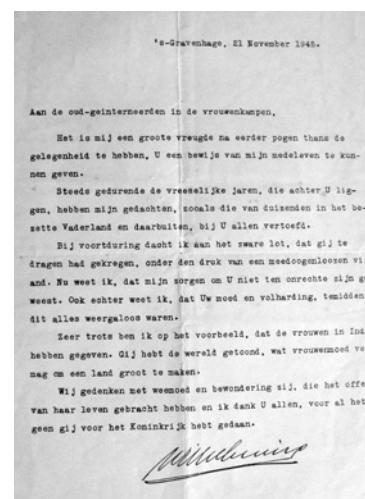
They (boys) were first of all placed in a sort of *pondok* (cottage) in the inner courtyard of the camp, where the two Bos boys' mother would come to at night to read to them. We boys were later all moved to Bangkong, a boys' camp, within the city of Semarang. We were later transported in a blinded train to the Gedangang camp at Semarang. Here we had to sleep on the floor. This was the case at all internment camps, not only along the walls but also in rows in the middle of the rooms. Ultimately each arranged a personal space that was I think about 67cm (24 inches) wide. During the day at the camp they had to work as forced labour much like the men in men's camps did.³¹

Donald Schotel was one of them:

On 12 September 1944, a few weeks after my 12th birthday [Donald was small for his age], I was marched from the Halmahera camp, where I had been interned for the past twelve months with my mother, grandmother and older sister Amy, to Bangkong - an old convent - which up till then was used by Japanese as a women's concentration camp. Of course I was not marching alone, all the other boys older then ten years marched with me...Already a few weeks before...we were separated from our families, although we were still living in Halmahera [perhaps to accustom us to the forthcoming separation]. On the day of our departure we were herded into a small square near the main-entrance gate inside the camp waiting to go to our new destination. No contact with our families was allowed. The women were standing some twenty or thirty yards back...I saw one boy standing with his

Figure 9

Queen Wilhelmina's letter of gratitude to Dutch women who had been interned in the NEI. Courtesy: Henriette Kuneman (deceased 2016).



little teddy bear still in one hand and his small suitcase in the other. I knew him by face, but did not know his name. I don't think he was older than ten. The mothers in the distance were yelling and crying and trying to get through, to kiss them and say good-bye. However, the *Heihos* (soldiers) would not allow this, they had their orders no doubt. It was all so sad and so confusing! I promised myself not to cry. I had to keep saying this to myself, but I kept my promise.³²

Elizabeth van Kampen, who was interned at Malang and Banjoebiroe, recalls how two poor mothers at her camp lost their minds when their little boys of ten were taken away to the men's camp.³³ When Japan capitulated, many young boys including Donald Schotel left their camps to find their mothers, despite the grave danger now posed by extremist youth freedom fighters - called *Pemuda* – renowned for grisly killing of their main targets Dutch ex-internees, Eurasian *Buitenkampers* and wealthy Chinese.³⁴ Australian researcher Robert Cribb, points out that these *Pemuda*, as they were commonly called, also included sizeable numbers of opportunist gangland criminals who had been trained in combat by the Japanese army.³⁵

The Japanese Occupation of the NEI had also changed the lives of the Indonesians in the archipelago. As the Dutch disappeared into interment camps, Japanese and Indonesians took over their positions in public life. From its onset, intense 'Japanisation' of the population came into force. Lesser Indonesian bureaucrats suddenly found themselves promoted immediately to positions three or four ranks higher than had formerly been reserved for the Dutch.

'Japanisation' was especially strong in schools, where Indigenous Indonesian pupils were duty-bound to be loyal to Japanese symbols and ideology. Currency and the annual calendar years also changed to Japanese. In addition, the Japanese dissolved all overtly political organizations and immediately released the most prominent pre-war nationalist leaders from captivity, to incorporate them into their administrative structure with promises of Independence. In these positions they were directed to carry out various Japanese projects. For example, 'radical nationalists', such as Sukarno, were used as propaganda tools to spread the gospel of the Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and Greater East Asia slogans of 'Asia for the Asians'. He was also directed to organise the compulsory requisitioning of rice and the recruitment of (labourers) *Romusha* for forced labour.³⁶ The U.S. Library of Congress estimates that in Java between four and 10 million indigenous Indonesians (*Romusha*) were forced to work by the Japanese military. About 270,000 of these Javanese labourers were sent to other Japanese-held areas in South East Asia. Only 52,000 were repatriated to Java, meaning that there was a death rate of 80 per cent. In 1943 the Japanese Emperor awarded Sukarno a medal for these activities. After the war, these same activities attracted the label 'collaborator' - similar to the behaviour of those Dutch in the Netherlands, who had established relationships with Nazis. As

a consequence they were unwilling to negotiate with Sukarno around issues pertaining to Indonesian Independence.

Growing poverty and repression of the archipelago characterised the Japanese Occupation of the NEI. The declining economic and social situation that followed after three and a half years of Japanese administration, had become visible well before the end of WWII. The most conspicuous problem was the failure of the food supply - a consequence of Japanese hoarding and their obstruction of the canal system, which was extensively used by Javanese to ferry crops to market. The widespread famine, malnutrition and starvation that ensued, took the lives of an estimated 2.4 million Javanese. Medicines, footwear and clothing were also unobtainable at this time and many people were found clad only in 'gunnysacks', burlap or thin sheets of rubber.³⁷

Figure 10
Pemuda wearing bandanas – Youth Freedom Fighters. Courtesy: J. Rikkers.



WAR'S END IN NEI – THE INDONESIAN REVOLUTION FOR INDEPENDENCE BEGINS

The Japanese capitulated on 15 August 1945 and two days later Sukarno declared Indonesian Independence. Combined, these events signified the end of the proposed choices associated with the modernisation and gradual democratisation of Indonesia, as was projected by Queen Wilhelmina in a radio address from her London exile base on 7 December 1942.³⁸ Worse still, was the deadly fear instilled in them before they could even leave internment by the ferocious Indonesian extremist youth - male and female - Freedom Fighters.

In his *History of Modern Indonesia*, historian Adrian Vickers records that by late September 1945, a series of incidents initiated by pro-Dutch Eurasians, provoked *Pemuda* to undertake atrocities against Dutch internees, and initiated by these actions, the spirit of revolution arose in all its passionate ugliness. The liberated Indonesians were drunk with victory. Indonesian writer Idrus' recall of *Pemuda*, was of "cowboys...[standing] in the middle of the road with revolvers on their hips and knives in their belts." His description of the emergence of the 'revolutionary hero' was of a young man with long hair, dressed in 'coolie' trousers made of sacking, a bandana on his head and some with a samurai sword at the waist. Most were aged between 15-25 years and both males and females were coerced into joining the rapidly growing movement.³⁹ All were on gruesome killing rampages, targeting mainly the *Buitenkampers*, *Indisch* Dutch, Eurasian persons of Dutch-Indonesian or Dutch-Chinese descent, interned Dutch and any economically well-to-do Chinese and Indonesians displaying pro-Dutch behaviour.⁴⁰

The Dutch who experienced the increasing intensity of fighting and violence that raged from later in August 1945 to the end of 1946 – label it the *Bersiap* – ('stand or be prepared') period. For these Dutch, the word evokes both the memory of the procedure about to take place and the mortal fear that it instilled in them, which many describe as an experience more sinister even than life as captives of the Japanese. "*Bersiap*" ["stand prepared"] was the notifying cry young 'nationalist extremist' *Pemuda* would shout to summon their members to prepare for a killing spree. They would invariably follow this with their ferocious war-cry "*Merdeka*" [freedom]. Derived from the Sanskrit *maharddhika* - meaning rich, prosperous and powerful – *Merdeka* was both their nationalist salute and the warning that their fighters were entering a street. Their shouting was accompanied by the noisy beating of iron stakes against fences and light poles with their Japanese weapons or local improvisations - machete and *bambu runcing* [bamboo spears] - that they were wielding. *Pemuda* would then descend upon and surround the home of a selected victim or a whole family, whom they would then torture and murder in the most brutal and grisly manner.⁴¹ Archival documentation and newspapers articles in Australia, the Netherlands and Dutch-Antilles note that thousands of civilians were murdered by 'extremist youth' during the *Bersiap* period.

However, Dutch and Indos [Eurasian] were not the only targets of *Pemuda* wrath. These radical nationalist youth reserved a special contempt for any Indonesian who had been willing to take the risk to sell goods secretly to the Dutch during their internment. These were mainly the former employees of Dutch families. Lurid hand-drawn posters surviving from the period display a barely credulous indignation that any Indonesian should stoop to do so. “Dogs of the NICA” they would ask in fury, “Why have you abandoned your own people?”⁴² *Pemuda* were a formidable combat force on murderous rampages – against anything perceived of as European or having worked for the benefit of Europeans - including other Indonesians and consequently also provoking fear and demanding compliance from within their own populations.⁴³

The revolutionary chaos that typified the NEI at the end of the war, was largely due to the British Caretaker Forces being unable to take on their task of ‘caretaker’ governance to restore law and order for another six weeks after war’s end. Nelson Mandela notes how violence frequently takes root in the absence of democracy, respect for human rights and good governance.⁴⁴ The history in this chapter certainly provides an example of his vision!

It was in addition extremely disconcerting for the Dutch, that under the ‘Terms of Surrender’, the Japanese Forces - the erstwhile oppressors of the Dutch - whom they had interned since 1942, were compelled to be their ‘caretakers’. As for the Japanese – some complied with the terms of surrender but others handed their weapons to *Pemuda* or joined them in the fight for independence. The Dutch internees whom I interviewed, all mentioned how bizarre it felt to have the Japanese, who had previously brutalised them, now having to care for them. However, some also mentioned how impressed they were with the great fights some Japanese put up, in order to save internees lives from *Pemuda* violence.⁴⁵

Given the volatility of the situation, Gurkha Command felt it was better for ex-POWs and ex-internees to return to or remain in internment camps, since it would be more convenient for food distribution and would make it easier to defend them from these lawless bands of Indonesian killers. As a consequence, the still interned Dutch found themselves joined over the months that followed by tens of thousands of *Indisch* Dutch who had to date been *Buitenkampers*, and who were now willing to be interned in a bid to also secure their protection from *Pemuda* attacks. However, this was not always guaranteed.⁴⁶

Mrs W *Krijveld*, who compiled a compendium of events at *Ambarawa* Camp from the diaries⁴⁷ of seven women and the notebooks of another five records, noted that on 21 November 1945:

Heavy artillery fire from Freedom Fighters flattened half the hospital and was especially heavy near barrack ten. People from this barrack subsequently sought shelter in the already overly crowded barrack nine where they slept on the floor for two nights. The following night Indonesian freedom fighters

Figure 11
Merdeka (Freedom) *Pemuda* with Bamboo fashioned weapons. Courtesy: Peters Collection.



again entered the unprotected Camp Nine and this time herded the inmates onto a grass field when they proceeded to throw live hand grenades into the crowd. Fortunately the Ghurkhas arrived just in time to offer some protection. Even so and despite a number of children and adults having thrown some grenades back at the extremists before they exploded, 13 Dutch died and 125 were injured. A number of the injured also died later. On other nights the *Pemuda* threw hand grenades into crowded barracks killing more inmates.⁴⁸

One explanation for the gruesome massacres of Dutch and Eurasians by *Pemuda* is the foothold that the extremists were able to secure during the power gap, between Japanese capitulation on 15 August 1945 and the arrival six weeks later – on 29 September 1945 – of South East Asia Command (SEAC). These were the troops sent to operate in a caretaker governance role in overall charge of Allied operations in the South-East Asian Theatre, until a governance powerbase could be re-established. They were accompanied by a small detachment of Dutch military personnel employed by them as officers assigned to the recently established Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI). RAPWI was established by SEAC to repatriate civilians and POWs from Japanese concentration camps throughout the Asian region. They operated under the direction of British commandos. Their brief was to effect a steady evacuation flow out of the internment camps, so as to maintain the morale of internees. It was a task made especially difficult by the lack of information about both the location and the numbers of Dutch interned in the estimated 300 internment and POW camps, believed to be located throughout the NEI, though mainly in Java and Sumatra. The revolutionary fervour of the ‘extremist’ *Pemuda* freedom fighters that the British troops encountered, changed their views about the role they should play in re-establishing governance in the post-war NEI.

As these troops struggled to restore order, the situation with *Pemuda* became ever more dangerous. For example, when the 3/3rd Gurkha rifles arrived at Buitenzorg (Bogor), they discovered that Indonesian extremists had abducted 1050 Christian Eurasians north of Dapok, on the Batavia-Buitenzorg Road, where they had killed and mutilated many women and children. They sent the casualties back to Batavia and the survivors to Buitenzorg. In November the Gurkhas took another 1,000 internees to Buitenzorg from Soekaboemi and evacuated 2,250 internees to Batavia. Reports by RAPWI and other British observers at that time, described the situation in Java and Sumatra as extreme. In some areas it would last until Dutch troops arrived from NL in mid-1946.

Sutan Sjahrir, who Sukarno nominated first Premier of Indonesia, provides an interesting perspective on this period. In a flyer dated 5 November 1945, sent to the Dutch Consul General in Sydney by the Indonesian Republican Information Service, he notes how Indonesia’s isolation from abroad during the Occupation, had enabled Japanese propaganda to gain a strong

foothold on Indonesian youth.⁴⁹ He also notes how the extensive Japanese combat training given to their youth, via secret Japanese societies such as - *Black Dragon*, *Black Fan* and others originating from the Japanese 5th column, including the Kempai Tai and Kaigun – had prepared them for Japan's defence. However, it had also encouraged them to resolve to 'fight to the death' (a Japanese trait). Sjahrir likewise remarked how the Japanese robustly activated *Pemuda* Nationalism in order to avert the social dangers that threatened them later, when hatred of the Indonesian people for the Japanese became universal. Sjahrir notes further how this Nationalism had taught *Pemuda* to abhor not only Netherlanders, but also Indo-Europeans, and 'our people' the Amboinese, the people of Minahassa and the Chinese.⁵⁰

Sjahrir's description of the Japanese influence on Indonesian youth bears a noteworthy resemblance to the 'Stockholm syndrome'. Conceptualised in the late 1970s, it describes a paradoxical psychological phenomenon, wherein 'some' hostages express positive feelings towards their captors, despite the danger they had endured.⁵¹ Sjahrir notes how, "*Pemuda* were unconsciously influenced by Japanese propaganda, to the point where their attitudes and even their thoughts were often similar to those of the Japanese" which provides a good example of this syndrome. Sutan Sjahrir's portrayal of *Pemuda* behaviour, likewise brings to mind Hume and Gibbon's model of revolutionaries, whose fanatical zeal [referred to by these authors as monomaniac passion] is nevertheless a moving force in history. Their behaviours also reflect aspects of Ben Wilson's 'hotheads' - because like their 'hotheads', *Pemuda* only pull down and destroy - they do not reconstruct. That they leave to other people.⁵²

Some *Pemuda* behaviours also bear striking similarities to that of the Hitler *Jugend* (HJ). Both *Pemuda* and HJ were indoctrinated into racial hatred. For HJ it was anti-Semitism and *Antiziganism*, for *Pemuda* it was Dutch, Eurasians and anyone pro-Dutch. *Pemuda* were also instilled with the motivation and given the combat training to enable them as soldiers - to fight faithfully for Dai Nippon - for HJ it was for the Third Reich. HJ education encompassed physical and military training rather than academic study - so too for *Pemuda* - it was combat skills rather than academic pursuits. In Europe, HJ as young as twelve, fought on the Russian front more ferociously than did their military counterparts.⁵³

The chaos in the NEI during the *Bersiap* period, has rendered it almost impossible to ascertain the actual numbers of Dutch who died. The evidence available suggests that between 3,500 and 30,000 Europeans and Eurasians were murdered by *Pemuda*.⁵⁴ Dutch war historian L. De Jong claims 3,500 Dutch as officially identified deaths by *Pemuda* hands, but however that another 16,000 went missing, having presumably met with the same fate.⁵⁵ William Frederick calls the killing of the Dutch and Eurasians in Indonesia's Revolution [1945-1949] a 'brief genocide'.⁵⁶ Around 1,000 Japanese died defending Dutch internees and other Japanese from *Pemuda*, as did 660 British soldiers. There are no clear figures, but it is estimated that between



Figure 12
Sinterklaas celebrations at the Cloisters
Dutch Club St Georges Terrace, Perth, WA,
December 1945. Courtesy: Arnold Drok.

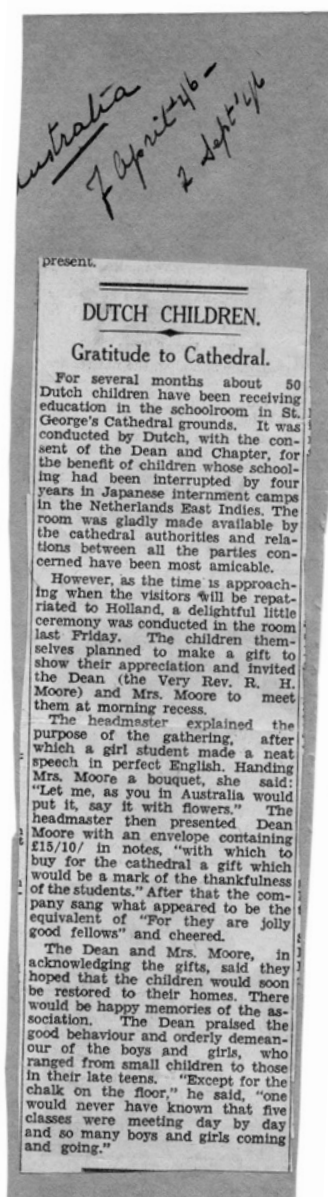


Figure 13
Children leave Burt Hall, Newspapers article
1946. Courtesy: WA Newspapers.

40,000 and 100,000 Indonesian youth died during the revolution, many killed by their own side.⁵⁷ It was *Pemuda* violence that made it necessary for SEAC to protect the seriously compromised Dutch internees and *buitenkampers* that lead to the second evacuation to Australia.

THE SECOND EVACUATION INTO AUSTRALIA 1945-1946

Indian Gurkha regiments of the British army eventually assisted the most physically and mentally depleted internees, POWs and *Buitenkampers* onto ships or airflights bound for rehabilitation in other countries, including Australia, NZ and NL. Restoring law and order to this chaotic situation and finding a safe haven for those Europeans still alive - but in grave danger of being killed - was the central focus at the end of September 1945, when the Gurkhas finally arrived in the NEI. SEAC immediately began looking for ways to protect the Dutch, Chinese and Eurasians. A preferred way was evacuation out of the NEI. Australia decided to take 6000 evacuees for rehabilitation, despite McMahon Ball's plea for them to take at least 50 thousand.⁵⁸ Australia's limited response was complicated even further by the Australian Unions, who supported Indonesian Independence by locking-in a boycott of Dutch ships preparing to take NEI (NICA)⁵⁹ personnel and food supplies back to those starving in the NEI, and evacuating internees to safety.⁶⁰ The hospital ship *MS Orange* was used to help the most depleted internees into Australia.

Western Australia received some 600 evacuees. Following registration with the Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees (NIWOE), they were placed in various modes of accommodation around WA, which could include being billeted with local families: (see Summers' chapter).



Figure 14
Temporary Dutch High School for evacuees
from the NEI, Burt Hall, St Georges
Cathedral, St Georges Terrace, Perth WA,
1946. Courtesy: Donald Schotel.

The older children's education was brought up to speed with the Dutch curriculum at the temporary High School (NIWOE) established in Burt Hall at St Georges Cathedral, St Georges Terrace, Perth. The Dutch Consul organized rehabilitation for the younger children at Fairbridge Farm School - an orphanage for British migrant children - located 100 kilometres south of Perth in Pinjarra. It was made possible because they had not received new UK arrivals since the outbreak of WWII.

The Dutch children rehabilitated in WA, all mentioned their lives in Japanese internment camps and how dangerous life continued to be in post-war NEI. Gurkhas had transported mothers and children from internment camps to the harbour, in the back of army trucks under tarpaulin and under the cover of darkness, in a bid to avoid the road-blocks, which had been set by extremist *Pemuda* specifically to massacre fleeing Dutch.⁶¹ After a number of aborted trips due to perilous *Pemuda* activity, one of the first transports going to WA for rehabilitation finally made it on board the *MS Oranje*. However, children being children, their first focus was on the amount of food laid out on the tables on board. Starved for so long, Winnie recalls the horror of seeing half a slice of bread floating in the ocean, "I just wanted to jump in after it".⁶²

The hospital ship *MS Oranje* then transported them to Fremantle. Some of the children, like Eduard's teenage sister Nora, were in the hospital section. She was very ill at the time from eating poisonous *Djarak* seeds to diminish her excruciating hunger. She had nearly died and was just 'skin and bone' when she arrived in Perth. She relates sitting with a friend in the grounds of the Westminster Hospital in Adelaide Terrace, Perth, which the Dutch Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation Evacuees (NIWOE) had taken over. They were both pinching themselves, hardly daring to believe that they were now safe.⁶³

For others - like the Plink family - the sadness would be ongoing. Willem Plink, a boy of around eight years old at the time, recalls:

Not everyone went directly from an internment camp to the Netherlands. I was among the lucky ones who were sent from the infamous *Tjideng* Japanese internment camp to Australia. However, this was due to the grips of sadness my family was in. In September 1945, in four days, my mother was informed that the Nazis had executed her father, her husband - my father had died while slave labour on the *Pakan Baru* Burma Railway line and her brother had been killed by the Japanese on *Kalidjati*. She was regarded thus as having crashed physically and psychologically and needing to be evacuated for immediate care. Thus we went to Western Australia.⁶⁴

On arrival in WA, the children gave vent to their new found freedom. They were rowdy and wild and counted riding the escalators in *Boans*, *Foy & Gibson*, *Aherns* or *Moore's* [shops in Perth at the time] as being among their favourite pastimes. They were therefore not at all popular with the locals, who in any case had no understanding of what they had been through. The children

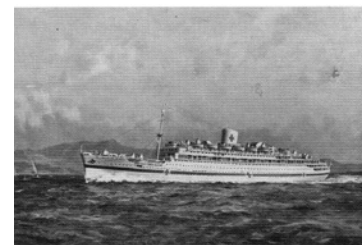


Figure 15
Hospital ship *MS Oranje* used to evacuate
NEI Dutch to Fremantle 1945-1946. Courtesy:
Peters Collection.



Figure 16
Dutch children and families evacuated to WA for rehabilitation from three and half years in Japanese internment camps in Java at Fairbridge Farm School c1946.
Courtesy: Willem Plink.

blamed the years spent in Japanese camps for their lack of awareness of the social norms, values and the customs of everyday life. Ernst, who referred to himself and friends as a “pretty rebellious wild bunch”, insisted that “[until then] their whole focus had been - survival – fight for yourself otherwise you will die; and so we ‘organised’ everything that we could. Food and whatever we could get.”⁶⁵ We children believed that “whatever we saw we picked up and took for ourselves, it was a habit. . . No, it was not stealing, we say ‘organised’ [laughter], not stealing, because you need food!”

To stay alive in an internment camp environment you had to develop survival strategies. For example, most of the children had at one time or another during their internment, bartered snails for food and even for education. However, they had never had to deal with a money economy.⁶⁶

When Perth city business people complained, the Dutch Consul went looking for a solution that could accommodate between 80 and 100 of these ‘feral’ children and they discovered Fairbridge Farm School in Pinjarra. After gaining permission from Dutch parents, the children were enrolled there as boarders and the first group arrived in November 1945. Their rehabilitation now included a team of Dutch and English teachers, and a program was developed which focussed on many levels, with the first priority always being to restore the children’s physical health. The second priority was bringing the children’s education up to the Dutch curriculum standard appropriate for their age, and the last was introducing them to the mores, values and manners of their culture.

Their Dutch teachers found that the children needed discipline. They had lived in such appalling conditions in the prison camps that the teaching of manners had almost been impossible. Thus all the important mores and elements of growing up had been denied them as internees of the Japanese. However, having to learn all these things from scratch and so much later in life than one normally does, was not an easy transition for children who had never sat behind a school desk, nor eaten with a knife and fork whilst sitting at a dinner table. Yet only a year after repatriation, the younger ones had picked up most of the things they needed to know in order to settle readily into a Dutch school on arrival in NL. Many Australians including Ella Bone, [introduced earlier in this chapter], later went to work as volunteers at Fairbridge Farm School, to assist with the children’s rehabilitation.

However, sadly many of these same children have in later life also suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reports that children are the main victims of war, with many suffering mental stress that will last a lifetime. Children worldwide are subjected to multiple forms of abuse on a daily basis, but the U.N. Children’s Fund claim that these forms of physical and psychological violence pale in comparison to what children are forced to endure in situations of conflict.⁶⁷

The Dutch children loved their time at Fairbridge Farm and viewed it as restorative - physically, psychologically and behaviourally. It is the ‘good’ Fairbridge story. For the first time in over three and a half years, they had

an abundance of food and were free. Moreover, those aged from seven to ten began attending school for the first time in their lives - the Japanese having disallowed education of any kind. They loved the English lessons, the swimming, horse riding and bush walks but most of all sucking their fingers, dipped in the jars of peanut paste and tubes of thick sweetened milk, which each child was given to help them to put on weight. The children described the Australian people as marvellous. "They invited us, welcomed us, they helped us - that is, apart from the...harbour workers." (referring to the Union boycott of Dutch ships).⁶⁸

At the end of a short year in WA, the majority of the children were shipped to resettle in the Netherlands, where most had never been before. As for the Dutch children on the *Blue Funnel Lines* who were marooned in WA throughout the entire war period, some also suffered for the rest of their lives. Local teachers and other children's parents came to their aid during school holidays – however, no matter how hard they tried, they were unable to bridge the gap left by their interned parents. The experience of Mary M. from Batavia [Jakarta], whose parents sent her to a Perth boarding school in December 1941 at the age of four in order to secure her safety, is representative of such children:

I remember vividly the day I was called into the Principal's office, four years later in 1945 and introduced to two very thin people I did not recognize, who turned out to be my parents. The huge break in our relationships had a permanent irretrievable impact for it had fractured forever the bond between us.⁶⁹

Mary comments that her parents were always much closer to the child they had after the war, than to the two who were sent to Australia for the duration



Figure 17 and 18
Els Duyser, one of the Dutch children evacuated to Fairbridge, expresses her feelings of gratitude in her album 'Netherlands Youth Blooms Again at Fairbridge'. Courtesy: Els Duyser.



Figure 19
The Dutch at Fairbridge Farm School c1946. Courtesy: Ernst Kolmann.



Figure 20
Union Boycott of Dutch shipping 1945-1947 had Dutch volunteers loading ships bound for Indonesia with much needed food supplies. Courtesy: *Sunday Telegraph* and *Age Newspapers* and the Zindler Family.

of the war. Children are invariably the innocent victims of war. In the carnage that was World War II, more children were killed or orphaned than at any other time in history. The Second World War was a watershed when civilian victims were as numerous as combatants.⁷⁰ Moreover these figures do not account for the many people who survived but were severely traumatised by their wartime experiences.

As it stands, the historical facts show, on balance, that all stakeholders in the Indonesian Independence equation – Dutch, Indonesians, Japanese, British and Australians (by tacit acceptance) – were at times perpetrators and at other times victims of violence and brutality from one or other or all of the others. Consequently, and contrary to myth, there is not much for any side to be proud of. Across the NEI, there were many gruesome, grisly, atrocious and unnecessary incidents of violence against Europeans, Dutch and their sympathizers, as well as unnecessary violence against supporters of the Republic. I would emphasise that we should avoid rationalising on the grounds that there were crimes on all sides and that we should consider the facts, so that each side acknowledges its own violence. WWII on Australian soil fits positively into the picture, mainly via its role in the ABDA Alliance and its acceptance of NEI evacuees and the NEI Administration-in-Exile. However, despite their gratitude to Australia, the NEI Dutch would give a negative evaluation to the role of unions and the Chifley Government during the Indonesian Revolution for Independence.

AUSTRALIAN UNIONS

The stance of the Australian unions involved in the boycott of Dutch ships [noted earlier] was motivated by members of the 500 Indonesian nationalists - prisoners from Boven Digul, Tanah Merah and New Guinea - all brought to Australia by their Dutch captors to stop them collaborating with the Japanese. On arrival in Australia, as noted earlier, the Netherlands East Indies administration had been forced to free them at the behest of the unions.

Delving into Australian digitized newspapers, as is now possible via the National Library of Australia's TROVE, shows the Australian media's reporting on the Indonesian Independence Movement in Indonesia to have been very comprehensive: (see <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>). Australian unions could therefore never plead ignorance of the state of affairs that was unfolding. Throughout this period, journalists reported on the bleakness of the situation for former Dutch ex-civilian internees, as well as the indigenous Indonesians in the NEI. They also noted the lack of law and order and how the volatility of the situation was intensified by the desperate food situation in Java, which the Japanese had orchestrated. The most critical shortages being within the Allied perimeter near Surabaya, where some 400,000 civilians resided, including peaceful Indonesians, Chinese and Arabs.



Figure 21
Western Mail Charity Ball November 1945.

Mary Briggs-Koning (2004), another of the POWs who now lives in Australia writes:

While people around the world celebrated the end of the war, we ... who had survived [Japanese concentration camps] were now at risk of being killed as we were thrust into a civil war - The Indonesian Nationalist Revolution. Consequently the banning of Dutch ships in Australian ports by the Australian wharf labourers, greatly diminished assistance to provide us with much needed supplies of food, medicines and a means of leaving the country.⁷¹

The Australian media also highlighted the impact that the boycotting of Dutch ships was having in the NEI. Not only for the critical supplies, which the stoppage was having on the wellbeing of starving indigenous Indonesians, but also because these ships could have been a potential means for the Dutch to employ in order to escape from their perilous situation.¹⁰²

The Australian Labor Government supported the Indonesian Republic, at least at the United Nations level. The personal ambitions of Chifley and Evatt played a key role in the events that developed, because they were keen to be seen supporting the rights of newly emerging nations. Bill Guy, in his biography of Clyde Cameron, claims that Evatt set about promoting Indonesian Independence at the United Nations level, where he had an influential voice as a result of his contribution to the creation of this international organisation.⁷²

The Australian Government adopted a passive strategy of support for the boycott campaign – doing little to encourage it, but nothing to discourage it either. Bill Guy claims their actions greatly accelerated Indonesian Independence and brought Evatt a great deal of prestige internationally.⁷³ Guy also claims some of the boycotts infringed the ‘emergency and security laws’ that Evatt as Attorney General administered, so he could have intervened to order a lifting of the bans. Chifley, as Prime Minister, could have invoked emergency powers to the same end. However, and despite the considerable pressure they were under from Menzies, other Opposition front benchers and the mainstream, pressed to take action to prevent the unions dictating foreign policy – they opted not to interfere.

It is, in addition, astounding to appreciate that at war’s close, Indonesians and dark skinned Eurasians stranded in Australia during the war, including the ones who had stirred up Australian unions’ support for the Indonesian Independence, were forced back to Indonesia within six months. These included Indonesians married to Australian women. These women lost their Australian citizenship on marriage, and should such a woman die in Indonesia leaving children behind, then Australia also refused to accept her offspring. As for the Unions, what is most surprising is their focus on Indonesia at a time when issues at home needed support. For example, when the boycott was invoked in 1945, Indigenous Australians could not vote in elections for another 22 years; and it would take another 28 years before Australia abandoned the White Australia Policy.

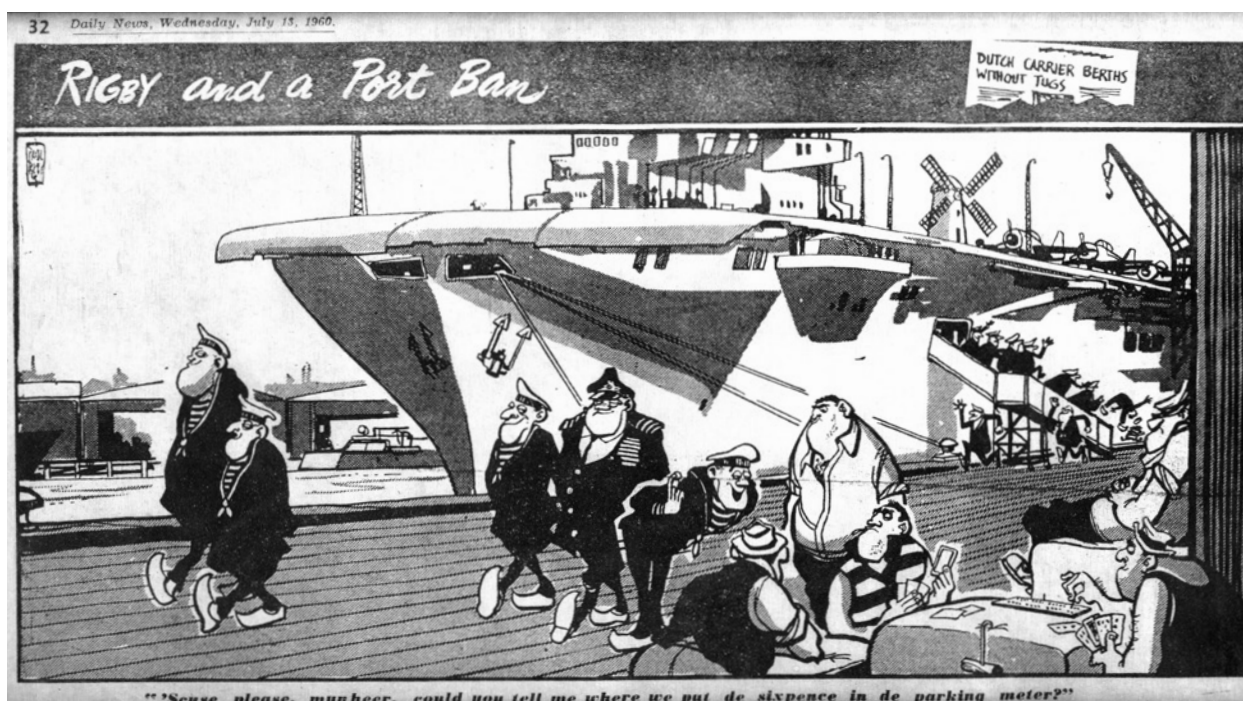
Dutch migration to Australia was a by-product of the political situation in the NL and the NEI. In the years that followed the war, lingering socio-economic stress and the tension of the Cold War contributed to a sense of instability and insecurity in Holland. As for the NEI, after December 1949, it was lost to the Netherlands forever. To make matters worse for those being repatriated, many NEI Dutch noted in interviews, how the Dutch in the Netherlands were not very welcoming either. Consequently as seen in Section III of this book, the opportunities promoted by immigration countries like Australia in the post-war period, proved irresistible to many Dutch and were especially compelling to those from the NEI, as it would take them closer to their country of birth – albeit now Indonesia - and allow them to forge a new life for themselves and their children.

ENDNOTES

- 1 http://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=23; 8 March 1942 Dutch troops at Bandoeng, Java, Dutch East Indies surrendered at the Isola Hotel in Lembang at 10.00 hours between Dutch General Jacob J. Pesman and Japanese Colonel Toshishige Shoji. In the afternoon, Dutch Governor Tjarda Van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, General Hein Ter Poorten, and Major General Jacob Pesman surrendered all Dutch forces on Java to Japanese General Hitoshi Imamura. Website visited 21 June, 2015.
- 2 Cribb, R., and Kahin, A., *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia*, Second Addition, The Scarecrow Press Inc. Oxford, 2004.
- 3 The surrender of Japan was announced by Imperial Japan on August 15 and was formally signed on September 2, 1945, bringing the hostilities of World War II to a close.
- 4 These most often comprised mixtures of Dutch with individuals of Indonesian or Chinese origin.
- 5 Femme Gastra, http://www.tanap.net/content/voc/organization/organization_end.html viewed 28, May 2015.
- 6 <http://www.en.afscheidenindie.nl/archieven-onderwerpen-nica.aspx>
- 7 Radical from the NEI administration's perspective.
- 8 Lingard, Jan, *Refugees and Rebels: Indonesian Exiles in Wartime Australia*, Australian Scholarly Publishing 2008.
- 9 Peters, N., *From Tyranny to Freedom: Dutch children from the Netherlands East Indies to Fairbridge Farm School 1945-1946*, Black Swan Press: Perth 2009.
- 10 Bone, Ella, pers.com. 2008; She notes the Centaur was bombed and sunk by the Japanese off the coast of Queensland, despite being clearly marked as an Australian naval hospital ship – with the loss of many lives, mainly of Australian Army Nurses and ship's personnel.
- 11 Ludrooke, J., *Schoolship Kids of the Blue Funnel Line*, Black Swan Press, 1999, 188.
- 12 Prime, M., *Broome's one day war: the story of the Japanese raid on Broome on 3rd March 1942*, 6th (ed), Broome Historical Society, Broome, 2004; Hurst, D., *The Fourth Ally: The Dutch Forces in Australia in WWII*, self published, 2001, 49, 171; Cote, Joost and Westerbeek, Loes (eds), *Recalling the Indies: colonial culture and postcolonial identities*, pp. 9-27, Aksant, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Edith van Loo's in-depth interviews with Dutch Australian veterans of WWII are located in the National Library of Australia (NLA).
- 13 *ibid* 41.
- 14 Peters, 2009.
- 15 <https://www.awm.gov.au/unit/U59381/>: Dutch airmen who escaped to Australia after the Japanese invasion of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) were brought together to form Dutch squadrons under RAAF command. First among these special squadrons was 18 (NEI) Squadron, formed at Canberra on 4 April 1942. Although nominally made up of Dutch nationals, the RAAF supplied many co-pilots, air gunners, bombardiers, photographers, and ground staff. The US provided supplies and equipment.
- 16 <https://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/alliesinadversity/australia/nefis/>
- 17 van Dulin, J., Krijveld, W.J., Legemaate, H.G., Liesker H.A.M. and Weijers, G., *Geillustreerde Atlas van de Japanse Kampen in Nederlands Indië, Asia Minor, Ziedrikzee*, 2002, 22.
- 18 *ibid* 21.

- 19 NAA Series A 1608/1, Item T39/1/3, Evacuation, NEI, Burns Philip letter to the External Affairs 26 February 1942; Jack, Allies in a Bind: Australian and the Netherlands East Indies in the Second World War, Published by Australian Netherlands Ex-Servicemen and Women's Association, Loganholme, Queensland, 1996, 26; <http://www.wv2places.qld.gov.au/places/?id=1787> website visited 21 June 2015.
- 20 Interview – Joan van Embden, 2008.
- 21 Established at the former US Army Camp Columbia at Wacol in July 1944, the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) Government-in-Exile is the only foreign government to be established on Australian soil. Other agencies - the Netherlands East-Indies Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS), the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) and the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service (NIGIS) moved from Melbourne to support their administration. An NEI transport unit maintained and flew Dakota aircraft at Archerfield.
- 22 Lockwood, Rupert, *Black Armada: Australia and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence 1942-1949*, Marrickville NSW, Hale and Iremonger, 1982; Lingard, 2008; Bennett, Frank, *The Return of the Exiles: Australia's Repatriation of the Indonesians, 1945-47*. Clayton, Vic., Monash Asia Institute; McMillan, Richard, *The British Occupation of Indonesia: 1945-1946: The Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution*, London Routledge, 2005; The U.S. Library of Congress estimates that between four and 10 million indigenous Indonesians (Romusha) were forced to work by the Japanese military. About 270,000 of these Javanese labourers were sent to other Japanese-held areas in South East Asia. Only 52,000 were repatriated to Java after the war, indicating that there was a death rate of 80 per cent.
- 23 Interview with Ella Bone by Sue Summers, 2006.
- 24 Vera Rado cited in Peters 2008.
- 25 Vera Rado, extracts from *In Japanese Captivity: The Story of a Teenager in Wartime Java*, memoir, 2006, pp. 1-11.
- 26 Van Wagtendonk, Jan, *Testimonies of the Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies*, Foundation for Japanese Honorary Debts, 2007.
- 27 Vera Rado 2009.
- 28 Van Wagtendonk, 28.
- 29 *West Australian*, 26 December 1945, 6.
- 30 Interview Eduard Lumkeman, 2006.
- 31 *ibid.*
- 32 *ibid.*
- 33 Peters, 2008.
- 34 Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949*, Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 1991.
- 35 *ibid.*
- 36 Penders, C.L.M., *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia 1945-1962*, Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2002, 9-10.
- 37 Gunnysack and Burlap forms of coarse sacking.
- 38 Penders, 2002, 9-10.
- 39 Vickers, Adrian, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, editions in 2005, 2013.
- 40 Peters, 2008.
- 41 *West Australian Newspapers*, 26 December 1945.
- 42 Robert Cribb, 1991, 63, notes: "hundreds of Dutch old colonial hands tell of the warm greeting they received from their old *babu* (nursemaid), *jonggos* (manservant) and *tukang kebun* (gardener) when they finally came home from the internment camps until they became the focus of Pemuda wrath."
- 43 Peters, 2008, notes the many oral histories, life stories, newspaper articles and academic treatise that describe the brutality of *Pemuda* behaviour during the Indonesian Revolution for Independence.
- 44 World report on violence and health 2002, Foreword by Nelson Mandela. http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/index.html
- 45 Peters, 2008.
- 46 *Advocate* (Burnie, Tasmania), Wednesday 26 June 1946, 1: The article notes the many deaths of Dutch held prisoners in the Indonesian Republican army camps and that many were still in the camps a year after the Japanese Occupation ended; *Buitenkampers: The Concealed History of the Netherlands East Indies 1942-1949*, a documentary film by Betty Naaijken-Retel Helmrich 2014.
- 47 The facts and individual experiences described in this section are drawn from the following documents: 'Chronology of events in Ambarawa: Camp Six compiled by W Krijgsveld (Postbus 165, 9750 A.D. Haren); the diaries of: Miep v/d Kroogt, Mrs. Krijgsveld, Mrs. Ouwejan, Mrs. Tjakkes, Atie te

- Velde, Ike te Velde, and Mrs. Wijna; notebooks from Mrs Burgerhoudt and Mrs. van Voorenveld, reports from Dr. E.Krijgsveld and from the later
- (1948) notes by Mrs. Wielenga (Fuku-kaitjo) and the books: *A Valley in Ambarawa*, and *Patience and Bluff* by Mrs. Petra Groen.
- 48 ibid.
- 49 Inv.nr 85: Algemeen RijksArchief, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Inventaris van het Archief van het Consulaat generaal te Sydney (Australië), 1927, 1930-1954. Translation of the pamphlet 'Our Struggle', by Sutan Sjahrir written about +/- 5 November 1945, 1-4.
- 50 ibid.
- 51 <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22447726>.
- 52 Wilson, Ben, *What Price Liberty*, London: Faber and Faber, 2010, 35; Wilson quotes Hume and Gibbon.
- 53 <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/hitleryouth/hj-boy-soldiers.htm> website visited 21 June 2015.
- 54 Frederick, W.H., *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution*, Athens, Ohio – Ohio University Press, 1989.
- 55 De Jong, Dr L., *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereld oorlog 1939-1945, Deel IIa eerste helft, Nederlands-Indië I*, S'Gravenhage Staatsuitgeverij 1984, 524.
- 56 Frederick, William, The killing of Dutch and Eurasians in Indonesia's Revolution (1945-1949): A 'brief genocide' reconsidered, in *Journal of Genocide Research* 14 (3-4), September-November, 2012, 359-380, (362).
- 57 Peters, 2009.
- 58 Macmahon Ball, William, *The Japan and Batavia Diaries of W. Macmahon Ball*, edited by A. Rix (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988).
- 59 <http://www.en.afscheidvanindie.nl/archieven-onderwerpen-nica.aspx>: On 3 April 1944 the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) was founded in Australia. The organisation was responsible for civil administration and judicial affairs in the parts of the Netherlands East Indies liberated from the Japanese. The NICA was intended to restore Dutch authority in those areas prior to their transfer to Dutch government control, and acted as the liaison between the government of the Netherlands East Indies and the Allied Supreme Commander of the South West Pacific Area (SWPA). NICA personnel were military or under military authority, and wore uniforms.
- 60 On 24 September 1945, despite a plethora of Australian newspaper articles detailing the killing rampages of *Pemuda* and the plight of the depleted Dutch and the millions of Indonesians dying from starvation, Australian Unions kept the boycott in place for three years.
- 61 See the slaughter of the *Goebeng* transport history by Hollander-Lake, Inez, *Silenced Voices: Uncovering a Family's Colonial History in Indonesia*, Ohio University press, 2008.
<http://www.archivesportaleurope.net/ead-display/-/ead/pl/aicode/NL-AsdNIOD/type/fa/id/819/unitid/819+-+148>
- 62 Interview Winnie de Vries, 2007.
- 63 Nora L, per. Com. 2007
- 64 Interview Willem Plink, 2007.
- 65 Ernst Kollman, interview with Nonja Peters 2007.
- 66 ibid.
- 67 <http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/1cinwar.htm>; <http://www.voanews.com/content/unicef-says-children-main-victims-of-war/2459908.html>
- 68 ibid.
- 69 Pers.com. M.M, 2002.
- 70 <http://www.warchildholland.org/effects-war-children>: Now, in almost all current conflicts, civilians are the majority of casualties, with children suffering disproportionately. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2 million children have been killed by conflict over the last decade; 6 million children have been made homeless; 12 million have been injured or disabled; and there are at least 300,000 child soldiers operating in 30 different conflicts across the globe.
- 71 It was not until 1950, following the return to government of the Liberal Prime Minister Menzies, that the Waterside Worker's Federation and Seaman's Union were forbidden from placing 'black bans' on foreign vessels. However, unions continued to intervene in various other ways in foreign policy under Liberal-Country Party rule (Lockwood 1982:231); (www.neswa.org.au/Library/Books/Footsteps_1.htm).
- 72 Guy, Bill, *A life on the left: A biography of Clyde Cameron*, ARTSA, 1999, 115.



Rigby Cartoon.
From the *Daily News* Wednesday 13 July 1960.
Courtesy: Peter Rigby.

The 1945-1947 boycott of Dutch ships by Australian Unions was not wholly effective. Dutch maritime prowess and the labour of military personnel in Australia were used to break the blockade. This enabled some goods to reach Indonesia after innovative ways had been devised to refuel the ships at sea. Even so, Macintyre claims despite these issues, that the campaign was effective enough to be a major factor in the survival of the Indonesian republic.

The boycott story did not end there – it was reinstated in 1960 when the Dutch Government embarked on a final stand to defend its bases, this time in West Irian. The aircraft carrier *Karl Doorman* and two destroyer escorts were sent out from the Netherlands to the Indian Ocean and Menzies offered them hospitality at Fremantle. Fremantle Dockies and seamen led by Patrick Laurence “Paddy” Troy – an Australian trade unionist and communist activist – re-imposed their ban on the warships, which, they said, could only endanger peace in Southeast Asia. So the carrier had to be brought in without tugs or pilot on a windswept day. However the Dutch Captain was a man of resource. He lashed four of his aircraft to the carrier deck and used the backdraft from their screw propellers to bring the carrier alongside the wharf, pennants flying, a feat of seamanship that won Paddy’s admiration.¹ Paddy was standing behind a group of men on the wharf to watch the ship’s progress. One said to another:

“You were in the navy during the war, George?”

“Yes.” “You were in the Signals, weren’t you?” “Yes”.

“Well, what do those flags read?”

“It reads, “Fuck Paddy Troy.”¹

¹ Macintyre, Stuart; *Militant, The Life and Times of Paddy Troy*, Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1984.

CHAPTER TEN

‘THESE WERE WILD TIMES’: THE EVACUATION OF DUTCH NATIONALS FROM THE FORMER NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1945-46

Sue Summers

What was happening? Out of nowhere, it seemed, there was a deluge of phone calls and dozens of letters appearing on my desk daily. The mobile was ringing from 5.45am, this rate of contact continuing for more than two months, with many communications still arriving a year later. In the midst of phone conversations, I gleaned that the Dutch organisation *Stichting Het Gebaar*¹ had generously sent letters to some 3,500 survivors of Japanese prisoner-of-war camps in the former Netherlands East Indies (NEI) – now Indonesia – to partake in the combined Dutch studies at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia.²

At that time in 2006, I was a Research Associate working with Nonja Peters and the year before we had travelled around Australia collecting more than 450 interviews and archival information on the Dutch presence in Australia. Yet why did this particular invitation to our studies garner such interest, especially given that 60 years had passed since their release from Japanese POW camps? In conversations and interviews the words piled out, one after the other, and when an extended questionnaire was sent out there was an astounding 50 per cent return rate. It was not unusual to receive 60 page responses, additional life histories, a range of photographs, historic documents and, at a later date, supplements to both questionnaires and interviews. As one woman pointed out, “After receiving your request regarding my experiences during the war, it was as if the load was lifted from my shoulders. At last someone is interested in what that time was like. I’m 80 now, but those awful happenings are as clear in my mind as yesterday”. Another said, “I owe it to my mother to be part of this study. Nobody knows about the Dutch evacuees; they don’t know what you’re talking about”. Collectively their stories and comments were very revealing of public knowledge and sympathies. “People know about the Holocaust,” I was told, “but they don’t care what happened in the East”. This person was referring to the largely silenced personal and collective holocaust faced by the ‘Other Dutch’ who were caught in the NEI at the onset of the Pacific War.

To give a brief overview, prior to the Japanese invasion on 1 March 1942, there were 220,000 Dutch nationals living in the NEI. The Japanese quickly overwhelmed Dutch and Allied forces and, when the Dutch surrendered, 40,000 military men were rounded up and interned in Japanese POW camps and 100,000 men, women and children in civilian interment camps for the next three-and-a-half years. The conditions were so primitive and appalling that 27 per cent of Dutch and Allied prisoners died in captivity,

an exceptionally high figure compared to the four per cent of British and American POWs who perished in Nazi German and Italian camps. Nine days after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 the Japanese surrendered and two days later the Indonesians declared their independence from Dutch colonial rule.³ At this point, the Dutch who had been interned, then briefly liberated, were caught in the middle of a nationalist guerilla war as the Netherlands sought to retain its colony and the Indonesians to assert their independence. Survivors clearly recall their terror as young Indonesian freedom fighters took advantage of the ensuing power vacuum by overrunning the streets, forcibly entering homes and villages, climbing fences of the camps from which many Japanese soldiers had fled, attacking lorries and convoys attempting to evacuate the Dutch, and killing thousands of Dutch nationals and others *en masse*. The Australian Government of the time was very sympathetic to the plight of the Indies Dutch and was willing, in principle, to take as many evacuees as this country was able to accommodate.⁴ Dutch representatives in Java anticipated that 10,000 would be sent to Australia, 53,000 to the Netherlands and the remainder to various countries willing and able to accept them.⁵ An Australian Government representative in Java witness to the severity and scale of the disaster called upon Australia to receive an even larger number – at least 50,000 ex-internees.⁶ The logistics however were enormous. Several hundred Japanese POW camps were scattered throughout South East Asia, and it could take months for Australian, American, British and Gurkha forces to reach embattled civilians and ex-internees, let alone safely liberate and evacuate them to Australia, Singapore, India, Ceylon or the Netherlands.⁷

There is no precise tally of those evacuated to Australia, but archival documentation and newspaper sources suggest some six thousand evacuees entered the country over eight to ten months. Six hundred evacuees reached Perth by mid-November 1945 and by late January 1946 the numbers had increased to one thousand. Some moved on to the Eastern states and by May 1946, just 625 evacuees remained in WA.⁸ The evacuations faltered due to lack of foreign currency and lack of ships and in April 1946 NEI authorities based in Melbourne were forced to bring the evacuations to a halt.⁹ By the end of the year, most of the evacuees had been repatriated to the Netherlands or to the NEI.¹⁰

According to the people in this study, “these were wild times”. Four years earlier, in 1942, the Dutch had been evacuated to Australia in Catalina, Qantas and Dutch Dornier Flying Boats, Lockheed Lodestars, B-25 Bombers, DC Tens, submarines, cargo and hospital ships—in just about anything that had the capacity to fly or float. In one instance, joint Dutch-RAAF 18th Squadron member Gus Winckel told me that his Lockheed Lodestar was so damaged it was considered unfit for flight, until one of the evacuees agreed to sit huddled inside the nose of this small plane to provide ballast, to act as an anchor, so that crew and evacuees could safely cross Western Australia. On another occasion, fuel ran so low that a group of evacuees were dropped



Figure 1a-1d
A range of Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees (NIWOE) pins and badges that Janie Hardey wore upon her Red Cross uniform. Courtesy: Janie Hardey.

off in a paddock in remote WA, left to find their own way to the nearest town. What happened to them, nobody knows.¹¹

The 1945-46 evacuations were – as much as circumstances would allow – far better organised with the majority of evacuees arriving in Australia by ship, including the Dutch *Tjibadak*, *Oranjefontein* and the *MS Oranje* (a former passenger liner converted to a hospital ship during the war), and with the NEI Air Force. However, not everyone entered Australia via designated procedures and pathways. In their attempts to flee a desperate situation some utilised their ‘connections’ with friends, acquaintances and family members to ‘hitch’ a ride with Allied Forces to Australia and, in some instances, even bypassed the necessary paper work on entry.¹² Others in this study came on an assortment of aircraft including B-25 Bombers, Douglas DC-6 transport aircraft, American Flyers and, in one instance, a family spent the journey wedged to a make-shift wooden bench in an old army plane that had lost its side door. Some spoke of informally boarding freight steamers, cargo and troop ships, with one person recalling the manner in which the family was “dumped” onto the wharf at Fremantle with no money, no contacts, wondering what to do and where to go. They were by far the minority, for those arriving by official channels were met by representatives of the Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees (NIWOE) or members of the Australian Red Cross.

The Australian Government was well aware of haphazard and unlawful arrivals and had been on the alert for “enemy agents” from the NEI since the beginning of war. They were also on the lookout for non-Dutch citizens said to be exploiting every avenue of influence to leave the war zone, often by presenting themselves as Dutch nationals in a bid for evacuee status. They would enter the country without visas to their passports or other documentary credentials and would “refuse”, or were unable, to provide a “satisfactory account” of their arrival.¹³ Thus, it was not surprising to hear that the formal reception of evacuees was mixed, especially as entry criteria was shaped by the White Australia Policy which favoured those of Anglo-Celtic and northern European background. The majority of those whom I spoke with, however, say they were treated well on arrival, although some hold memories of being “doused with DDT powder”, their bodies inspected for nits and scabies and their blonde hair inspected for the dark roots which may have suggested, to a sceptical Immigration or Customs Officer, that they were of Dutch-Indonesian or non-Dutch heritage.

Those assessed as genuine evacuees could enter Australia for ‘recuperative purposes’ on condition that they were of Dutch-European descent, were free from communicable diseases, and that NEI authorities in Australia would take full responsibility for their maintenance and accommodation.¹⁴ The Queensland-based NEI government-in-exile – mostly referred to as the ‘Dutch Administration’ – was well prepared for their arrival. They had set up branches of Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees (NIWOE), which, in Perth, was based at the Cloisters at 200 St Georges Terrace. The

role of NIWOE was to receive and process the evacuees, to pay all expenses associated with their 'recuperation', and to organise accommodation in private homes, hotels and boarding houses.

The Dutch authorities had proved to be astute and far-sighted. During the war, Fremantle was the biggest submarine base in the SW Pacific for US Navy forces that had successfully requisitioned residential facilities in most of Perth's larger hotels. As US forces departed at the end of war, the Dutch quickly took advantage of the existing infrastructure by booking – and paying for – accommodation for evacuees up to five months in advance of their arrival. Newspaper articles of the time suggest that publicans throughout the country were delighted for this was a financial bonanza they had only dreamed about.¹⁵ The Australian government, however, was far from impressed. There was an acute accommodation shortage in the post-war years, and the efficacy and largesse of the Dutch Administration reflected badly on the facilities and services available to Australian servicemen returning from overseas duty.

Archival and newspaper documents reflect the tensions between Australian and Dutch authorities. The Department of External Affairs detailed the "impropriety" of Dutch consular officials in booking up available hotels and boarding houses, saying it was "viewed with disfavor" by the Australian Government, that it could "only react against the Dutch in this country if Australians find themselves thereby deprived of accommodation," and that the Dutch "should make no further bookings and not take up reservations already made". The Department referred to an earlier agreement in which the Commonwealth had agreed to take in Dutch evacuees to the limit of the country's accommodation capacity, but on the understanding that this did not exclude the use of existing camps sites such as those Cowra, Harvey and Mt. Martha. Two weeks later the Department outlined the response of Mr Wessells, the Vice Consul of the Netherlands, who clearly stated his view that accommodation in disused army camps would not be beneficial to Dutch nationals previously interned in Japanese POW camps, particularly when the object of their evacuation to Australia was to recuperate them to health. Wessells also pointed out that the Army camps, in the main, had been erected for the "temporary accommodation of troops" and were "not suitable for mixed sexes and children".¹⁶

The Department of External Affairs then wrote to 'Her Netherlands Majesty's Envoy International' in Canberra explaining that:

... the housing position in Australia being at present what it is, a great many of these man and women must look for accommodation in hotels and boarding-houses ... It is my understanding that Netherlands officials have in the past made a considerable number of hotel and boarding house bookings for evacuees ... and that they have continued to make these bookings. You will appreciate that where large numbers of evacuees are involved, this practice, if continued, will have the effect of depriving our own necessitous cases

of accommodation, and actually places them at a serious disadvantage since no similar agency to yours exists to obtain accommodation for them. It is for this reason ... that the Counselor of the Royal Netherlands Legation has been asked to convey the request of the Commonwealth Government that no further bookings of hotel and boarding-house accommodation be made by Netherlands officials for evacuees from the Netherlands East Indies.¹⁷

Returned Service organisations expressed outrage. They sent a telegram to Prime Minister Ben Chifley in February 1946 claiming that real estate agents were “inundated with enquiries and offers of high rentals and awards” for finding accommodation for Dutch evacuees while Australian ex-servicemen “had to walk the streets seeking urgent accommodation for themselves and their families”. They demanded Chifley “take immediate action under national security regulations forbidding the renting of houses flats etc to alien evacuees”.¹⁸

In responding to the sheer practicalities of the situation, the Australian government set aside calls to receive 10 to 50 thousand Dutch nationals and limited the intake to six thousand evacuees, which was just three per cent of those endeavouring to flee the carnage in Java.¹⁹ The response to this decision was mixed. The Melbourne *Argus* criticised this “miserly” intake and all the talk of how to feed the men or where to house them when the nation had already proven capable of feeding an army of Americans.²⁰ In Western Australia, a decision was made that old army camps were not suitable for the Dutch, and that the evacuees would be better accommodated in “hotels, rooms or flats in the metropolitan area to be handy to available medical facilities”.²¹

The Dutch evacuees, however, were barely aware of these issues: from their point of view they had gone from Hell in the camps to Heaven in Perth. But they do recall feeling “extremely embarrassed” on arrival as all they had to wear was the tattered remnants of clothes that had survived the camps and their physical appearance reflected years of malnutrition and ill-treatment. Many were barefoot, while others wore make-shift shoes that had been put together from bits of wood and old car tyres. From their point of view they were “very skinny”, “shabby” and “s-o-o-o horrible”, yet their plight did inspire compassion within much of the Australian public. There was one notable exception: a number of unions including the Australian Waterside Workers Union, the Australian Seamen’s Union and the Australian Carpenter’s Union, who were all actively supporting Indonesia’s fight for independence, had placed Black Bans on Dutch vessels and refused to load, re-fuel, or to tug a number of Dutch ships in or out of port.²² They also refused to load thousands of tons of Red Cross supplies for the 200,000 Dutch nationals awaiting evacuation from Java.²³ The pro-Indonesia stance of the Unions failed to recognise that the Dutch were an integral part of the joint Australian, American, and British (ABDA) forces that had helped

**Figure 2**

Janie Hardey next to the Pontiac she drove with the registration 'RNF [Royal Netherlands Forces] 680' - at Fremantle Wharf with the historic C.Y. O'Connor Statue and the Tourist Information Bureau in the background.

Courtesy: Janie Hardey.

to defend the south west Pacific, including Australian waters, and that the Dutch had played a particularly active role in taking supplies through enemy lines to Australian forces fighting in the Pacific War.²⁴

Once they passed the hurdles of entry, the evacuees found themselves in a whole new world. They were picked up from the Port of Fremantle by drivers employed by NIWOE and taken to the Dutch Club at the Cloisters for processing. Perth woman, Janie Hardey, was one of at least eight drivers who chauffeured the evacuees to various hotels and boarding houses including the Majestic Hotel at Raine Square, the Wentworth Hotel at the corner of Murray and William Street, the King Edward Hotel in Hay Street, the Commonwealth Hotel in North Perth, the Windsor Hotel at South Perth, the Crawley Reception Centre, and the Manly Hostel and Ocean Beach Hotel in Cottesloe.²⁵ They were also taken to the Fairbridge School Farm in Pinjarra, and to a number of sites and appointments including the 28-bed Westminster Hospital in Adelaide Terrace. As NIWOE's role was to take financial responsibility for the health needs of evacuees, the hospital had been brought under the control of the Netherlands' representative of the International Red Cross and functioned exclusively as the 'Dutch Medical Centre' from December 1945 to September 1946. This was a boon to incoming evacuees for they could then bypass the long waiting lists at local Perth hospitals to be given "a thorough medical overhaul".²⁶

NIWOE headquarters, situated at the historic Cloisters building in the city, was popularly known as 'The Dutch Club' and there is a 1946 article in the *Sunday Times* that describes the WA-based headquarters very well. The Dutch administration had spent £4000 refurbishing the Club with "tastefully decorated" accommodation, provided meals for up to 60 persons, and a range of amenities "not available to the ordinary citizens of this State". Titled, 'We give refugees warm welcome,' the article was written to help dispel the impression widely held amongst Dutch nationals in the NEI that

**Figure 3**

The Dutch Club and also the Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees headquarters in St Georges Terrace:

Courtesy: Janie Hardey.

**Figure 4**

Westminster Hospital, Adelaide Terrace, Perth. Courtesy: Janie Hardey.

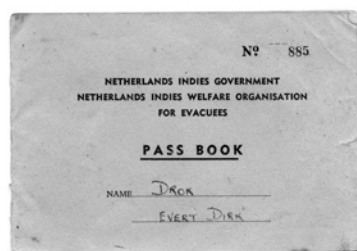


Figure 5
Dirk Drok's Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees Pass Book, the documentation required allowing entry into Australia. Courtesy: Arnold Drok.

Person	Date Paid	Amount	Signature
1. CHILD		FL 1.80 - 0 - 0	
2. SPOUSE		FL 1.80	
3. MARRIED COUPLE WITH ONE CHILD		FL 1.80	
4. MARRIED COUPLE WITH TWO CHILDREN		FL 2.40	
5. MARRIED COUPLE WITH THREE CHILDREN		FL 3.00	
6. MARRIED COUPLE WITH FOUR CHILDREN		FL 3.60	
7. MARRIED COUPLE WITH FIVE CHILDREN		FL 4.20	
8. MARRIED COUPLE WITH SIX CHILDREN		FL 4.80	
9. MARRIED COUPLE WITH SEVEN CHILDREN		FL 5.40	
10. MARRIED COUPLE WITH EIGHT CHILDREN		FL 6.00	
11. MARRIED COUPLE WITH NINE CHILDREN		FL 6.60	
12. MARRIED COUPLE WITH TEN CHILDREN		FL 7.20	

Figure 6
Family allowances were recorded in the Pass Book, with evacuees very well catered for by the Dutch Government in Exile in Australia. Courtesy: Arnold Drok.

Australia was “extremely hostile to refugees sheltering here”. Such perceived hostility would have arisen from the Australian Maritime Workers’ blockage of ships – some of which were said to be carrying evacuees – and to tensions rising from the competition for available housing in Australia following the war. The article pointed out that the people of Perth had shown considerable generosity in making the Dutch welcome. There was a WAAAF hut in a nursery equipped with swings, dolls and prams, scooters, tables and chairs, beds, children’s deck chairs and a rocking horse and piano. A radio and loudspeakers had been donated by a Perth firm and there were 100 chairs and 30 tables for the outside gardens that had been crafted by the Maylands Blind School in less than a month.²⁷

There is no doubt that the Australian and Netherlands Governments were very generous to the evacuees. On arrival, the Dutch Administration provided evacuees with clothing coupons and a living allowance of £40 for each adult and £20 to those under 21 years of age. Thereafter, a single person received £40, and a married couple with one child, £80 a month for living expenses.²⁸ With this largesse, the evacuees bought “suits and hats and stockings and gloves and shoes and underwear” and all manner of items before their repatriation to war-torn Netherlands. But the money rarely featured in their conversation; far more important was their new-found safety and freedom and access to copious amounts of food. Many of the youngsters could hardly contain themselves for they could play and move about without constraint for the first time in several years. Many years later, they would describe themselves as a wild and irrepressible bunch of children who made a lot of noise. But in Perth, if they were “pests” and “running amuck”, as some had claimed, most people – other than business owners – took little notice for the majority of Dutch and Australians alike were more intent on locating sons, husbands and brothers and getting on with their own lives.²⁹ At this time, these boisterous kids who had just been released from the camps were just one part of the rich kaleidoscope of post-war life.

Perth man, Jim Williams, remembers the children particularly well. In early 1946, Jim was just 14 or 15 years of age, and was the local paper-boy working from the street corner outside the Commonwealth Hotel – now known as the Hyde Park Hotel – in North Perth. He recalls some 30 Dutch evacuees, including many children, billeted at the hotel, which, in the eyes of a young teenager, was “an up-to-date, high-class, hotel with good qualities, just out of the city”. “Got yapping to them”, he said. “Made conversation with them and we played cricket with an old fruit case and a piece of picket [fence] for the bat.” To Jim, the kids were very tall, had yellow complexions, were wearing “cloppity old sandals” and were “so skinny their ribs were sticking out”. They didn’t talk to him of their experience of war, for they were far more intent on what was happening around them and what they were going to eat. “They were never late for meals,” he chuckled. He also noted they were a little “in awe of Australia” and, in what Jim described as “a glorious uncertainty”, a “little apprehensive of what was to come”.³⁰

By January 1946, 600 evacuees had already arrived in Perth and more than a 1000 were on their way. The Dutch authorities, who had earlier realised that something needed to be done for the children sent the younger of the new arrivals to join their peers at Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra, and the older arrivals to the already established Dutch High School at Burt Hall, St Georges Cathedral. Apart from its existence, we don't know much about this High School as the church records hold little detail. I asked Henriette Thomas (nee Kuneman) who was evacuated to Perth at the age of 16, what the school was like, how many children there were, and what she remembered of the teaching. And what did she say? "Nothing, Sue. I remember nothing. Not a single thing." And why? Henriette, who had the nickname of Spitfire – a suitable name for a child of the camps – said she had "discovered the world of boys". Henriette was catching up for lost time: she laughed a lot, was playful, spirited, effervescent, went to the movies, rode horses, played tennis, swam in the pool at Nedlands on the Swan River (now JoJo's Cafe), and was having the time of her life. When I mentioned the money given to evacuees by the Dutch authorities she said, "Oh, so that's why I always had £2 in my pocket".³¹ In retrospect, she described this interval between three-and-a-half years spent in an internment camp and her repatriation to the Netherlands as an "age of innocence" and as "the best time in my life".

In contrast to Henriette, Marianne Smith (nee Kleyn), was overwhelmed by change – in culture, in country, in language, in schooling – and it was only years later that she realised, like many others, that she could have enjoyed herself more, that there were many positives at this particular time of her life. She was evacuated to Sydney in 1946 at the age of 14, where she resumed her schooling after several years in a civilian internment camp. This was far from easy for she could not speak English and had no idea what the teachers were talking about. So the Education Department stepped in and gave this young girl – whose only language was Dutch – an intelligence test in the English language. When they subsequently placed her with far younger children in a domestic science school to learn cooking and needlework, she was devastated but did not have the capacity then, as she does now, to say: "I challenge any one of them to do one of those tests in Dutch!" In a short time, Marianne learned the language, adjusted to the freedom of not being in a camp, and very soon was second in her class. Marianne's father was a ship's engineer with *Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij* (KPM) and when he was transferred to Fremantle in 1949, the family moved to Perth. This proved to be a good move, for Marianne was then sent to Leederville Technical School in Oxford Street that was taking in young ex-servicemen of any nationality whose education had been disrupted by the war. Her mother was very resourceful, and approached the school principal for Marianne to be included as a student. He "took a gamble" and placed her with children of her own age, and it was in this environment that she quickly moved from Year 7 to Year 10. Later she trained as a physiotherapist at the WA School of Physiotherapy, which initially was based at Royal Perth Hospital in Perth and later at the hospital's Shenton Park Annexe.³²



Figure 7
Dirk, Kitty and Arnold Drok following their recuperation from several years in a Japanese POW camp. Courtesy: Arnold Drok.

Arnold Drok was also evacuated to Perth with his parents and grandparents in late 1945, just before his fourth birthday. Born in February 1942, and interned later that year, he spent three years in an internment camp. In the late 1930s, just prior to war, his uncle was a boarder at Perth's Wesley College and during this time one of his classmates was invited to stay with the family in Java for a holiday. This hospitality was reciprocated when Arnold's family arrived in Perth as evacuees after the war. His Dutch father, Dirk, and his mother, Kitty, who was of mixed Dutch-Indonesian-Chinese heritage, met with many other evacuees at the Dutch Club where they would reminisce with the others in the lounge following the meal. He clearly remembers the St Nicholaas celebration at the Club when he said to his mother: "Hey mum, why is dad dressed up like that?" He recalls much laughter as he was quickly told to, "Sssh, shssh, shssh".³³

Each person who responded to this study has a different story, a different experience of the former NEI, of war, of migration, and of life in Western Australia. Johannes (Joop) Bernardinus Ambrosius Saat was born in 1924 in Bandung, West Java and from 1942 served as a *Stuurmansleerling*³⁴ (Apprentice Deck Officer) and from 1944 as a 3rd Officer with the KPM fleet in the Indian Ocean and SW Pacific area. The KPM ships formed the mainstay of the Allied transport fleet and carried troops and thousands of tonnes of war supplies throughout the south-west Pacific war zone, where they were subject to bombing and strafing raids by the Japanese.³⁵ During shore leave in 1945, he met Perth woman Joan Higgins and when the opportunity arose in 1947, he took three months leave owing to him and headed right back to Perth. After successfully applying for an honourable discharge, he applied for resident status as a migrant and then settled in WA with his new wife.



Figure 8
Dirk and Kitty Drok when they married in April 1941. Courtesy: Arnold Drok.

Joop's application would have been backed by the Commonwealth Migration Officer in Perth who believed Dutch Servicemen would prove "suitable migrants" should they be able to produce evidence of an "honourable discharge", a "satisfactory medical certificate" and be able to "maintain and provide accommodation" for themselves and their dependents.³⁶ This Joop could do. His only grievance is that he was not permitted to join the Australian Merchant Navy as his Dutch qualifications were not recognised in Australia; instead he trained as a high school teacher and became a "real dinky-di Aussie and proud of it!"

Unlike Joop, who was a *bona fide* migrant and married to an Australian woman, the majority of arrivals were evacuees permitted to remain in Australia for eight to twelve months.³⁷ From May 1946, the *Tasman*, *Bloemfontein*, *Sibajak*, *Volendam* or the *Nieuw Amsterdam* carrying evacuees from the eastern states, would stop off at the Port of Fremantle each month to collect WA-based evacuees to repatriate them to the Netherlands or NEI.³⁸ It is understandable that so many were "sorry to leave 'hospitable' Perth";³⁹ especially as many families who had been interned in separate camps were to be separated yet again, as many husbands returned to the NEI, and wives and children to the safety of the Netherlands.⁴⁰ Newspaper headlines expressed their feelings: "Tears as Dutch Evacuees Leave", "Sadness Replaces Joy at Cloisters", "A 'Sorrow Ship'. The Crowded *Sibajak*. Evacuees and Brides Complain".⁴¹ For many, this was a journey to a new and unknown territory—a country most had never seen, with a climate far colder than they had ever experienced. The Netherlands was also an impoverished country due to its wartime occupation by the Germans, and its critical food and housing shortages were aggravated by the 'first wave' of 100,000 Dutch nationals from the NEI entering the country between 1945 and 1950.⁴² The bitter irony was that the Netherlands actively sought to retain the NEI as Dutch territory, including the revenue and trade it generated, yet the new arrivals were dismissed as the 'other Dutch' and portrayed as 'spoilt colonialists', with their identity as genuine Dutch nationals subject to ongoing scrutiny and debate. This was particularly difficult for those of Eurasian descent.⁴³ Tensions in the country were rife and the incoming Dutch vividly recall the "sour face" of angry crowds at the wharves holding banners commanding them to: 'GO HOME'. They were not interested in the wartime experiences of the Indies' Dutch—they were absorbed with their own troubles, and the needs and experiences of a distant people who had been incarcerated in prisoner of war camps for three-and-a-half years, who had lost country, homes and worldly possessions, and a large proportion of family members, were of secondary importance.

It appears that the majority of the children from the NEI, at least those in this study, quickly resumed their education in the Netherlands and mostly without incident—especially those who articulated a clear determination to make up for years of lost schooling. Others, however, spoke of being the targets of school bullies who, from all accounts, were totally unprepared for the capacity of young boys – particularly those separated from parents and placed alone in a male POW camp at 10 years of age – to protect themselves.



Figure 9
Henriette Thomas (left) and friend at the Fremantle Wharf on 2 September 1946, about to leave on the *Volendam* for the Netherlands. Courtesy: H. Thomas nee Kuneman.

These young boys were not to be messed with and, in many instances, the school bullies, their parents, and the teachers were both outraged and horrified by the ability of these youngsters to stand up and fend for themselves.

Henriette Thomas did not experience problems with her schooling in the Netherlands, yet her father had died in a POW camp, her mother was very ill, and when she became the ward of her aunt and uncle she was subject to ongoing emotional and physical abuse. She was “a child of the East Indies” – one whose early years were immersed in the freedom, colour and warmth of a coffee and rubber plantation – who felt trapped in a “grey and horrible” country with “stodgy and hostile” people.⁴⁴ As soon as she was old enough to be independent, Henriette joined hundreds of thousands of other Dutch nationals who sought a better life in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the USA or Brazil.⁴⁵ She was one of 10,000 NEI Dutch who migrated to Australia following the war.⁴⁶ Henriette was so very excited to return to Australia; she had relished her time in Perth when evacuated from the Japanese internment camp in 1946, and she had been given a far better reception as an evacuee in Western Australia than as a Dutch national in the Netherlands. She also was meeting up with her brother, Kim Kuneman – a former member of the joint NEI-RAAF 18th Squadron – who had already settled in Perth with his wife. She loved Western Australia, the climate, its wonderful people, believing it to be a country where she could feel at home. Similarly, Marianne Smith felt that Australia was a country she could *belong* to. “I have always felt more kinship with Australians and their way of life and attitudes,” she explained, “than with any of the Dutch I have ever met.”⁴⁷

Many of the NEI Dutch who have settled in Western Australia, indeed Australia as a whole, have been very successful. Among them is Bart Benschop, born in Java in 1939, interned as a child, and now a consultant engineer and biologist living in Perth. John [Jan] Corver was born in Java in 1940, evacuated to the Netherlands in 1945, returned to the NEI in 1946, and then migrated with his family to Perth in 1951. His family had lived in the NEI for three generations—his father was a former Inspector of Police and his mother a librarian of Dutch-Indonesian heritage. She had black hair, olive skin and was clearly of Eurasian descent. John has just a slight recollection of family conversations about the difficulties his mother encountered in entering the country, but thinks she was allowed through because the family, as a whole, presented as European and all the children had blonde hair. There was also some leeway in the interpretation of the White Australia Policy, with an immigration document indicating that “... the term Dutch can if necessary, be read as including Eurasians, but we are anxious as far as possible to keep the entries to whites”.⁴⁸ John, like so many other Dutch children with blonde hair, quickly blended in with the other kids in the playground and before long he identified as an Aussie, his memories of life in the internment camps and his Dutch-Indonesian heritage becoming more and more sparse. He later trained as a mechanical engineer at the University of Western Australia and retired in 2004.⁴⁹

**Figure 10**

The Corver family moving from Watermans' Bay to Medina in 1954. Jan was the Inspector of Police in the Province of Middle Java prior to the war, but in Western Australia he worked in a variety of labouring jobs until he secured a more promising position at the BP Oil Refinery at Kwinana. Courtesy: John Corver.

Those who arrived as adults shared much in common: they quickly found work and learned the language, even speaking it in the privacy of their own homes.⁵⁰ They mostly associated with Australian rather than Dutch people as they had made a conscious decision to put the past firmly behind them. They wanted to become Australian. Yet, there was a cost: many of the children lost touch with their unique heritage and identity, their language, and their family history. This was not an issue for the children at the time, for they settled relatively easily, quickly adopted an Australian identity, typically married an Australian person and learned to accept their parents' silences as an ordinary part of life. On the whole, energy was directed towards resettlement and the needs of the family, and issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other health concerns arising from years of incarceration and ill-treatment took second place. However, delayed PTSD can emerge, or heighten, during people's later years with many of those who participated in this study expressing a sense of despair and apprehension for the once-buried memories arising to the surface.⁵¹ As one person explained, "All those years I pushed it back and pushed it back and then I had a nervous breakdown". There were some who entered the study to see if their own experiences were typical of other stories told. They needed to know they were not alone. One such person said, "My doctor tells me that I need to talk about my experiences, but there is nobody to talk to here who has a clue about the Indies".

For some, the legacy of war takes very little to re-emerge, with the unexpected sighting of a Japanese person triggering a string of memories that rush to the surface. Many like Henriette Thomas, settled well initially, but in her twenties she would awake screaming from shattering nightmares and

then, during her forties, she suffered from “acute depression”. Henriette, a feisty and ultimately resilient woman, took immediate and decisive action and managed to overcome both conditions by herself. Others were not so fortunate. Willem, for example, never caught up on the lost years of schooling and is now on a disability pension due to what he described as, “clinic depression, chronic fatigue and Attention devesid disorder”.⁵² Another described himself as still dealing with the after effects of malnutrition including poor eyesight, ongoing bouts of malaria, and delayed PTSD. Like many others, he survived life in the camps, but today it is the memories from which there is no escape: “the memories that keep coming up and coming up more, just like my computer going to work”.

Those taken as ‘comfort women’ by the Japanese also remain traumatised, typically not speaking of their experiences, even with close family members. One woman spoke in detail of her exhaustion, her pain and terror and of the devastating impact this was to have on her marriage. It took fifty years to develop the courage to tell her family, and she later became a spokesperson for the many others who had experienced the same ordeal.⁵³

Louise Kriekhaus, who was incarcerated in a civilian camp, needed six operations on her hips following the damage incurred carrying logs and huge bags of rice on her back when interned. She found peace through her religion and was an active member of the Victory Life Church in Perth. Her husband Fries had been interned in the mountains of Sumatra and was both starving and very cold for three-and-a-half years. He rarely spoke to her of his experience of war and incarceration but, when he passed away in 2004, she discovered that he had been hoarding woollen socks and underwear and dozens of shoe laces that he had kept “just in case”. As she sifted through the written memories that he kept both hidden and silent, she found comfort: “... it makes my life really pleasant, for I am *now* finding out what he went through and what he felt”.⁵⁴

There are others who recognise positive outcomes arising from years of hardship. Bart Benschop, for example, “... gained skills and insights that others do not have”. Interned as a young child, he was determined to survive and he developed the strength and perseverance to succeed through thick and thin. Joop Saat – who was never interned but had the dangerous job of taking supplies through enemy lines to Allied Forces in the Pacific War – would bounce into the office offering to help in any way he could. He spent much time with his granddaughter, Emily Taylor, translating a war diary retrieved from Ambarawa civilian concentration camp in Central Java. He was naturalised in 1955 saying, “If you decide to make Australia your home you go the whole hog and become an Australian citizen”. His only grievance was that *Stichting Het Gebaar* had classified him as a ‘civilian’ within the Dutch Merchant Navy – when he had acted as 3rd Officer in the defence of the Indian Ocean and SW Pacific – and he was therefore deemed not eligible for compensation.

Those who were incarcerated as young children, however, typically have very few memories of this time in their lives. Many like John Corver view themselves as Australian and joined the study partly from a sense of curiosity, but more as an opportunity to learn about others and to connect with their own history. An interview with John led to a lively family gathering in which his brothers, Tony and Hans, and sister Yvonne, shared, compared and debated memories as they spread old – and now historic – documents and photographs over the kitchen table, all struggling to make meaning of the contents and translate them into the English language.⁵⁵

Arnold Drok, evacuated to Perth just before his fourth birthday, grew up to consider himself as “no different to any other Australian child”. He knows little of the experiences of his parents in war. Like others, they did not talk about their incarceration in prisoner-of-war camps, and Arnold now finds it difficult to distinguish between his own sparse memories and the little that his parents revealed to him. When his mother, well-known Western Australian ceramicist Kitty Drok died in 2001, Arnold was surprised to find a small handbag containing NIWOE ration books and meal vouchers; his baby shawl from the POW camp; gold capped teeth (typically used as currency in camp situations); food bowls made from coconut shells, and early photographs, passports, postcards, and tiny letters written by his father on rice paper and smuggled to his mother who was interned in a separate camp. All these things had been hidden for some 55 years and when found after his mother’s passing, family members could only ponder over their particular history and personal meanings.

In conclusion, the study evoked a number of issues for the Dutch from the former NEI, particularly their disappointment that their unique identity, their collective experience of war and internment, and their notable contribution to the defense of Australia and the SW Pacific during the Pacific War is barely recognised in this country. Those I spoke with were pleased to have this opportunity to share their personal accounts of the past and also to speak with someone who had some level of knowledge and understanding of what they had been through and were attempting to say. Further, the research provided a window of opportunity for the adult children and grandchildren to help parents fill in the e-questionnaires. They say they had never heard the full story before, and they delighted in the resulting “treasure hunt” – unearthing memories, documents, photos and other memorabilia – which engaged the whole family, furthered communication across the generations, and helped children reconnect with their past and to establish more clearly their connection to a unique and very interesting history in this former Dutch colony. Also significant was their amazement and wonder that thousands of people from the former NEI were living throughout Australia. Most had formed friendships with the Australian mainstream population and were not aware of the number of clubs scattered throughout the country, including the Bambu Club in Perth, Western Australia, where 30 to 100 people of similar NEI background can meet, share experiences, conversation, Indonesian food

(with a special treat being a *Ristjafel*), raise money for causes in Indonesia, and enjoy Indonesian dance performances.

For a significant number, the study also tapped into a growing need to express their stories openly, in many instances providing a viable and proactive outlet for the memories triggered by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many spoke openly of this war-induced stress, for they wanted to know whether they were alone or if there were others in this age cohort with similar stressors. They listened carefully when told that Post Traumatic Stress is common to elderly survivors of 20th century wars, that many suffer from ongoing or delayed PTSD, and that a significant number of cases remain undiagnosed. This engagement with the past may also have provided a vital source of knowledge and understanding for the children and grandchildren of survivors as it is possible, in some instances, for PTSD to be transmitted from generation to generation. With this knowledge, it becomes easier to recognise issues and to access appropriate treatment where required.

From one perspective, the losses of those who once lived in the former Netherlands East Indies are very complete. They emerged from war and incarceration as a dispossessed people who lost their homes and worldly possessions, community and family members, and their continuity with the past. Yet they were also an enterprising people who showed considerable initiative and determination in their search for a place where they could belong: they worked hard, quickly adopted the language, embraced the Australian way of life, and learned to make this country – with its sunny climate and colourful open spaces – a home away from home. As this chapter attests, those from the former NEI are more than survivors, they are a proactive and adaptive people whose personal experiences of war, displacement and resettlement deserves recognition and understanding in both Australia and the Netherlands.

ENDNOTES

- 1 In 2001, the Dutch foundation *Stichting Het Gebaar* called for claims for compensation to make amends for “suffering caused by the insensitive, formalistic and bureaucratic policies of previous Dutch governments” and “to make amends for possible shortcomings in the restoration of rights after the Second World War”. Successful claimants were awarded NLG 3,000 (approximately AUD \$2000). Predictably, there were many responses. Some described *Het Gebaar* – which translates as ‘The Gesture’ – as a Dutch ‘AALMOES’ (charity or handout) while others expressed a “heart felt thank you!” in the understanding that “at last someone in Holland finally showed recognition and a degree of care”.
- 2 Our considerable thanks to Edny Vandenbroek from Western Australia who was the original driving force behind this initiative. It was through his efforts that the organisation sent letters to Dutch migrants from the former Netherlands East Indies informing them of this research project. Thank you Edny, your contribution is valued.
- 3 Jan A. Krancha, “Introduction,” in *The Defining Years of the Dutch East Indies, 1942-1949. Survivors’ Accounts of Japanese Invasion and Enslavement of Europeans and the Revolution that Created Free Indonesia*, ed. Jan A. Kracha. Jefferson, 5-8. North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1996.
- 4 “Confidential,” correspondence from Acting Minister of State for External Affairs, Canberra to Baron F.C. van Aerssen Beyeren van Voshol, M.W.O., Her Netherlands Majesty’s Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Royal Netherlands Legation, Canberra,” 12 December 1945, in “East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects”, 1945-1946, Series 1838, Control Symbol 401/3/6/1/8, National Archives of Australia (NAA).

- 5 "Evacuees from the Netherlands East Indies, Draft for Cabinet," (n.d.) in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, Series 1838, Control Symbol 401/3/6/1/8, NAA. See also, "Notes of the Third Meeting of the Dutch Refugee Co-ordinating Committee, Headquarters Supreme allied Commander South East Asia," (n.d.) in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, Series 1838, Control Symbol 401/3/6/1/8, NAA.
- 6 "Distress in Java and the N.E.I." (n.d.) in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, NAA. See also, "Australia will take only 6,000 Dutch from Java," *Melbourne Argus*, November 30, 1945.
- 7 "Distress in Java and the N.E.I.," memorandum from Mr. W. MacMahon Ball, the Australian Government Political Representative in Batavia, (n.d.) in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, Series 1838, Control Symbol 401/3/6/1/8, National Archives of Australia.
- 8 Figures of arrivals need to be extrapolated from a number of documents and newspaper entries. The front page of the 6 January 1946 edition of the *Sunday Times* stated that 4,500 Dutch Internees were on their way to Australia and New Zealand, and that Australia was expected to take 3000 of this number. A Department of Immigration document refers to 818 European Dutch Evacuees registered throughout Australia to 9 January 1946, with the Customs and Excise Office in Fremantle claiming an additional 600 Dutch evacuees landing in WA on 11 January 1946 ("Dutch Evacuees - Registration of," 1945-1947, Series A437, Control Symbol 1946/6/79, NAA). Mr. H. J. W. Blok, head of NIWOE in Perth also states that 600 evacuees were residing in WA in this time frame (*West Australian*, 19 November 1945). The *Sunday Times* (20 January 1946) points to an additional 420 evacuees bringing the total in WA to more than 1000, yet the 9 March 1946 edition of the *Daily News* in Perth quotes Blok as saying there were 625 evacuees in WA. The *West Australian* (2 March 1946) claims there were 5000 evacuees throughout Australia. The *Sydney Morning Herald* (30 November 1945) and the *Melbourne Argus* (30 November 1945) both refer to a limit of 6000 evacuees to Australia.
- 9 "N.E.I. Evacuees. No More for Australia. Insufficient Foreign Currency," *West Australian*, March 21, 1946, p 9.
- 10 In this chapter, I refer to the 'Netherland East Indies' (NEI) rather than to 'Indonesia', as Indonesian independence was not officially proclaimed until December 1949.
- 11 Gus Winckel and other former 18th Squadron Veterans, interviews by author, Friday 22 July 2005, Gold Coast, Queensland. Gus passed away at the age of 100 in 2013.
- 12 These narratives are backed up by archival documentation. See for example, correspondence from the Commonwealth Migrations Officer for W.A., 21 June 1946, and correspondence from the A/G Inspector of Excise & Sub-Collector, Perth, 28 May 1946, in "Aliens registration of European Dutch evacuees from Netherlands East Indies, 1945-1948, Series PP6/1, Control symbol 1945/H/595, NAA.
- 13 Correspondence, Minister for the Army, 15 May 1942, in "Enemy Agents among refugees from the Netherlands East Indies," Series A2684, Control Symbol 874, 1942, National Archives of Australia.
- 14 "Temporary Admission of Dutch Europeans and Indonesians from N.E.I. for Recuperative Purposes," Memorandum from Department of Immigration, Canberra to The Collector of Customs, Fremantle, 10 September 1945, and 1 November 1945, in "Aliens registration of European Dutch evacuees from Netherlands East Indies, 1945-1948, Series PP6/1/0; Item 1945/H/595, National Archives of Australia.
- 15 "Country Hotels Reap Harvest from Dutch," *Daily Telegraph*, 19 January 1946. NIWOE also sought places in nursing and rest homes and private hospitals in all states for the evacuees. See, for example, the "Indies Evacuees. Private Hospitals Sought", *West Australian* December 12, 1945, p. 4.
- 16 "Dutch Consular Officials. Dutch Evacuees," correspondence from the Department of External Affairs, 5 December 1945, in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, Series 1838, Control Symbol 401/3/6/1/8, NAA. "Evacuees from Netherlands East Indies," 19 December 1945, in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, NAA.
- 17 "Confidential," correspondence to Baron F.C. van Aerssen Beyerens van Voshol, 12 December 1945, in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, NAA.
- 18 "Copy of telegram received by the Prime Minister, 8th Feb., 1946," from the "President, Queensland Branch Demobilised Sailors Soldiers Airmens Association of Australia," in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, Series 1838, Control Symbol 401/3/6/1/8, NAA.
- 19 "Australia will take only 6,000 Dutch from Java," *Melbourne Argus*, November 30, 1945. "Limit on Java Evacuees Here," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 30, 1945, p. 3.
- 20 "Canberra Trounced," *The Argus*, December 5, 1945 p 7.
- 21 "Old Army Camps not for Dutch," *Sunday Times* (WA), November 4, 1945 p 5. "Dutch Evacuees Await Shipping," *Daily News*, March 9, 1946.

- 22 See for example, "Dutch Ships Ban. Carpenters Emphatic," *The West Australian*, December 21, 1945; "Dutch Ships. Waterside Workers' Ban," *The West Australian*, 18 June 1946, p. 4; Printing for N.E.I. Cancellations of Orders, Effect of Shipping Trouble," *The West Australian*, June 15, 1946, p. 10; "Dutch Evacuees. Tasman Leaves Today. Baggage Loaded by Nationals," *The West Australian*, July 29, 1946, p.9.
- 23 "Ships Stand by to Evacuate Internees," *The Daily News*, November 28, 1845, p. 5.
- 24 Bart Benschop, interned by the Japanese in the NEI, explained, that the "Dutch and Australian government sent a ship to evacuate us. This ship took on a few people from our Camp because it was already nearly full. The ship never made it to Australia because Australian Maritime Workers refused to handle the ship, and the refugees were then dumped in Tandjong Priok [a harbour in Batavia/ Jakarta] without any facilities". What may have happened to them is unclear. For the Dutch response to the boycotts, see also: "'Haven of Refuge.' Dutch Evacuees. 500 at Fremantle. Conditions in Java," *The West Australian*, January 21, 1946, p 9.
- 25 Janie Hardey, interview by author, 24 April 2006, Perth WA. Janie, who passed away in 2015, wore a Red Cross Uniform as a driver, reflecting the strong links between NIWOE and the Australian Red Cross. The Wentworth Hotel was established in 1928 and the original building was still standing in 2016 with the Boheme Bar and Restaurant at street level. It is said that the evacuees were also billeted at the Globe Hotel in Wellington Street in Perth where the façade remains, and at the Royal Hotel at the corner of Wellington and William Streets which, in 2013, provided "quality budget accommodation" for backpackers.
- 26 "Dutch Evacuees. Medical Treatment. Local Hospital Taken Over", *West Australian*, November 19, 1945 p 6. "Hospital Open", *Sunday Times*, September 22, 1946, p 3.
- 27 "We give Refugees Warm Welcome ..." *Sunday Times*, January 20, 1946, p.15.
- 28 Figures sourced from the NIWOE Ration Book for the Drok family in 1946, a figure also reiterated in the 19 November 1945, page 6, edition of the *West Australian* which quoted Mr. H. J. W. Blok, head of NIWOE in Perth, saying that evacuees had a monthly allowance of £40. See also, Bernadine Williams. *All the World's a Stage*. (South Australia, Griffin Press 2005) 49-50. The money provided by the Dutch administration was clearly an enormous sum of money as 1946 archival records indicate that a man employed by Fairbridge Farm School as a cook for the Dutch evacuees was paid £3 5s. per week. See: "Fairbridge Personal Files", Records 1908 – 1981, MN 62, ACC5037A, Battye Library, WA.
- 29 Ella Bone, interview by author, 25 August 2006, Perth WA.
- 30 Jim Williams, interview by author, February 2007.
- 31 Henriette Thomas, interviews by author, April 2006, October 2008, August 2013, Perth, WA. Henriette had sufficient money to purchase a Malvern Star Bike in Dutch colours (bright orange) which she described as a sports model of the time. Its vibrant colour and air-filled tyres made quite an impression when the family was repatriated to the Netherlands, where bike tyres were typically improvised by removing strips of rubber from disused cars and binding them around the rims of the wheels. Henriette passed away on 18 March 2015.
- 32 Marianne Smith, interviews by author, February 2006 and June 2011. Information also sourced from, Marianne Smith, *Personal History: 'As I Remember'*, unpublished manuscript (n.d.).
- 33 Arnold Drok, interviews with author, 5 May and 20 September 2006, Perth WA.
- 34 The word *leerling* means 'the learning one' and *stuurman* translates as 'steering man'.
- 35 Joop Saat, email correspondence with author July 13, 2011. Joop explained that: "The twenty odd ships which managed to escape from the NEI, were chartered by the British War Administration and during the dark days of 1942 and the beginning of 1943 'carried the can' as it were, as the US didn't get going until the middle of 1943. These ships with the addition of a small number of British registered ships were sometimes referred to as the 'Liliput Fleet'. Fully manned and with experienced crews, these ships were ideally suited to sail in some shallow waters in the SW Pacific area. During the Pacific War, the KPM lost five ships but not all crew were lost, leaving surplus crews but no ships. Thus the authorities arranged for three US built ships to be handed over to the KPM. They were named *Fort Wilhelmus*, *Fort Amsterdam* and *Fort Rensselaer*, and I became the *derde stuurman* on the latter. In April 1945 I was flown across Australia to Fremantle because the *Van Spilbergen*, then under charter by the WA State Ships was minus a Third Officer". Information also drawn from numerous informal discussions with Joop and from his unpublished manuscript: Joop Saat, *Memoirs of Johannes Bernardinus Ambrosius Saat (1924 -??)*. Self-published: Perth, Western Australia, n.d. Joop Saat passed away in 2014.
- 36 Correspondence, The Commonwealth Migration Officer, Perth, WA, 19 August 1947, in "Dutch Servicemen, Wives and Children - Return to Australia after Visiting Netherlands East Indies," 1947, Series PP6/1, Control Symbol 1947/H/1963, NAA.
- 37 See for example, Department of Immigration communication dated 10 September 1945, in "Dutch Evacuees – Registration of," 1945-1947, Series A437, Control Symbol 1946/6/79, NAA, which outlines the temporary admission of the evacuees for "recuperative purposes for any period up to six months".

- 38 Dutch Evacuees. Tasman Leaves Today," *The West Australian*, 19 July 1946, p. 9; "Farewell to Dutch Evacuees," *The West Australian*, September 5, 1946 p. 3. It appears that most evacuees had left Australia by the end of the year. According to the 27 August 1946 edition of the *Melbourne Herald*, "Fewer than 200 Dutch Nationals will be left in Melbourne by the end of next week after three ships have sailed to Holland and the Netherlands East Indies with evacuees. ... An officer of the NEI Information services said today that nearly 3190 evacuees would be cleared from Australia by the end of next week. ... with another 200 leaving Fremantle tomorrow". For those returned to the Netherlands East Indies on the s.s. *Tasman* on 9 December 1946 see, "Departure from the Commonwealth of European Dutch Evacuees," Series PP6/1, Item 1946/H/1009, NAA.
- 39 "Dutch say WA is a Paradise'," *Daily News*, July 19, 1946, p. 8.
- 40 "Dutch Families to Break Up," *Daily News*, June 1, 1946, p.4.
- 41 "Tears as Dutch Evacuees Leave," *Sunday Times*, June 16, 1946, p.1. "Sadness Replaces Joy at Cloisters," *Daily News*, June 1, 1946, p. 9. "A 'Sorrow Ship'. The Crowded Sabajak. Evacuees and Brides Complain", *West Australian*, 26 September 1946, p. 3.
- 42 "Repat/Evacuatie," *Botenlijst*, accessed 22 September 2006, <http://home.planet.nl/~oost2767/html/repatriatie.html>. The total figure for the three waves amounted to 300 thousand Dutch nationals. My thanks to Walter Ypma for his translation from Dutch to English. See also, Nonja Peters, "Memories of a Homeland," *Inside Indonesia*, April 9, 2011; Wim Willems, "No Sheltering Sky: Migrant identities of Dutch Nationals from Indonesia," in *Recalling the Indies: Colonial culture and postcolonial identities*, eds Joost Coté and Loes Westerbeek, 251-287, Amsterdam: Askant, 2005, 251-252.
- 43 "There was resistance especially against admitting people who were 'Eastern oriented,' ie those of mixed descent belonging to a lower stratum of colonial society" (Willems, *No Sheltering Sky*, 257). See also, Willem Flach, *Never a Dull Moment: The memoirs of Willem Flach* (Sippy Downs, Qld: Maju Publications, 2005) 257.
- 44 Henriette Thomas, interview by author, 04 April 2006, Perth WA.
- 45 For an excellent discussion of Dutch migration see Marlou Schrover and Marijke van Faasen, "Invisibility and Selectivity: Introduction to the special issue on Dutch overseas emigration in the nineteenth and twentieth century," *Magazine for Social and Economic History* (*Tijdschrift voor Sociale and Economische geschiedenis*), 7, 2 (2010): 3-31, accessed 5 October 2010, http://www.culturalheritageconnections.org/wiki/Invisibility_and_selectivity_Special_issue_on_Dutch_overseas_migration_in_the_nineteenth_and_twentieth_century%22. See also Flach, *Never a Dull Moment*, 253.
- 46 Loes Westerbeek, "An Indisch Identity in Australia," in *Recalling the Indies: Colonial Culture and Postcolonial Identities*, eds Joste Coté and Loes Westerbeek, 289-315. (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2005), 289.
- 47 Marianne Smith, interviews by author, February 2006 and June 2011.
- 48 "Evacuees from the Netherlands East Indies. Draft for Cabinet." (n.d.), in "East Indies - Evacuation from Netherlands East Indies to Australia of distressed Dutch subjects", 1945-1946, NAA. An Australian Government Department of Immigration document 45/2/1946 stated: "It is not expected that many, if any, Indonesians will be sent to Australia under this agreement" (Ref 45/2/1647, in "Dutch Evacuees - Registration of," 1945-1947, NAA.)
- 49 John Corver, interview by author, 23 March 2006, Perth WA.
- 50 "Successive population census data in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have shown that Dutch immigrants are at the top of the list of migrant groups who give up their language within one generation, and shift to English." Marlou Schrover and Marijke van Faasen, "Invisibility and Selectivity: Introduction to the special issue on Dutch overseas emigration in the nineteenth and twentieth century," *The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* (TSEG), 7 (2010): 11.
- 51 Delayed onset and/or reactivation of combat-related post-traumatic stress in later life is well-documented in the literature. It requires treatment rather than avoidance. See, for example, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 28, 4, (1994): 625-634; *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 164, (September 2007): 1319-1326.
- 52 Willem is a pseudonym.
- 53 Interview by author, 26 June 2005 (name of interviewee withheld).
- 54 Louise Kriekhaus, interview by author, 28 March 2006, Perth WA. Louise passed away in mid-2012.
- 55 Corver family, interview by author, 23 March 2006, Perth WA.

DIRK DROK VIGNETTE

Dirk Drok was a remarkable man whose meticulous research contributed to the uncovering of the wreck of the ill-fated Dutch vessel the *Batavia* in 1963 and to the celebrated publication, *Voyage to Disaster*, in the same year.

In January 1946 Dirk was evacuated with his wife, son, and parents-in-law from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and together they built a new life in Perth, Western Australia.

He became a successful mature-age student at the University of Western Australia (UWA), passing many of his examinations in French, German, Greek and Latin with Distinction. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts in 1950, a Teacher's Certificate in May 1952, and a Diploma of Education in 1957. He tutored languages at UWA, taught at various schools in regional Western Australia, was elected to the Australian College of Education in 1971, and was Senior Master of Languages, and of Administration, at Christchurch Grammar School from 1973. He taught Latin and French and then introduced German and Indonesian into the school syllabus. He was a gentle man of the old school, very strict, and a really good teacher—just like his parents and grandparents before him.

Dirk also loved history. He worked with Henrietta Drake-Brockman (1901–1968) for a decade to help solve the mystery of the *Batavia*. Their 1963 publication *Voyage to Disaster* focuses on the ill-fated voyage of the *Batavia* in 1629 together with a biography of the ship's captain Francisco Pelsaert. Importantly it was Dirk's translations of numerous, relevant documents from the period including Pelsaert's Journal, and the complete Log of the *Batavia* and of the *Sardam* – written in the Gothic handwriting of 1629 – that helped Dirk and Henrietta Drake-Brockman to pinpoint the wreck of the *Batavia* off the Western Australian coast within a mile of their calculated position.

In a Letter to the Editor (*Western Mail*, 2 December 1985) – copies of which are also held in the Battye, National and The Hague Libraries together with a number of Australian university library archives – Dirk states that:

For a period of ten years I translated aloud to Henrietta who made written notes and together we poured over the current Admiralty Charts locating all the bearings given in relation to both ships. Together we concluded that the 'Batavia' must be in the vicinity of Noon Reef, and this decision was not an accident or a guess, it was the result of our arduous search and research. Henrietta told Hugh Edwards of our calculations, so for the next three years local fishermen were on the watch. David Johnson, a crayfisherman, spotted on Morning Reef,

objects which he believed to be canons and reported them to Max Cramer then President of the Geraldton Skindivers Club. He and Hugh Edwards visited the site and Max brought to the surface proof that the 'Batavia' lay within a mile of our calculated position. Max Cramer, Hugh Edwards and others in conjunction with the Royal Australian navy began uncovering the wreck some five months later. It was then that both Henrietta and I dived on the wreck to view it in situ.¹

Dirk's son, Arnold, remembers when the family was living in Boronia Flats opposite the Captain Stirling Hotel in Nedlands, Dirk would be up all night with the projector, with images of Pelsaert's journal – sourced from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam – projected onto the wall. He took considerable care in reading and interpreting Gothic Dutch.

We celebrate Dirk Drok's contribution to *Voyage to Disaster*² and to the finding of the wreck of the *Batavia*. He deserves a place in the rich history and ongoing exploration and research of this fascinating story and its place in Western Australian history.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Evert Dirk Drok, Letter to the Editor, *Western Mail*, 2 December 1985. In, 'Correspondence, 1973–1985,' Drok, E. D. (Evert D.), ACC 2312A, Battye Library, State Library of Western Australia (SLWA).
- 2 *Voyage to Disaster* by Henrietta Drake-Brockman was first published by Angus and Robertson, Australia, in 1963. Evert Dirk Drok is formally acknowledged as a contributor to this publication.

and at last after nine weeks travelling reached thereabout. But oh what a
 what misery! my pen stands still to write this, consequently I shall keep my
 counsel so that I write nothing of it, I shall relate only such things as we
 understood from the surviving people. After we had parted from the Ship Batavia,
 the under Merchant Jeronimus Cornelisz., being a Frisian (and erstwhile Apoth-
 ecary at Haarlem, where he had been, so it is said here, a follower of Jan
Symonsz. Torrentius) assumed supreme authority, greatly lording it, and whoever
 would not be obedient to him was murdered at once, the Women who would not
 oblige him killed and defiled. He sent a party of People, so that they should
 perish of hunger and distress, to an Island, where he thought that nothing
 would be got on which to live, so that they should perish in great affliction.
 And noticing that somehow they could maintain themselves there, he and his
 accomplices still sought to kill the same, as moreover he did nearly all. The
 Children he treated brutally, the pregnant Women were not spared, in ^{sum} ~~some~~ he
 lived as if there were no God. He also thought to run away with the Yacht which

Figure 1
 This image shows a translation in process by Dirk Drok in the mid 1960s. It is an extract of a letter written by Francisco Pelsaert, from the *Batavia*, at sea, on 11 December 1629. Pelsaert provided a detailed account of mutiny, terror and massacre following the grounding of the *Batavia* off the Western Australian coast in June 1629. Courtesy: Sue Summers.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS:
AN AUSTRALIAN WAR BRIDE WRITES HOME

Christina Houen

It is estimated that thousands of Australian women married British, American or Dutch servicemen during or just after the Second World War. The Second World War was a time of great uncertainty for many in Australia, but also a time of great excitement, particularly when Allied troops visited Australia. Many young Australian women were quite taken with “those handsome young men in uniform from so far away” and inevitably, relationships were formed. Some couples married during the war itself. Others became engaged during the war and married afterwards. These liaisons, were not always looked upon favourably by the Australian families of the women concerned or by the wider Australian community. In many cases, towards the end of the war or immediately post-war, many of these Australian women undertook a long sea voyage to either the USA, UK or Netherlands in order to be with their husbands or fiancés, aiming to make a new life thousands of miles from Australia and their own families. The majority had little or no knowledge in advance of either their husband’s families or what their new homeland would be like.

The story which follows, reverses the perspective of many of the chapters in this book; it tells of an Australian woman who emigrates from Australia to the Netherlands to join her Dutch husband there, and writes letters home, describing the nature of her new life to her family. It is written from the letters of Margaret Kruimink, née Stokes, and from conversations with her and her sister Stephanie.

Figure 1
Margaret Stokes and Klaas Kruimink -
22 December 1943: Courtesy: M. Kruimink.



In 1946, a young West Australian woman left Fremantle on the *MS Volendam* with hundreds of other Australian war brides, sailing to the Netherlands with her baby son. Margaret Stokes had married a Dutch naval officer, Klaas Kruimink, when he was on shore leave in Perth. Although World War II had ended in Europe in May 1945, and in the Pacific and the Far East on August 15 the same year, Klaas’s job was not over; he was not allowed to apply for discharge from the Dutch navy for several more years. He had graduated as an engineer before the war, and when the Netherlands fell to the Nazi Germany, he and another man managed to get an old Danish ‘tramp steamer’ operational and escaped in it to the British coast. Upon arrival there they were held as potential spies, but then released. The steamer was subsequently donated to Britain, and Queen Wilhelmina, whose court had taken refuge in Britain, decorated Klaas for his bravery. He was assigned to the destroyer *Van Galen*, which was based at Fremantle. Margaret then met him at a party, and so began a love match, which lasted until his sudden untimely death at the age of 61.

For most of the decade of her life spent in the Netherlands, Margaret wrote to her family regularly. Her letters were usually no more than a couple of

pages: to send more than this was far too expensive. They chronicle the busy domestic life of a young mother, whose days are taken up with childcare, housework, sewing and shopping. She and Klaas sometimes go to balls and dinners, when he is home on leave, and exchange visits with other young couples. Margaret develops a network of friends, mostly Australian girls whom she had known in Perth, and some English girls who are married to Dutch officers. From time to time she and Klaas go to stay for a few days with Klaas's parents, who live in a coastal town in North Holland - a five-hour train trip away from Rotterdam or receive visits from them. The Netherlands has 11 provinces and North Holland is one of them although many people incorrectly refer to the whole country as Holland.

To read Margaret's letters is rather like gazing at a Rembrandt painting, or looking through a family photo album, where we can see the details of dress and appearance, home furnishings and utilities, food and festivals and the friends and relatives who visit. Sometimes we can glimpse the wider setting - the countryside, the canals, the cities and the public buildings. The letters however do not give us much idea of the great changes and upheavals happening in Western Europe in those years of postwar reconstruction — the politics, the tensions of the Cold War and the movement towards greater unity and co-operation between independent nations.

Margaret was born in Perth, Western Australia in 1925 and she married Klaas (born in 1919), when she was 18. Her parents liked the handsome naval officer, but were against the marriage; her father said she could not marry until she was 21. However, when Margaret found out that Klaas had to go to sea for an unknown period, she told her father she would get pregnant if he did not agree to the marriage. He gave in, and they had a small festive wedding with friends and naval officers at the Palace Hotel then spent a few days in Pemberton, where she recalls sailing in a dinghy on the river.

I was born 15 years after Margaret, and to read her letters is to enter a 'looking-glass world', where things are recognisable, but unfamiliar in many ways. In Lewis Carroll's story *Alice Through the Looking-glass*, when Alice and Kitty manage to pass through the mirror above the mantelpiece, Alice notices 'that what could be seen from the old room was quite common and uninteresting, but that all the rest was as different as possible.'¹

When I enter Margaret's world, I find a domestic scene that has a great deal in common with the middle class life into which I was born, and I can identify with many of her hopes, her pleasures and her dreams. However I also see many differences; not just a different country and culture, but a young married woman who happily accepts that her place is in the home. Gifted, intelligent, a good writer, a good manager; she marries not long after leaving school, has her first child the following year and does not finish her Arts degree. The marriage is happy and for the first few years of her married life, she does not seriously consider having a life outside of the home, marriage and motherhood.

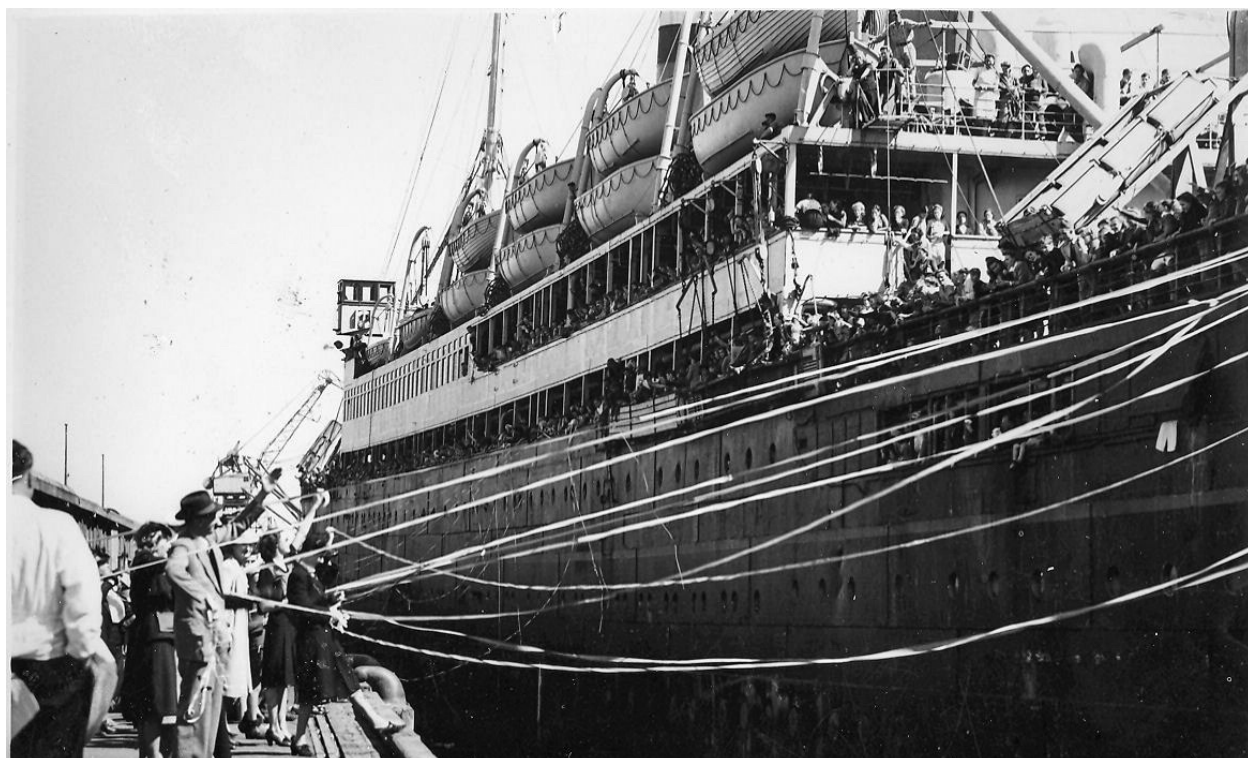
Figure 2
Margaret and Robert in Australia - 1946:
Courtesy: M.Kruimink.



The voyage to the Netherlands on the *Volendam* in 1946 is not a pleasant experience for Margaret and baby Ricky. Built as a passenger ship in 1922, the *Volendam* was commandeered for the Allied war effort. She survived a torpedo attack in 1940, then served as a troop carrier, and after the war, is used for troop transport to the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), and to carry evacuees, who had been rehabilitated in WA from Japanese internment camps and the violence of the Indonesian Independence Revolution in Java, to start a new life in the Netherlands. She carries over 1600 passengers on the voyage, which Margaret takes.² Including many war brides with children, some pregnant; there are several babies born on the voyage, and at least two miscarriages. Margaret has a group of friends, about six, whom she knows from her hometown. The long days and nights in tropical heat are very trying, and Ricky becomes ill with a severe heat rash. He is hospitalised, but Margaret is horrified when she visits him:

“He had been put in a men’s ward in an ordinary bed, with only a male nurse. He was lying on an oil proof sheet — no sheet over it — had a dirty nappy — and was terribly miserable. I asked what he’d had for lunch — and was told they’d tried to give him fish salad with mayonnaise. I asked for boiled water, for he hadn’t had a drink all day — but they said they had none. I was mad as hell and told off several doctors and then picked him up and walked out.”

Figure 3
MS *Volendam* leaving Fremantle for
Rotterdam 1946: Courtesy: W. Plink.



Relief from the pressures of being surrounded by screaming children and hundreds of people, of having to queue for everything and having access to fresh water for only three hours daily, comes when she eventually reaches the Netherlands.

At Rotterdam, she is called up to the bridge by the captain: 'See that light winking over on the dark, dark ocean — that's your husband!' Klaas, whose ship was in port, is waiting on the wharf, waving to her when the *Volendam* docks, but has to go back to his ship. While Margaret is waiting for her papers to be cleared, she feels a hand over her eyes; it is Klaas's brother Fritz, who has a jeep and a driver to take her to the family home in Gouda, which she and Klaas share with Fritz and his English wife Dorothy for the first few months.³ Later they move to Rotterdam, where they have a flat to themselves, unlike most of the young couples they know, who have to share because of the acute housing shortage caused by the widespread destruction of Dutch cities by Nazi bombers. Later, as their family grows, they move back to Gouda to the roomier family home.

One of the things Margaret finds 'as different as possible' and yet similar in some ways, is the food, which is rationed, as it is throughout Europe and in Australia. Soon after they arrive, they have eels for supper — 'the most scrumptious things you could ever imagine' — and for lunch, shrimps, 'tiny ones mixed with mayonnaise and eaten on fresh brown bread. Mmm.' Fish is plentiful whilst meat is scarce, but is eaten three nights a week. They get four ounces of butter each a week, half a pound of margarine and half a pound of dripping. Margaret writes that the typical Dutch breakfast is 'horrible'; just bread with cheese or jam. She and Klaas have Australian breakfasts of cornflakes or porridge and toast. Eggs are only available with special coupons for sick people, or one a fortnight for others. Lunch Dutch-style is bread again, with, 'if you are lucky,' warmed-up vegetables left over from the night before, or salted herrings or sardines. The chickens, the butter and the milk all have a special taste, because of the rich, deep soil of the farmlands. Fruit is scarce, especially oranges, which Margaret says she will never leave lying around again. At Christmas, they have the luxury of coupons for a pound of oranges from Spain — 'delicious!' Margaret's parents send her parcels from time to time with scarce items such as nylons, soap, cigarettes, tinned meat, and on one occasion, eggs. Margaret reports that the eggs did not keep, despite being set in dripping.

'Our attic is full of pears and apples for the winter; all the tradespeople come to the door with their wares, so there is no queuing or carting home large string bags full of groceries etc.'

The building, which they move into in Rotterdam has the luxury of shops of all sorts on the ground floor. Another comfort is the central heating.

Fashion is important, and many of Margaret's letters describe the clothes she is making for the children or for herself. She loves her new black suit made in "New Look" style, and sends sketches of the front and back view:

tight bodice and flared jacket, long skirt- narrow in front with back tucks and pleats. She wears it to a party:

I had a wonderful triumph. I was the Belle. ... Klaas kept telling me I looked wonderful and we danced cheek to cheek and felt as if we'd just met. I wore my hair down — just washed and all shining, and that little black lace cocktail affair on my head.

Later, in 1949, she has her hair cut in the “New Look” coiffure, ‘very short, slightly standing out, it suits me well Klaas says, though he got a shock at first.’

Another difference in the Netherlands is in the way the houses are set in the street, in a long row, joined together: ‘the dining-room looks out over the street, and the windows take up all the front wall. Neighbours pass and wave and call as we eat — but nobody minds.’

When they travel to Den Helder to visit ‘Moeder’ and ‘Vader’, Margaret remarks on the tidiness of the countryside:

Holland is all laid out like a garden — so neat, and everything in rows — rows of picturesque little cottages, all the vegetables grow in terrifically straight lines, the cows — all black and white — seem to be dotted in specific places, in the bright green fields, which are always divided by neat channels of water, some narrow and some wide. Small steam boats go right through the middle of Holland in canals, cut through the fields, and from the train all you see is the top of the ship moving along. Then, of course, there are the windmills, which still give me a terrific thrill, and fields full of cultivated flowers in bloom, each colour in squares so that it looks like a patchwork quilt.

Margaret is accepted by her parents-in-law, despite her foreignness and different religion — she is Catholic, they are Protestant. She and her English sister-in-law, also a Catholic, have agreed not to bring the children up as Catholics. She describes Klaas’s parents as doting grandparents. They often have the grandchildren to stay with them for a few days at a time, in order to give Margaret and Klaas a break, or when Margaret has a new baby.

Moeder, like most of the older Dutch women, is very family-oriented and a conservative housewife, dressed in long, dark clothes.

Margaret’s sister Stephanie, who visited Margaret and her family and lived in the Netherlands for nearly a year, describes her, in retrospect, as severe and critical of her daughters-in-law, but good-hearted. Vader she remembers as being ‘a lovely warm, giggly man, who used to smuggle cigarettes to Margaret’. Both sisters remember the Kruimink parents as honourable and patriotic; unlike many Dutch families, they had not given in to the Nazi occupation, and though they had Nazi soldiers billeted with them, they refused to socialise with them or serve them food. Moeder shows the strains of the war; she wears a wig, having lost her hair ‘through the war worries

and lack of food.’ This comment refers to the terrible winter of 1944-45, known as ‘the hunger winter’, when occupied Netherland was bypassed by the Allies on their drive to Berlin. The last winter of the war had brought severe food and fuel shortages, as one historian reports:

In some provinces there was nothing left to eat but tulip bulbs and sugar beets. Eighteen thousand Dutch civilians starved to death and many others never forgot their gnawing hunger in those months.⁴

Moeder is strict in her ways and parochial: ‘...if you mention America, she immediately says “Yes, all American women drink. America is no good. Bah!” but when Klaas teases her about that and her other little ways, she loves it. When Margaret smokes and has a drink with Vader and Klaas, Moeder ‘mutters to herself about women who smoke and drink, and we all laugh heartily and go right ahead — and she doesn’t mind a bit.’

Another difference is the weather: in her first winter in the Netherlands, Margaret reports that when she goes out to bring in the nappies, they are frozen stiff, like so many boards. This was a shock to a girl who had grown up in Perth’s temperate climate, where winters are mild, temperatures rarely drop below freezing and snow never falls. She has been used to a laundry with a washing machine, whereas in most middle class homes in the Netherlands at this time, there are no laundry facilities. Washing is done by hand in a tub and bucket, and heavy washing is sent to a commercial laundry.

After the first night of heavy frost, nappies left to soak overnight in the tub are a solid mass by the morning, and she tries to melt them over the stove, while Klaas and his brother rush to fit into their skating boots. The windows are covered in frost flowers, and Klaas and Fritz go off to skate on the ditches and canals. Margaret dresses for her first skating lesson in many layers, with the temperature at fifteen degrees Fahrenheit outside. In February 1947, she writes that the canals have been frozen for two months, coal has run out, the central heating is off and they are huddled in many layers of clothes over a small electric fire, which they can’t use much, as electricity is rationed.⁵

At Christmastime, she misses her family, and the ritual of present-giving; Christmas day in the Netherlands is a day of religious celebration. A special dinner is cooked, but no gifts are given, because things are so expensive. The main cultural festival is on ‘*Sint Nicholaas Day*’ (5 December), when small presents are exchanged. All day the children (and adults) eat dolls made out of gingerbread, spiced biscuits, sweets and butter cakes. Every now and then the door mysteriously opens a little, and *Sinterklaas* throws in a shower of *Pepernoten* a traditional confectionary.⁶ He visits the school in the daytime and gives out presents, assisted by *Zwarte Piet* (Black Peter), who is supposed to take off any naughty children in his bag. At night the children put their shoes in front of the hearth, sing a song up the chimney asking *Sinterklaas* to put something in them, then go to bed. Although he is dressed like a member of the ‘Black and White Minstrel show’, some say Black Peter’s origins are a ‘chimney sweep’.



Figure 4
Son Robert meeting St Nicholas – December 1951 Courtesy: M. Kruimink.

Childbirth in the Netherlands is also very different; most babies are born at home, without anaesthetic — ‘Doctors don’t give anaesthetics here at all [for childbirth] which I think is awfully cruel and unnecessary’ — but Margaret chooses to have hers in a nearby hospital run by nuns. During her pregnancies, her doctor visits her at home once a fortnight. Boys are not circumcised, and she has to make a fuss to get Ricky’s little brother ‘done’; the sisters all think she must be Jewish. When her fourth baby is born, she has her at home, with a midwife who helps at the delivery and stays for a fortnight, completely caring for house, family, mother and new baby. This remarkable support system is still in place in the Netherlands today.

World events have little impact on her life, apart from Klaas having to stay in the Navy because of ‘the world situation’ (the Cold War). She answers her parents’ question about why she does not mention ‘the Indonesian issue’ (the struggle for independence from Dutch colonial rule):

... it’s such a mess and it seems to me it’s no use worrying. I’ve been so busy having a family it just doesn’t seem to matter. Doesn’t that sound awfully dull and domestic — it’s not though, it’s the nicest thing in the world.

Margaret is happy in the Netherlands, being of a temperament that makes the best of things: ‘Wherever I’ve lived, I’ve just got on with it’, she reflects in old age. She, like most of her friends, is in love and although she misses Klaas when he is away, and sometimes gets depressed, his absences keep their marriage alive. On the other hand, she and Klaas live for the day he can leave the Navy; he is always away, on trips to Spain, the West Indies, the Azores, but ‘longs for home and us. Our ideal is a permanent home and a small car, a decent income and always together.’

Her letters reveal how much she misses her family. Throughout their years in the Netherlands, she dreams of returning home to Australia, and she and Klaas plan for it, asking her parents for help with finding a job and a place to live. He wants to leave the Navy and have a job on shore. He feels that Europe has ‘had it’: ‘it is over-populated and has no prospects for the younger generation; Australia is the place to make money.’

The ‘overpopulation belief’ was actively promoted by government propaganda, both in Europe and Australia. Emigration was seen as a partial solution to the overcrowding and shortage of resources in post-war Netherlands.⁷ Margaret comments on the difference in the standard of living between Australia and the Netherlands: ‘Pop’ Kruimink is on a salary similar to Margaret’s father, but ‘he couldn’t think of having a car, and although he has his own house in Gouda, it is old-fashioned, and only has a tiny patch of garden at the back.’ There is no possibility of building your own home in over-crowded Netherlands.⁸ Nevertheless, she is able to afford to have household help — at first, a girl who comes in two days a week and later, before and after the birth of her third baby, she has a daily maid who ‘does absolutely everything, so I just busy myself with the children.’ In 1949, after baby number three, she details their household budget:

Klaas gets 410 guilders a month now — £41 (English); Rent £2/8/-, insurances [for the children's tertiary education] £6/5/-, food £20, maid £4/5/-, gas and elec. £1, telephone £1/5/-, Ricky's school 10/-, total £37/13/- which leaves £3/7/- for clothes and entertainment. ... So you see we just manage. My four pairs of slacks have become overalls for the boys.

In 1950, she takes to doing the housework herself to save money for clothes, and later for their migration to Australia. In February 1953, Margaret writes of the floods in the Netherlands; Gouda is in no danger, with a strong river dike, but most sea dikes have broken, at least 1200 people have drowned, and nearly a million are homeless with millions of pounds worth of damage to property:

We've seen lots of evacuees walking along the *Krugerlaan*, with prams and wheelbarrows full of possessions, farmers driving cows and pigs, and so on. ... People are still clinging to roofs and sitting in attics since Sunday, and they can't be reached.

Klaas is in the West Indies for seven months, and Margaret writes of her growing depression. After he returns, she writes to ask her parents if they can lend them some money for their passage to Australia.

In December 1953, Margaret's parents and younger sister Stephanie visit at long last, so there is a gap in the correspondence. The parents leave after a few weeks and go to London, but Steph stays behind and lives with her sister's family. She works in the Netherlands for a while, having majored in English and German for her Arts degree and specialised in Philology, she now becomes fluent in Dutch and works as a travel guide, taking visitors from the United Kingdom to visit sites of interest. Stephanie remembers her first impressions of Rotterdam, which had been burnt and bombed to pieces and was not fully restored when she arrived. It was a shock to a girl whose generation had missed out on personal involvement in the war — she being seven years younger than Margaret. Those friends she makes in the Netherlands are more serious, having lived through the war as teenagers. She finds the neighbours critical of Margaret as a housewife, because she does not wash the windows and doors every week, clean the pavement and disinfect the bins, or hang the rugs on the washing line outside on Fridays to beat the dust out of them. Also, because she likes to smoke and swear a little and to sunbake with her sister in the back yard and wear trousers. Margaret recalls a time when she went shopping wearing a green slack suit, and was followed in the street by children chanting 'Missus wearing trousers!'

Both sisters love the Dutch people for their warm-heartedness and their strong family loyalties and community life. Stephanie remembers that when children came home from school on dark winter afternoons, their mothers would wait for them outside the houses, with welcoming tea lights burning in the windows.

Stephanie has many Dutch boyfriends and girlfriends, and loves riding her bicycle everywhere. She remembers with fondness a visit to Klaas's relatives in Drente on the German border. They live on a farm and are 'real Dutch', who wear clogs and have cattle living under the same roof.

The fourth baby is born to Margaret and Klaas in March 1955, and Margaret makes Ricky (aged nine) a pair of 'plus fours' for school, as 'all the boys wear them here.' For Sunday best, she has made the two boys long trousers with narrow legs — 'very chic!'

Later that year, back in Perth, Steph gets married, and Margaret feels rather left out of all the excitement of wedding preparations: 'I want all the details and a wedding photo. All the friends and neighbours ask such questions too and I know nothing'.

EPILOGUE

The last letter we have is dated June 21st, 1955. Margaret talked to me by telephone of their return to Australia. They left the Netherlands in 1956, with a free passage to Australia, funded by the Postmaster General's Department in Sydney. The voyage home for Margaret was a very different experience from the one to the Netherlands; they came first class on the *Iberia*.

They lived in Sydney for three years, then went to Tasmania, where Klaas took an engineering job (with house provided) at Mount Lyall, on the west coast of Tasmania.

Margaret went back to study when the children were older, completing a Teacher's Certificate and an Associate Diploma in Librarianship. She subsequently worked as a teacher librarian until she retired.

Klaas died 'too young' at the age of 61. He and Margaret were at sea in the yacht which he had bought on retirement, when the wind rose, creating enormous waves. As he tried to start the engine, he collapsed. Margaret attempted unsuccessfully to resuscitate him, crying: 'don't leave me, don't leave me'. She was however able to zig-zag the boat back in to shore. She now lives in a retirement home in Hobart. Stephanie lives in Perth with her husband and they have been together for over 60 years.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Lewis Carroll, *Through the looking-glass*, Project Gutenberg Etext, 1991, viewed 8 October 2007, file:///Users/215295f/Desktop/lglass18h.htm.
- 2 'Volendam temporary 'home' to numerous Dutch North Americans', Godutch.com, viewed 8 October 2007, <http://www.godutch.com/windimill/newItem.asp?id=307>.
- 3 When the Netherlands fell to the Germans, Fritz reported to the German command, and was ordered to serve them or be imprisoned; he chose imprisonment and went on to escape 13 times, including from notorious Colditz prison; he was successful in this last 'great escape' going by train to Paris,

where he worked with the Resistance. From there he escaped to England, and married Dorothy. They still live in the Netherlands.

- 4 Henri A Van Der Zee, '*The hunger winter: occupied Holland, 1944-1945*', viewed 23 October 2007, <http://www.godutch.com/catalogue/bookN.asp?id=640>.
- 5 This was known as 'the big freeze of 1947', the coldest winter recorded in Europe since 1659; harbours froze over, factories and schools shut down, crops and livestock were lost and thousands of people died. See WeatherOnline, viewed 23 October 2007, http://www.weatheronline.co.uk/feature/so07/01/26_ne.htm.
- 6 *Pepernoten* are a Dutch or Belgian cookie-like kind of confectionery associated with the early December *Sinterklaas* holiday in the Netherlands and Belgium.
- 7 Nonja Peters, *Milk and Honey But No Gold*, UWA Press, 2001.
- 8 The notion of the country being over-crowded. is propaganda sold to the general public by governments trying to rid themselves of people in a depressed economy, where jobs are scarce and lack of housing a serious issue.



Figure 5
The Feast of St Nicholas by Jan Havicksz.
 Steen, 1665 – 1668
 Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



SECTION THREE:

MIGRATION

Nonja Peters



Figure 1
Australia Your Future. Courtesy, National
Archives Australia, CP815/1/1 Item 23/21/4
Pt2.

Section Three is concerned with the experience of Dutch Migration to Western Australia pre and post WWII. There were few Dutch in WA before the Second World War, in fact, the last Census before the outbreak of WWII recorded just one hundred and two.

Between 1945 and 1971, around 170,000 Dutch left the Netherlands for Australia. An estimated 25 per cent returned to the Netherlands during the 1950s and 1960s. Approximately 13,000 of the Dutch who made Australia home settled in Western Australia. At the last census around 35,000 Western Australians claimed Dutch Ancestry (ABS 2012). These include the Dutch expatriates working for Dutch corporations in the mining, oil and gas industries.

Everyone's experience of migration is unique, since each case study has not only been shaped by the economic, social, cultural and political situation they left behind, but also by the time of their arrival, gender and age at arrival.

Some migration stories are full of the joy of fulfillment and contribution, others are preoccupied with hardship, homesickness and deprivation and many are a combination of all these elements. The chapters and vignettes in Section III contain a 'selection' of some of the myriad of experiences relating to the benefits and pitfalls, and the hope and courage that underlie them, which were encountered by Dutch migrants to WA before and after WWII.

The focus of the pre-WWII chapters begins with the story of the Bruce Family's Dutch connections by Nonja Peters, followed by Neil Foley's chapter on the Dutch Socialists who settled in WA at the end of the 19th century. The personal vignette by Alet Doornbusch describes the life of her Dutch-born Socialist grandparents and their Australian-born children in rural and urban WA. The chapters by Anne Pauwels, Kim Negenman and Nonja Peters and the personal vignettes by Rietveld, Crijns, Vermeulen, Plug, Pritchard and Eysbertse-van Schaik focus on the diverse experiences, challenges and opportunities that confronted those migrants who chose to resettle in WA after WWII.



Figure 2
National Archives of Australia Collection
C3939/1, N1957/75/106 PT 2.

CHAPTER TWELVE

JOHANNA BRUCE – Nee HERKLOTS AND
FAMILY 1850 - 1917**Nonja Peters**

A little known Dutch link with WA was introduced by Col. John Bruce, the Officer in Charge of the Pensioner Guards who was commissioned by the British Government in 1850 to accompany and oversee the convict labour that the WA Government had requested from Britain to help strengthen the economy.

John Bruce was born on 25 July 1808 in Athlone, Ireland. He joined the British Bengal Army in 1828, and in the same year married Johanna Jacoba Herklots who, according to John Bruce's biographer, was the daughter of Gregorius Herklots from Bremen, Germany. He was a Fiscal at Chinsura - a Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC) Dutch East India Company settlement - in Bengal.¹ Information in the data bases digitised in 2014 by the Presidency University, note that Gregorius Herklots Senior who was the Acting Governor there from 1784 – 1785, was married to C. G. Kloppenburg from Middleburg in Zeeland in the Netherlands, and that they were the parents of Johanna Herklots.²

John Bruce, Johanna Bruce nee Herklots and their children: Charlotte Elizabeth, Jane Mary, Mary, Caroline, Clarrie, Emily Helen and Edward arrived in the Swan River Colony with a group of Pensioner Guards on 24 October 1850, on board the colony's first convict ship *Hashemy*.

The Bruce family's first place of residence in Perth was the east end of the building in St George's Terrace called 'The Cloisters' (currently only the façade remains, the building behind it is occupied by Landgate – it was the Dutch Club in 1945/6). The Bruce family's next move was to 'Cambray', a house on what was then the Swan River foreshore, which later was the site of the Foy & Gibb Department store. From November 1868 to 29 September 1869 John Bruce was Acting Governor of the Swan River Colony, and Johanna consequently – First Lady. Johanna was known for her kind and charitable disposition, her excellent needlework skills and her love of letter writing. She founded DORCAS – a charitable society that looked after the poor in Western Australia. It was still thriving 50 years later.

Three of the Bruce daughters were married in the first year the family was in Perth. The one who was most relevant to the Dutch theme in this book was that of Mary Bruce. On 3 June 1852, she married Anthony O'Grady Lefroy of Limerick, Ireland, then private secretary to the WA Governor and Colonial Treasurer for 36 years. They had three daughters and two sons, one of whom, Henry Bruce, became Premier of Western Australia in 1917.

Henry Bruce Lefroy continued the Dutch origins he inherited from his mother via his maternal grandmother (Kloppenburg), when he married Rose Agnes Wittenoom, granddaughter of the colony's Anglican chaplain,

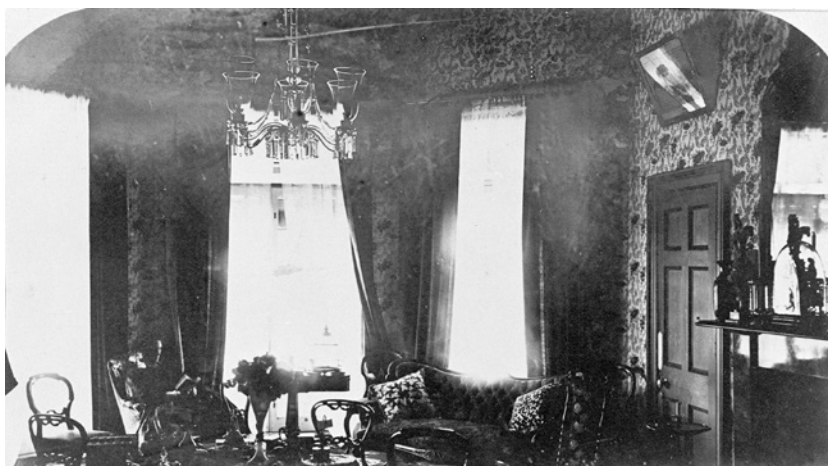


Figure 1
Johanna Herklotz in her drawing room
c1860s. Courtesy: Battye 21402P.

John Burdett Wittenoom (1788-1855), in St George's Cathedral, Perth on 15 April 1880. The couple had three sons and a daughter. The Dutch connection comes via her great grandfather Thomas Wittenoom of London, who had Dutch grandparents.³ Of interest too is the fact that John Burdett Wittenoom's daughter – Mary Eliza Dircksey Wittenoom – was the mother of Edith Dircksey Cowan, the first Australian woman to enter parliament and after whom Edith Cowan University is named. Consequently this was quite a significant Dutch imprint for the early years of the Swan River Colony.

The Perth suburb of Nedlands is named after Edward (Ned) – the youngest Bruce child and only boy – the land having been left to him by his father. Many Nedlands' streets are also named after other family members, although Johanna Street (now Webster) was removed in WWI as a result of her father's German origins.⁴ Johanna left WA to live out her aged years with her daughter in London and died there a few years later.

ENDNOTES

- 1 <http://dutchcemeterybengal.com/voc.php>
- 2 Presidency University email 13 April 2014, Afzal Mohd (New Dehli introducing N.Peters to Prof. Souvik Mukherjee at Presidency University) who is coordinating our efforts (digitizing of VOC records) at Chinsura.
- 3 <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wittenoom-john-burdett-2810>.
- 4 Col. Edward Bruce was educated at the old Bishop's College, St. George's Terrace, Perth, amongst his schoolfellows; being Sir John Forrest, Mr. S. Burt, K.C., and the present Chief Justice, Sir Henry Parker. Leaving Western Australia for Sandhurst, he entered the army as a subaltern in the 84th Regiment, afterwards exchanging into the Indian Cavalry-the 19th- Bengal Lancers (Fane's Horse of the Indian Mutiny). With a natural aptitude for languages he was twice entrusted with missions to Persia. He also served on Sir Donald Stewart's staff in the Afghan war, and was at the battle of Ghazni. He also formed one of the late King's escort during his memorable visit to India in 1875. While lately in command of his regiment he controlled the important district of Chitral, on the North-West frontier, during the absence in South Africa of Sir Archibald Hunter. He received the military order of the Bath five years ago, personally receiving his decoration from the late King at Buckingham Palace. Four years ago he renewed his interests in this State by commencing the development of his property on the Swan River, now the well-known Nedlands Park Estate, so named after him. He was a typical Anglo-Indian - officer, and all who met him were attracted by his personality. He had many friends in this State, who will regret his unexpected demise. He married in 1874 a daughter of the late General Webster, who survives him and leaves four sons, two of whom are in the Indian Cavalry, and two daughters. He was 61 years of age.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A DUTCH SOCIALIST CONNECTION WITH WA

Neil Foley

SMALL IN NUMBERS BUT NOT UNNOTICED

Before World War II it would have been fairly unusual to come across someone of Dutch origin in Australia. While the nineteenth century had seen a few Dutch sailors, gold seekers and adventurers finding themselves in the Australian colonies, only the occasional emigrant had made the long journey from the Netherlands (NL) to Australia with the conscious purpose of making it home. Even from the 1890s, Dutch immigrants still represented only a few droplets in the immigration flow into Australia. This increased to a trickle after the First World War, but the Dutch still constituted only a tiny fraction of the total immigration into Australia until World War II and its aftermath dramatically changed the situation.

This is borne out by the census figures for WA. In the 1881, only nine males and two females gave their places of birth as the NL, representing a meagre 0.037 per cent of the total recorded population of the colony of 29,708¹. When the 1891 census was taken, the Dutch-born had only increased to nineteen², and by 1901, even the gold-rush years had not seemed to have attracted the Dutch, with only forty-one being counted³. By 1911 the NL-born reached eighty-four, out of a total state population of 282,114 (0.03 per cent). In 1921, the census still recorded a small Dutch community in WA – ninety-seven residents who declared their birthplace as the NL (0.029 per cent)⁴. The non-NL-born children of Dutch parents would have slightly added to these figures.

Such a small Dutch presence might have been expected to have gone almost unnoticed by the mainstream populace. However, world events such as the Anglo-Boer War and World War I, maritime contacts, including with the Dutch East Indies, and the actions of a few of the Dutch who had settled in Western Australia (WA), brought the Dutch and their nation a greater (sometimes unwelcome) prominence and scrutiny by the public and officialdom than their very small numbers might have otherwise been anticipated to result in.

The following pages outline the stories of two of the more ‘noticed’ Dutch emigrants to WA in the period – Willem Siebenhaar and Ferdinand Domela-Nieuwenhuis. They arrived together in 1891 and along with their wives became quite prominent and well known during the following decades. This was partly due to circumstance, but also due to their personalities, characters and abilities, as well as the social and political views that Siebenhaar particularly held.

Why did these two schooled and relatively well-to-do young men come to WA? The answer lies in a connection between European socialist movements and

WA, which few would conceive existed in the 1890s and the early twentieth-century, but such a link forms part of their story. Associated with Willem's story, is that of his sister, Anna Siebenhaar and her husband Edgar. Anna arrived a few years after her brother, and with Edgar became an advocate for Dutch interests in WA, although Anna's pro-German position during World War I, saw her come under the observation and suspicion of the authorities. Willem, Ferdinand and Anna were to receive public and official attention, including a degree of notoriety, some perhaps deserved, and some undeserved.

THE DUTCH NEWCOMERS

The Royal Mail Steamship *Ormuz* arrived at Albany from London on 6 March 1891. Travelling on board were two Dutch companions, 27-year-old Willem Siebenhaar and 20-year-old Ferdinand Jacobus Domela-Nieuwenhuis. They soon made their way to Perth. Not long afterwards, on 4 April, another Dutchman, 30-year-old Joseph Tomey (Tomeij), also arrived at Albany from London on the *Austral*, to join his two compatriots⁵.

So why did they come to WA together?

THE DOMELA-NIEUWENHUIS CONNECTION

The exact reasons will of course never be known, but a significant part of the story lies with the paternity of Ferdinand Domela-Nieuwenhuis. His father, also named Ferdinand Jacobus Domela-Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919), was the most prominent Dutch socialist, and later anarchist, of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries⁶. He had been a Lutheran clergyman, but had lost his faith, and left the church in 1879. Being the lucky recipient of an inherited fortune equivalent to £5,000 per year⁷, he was able to follow his socialist ideals, fighting for workers' rights. From 1882, Domela-Nieuwenhuis was the leader of the Dutch Social Democratic League (*Sociaal-Democratische Bond*), a political party based on Marxist principles. In 1888 he became the first socialist member elected to the Dutch Parliament, where he served for three years. Often being at loggerheads with the authorities, in 1886 he was controversially gaoled for a year for using insulting and outrageous language in a journal article directed against the Dutch King. He accepted the blame as editor, although he was not the author of the article⁸. Domela-Nieuwenhuis was anti-militarist, and from the 1890s, he became increasingly sympathetic to anarchism.

Ferdinand Domela-Nieuwenhuis junior was the eldest child of Ferdinand senior, having been born in 1871 at Harlingen in Friesland, by Ferdinand

senior's first wife, Johanna Lulofs⁹. Ferdinand junior's mother died when he was a year old. His father remarried three further times. Ferdinand senior came to realise that his eldest son, whilst being intelligent, was not intellectual or academic, and that he had artistic and practical talents more suited to a singing career than to being a social theorist and agitator like himself. He sent young Ferdinand to study engineering at the Technical University (*Hogeschool* or *hbo*) in Zurich in the late 1880s as he wanted his son to gain practical skills in engineering rather than just theoretical knowledge. Ferdinand senior was, however, worried about reports of his son's exuberant student life whilst in Zurich. He realised that this son was not likely to live up to his hopes for him to one day lead the Dutch socialists. To that extent Ferdinand junior appears to have been somewhat of a disappointment to his father who nevertheless maintained hope that young Ferdinand might still amount to something as he matured.

Domela-Nieuwenhuis senior was a correspondent with Friedrich Engels, the co-author with Karl Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*. It is in Engels' and Domela-Nieuwenhuis' surviving correspondence that we find the apparent reason for the emigration of Ferdinand junior, and the major influence for his two compatriots to come to WA in 1891. In 1890, Ferdinand senior wrote from Den Haag to Engels in London seeking some advice as to the opportunities for his son Ferdinand junior, then aged nineteen, to be taken on as an apprentice in an engineering workshop in England¹⁰. Engels replied that he thought that there was no chance of this occurring, but he would get in touch if anything arose¹¹.

Engels apparently had no luck, because in December 1890, he replied to a follow-up letter from Domela-Nieuwenhuis senior in which the reason for trying to get his son out of the NL becomes apparent. The main topic that Domela-Nieuwenhuis raised in his letter was the propriety of him buying his son Ferdinand junior out of the compulsory military service that he was due to do in the NL. Under Dutch law, it was possible to pay for another man to be a *remplaçant* (replacement) to do someone else's army service. Engels advised Domela-Nieuwenhuis that he thought there was nothing wrong in principle with him purchasing his son's exemption, but it depended on the local situation with which he was not all that familiar. Nevertheless, Engels cautioned that a particular consideration would be the impression such a course of action might make on his party comrades and the mass of workers still outside his party, because it might stir working-class opinion against Social Democracy¹².

This presented Ferdinand senior with a tricky problem. Considering that the army would interfere with his son's opportunities, and as a champion of anti-militarism and equality, he could not let his son serve in the army and nor could he pay a substitute. Evasion still appeared to be the best solution to the problem. So it was that Ferdinand junior, having just turned twenty, left for WA in early 1891 with two of his father's socialist colleagues, Willem

Siebenhaar and Joseph Tomey, whom his father had requested to ‘keep an eye out’ for young Ferdinand.

Presumably, however, the three were also attracted to WA by the opportunities it presented, both economic and otherwise. There had been important gold-finds in the north-west of WA in the mid to late 1880s at Halls Creek in the Kimberley region and also in the Murchison region, but the huge discoveries of world significance at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, in what became the eastern goldfields, occurred in the two years after their arrival. Nevertheless, the early gold-finds in WA appear to have been at least a contributing factor to the decision for emigration. This is evident from Siebenhaar’s biographical note in J.S. Battye’s 1912 *Cyclopedia of WA* which states that due to the wonderful gold discoveries, ‘Mr Siebenhaar migrated to WA, believing that there would be greater scope for his ambition in a new land’¹³. Later, although, Siebenhaar would say that given he held socialistic views, he did not feel he could make a career in the NL, and so decided to go to a freer country, which he knew England was, and found subsequently that Australia held views even more free and democratic, and so came to Australia¹⁴.

Tomey left the Colony after a short time, but Siebenhaar and Domela-Nieuwenhuis (later just known as just ‘Domela’) made their homes in Perth. Quite different in their characters, they still mostly participated in the same social circles, becoming firmly part of the social scene.

WILLEM SIEBENHAAR (1863-1936)

Willem Siebenhaar was born in Den Haag in 1863, the son of Christiaan Siebenhaar, a sergeant and well known fencing master (*schermmeester*) in the Dutch army, and Geertruida Johanna (née Frölich)¹⁵. They had six children, although only Willem, the youngest son, and his older sisters Christina and Anna, survived to adulthood¹⁶. While Dutch-born and having a Dutch mother, Christiaan Siebenhaar’s father was German¹⁷, and Willem’s German sounding surname was later to result in some disadvantage when his loyalties were brought into question in WA.

In 1882, when Willem was nineteen, he is said to have matriculated at Delft University. He then took up the study of philology and literature for two years¹⁸. Already holding socialist views, he started associating with Ferdinand Domela-Nieuwenhuis¹⁹.

Siebenhaar went to England in 1884 where he lived for the next six years. He taught in London and at a private school near Reading²⁰. In 1885 he joined the British Socialist League²¹ and was corresponding with Friedrich Engels²².

On arriving in Perth in 1891, Siebenhaar initially taught at Perth Grammar School (later Hale School). In 1892 he secured a civil service position in the colonial administration, first working as a clerk, and subsequently being promoted to Compiler of Statistics and Sub-Editor of the Year Book in 1906, and eventually ending his career as Deputy Registrar-General, with on occasion, acting as Registrar-General²³.



Figure 1
W. Siebenhaar (with a dedication from W. Siebenhaar to F. Domela Nieuwenhuis on back). Source: Album 141, nr. 70: International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (FDN) BG A12-932/124 B/C:30051000159555.

His commitment to make his home in WA is indicated by his successful application to be naturalised as a British subject in the Colony in 1894²⁴. Willem met English-born Lydia Bruce Dixon in Perth and they sailed to England where they married in 1899. After honeymooning in Italy, the couple returned to Perth, which they intended to make their home. They established themselves in Cottesloe²⁵. No children ever ensued from the union.

Siebenhaar's politics were labelled in WA as being "Libertarian Socialist". In his spare time, he applied his considerable intellect in many directions, being an author, a writer of articles on current issues, a poet, a magazine editor and a translator. Besides Dutch, he also had a sound knowledge of French and German and limited knowledge of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. He translated a number of works, including a portion of an early Dutch account of the wreck of the *Batavia* in 1629 which was published in the *Western Mail* newspaper in 1897, exciting public interest and laying the foundations for the wreck site's eventual discovery²⁶. A champion chess player, Siebenhaar's prowess was often reported in the chess news sections of the local newspapers, and for a time, he was chess editor for the *Western Mail*.

Supporting women's rights, he gave some of the earliest public lectures on the subject in WA. In 1909 Willem presented a talk on the suffragette movement at the Guildford Branch of the Australian Natives' Association. This was before the 1910 lecture tour of Australia by the famous Adelaide-born British suffragist Muriel Matters, which included Perth where her family lived, although the issue was perhaps not as controversial in WA, where without a great deal of fuss, women had achieved the vote in the local Parliament in 1899 and in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1902. At the 1911 annual meeting of the Women's Service Guild held at the Karrakatta Club, Siebenhaar gave a lecture entitled *The Revolt of Women* and in 1914 he presented on the militant suffragette movement at a number of venues²⁷.

Siebenhaar was a founding member of the Theosophical Society in Perth in 1897 and helped form the Civil Service Association in 1902, serving as its Vice-President.

On matters of external affairs, Siebenhaar became involved in controversy. He did not take a pro-war viewpoint on the Anglo-Boer War. He also adopted the anti-conscription position and was unfairly accused of pro-German sentiments during World War I.

This came to the fore in 1916, when Siebenhaar and a fellow officer of the Statistical Department named Harry Leighton, were the subject of an enquiry into allegations of misconduct as civil servants made under the *Public Service Act 1900*. Civil servants were not supposed to get involved in political matters during their work: a fundamental platform of the Westminster system of government is a politically neutral, impartial, merit-based career public service. Siebenhaar was charged with being guilty of improper conduct by manifesting sympathy with the illegal methods of the International Workers of the World (IWW) organisation. This alleged improper conduct was due to Siebenhaar collecting money and soliciting subscriptions during office hours

and at other times for the purpose of providing for the legal defence of one of the IWW's members, 85-year-old Montague Miller, who had been charged with an offence, which was said to be 'an act approaching sedition'. Leighton, a clerk, was charged with improper conduct under the Act because he had disregarded an order and distributed unattributed anti-conscription material in his department and in the Lands Department, which was also contrary to the *War Precautions Regulations* and the *Military Service Referendum Act 1916*²⁸. Both were suspended without pay from 7 November.

The press had a field-day, stating and inferring disloyal and unpatriotic conduct on Siebenhaar's behalf. Siebenhaar wrote to *The West Australian* pointing out that nowhere in the official charge against him were the words 'disloyal' or 'unpatriotic', and protesting that such terminology should not be used²⁹. On 29 November, the Public Service Commissioner handed down his decision. The charges against Leighton, were found to be proved and the penalty imposed being that he was called to resign from the public service. The Commissioner determined, however, that the charge of improper conduct against Siebenhaar was not proved, essentially finding that Siebenhaar had merely been trying to help an old friend by collecting the money, and not on account of any sympathy for the IWW, and that the evidence presented indicated that he was anti-German and in sympathy with the Allied cause³⁰.

Siebenhaar's position may not have been helped by the activities of his sister, Anna, who was pro-German and was investigated by the authorities (see more about her later).

Siebenhaar retired from the civil service as Deputy Government Statistician and Deputy Registrar General in 1924 with thirty-two years' service under his belt. Despite there being a dislike for his social and political views in a number of quarters, Willem had been highly respected by many, including his work colleagues. When submitting Siebenhaar's resignation to the Under Secretary for the Colonial Secretary's Office, the Registrar General, S. Bennett, noted 'I submit the foregoing resignation with much personal regret. Mr Siebenhaar has always been most loyal to me, and his great ability has made him a valuable colleague.'³¹

Willem returned to Europe, first to Italy, where Lydia had preceded him. Finding Mussolini's Italy not to their liking, they settled in England after travelling via the NL³². Willem did not forget WA though, as in Den Haag in 1926, he presented a public lecture with slide views on the subject of settling in WA. He advised that while life in WA could be hard, it was a good place to emigrate to³³. Willem Siebenhaar died in Sussex in 1936 aged 73 as the result of a motor accident³⁴.

Although a controversial character, Siebenhaar contributed to raise the level of intellectual debate in WA in the first-quarter of the twentieth century, sometimes providing an alternative to the mainstream view. This, as well as his translations and statistical work as a civil servant (including the Year Book compilations), deserve to be acknowledged as a significant Dutch contribution to WA. However, while Siebenhaar's life in WA has been fairly



Figure 2
Ferdinand Jacobus Domela Nieuwenhuis junior (1871 – 1911) Source: Domela Nieuwenhuis Museum, Heerenveen, Netherlands.

well documented, both in contemporary material and later works³⁵, little has been published about his 20-year-old travelling companion to WA, Ferdinand Jacobus Domela-Nieuwenhuis.

FERDINAND DOMELA-NIEUWENHUIS JUNIOR (1871-1911)

Like Siebenhaar, Ferdinand Domela (as he was generally known in WA) secured a job with the local civil service in April 1892 in the Registry of the Registrar General's Department at £200 per annum, £80 more than Siebenhaar's starting salary of £120. A year later, in April 1893, when still in the Department, Ferdinand submitted a memorial to the Governor stating that he had decided to settle permanently in WA, and requested naturalisation as a British subject in the Colony under the local *Naturalization Act 1871*. This was approved on 3 May³⁶.

Soon after, on 22 May 1893, Ferdinand Domela married Emilie Mary Nettle. The wedding took place at the residence of William Paterson MLA, Member for Murray, at Whitby Falls, 50 kilometres south-east of Perth, where Emilie was working as governess to his children. Siebenhaar was best man³⁷. Emilie was intelligent and ambitious³⁸.

On 24 March 1894, at their home in Perth, Ferdinand and Emilie had a daughter whom they named Emilie Johanna³⁹. She grew up being called 'Topsy' Domela and became a talented pianist. Ferdinand and Emilie purchased a block of land in Perth and had a house built on it⁴⁰. They entertained often at their home and became regular participants in the Perth social scene, with Emilie being particularly popular. Like Willem Siebenhaar, Ferdinand and Emilie Domela were keen chess players and often played each other.

Ferdinand took to cricket and is recorded in the local newspapers as playing in many matches, the first at York only three weeks after he arrived in the Colony⁴¹. Siebenhaar was more interested in soccer, chairing a public meeting in May 1892 at which an association was formed for the playing of the English Association and Rugby Union games⁴². Willem became a committee member⁴³, and both he and Ferdinand participated in the first game of soccer played in WA a few weeks later, with Siebenhaar being captain of one of the sides⁴⁴. Ferdinand also played in the rugby team⁴⁵.

Apart from his sporting abilities, Ferdinand could also sing, occasionally being noted in the papers singing at charity events⁴⁶. He was also a keen stamp collector, being president of the local Philatelic Society in 1902⁴⁷.

Emilie Domela put her hand to journalism from about 1898, including writing short stories⁴⁸. She also worked for *The Argonaut* newspaper, and was on the staff of *The Morning Herald*, writing under her pen-name, 'Egeria' ('patroness and adviser')⁴⁹. The newspapers note Emilie's involvement in many social activities, sometimes with Ferdinand, but often on her own in women's groups. She was elected General Secretary of the Women's Electoral League in 1901⁵⁰.

Ferdinand liked the good life and made investments in property and goldmines. One of his property investments landed him in the Perth Police Court on 3 February 1899 as a reluctant witness, and this provides a glimpse of his character. One Charles Neilson was charged with having let a house to be used for an unlawful purpose (a shop in William Street, Perth, known as the 'Gaiety'). It was alleged by the police prosecutor that the shop was operating as a brothel, which the evidence of witnesses clearly bore out. This appeared to be a generally well known fact around town, the Gaiety being described by a police constable as 'one of the worst places of the kind in Perth.' Ferdinand was described as 'a civil servant and part owner of the premises'. He testified that he had let the shop to Neilson two-and-a-half years before. He 'did not know that the place was used as a disorderly house'. However, the magistrate did not agree, particularly making the point in summing up that 'he did not like the evidence of Mr Domela. He could not help thinking that it must have come to his knowledge that the place was one of the worst in town' and that this also must have come to Neilson's knowledge. The magistrate fined Neilson £10 with costs⁵¹.

Domela's reputation was presumably at least a little tarnished by this event. Ferdinand's spendthrift attitude and gambling continued⁵², but his speculative investments in goldmines in WA in the late 1890s, which included the use of his own as well as family money (his father's and younger brother's in particular) were unsuccessful and debts accumulated⁵³. The family money had largely been accumulated via various inheritances over the years and both Ferdinand junior and his younger brother Theodore had inherited substantial sums. However, Ferdinand senior was a poor financier and made some unwise investments in the NL and the family fortune was dwindling in the 1890s.

By 1899 it became evident to the family in the NL that Ferdinand junior had lost much money in Perth and was in all sorts of problems. Young Ferdinand had apparently liquidated his stamp collection said by him to be worth 12,000 guilders (about £1,000). At the same time Ferdinand senior was in financial trouble at home. Family members in the NL grew impatient, anxious and despondent that the considerable sums loaned to Ferdinand junior for investment were not being repaid, or that even interest on the amount had not been forthcoming, and little was heard from him. His younger brother Theodore thought of visiting Perth to ascertain what the situation was but decided against it. By 1902 it was clear that there was no hope of retrieving the loaned family money, with Theodore lamenting that almost all of his inheritance from his mother had been lost (7,000 guilders or nearly £600) as well as a substantial part of his father's wealth, which without such loss, his father would not have been in such a bad financial situation. It is unknown exactly how much Ferdinand senior lost on young Ferdinand's speculations in WA, but it may have been some 12,000 guilders⁵⁴.

While Ferdinand and Emilie were, according to the newspaper reports, still on the social scene together in January 1903 attending civic and government

functions⁵⁵, the relationship was apparently finished. Ferdinand continued playing in cricket matches for the Claremont-Cottesloe club with his last participation recorded in the main newspapers on 28 February 1903, when he unfortunately got out for a 'duck' in the first innings after being stumped, with things not improving in the second innings, when he was caught-out with only one run⁵⁶. Perhaps he had the more serious issues of finances and his marital relationship on his mind. By February, the couple were no longer mentioned in the major newspaper social columns as attending events together.

In late April 1903 advertisements were placed in *The West Australian* newspaper for an auction at Mrs Domela's home under her instructions. Available for sale was a list of 'High Class Furniture', apparently being all of the household contents, including an *Ibach* piano that nine-year-old Topsy would have played⁵⁷. Ferdinand's debts had caught up with them.

The last mention of Ferdinand in the major newspapers is in May 1903, when he was playing in the Perth Chess Club's Cup Tourney. He was beaten⁵⁸. In February 1902, Ferdinand's title of 'Clerk and Librarian' in the Patents and Trademarks Branch had been improved to 'Chief Clerk and Librarian' although the salary had remained at the comfortable £290 per annum (Siebenhaar was earning £220 as 'Sub-editor of the Statistical Year Book'). However, from one July 1903, Domela's salary was reduced to £250 and the title of Chief Clerk was abolished. At the same date, Siebenhaar received a pay-rise to £230. This was likely the last straw for Ferdinand, because on 17 July 1903, he resigned from the civil service⁵⁹. A week later Emilie had sold the newspaper she had started a year before called *The Social Kodak*, although she was able to continue writing its social section⁶⁰.

Emilie's name continues to appear in the social pages, but Ferdinand disappears from the scene. In September 1903, a Mr Herman laid a charge in the Perth Local Court for recovery of a debt owing to him on a dishonoured promissory note signed by Emilie Domela for the very large sum of £61 4 shillings and 10 pence. In her defence, Emilie told the Bench that the signatures on the note purporting to be hers were forgeries. The magistrate believed her and found in her favour⁶¹. But the question was: who forged her signature?

To escape mounting debts and a marriage in tatters, Ferdinand Domela slipped away to South Africa. He served as a police constable in the South African Constabulary in the Transvaal during 1906 and 1907⁶². Then he secured a position as a private school teacher in the Transvaal. On 17 July 1911 at Reitfontein, Lichtenburg, Transvaal, Ferdinand died aged only forty, apparently from apoplexy (a stroke). The Secretary of the School Board at Lichtenburg requested that the Dutch Consul-General in Pretoria inform Ferdinand senior in Holland, which the Consul did on 30 August. It was not until after the authorities had taken possession of Ferdinand's small estate in South Africa of £14 plus a month's salary owed to him by the Education Department, that documents were found indicating his marriage to Emilie

and that he had a daughter Topsy. The Consul-General in Pretoria then wrote to the Honorary Dutch Consul at Fremantle in October asking him to inform Emilie of his death⁶³. The Deaths column of *The West Australian* noted his passing in February 1912, eight months after the event⁶⁴, although Emilie had by then left the state.

EMILIE DOMELA'S NEW LIFE

Emilie, while having been deserted by Ferdinand, managed to stay on her feet and kept working in journalism. She found a new partner, Leonard Matters, a fellow journalist at *The Daily News*⁶⁵ who was sixteen years her junior and the brother of the Australian-British suffragette, Muriel Matters. She left Perth in 1910 for Sydney where Leonard had preceded her, and in 1911 they sailed for North America, later going to Britain⁶⁶. They worked in the newspaper business in Britain and Argentina, before returning to Perth in 1921. They went back to England, where Leonard was elected to the British House of Commons, serving between 1929 and 1931. Emilie died in Surrey in 1939. Her Perth obituary writer reflected on her life:

‘Mrs. Matters was well known in journalistic circles in Perth and had many friends all over WA and in Victoria, which was really her home State. She came to WA in the early nineties and not long after she came she married the late Mr. F. Domela, a charming Dutchman. She once told the writer she had two years of perfect happiness, the first two years of her married life. Later, life did not deal so gently with her and her husband left WA and never returned. Mrs. Matters was a woman of courage and became a journalist, working hard but happily and supporting and educating her only daughter “Topsy,”’⁶⁷

FERDINAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO WA

Ferdinand Domela's immigrant contribution to WA was clearly not comparable to Siebenhaar's, and did not fulfil his father's, nor his wife's, hopes and ambitions for him. He nevertheless left the legacy of a talented child. His wife was one of Perth's earliest female journalists. There were also some positive social and cultural contributions to the community that Ferdinand made during his more than twelve years in WA, including his involvement in sport, singing, chess-playing and philately.

ANNA SIEBENHAAR, WILLEM'S SISTER

Also not going unnoticed in Perth was Willem Siebenhaar's sister Anna (Johanna Elisabeth) who had followed him to Perth, and her husband Edgar Semmens. Like her younger brother, Anna had gone to teach in England in the 1880s, holding a position as a governess at a boarding school in Brighton before she too departed for WA in the early 1890s⁶⁸. In 1896, when aged forty-two she married Edgar George Semmens at Coolgardie⁶⁹.

Semmens was educated in South Australia and worked as a mining clerk and accountant in Broken Hill before going to Coolgardie in 1895, where he did the same type of work, later becoming a buyer for a mining company. In 1897, with a slump at Coolgardie, Edgar and Anna moved to Perth, and when staying with his brother-in-law Willem, he applied for and obtained a temporary position as a Record Clerk in the Statistical Branch of the Registrar General's Department in Perth. This was no coincidence as Siebenhaar was at the time Statistical Clerk in that Branch and Ferdinand Domela was Chief Clerk in the Patents' Branch, all sitting in the same small office. Soon after, Edgar gained a permanent position and in 1900 he was promoted to Registry Clerk, which was the beginning of a 40-year career in the State Public Service⁷⁰. Anna and Edgar settled in Claremont and busied themselves in their spare time with community affairs, much related to Dutch matters. Like her brother Willem, Anna had no children.

In 1908, Anna was appointed the Australasian representative of the 'Het Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond' (the ANV or General Dutch League/ Union) in succession to the secretary to the Dutch Consulate in Melbourne⁷¹. The ANV had been founded in 1895 as a literary society with the object of promoting cooperation in the fields of Dutch language and culture, fostering kinship ties as well as trade and commerce between the NL and Dutch residents in its colonies and foreign lands.

Edgar Semmens was a founding member of the WA branch of the NL Chamber of Commerce for Australasia which had been established in Melbourne in 1903, and he developed a strong interest in trade and commerce, which he pursued in his spare time from his civil service job (in 1908, he was promoted to Deputy District Registrar for Perth)⁷².

In 1910, when his long service leave became due, Edgar was granted 12 months leave on half pay from his position to travel to Europe with the aim of promoting improved trade links between WA and the NL and the NL East Indies (NEI). Semmens pointed out that for 1909, WA imported £54,773 worth of goods from Java and £26,480 from the NL, whilst the State only exported £2,480 worth of goods to Java and nothing to the NL. Although he was undertaking the trip in an independent capacity, Semmens was provided with a letter of introduction to the Dutch Government from the State Premier and he was permitted to give papers in Den Haag, Amsterdam and Rotterdam⁷³.

In 1911, it was reported that there were many enquiries about WA from potential emigrants in the NL, and the State Government had even appointed an emigration agent there, although this appointment did not fulfil expectations⁷⁴. However, the enquiries had not led to many new arrivals, with the 1911 census recording a NL born population in WA of only eighty-four, out of a total State population of 282,114 (0.03%). Australia-wide in 1911, there were only 745 NL born of a total population of 4,455,005 (0.017%)⁷⁵. The figures for State financially assisted immigration into WA from overseas for the year ended 30 June 1912 were 9,697 passages in total, of which all came

from the British Isles except forty-eight from various European countries, of whom nearly all had been nominated by their friends already in the State. Only one of these forty-eight was from Holland⁷⁶. The official immigration statistics for the period 1901 to 1915 show net Dutch arrivals in WA of only 117 (218 arrivals minus 101 departures), and this included forty sailors from the Royal Dutch Navy who ‘arrived’ as deserters at Fremantle in 1910⁷⁷.

Edgar was on a mission to do something about improving the trade deficit and the poor immigration performance of WA with the NL and its colonies in the East Indies. He and Anna sailed for the NL in May 1911⁷⁸. Edgar was able to meet with the Dutch Minister for Commerce regarding WA matters and gave various lectures⁷⁹.

While in NL in 1911, Anna called on Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis senior and provided him with her perspective on the lives of Ferdinand junior and his wife Emilie in Perth. Ferdinand senior heard much that he had never known. Anna said she was estranged from her brother Willem. Her view was that Ferdinand junior was a good and sympathetic young man, although weak. She felt that Emilie was his downfall, although after they first married in 1893, their house was a welcome place to visit. It was an ideal home in which they did all the housework themselves. When more money came their way they employed hired help as Emilie wanted to do more of her own journalistic work. The relationship then began to crumble. The house became a party-house. More and more, young Ferdinand did not find what he wanted in his home and he started to drink and gamble on the horse races. Ferdinand junior was well thought of by his superiors at work, and Anna considered Ferdinand to be a better person than her brother. After hearing Anna’s assessment, Ferdinand senior concluded that, as the family had always thought, even though Emilie may have had talent, she had not been the right person for his son⁸⁰.

Edgar and Anna returned from Europe in April 1912 and Edgar presented the State Government with a report on his findings regarding trade opportunities with the NL and the East Indies, which was published in *The West Australian*⁸¹. Edgar Semmens continued to promote trade between the two countries and wrote many articles that were published in the local papers and even in the *British Trade Journal* into the 1920s⁸².

Like her brother, Anna Semmens Seibenhaar (the appellation she sometimes used), was talented and outspoken, as letters published in the newspapers and surviving in archives testify⁸³. But her marriage to Edgar was not a happy one. Writing to her unmarried sister, Christina, in Den Haag in September 1918, Anna complained that she had to manage on what money Edgar gave her, and told Christina ‘I hate and abhor that miserable creature so much that it costs me pain to speak to him, and were I financially independent I would not suffer him in my proximity’. Anna continues with much more criticism and vitriol in regard to Edgar. Then in a following letter in January 1919, Anna wished her sister Christina a happy 67th birthday, with a further lament about her own situation:

‘I wish you much happiness on that day and hope that you will enjoy your liberty for many years to come. Certainly it is fortunate when one feels so free, but how many do reach it? And therefore there are so many women who prefer to go out working, as long as they can feel free in their own little rooms. One thinks that by marrying one goes towards ones freedom but then the slavery only starts, as long as there is attachment and collaboration, the tie does not pinch as much, but when things begin to go wrong, then a greater slavery is unimaginable. Mother also always spoke of her yoke and as likewise was unhappy in her marriage. I am now able to understand. Oh! Yes I prevent every unpleasantness and owing to having done so I rest, but imagine how lonesome my life is.’

The letter continues with much criticism of her brother Willem’s wife Lydia for her pro-British and anti-Dutch letter writing to the newspapers, referring to her as ‘that minx’, and expressing disappointment in herself for being the ‘intermedium’ in Willem’s proposal of marriage to her, and in Willem for allowing Lydia to write letters to the newspaper that were against his native country.⁸⁴

Anna had come to the attention of the Censorship Office of Military Intelligence in Perth, and the above is contained in two of a number of Anna’s letters to Holland that had been intercepted and translated between 1915 and 1919. The Censor notes that Anna was said to be on very bad terms with her husband Edgar⁸⁵. The military intelligence authorities also noted that; ‘She has been regarded as anti-British in her sympathies, and throughout the war her correspondence has been reported to the Censor as being of a disaffected character.’⁸⁶

As early as February 1915, Anna had come under observation when she had sent a letter on behalf of ‘Het Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond’ (ANV or General Dutch Union) to the editor of the Dutch monthly paper *Neerlandia* in Dordrecht with the 1914 annual report on the local branch of the ‘union’⁸⁷. Anna’s report states that in the early part of 1914:

‘a second effort was made to unite the Hollanders living in WA, and at first it appeared as if sufficient collaboration could be expected in order to have better results than those experienced in 1911; but alas, disagreeable influences had their effects, preventing the union from obtaining any life existence, and notwithstanding that the most disquieting factors fortunately disappeared from our surroundings, not one has felt the spirit awake within one’s self to attack the task once more. Notwithstanding declarations and explanations which some don’t seem to understand there remains some sort of mistrust towards the Dutch General Union.’⁸⁸

In June 1915, the Dutch translator (and informant) for the Censor, J.H. Otto de Grancey, wrote a confidential memo to the Censor advancing his view that:

‘Mrs Semmens’ object for these meetings perhaps is, to engender her anti British propensities into the minds of a handful of deserters from the Dutch Warships and a few others. For about 15 years, we have known this lady to be very headstrong and anti British but all of the time she loses sight of the fact that both her husband and herself are Civil Servants as Registrars of Births Deaths and Marriages.....’⁸⁹.

Anna had organised a number of meetings of the ANV at her home. The deserters referred to are some of the forty Dutch sailors who deserted from a Dutch Naval Squadron visiting Fremantle in 1910.

In December 1918, the local military intelligence considered that the language used by Anna in her letters constituted a breach of Regulation 27A (a) of the *War Precautions Regulations* and conveyed this to the Commonwealth Secretary of Defence in Melbourne ‘as her hostile statements may receive a certain amount of damaging publicity’ in Holland. In January 1919 the Minister for Defence’s decision was conveyed to the Commandant of the 5th Military District in Perth: ‘As the publication of such letters in a neutral country might tend to discredit Britain, I authorise the District Commandant to prosecute, if after consultation with the representative of the Crown Solicitor, he is satisfied that a case would succeed’. The District Commandant sought a legal opinion, forwarding the file of letters to solicitors Moss, Dwyer, Unmack & Thomas. The solicitors’ view was that Anna had committed a breach of Regulation 27A in a letter dated 1 December 1918 to Felix Cohen in Rotterdam, in which she had said words calculated to incite hostility to the British Empire, although the legal advisers had some doubt as to the meaning of the words ‘calculated to incite hostility’ contained in Regulation 27A (Anna’s letter to Cohen expressed pro-German and anti-English sentiments)⁹⁰.

The preparation of the prosecution case was commenced. On 5 February 1919 a letter was sent to Anna from the Intelligence Section asking her to call at the Military District headquarters in Perth. The letter was addressed to her house ‘Forest Gate’, Riley Road, Claremont, perhaps provocatively; as it was a translation of the Dutch name she had given to her house, ‘Boschhek’, and which appeared on all her correspondence. Anna subsequently called at the Intelligence Section in Perth, presumably taking advantage of the First Class Railway pass from Claremont to Perth that had been included in the letter of invitation. The interviewing officer scrawled a handwritten note on the file:

‘Mrs Semmens is at feud with the wife of her brother – Lydia Bruce Siebenhaar, who is the author of anti-German letters in the press. Apparently a good deal of Mrs Semmens’ disaffection is caused by the hate and detestation of her sister in law. Mrs Semmens strikes me as half crazy on the subject of her

sister-in-law & Holland and I do not consider that prosecution of her would lead to a very good result.’⁹¹

That appears to have been the end of the matter.

In December 1921, Edgar was granted one day’s leave from the Registry for 8 December to attend the auction of his house in Riley Road, Claremont⁹². Put to auction was not only the house, but also its furniture and household effects, plus another vacant block of land in Claremont⁹³. Anna returned to the NL, possibly in 1922, and died at Voorburg in 1938⁹⁴. Edgar Semmens was promoted to District Registrar for Perth in 1925⁹⁵ and remarried Ivy Cooper at Perth in 1938. He died in 1958 at Mt Hawthorn, WA.

Thus, as often happens, what apparently started out as a good relationship where there were common interests, turned sour, with as in most such cases, faults on both sides. Yet there were positives in the relationship for WA. Perhaps Edgar may never have become interested in Dutch trade issues if he had never married Anna, and his efforts had lifted the profile of the NL in WA and in the Netherlands in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Willem Siebenhaar, Ferdinand Domela-Nieuwenhuis, Anna Siebenhaar and their spouses Lydia Siebenhaar, Emilie Domela and Edgar Semmens were very diverse in their characters and beliefs but all had considerable abilities. Their lives were intertwined in the small social scene of Perth in the last decade of the nineteenth and first two decades of the twentieth centuries. In their own ways they made some valuable and interesting contributions to WA. However, their activities did not go unnoticed by the general population or government authorities. Because of their Dutch connections, awareness of the NL was at least to some extent maintained in the minds of the general populace in WA in the period, even though the attention they received may not have been all positive.

Acknowledgement

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ENDNOTES

- 1 L. S. Eliot, Superintendent of Census, *Census of the Colony of WA taken on 3rd April 1881*, Government Printer (Perth, 1882), pp. 99-103.
- 2 17 males and 2 females being 0.038% of the total recorded population of 49,782. *Census of WA 1891: General Report with Appendices*, Government Printer (Perth), p. 43, p. 119.

- 3 36 males and 5 females or 0.022% of the recorded population of 184,124: *Seventh Census of WA Taken for the Night of 31st March 1901*, Comp. by Malcolm Fraser, Registrar General, Volume 1 – Superintendent's Report, Government Printer (Perth, 1904), pp. 123-124.
- 4 Of the Dutch born in W.A. in 1911, 73 were males and 11 were females. The total of 745 NL-born for Australia was comprised of 643 males and 102 females of a total population of 4,455,005 (0.017 per cent): *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia Taken for the Night between 2nd and 3rd of April, 1911*, Volume II: Detailed Tables, Commonwealth Statistician: Melbourne, 1914, p. 109, p. 113. The 1921 Census enumerated only 97 NL born in WA out of a total population of 332,732 (0.029%). Of the 97, there were 82 males and 15 females. Australia-wide there were only 1,391 NL born (1,058 males and 333 females) of a total population of 5,435,734 (0.026%): *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia Taken for the Night between 3rd and 4th of April, 1921*, Part II: Detailed Tables, Commonwealth Statistician: Melbourne, pp. 45-47, pp. 51-52.
- 5 *Albany Inwards Passenger Lists from Overseas*, 'Ormuz' & 'Austral', Cons 108/1, AN 371, State Records Office of WA (SROWA); Outgoing Passenger Lists UK. Ports, 'Ormuz' BT27/66-11 & 'Austral' BT 27/66-42, The National Archives (TNA), Kew; In the London outgoing Ormuz list, Domela is listed as an 'Engineer'.
- 6 Much has been written on Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis senior. An outline of his life is at: *Het leven van Domela Nieuwenhuis*, <http://www.fdnmuseum.nl/>. The family correspondence has mostly been published in *De familiecorrespondentie van en over Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1846-1932*, collected and presented by Dr B. Altena in collaboration with R. de Jong, Amsterdam: Stichting IISG, 1997. Much information on Ferdinand junior and his family in this chapter has been taken from Dr Altena's General Introduction and the correspondence itself in this work (especially pages 34-36, 38-39, 42, 44, 395, 397-398, 402, 406-407, 410, 415-416, 430, 432, 434, 436, 465-466, 469-470, 473, 476, 505, 538, 544, 564, 573, 585, 595-600, 605). The International Institute of Social History (IISH/ISSG), Amsterdam, holds the *Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis Archive*.
- 7 *Glasgow Herald* 14 July 1900; *The Pall Mall Gazette* 13 August 1886, p. 6.
- 8 *The Times*, 11 June 1886, p. 10; 17 September 1886, p. 3; 24 September 1886, p. 3; 12 January 1887, p. 6.
- 9 Ferdinand was born on 12 February 1871: Civil Register of Births, Gemeente Harlingen, Geboorteakte Aktenummer: A 53, Tresoar, Frysk Histoarysk en Letterkundich Sintrum. Registered 13 February 1871.
- 10 Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis in Den Haag, to Friedrich Engels in London, 7 April 1890, Briefe L5114, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels Papers*, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
- 11 Friedrich Engels in London, to Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis in The Hague, 9 April 1890, published in 'Frederick Engels Letters January 1887 – July 1890', Volume 48 of *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Lawrence & Wishart, (London, 1975), pp. 470-471.
- 12 Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis in Den Haag, to Friedrich Engels in London, 27 November 1890, Briefe L5115, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels Papers*, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; Friedrich Engels in London, to Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis in The Hague, 3 December 1890, published in 'Karl Marx Frederick Engels: Engels 1890-92', Volume 49 of *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Lawrence & Wishart, (London, 1975), pp. 77-78.
- 13 J.S. Battye (editor), *The Cyclopaedia of WA*, Vol. 1 (Perth, 1912), p. 517.
- 14 Siebenhaar testified in the 1916 Public Service Commissioner's *Public Service Act* enquiry into his assistance to Montague Miller of the International Workers of the World. When asked by the Commissioner what parted him from Holland, Siebenhaar replied: 'The difficulty in my own country of reconciling myself to the state which at that time prevailed. Although my father was in an honourable position and commanded a good deal of influence, even Royal influence, to help me to get a position, as I held socialistic views, and as at that time things were not anything like so free as we know here in Australia, I left. Things were rather hot for you? -- It was not that they were hot for me, but I saw perfectly well that either I should have to give up my ideas or else relinquish the opportunity of making any career at all. I therefore looked round to go to a freer country, which I knew England was, and found subsequently that Australia held views more free and democratic. I afterwards found that Australia was much freer than most of the countries of Europe.....'. *The West Australian* 24 November 1916, p. 8.
- 15 Willem was born on 28 July 1863: Civil Birth Register, Gemeente Den Haag, (birth registered 30 July 1863, Akte 1815, Geboorten 's-Gravenhage Periode: 1863-1872: 18 Jul.1863-29 Aug. 1863 Aktenummer: 1733-2024, Fiche 418, afbeelding 14). Willem's father Christiaan was in the *Grenadiers en Jagers* regiment. In 1858 he translated the French manual for the teaching of swordsmanship entitled *Handleiding voor het onderwijs in de schermkunst*, laying the basis for what became known as the 'Dutch fencing school' or 'Dutch method'. It was published by Erven Doorman at Den Haag, had 58 figures and a title-plate and was recommended by the Ministers of the Army and Navy: *Nieuw Amsterdamsch handels-en effectenblad* (Amsterdam), 22 & 23 July 1858, p. 2; *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche courant : staats-, handels-, nieuws- en advertentieblad* (Rotterdam) 10 March 1859, p. 2, 23 June 1861 p. 2, 20 February 1864, p. 2; *Bredasche courant* (Breda) 10 February 1859 p. 2; *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage* ('s Gravenhage) 22 July 1858 p. 2, 21 February 1868 p. 4. The seventh edition was still being offered for sale in 1888: *Java-bode: nieuws, handels- en advertentieblad voor Nederlandsch-Indie* (Batavia) 5 December 1888, p.3. In 1877, Christiaan published a revised work called *Wenken en*

- aanwijzingen voor den onderwijzer in dem schermkunst ('Hints and instructions for the instructor in swordsmanship'). This was published at Den Haag ('s-Gravenhage) by Erven Doorman. Christiaan Siebenhaar had been born in 1814 at s'Hertogenbosch in Noord Brabant, the son of a German tailor, and he had married Geertruida Frölich at Delft, where their second child was born in 1853.
- 16 Christiaan's and Geertruida's first child, Christina, was born in 1852 in Den Haag, as were the other five children. Three children died in infancy, whilst Willem's older brother, Christiaan, died at only 18 after having achieved the rank of sergeant in the infantry.
 - 17 Christiaan Siebenhaar was born on 18 October 1814, the son of Christiaan Siebenhaar, a 44 year old "bataillons kleermaker" (battalion tailor) living in s'Hertogenbosch, Nord Brabant, NL. His mother was Christina Johanna Fortuyn. The birth was registered on 19 October 1814 in the Civil Birth Register at s-Hertogenbosch (Gemeente s'Hertogenbosch, Stadsarchief). Christiaan Siebenhaar senior was German. In a letter intercepted for censorship purposes in 1919, Willem's sister, Mrs Anna Semmens (Siebenhaar) writing from Claremont, W.A. to her sister about the war asks Christina in Den Haag on 20 January 1919: 'How would father who was so for Germany have suffered under it, for were it not his father's native land.'; *Siebenhaar*, file 1-12-326, Headquarters, 5 Military District [I], Commonwealth Military Forces, PP14/1 (*Intelligence reports of internments, repatriations, affiliations and general investigations, multiple number series*), BC747357, National Archives of Australia, Perth. Christiaan Siebenhaar senior's 1828 death registration at Den Haag states that he was born at "Basewalk, Pommeren" (Pasewalk, Pommern or Pomerania), and he was aged 58 at his death (i.e. born about 1770): Akte 1219, verlijdens 's-Gravenhage Periode 1823-1832 Aktenummer 1168-1379, Fiche 101, afbeelding 9, Gemeente Den Haag (Municipality of The Hague). Christiaan junior had other brothers and sisters and some of their children (Willem's cousins) used the more German sounding surname spelling of 'Siebenhar'. Christiaan Siebenhaar married on 26 June 1851 at Delft to Geertruida Johanna Frölich: Delft Civil Marriage Registration No. 1851/81, Gemeentearchief Delft. Christiaan Siebenhaar senior died 3 December 1885, death registered 4 December 1885: Civil Death Register, Gemeente Den Haag, Akte 3134 Overlijdens 's-Gravenhage Periode: 1883-1892 Aktenummer 3037-3216, Fiche 899, afbeelding 17; *Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant* (Amsterdam), 5 December 1885, p.12. Honouring his father's achievements, Willem wrote a biography of him in 1888: W.Siebenhaar, *Christiaan Siebenhaar, stichter der Nederlandsche schermeschool : eene biografische bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der gymnastiek en schermkunst in Nederland*, 's-Gravenhage: Van Langenhuisen, (1888): 'Christiaan Siebenhaar, founder of the Dutch fencing school: a biographical contribution to the history of gymnastics and fencing in the NL'.
 - 18 This is stated in J.S. Battye (editor) *The Cyclopaedia of WA*, Vol. 1 (Perth, 1912), p.517, and repeated in Matters, Mrs Leonard W. (formerly Mrs Emilie Domela), *Australasians Who Count in London and Who Counts in WA*, J. Truscott, (London 1913), p.230. However, it appears that he did not graduate from Delft University according to the University's records.
 - 19 Item 218 *Siebenhaar, Frans H.*, *W. Siebenhaar, J.E. Siebenhaar-Groot en L.L. Merhottein*. 1882; Item 219 *Siebenhaar W.* 1885-1887, 1891-1893, 1897-1899, 'Correspondentie: Ingekomen brieven en briefkaarten', Archief Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919), International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
 - 20 'Schoolnieuws', *Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant* (Amsterdam), 16 December, 1887, p. 5.
 - 21 Item 164 (microfilm reel 4), F. Secretary's Office, Membership Cards, William Morris: Part 3: *Archives of the Socialist League (UK) 1884-1891*, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam (microfilm copies by Research Publications, Reading, Berks, 1989). Willem Siebenhaar joined on 28 January 1885, giving his address as 3 St George's Road, Wimbledon. In 1886-87, he wrote four letters to the Socialist League. In August 1886 when in Den Haag, Siebenhaar forwarded an article to the editor of the Commonweal, the League's journal, writing 'I trust that the enclosed record of the Amsterdam riots, which according to my friend F. Domela Nieuwenhuis is the best in any paper, will be welcome to you'. Siebenhaar returned to London but then took up residence at Caversham House, Caversham, near Reading: Items 2722-2725, Series K. Correspondence (received), Socialist League (UK) Archives, *ibid*.
 - 22 Items L5699 and L5700, *Siebenhaar, W.* 1886. 2 *Briefe.*, Series L. Letters of Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Papers*, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.
 - 23 *WA Blue Book for the Year (s)...* 1892.....1915, Government Printer (Perth); Colonial Secretary's Office file 2033/1919, *W. Siebenhaar (Registry) – Personal File*, Vols 1 & 2, Cons 752, SROWA.
 - 24 Colonial Secretary's Office file 1827/94 *W. Siebenhaar*, Cons 527, SROWA. Siebenhaar was issued a naturalization certificate by the Governor on 15 November 1894 and this was enrolled as a record of the Supreme Court of WA on 23 November 1894.
 - 25 General Register Office, Marriage Registration June Qtr 1899 - Bromley Vol. 2a p. 552. They married on 7 March in Bromley Parish Church, Kent (London) in a 'fashionable local wedding' according to the newspaper account: *Western Mail*, 21 April 1899, p. 46. A marriage notice was also published in *Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant* (Amsterdam), 16 March 1899, p. 7. Lydia had been born in 1865 at Old Ford in the East End of London to Nathaniel Dixon, an accountant, and his wife Mary Harriet. By 1881 the family had moved to Hackney where Lydia was described with one of her sisters in the census return as a 'pupil teacher' and in 1891, whilst her family had moved to more fashionable Wimbledon, she was a governess in a small private school in the very fashionable Hampstead: General Register Office Birth Registration March Qtr - Poplar Vol. 1c p. 655; 1881

- Census RG11/288 f.60 p.11, TNA, Kew; 1891 Census RG12/604 f.47 p.18 & RG12/108 p.20, TNA, Kew.
- 26 Siebenhaar translated the first edition of *Ongeluckige voyage van't schip Batavia* ('Unlucky voyage of the ship Batavia'), Jan Jansz's 1647 account of the 1629 *Batavia* shipwreck and mutiny on the Abrolhos Islands off the WAn coast, a third person transposition of Francisco Pelsaert's journal of the 1629 event. Siebenhaar's translation was called 'Abrolhos Tragedy'.
 - 27 *The West Australian* 20 October 1909, p. 8; 'Women's Service Guild', *The West Australian*, 11 April 1911, p. 8; *Western Mail*, 22 May 1914, p. 54.
 - 28 *The West Australian* 28 November 1916, p. 23.
 - 29 *The West Australian* 15 November 1916, p. 16.
 - 30 *The West Australian* 30 November 1916, p. 9. See also for more on this case: *The West Australian* 28 October 1916, p. 6; 31 October 1916, p. 23; 1 November 1916, p. 6; 3 November 1916, p. 49; 15 November 1916, p. 6; 22 November 1916, pp. 8-9; 30 November 1916, p. 9; 2 December 1916, p. 8; and 8 December 1916, p. 22. This case is dealt with in much more depth in Naomi Segal's *Who and What Was Siebenhaar: A Note on the Life and Persecution of a WAn Anarchist* (Nedlands, W.A.: Centre for WAn History, University of WA, 1988).
 - 31 Colonial Secretary's Office file 2033/1919 W. Siebenhaar (Registry) – Personal File, Cons 752, SROWA, Vol. 2, folios 216-217.
 - 32 Social Notes', *The West Australian*, 29 February 1924, p. 7. Some correspondence from this period survives in the Siebenhaar Papers, Accession 8062A, J.S. Battye Library.
 - 33 'Residentienieuws Australië', *Het Vaderland: staat- en letterkundig nieuwsblad* (Den Haag), 27 September 1926, p. 2.
 - 34 *Western Mail* 18 February 1937, p. 26; *The West Australian* 12 February 1937, p. 24. Lydia Siebenhaar survived him, dying in 1944 in south west England: General Register Office, Mere Registration District, June Qtr 1944, Death registration Vol. 5a p. 204.
 - 35 Apart from the sources cited elsewhere herewith, see for instance: Battye, J.S. (editor) *The Cyclopaedia of WA*, Vol. 1 (Perth, 1912), p. 517; Matters, Mrs Leonard W. (formerly Mrs Emilie Domela), *Australasians Who Count in London and Who Counts in WA*, J. Truscott, (London 1913); Segal, Naomi, *Who and What Was Siebenhaar: A Note on the Life and Persecution of a WAn Anarchist* (Nedlands, W.A.: Centre for WAn History, University of WA, 1988); Eggert, Paul, 'The Dutch-Australian Connection: Willem Siebenhaar, D.H. Lawrence, Max Havelaar and Kangaroo', *Australian Literary Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, May, 2003, pp 3-19; Segal, Naomi & Duyker, Edward 'Siebenhaar, Willem (1863 - 1936)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Supplementary Volume, Melbourne UP, 2005, pp. 359-360 and online version <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs>. Although he also used the names Wilhelm and William, his birth was registered as Willem.
 - 36 Colonial Secretary's Office file 689/93 F.J.Domela, Cons 527, SROWA. An interesting point in the naturalization application is that Ferdinand states he is 26 years old, when in actual fact he was 22. Did he put his age up when he applied for the civil service position? When he commenced in his position in April 1892 he would have been 21. It would have been unusual for such an important document to have such an error. Domela was issued a naturalization certificate by the Governor on 18 April 1893 and this was enrolled as a record of the Supreme Court of WA on 3 May 1893: *Naturalization Register, 1841 - 1903*, Item 1, Cons 1157 (WAS 1547), SROWA; *Naturalization Register, 1871-1903*, Item 1, Cons 1293 (WAS 1547), SROWA; *Register of Naturalization Act Certificates (Consolidated Alphabetical Nominal Index, 1871-1903*, Item 3, Cons 3441 (WAS 60), SROWA; *Naturalization Certificates Issued Under Naturalization Act, 1871*, Boxes 1-3, Cons 3442 (WAS 61), SROWA. The reason for seeking naturalization may have been related to his impending marriage, because if Emilie married an alien, she would lose her British nationality. Dutch citizenship did not seem to impede Domela and Siebenhaar being admitted to the local civil service. It was not necessary for an alien to become naturalized to own land in W.A., because this was made legal for aliens by the W.A. *Naturalization Act, 1871*. The Act made provision for aliens residing in WA to apply to the Governor for a certificate of naturalization, which when granted, was to be enrolled as a record of the Supreme Court. Obtaining the grant of a certificate would, after the taking of an oath of allegiance, entitle an alien whilst resident in the Colony of WA, to all political and other rights, powers and privileges of a natural-born British subject, but would also require the alien to be subject to all obligations of a British subject. But naturalization only applied whilst resident in WA – if one went to another colony one would need to be naturalized again in that colony. With the federation of the six Australian colonies to form the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901, the function of naturalization passed under the Commonwealth Constitution from the former Colony (now State) of WA to the Commonwealth Government. In 1903 the new Commonwealth Parliament passed the *Naturalization Act* (No. 11 of 1903). That Act provided that any person who had already been naturalized in an Australian State or colony was deemed naturalized under the Act. Thus Domela and Siebenhaar were able to be included on the Commonwealth electoral roll and vote or to stand for office. Siebenhaar's sister, Anna, became naturalized under the 1871 WA Act and the 1903 Commonwealth Act upon marrying Edgar Semmens, a British subject, and was able to vote in W.A. elections from 1899 and in Commonwealth elections from 1902, something she could not do if she was living in England or the NL where women were not given the vote until much later.

- 37 *The West Australian* 27 May 1893, p. 4; *Western Mail* 3 June 1893, p. 26, p. 28; She was the daughter of Richard Nettle (deceased) of Ballarat, Victoria. Marriage Registration Serpentine 1893/165, Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages, WA and Typescript of Anglican Church Registers for Pinjarra 1880-1982, J.S. Battye Library, Accession 3463A, MN614; *The West Australian* 16 May 1930, p. 6. For Ferdinand, the marriage was registered as Domela Nieuwenhuis.
- 38 In 1881, when a 16 year old pupil at Mt Pleasant State School at Ballarat, Emilie had attempted and passed the Victorian Civil Service examinations, qualifying for admission to the ordinary division of the civil service: *The Argus* (Melbourne), 27 January 1882, p.6: 'The Civil Service List'. The following year, whilst still at Mt Pleasant School, she passed the matriculation examinations held by Melbourne University: 'The Matriculation Examinations', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 11 January 1883, p.10. The University of Melbourne Archives *Student Cards* series do not include Emilie which means that she did not undertake a degree course if she did attend.
- 39 Birth Registration Perth 1894/574, Registrar General of WA (the birth was registered as Domela); *The West Australian* (Perth, WA), 31 March 1894, p. 4.
- 40 *Rate Books*, City of Perth North Ward, Perth Town Lot N81, SROWA: For Year 1894 (dated 16 Dec. 1893), Assessment No. 226, Vacant Ground sold to Ferdinand Domela, Civil Servant, by Alec Forrest, Agent; For Year 1895 (dated 15 Dec. 1894), p.21, Assessment No. 270, includes a house on the block, Net Annual Value £30; 1898, p.49, Assessment No. 622, Net Annual Value £60, Capital Value £1200. The house at No. 166 Palmerston Street, was on the south-east corner of the intersection with Bulwer Street, but was demolished in the 1960s to make way for a block of flats. The 1894-95 Pierssene *WAn Directory* (Battye Library) shows Domela F.J. living in Beaufort Street, but the 1895-6 Wise's *Post Office Directory* lists 'Domela Ferdinand' at the corner of Palmerston & Bulwer Streets. *The West Australian*, 8 August 1898, p. 5 states that the house was named 'Salvan'.
- 41 Between 29-30 March 1891: *The West Australian*, 30 March 1891, p.3 & 1 April 1891, p. 4. Domela was good enough at cricket to be selected by the Cricket Association in 1892 as part of a squad of 20 players from which a team was to be selected to play inter-colony matches in South Australia the following year: *The West Australian*, 21 December 1892, p. 2. Domela was clearly a good overall sportsman. In a W.A. Cricket Association's sports day, for the Half Mile Steeple Chase, Domela was given a handicap of 80 yards, with the lowest handicap being 15 yards: *The West Australian*, 28 December 1893, p. 3.
- 42 On 5 May 1892, a public meeting was called at Strickland's Hotel, Perth for the purpose of considering the advisability of forming an association to promote the playing of the English Association game and the Rugby Union game. There were about 22 persons present. Willem Siebenhaar took the chair. After a considerable amount of discussion as to whether the Rugby game alone should be played, it was decided to form a club to be called the English Association and Rugby Union Football Club. Siebenhaar was appointed to a preliminary committee as well as temporary Secretary and Treasurer, and was to receive the names and subscriptions of all intending players: *The West Australian*, 30 April 1892, p. 2; 5 May 1892, p. 6; 6 May 1892, p. 6. 'C.B.' had written a letter to the Sporting Editor of *The West Australian* published on 15 April 1892 (p. 3) suggesting the formation of a Club for Association football. Advertisements were placed in *The West Australian* calling the public meeting. A practice rugby match was played on 7 May and an Association scratch match was held on 9 May on the New Recreation Ground: *The West Australian* 10 May 1892, p. 3.
- 43 On 17 May 1892, the second meeting of the Club adopted rules for the Club and appointed office bearers, with Siebenhaar being elected to the permanent committee, after declining to be nominated for the Secretary position: *The West Australian* 19 May 1892, p. 6.
- 44 The new club has organised the Association (soccer) football match in Perth a week later on 25 May 1892 to satisfy those in the club with a passion for that code. Siebenhaar was made captain of the 'White' team with Ferdinand Domela being his team mate, both playing as 'forwards'. The opposition team were the 'Blacks' (in white with black sash). *The West Australian* reported that 'This match will be of special interest, as it is the first one of its kind played in this colony'. The Whites won 2 to nil: *The West Australian*, 25 May 1892, p. 2 & 26 May 1892, p. 6. It was a Wednesday, and the match was played from 4:15 in the afternoon on 'the green' (the New Recreation ground, on The Esplanade which had been reclaimed from the river).
- 45 There was a slight change to the club name: Rugby and English Association Football Club. The new club decided to first organise a 'social' rugby union match which was played on 18 May 1892, the teams being 'England verses the Colonies'. It appears that rugby wasn't Siebenhaar's forté, but Domela got involved, perhaps as he was a bit younger and more 'sporty'. Ferdinand was half-back for the 'England' team: *The West Australian*, 18 May 1892, p. 6.
- 46 Such as when he was a solo vocalist at a Civil Service Association Promenade Concert in Perth in August 1902: *The West Australian*, 30 August 1902, p. 8.
- 47 *The West Australian*, 11 October 1902, p. 12.
- 48 *Western Mail*, 21 July 1899, p. 52.
- 49 *The West Australian* 15 November 1910, p. 7, 16 May 1930, p. 6, 16 June 1939 p. 8.
- 50 *The West Australian* 20 March 1901, p. 4.
- 51 *The Daily News* 3 February 1899, p. 3; *The West Australian* 4 February 1899, p. 10.

- 52 In the 'Turf' section of *The West Australian* in March 1900 it was noted that 'Mr F.J. Domela, the well-known cricketer, who drew Merryman, the second horse, on Tattersall's consultation on the Kalgoorlie Summer Cup, had previously won four or five placed horse prizes in the same promoter's sweeps.' The second place for Merryman won Ferdinand £157, a significant amount of money. There were 6,281 in the draw. One wonders how many of the entries were Ferdinand's? Some of his other wins were noted in the papers: *The West Australian* 12 March 1900, p. 2.
- 53 At the Perth Local Court on 11 December 1902, for instance, judgements were entered against him for debts owing on dishonoured promissory notes for £8 and £11 he had made in favour of Messrs Abrahams and Jeffrey: *The West Australian* 12 December 1902, p. 6.
- 54 The assessment of Dr Bert Altena, in *De familiecorrespondentie van en over Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1846-1932*, p.44.
- 55 *The West Australian* 8 January 1903, p. 5; 20 January 1903, p. 5.
- 56 *The West Australian*, 2 March 1903, p. 6.
- 57 *The West Australian*, 25 April 1903, p. 2.
- 58 *Western Mail*, 16 May 1903, p. 38.
- 59 *WA Blue Book for the Year 1903*, Government Printer (Perth, 1904), p. 14 & p. 45.
- 60 *The Daily News* 24 July 1903, p. 1.
- 61 On 10 September: *The West Australian* 12 September 1903, p. 11.
- 62 *Record of Conduct and Service of South African Constabulary: Ferdinand James Domela*, Chief Staff Officer, South African Constabulary (SAC), Vol. 60, System 01, Reference H2848, TAB: National Archives Repository, Pretoria (Public Records of former Transvaal Province and its predecessors as well as of magistrates and local authorities).
- 63 File 1921/292, *Ferdinand Jacobus Domela*, Applications for Grants of Letters of Administration, Supreme Court of WA, Cons 3458, SROWA.; Death Notice 18439/1911 *Ferdinand Jacobus Nieuwenhuis*, Master of the Supreme Court, Pretoria - Estates (MHG), Transvaal, TAB: National Archives Repository, Pretoria.
- 64 *The West Australian* 16 February 1912, p. 1.
- 65 *The West Australian* 24 January 1907, p. 5.
- 66 *The West Australian* 15 November 1910, p. 7; *Border Crossings from Canada to the US 1895-1956: Manifests of Passengers Arriving in the St. Albans, VT, District through Canadian Pacific and Atlantic Ports, 1895-1954*, Arriving from Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 1911, Leonard W. Matters (aged 29, single, advertising agent), Emilie M Domela (aged 40, married, journalist), Emilie J. Domela (aged 16), Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Pub. No. M1464, Roll No. 145, RG 85, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington.
- 67 *The West Australian*, 16 June 1939, p. 8.
- 68 1891 *Census of England and Wales*, RG12/804 folio 9 p. 11, The National Archives, Kew. Noted in census return as 'Anna', not 'Johanna'.
- 69 *Registrar General of WA, marriage registration Coolgardie 1896/114*; *The West Australian* 25 November 1896, p. 4.
- 70 'District Registrar', *The West Australian*, 19 January 1937, p. 15; *WA Blue Book for the Year 1898*, Government Printer, (Perth, 1899), p. 95; Colonial Secretary's Office file 2867/1919 *Edgar G. Semmens Registry – Personal File*, Cons752, SROWA.
- 71 *The West Australian*, 28 September 1908, p. 5. Also translated as Pan-Dutch Union or General Dutch Union/Alliance/Confederacy. Anna stated she was representative of the 'NL Union for Australasia' in 1913 (*The West Australian*, 29 March 1913, p. 8), but in an article in 1911, J. H. Otto de Grancey stated that he was the Australian representative of the ANV: *The West Australian*, 7 July 1911, p. 9.
- 72 'Dutch East Indies and Australia', *The West Australian*, 15 July 1910, p. 6 (a report on the sixth annual report of the Chamber).
- 73 *Western Mail*, 29 April 1911, p. 14, p. 24 (includes portrait photo); *The West Australian*, 24 April 1911, p. 2.
- 74 *The West Australian*, 7 July 1911, p. 9.
- 75 Of the Dutch born in W.A. in 1911, 73 were males and 11 were females. The total of 745 for Australia being comprised of 643 males and 102 females: *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia Taken for the Night between 2nd and 3rd of April, 1911*, Volume II: Detailed Tables, Commonwealth Statistician: Melbourne, 1914, p. 109, p. 113. The 1921 Census enumerated only 97 NL born in WA out of a total population of 332,732 (0.029%). Of this 97, there were 82 males and 15 females. Australia-wide there were only 1,391 NL born (1,058 males and 333 females) of a total population of 5,435,734 (0.026%): *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia Taken for the Night between 3rd and 4th of April, 1921*, Part II: Detailed Tables, Commonwealth Statistician: Melbourne, pp. 46-47, pp. 51-52.
- 76 *The West Australian*, 9 December 1912, p. 7.
- 77 The writer's analysis of data in *WAn Statistical Register* (Government Printer, Perth), editions 1900-1915.

- 78 They sailed for London on the *Suevic* on 3 May 1911: *The West Australian*, 4 May 1911, p. 4;
- 79 *The West Australian*, 18 September 1911, p. 6.
- 80 B. Altena and R. de Jong, *De familiecorrespondentie van en over Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, 1846-1932* Amsterdam: Stichting IISG, 1997, pp. 599-600.
- 81 *The West Australian*, 18 July 1912, p. 5, 19 July 1912, p. 3.
- 82 See for example *The West Australian* 26 May 1915, p. 8, 26 October 1922 p. 16, 2 December 1922, p. 13, 5 January 1923, pp. 7-8, 6 January 1923, p. 10, 6 April 1923, p. 10, 26 April 1923, p. 9, 19 July 1924, p. 14, 7 July 1925, p. 8, 1 August 1925, p. 11, 25 December 1925, p. 5; *Western Mail* 6 July 1922, p. 16, 27 July 1922, p. 8 (includes portrait photo), 12 October 1922, pp. 14-15, 23 November 1922, p. 21.
- 83 For example, she wrote to the Editor of *The West Australian* on diverse subjects such as public health, including the need for sex education (12 December 1916, p. 4); Dutch matters such as notice of the impending visit to Fremantle of a Dutch Naval Squadron (6 September 1910, p. 6), the celebration of 100 years of peace in The NL and the Palace of Peace established The Hague (29 March 1913, p. 8) and a proposal for public contributions be sent to neutral Holland to support the many Belgian refugees there (10 December 1914, p. 5); the conscription referendum – not openly disapproving of it (12 October 1916, p. 10); the prevention of war (20 April 1917, p. 9), parliamentary reform, suggesting that candidates should be required to undertake training before standing for election (9 March 1918, p. 10); and town planning (18 February 1921, p. 8).
- 84 Translated letters: Anna Semmens Siebenhaar to Miss C. Siebenhaar, The Hague, 29 September, 1918 & 20 January 1919, *Siebenhaar*, file 1-12-326, Headquarters, 5 Military District [I], Commonwealth Military Forces, PP14/1 (*Intelligence reports of internments, repatriations, affiliations and general investigations, multiple number series*), BC747357, National Archives of Australia, Perth. The letters were translated for the Censor by J.H. Otto De Grancey.
- 85 Censor to Headquarters 5th Military District, Perth, 23 January 1919 in file 1-12-326, *ibid*.
- 86 A/Commandant, 5th Military District to the Secretary for Defence, Melbourne, 12 December 1918, in file 1-12-326, *ibid*. Willem Siebenhaar was still writing to Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis senior in Hilversum, but his letters too were subject to the censor's scrutiny. In one intercepted letter on this file, dated 1 October 1917, Siebenhaar complains 'I commence to fear that either your letters or mine are at the bottom of the sea.....', noting that he had sent a number of previous letters but without reply. Siebenhaar sees progress in Russia, hopes 'the Germans will throw off the tyranny, then everywhere the right spirit would set in', complains that the State Liberal Ministry has been stifling his long-merited promotion under the pretence of economy, and describes the situation of Montague Miller, the 85 year old local leader of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) who had been gaoled essentially for his anti-war position, and for whom Siebenhaar had collected funds at his work and had been consequently subject to a Public Service Commission Enquiry. Ferdinand (junior) Domela Nieuwenhuis' sister, Madame Johanna l'Arbalestrier (wife of Captain Octave l'Arbalestrier) who was prima donna in German opera in Belgium, was also in correspondence with Willem Siebenhaar in 1916: *The West Australian* 23 September 1916, p. 7.
- 87 File 1-12-326, *ibid*.
- 88 Anna Semmens-Siebenhaar to C. van Son, Dordrecht (Editor of *Neerlandia*), 14 February 1915, file 1-12-326, *ibid*.
- 89 De Grancey to Censor, 30 June 1915, internal memo, file 1-12-326, *ibid*.
- 90 File 1-12-326, *ibid*.
- 91 File 1-12-326, *ibid*.
- 92 Colonial Secretary's Office file 2867/1919 *Edgar G. Semmens Registry – Personal File*, Cons 752, SROWA.
- 93 *The West Australian*, 7 December 1921, p. 3.
- 94 *De Sumatra Post* 14 July 1922 p. 11 states that J. Semmens left Batavia for Amsterdam aboard the *Prins der Nederlanden* on 12 July 1922; Civil Death Register, Gemeentearchief Leidschendam-Voorburg, Akte 134, Johanna Elisabeth Siebenhaar, died 28 May 1938, death registered 30 May 1938. The death registration indicates she was married to Edgar Semmens and the WA Divorce Registers 1919-1937 do not list a divorce for Edgar and Anna: Supreme Court of WA, Cons 3409/6 to 3409/13, SROWA.
- 95 *Western Mail* 7 May 1925, p. 8 supplement (photo); *The West Australian*, 19 January 1937, p. 15 (biography).

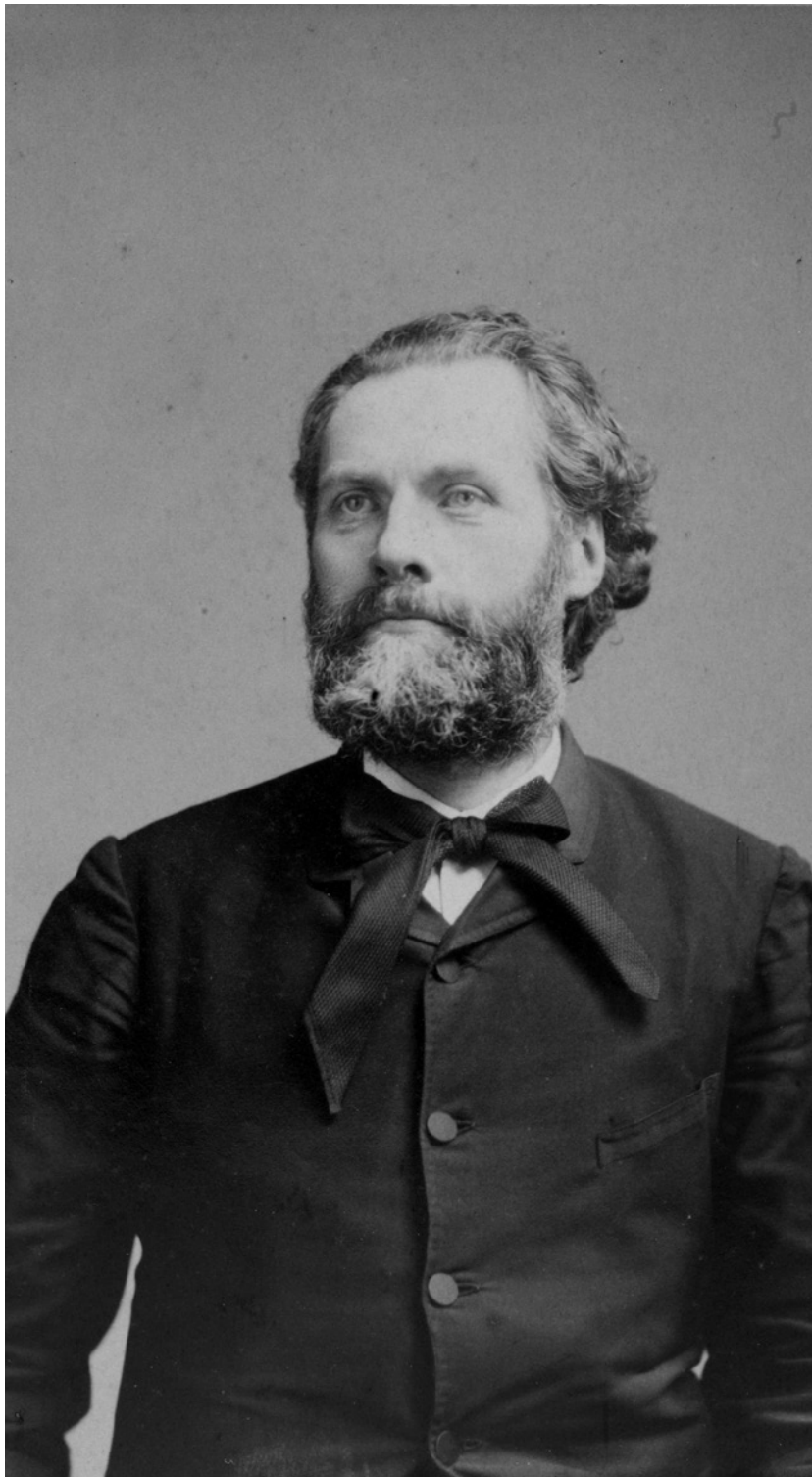


Figure 3

Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919). Nieuwenhuis was born in Amsterdam. He had a theological education and became an Evangelical-Lutheran preacher serving in various Dutch towns until he gradually lost his faith and stopped preaching in 1879. He came into contact with the social issues of the time and became one of the founding fathers of Dutch socialism. A contemporary of Marx and Engels, he is remembered as a charismatic leader of the Dutch labour movement and a revolutionary. He was the father of Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis Junior, who migrated to Western Australia with Willem Siebehaar (see Neil Foley's chapter).

Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DUTCH SOCIALIST PIONEER LINKS WITH
DUTCH LITERARY GIANTS**Alet Doornbusch and Family**

In the last decade of the 19th and first two decades of the 20th century, the Dutch in Western Australia (WA) were predominantly deserters from the Merchant Navy or Dutch Military Convoys, farmers looking for a better life and members of the Royal Netherlands Consular Corp. Less known were the members of Dutch Socialist families looking for a country more tolerant of freedom-of-speech, than was characteristic of the Netherlands (NL) at that time. On the eve of mass migration in 1949, around 250 residents of WA were recorded as Dutch. By 1954 the number had risen to 10,000.

This vignette is about the Dutch Socialist couple, Berend Jan Kornelis Doornbusch (1886-1956) and Hermina Doornbusch nee Langelier (1903-1993) who settled in WA in 1928. Berend was one of twelve children born to first cousins of a farming family in Almelo the Netherlands, of whom six survived. His sister Janetta Jacoba (1892-1959), who travelled with him to WA in 1913, was the youngest of the survivors. The children grew up in a household divided by religious and secular ideals. Half of the children were indoctrinated into Calvinism, the religion of their devout mother. The other three, who included Berend and Janetta, were atheists and Communists like their father.

Dutch Socialism was a popular movement at that time. Socialists had been advocating for better economic and social conditions for the working classes, who had long-standing histories of family hardship, meager diet, premature family death, and of living in overcrowded, damp houses and having minimal education. The period was also witness to conflict between the unions of the two major religions: Calvinism and Catholicism. The political repercussions of this clash divided many families and friends¹. The worsening situation had driven some Socialist farming families to initiate a chain migration from Amsterdam to Queensland in 1910.²

Berend and Janetta's sojourn in WA was to observe the 'collective lifestyle' of Australian Aboriginals, a particularly seductive aspect of Socialism at that time.³ However the greater incentive driving their journey of discovery half way around the world was indeed the strong tradition of Socialist and Communist political ideals, into which they had been indoctrinated by their father, a farmer and committed member of the Socialist Movement. Their father also occasionally contributed to *Het Parool*, a Communist weekly established to raise the Dutch public's consciousness about the highly conspicuous inequalities in their society. Induced by the major rural urban shift known as the Agrarian Depression of 1878-1895, it had forced large numbers of people to leave behind family, community and religious loyalties in pursuit of a city livelihood, only to be confronted with high unemployment and industrial unrest.

These conditions had the working classes flock to meetings at Trades schools to listen to leaders such as the social anarchist Pieter Jelles Toelstra, a Frisian Lawyer and powerful, inspirational leader of the Social Democratic Labor Party (*Sociaal Democratische Arbeiders Partij*). The movement was conceptualised by a former *predikant*, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919) turned social anarchist and anti-militarist. He is also credited with having established the first socialist newsletter (see also Foley's Chapter). A zealous speaker, he championed the negative effects of the five K's: Kerk, Koning, Kapitaal, Kazerne, en Kroeg (in English - church, king, capital, militarism and pub). His success was his capacity to articulate the working public's strong feelings about the inadequate measures taken by the government of the day to reform the labour situation. Hence the growing interest in Socialism and Communism. Even suffrage for working class men and women was not realised in the Netherlands until 1917.

The siblings, Jan Kornelis (gardener) and Janetta Doornbusch (servant) travelled to Australia together, arriving in Fremantle on the *M.S. Osterley* on 24 June 1913.⁴ Janetta returned to the Netherlands in 1915, without Berend, who had instead opted to extend his stay after acquiring a job at Yardi Creek Station catching and breaking-in wild horses (brumbies) for use by the 10th Light Horse Brigade of the Australian Army. It was a lonely job, but, as Berend often told his children in later years, made tolerable by the large sums of money he was able to realize from the sale of his horses to the Light Horse Brigade. It was, he would add, the only time in his whole life that he had any real money to spare. Berend's favourite distraction from the isolation of this existence was to take two horses and a cart to Ajana, the town nearest to Yardi Creek Station. There he would spend time picking up fresh supplies and chatting with the locals.

Berend was eventually able to purchase a farm in Northampton from the considerable savings that the job afforded him. However, this was soon reversed by the 1918 drought, which left him virtually penniless. It forced him in fact, to walk off his property with only the clothes on his back. Shortly, thereafter Berend applied to the Commonwealth Government for British Citizenship. This was granted on 27 August 1929. Another 20 years would elapse before the Australian Citizenship Act was passed in 1949. However, for Berend there was also a down side. Having gained Australian Citizenship, he could now be called up for mandatory military service. A pacifist, Berend registered as a conscientious objector, citing his incapacity to kill – even the sheep on his farm - as his reason for objecting to conscription.

He returned to the Netherlands in 1919, where he moved in with his sister Janetta and journalist, writer Gerardus Johannes Marinus van het Reve, the man she had married the year before. Janetta and Gerard eventually had three sons. Tragically, one died at a few months of age. However, the other two became renowned, albeit controversial, Dutch literary giants. Gerard Reve⁵, who started writing as Simon van het Reve, adopted the shorter Gerard Reve in 1973. Gerard who, 'came out' later in his life, is also associated with



Figure 1
Prof Karel van het Reve receives the PC Hooft Prize in Muiderslot; Karel van het Reve (right with glasses) in conversation with his brother Gerard Reve in the courtyard of the Muiderslot, 19 May 1982. Gerard won the same highly prestigious prize in 1968. Photographer: Croes, Rob C Croes. Courtesy: Nationaal Archief Fotocollectie Anefo: Access No. 2.24.01.05. File Number 932-1721.



Figure 2
Anne, Kon and May as children.
Courtesy: Doornbusch Family.

gaining recognition for the rights of gay men. Karel van het Reve⁶ his brother, is better known as a Slavist historian academic.⁷ Both (Gerard 1968; Karl 1981) were recipients of the P.C.Hoofd prize, considered the chief literary accolade in the Dutch language press.⁸

In the years 1925 to 1927, Berend organized a study tour of middle European languages, because it gave him access to Central European countries where he was keen to evaluate the socialist lifestyle. His travels were to eventually take him as far East as Western Siberia. He was particularly impressed with the Russia's hospital system, which treated an illness he had contracted during his six weeks sojourn there - free of charge!⁹

While back in the Netherlands he met the much younger Hermina Langelier. Youngest of seven children of the blacksmith in the town of Lochem, she was a very progressive kindergarten teacher who shared his socialist ideals.¹⁰ The couple decided to get married and settle in Western Australia. Both were highly educated and spoke both Dutch and German. Hermina could also communicate in French and Berend had a smattering of Flemish and Prussian.¹¹

Berend returned to WA in 1928. Hermina followed a few months later, arriving here on the *MS Esperance Bay* on 29 March 1928.¹² The couple were married at the Perth Registry Office five days later on 3 April 1928. Friends of Berend's, H. and F.V. Wilkie, were witnesses at the wedding. Family folklore has it that the honeymooners' favourite pastime was riding their horses bareback through the bush, sometimes getting lost, and letting the horses find their way home.

The newly married Doornbusches moved to a vacant bush block in Yarloop, which Berend had been able to purchase inexpensively, probably because it was without running water.¹³ Here they lived in a tent until that burnt down when a log fell out of the fire, destroying all their wedding gifts packed in the tent. Following this tragedy, Edward Ash – an old bachelor in Harvey – offered them accommodation in his home.

Their first three children: Kornelis (1929), Augusta (1930) and May (1932) were born there. In 1932, the family of five moved to a twelve-hectare farm bordering the railway line, one kilometre out of Harvey that they purchased from savings. Three more children were born on the farm: Abel Tasman (1938), Herman Jan (1941) and Leo Tolstoy (1943).

Life on their Harvey property seemed idyllic until local government authorities reclaimed ten percent of their land to build a 'diversion drain'. Designed to stop the Harvey River from flooding, it had unexpected and drastic consequences for the Doornbusches as the 'diversion drain' removed all the permanent water supply in the billabong, leaving their property without water in summer and flooded in winter. Furthermore, when Berend registered a compensation claim with the local authorities, it was rejected on the grounds that six months had passed since the completion of the drain,

even though the family could prove that the damage had not manifest until then.

After that, life on the Harvey farm became a struggle. In effect it was never to provide them with a regular source of income. To survive they were forced to target niche markets. For example, during World War II they fattened pigs for bacon for the English market and kept poultry and cows. At the same time they used their milking cows to suckle bull calves that Berend collected from other dairy farmers to grow into ‘vealers’. These were butchered and railed to Perth to Nelson’s Meat Market at West Perth Markets.

To be successful as smaller acreage farmers required the Doornbusches to be highly flexible, commercially aware and open to the challenges of changing market trends. This was not Berend’s forte and a major setback came when at the close of WWII, the local market turned to lean bacon, forcing them to sell their ‘fat baconers’ for less than they had paid for them. In this shifting economic environment, child endowment payments were often the family’s only source of stable income.¹⁴

Ultimately, it was Hermina’s inventiveness that kept the family afloat, at least nutritionally if not financially. A vegetarian, she grew her own fruit and vegetables, made her own cheese from cow’s milk, baked her own bread and kept chickens for eggs. Other staples were porridge, peas and potatoes. The dairy cows provided the family with milk. The only meat they ate was offal. Berend collected ‘meat’ for home use from two local slaughterhouses. The family ate the hearts, livers, tongues and brains whilst the rest of the guts were fed to the pigs.

Additional difficulties were created by the couple’s origin culture. Dutch born and raised, both Hermina and Berend had the difficult task of bringing up their Australian-born children in an environment where the cultural heritage, values and beliefs were completely unfamiliar to them. The immigration policies at that time expected newcomers to assimilate to the Australian way of life – whatever that was!

On the other hand, Berend and Hermina’s staunch socialist political views had them dedicated to the children’s education. The need to educate their children ultimately occasioned their move from Harvey to Perth in 1947. This was specifically made to enable their oldest child Kornelis, then 18, to take up the offer of a prestigious Hackett Bursary Scholarship to study Civil Engineering at the University of Western Australia.

In 1948, with the proceeds of the sale of their Harvey Farm, they purchased a four-hectare farm situated a kilometre from the main road on a dirt track in Grand Promenade, Dianella, that the local council was selling in order to recoup unpaid rates. Despite the shift to the city, Berend continued to use horse and cart to transport resources to the farm. He also saved extra money by going to the West Perth markets to pick up greens (vegetable scraps) for the stock. He sent his youngest sons (Herman and Leo) to pick up carrot tops for the pigs at Osborne Park. Hermina learnt to drive their Leyland, an old



Figure 3
The older children 1946 – May, Anne and Kon
at Harvey Weir before moving to Morley.
Courtesy: Doornbusch Family.



Figure 4
May and Anne at Tante Johanna's place
in Albany – where they boarded to attend
school. Courtesy: Doornbusch Family.

Wesfarmers ex-wheat truck, as did Kornelis, who was allowed to use it for personal transport.

On New Year's Eve 1956, the family was dealt a massive blow when Berend died after fighting cancer. He was only 69, going on 70. It was now up to Hermina, aged 53 to find ways to sustain the family. She did this by purchasing a milk bar delicatessen in a newly built 'block of three' on the corner of Grand Promenade and Walter Road. During the day she managed the shop with the help of her two school-aged sons (Herman and Leo). In the evening, from 5.00 - 9.30pm, Kornelis would take over after his university lectures had finished for the day.

Hermina eventually sold the delicatessen in the early 1960s. By then both girls were married. However, she still had four single males living at home, including Kornelis, who had by then qualified as a town planner at UWA.

Berend and Hermina educated all their children to university standard – the girls as well as boys. The end result was four teachers and two engineers. In the 1930s, giving girls an education was considered very progressive indeed! Educating them all was a remarkable achievement, for which Berend was greatly admired, especially given that he had never earned enough money to even fill in an income tax form!

However, family mythology has it that Berend did his best deals in death. This came about in 1962, when the Shire Council subdivided their property under Town Planning Scheme 12A - Hermina had no say in the matter. Under this scheme, the Council could resume land, which it then subdivided, and the previous owner(s) were allocated a proportional number of serviced lots. Hermina gave each of her four sons a choice of one of the nineteen lots, which she was awarded. Her eldest son Kornelis was still living on the lot he had chosen, when he died in April 2016. In contrast, and in this instance in accordance with the less progressive thinking of the times, (than with their education), her two daughters were expected to find a husband to provide for them and were thus not given a block of land like the boys. The remaining lots were auctioned off and Hermina used the proceeds to purchase a house in Mount Lawley, half of which she rented out for extra income.

National Archives files show that the Doornbusch family also sponsored numerous other Dutch families to Western Australia over a 25-year time span - a method currently described as chain migration. Consequently, the family were central members of WA's Dutch networks. WA's Dutch at that time all knew each other. They met at the Dutch Honorary Consul's to celebrate the Dutch Queen's Birthday each year and mixed informally on numerous other occasions. These WA Dutch volunteered their help when the Consul was called upon to find accommodation for refugees following the Japanese Occupation of the NEI in 1942, and again in 1945 – to house evacuees brought here for rehabilitation from ill treatment – including malnutrition from Japanese POW and interment camps in the NEI, and the first extremely violent months of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence 1945-1949.



Figure 5
On the bikes are: Anne with Herman,
Hermina with Leo and May with Tas – late
1940s. Courtesy: Doornbusch Family.

Editor's note

Alet Doornbusch's three children: twins – Jaeger and Minaida (2007) – and their sister Mira (2011) are the grandchildren of co-ordinating author of this book – Nonja Peters.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Laurens M.M (1943), 'Labour', in Landheer B (ed), *The Netherlands*, Ch12, University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- 2 Gabb, Diane, 'In Search of Utopia', in N. Peters (ed), *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, Perth: UWA Press, 2001.
- 3 Father Kornelis Doornbusch; Mother: Annegien Karp.
- 4 NAA, shipping list for the M.S. Osterley Date of arrival, 24 June, 1913.
- 5 Gerard Reve, in full Gerard Kornelis van het Reve born Dec. 14, 1923, Amsterdam, Netherlands and died April 8, 2006 at Zulte, Belgium. Dutch writer noted for his virtuoso style and sardonic humour. His subject matter was occasionally controversial, treating such topics as homosexuality and sadism. Although Reve invented a fanciful background for himself as the Dutch-born child of Baltic-Russian refugees, he was in fact the son of a Dutch journalist Gerard van het Reve. From 1945 to 1947, Reve attended the Amsterdam school of graphic arts after which he worked as a reporter for *Het Parool*, a national daily newspaper. Unlike his brother Gerard shortened his surname to 'Reve'. Gerard Reve is considered one of the great Dutch post-war prose writers.
- 6 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karel_van_het_Reve
- 7 Karel van het Reve (19 May 1921, Amsterdam – 4 March 1999, Amsterdam) was a Dutch writer, translator and literary historian, teaching and writing on Russian literature. He was born in Amsterdam and was raised as a communist. He lost his 'faith' in his twenties and became an active critic and opponent of the Soviet regime. With his help, work of dissident Andrei Sakharov was smuggled to the west, and his Alexander Herzen Foundation published dissident Soviet literature. He is considered to be one of the finest Dutch essayists, his interests ranging from the fallacies of Marxism to nude beach etiquette. His works include a history of Russian literature, 2 novels and several collections of essays. In 1978 Karel van het Reve delivered the Huizinga Lecture, under the title: *Literatuurwetenschap: het raadsel der onleesbaarheid* (Literary studies. The enigma of unreadability).
- 8 Established in 1947 and named for the Dutch poet and playwright Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft.
- 9 Letter from Berend and Hermina Doornbusch to the Director, Commonwealth Office of Education, Sydney dated 24 January 1948, page 1.
- 10 Lochem is located in the Province of Gelderland.
- 11 B. Doornbusch, letter to Director Commonwealth Office of Education, Sydney written 24 January, 1948.
- 12 NAA, shipping lists Esperance Bay, 28 March 1928.
- 13 Pers.Com. May Doornbusch 2010.
- 14 Pers.Com. May Doornbusch 2011.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FREMANTLE: FIRST STEPS TO A NEW FUTURE

Marijke Eysbertse-van Schaik¹

The emigrant is uprooted from his native place. He is cast upon an alien shore, where there is everything to do, everything to make. He will bring some endowment from the old culture, but he must shape a new one.²

It was in Fremantle that Dutch families would take their first steps on Australian soil. This vignette looks at the Dutch migrants who, after a short stay in Perth of only a few hours through to a few days, sailed on to Port Melbourne; from there travelling by train to the Bonegilla Migrant camp in Wodonga, Victoria, on the shores of the Hume Weir.

In the fifties and sixties most migrants came to Australia by ship, often relishing their journey as the first holiday they had ever had. Romantic dreams of a tropical paradise on an exotic Pacific island came true for many

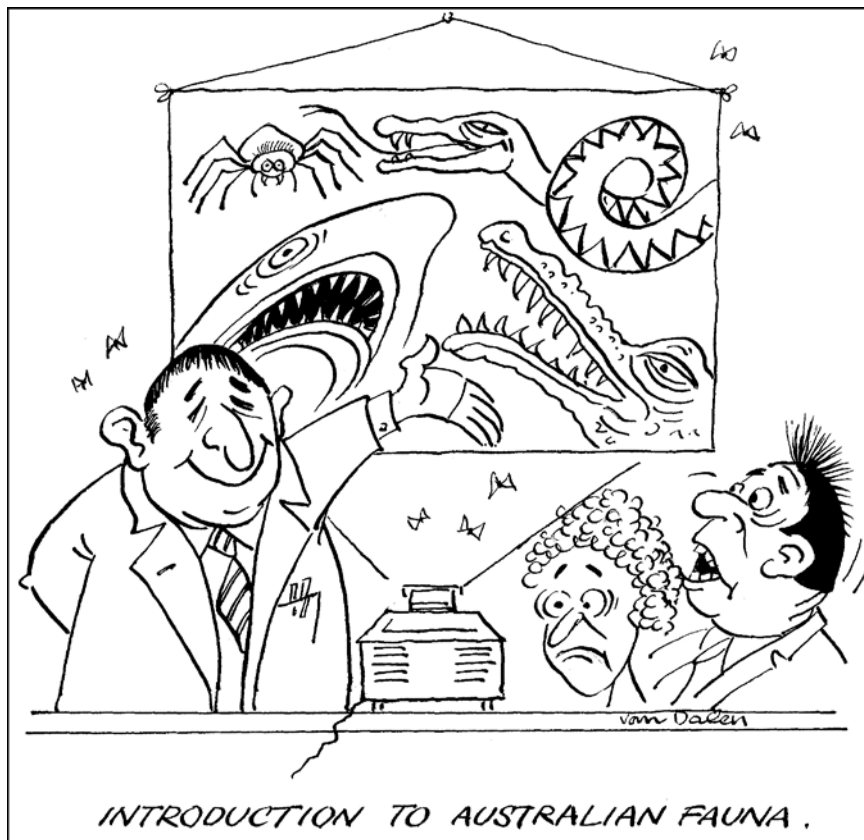


Figures 1 and 2
Cartoons from Nico van Dalen Bonegilla Collection, on permanent display at the exhibition *Where Waters Meet*, Bonegilla by Dirk and Marijke Eysbertse, at Block 19, Bonegilla Heritage Park, Bonegilla, Victoria.

who wandered in wide-eyed wonder through the parks and green spaces of Fremantle and Perth, enjoying the warm rays of the sun and marvelling at trees resembling giant pineapples. First impressions of this new and strange land are vividly and indelibly etched in the memories of every migrant.

'... We disembarked in Fremantle after a lot of formalities and just walked around. We saw a nice park, sat on the grass and cried out: Oh, how wonderful; grass under our bottom. Land. We were crazy. It was not really that beautiful but we were so happy...' Marie Baars, MS Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, 1956.

'...The harbour of Fremantle resembles those in the Mediterranean. Everything looks fantastic with the hills in the distance...



...The strange-looking trees, plants and flowers, (we even saw flowering cacti growing along the pavement), all bathed in glorious sunlight, are exceptionally beautiful. In Holland most Australian plants are grown indoors as pot plants...' Marie Baars, MS Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, 1956

The new arrivals keenly observed the differences between The Netherlands and Australia and tried to make sense of Aussie English.³

'...Of the 1400 passengers, 400 stayed in Western Australia. We left the ship to go sightseeing. We walked around for a few hours. Some of the cars we haven't seen for years in Holland. Noisy, creaking trams are a welcome sight. They even transport prams, which hang on the front or back. Buses are a much older vintage than those back home...

...After dinner back on the ship, we went out on the town again. We ended up at a dance. You can't imagine what the venue looked like: a huge wooden shed with plain wooden benches alongside the walls. Not very gezellig (cosy). The band played in the corner. One thing we didn't like at all – so many drunks. Australian beer, containing more alcohol than Dutch beer, is drunk by the litre from dawn until night. We found most people hard to understand. After the dance, we stopped at a snack bar where we had a delicious hamburger, two toasted sandwiches with fried eggs, onions and minced steak, sweet and sour gherkins and tomato sauce. I can recommend it to you...

...Back on the ship, waterside workers were loading hundreds of kilos of fruit and tons of meat. Baggage was also uploaded. They were asking for volunteers as there were not enough workers on the wharf. Many passengers lent a hand...' Hennie Bos, MS Johan van Oldenbarnevelt 1952

'...We finally approach Fremantle. I am quite nervous and at the same time excited about what the country will look like. Meeting the doctors and customs officers that came on board, I can see with some relief that the Australians are easy-going. Forty migrants will be settling permanently here...' Familie Groenewegen, SS Waterman, 1962 ⁴

Some migrants thought they had entered a Wild West town – looking at historic buildings with their wide awnings and marvelling at the Australian men wearing akubra hats as if they were straight out of *Bonanza*.⁵ For others, seeing the stately buildings in the Perth city centre, it was a relief to realise they were back in a country with a European – albeit British – culture, after being at sea for so many weeks traversing a world, which appeared more Eastern with every port and nautical mile.

'...Our first impressions in Fremantle are like those you experience when on holidays in a new land. The houses are built as you find

in the tropics with verandas, surrounded by strange looking trees, and gorgeous looking flowering shrubs, all bathed in sunlight. I have to add that everything looks less prosperous than in Holland – less solid, not as well maintained, badly in need of a coat of paint. Department stores are like the Bijenkorf and the Hema⁶, but prices are much higher. Sizes, weights, money, everything is different here...’ Hennie Bos, MS Johan van Oldenbarnevelt 1952.

‘...Our kids thought it was funny that Australian kids were ordinary white people. After Port Said and Aden, they had expected to find in Australia kids who were even darker-skinned. They were disappointed not to see any kangaroos...’ Familie Groenewegen, SS Waterman 1960

In the early 1600s Dutch explorers arrived at the shores of Western Australia on sailing boats by the grace of winds and tides, not eager to stay. Three centuries later migrants arrived on grand Dutch migrant ships, answering the call by an Australia eager to populate its country. Many of these ‘Dutchies’ and their descendants are proud to call Australia home.

ENDNOTES

- 1 All personal entries are from: Eysbertse D and Eysbertse M, *Where Waters Meet, Bonegilla, The Dutch Migrant Experience in Australia*, 3rd revised edition 2006, Erasmus Foundation, Melbourne.
- 2 Paul McGuire, *Australian Journey*, Heinemann 1942.
- 3 The cartoons in this article are part of the the *Nico van Dalen Bonegilla Collection*, on permanent display at the exhibition *Where Waters Meet, Bonegilla* by Dirk and Marijke Eysbertse, at Block 19, Bonegilla Heritage Park, Bonegilla, Victoria.
- 4 *SS Waterman*, *SS Zuiderkruis* and *SS Groote Beer* were the three so-called Victory Ships, built in the USA for the war effort in World War II, and sold to the Dutch Government, who used them for troop transport and later as migrant ships to the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.
- 5 *Bonanza*, a Western TV series made in the USA, was very popular in The Netherlands from 1959 to 1973.
- 6 Department stores in The Netherlands.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

LEAVING FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Nonja Peters

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is Dutch migration to Western Australia over the past 65 years. Its specific concerns are the emigration and immigration experiences of Dutch from the Netherlands (NL) and Netherlands East Indies (NEI – present day Indonesia), who made WA home after World War Two (WWII).¹ It is worth noting here that regardless of the decrease, due to ageing, of Netherlands-born Dutch Australian numbers, that the Dutch presence in Australia still remains robust. This is confirmed by the last Census (Table One ABS 2011), when over 335,493 Australians acknowledged their Dutch origins.

This chapter contains a ‘selection’ of just some of the myriad of experiences relating to the benefits and pitfalls and the hope and courage that underlie the emigration experiences which were encountered by Dutch migrants to WA after WWII.

My postdoctoral research project *Footsteps of the Dutch in Australia from 1606 – 2016* underpins this chapter.² It explored the ways in which family, local, national and global influences - including social, cultural and economic policies and/or conflicts in NL, the NEI and Australia combined to shape the presence of the Dutch in Western Australia.³ It derives its content from biographies, autobiographies, oral history interviews, focus group discussion, questionnaires, archival documentation, photographs and secondary sources.⁴

			Generations in Australia			
	Persons(a)	Proportion of total population	First generation	Second generation	Third-plus generation	Also stated another ancestry
Ancestry	'000	%	%	%	%	%
English	7 238.5	36.1	18.5	20.1	61.4	53.5
Australian	7 098.5	35.4	2.0	18.3	79.6	38.5
Irish	2 087.8	10.4	12.9	13.9	73.2	80.4
Scottish	1 792.6	8.9	17.1	19.1	63.8	78.3
Italian	916.1	4.6	24.1	41.0	34.9	44.3
German	898.7	4.5	17.3	19.8	62.9	75.4
Chinese	866.2	4.3	74.3	21.3	4.4	16.2
Indian	390.9	2.0	79.8	18.6	1.6	12.9
Greek	378.3	1.9	30.9	44.8	24.3	26.2
Dutch	335.5	1.7	32.5	43.3	24.2	55.1
(a) Table One presents collective responses to ancestry question. As some people stated two ancestries, the total persons for all ancestries exceed Australia's total population.						

TABLE ONE. SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF ANCESTRY GROUPS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – THE ‘PUSH’ AND ‘PULL’ FACTS OF DUTCH EMIGRATION

The main question that the large exit of Dutch out of the Netherlands in the mid 20th century raised is “What ‘factors’ activated this mobility?” For despite high population density, the absence of additional farmland and the crowded conditions that had existed in the Netherlands for generations - it was never really an emigration country. It seems the Dutch preferred to stay in their homeland rather than emigrate in any substantial numbers. Consequently, the radical shift in attitude towards emigration that occurred after the Second World War, took everyone by surprise - it was so completely uncharacteristic. The change would ultimately lead to around five per cent (500,000) of the NL population leaving the Netherlands over the next 25 years to settle in immigration countries that included America, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Argentina and Brazil.

Dutch participants in this research contend overwhelmingly, that the main factor motivating their emigration was the tough life in the NL and NEI in the aftermath of WWII. This was confirmed at a focus group meeting in 2003, attended by 14 female members of the *Neerlandia* Craft Club.⁵ The craft club ladies women met fortnightly at the *Neerlandia* Clubhouse in Cambridge Street, Wembley WA for commensality and to work on various personal and group craft projects. The following quotes are representative of this group’s responses:

Maria L: *My husband was a contractor and after the war it was very bad in the construction industry in Holland. He could not get enough work for our family, which was growing at that time, that was why he thought we should try in a younger country, where they were seeking trades people.*⁶

Louise G: *The reason we came here was the poor state of the Netherlands economy... there was nothing left to be had after the war [in Holland].*⁷

Maartje E: *At that time The situation in the Netherlands was bad. So we thought, “why not try it in Australia [inferred nothing to lose].”*⁸

Leny W: *We migrated mainly for the children for a better future.*⁹

Numerous Dutch emigrated to WA in the years that followed. Many were mobilised by the massive propaganda campaigns generated in both



the Cradle Cannot Solve It—



—But Immigration Can

Figure 1 and 2
Land of Tomorrow: National Archives of
Australia (NAA) CP815/1,021 (pt2)
& NAA A343 Item1949/3/21685. Courtesy,
Department of Immigration Canberra, 1947.

immigration and emigration countries (See Figures 1- 4). Others responded to letters received from relatives and friends who were already in WA and that were full of positive evaluations of the economic opportunities available. These letters most notably contained statements such as:

“Look, if you are not too lazy to work you can do anything [here in Australia]. For instance, you can open a fish and chip, grocery shop or newsagency and you will do really well, but it takes a lot of hard work”.

I should mention here that even those lured to Australia by relatives, generally commented that it had been the depleted state of the Dutch economy and lack of housing that had ultimately provided the incentive to take their family’s enjoinders seriously.

The warmer WA climate was an additional temptation. One woman recalled her husband’s immense pleasure when emigration authorities claimed the family could expect 360 days of sunshine per annum. Two other ‘Craft Club’ members explained that their husbands had registered for emigration, as soon as they returned from the war years they had spent in another country. Both declared unequivocally that their husbands did not want to stay in NL after demobilisation, “Holland now felt too small to them [and this may well have been in spirit rather than size] after the fears and confusion the war years had induced.”

WORLD WAR II IN THE NETHERLANDS

On 10 May 1940, the Netherlands was invaded by German forces, despite its policy of neutrality and without a formal declaration of war. Approximately nine million people were living there at that time.¹⁰ Being a relatively flat country, it had few natural features that could support an armed resistance against the Nazis.

The four goals the Nazis had for the Netherlands included transforming it into a national socialist state; exploiting the economic potential of Dutch industries and the labour force; purging the Netherlands of all Jews; and preventing all aid to Germany’s enemies through espionage, sabotage and guerrilla activity.¹¹ From 1943 when the Nazis had introduced the obligation to work, every male between 18 and 50 years and every unmarried woman between 21 – (later 18) – and 35 years, could be conscripted to work for the German Reich.

In due course, complete birth cohorts were bound to work. The number of Dutch sent to work as forced labour for the Nazi war machine would ultimately number around 475,000.¹² My parents Jan (John) and Jo (Johanna) Peters (nee Verhoeven), were among these individuals and spent most of the last year of the war making bullets in a munitions factory near Strasbourg in Alsace-Lorraine. Not long married, Jan was picked up for this work during a Nazi *razzia* (raid) for young men for the Nazi War Machine. Jo followed him to Strasbourg some weeks later. The Nazis then also put her to work



Figure 3
Cousins, Cor Nonner (left) and Jan Peters C 1925. The remains of Cor Nonner were found in a mass grave. He had been executed by the Nazis in 1943, for working with the Dutch Resistance.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.

in the munitions factory. I grew up later hearing stories of the gratitude she felt for the help she received from Mongolians in the factory, whom the Nazis had recruited as 'slave labour'. They would reload her machine with lead, every time she needed to stamp out the next round of bullets. To be fair, my mother reciprocated by smuggling in hot soup for them which she made in her *pension*. She had been allowed to live outside the camp when her pregnancy became obvious. The Mongolians who were fed starvation rations, would hide in the toilet to devour the hot liquid. Had the Nazis discovered their exchanges, all involved would have been shot.

My parents eventually escaped and returned to NL, not however without incident. As their train approached Cologne (Köln), it came under heavy fire from the Allies. The relentless bombing that ensued would eventually destroy much of Cologne's (Köln's) built environment, including significant tracts of cultural heritage. They therefore felt they were lucky to make it back alive to their hometown Tilburg, in time for my birth in February. My father however was forced to go back into hiding immediately, in order to avoid being sent back to Alsace, where he stayed until the Nazi surrender on 5 May 1945.¹³

Many young Dutch died while in forced labour or working for the resistance. Such a tragedy also touched my family. The remains of my father's first cousin, his friend and an only child – Cor Nonner – were found in a mass grave of 80 young Dutch resistance fighters. Neither was Cor Nonner's death an isolated incident. Wartime losses left much of the NL population bereft. A quarter of a million Dutch had perished in the war, including 18,000 from starvation in the western provinces during the hunger winter of 1944-1945. At the height of this famine, hundreds of thousands of Dutch became severely malnourished.¹⁴ These circumstances left deep scars of grief and loss in family, village, town, city and countryside.

Furthermore, people hardly had time to recover their sense of freedom or to put adequate food on the dinner table, when the country's struggling infrastructure was dealt yet another blow – the loss of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), which had provided for one-sixth of the Netherlands Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Its forfeiture was also antecedent to a massive and 'unwanted' refugee influx from the NEI, fleeing the Japanese Occupation and Independence Revolution in the aftermath.¹⁵ The arrival of these refugees would seriously overburden a greatly depleted housing stock, severely decreased by wartime bombing and a lack of building maintenance during the war years. Moreover, as if that were not enough, they also brought health issues. Later around 10,000 of the same refugees would re-migrate from NL to Australia. It is nevertheless important to appreciate the difference between life in Japanese Occupied NEI at the time, compared to life in the Netherlands under Nazi Occupation, as specific factors influenced aspects of the rest of the migrants' lives. In NL, life went on, albeit under Nazi rule. In the NEI, European Dutch were rounded up and interned for the entire period of the war. The Indonesian Revolution for Independence that began at close of war, immediately threw the lives of these Dutch into mortal



Figure 4
The treatment of those Dutch who were considered to have been Nazi Collaborators - including women who 'went out with' Nazi soldiers. c1945 – after liberation.
Courtesy: Wieman Family Collection.



Figure 5
Emigrare necesse est! Courtesy: Dutch cartoonist Eppo Doeve.

danger once more (see Peters' chapter Section II). When South East Asian Command (SEAC) took over governance of the Region six weeks later, they chose repatriation to NL as the primary method for protecting the lives of the severely depleted interned Dutch and brutally traumatised Buitenkampers (Eurasians living outside of camps).

The escalating unemployment levels and decreasing economic options and choices, made the future in the Netherlands look progressively bleaker.¹⁶ This situation would also impact on those soldiers returning to NL, who had served their compulsory military duty in the NEI from 1946. Having spent a number of years in the tropics far away from home and family, many found it hard to settle back into everyday life in the Netherlands. They often registered for emigration shortly after demobilisation. Dutch military men based in Australia during the war, also sought ways to return to Australia as soon as was feasible after demobilisation, so they could marry the Australian women they had met on shore leave. A few took their brides back to NL, however most of these would return again, eventually to settle in Australia for good (see chapter 11 by Christina Houen). War and post-war trauma had wreaked havoc with the lives of all these young Dutch, whether they came from the NL or the NEI.

ANXIETY RELATED TO LIFE IN POST-WWII NETHERLANDS

Dutch sociologists hold war responsible for the collective sense of economic, social and political insecurity, uncertainty and 'sense of disconnect' – from their country's politics, religion and culture – that was experienced by many of this cohort in the aftermath of war in the NL and NEI.¹⁷ This feeling of alienation was intensified by the government's incapacity to address the need to physically reconstruct the country's infrastructure, in order to overcome the public's anxiety about the dearth of jobs, retrenchments, low wages, high living costs, and acute housing and resources crisis.¹⁸

The state of affairs in post-war Netherlands made life especially difficult for younger, recently married couples, most of whom had been catapulted from the poor living conditions of semi-industrialised Netherlands into the disrupting environment of the Depression, followed closely by the devastation brought about by WWII. The five years of Nazi Occupation had left factories stripped, land wasted, flooded and depleted of energy sources, food production greatly reduced and as a consequence, the economy was generally seriously compromised.

Neither did the Government's engineered program of rapid industrialisation arrest the widespread, structural unemployment. This was mainly because the initial focus of the program was to rid the country of 'unwanted population' rather than to generate jobs. To this end the Government actively rekindled earlier concerns about 'overcrowding'.¹⁹ It is perplexing that a 'government-engineered state of affairs' could impact on the community to the extent that it actually did. In fact, the expression - 'overpopulation psychosis'



Figure 6
The Netherlands Overpopulated. Courtesy: Dutch cartoonist Eppo Doeve.

was coined specifically to explain the public's intense response. Captured by a survey carried out 1947-1948, it recorded a third of the population, then approximately nine million, as favourably disposed to emigration. This survey added the 'Cold War' to ongoing rationing, under-employment and the housing crisis as reasons for the massive change of heart of Dutch citizens towards emigration. This drastic situation rendered this young Dutch cohort especially vulnerable to the 'overpopulation propaganda' that the Dutch government began promoting, in order to secure the exit of large numbers of its population to immigration countries.

THE NETHERLANDS POST-WAR 'PUSH TO MIGRATE'

The 'over-population' concept gained additional currency when, in 1951, the prominent newspaper *Elsevier* published two etchings, one of a family leaving, and another showing a map of the Netherlands spilling over with people. The latter was accompanied by a quote from the then Prime Minister Drees, that insisted:

"A portion of our folk must have the courage as in earlier centuries, to seek their future/fortune in continents larger than the homeland".²⁰

The Dutch Monarchy and Government seized on the apparent change of attitude to emigration that these situations had fostered, to also exert further pressure on Dutch citizens to register for emigration at one of the 300 emigration offices, which they had established around the country to promote such an exodus.²¹ Dutch emigrants' impressions of migration were therefore critically framed by a (Dutch) government that wanted to get rid of them, a propaganda machine prone to sensationalising emigration's benefits and an (Australian) government desperate for their labour (the cartoon images here were produced to convey the above sentiments).²²

AUSTRALIA'S MASS MIGRATION PLANS - PRE AND POST WWII

How did the Australian Government 'who wanted them', view the Dutch? As it stands, their perceptions had developed well before the war and already in response to the Dutch Government's search for a home for its surplus-farming sons. These concerns had occasioned the visit to Australia from the Director General of the Netherlands Emigration Foundation, Mr J.A.A. Hartland, to discuss a possible influx of Dutch. Reporting on this visit on 5 July 1939, the *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted the Australian Government's view on the proposed migration of Dutch to Australia as being greatly beneficial. The Government 'Official' described the Dutch as innovative, strong, adaptable and easily assimilated, because they originated from a similar democratic system and generally had some knowledge of the English language.²³ The outbreak of WWII in 1942 put paid to these proposed migration plans. However, at the end of WWII, they were reignited.



Figure 7
300 Emigration Offices in the Netherlands.
Courtesy: Dutch Migration Organization.



Figure 8
Union bank – A New Future. Courtesy:
Netherlands Government Publication.

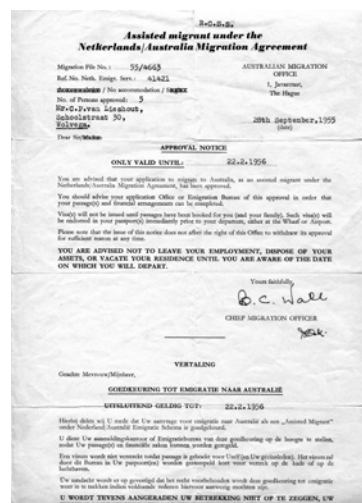


Figure 9
Assisted Migration Documentation. Courtesy:
Leah van Lieshout.

To meet the immigration challenge, in 1945 Australia established the Department of Immigration with the honourable Arthur A. Calwell at its helm. Under his leadership it embarked immediately on a bold policy of immigration to increase the declining population; secure the country's defence; overcome the severe labour shortages, maintain the war-boostered economy, develop the burgeoning manufacturing, building and construction industries and to restore essential services to pre-war levels.

Calwell adopted the American immigration model, which set the maximum effective population absorption rate for an expanding country at two per cent. In 1947, he founded the Haylen Committee (later renamed the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council [CIAC]), to administer the smooth transition of the proposed mass movement of peoples from Europe to Australia, in particular their reception and assimilation into the community. In 1949, another government body was established - the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council (CIPC) - to advise on matters relating to migrant selection, economics, industry and general policy.²⁴

That done, under the maxim 'populate or perish', Calwell then began negotiating immigration agreements with Britain and a diversity of other European nations, that could be relied upon to yield the 70,000 persons per annum which he sought. The propaganda that accompanied the formal agreements was formulated specifically to lure emigrants to Australia. It promised good working conditions, an abundance of food and the opportunity for home, car and white goods ownership. This level of materialism was unheard of in post-war Netherlands or Europe, where food rationing and waiting in queues for scarce resources such as fuel and clothing, was unrelenting. To contribute even further to making the dream a reality, Calwell sought migration agreements that included 'passage assistance', which both governments would help to subsidise.

In the absence of being able to attract enough British emigrants, due to Britain's post-war reconstruction needs and a lack of available shipping, the Displaced Persons Scheme that Calwell had established with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) in 1947 came rapidly to a close. He was therefore forced to look to other European nations for further options. It was not long before Australia's focus fell to recruiting the Dutch, favouring especially the 'blonde, blue-eyed' larger families, whose children would soon be entering the labour market. Calwell conferred surrogate British status upon these people.²⁵ This is confirmed by the high rates of government-assisted passages the Dutch received, compared to other European nationals.²⁶ For example when 85 per cent of the British and 60 per cent of the Dutch, German, Maltese, Yugoslav and Eastern European migrants gained passage assistance, in contrast only 34 per cent of Greeks and 20 per cent of Italians did.²⁷ Historians describe the 'assistance incentive' as 'a form of social engineering designed to keep Australia British, to keep the labour force manual, to redress the gender imbalance and to keep Australia White'.²⁸



Figure 10
The Verschuren family from Breda arrive
in WA 1954. Immigration Officials sought
large Dutch families to increase Australia's
population and expand the labour market.
Courtesy: The Verschuren Family.

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO EMIGRATE?

A question central to emigration research is “What motivates individuals to leave everything they know behind, to settle thousands of miles away from their home, in a country with different, customs, language and traditions?”

Theories generated over the years, have attributed the decision of the Dutch to emigrate to job opportunity, family reunion, love interests, lifestyle, trade, the social, political and economic upheaval associated with war, political or religious unrest, plus adventure – or a combination of these factors. However, Dutch sociologists *Beijer*, *Frijda*, *Hofstede* and *Wentholt* (1952) offer a perspective, with a difference. They attribute the large post-war exodus from the Netherlands to the ‘Dutch national character’, which they claimed perfectly suited the rigours of emigration, since it produced people who were reasonable, sober, practical, and industrious.²⁹

In reality, the motives given for emigrating by those Dutch interviewed in various studies, are complex and many faceted and although mainly economic — chasing opportunities for a better life — they also contain elements of adventure, a better climate, the escape from family conflict and/or out-dated social and economic obligations.³⁰ However it would be difficult to pinpoint exactly why a particular cohort chose to go and why the larger cohort stayed at home.

Joed Elich, a Dutch researcher of ‘Dutch migration to Australia’, argues that the Dutch emigration policy of the 1950s and 1960s has hardly ever been criticised. By way of explanation, he cites Caplow, a leading American researcher, who labelled Dutch sociologists of that period “obedient servants of the government”, since even the noted academics such as *van Heek*, *Groenman*, *Steigenga* and *Hofstede* agreed that the Netherlands was an over-populated country.³¹

Petersen argued in 1955, that Dutch emigration policy was not based on rational grounds and did not solve the population problem. *Elich* also notes how the Dutch government all but ignored *Hofstede*, when he criticised Dutch emigration policy in his 1964 thesis.³² A critical mass critiquing Dutch emigration therefore failed to emerge in order to challenge the Government’s policy in any way, and this may have had implications for the influx into the country that took place in more recent decades and has recently become a ‘political hot potato’.

Alternative views about why Dutch emigrated post-war in such large numbers, were offered by *Beijer et al* (1961). Their fieldwork analysis recorded that around 20 per cent of their sample had suffered downward social mobility, either because the emigrant had not lived up to the expectations or requirements of his social milieu, or because a wife had married ‘beneath her’. They indicated that while downward mobility was not typical of the average emigrant, it occurred fairly frequently among emigrants from the traditional ‘well-to-do’ bourgeoisie and the modern ‘well-to-do’ new middle class circles and self-employed petite bourgeoisie, who emigrated from the late 1950s.³³ John Hempel, in a study of Dutch who arrived in in Queensland after 1956,



Figure 11
Travel to Australia documentation of the van der Brugge Family (Albany WA). Courtesy: J. van Brugge.



Figure 12
Family van der Brugge. Australia wanted Dutch families. Courtesy: J. van Brugge.



Figure 13
Sponsorship documentation for Zegert van Eyk and Family organised by Hendrik Plug, 1955. Courtesy: A. Plug.

recorded a change in their employment status.³⁴ At this time, fewer farmers, tradesmen and professionals came to Australia but there was an increase in farm labourers, clerical, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.³⁵ Indoor and outdoor sales, became a popular avenue of employment for those Dutch who were unable to procure a job in their previous professions or trades. Charles Beltz (1964), whose PhD on Dutch employment in Australia supported this observation, also noted that the majority of Dutch in ‘commerce’ were most often selling insurance or real estate.

Many Dutch also left the Netherlands because their peers and friends were leaving, even when their families were not supportive, as Maria notes:

Maria: *I am the only one in my family who migrated and dad thought it was awful because I was four years old when my mother died. So my father was everything to us children and we to him. However, my husband wanted to go to Australia, and the expectation in those years was that ‘where your husband went [to earn a living] that is where the family went.’ We left because he felt we had a chance at giving our five children a better life and that is what actually was done. They all landed well. I have 12 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. So we have populated Australia!³⁶*

However, this was not the case for everyone. For example Corrie, another craft club lady who came from a family of nine children - did not think her mother was so bothered about whether Corrie’s nuclear family stayed or left to live in Australia, (inferring that there were plenty of other children left behind in NL).

YOUNG ADULTS VACATE THEIR HOMELAND – PERSUASION AND PROPAGANDA

The question as to why so many young Dutch couples and families succumbed to the enticements promoted by the propaganda machine in daily newspapers and on huge billboards around the Netherlands is plausible, when one factors in the state of affairs in NL and the NEI in the late 1940s and 1950s. Even so, ‘who’ would ultimately make the leap was largely determined by the agreement that dominated the period in which they arrived. The first immigration agreement in 1946 for instance, was signed up with the Netherlands Immigration Foundation, a private consultative body whose brief included assisting with and arranging group migration centred on encouraging young farmers and artisans to settle in Australia.³⁷ However, few Dutch actually came into WA under this scheme.

The second post-war migration agreement to bring Dutch migrants to Australia was the Empire and Ex-Servicemen’s scheme. Signed in 1947, the same year as the ‘Displaced Persons Scheme’, it ostensibly granted free passages to British ex-service personnel and their dependents, but also offered some privileges and assistance to Allied military personnel who

had served between 1939 and 1945.³⁸ In contrast to other immigrants, ex-servicemen did not need to be nominated by a person living in Western Australia, nor by an Australian state or private organisation, who would ordinarily also have to guarantee them accommodation, as was the case for general British migrants.³⁹ My own father and great Uncle, Toon Berens, were among the first batch to depart NL for Australia under this scheme. However, the *SS Volendam* carried many more Displaced Persons than it did Dutch on that voyage.

However, one cannot speak of a significant Dutch exodus into Australia until after the signing of the Netherlands Australia Migration Agreement (NAMA), and the Netherlands Government Agency Scheme (NGAS) passage assistance schemes in 1951.⁴⁰ In line with Australian requirements, NAMA and NGAS gave passage assistance mainly to trade-skilled and unskilled labourers, who could meet both age and rigorous health and security checks. Prospective emigrants had to be between 18 and 35 years, if single men, and to be between 18 and 30 years if single women. In contrast, the male head of a family could be up to 50 years of age, if his family included a number of working-age children.⁴¹ To be selected for passage assistance, prospective emigrants had also to agree to remain in Australia for two years, in the employment for which they were selected by the Australian Government. If they returned before that time, they had to repay their fare.⁴²

Prospective emigrants could also gain entry to Australia via sponsorship by family, friends or industry, in other words, if their sponsor provided accommodation and was prepared to look after them until they had secured a job. This engendered a sort of 'chain migration'. However, a similar reach was numerically far greater among Italians and Greeks emigrants, than it ever was among the Dutch. Sponsorship also dominated British migration to Australia well into the 1950s. It stimulated such programs as 'Bring out a Brit' in order to attract more Britons⁴³ to Australia, who continued for many decades as being the preferred migrants.

Economist Professor Reginald Appleyard has shown that during the period 1948 to 1953, nearly 40 per cent of Dutch male arrivals and 43 per cent of Dutch female arrivals were assisted by either the Allied Ex-Servicemen's Scheme, NAMA or NGAS.⁴⁴ The remainder were either full-fare passengers or were assisted under some private scheme.⁴⁵ However, unlike arrangements made with other governments, where each migrant contributed a flat rate of \$AUD20-\$AUD25 towards transport costs, the practice in the Netherlands was for the migrant to make a personal contribution towards emigration costs, which was directly related to their earning capacity.⁴⁶

REGISTERING FOR EMIGRATION – THE PROCESS

For generations, Dutch society had developed along the lines of 'cradle to grave' pillars (*verzuilingen*), associated with the religious beliefs of its major groups, plus a 'secular' pillar. Each had its own philosophy and in keeping with its basic beliefs, had developed institutions, schools, electronic

and print media as well as education programs. Having administered the comparatively small-scale exodus of Dutch seeking to escape the Depression in the USA during the 1930s, the various *Verzuilingen* were quick to step-in and begin processing applications as the post-war migration schemes began to materialise in the early 1950s.⁴⁷ Prospective emigrants could register for emigration at the offices of Roman Catholic, Reform (*Hervormde*) or Free Reformed churches. Those who chose not to register at a religious emigration agency, could do so at the local Labour office.

Emigrants claim that Dutch Authorities expected them to put everything they owned towards travel costs, and to do so under close government supervision.⁴⁸ Those who left the Netherlands in 1951, recall only being allowed to take the equivalent of \$200 in cash and being restrained by a baggage allowance limited to a packing crate measuring no more than one cubic metre.⁴⁹ As a consequence, many subsidised immigrants arrived at their destination virtually destitute, with only the landing money that the Dutch government had negotiated for them from the Australian Government. In 1950 this was £10 for singles and £20 for a family. Even fare-paying passengers faced restraints relating to the amount of cash they could take out of the Netherlands. They too were given 'board money' to spend en-route. A few older, better-off migrants with foresight, paid the extra to hire a container that they could fill with all their household goods, furniture, a motor bike, car or a kit-home to erect in Australia.⁵⁰ A number of families also took the risk of smuggling the proceeds of the sale of their house out of the country. However, this had to be done illegally. In reality the majority of Dutch started their new life in Australia without funds, which meant no access to bank loans, which would have required collateral.

Dutch nationals who migrated to Australia directly from the NEI faced additional monetary constraints, as their finances were dramatically eroded by the devaluation of the *rupiah*. This trebled the passage cost, which most had hoped to pay out of bonuses or savings, and reduced even further their resettlement possibilities at the point of destination.⁵¹ From 1947, Dutch wishing to migrate to Australia from the NEI included people who, after being demobilised from the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (*Koninklijke Nederlands Indische Leger* [KNIL]), had stayed on to work in NEI. They included the trade-skilled, the self-employed and those who had held down administrative posts in Government or in private enterprise, in tropical agriculture, sugar or rubber plantations or in banking.⁵² These people were also eligible to apply for passage assistance under the Allied Ex-Servicemen's Scheme, providing they could satisfy the White Australia Policy criteria.⁵³ Thom Dercksen, (Consul of the Netherlands to WA in the 1980s and 1990s), was among the first wave of Dutch from Indonesia to Australia, after Indonesia gained independence at the end of December 1949. He notes:

I stayed in the army until 1949. After demobilisation I joined a shipping firm as a junior aged 22. In 1950 political unrest created an intolerable sense of insecurity. The Indonesian

government devalued the currency and the nest egg I had saved to return home was now inadequate, so I decided to go to Australia. I scraped together the funds to get me to Perth. After arrival I soon found a job in shipping.⁵⁴

Under the White Australia Policy, Australian selection officers had to follow specific policy procedures to determine the 'racial origin' of prospective immigrants from Indonesia. For example, even a British subject who was of partly non-European extraction was only eligible for admission in the ordinary manner, if he or she possessed 51 per cent or more European blood! If an officer was in doubt as to the degree to which a person could be considered 'coloured', the test applied was based on ascertaining the race and birthplace of the person's parents and their paternal and maternal grandparents.⁵⁵ Prospective emigrants whose cases were unclear, were asked to bring photographs of their four grandparents to the immigration authorities. Generally, in the case of NEI Dutch, if more than one grandparent looked Indonesian, then the authorities would reject them for emigration.⁵⁶

After December 1958, a second wave of NEI Dutch left Indonesia when the Indonesian government passed a policy to nationalise all Dutch businesses.⁵⁷ A third and final wave left Indonesia following the conflict that broke out after Dutch-owned Papua New Guinea was annexed by Indonesia, in line with United Nations pressure on 1 May 1963.⁵⁸ Most of these emigrants, who could also be called evacuees or refugees, travelled under passage assistance schemes or on migration loans.⁵⁹ They were also luckier than earlier migrants, since by 1962 the Dutch government had started to assist the migration process by waiving the migrant loan repayments. The Dutch government undertook this move in order to alleviate the guilt felt about the first emigrants, whose contribution to the voyage was means tested as noted earlier, resulting in them being practically impoverished upon arrival in Australia.⁶⁰ A common expression among these early migrants was that the Dutch government had abandoned them both 'economically and emotionally'.

THE VOYAGE ACROSS TO AUSTRALIA: BY SEA OR AIR

During the 1940s and 1950s, migration often meant saying a permanent farewell to family, friends and familiar places. Communication channels and chances of a trip home were limited. Waiting to be allocated a berth or an aeroplane flight was therefore a nerve-wracking time. Unlike Displaced Persons (DPs), who were accommodated in a variety of pre-embarkation camps around Europe, the Dutch migrants stayed at home until the day of departure.⁶¹ However, the days and weeks leading up to embarkation were very harrowing. They had to decide what to take and what to leave behind and how to placate their parents and siblings, who could not or would not fathom their decision to emigrate. Migrants recall feeling tense and emotional in the days before embarkation.



Figure 14
White Australia. Source, E.J. Stuart, *Land of Opportunity*, London 1923.



Figure 15
In 1961, Joyce Hillebrand (back row, 2nd right) is accepted as a migrant to Australia and her younger brother (right front row) is rejected by Australian migration officials. Courtesy: J. Hillebrand.



Figure 16
Information Booklet – Dutch Government.

Figure 17
Collage *Leaving the Netherlands*.
Courtesy: Peters Collection.

Most emigrants recall with vivid detail, the weepy farewell parties organised for them and usually attended by a plethora of friends and family. Dutch women will identify with the following sentiments:

Just woke up and immediately the realisation dawned on me that this is our family's last day in the Netherlands. Tomorrow we sail towards our new future. Loads to be done today....to be ready for the baggage contractor who will take us to the harbour tomorrow. This will save us a lot of time and trouble. Looking around to make sure I have not forgotten anything, I could not avoid my eye falling on the pram we will need to leave behind, even though all our ten children slept in it. I must stop myself thinking along such negative lines, after all it was us that chose to make this move - it wasn't forced upon us.⁶²

Some emigrants made a point of finding their own way to the harbour on the day of departure, in order to avoid any more highly charged emotional scenes and even chose shipping agencies who provided dedicated buses to transport emigrants to the wharf. Others, like the woman quoted above, hopped onto the truck with the removalist contractor they had hired to take their baggage to Rotterdam. However, for most people it was friends, family or neighbours who took them to the port or aerodrome. Farewells were sad occasions. The band commonly played sentimental songs and the family left behind on the wharf grieving their loss, would hang onto the streamers connecting them to their loved ones, until the force of passage cut them asunder.



In the early years, most Dutch migrants were transported to Australia by sea in converted troop carriers. Later some lucky migrants were given pleasurable trips on luxury liners, and had well-appointed cabins with ensuite. They could enjoy themselves on board and sunbathe, play deck-sports and swim in the pool. Moreover, on these particular ships their children were also cared for in the ship's nursery, which provided games, films and parties. In the evening adults could dance the night away to the strains of the ship's band.⁶³ People on the 'good trip' describe their voyage as 'the holiday they'd never had'.

In contrast passengers travelling on 'liberty ships', lived in cramped conditions without air-conditioning. Those on this 'bad trip' therefore wished never to repeat such a four week voyage again. In the worst case scenario, migrants could be sleeping in the hold with up to, and in some cases, over 100 other passengers. This was certainly the case for 'Displaced Persons'.

However in July 1949, I found myself, my mother Johanna, brother Eddie, great Aunt *Tante* Cor and her three children – Jan (John), Sjannie (Adriana) and Tony all sharing a dormitory with 40 Sicilian peasants on the Italian owned part-passenger/ part – freighter *MS Ugolino Vivaldi* of the Lloyd Triestino Line. We had missed our designated ship due to a bank teller's misinterpretation of a telegram, and this vessel was the only available ship that the Dutch Consul in Milan could find which was leaving Genoa for Fremantle the same week.

Dutch migrants will recall the names of the troop ships used to transport migrants, including the *Grote Beer*, *Zuiderkruis* and *Waterman*. A much better mid-range berth could be had on the *Volendam*, *Sibajak*, the *MS Oranje*, (this had been a hospital ship during WWII), its sister ship the *Willem Ruys* and the refurbished *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt*. Dutch were also allocated berths on non-Dutch ships, such as the *Fairsea*, *Fairsky* and *Aurelia*, and if they were really fortunate, were offered a cabin on a P&O liner, such as the luxurious *SS Himalaya* or *SS Arcadia*. Those travelling from the NEI to Australia will recall the *Maetsuyker*.

Whatever the ship, most young, single Dutch hold fond memories of the shipboard fun and romance, since the voyage to Australia took between four to six weeks, depending upon the route. In contrast, the journey for those Dutch coming straight from the NEI was only five days, the same time it took migrants to travel from Europe by aeroplane. The air trip at that time was lengthy and included refuelling and a couple of overnight stops.

Typically, the new life that the migrant sought began on the voyage across, when most migrants would discuss their expectations and fears with other travellers. However, basic shipboard conditions often made the first major impact upon the emigrants. For example, working class families, who pre-embarkation had been 'making do' on severe food rationing, recall feeling overwhelmed by the wide selection of food on offer on the refurbished *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt*. Even the table prepared for small children, seemed to sport everything that children would find appealing. Stewards seeing the

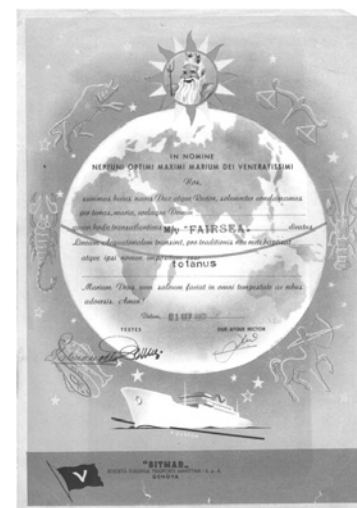
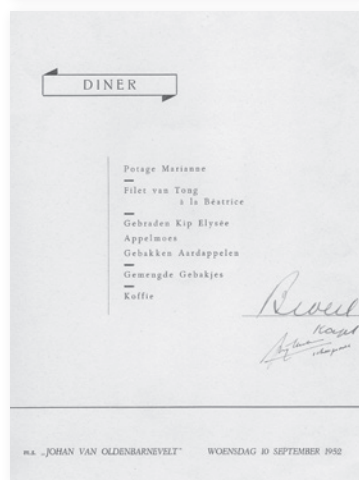
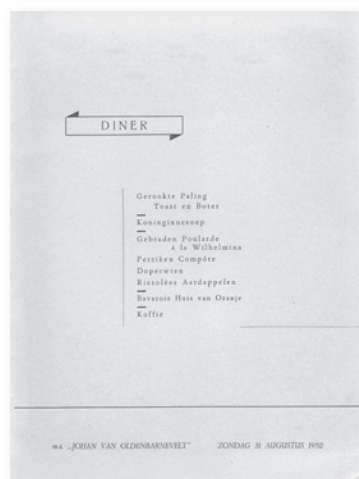


Figure 18
Crossing the Line Certificate *MS Fairsea*.
Courtesy: Totanus family.



Figure 19
George van Beek on board the ship to Australia aged 4 years. Courtesy: van Beek Family.



discomfort in the face of such abundance, had often to urge emigrants to ‘help themselves’.⁶⁴ However, the experiences were not all positive. From personal experience, the Peters and Berens children, for whom the Dutch Consul in Milan had found berths on an Italian ship, recall all piling up our plates with ‘cherries’. Great unhappiness followed when these proved to be olives! We had never before tasted foods from other nations. Such a change to eating a broader variety of foods developed quite rapidly among emigrants and Australians, once we were later living among the diverse ethnic groups that made Australia our home after WWII.

However, interest in food often waned during the first days of the voyage, especially if the sea was turbulent, as was often the case in the Bay of Biscay. Ships plying the Cape of Good Hope route, which many did whenever the Suez Canal was closed, were often confronted with mountainous seas as they passed around the Cape. The more the ship wallowed, the more people succumbed to seasickness and stayed in their cabins. Those who had found their ‘sea legs’ would sit around the lounges or on deck in their life jackets and would feel their way around the ship holding onto the ropes, provided to ensure their safety. Crashing crockery was a common sound on such voyages. Eating soup was a challenge, as it would slop from side to side in the bowl — you just had to wait with your spoon for the ship to list to the other side, and in doing so your spoon would automatically fill with soup. Crossing the Red Sea in ships without air conditioning was also patently uncomfortable, and many passengers on ‘liberty ships’ spent this segment of their voyage sleeping on deck, to avoid oppressively hot and crowded cabins.⁶⁵ This was not, however, always with the support of the crew! It also meant that people spent a great deal of time together on the deck, speculating about the new future they would shortly encounter.

Shipboard Information/Escort Officers were employed by the Dutch Government, to pave the way to transition for the migrants from one culture and set of living conditions to another, and from the expectation they had generated, to face the reality they had to confront. This was an enormous task because as the Dutch officer Mr H.P. Francissen on the *Grote Beer* noted:

In my candid opinion the information these people receive in Holland is far from satisfactory. They are entirely without practical knowledge about the country in which they hope to make a new start in life.⁶⁶

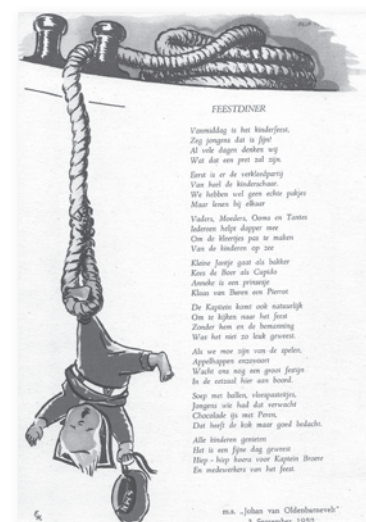
A response from the then Minister for Immigration Mr Harold Holt, that appeared in *The Argus* on 4 August 1951, was his instruction to his staff at the Department of Information to paint a ‘grimmer picture’ in propaganda booklets about Australia, as the current literature was giving people the wrong impression.⁶⁷

Unlike the Displaced Persons (DPs) whose countries had disappeared behind the ‘Iron Curtain’, Dutch migrants could go back if they so desired, providing of course, that they could raise the travel funds to pay the return voyage and were prepared to take the ‘loss of face’ and ‘on the chin’ that their

jeering relatives and friends would often impose. According to estimates, up to 25 per cent returned for good. However, for some it was the beginning of a roller coaster career that would leave disgruntled children on both home and host-land shores. Even so, that still means 75 per cent of Dutch emigrants to Australia made a go of it. More of their story about arrival and resettlement is told in Section IV.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Duyker, E., *The Dutch in Australia*, AE Press, Melbourne, 1987; Elich, J.H., *De Omgekeerde Wereld: Nederlanders als Ethische Groep in Australië*, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1985; Velthuis, K., 'The Dutch in NSW, A Thematic History', Johnstone Centre Repo. 201, Charles Stuart University, Albury, 2005; Birkhead, W., *De Iutocht uit Indie 1945-1995*, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 2001; Hofstede, B. P. *Thwarted Exodus*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhof 1964; Blauw, P. *Explanations of Post-war Dutch Emigration to Australia*, in Peters, 2006, pp.168-183.
- 2 I was awarded this 5 year Curtin University Senior Postdoctoral Research postion 2005-2010, to research the Dutch in Australia from 1606-2016.
- 3 The research is based on oral history interviews with Dutch Australians for my PhD on migrant self-employment (UWA 2000), my postdoctoral research project: 'Footsteps of the Dutch in Australia' (Curtin University 2005-2010) and various grant projects including 'The Dutch in Western Australia', which attracted a Community Grant from Lotterywest (2004). The interview data are contextualised with reference to archival documentation relating to Dutch maritime, military, migration and mercantile connections with Western Australia since the outbreak of WWII in the Asia Pacific in December 1941 and its aftermath in Europe and the region.
- 4 Peters, N., *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, UWA Press, 2006.
- 5 The focus group discussions were led by Kim Negenman a Dutch researcher from the Free University Amsterdam. Her research was assisted by the accommodation she was offered by Nell Ottenhoff and the Wieman family in Cannington. The focus group sessions were attended by Elisabeth Baggen, J.E. Bunning, Catherine Chatfield-van der Klau-Rykers, Maria van den Dries, Cecilia H. Dusseldorp, Maartje Essers, Louise Goodheart, Johanna Hart, Gre Hiemstra, An Hotz, Jannie Kuper, Maria Lindén, Marijke Mulder-Wijbenga, Cornelia Anna Maria Smit, Corrie Toneman and Leny Wolfs.
- 6 Original Dutch version of this quote: Mijn man was een aannemer en naar de oorlog was het heel slecht in de bouw in Holland. Hij kon niet genoeg werk krijgen voor ons gezin, wat steeds groter werd in die tijd. En dat was dat hij probeerde in een jonger land, waar ze wel vakmensen nodig hadden.
- 7 Original Dutch version of this quote: Wij zijn hier heen gekomen...omdat het slecht was in Holland. En er was niks over na de oorlog.
- 8 Vanwege dezelfde tijd.....Het leek niks bijzonders meer in Nederland. Dus je denkt: "ik probeer het in Australië."
- 9 Original Dutch version of this quote: Uit hoofdzaak voor de kinderen zijn we hiernaar toegekomen, voor een beter bestaan.
- 10 <http://www.tacitus.nu/historical-atlas/population/benelux.htm>
- 11 <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/dutch-citizens-resist-nazi-occupation-1940-1945>; 105,000 out of 140,000 Dutch Jews were killed by the Nazi and an unknown number of Romany.
- 12 <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/zwangsarbeit/geschichte/auslaendisch/freiwillige/index.html.en>
- 13 http://www.naa.gov.au/naaresources/publications/research_guides/fedguide/chronology/chron17.htm 540 000 Australians had enlisted in 1939-45, compared to 417 000 in 1914-18, but fewer had died in action - 33 826, compared to nearly 60 000 in World War I. Prime Minister John Curtin died in office after an illness exacerbated by his efforts as wartime leader; the Commonwealth Government signed the United Nations Charter, becoming one of 51 founding members; Free hospital treatment in public wards was introduced; Commonwealth Employment Service established; War Service Land Settlement Scheme implemented.
- 14 <http://www.pnas.org/content/107/39/16757>: In the winter and spring of 1944 after a railway strike, the German Occupation limited rations such that people, including pregnant women, in the western region of The Netherlands, including Amsterdam, received as little as 400-800 calories/per day. http://www.verzetismuseum.org/museum/en/tweedewereldoorlog/kingdomofthenetherlands/thenetherlands/thenetherlands_june_1944may_1945/the_hunger_winter. The amount of food available on ration dropped steadily. More than 20,000 people died of starvation. The transport of coal from the liberated south also ceased. Gas and electricity were shut off. People chopped down trees and dismantled empty houses to get fuel.



Figures 20-24
Menu Cards and Programmes MS Johan van Oudenbarnevelt 1952. Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

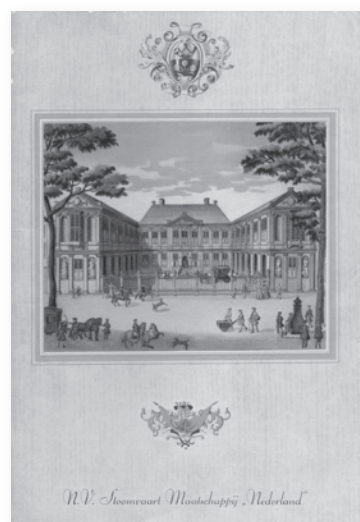


Figure 25
Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

- 15 This is worse for Dutch interned in Japanese POW and civilian internment camps in the Netherlands East Indies. Treating the psychiatric illnesses these wartime trauma caused is complicated by the lack of understanding in the wider community of the nature of the experiences.
- 16 Oosterman, 1975.
- 17 Hofstede 1964, 54; Bagley, C., *The Dutch Plural Society; Comparative Study in Race Relations*, London, 1973.
- 18 Kovacs and Cropley, 1975.
- 19 Hofstede 1964.
- 20 Elich, J. H. 1987, *Aan de Ene Kant Aan de Andere Kant: De Emigratie van de Nederlanders Naar Australië 1946-1986*, Delft: University Press 1987, 112-3 citing Elsevier 1950; Translated from the Dutch by N.Peters. The Dutch reads - Een deel van ons volk moet het aandurven zoals in vroeger eeuwen zijn toekomst te zoeken in grotere gebieden dan eigen land; Beijer, G. Frijda, N.H. Hofstede, B.P & Wentholt, R, 1961; Hofstee, E.W., *Some Remarks on Selective Migration*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952; Hofstede, 1964.; Elich, 1987, 112-113.
- 21 Emigration Offices around the Netherlands 1952, Courtesy Dutch Migration Organization cited in Elich, J.H. 1985.
- 22 Hofstede, 1964, 54.
- 23 The Sydney Morning Herald, 5 July 1939.
- 24 NAA, Acc. No.MP1308, Department of Labour, Central Office, Management Services Branch, Central Registry, Correspondence Files, Annual single number series, 1953-. File No. 63/4377 Notes on the Commonwealth Government's Immigration programme, p.1.
- 25 Walker-Birkhead, W., 'A Dutch Home in Australia: Dutch Women's Migration Stories' in *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, N. Peters, Coordinating Author, UWA Press 2006.
- 26 Jupp, J. *Australians from 1939*, Vol 5, 1988; Jupp, J. (ed.) 'Immigration Since the Second World War' in *The Australian People: Encyclopaedia of the Nation its People and their Origin*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1988.
- 27 Wilton, J and Bosworth, R., *Old Worlds New Australia*, Melbourne, 1984.
- 28 Jupp, J., *From White Australia to Woomera*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 18.
- 29 Beijer et al 1961, 1952; Hofstede, 1964.
- 30 Beijer et al, 1961: Recorded 'a better future for their children' as the most cited reason for 'leaving the Netherlands' among the sample they surveyed. They also claimed that 51 per cent of their (male) emigrant respondents were 'energetic, active, enterprising, independent', 16 per cent were 'gentle, easy going, domestic' and 5 per cent were 'hard, very individualistic, 'self-assured' individuals. Characteristics, which seem to be less helpful for emigrants, they claim were less often found. Only 10 per cent were described as 'full of unsolved personality conflicts or difficulties', 5 per cent as 'dependent, rather weak' and 3 per cent as 'indolent, or lazy'.
- 31 Cited by Joed Elich, 1987, 85.
- 32 Elich 1985; Beijer, Frijda, Hofstede & Wentholt, *Characteristics of Overseas Migrants*, 1961, 190-5; Hempel, J.A. 1960. *Dutch Migrants in Queensland*. Canberra : Australian National University. 31,38; Beltz, C., Dutch Migration to Australia, 1946-1961. Unpublished Thesis. Canberra: Australian National University, 1964.
- 33 Beijer et al, 1961, 196, 193.
- 34 Hempel 1960, 38; Beijer et al 196, 190-5.
- 35 *ibid.*
- 36 The Dutch quote reads: Ik ben de enigste van mijn familie die vooruit is gegaan en vader vond dat het ergste. Want ik heb nooit mijn moeder gekend, ik was vier jaar toen mijn moeder stierf. Dus mijn vader was alles voor ons. Maar mijn man ging naar Australië, dus...waar je man is, is je gezin, dus we gingen weg omdat we hier een beter leven hadden voor de vijf kinderen en heeft hij ook echt gedaan. Ze zijn allemaal goed terechtgekomen. Ik heb 12 kleinkinderen en 12 achterkleinkinderen. Dus we hebben Australië bevolkt!
- 37 Wentholt et al, 1961, 9.
- 38 Australia Dutch League (ADL) Newsletter, Christmas, 1954, 7.
- 39 Armit, M., Immigration Snapshot, in *Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (BIMPR) Bulletin*, Canberra, August, 1988, 30.
- 40 Appleyard, R.T., 'The Economic Absorption of Dutch and Italian Immigrants into Western Australia 1947 to 1955', *R.E.M.P. Bulletin* 4:3 (1956), 45-54, 48. Because N.G.A.S was administered and financed by the Netherlands Government the Commonwealth could not direct these immigrants to employment. The job placement of N.G.A.S immigrants was arranged by agreement with the Netherlands Emigration Offices, attached to Netherlands Consulates. In Australian cities in conjunction with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). These migrants made arrangements with the Netherlands Emigration Office regarding repayment of their travel costs

although the Commonwealth allowed them to use its facilities at the Reception and Training Centres. However, the Netherlands Emigration Office was charged for these services.

- 41 Bagley 1973, 34.
- 42 *ibid*: However, the Commonwealth Government retained the right to limit the selection of specific classes of workers as this scheme was related to employment vacancies in Australia.
- 43 'The Australian Women's Weekly', Wednesday 13 March 1957, 2.
- 44 Appleyard, 1956, 48.
- 45 Appleyard, 1956, 49.
- 46 Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council, (CIPC) Minutes, 1968, 63.
- 47 Velthuis 2004, 14.
- 48 Beltz, C., 1964.
- 49 The Netherlands Government had also restricted the amount of Dutch currency that could be taken out of the country, as it needed to finance reconstruction and development programs.
- 50 S.T., interview, 1998.
- 51 National Archives Australian (NAA) 445/1, Item 178/1/4: Settlement in Australia of Dutch Ex-Servicemen at present serving in Indonesia.
- 52 The Koninklijke Nederlandse Indische Leger (KNIL) - Royal Dutch Indonesian Army.
- 53 The CIPC Minutes, 1968.
- 54 Thom Dercksen, interview 1995.
- 55 AA 434/1, Item 50/3/43768: From a letter written by the Secretary of the Department of Immigration in Canberra to the Chief Migration Officer (CMO) in Perth on 3 July 1947, outlining the procedures to follow to determine racial origin.
- 56 Eijbsbertse, D. & M. *Where Waters Meet*, Melbourne, 1997, 91: Exhibition catalogue, W. Willemsen, 'Breaking Down the White Wall: The Dutch From Indonesia' in Nonja Peters (ed) *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, Perth, 2006, 132-149.
- 57 *The Canberra Times* 5 December 1958, 3.
- 58 *ibid*, 2 May 1963, 1.
- 59 Julien, R., '*The Dutch in Tasmania: An Exploration of Ethnicity and Immigrant Adaptation*'. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts: University of Tasmania, 1989, 193: In her study of a Dutch construction company in Tasmania, Julien also noted that assisted middle and upper-middle class Dutch nationals who had been successful businessmen in Indonesia gained jobs immediately in the financial centres of Melbourne and Sydney with agencies of the same companies they had been employed by in Indonesia. Hendrick later established his own shipping transport company.
- 60 Peters, N., '*Trading Places: Greek, Italian, Dutch and Vietnamese Enterprise in Western Australia*', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia 2000.
- 61 Peters, 2001.
- 62 Zubrzycki, J., *Settlers of the Latrobe Valley*, Canberra, 1964, 193-4.
- 63 Rademakers, P., '*A Migrant Family in Western Australia*', unpublished memoirs, 1988.
- 64 Zubrzycki, 1964.
- 65 Peters, 2001, 92.
- 66 *ibid*
- 67 *The Argus*, 4 August 1951; Beijer et al, 1961, 54, contends that the severe social and economic dislocation that followed the war and occupation had, in the Netherlands, created a state of anomie, which even in the late 1940s continued to pervade Dutch society and was expressed in a loss of a sense of collective security and self-confidence. He describes a 'lost generation' (aged between 17 and 25 years when war broke out) whose development was especially disturbed by the war and when, after the war, their lofty and idealistic expectations, so natural at that age, could not be fulfilled they went into a kind of concealed isolation: 'which,' he contends, 'was expressed 'inter alia', in an increasing lack of interest in politics, an 'ohne uns' (without us) attitude that even extended into religion and culture.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE HERVORMDE KERK IN PERTH

Jan Pritchard



Figure 1
Kerkeraad (Church Council) Standing, L. to R. Unidentified, Mr. Van Andel, Wim de Bruyn, Mr Kardol, Unidentified, Mr. van Beem.

Sitting, Dirk van Bruchem, Dien Smit (Deaconess), unidentified, Anje Bargerbos, Ds Maarten Bonting, Hero de Blank, Niek Vonk, Mr Nortier, Kees Mos, unidentified (Henk), Mr Bergsma. Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

In Western Australia, recently arrived members of the Dutch Hervormde Kerk were most often affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. However, during the peak years of Dutch migration to WA 1952-1964, it was also usual for the Hervormde Kerk in the Netherlands to send Dutch clerics here to take care of their rapidly growing Australian flock. Ds Maarten Bonting, who arrived here in 1953, was the first cleric sent to Western Australia on a five year appointment.

Ds Bonting's first undertaking in WA was to negotiate to use the Assembly Hall of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Pier Street, Perth, to hold Hervormde Kerk services in the Dutch language. It became the central meeting place, accessible by public transport, since in the early years of resettlement few migrants owned their own transport. During those first years as many as 250 people attended the church services.

Ds Bonting's role as cleric was extremely demanding since the newcomers were unsettled, some even very homesick. For some, it was said, the weekly sermon gave them the courage to go forwards. Many had little knowledge of the English language or of social and workplace customs, beliefs and values. Ds Bonting therefore had to be a counsellor as well as advisor, dealing with many resettlement problems. Furthermore, since many migrants were sent to work in country towns under the policy of decentralisation, Ds Bonting had also to keep in touch at least twice a year with these Dutch, by visiting towns as far away as Albany to provide them with church services.

He also organised for lists of migrants belonging to the Hervormde Kerk who were arriving on ships. Members of the congregation went to the ships, especially if a ship berthed on the weekend, and invited the newcomers to their homes or to stay in caravans in their backyards. The church had become a good starting point, a place to which they could turn.

A Ladies' Guild was formed that met once a month at Mrs Bonting's house, coming all day and bringing their own lunch. They made articles for the yearly Fete including children's clothes, baskets, playpens and surf boards. Mrs Bonting was an excellent craftswoman. The Church Elders were kept very busy too, making regular visits to parishioners. Ds Bonting was very good at delegating the work where required.

Bible study was held in Kalamunda in a greengrocer's shop. A church choir, led by organist Niek Vonk, met on Tuesday nights and practised in St. Andrew's church. Mrs de Boer became the Deaconess to keep in contact with the women, many of whom were homesick and suffering deeply from missing their families. Three church women, Gre Hiemstra, Geer van Geest



Figure 2
Kerk Flyer. Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

and Sophia Vonk visited the sick in hospital and helped where needed with their housework.

Henk Koning established a 'Jonge Kerk' (Young Church) for the twenty year olds, held at a private house. The younger teenage members 14-20 year olds, formed a club called the 'Boomerang'. They organised outings, picnics and bible readings. The highlight of their year was an annual camp held at Coogee beach. Another congregational activity was organising Sunday School classes for the various primary school-age groups and Catechism classes for teenagers and young adults preparing for Confirmation.

At the end of his appointment, Ds Bonting and his family returned to the Netherlands and were replaced by Ds Chris Mackaay, with his wife Siep and six children. The congregation moved to West Perth, sharing the facilities of Ross Memorial Presbyterian Church. In turn, Ds Mackaay was followed by Ds Fred Zuiderduyn in 1963 and the congregation moved to St Margaret's Presbyterian Church in North Perth.

As the younger groups communicated with each other in English and spread into the Australian community, the need for services in Dutch gradually faded. The older generation, however, enjoyed occasional services in Dutch (held by the Rev. Nick Stuurstraat and later by Ton van Doorn) until the 1990s. Many of the friendships that were formed in those early years were enduring – they still remain into the present.



Figure 3
The Hervormde Kerk Choir at St. Andrews Church. Niek Vonk playing the organ.

Back row, L. to R. Joop Witkamp, Unidentified, Dick Soet, Tony Paschier, Roel Venema, Joop Soet, Arie Kardol, Niek Niewenhuyzen, Jack Noorderwier.

Middle Row, Astrid Kardol, Jenny Protzman, Corrie Swaan, Mar van Tuyl, Sophia Bonting.

Front Row, Unidentified, Sophia Vonk, Siska Swaan, Gre Hiemstra, Betty Bargerbos, Unidentified. Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.



Figure 4
Confirmation Group (Day of being confirmed formally as members of the Church)

Back row, L. to R. Jennie Protzman, Jeanette van Tuyl, Unidentified, Willy de Boer, Roel Venema, Ds Mackaay.

Front Row, Henk Wynhorst, Frans Eigenraam, Cor van Bruchem Piet Stolp, Koos van Bruchem, Leen van Anandel, Arnold Giltay. Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

Figure 5
Soccer Team, made up mainly of girls from the "Young Church" group. The coach was Theo Spanjers and they played on Sundays, on the Tricolore Ground. Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

BOOMERANG CHURCH YOUTH CLUB

Jan Pritchard



Figure 1
Camp at Coogee beach

Back row, L to R. Bas Wynhorst, Hans Mackaay,
Middle Row, Cor van Bruchem, Maaïke Brands, Nicky Diepeveen
Front Row, Adrie Schokker, Dick Kardol, Willy van Heyst, Jannie Bargerbos, Helene de Boer.
Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.



Figure 2
Coogee Camp, 1962

Back Row, Helene de Boer and Gerrit Schut
Middle Row, L. to R. Nicky Diepeveen, Maaïke Brands, Peter Meinema
Front, Jannie Bargerbos. Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.



Figure 3
Coogee Camp
Dick Kardol, Bas Wynhorst, Nicky Diepeveen, Helene de Boer.
Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

During the later Fifties and early Sixties, The Boomerang Youth Club was central to the social life of twenty or more teenagers. Most were working full time by the age of sixteen, and parents were strict, so that the weekly club night at a North Perth church hall, was a great escape. The teenagers understood and supported each other – all had experienced broken educations and resettlement problems. Club nights were for confidences, for whinging about parents, but above all for having fun. They played cards, or basketball, or made various plans, and it was more than difficult to call them to order for any formal part of the evening.

At one stage they put on an evening of skits for the congregation. There was, for instance, a shadow play for which a sheet was put up, behind which doctors performed an operation by pulling strings of sausages from the abdomen of a recumbent patient. There were hula girls, and the song ‘*Kissing and Hugging with Fred*’ was enacted, not to mention the creepy song, ‘*An old woman stood by the churchyard door*’.

On weekends, especially on Sunday afternoons after church, smaller groups of friends hung out with each other at home or took off to the hills or the beaches. Freedom grew when some of the boys acquired cars, motorbikes or scooters. Five of the boys formed a band ‘*The Boomerang Five*’ with John van Heyst and Peter Meinema on guitar, Hans Mackaay on bongo drums, Frans Eijgenraam played the mouth organ and Gerry Schut played base on a tea chest. They played songs by the *Kingston Trio*, by the *Brothers Four* and by *Peter, Paul and Mary*. Only one public gig resulted, but by all accounts they were very well received.

By far and away the highlight of the Boomerang Year was the annual camp at Coogee Beach, held on the long weekend in January. Two tents, one for the boys and one for the girls, were erected in the sand dunes. Amateur cooking of tinned food was done by roster, in the open. The results were generally pronounced to be too salty, or too sweet, or tasteless. The after-effects of baked beans provided a recurring motif. Cold showers were available in the ablution block at the beach, but mostly everyone was encrusted with sand, salt and sunburn cream.

The group was warned at the beginning that whatever went on during the year, all were to avoid causing scandal for this weekend, or the church would ban future camps. There was little point in the warning, since unrequited crushes on each other were suffered by nearly all, and the most popular songs of the day shared in the heart-felt woe. Like stranded dolphins they lay on the beach, and sang about the ‘*Ninety-nine ways of losing the blues*’ or ‘*Oh, lonesome me*’, or ‘*Oh yes, I’m the great pretender*’. It was a great time.

The best part of the weekend was the spooky game that was played in the sand dunes at night – in the dark. There were two teams. One team hid a lantern and posted guards and the other team split up to search for and capture the lantern. The guards took prisoners if anyone came within reach of a touch on the shoulder. Each game could take hours until the lantern was found or until the whole searching team was in jail. It was possible for a game to end inconclusively if a pair of searchers got happily lost. On one occasion a guard stood up and waved the lantern as a way of shaking off one of the unrequited.

By Monday afternoon, no one had had more than a few hours sleep and everyone looked bedraggled. One girl making her exhausted way home with a badly packed suitcase was picked up by the police for being a suspected runaway. They took quite a bit of convincing. But more than fifty years later those camps are still the subject of fond reminiscences by old friends.

In spite of all the emotional tangles, only two pairs of members married, Helene de Boer married Peter Meinema, and Adrie Hiemstra married Cor van Bruchem.



Figure 4
Coogee Camp tents, 1962.

Hans van Heyst, Arnold Giltay, Jerry Schut.
Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.

Figure 5
Coogee Camp

Front Row (L to R): Nicky Diepeveen, Helene de Boer

Second Row: Wim Schokker, Corrie Swaan, Willy van Heyst, Jannie Bargerbos, Adrie Schokker

Third Row: Piet Stolp, Maaïke Brands.

Back Row: Hans Smit, Theo Swaan, Bill Swaan, Hans Mackaay, Dick Kardol, Henk Wynhorst, Bas Wynhorst, Cor van Bruchem.
Courtesy: Jan Pritchard.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE FREE REFORMED COMMUNITY IN
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**Aart Plug**

My name is Aart Plug, and I am 66 years old. I was born in Australia, of Dutch parents and grew up bilingual; I am still fluent in Dutch as well as English. I married a Friesian girl named Idske Broersma, and we have four children and seven grandchildren. We live in Armadale, and belong to the Free Reformed Church. I am a curriculum development officer at the John Calvin School, also in Armadale. My contribution will focus on the story of the Free Reformed community in WA, and especially on the story of the John Calvin Schools, and the people who were directly involved in establishing them.

My family came to Western Australia in August 1950 and settled in Albany. I was born almost exactly nine months later. In fact, if I've done my sums right, my personal story probably starts on board the *M/S Sibajak*, somewhere in the Red Sea, between Port Said and Aden!

When I arrived, our family was not living in a tent anymore (we had been, for the first few months), but the house we lived in was a makeshift shack in the middle of a paddock along the Perth Road, and it still had the tent as a roof. There was no room – and no money – for a cradle, so for the first few months of my life I was put to sleep in the top drawer of the chest of drawers next to my parents' bed.

The Plugs came as an extended family, consisting of my father, Jan Plug, with his wife and children, along with three of his brothers and two sisters (some with families, some not), and my widowed grandmother, a total of 27 people.

The Plugs came from Katwijk, on the North Sea coast of Holland, and had been fishermen for generations. My father and his brother Dirk intended to start up a fishing business along the south coast of WA. They brought along boats, a truck and other equipment. As things turned out, the venture never got off the ground; my father went into business in Albany, and my uncle Dirk moved to the Perth area. Together with his boys, he went fishing off the west and north-west coast of WA. Right up to the present, the name Plug is still quite well known in the WA fishing and marine industries.

In the Netherlands, our families had belonged to a branch of the Reformed Churches, and we took a strong faith, and a strong sense of faith community with us. This was reinforced by the fact that we had been involved in a fairly traumatic split within the Reformed Churches in the old country in the mid-1940s. Rather than joining existing churches within the Australian community, immigrant families that shared our religious tradition tended to draw together, and it wasn't long before the Free Reformed Churches were formed. These churches have grown in the past sixty years. From two small

congregations in the early 1950s, one in Albany and one in Armadale, there are now 14 congregations with some 3500 members spread throughout the South-West of the state. We see ourselves as fully Australian, but with a Dutch flavour.

The Reformed tradition has a very distinctive view on education. To begin with, it strongly believes that it is parents, first and foremost, who are responsible for the education of their children. In addition, there is a conviction that education at school and upbringing at home needs to be consistent with the shared faith of the church community. It did not take very long for associations of parents – Free Reformed School Associations – to be set up, and schools to be established. I myself was a student at the John Calvin School in Albany when it opened in 1962.

At first, the John Calvin Schools were small and spartan. They were completely paid for by the Church communities – there was no Government funding. It is a measure of how important Christian education was to these parents that they were willing to make very substantial sacrifices to help make it happen. At the time, there were no other parent-controlled schools anywhere in WA, and the broader community tended to view those “Dutchies” with bemusement and sometimes a degree of irritation or suspicion.

In the meantime, of course, attitudes have changed. There are any number of Christian and other independent schools in the state, largely funded by the State and Commonwealth, and we ourselves have grown too. Right up to the present, most children of Free Reformed families attend the John Calvin Schools, and most members of the Free Reformed community – even those who do not or no longer have school-age children – support the school associations. I myself have spent most of my adult life as a teacher – and a number of years as Principal – at various John Calvin Schools. Speaking as a Christian, and as a member of the Free Reformed community, I recognize God’s blessings in what we have experienced and have been able to do, and I am thankful for that.

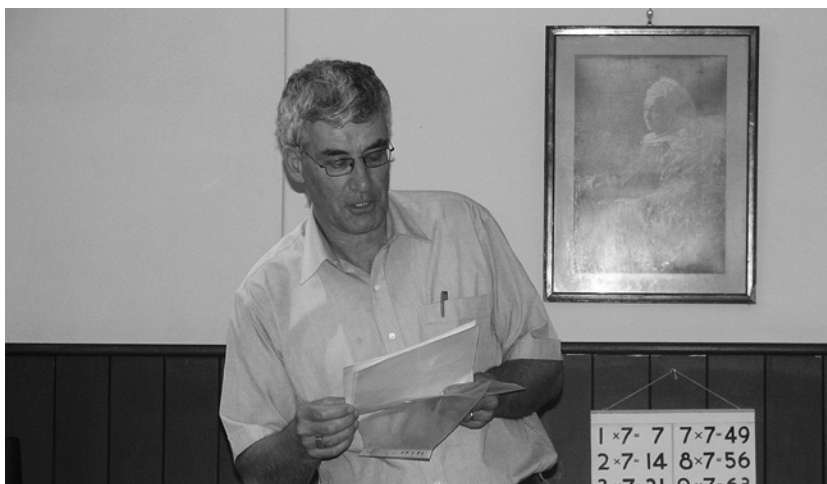


Figure 1
Aart Plug - Calvin School Armadale.
Courtesy: Aart Plug.

CHAPTER TWENTY

DOUBLE DUTCH – THE DUTCH LANGUAGE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Anne Pauwels

INTRODUCTION

The Dutch have a longstanding reputation for individual bilingualism and even multilingualism. Their knowledge of other languages is mainly a result of school-based language learning, combined with regular contact with other speech communities. The main languages learnt in the Dutch education system were and continue to be English, German, French and Spanish. More recently, some immigrant languages such as Turkish, Arabic and Berber, as well as the languages associated with former colonies, have been added to this list, as Extra and Verhoeven point out in their 1993 study of community languages in the Netherlands.¹ However, the latter are usually studied only by the children of immigrants. In addition, since the Netherlands is a small country with only one neighbour sharing the same language (Flanders in Belgium), regular and extensive contact with other speech communities is not only a given, but also increasingly necessary in a globalising world. Indeed, contact with other languages has a long tradition in the Netherlands dating back to the Seventeenth Century, Holland's 'Golden Age' as a world seafaring nation. During that era, a considerable number of Dutch seafarers and traders from all walks of life came into contact with other languages and often learnt a smattering of these languages. Like other seafaring nations, the Netherlands established settlements and colonies around the world in which Dutch came to play a significant role as the main language for trade and administration, or even as the official language. In some regions, the contact between the indigenous people and the Dutch traders and colonists also led to the development of pidgins and later, Creole languages such as Berbice Dutch, which is spoken in Guyana.

Early Dutch contact with Australia, and later, the settlement of many post-war migrants from the Netherlands, gave rise to a very different linguistic story for Dutch in Australia. It is this story that I present in this chapter through the elaboration of three themes. The first theme traces the linguistic footprints that early Dutch explorers left on the Australian landscape, with a focus on the toponymy or incidence of Dutch place-names in the region of Western Australia. The second theme of the chapter, 'leaving Dutch behind — from bilingualism to monolingualism in one generation', examines the question of language ecology in relation to the Dutch community in Australia; that is, the development of the language spoken by Dutch people as they interacted with their environment. In this part of the chapter, I discuss the language practices of Dutch migrants and their children in Western Australia and outline the consequences for the future of the Dutch language. I will compare the evolution of the Dutch language in WA with the language practices of Dutch migrants in other parts of Australia as well as with those

of other migrant groups. The third theme of this chapter, ‘Double Dutch’, deals with the linguistic features characteristic of the Dutch language in Western Australia. Here I discuss the consequences of long-term contact with English on the Dutch spoken by Dutch migrants and their offspring. The final section offers some concluding remarks about the fate of the Dutch language in Western Australia.

THE LINGUISTIC FOOTPRINTS OF DUTCH EXPLORERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE

Dutch seafarers were among the first westerners to explore the coasts of and waters around *Nieuw Holland* (*New Holland*), later to be named Australia. Other chapters in this book deal more extensively with this aspect of early Dutch-Australian connections. Here I would like to highlight briefly the linguistic footprints that these Dutch explorers left in Australia, particularly in Western Australia, as a result of their navigations around the coastline and their brief explorations of the region. To date there has been limited research on Dutch toponymy in Australia, although Dr Jan Tent has written some brief reports on Dutch placenames in Australia.² He distinguishes between Dutch placenames, which were coined by Dutch explorers and those, which are named in honour of Dutch explorers.³ It is not always straightforward to know which placename belongs in which, category.

Most remnants of the Dutch explorations around the coastline of Australia are primarily of a toponymic nature: placenames and names like *Cape Leeuwin*, *Batavia Coast*, *Hartog Island*, *Duyfken* are well-known and recognised by many people as linked to Dutch explorers and their ships. Names like *Rottnest Island*, *Swan River*, *Red Bluff*, *Turtledove Island* are less likely to be linked to Dutch exploration or recognised as linguistic footprints of the Dutch. This is because they have been subjected to linguistic conversion processes. The likely origins of *Rottnest* are the Dutch words *rat* and *nest*, coining the name for the island, a *rattennest*, based on the abundant presence of the quokkas — rat-like creatures — on this island. Names like *Swan*, *Red Bluff* and *Turtledove Island*, none of which are recognised as Dutch words, are the result of direct translations from the early Dutch names, *swaen* or *swane* for the Swan River, *Rode Houck* for Red Bluff and *Tortelduyf Eylandt* for Turtledove Island. Besides such placenames coined by Dutch explorers (albeit translated later or even replaced by other names), there are a number of Dutch-linked and Dutch-based placenames named after or in honour of Dutch expeditions or explorers. The West Australian town of *Guilderton* is said to have been named after the Dutch ship *Gulden Draek* — Gilt Dragon — which had lost a fortune in guilders when it sank off the coast of Western Australia near the

Moore River. Another example is the township of *Leeman*, named after the under-steersman on the ship *Waeckende Boey* — Watchful Buoy — which was sent to recover the shipwreck of the *Gilt Dragon*.

More recent influences of Dutch on English in Australia are linked to the considerable number of Dutch migrants (more than 100,000) to Australia after the Second World War. They pertain primarily to the foods that these migrants brought with them: this includes *drop* (liquorice), *bitterballen* (a type of cheese/meat croquet), *poffertjes* (very small pikelets fried in oil), *speculaas* (a type of gingerbread) and the cheeses *Gouda* and *Edam*. However, with the exception of *Gouda* and *Edam*, most of these food-related words are not known by Australians in general, only by Dutch-Australians or those associating with them. This is very different from the impact other migrant groups such as the Italians and Greeks have made on the culinary vocabulary of Australians: the Dutch culinary words listed above are no match for those brought to Australia by Italian migrants — *pizza*, *espresso*, *cappuccino* — by Greek migrants — *souvlaki*, *baklava* — and by many other groups. Clearly the culinary habits of the post-war Dutch migrants did not raise the same interest as those of other migrant groups! In sum, Dutch linguistic footprints are quite minimal: in

Figure 1

'This is called a foot.'

Child evacuees from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) learning English at Fairbridge Farm School, Pinjarra - during their sojourn in Western Australia for rehabilitation after three years in Japanese Internment camps in Java during WWII.

Courtesy: *Western Mail* 1946.



the case of the early Dutch explorers, the explanation probably lies in the fact that they considered Australia to be of little commercial value and were fully focused on reaching the Netherlands East Indies.

LEAVING DUTCH BEHIND: FROM BILINGUALISM TO MONOLINGUALISM IN ONE GENERATION

Dutch migrants were well represented among the early post-war migrants to Australia. Although the majority of Dutch migrants came from the Netherlands to escape the economic ravages of the Second World War, a small contingent of Dutch-born migrants had moved to Australia from Indonesia following its independence from the Netherlands. It is estimated that at the height of post-war migration around 100,000 Dutch-born people settled in Australia. Dutch migrants were often held up as ‘model’ migrants in terms of their assimilation into post-war Australian society:⁴ a major element in this assessment was their willingness to adapt and their ability to learn English quickly. Early scholarly investigations have shown that many Dutch migrants had acquired (some) English soon after their arrival, resulting in a high degree of Dutch-English bilingualism compared to other post-war migrants from Europe. These investigations further revealed that soon after their settlement, Dutch-born migrants not only started using English in many public situations but also in private domains such as within the family and among (Dutch) friends. It seems that their early acquisition of English paved the way for a rapid shift away from Dutch to the exclusive use of English. In other words, their Dutch-English bilingualism proved to be transitional and rapidly gave way to the dominant and later exclusive use of English even among the Dutch-born generation. This is quite different from the language behaviour of other post-war migrants, who took longer to become bilingual and who have maintained a much higher level of bilingualism.⁵

In the following paragraphs I illustrate this remarkable and rapid shift from Dutch to English, by drawing upon the extensive language data pertaining to Australian Census surveys since 1976, as well as upon in-depth studies and surveys of the post-war Dutch community in Australia. Where possible and relevant I provide more specific details about the language behaviour of Dutch living in Western Australia. These data show that Dutch migrants spearhead language shift, with more than 60 per cent no longer using Dutch. Consequently only a very small per centage of their Australian-born children (less than 8 per cent) can or do use Dutch in Australia.

DUTCH LANGUAGE USE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA: A SHRINKING STORY

The first generation: Dutch-born migrants

In 1976 the Australian Census introduced for the first time a question about the use of languages in Australia. Later Census surveys (1986, 1991, 1996

and 2001) continued to include a question about language use, although the wording changed, making comparisons with the 1976 Census somewhat difficult. In 1976 the question sought information about the *regular* use of languages, whereas in later census surveys the question concerned *home* language use. Despite this rewording the inclusion of this question has allowed for a significant insight into the language ecology of Australia. In Table 1, I present data on the users of Dutch in Australia between 1976 and 2001.

Table 1: Users of Dutch in Australia

Census	1976	1986	1991	1996	2001
Australia-wide	64768	62181	47115	40770	40190
Rank based on speaker numbers	4	9	13	15	17
W.A.	7737	8272	6319	5591	5610
Rank	4	5	8	10	10

The Australia-wide figures show a significant reduction in the use of Dutch over a period of 25 years. Whereas Dutch ranked fourth in 1976 after Italian, Greek, German and French, it fell well outside the top ten languages other than English by 2001. The decrease in use was most dramatic between 1986 and 1991, falling by almost 25 per cent. The situation of Dutch in Western Australia is similar though not identical: although there is an overall decline in the number of Dutch speakers, the decline is less dramatic and less linear, with slight increases in 1986 and 2001. Furthermore, in Western Australia, Dutch continues to rank among the top ten languages used other than English. This is partly due to the fact that the more recent large-scale influx of migrants from Asia and Africa have not settled in Western Australia.

Although other community languages (Polish, German, Italian and Greek), which entered the Australian scene around the same time as Dutch have also suffered decreases, these have been less dramatic. For example, Italian continues to rank as the most widely used language other than English, despite dropping from approximately 445,000 users in 1976 to around 353,600 users in 2001. In the case of Greek, its use grew from around 263,000 users in 1976 to approximately 277,400 users in 1986, before decreasing to 270,000 in 1991 and to 264,000 in 2001. Greek continues to rank as the second most widely used community language in Australia.

The precarious situation of the Dutch language is further illustrated through data on language shift. Language shift refers to the process in which speakers of language A gradually abandon the use of language A, in favour of the exclusive use of language B. Although the process of language shift is common amongst most migrating communities, the rate at which the shift occurs can differ significantly from group to group. In comparison with most other migrant communities in Australia, the Dutch community registers a very high rate of language shift. In fact, the 2001 Australian Census revealed that 62.6 per cent of Dutch-born Australians spoke only English at home. This is the highest rate of language shift among overseas-born people. The second highest rate

of language shift is recorded by people born in Germany and Austria, with approximately 54 per cent speaking only English at home. The lowest shift rates are found among people born in Vietnam (2.4 per cent). Most post-war migrant groups have maintained more of their language than the Dutch: for example, those born in Greece register a 7.1 per cent language shift rate, those born in Italy 15.9 per cent and those born in Poland 22.3 per cent. In Table 2, the progressive increase in language shift among Dutch-born people in Australia and in Western Australia is documented. This shows that many Dutch-born people abandoned the use of Dutch soon after their arrival and switched to the use of English. Though the rate of language shift is somewhat lower for Western Australia than for Australia as a whole, the difference is too small to be significant.

Table 2: Percentage language shift among Dutch-born Australians

Census	1976	1986	1991	1996	2001
% LS -AUS	43.55	48.4	57.8	61.9	62.6
% LS W.A.	42.83	45.0	55.2	58.9	59.9

Studies on language use in the Dutch community have shown that English is a dominant presence in most community-related contexts such as clubs, societies and ethnic church services.⁶ For example, English is used extensively in many Dutch social and community organisations, despite the fact that they cater primarily (if not solely) for Dutch-born migrants. Formal and written forms of communication within these societies such as member correspondence, signs, agendas and minutes of meetings are almost exclusively in English. The language of formal meetings tends to be English, although individual members may use Dutch. The language of social activities in such settings is best characterised as extensive ‘code-switching’: that is, individuals switch between Dutch and English or mix both languages constantly even within a sentence. The use of Dutch in ‘ethnic’ church services varies according to religious denomination.

In comparison, clubs, societies and community organisations catering for other ethnic groups in Australia, tend to preserve a much greater role for the ethnic language in the formal and social conduct of their activities than do Dutch organisations.⁷

Most dramatic however, in terms of accelerating language shift, is the language use in the home. In-depth studies of the home language practices of Dutch migrants confirmed the findings of the census. They showed that many Dutch-born migrants spoke English in their homes, at least to their children and increasingly also to each other. The domain in which they have maintained Dutch best is that of friendship: when Dutch migrants (now mostly elderly) meet with their same-age Dutch friends, Dutch tends to be the preferred language. Their preference for Dutch in this context is said to be linked, to creating an atmosphere of Dutch cosiness known as *Gezelligheid*.



Figure 2
The ‘Klashorsts’ - A bilingual family - 1962.
They were the first Dutch Butcher in Perth.
Courtesy: Klashorst Collection.



Figure 3
English lessons at the Holden Migrant Camp in Northam c 1952. Courtesy: N. Peters Collection.

The second generation

The figures detailing the use of Dutch amongst the Australian-born children of Dutch migrants paint a picture of almost complete English monolingualism. The Dutch second generation also tops the list in terms of the rate of language shift. Table 3 documents the progressive increase in language shift rate among second generation Dutch, with a distinction between those children with two Dutch-born parents (endogamous) and those with only one Dutch parent (exogamous). Unfortunately, due to changes in the wording of the Census question on parental birthplace — only two options: ‘in Australia’ or ‘outside Australia’ were included — detailed language shift rates for the second generation could not be calculated beyond 1996.

Table 3: Percentage language shift among Australian-born offspring in Dutch endogamous and exogamous marriages

Census	1976	1986	1991	1996
% LS Endogamous	80.29	85.4	NA	91.9
% LS Exogamous	99.9	92.0	NA	96.9

The Census data for 1976 showed a more pronounced difference in language shift between the two groups (around 19 per cent). However, by 1996 this difference had almost disappeared, with both groups using very little Dutch in the home. Again, this rate is high in comparison with other groups: for the German second generation the respective figures in 1996 are 77 per cent (endogamous) and 92 per cent (exogamous), for Greek they are 16.1 per cent (endogamous) and 51.9 per cent, for Italian they are 42.6 per cent (endogamous) and 79.1 per cent (exogamous) and for Polish they are 58.4 per cent (endogamous) and 86.9 per cent (exogamous).

DUTCH AS A LANGUAGE OF THE ELDERLY

The Census data backed up by in-depth studies of language use in the Dutch community clearly point to Dutch being a language increasingly associated with the elderly. For example, Kipp, Clyne and Pauwels’ analysis of the 1991 Census noted that ‘the Dutch-speaking population in Australia is an ageing one, with 63 per cent aged over 45 years, and 26.6 per cent aged over 65.’⁸ With new migration from the Netherlands to Australia being negligible in numerical terms, and with an almost completely monolingual English-speaking second generation, the use of Dutch is confined largely to elderly Dutch migrants. Indeed, in the early 21st century, it is in nursing homes and retirement villages associated with the Dutch community that one hears and uses Dutch the most. As opportunities for studying Dutch at secondary and tertiary education level have almost completely disappeared (in fact it is no longer possible to study Dutch at an Australian university) it is unlikely that this pattern will change.

DOUBLE DUTCH – THE DUTCH LANGUAGE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

“Op het ogenblik is ‘t meer *sort of* van het, zoals ze zeggen, *Double Dutch*” [Translation: At the moment it is more like, as they say, Double Dutch].

This quotation by a Dutch-born immigrant is included in Clyne’s pioneering study of the Dutch language in Australia.⁹ The quotation not only illustrates the phenomenon of language contact, but also reveals that its users are aware of the changes in their use of Dutch. Although this awareness may not occur at the moment they utter the words, it is nevertheless present amongst most immigrants. Clyne’s study, together with other studies including those of Ammerlaan, Hoeks and Pauwels, have documented the diverse contact features occurring in the Dutch language spoken by Dutch migrants (and in some cases their children) in Australia.¹⁰ Transference from one language to another affects many levels of language and parts of speech. Sounds (phonology), intonation patterns (prosody), words (lexicon), meanings (semantics), forms and structures (morphology and syntax) as well as language use conventions and practices (pragmatics) can be subject to transfers from one language to another. A description of all these types of transfers is well beyond the scope of this chapter, and I refer the reader to more substantive descriptions of transference such as those of Clyne and Pauwels.¹¹ Here I provide some examples of lexical transfers. The examples given below are all taken from Pauwels’ 1980 study, except where stated. Before moving on to these transfer phenomena, it is important to note that Dutch migrants are not unique in displaying the effects of contact in their language. Similar features are also found in many other immigrant languages such as Italian, Greek, Hungarian, Vietnamese, French, German, and Chinese and have been described by numerous scholars.¹²

LEXICAL TRANSFERS – COMING TO GRIPS WITH A NEW ENVIRONMENT

When people migrate, they are confronted with many changes, including learning a new language, coming to grips with a new culture and its values, and settling into a new environment which is often very different from the one they left behind. It is not surprising then that they borrow words from their new language to name and describe the objects, concepts and experiences typical of their new environment. For example, for many Dutch migrants the Australian physical and cultural landscape was very different from the one they had known in the Netherlands; so rather than find translations for the new concepts, they simply borrowed the English words, for example: *weatherboard* huis, een (a) *ute*, een *gum tree*, de (the) *milkbar*, de *surf*, *bushwalking*, een *bottle shop*. Another source for borrowing English words was linked to their new work environment and experiences: in the initial settlement period many migrants were assigned specific jobs,



Figure 4
Children from various European countries – including the Netherlands – at the Holden Migration Camp, where they were keen to learn English so that they could communicate with each other.
Courtesy: *West Australian Newspapers* c1953.

which were unrelated to their training. As they were unfamiliar with the new types of work before they moved to Australia, they used the English terms and concepts to talk about them. Examples include *power station*, *supervisen*, *computer studies*, *de oxygen tent*, *een qualified hair-stylist*.

In other cases the use of transfers from English allows the migrant to make distinctions along cultural and regional lines. For example, although beaches, waterways, woods and roads are well-known concepts in Dutch, Dutch migrants often use their English equivalents when speaking Dutch in Australia, to stress the difference between Australian and Dutch versions of these concepts. The word *beach* will be used to describe a typical beach scene in Australia, whereas the word *strand* will be used when describing a beach in Holland or Europe. This also occurs frequently with the words *bos* and *bush*. Transfers from English into Dutch also happen because the speaker cannot remember the word or does not know the word. The former is more typical of first generation speakers who do not use much Dutch, and the latter typifies the second generation speaker who has a very limited knowledge of Dutch.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The linguistic history of the Dutch in Australia as detailed in this chapter is an interesting one. It shows that the Dutch can be said to be more pragmatic about language matters than many other groups and societies. The use of Dutch does not appear to be a core value for maintaining their identity in Australia. Indeed, throughout the period of contact with and settlement in Australia, making a linguistic impression on Australia has been peripheral to Dutch people. As a result there are very few linguistic remnants of the early contact period. As post-war migrants the Dutch focused their energies on linguistic integration, if not assimilation, as evidenced in the very high rates of language shift to English. These shift rates are continuing to rise, so that there is a limited future for the Dutch language in Australia. Nevertheless Dutch will continue to be used by small sections of aged-Dutch migrants and some recently arrived migrants. However, the current intake of Dutch migrants is very small, and is unlikely to increase significantly in the foreseeable future. Also, there is no evidence that the more recently arrived migrants behave markedly differently from post-war migrants in terms of language use. Perhaps the increased contact that second and third generation Dutch people have with the Netherlands through regular travel and extended periods of residence in the Netherlands, may lead to a small revival of Dutch in Australia in future years.¹³

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CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

ROLLER COASTER MIGRANTS

Anne Rietveld (nee Rijnders)

FOREWORD

Somewhere between 25 and 30 per cent of the original post-war Dutch migrants to Australia returned to the Netherlands. Some stayed and re-established a home there. Others seemed unable to make a permanent home on either shore. Anne Rietveld's story highlights the trauma of families who became embroiled in a 'roller-coaster' existence.

I (Anne) was born to Paulina and Arnold Rijnders Engelberts on 15 November 1939. At that time the family home was in *Hoograven*, a suburb on the outskirts of the city of Utrecht surrounded by small farms. The house we lived in as a family of six, was newly built when my parents moved in. It consisted downstairs of a lounge, dining room, kitchen and toilet, and upstairs there were two double bedrooms, two single bedrooms, a bathroom and attic, as well as a balcony off the main double bedroom. We also had a shed in the back garden.

Until I went there on a return visit in 2004, it had always figured in my mind's eye as a large house. This was soon quickly dispelled, when the current occupiers walked me around the various rooms of what now appeared to be a greatly diminished version of our old place. The visit also included the back garden where I had spent many happy hours, which was now locked to stop unwanted visitors entering. I had been very happy there and was utterly surprised when my parents decided to migrate to Australia.



Figure 1
Rijnders Family arrives in Fremantle
2 October 1952
Courtesy: Anne Rietveld.

Why they made the decision to leave is still a mystery to us – their children. Perhaps it was the aftermath of being in forced labour camps in Germany during the Nazi Occupation, and/or because the prospects for the future for their four children were not the best in the aftermath of war. Dad had a job!

We arrived in Fremantle 2 October 1952, just over a month before my thirteenth birthday; my siblings then aged fifteen, eight and five. Although we were booked to go to Melbourne on the *MS Fairsea*, it had been so traumatic - not at all like the holiday, which we were told we would have – so that when the opportunity presented itself, we disembarked instead at Fremantle. This was due in no small part to my father having contracted an eye infection that had induced temporary loss of sight. Consequently on disembarkation he was whisked off to Royal Perth Hospital (RPH). The rest of the family: my mother, sister and two brothers were placed on a bus taking newly arrived migrants to accommodation at the Holden Immigration Accommodation Centre in the Wheatbelt town of Northam. Most non-English speaking immigrants were sent to rural immigration facilities for processing, orientation and to be allocated employment in those years.

We had never heard of Northam and had no idea that it was 98 kilometres from Perth. The journey in the bus seemed endless. The further we travelled through the desolate looking countryside, the more the sense of adventure



Figure 2
Holden Migrant Camp, Northam –
2 October 1952 to 19 February 1953.
Courtesy: Anne Rietveld.



Figure 3
Graylands Hostel, Perth 1953
Courtesy: Anne Rietveld.



Figure 4
Anne – teacher of year 4/5 at West Morley
Primary School 1973-75
Courtesy: Anne Rietveld.

abandoned even us children, to be replaced instead by feelings of catastrophe. What had our parents been thinking of to bring us out here?

Northam accommodation was an even greater disappointment. I took one look and burst out crying. However, children are resilient and after leaving Holden camp to go to Graylands camp near Claremont, and therefore in the city, things started to take on a better hue, and my parents eventually sent me to Iona Presentation College in Mosman Park. On completion of my leaving, I was going to enrol into Teacher Training College, but there was continuous talk of my family going back to the Netherlands, especially by my mother. So I did not go to Teachers College and went to work as a clerk for *Rheem Australia* instead. Dad then decided that he would send my mum and younger sister Marlene for a holiday to the Netherlands, hoping this would settle her better into the Australian life upon her return. This idea was a success and when she returned from the Netherlands, Mum settled down well and told us children that we were better off in Australia!

I was married to Rex Edward Turner in St Columbas Church in South Perth on 23 February 1963. However in April 1963, just six weeks later, my parents told me they were going back to the Netherlands to live and were taking all my siblings with them. Even Paul, my eldest brother, who married Lennore in March 1963, was taking his Australian wife to live in the Netherlands. My other brother Julius, who was studying in Melbourne, would join them later. I had heard they had plans to go, but of course had hoped that they would stay, especially since their daughter was now married to an Australian and who had no intention of going to live in the Netherlands.

This news left me feeling unloved and abandoned as an outcast. My thought went back to the war years when the Nazis took my father away as forced labour in Germany. Shortly after he left, the Red Cross and the Catholic Relief fund sent me and my eldest brother Paul away. My mother, being pregnant and without the support of my father, was finding it very difficult to locate enough food for us children. We of course did not understand this, when we were put on a horse and carriage and sent to a farm to *Enschede*. On arriving at the farmhouse we discovered that the farmer only wanted one child – a boy – but according to my brother, who is three years older than me, I had no intention of letting my brother go anywhere without me! So the farmer reluctantly took in us both.

When my first child was born in December 1963, I experienced an overwhelming sense of loneliness. It was devastating not being able to share the joy of the occasion with my parents and siblings. I sent them telegrams and they replied with telegrams. But it is not the same as being able to show the baby and have them hold her. I found it hard to come to terms with the fact that having decided to come to Australia, which we children did not want, my parents were now willing to break up the family in reverse. I could appreciate how my sister felt when four years later, in October 1968, they again migrated to Australia, this time leaving my younger married sister behind in the Netherlands. This turned into another disaster, for only

two years later in January 1970, when my father became seriously ill, they decided to return to pursue treatment in the Netherlands – and so it went on.

After the birth of my fourth child, I went to Claremont Teachers College and graduated as a Primary School Teacher. My first class was a Year 4/5 at West Morley Primary School. I resigned from teaching when I was 8 months pregnant with my fifth child and then took up Accounting at Edith Cowan University.

My marriage to Rex was dissolved on 2 October 1995, and I remarried on 23 November 1997 to Peter Rietveld.

It is not only the children of migrants on the 'rollercoaster' who suffer, so too do their grandchildren and great grandchildren, who all miss out on family contact. My parents were never happy back in the Netherlands, but neither would they have been happy in Australia once they had grandchildren in both countries. My parents have since passed away - my mother not that long ago.

She left a letter in which she laid emphasis on why she should never have returned to the Netherlands in 1963, as she was very content in Australia it was Dad who had wanted to see his parents again.

I guess I will never know why he did not just go for a holiday!



Figure 5
Anne's children: Sue-Anne, Jacqueline, Peter, Anthony and Pauline
Courtesy: Anne Rietveld.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

TICKET TO A 'NEW LIFE'

Henny Crijns-Coenen

My name is Henny Crijns – born Hendrika Wilhelmina Gerda Janny Coenen, in Beekbergen on the 26 November 1947. My parents, both deceased, were Pieter Coenen, originally from Grevenbicht in Limburg; and Anna Jandina Coenen – Verveer, originally from Hellevoetsluis in Zuid Holland. I have two older sisters Magda Magcheltje Drazic (deceased) and Anna Aafje Colagiur (also deceased) - both born before the Second World War, and one older brother Gijsbertus Peter Coenen - born like myself after the war.

My father spent from 1942 to 1945 in the concentration camps of Buchenwald, Dora and Bergen Belsen, as a 'Political Prisoner'. He was captured by Nazi Occupation Forces in 1942, while working for the Resistance on the 'Escape Line'. My mother and two small children, were forced to travel from town to town in the Netherlands (because of my father's situation), in order to avoid persecution from the occupying forces.

My father, was finally liberated from the concentration camp on 15 April 1945. However, he never got over his craving for intrigue, adventure and danger; albeit that he almost died in Bergen Belsen.

He spent the first few years after the war trying very hard to get work in Europe and America as an undercover agent. My mother on the other hand, wanted only to be a whole family again and to bring up the children in a new, safe and stable environment.



Figure 1
The Coenen Family: Father - Pieter, Anna, Gijsbertus, Magda and Mother - Anna. Henny is the young child in the centre. Photo: 1952 Rotterdam. Courtesy: Henny Crijns-Coenen.

There was, I was told, an article in a Dutch Newspaper which advertised this wonderful land of 'Australia'. My parents heard that Australia needed workers, and although my mother wanted to remain in Holland to be with her father – my father did not. After some coercing she agreed to resettlement in Australia - at least on a trial run. A new land, a new start and the family altogether as a whole.

Australia offered a start that was unavailable in the Netherlands at that time. My father had promised though, that if it did not work out after two years, then we would return to Holland. Also we would not be alone, as my mother's brother and family had already moved there earlier.

We migrated to Australia in 1953, coming out on the *MS Fairsea*. On arrival, my father was offered a job by the 'de Piers' family on their farming property in Wyalkatchem in the Eastern Wheatbelt of Western Australia. In this job he had to work from dawn until dusk. My sister Magda was also sent to work on the land, whereas my sister Annie became a cleaner in the 'big house', as it was known – the owner's house. My mother kept house and looked after my brother and myself, but she also did quite a bit of needlework for the 'big house'.

We were just beginning to make sense of our new environment when tragedy struck our family. My father took ill and we were forced to move to Perth - the capital city – to be near Royal Perth Hospital where father was being cared for. The years in concentration camps had taken their toll on his health.

Early 1955, when we had not yet been in Australia fully two years, he passed away at the age of 42 years, leaving behind a young wife, who spoke no English and did not work – plus two teenage daughters, a son and another daughter of lower primary school age.

Thankfully, my mother was not foreign to being alone and having to bring up children by herself – but this was in a strange land – albeit not at war! We children all learnt English very quickly and in turn taught our mother how to speak it. However, it was a tough and trying time for us all. Especially for mother, who had to make it all 'happen' on the money which the girls earned in junior wages as nurses plus her widow's pension, which she had eventually been able to secure, as well as doing some dressmaking for other migrants.

Mother never remarried. Despite all the trauma, when she passed away in 2003 at the age of 88 years, she was happy about our migration to Australia. She left behind a son and three daughters, two married to other Europeans and one (the author) married to a Limburger from Maastricht. She also had



Figure 2
Jester Henny leading in carnival,
26 September 2008
Courtesy: Henny Crijns-Coenen.

eight grandchildren, fifteen great grandchildren and a great, great grandson on the way.

My husband Harry and I still maintain close ties to the Netherlands. We have regular contact with relatives and also those new friends we made on a return visit to the old country in 1999. We hope to make more trips, pension permitting!

I was educated in Australia and being very young on arrival, spoke only very basic Dutch language – childish talk really. Over a number of years now I have tried hard to relearn Dutch by way of a course at TAFE and private lessons with a friend. I understand the language very well, can read and write it, although it takes me some time. However, I continue to feel self-conscious about speaking it in public. I also have my husband's Limburger dialect to contend with!¹ Dutch dialects often being very different from *Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands*, (the country's official language) and thus very challenging to negotiate

Harry and I are both heavily involved in the Dutch Community in Western Australia. He was President of the Dutch Club 'Neerlandia' for five years. I continued to write articles for the club's 'Neerlandia Magazine'. I am also Secretary of the Dutch Carnivals Club 'The Sandgropers'.²

I made the 'Prinsen, Adjudant and Raad' hats for them each year, and I write and produce two newsletters – 'The Carnival Gazette' and the 'Sandgropers Social Newsletter'. The 'Gazette' had an international readership. Apart from being distributed to members, it also goes out to other Carnival Clubs in Australia, Limburg in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. The 'Social Newsletter' is only for local members. Occasionally I write articles in Dutch, however, my limitations in the Dutch language and the fact that we do have Australians in the club, means that I write predominantly in English. Besides, our children and grandchildren's first language is English and they should be able to read the magazines as well!

On 1 November 2003 I became Princess Carnival – *Princess Henny 1st* – The Carnivals Club 'The Sandgropers' for 2003-2004. Although my mother knew of the pending honour, she sadly passed away just a couple of weeks prior to my crowning. My father would have been very proud as well, for he was a true Limburger.

When possible, I listen to Radio Netherlands and we also have BVN connected at home, which my husband and I watch on a regular basis and the Perth 'Dutch Community Radio' 6EB 95.3FM, which is broadcast every Sunday between 2pm and 3.30pm. The reason I listen to the radio stations and watch BVN, is not just because I like it and I want to know what is going on in The Netherlands and other Dutch Communities around Australia, but also to keep that little bit of Dutch 'girl' in me. It helps me with the language and hopefully my grandchildren will learn and remember some of the Dutch poems and songs that I try to teach them. I love my Dutch heritage, and all my friends know this and also know that I am a 'crazy' Delfts Blauw collector.



Figure 3

Carnival Princess Henny 1st takes the throne for the Sandgropers Carnaval Club at the Dutch Club in Wembley WA on 1 November 2003

Courtesy: Henny Crijns-Coenen.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Mestreechs, the dialect of Dutch spoken in Maastricht. http://www.expatica.com/nl/leisure/arts_culture/carnival-in-maastricht-36390_9205.html.
- 2 Carnival in the Netherlands is also called "Vastenavond" or "Vastelaovend", and is most celebrated in Catholic regions, mainly the southern provinces North Brabant and Limburg. Dutch Carnival is officially celebrated on the Sunday through Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday. Although traditions vary from town to town, some common characteristics of Dutch Carnival include a parade, a "prince" plus cortège ("Council of 11"), a farmer's wedding (boerenbruiloft), and eating herring (haring happen) on Ash Wednesday. One variant of Dutch Carnival is known as the Rijnlandsche Carnival, which can be seen in the province of Limburg. The province's capital of Maastricht holds a street Carnival featuring elaborate costumes that resemble some South American and Venetian influences. Intentionally amateurish marching bands ('Zaate Hermeniekes' or 'Drunken Marching Bands') traditionally perform on the streets. The oldest-known Dutch Carnival festivities date from 1385 in 't-Hertogenbosch. They are depicted in several paintings by 15th-century painter Jheronimus Bosch. During the three days of the Carnival, 't-Hertogenbosch changes its name to "Oeteldonk", which means "Frog Hill." This name changing tradition is common in and around North Brabant. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnival>

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

MAKING A DUTCH HOME IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA FROM THE 1950s

Nonja Peters

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about Dutch arrival and resettlement in Western Australia (WA) after WWII. It is based on oral history interviews and archival documentation. The emigrants' arrival in their new homeland posed a different and specific set of challenges. This was principally because few had realised at the point of disembarkation, that their expectations of the new land would collide with the reality of the possibilities. It was also despite all the input received from an Escort Officer, sent to travel to Australia with the emigrants to answer their questions, and to provide advice and support.

Migration is a complicated, emotional and physical journey, full of risk, uncertainty, expectation, longing and relief. It consistently involves uprooting and confronting an unknown future in a land that is typically both distant and different – socially, culturally and linguistically – from an emigrant's homeland.¹ These differences impact on newcomers in various ways. For example, academic and Displaced Person (DP) to America, Alfred Schutz, was dismayed to find his social map no longer functioned in the new setting. To function optimally newcomers need to learn the host language, customs, beliefs and values and this takes both time and commitment. When my father, Jan (John) Peters and his uncle by marriage – Toon Berens – stood waiting to disembark from the *SS Volendam* on 13 January 1949, at Victoria Quay in Fremantle, WA, he was about to discover that his most important skill on entering the new country was a passable competence in the English language. This legacy of obligatory lessons in English, German and French at his Dutch Grammar School had hardly been a consideration before this time.

Jan and Toon were among the passengers who had opted to disembark at Fremantle on the advice of the ship's captain after hearing him insist that WA offered better job prospects than Melbourne where the men had originally planned to resettle. Both men also felt that they had been travelling long enough. Their ship had departed from Rotterdam Harbour some 33 days earlier, on 11 December 1948. After disembarkation and customs, all the non-English emigrants on their ship (many were DPs) destined for WA, were bussed along with Toon and Jan to the Department of Immigration Reception and Training Centre (an erstwhile military camp) in Lantana Avenue, in the suburb of Graylands (now Mt Claremont). The Dutch men among them had all gained entry to Australia under the Allied Ex-servicemen's Scheme.² Another 30 months would pass before the first consignments of assisted Dutch travelling on either the Netherlands Australia Migration Agreement (NAMA) or the Netherlands Government Agency Scheme (NGAS) would arrive on the converted troopship carrier the *SS Waterman* in November 1951.³



Figure 1
The *Waterman* berthing at Fremantle c1951.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 2
Land Ahoy at Fremantle.
Courtesy: A van Kann.

By Christmas 1954, around 10,000 Dutch migrants had made WA their home.⁴ For many of these newcomers, an unexpected irony was to find on arrival that there was a critical housing and building material shortage in WA that rivalled the ones the migrants had left behind. As a consequence housing was as hard to come-by in Australia, as it had been in the Netherlands. The smart ones who had taken the information offered en-route by the Information Officers seriously – about the critical housing situation they would encounter – were quick to snap up any jobs on offer with accommodation, even if it did mean a sudden and unexpected disembarkation and a move into rural Western Australia. Many of them, like my father, also destined for the Eastern States – were tempted off the ship at Fremantle by the gaggle of employers, who jostled with each other opportunistically to be the first to approach passengers with offers of ‘jobs with accommodation’ as they made their way down the gangway and stepped onto Victoria Quay. This was however not the case for my father and uncle, who as previously mentioned, were taken instead to Graylands Reception and Training Centre – referred to commonly as Graylands migrant camp.

LIFE IN THE MIGRANT CAMPS

The housing shortage was worse for the larger families, who had little other choice than to opt for a long-term stay at one of the Department of Immigration Accommodation Centres until private accommodation could finally be sourced. The Department of Immigration’s choice to requisition military camps, abandoned in the aftermath of war, was predicated on the fact these could be refurbished with minimal recourse to labour and building materials – both in short supply at the time. In 1949 in WA, the military camps used as initial receiving and training centres for migrants were located in Perth in the suburbs of Graylands, Swanbourne, Belmont (Dunreath) and Point Walter. Others were in the Wheatbelt towns of Cunderdin, 157 kilometres from Perth and at Northam about 98 kilometres from Perth.⁵ Many other migrant workers barracks and tent camps were erected later to cater for migrants sent to work on road and rail maintenance in south west coastal and Wheatbelt towns including Collie, Bunbury and Merredin.

From May 1949, the majority of assisted Dutch migrants in need of accommodation were transported from Fremantle wharf in trains or buses to the Commonwealth Immigration Department’s ‘Holden Reception, Training and Holding Centre’. Called ‘Holden Camp’ by the inmates, it was located in Hutt Street about one kilometre north of the town centre. Holden Camp could comfortably house between 850 and 1,000 people.⁶ In contrast, Northam army camp, located on the Great Eastern Highway about



Figure 3
C Shed Customs - Fremantle - c1950
Courtesy: P. Manucci.



Figure 4
De Boer family, Graylands Hostel 1954
Courtesy: Hélén Meinema.



Figure 5
Carla, Nelli and Ali Gortmaker
Holden Migrant camp - Northam 1954
Courtesy: Nelli Hodges.



Figure 6
Holden School 1952.
Courtesy: Peters Research Collection.



Figure 7
Graylands Hostel Nissen Huts 1951
Courtesy: Peters Research Collection.



Figure 8
Gortmaker Family in the bush outside Holden camp - Northam 1954
Courtesy: Nelli Hodges.



Figure 9
Airing beds to rid them of bed bugs- Holden Camp c1954. Courtesy: van Welie Family.



Figure 10
Dutch migrants congregating at Holden Camp c1954
Courtesy: van Welie Family.

five kilometres outside of the town and where the majority of Displaced Persons were accommodated (1949 to 1952), could accommodate up to 5,000 persons.

On arrival at Holden camp, a family would be allotted one or two little cubicles, depending upon its numerical size. However, the cubicles offered only a semblance of privacy, given that the sisal craft partitions between rooms were only man-high. The occupants shared sounds, smells and illnesses with everyone else in the barrack. Sonja K, who arrived in WA from Java in 1952, recalls:

We lived in Indonesia for seven years and had a good time. In WA we first lived in Northam migrant camp where the living conditions were horrible. The food was strange, the rooms very small and noisy and many had problems with bedbugs. In the camp the Dutch all spent a lot of time with each other and didn't mix much with the other nationalities.⁷

From 1952 onwards, any migrants who on arrival were directed to a job in the city were allocated accommodation at the better-appointed Graylands 'Hostel'. Established on the site where the Graylands military camp was located, its Nissen Huts (sourced from Sweden) were erected in 1951 to specifically cater for a large influx of British immigrants. The British would no longer need a sponsor to organise accommodation and a job on arrival to gain entry to Australia, they could now register directly with Australia House in London and on arrival stay at government run hostels. Prior to the Hostel's construction, migrants who were sent to work in the city were accommodated in the old military camp. My Father Jan and Uncle Toon who arrived in Fremantle on 13 January 1949, spent a month in one of the austere, dilapidated 'Graylands army camp barracks'. This was two years before Commonwealth Hostel Nissen Huts were erected on the other half of the site.

The migrants sent to Perth after spending time at Holden camp in Northam, made the most vocal comparisons. Hélén Meinema nee de Boer compared her family's transfer from Holden camp to the Graylands 'Hostel', like going from hell to 'Shangri La'. Hélén continues to associate her life at the Northam camp with extreme 'culture shock'. She remembered especially the dry, deeply grooved earth that surrounded the camp and:

...the food, lots of salad – we weren't used to that. As it was I had become jaundiced on the boat (hepatitis?), so I had difficulty with the food. Mum managed to acquire a small round cooker and cooked rice for me (this was illegal for fire reasons). We [children] attended the camp school. First I had to learn the times tables – to 12. We played cricket – boys and girls. I was also given an English name – Helen – it didn't fit though.

Asked if there were any positive experiences, Hélén mentioned two Little Golden Book titles – *Alice in Wonderland* and *Johnny Appleseed* – that her

parents had given her for her 10th birthday – her first in Australia.⁸ I (author) had a similar experience, however, the title of the book I learned to love was *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* – now also a favourite with my grandchildren. You could lose yourself in a book- it transported you away from difficult surroundings.

In 1954, the old military barracks where my father had been accommodated became Claremont Teacher Training College. However, the ‘Hostel’ for British migrants on the other half of the site, remained operational as a migrant accommodation centre until 1987. During that period, its structures changed quite dramatically from Nissen huts to brick and tile flats or units.⁹ The ethnicity of the inmates also changed from 100 per cent European to Asian, South American and Eastern European. However, the change to Asian migration only became possible when the Whitlam Government abandoned the White Australia Policy in 1973.

Most migrant accommodation centres had either a hospital or a nursing post. Since migrants commonly experienced a great deal of illness in the initial stages of resettlement, the hospitals and nursing posts treated a constant stream of migrants suffering from cuts, abrasions, heat exhaustion, diarrhoea and respiratory and gastric infections. A prime example was that the staff of these busy posts had to treat hundreds of newcomers who contracted the highly contagious eye infection of conjunctivitis. This epidemic raged in all the camps during the 1950s.¹⁰ In Northam the camp doctors were treating over 600 cases per day.¹¹

Within migrant families, the plethora of humorous stories related to the ‘performances’ their grandparents had to engage in to describe their illness symptoms to Australian migrant camp doctors, given their lack of the English language, have attracted the status of folklore. These stories however intermingle with stories of the greatest distress. For example, it was hospital practice in Australia at that time to not allow parents to visit the ward where their child was being treated. This intensified both parents’ and child’s anguish as their child could not yet communicate his needs in English. When one of the children in the Graylands camp hospital subsequently died, and was not identified for some hours because the child bore only an identification number, the parents became especially alarmed and those with sick children hid them to prevent the barbaric separation.¹² The death of this child also elicited an evocative editorial from the *West Australian* Newspaper, insisting the government be more humanitarian in its treatment of migrants.¹³

The vastly different physical and climatic environments and the unfamiliar combinations and tastes of the food prepared in migrant camp kitchens, also caused distress. For example, in the Netherlands at that time people ate mainly beef, pork and fish. Lamb was hardly eaten, if at all – the Dutch considered it too gamey - and mutton was unheard of. Consequently few Dutch migrants could tolerate either the taste or smell of mutton, nor the fat, which it provided for baking. What is more large amounts of this mutton, was



Figure 11
Jan (unknown), Toon Berens and Jan Peters
outside the ablution block at Graylands R & T
Centre - January 1949
Courtesy: Berens Collection.



Figure 12
Migrant baggage arriving at Holden camp
c1954. Courtesy: Verlinden family.



Figure 13
Van Welie Family in front of the Holden
Camp signage - Northam c1952
Courtesy: van Welie Family.



Figure 14
Holden Camp Floor plan.
Courtesy: Peters Research Collection.



Figure 15
Jan Peters in his first car - an Austin A30.
Courtesy: Peters Collection.



Figure 16
Ida Van Der Klashorst and her father in front
of the family Plymouth - c1956
Courtesy: Ida Van Der Klashorst.



Figure 17
Tony Berens and the family's
Standard Ute 1951.
Courtesy: Berens Family.

served at most camps, and this also posed a problem since most European migrants were unused to having large quantities of any meat served at every meal.

As food and health are inextricably linked, camp food anxiety increased the migrants' vulnerability to ill health, which in turn increased homesickness. To top it all, camp authorities also banned the migrants' practice of standing milk in the sun to 'sour', to remind them of the way they made yoghurt back home, not understanding the comfort such familiarity gave. Similarly, migrants were urged to add cordial to the water in the large waterbags, which the authorities had placed around camp complexes. This all resulted in migrants wishing to leave the camp as soon as feasible in order to live and cater for themselves. In reality this was easier for the breadwinner and his 'working age' children, than for mothers with younger children.

ORIENTATION

The deal on arrival was to spend three weeks in the camp, undergoing 'orientation' to learn English and to be made aware of Australian customs, attitudes and values. Following this, the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) Officers located at all migrant camps, would direct the family breadwinners to work, sometimes in the most remote areas of the state. However the Dutch Australian Immigration Agreement gave Dutch immigrants far greater opportunities to stay closer to their families, than did the immigration agreements pertaining to Displaced Persons or Southern Europeans.¹⁴ Even so, the unskilled Dutch migrants who were sent to the migrant accommodation in Northam, found themselves working on road and rail upgrades or clearing land in rural Australia for the Returned Servicemen League of Western Australia, so that their members would have the opportunity to establish farms. From an Australian perspective, these work programs gave credibility to the vision and mission of migration and its policy of decentralization. However, it made family life in a 'new country' difficult, because it often separated the husband from the rest of the family for significant periods of time.

Having secured a job, the migrants' next practical concern was transport. In contrast to Europe, owning a vehicle in this vast country was a necessity, rather than a luxury. This was because distances were far greater than 'back home', and also because the work to which many were directed was often in far flung regional areas. Migrants were quick to pick up the Australian's idiom for these isolated places and refer to them as: 'beyond the black stump' or 'the back of beyond'. They were also quick to pick-up Australian mateship terms of endearment - even as a migrant child I heard 'you old bastard' (affectionately) bandied around workmates among my father's working class peers. My Welsh husband, Robert Peters, also appreciated what he expressively referred to as the 'irreverence' of the Australian working class, when compared to the 'stiff upper lip' of the English boarding school strata of the society in which he was raised.

Breadwinners who were allocated jobs in isolated locations, were therefore first to feel the need to purchase a vehicle in order to visit their families at weekends. Generally, as few migrants had the collateral to raise a bank loan to purchase a vehicle outright, most had to wait until they had saved the necessary cash for a down payment, and then they could sign a 'Hire Purchase Agreement' and pay off the rest. This also meant that the first cars of most migrants were 'old bombs', as we called them. My father had a series of such vehicles. The first three were an Austin A30, a Buick with runner boards and an old Ford V8 with a 'Dickie' seat. My brother Eddie and I both loved the 'Dickie' seat, as it was the only car in which we were not car sick! Scooters, motorbikes and Utes (utility) were also popular first vehicles. The Ute was especially ideal for the large Dutch families. I recall some families even placing old lounge chairs on the Ute's tray to seat all their children – no seat belt requirements then.

Husbands who were allotted work away from the camp, were the only persons given permission to join their families legally at the migrant camp on weekends. As many as a hundred would visit Holden Camp at one time. Officially they were supposed to be issued with bedding, crockery and cutlery and had to pay a pro-rata amount towards their 'board and keep' for the weekends spent in the camp. However most made undercover visits, sneaking in after dark on Friday evenings and leaving again very early on Monday mornings.¹⁵ Camp authorities refused to consider that many men missed meals because they arrived too late and/or left too early. Some husbands tried travelling to and from Northam to Perth every day. However, this meant leaving very early in the morning before breakfast was served, and arriving back late at night after the evening meal had finished. Coming home for the weekend 'officially', would cost £9 per family instead of £4 per week. As breadwinners had also to pay board elsewhere during the week, the extra weekend payments crippled the family financially and ultimately increased their time in the camps, by reducing the possibility to save towards renting rooms or leasing a house.¹⁶ The authorities tried to make it impossible for the men to sneak in unofficially by taking away their bed, knife, plate, spoon and fork. They wanted them to pay! This situation led to Mr Kim Beazley Senior – MHR for Fremantle – lobbying Arthur Calwell to grant easier access for working husbands living away from the camp, in order that they could stay with their families in the migrant camp at weekends. His intervention eased the burden a little for the mothers of those large Dutch families who were stuck longer in migrant camps, while awaiting affordable housing.¹⁷ Researchers estimate that in fact around 50,000 European migrants were housed at the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration Holden Accommodation Centre between 1949 and 1963.



Figure 18
Sjannie Berens on the family's Standard 8 Ute - with Lucy, Josie and Mary (Riet) Peters. Courtesy: Berens Family.



Figure 19
John Berens - then an apprentice panel beater - with his first car, a Willys Overlander. Courtesy: Berens Family.



Figure 20
Van Welie's Ford Prefect mid-1950s model. Courtesy: van Welie Family.



Figure 21
Holden Camp Playground
Courtesy: Klaassen Family Collection.

AUSTRALIAN CULTURE AND RELIGION

The transition period to beginning to feel ‘at home’ in Australia was also anything but easy, given that migrants generally considered the Western Australia of the 1950s – particularly in the country towns where most were located –to be something of a ‘cultural’ desert. For example in Northam, on Saturdays at 12 o’clock the shops and hotels all closed, and apart from football there was nothing to do in the afternoon. Eating out proved equally disappointing. Migrants claim that in the 1950s there were few restaurants in Australia in the European sense, (at least not in country towns), and probably none that they could afford in the city. There were just cafes that sold fish and chips, mixed grills or pie and two vegetables, (peas and potatoes) with gravy. The idea of what constituted a ‘salad’ in Australia— lettuce with some salt on it and tomato and cucumber without salad dressing, was considered unpalatable by the migrants. Then of course you could also buy simple meals at the many local pubs (hotels) and a beer.

Northam did also show Hollywood films at two picture theatres, one in the open air for summer and an undercover one for winter. These were operational on specified days each week but did not include Sundays. At intermission the audience rushed across the road to buy lollies (sweets) from the milk bar owned by Yugoslav migrants. Dutch migrants also thought the custom of young Australian children coming to the theatre wearing their pyjamas as being very strange indeed!

Sundays were considered to be the worst day of all, as there was little to do at the migrant camp nor in the town centre, except to listen to the Salvation Army band - it could be relied upon to play every Sunday evening on the same main street corner in all weathers. Consequently, for many migrants in their first years of resettlement, it was the church services that offered the greatest sense of familiarity.

Christians comprised around 90 per cent of Dutch arrivals. Dutch Calvinists and Catholics, the religions which both rejected birth control and therefore had the highest birth rates and largest families, were the greatest supporters

Table 1
Religion of WA Dutch at 1954 Census

Gender	RC	C of Eng	Congre-Gational	Lutherin	Methodist	Pres-byterian	Protes-tant	Catholic	C of C	Baptist	Other Incl undefined	Non Christ Relig	No reply	No relig	Total
F	956	96	17	19	67	468	198	353	8	22	413	7	851	148	4866
M	1258	186	15	31	79	604	284	471	12	21	475	9	1213	212	3624
F NEI	45	27	..	1	7	29	43	20	..	3	9	5	41	18	242
M NEI	45	39	..	3	11	40	46	25	1	1	7	9	97	14	338
	2,304	348	23	54	164	1,141	571	869	21	47	904	30	2,202	392	9,070

Religion of WA Dutch at 1954 Census WA Census 1954 (Netherlands East Indies (NEI) appears as Indonesia in this Census.

of emigration. From 1945 to 1962, Calvinists made up 28.3 per cent of the emigration to Australia, and although many more went to Canada, it was a figure almost triple their proportion in the total Dutch population. However more Dutch Catholics than Protestants came to Australia.¹⁸ Roman Catholics (RC) emigrated in numbers proportional to their percentage of the total NL population (see Table 1).

Resettlement issues were different for different religions. For example, as Arent de Graaf explains, when the Reform Church came to Australia, the new migrants, both men and women, whilst all seeking to do God's will, nonetheless found both the migration experience and the church situation overwhelming.¹⁹ He notes:

...most of them (migrants) were feeling the burden of seeking a new identity: learning a new language, trying to provide for growing families, and, in most cases, learning to work in a humble trade they were not familiar with. Many came from jobs of at least *some* status in the old land. So they threw their weight around in the church. Then add to this the fact that the churches, all these people came from were different denominations: *Gereformeerd*, *Vrijgemaakt*, *Hervormde*, *Christelijk Gereformeerd*, *Gereformeerde Gemeente*, etc! And all these churches, especially *then*, saw themselves as, if not *the only*, at least *the most pure* version of Christ's Body on earth! To unite such people around the One Word of the One Lord was our task, and daunting at that!²⁰

In Australia, the Dutch migrants joined those churches that most resembled their equivalent in the Netherlands or they established new ones to fit their particular needs. For example, most reformed church members eventually joined the Presbyterian Church (see Pritchard vignette). In contrast, the Free Reformed church, comprising a very close-knit cohesive migrant congregation, was at liberty to establish churches and schools to provide religious services to the various congregations, and in Western Australia they did so by establishing new communities in Albany and Armadale that continue to flourish today (see Plug vignette).²¹

The problem for the *Hervormde Kerk*, related more to its status as the National (State) Church in NL. This meant that it could not openly advocate the establishment of separate churches in another country - a fact that would not inhibit the more conservative Calvinists. The Dutch Church generally worked through the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, in order to provide contact congregations for its emigrating parishioners.²²

In the first decades of resettlement, the religions with large congregations sent priests or rectors to Australia to administer to the religious needs of their flocks— baptisms, marriages, first communions, confirmations, funerals and religious teaching (see Pritchard vignette).²³ Migrants held parties and wakes in their homes to mark these significant religious ceremonies, much as they had done previously in the Netherlands. However, this practice had



Figure 22
Wieman Family photo album showing children on their First Communion day c1950s. Courtesy: Wieman Family Collection.



Figure 23
Klaassen Family at Holden Camp c1952. Courtesy: Klaassen family.



Figure 24
Clearview flats, Northam - the first place of rental for many families after leaving the migrant camp. c1954
Courtesy: van Welie Family.

already stopped by the early 1970s in all but the Free Reformed Churches in Armadale and Albany. These groups, who also established their own schools, tended not to mix with the rest of the Dutch community. Their cohesiveness was a function of inter-marriage to Dutch within their group. In contrast, most Dutch tended to 'marry-out' with members of other ethnic groups, Australians or British migrants.²⁴

The RC Church hierarchy was very active in promoting emigration. It saw its secular responsibility as one of caring for souls who were in precarious situations. The intention of the Roman Catholic Church was to provide new missionaries and build up a numerical majority in certain countries. However, their program was not very successful because Canada and South Africa were not eager to have so many Roman Catholics and so most ended up in Australia.²⁵ At that time Roman Catholics possessed 'second class' status in Australia, compared to the establishment Anglo-Protestants.²⁶ The only really familiar aspect of Roman Catholicism in Australia was the Latin Mass and Confession. On Friday afternoons at the convent school I attended in Northam, the nuns would take our class to the church. Here we joined the large queues outside the confessional, preferably on the side presided over by the Polish priest, as he did not ask questions and just handed out penance, compared to the Irish Catholic '*Monseigneur*', who would probe intently.

Dutch Catholics from Perth will remember Pater (Father) H. Vijgen from The Hague and Pater Pieters from Maastricht. Around 1954, when Dutch migration was at its peak, these priests converted a church-owned residence at 48 Riversdale Road in Rivervale into accommodation for single newly-arrived Dutch migrants, especially the ones who came to Australia under the sponsorship of the Catholic Church.²⁷ To ensure the hostel would function at an optimal level, the Dutch Emigration Association of Victoria Park submitted an application to the Belmont Park Roads Board, requesting that they be allowed additions to the same house, including a new shower block. Many Dutch Catholic tradespersons offered their expertise and time to assist with the renovations. In 1956, the house was transferred to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Perth. In November 1996, the Heritage Council acknowledged the significance of the same building as a heritage site, due to its role in promoting settlement to WA, maintaining religious traditions and ceremonies, as well as immigration, emigration and refugees.²⁸ If you were one of the migrants accommodated in the Rivervale residence, we would like your story and any photographs for the 'Dutch Australians At A Glance' www.daaag.org website.

BENEFITS OF COSMOPOLITANISM TO RURAL WA

The increasingly cosmopolitan - (multiculturalism as a concept came later) - nature of the State as more and more migrants from diverse European countries settled in WA, also cultivated greater interaction with those locals who could see subsequent benefits for their businesses. For example, not long after the first arrivals in Northam, you could buy Polish, Italian, Dutch

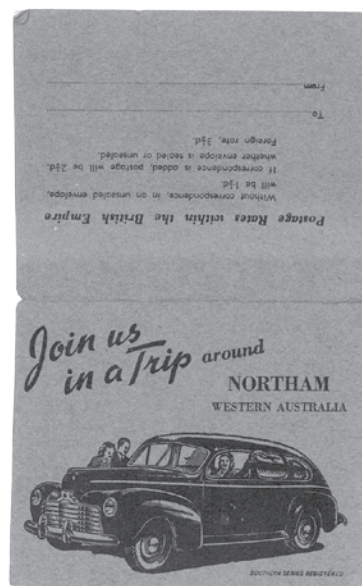


Figure 25
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.

and German ‘small goods’ at *Roedigers* (German origin) in Northam. This butcher had the foresight to exploit the new market niche, by employing migrant butchers from various backgrounds to make ‘small goods’ familiar to the taste of the migrants’ own countries. Moreover you could also make your purchases there in German. It was the *lingua franca* of most Displaced Persons, who had spent many years in Germany pre-migration living in refugee accommodation. Moreover, the German language was also understood by most Dutch who had lived out the five years of war under Nazi Occupation. Another product that migrants ‘hankered after’ and which soon became available in Northam, was homegrown and homemade *sauerkraut*. It was sold directly from wooden barrels in the makeshift sheds of migrants’ backyards. Locally wineries were also quick to exploit the migrant market ‘niche’ with wine (termed *plonk* by the locals).

By the early 1960s, it was also possible to dance at weekends to the strains of Polish *mazurkas* at Polish and Ukrainian club dances, or to elect for the Barn Dance or ‘Pride of Erin’ at Australian events. The intensity and frequency of social entertainment was organised by the various migrant groups, mainly to help migrants escape — if only for a few hours — from alienation, homesickness, poverty or cramped living conditions. Music was another important communication device especially for the musicians amongst the migrants. You did not need a particular language to play an instrument and many lifelong friendships started among migrants from diverse backgrounds at weekend ‘jam sessions’. My father, who played the saxophone and clarinet, always had his own dance band – it provided a second income – and it had been his primary income in the Netherlands. His band spent most nights on weekends playing for the Country Women’s Association (CWA) Balls and Dinner Dances around the Wheatbelt towns. They also played at weddings and engagement parties or other such events in Northam and the immediate surrounds as well as in Perth, when we moved there later in the 1960s. It was the job that he loved most of all. During the day on most weekends, our home was the migrant musician’s rendezvous, which we as children loved!

WHERE TO LIVE

As soon as was feasible after acquiring both a job and a vehicle, the majority of newcomers went in pursuit of accommodation so they could leave the migrant reception centres. However, the issue of where to find a place to live proved to be the single greatest obstacle that 1950s migrants encountered. It was estimated that between 250,000 and 300,000 new homes were needed Australia-wide. The situation was a consequence of the decline in building during the Depression and WWII, plus massive building material and skilled labour shortages.²⁹ Migrants entered the country when the demand for rental accommodation was at its peak, and the situation deteriorated even further with the arrival of their greater numbers.

Australians rightly point out that this situation had also forced many newly married Australian couples to have to move in with parents, or share a house



Figure 26

Jo Peters and twins - Nancy and Eric - outside the dilapidated Duke Street, Northam rental. It was actually ready for demolition. The walls were timber on the outside and all were pressed tin inside. Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 27

The van Beek family's second rental at 18 Stamford Street Leederville, where they moved on 29 August 1954. This property was in far better condition, close to all amenities and not shared.

From L to R : Henk Oorschot (visiting), Elizabeth, Mr and Mrs van Beek, Angela, Theo and Tina.

Front row (L to R): George (holding hands with Dad), Maria and Tony.

Courtesy: Van Beek Family.



Figure 28
'Topping Out'.
Courtesy: Neeling family.



Figure 29
Verschuren Builders.
Courtesy: Verschuren Family.

with relatives or friends, often for extended periods of time.³⁰ The bigger the Dutch family, the greater the difficulties they encountered in finding accommodation. Landlords were often reluctant to take on large families. In fact for many larger families, the housing crisis would not be relieved until the State Housing Commission built affordable housing estates (rentals) in Bentley, in 'Maniana' near Queens Park and in Medina, where most employees of BHP Kwinana were accommodated. State houses were also built at this time in rural towns such as Northam, where many migrants were employed constructing the standard gauge railway line to the Eastern States.³¹

The lack of available residential accommodation in the Perth Metropolitan area also inspired business ventures such as the '*Hollandse Pension*' at 272 Hay Street, Perth. It offered *Kamers met Ontbijt* (rooms with breakfast). Some migrant families overcame the lack of liveable, reasonably priced accommodation by setting up home on a plot of land they had bought, and on which they hoped to eventually build a house. Meanwhile they lived in old tram or train carriages, tents, caravans and even in car crates on their plots. They 'made do' in this way until they could afford to start building parts of the main house.

Shrewd migrants who had made inquiries before embarkation, made other plans as Catherine notes:

My husband came to Australia first to see how it was here.... When he saw in the newspaper that when I and the children arrived in Melbourne we would have to go to a camp, he got off in WA and took a job at the State Forrest in a town called Dean Mill, which I thought was 'at the end of the world'. There was no water, there was no gas, there was no light. There was nothing! But he had a house, a new home, and work. Then he said to the boss, "I'm going back home, because my wife cannot get a boat [to Australia]. Two days later I had a boat with my brother and the kids. My husband wrote: there is not so much here, it is warm and the people are fantastic - and we have to live with that - and that we have done with pleasure.³² The group of Dutch sent to the timber town of Dean Mill soon formed friendships and also attended English classes together and became quite good English speakers.

YES YOU WILL OWN YOUR OWN HOME – HOWEVER YOU WILL HAVE TO BUILD IT YOURSELF !

Since most Dutch families leaving the migrant camps were 'strapped for cash', the whole family was often expected to contribute their earnings to the family income.³³ On weekends or after school, migrant children were also expected to spend their time helping to clean old bricks, renovating or even helping to make new bricks. When there were sufficient bricks, the family erected a one-car garage or built the back veranda of their future home. These

families also came up with the most innovative ways in which to cram their many children into the smallest sleeping spaces. Others expanded existing small houses to accommodate their large and growing families. Until 1952, building size legislation also dominated WA building practices.³⁴ Imposed by the scarcity of building materials, it limited houses to two bedrooms, a sleep-out /back veranda, dining room, lounge and kitchen, bathroom and toilet. Over 30 per cent of homes that were built during the 1950s were 'do it yourself (DIY)' projects. DIY helped Australians minimize household debt, increased social mobility and benefitted the national economy.³⁵

The (Toon) Berens family- parents and three children - started life in WA by renting the back veranda of a house in Queens Park from its owners, who lived in the main part of the same house. However, when Toon (Anthony) and Cor (Cornelia) opened a bottle of beer to celebrate the purchase of their block of land in St James Park, (where the family eventually built the house they lived in for the rest of their lives), they were evicted! Drinking alcohol apparently contravened their rental agreement. Their drinking was a one-off situation, but landlords at that time were very hard on renters. Having no more cash after putting a 'down payment' on the block, they struck it lucky with the help of the local Catholic Priest, and despite their lack of collateral were able to borrow enough money to erect a 'one-car' garage on their property. The family of five moved into this garage, which had neither electricity nor water. Several times a day the children were sent to fill buckets of water from a tap, which was three streets away. The Berens family lived in this same garage until they could afford the necessary second-hand bricks to build a back veranda. After work each night and under the light of the street lamp, Toon cleaned the bricks for re-use. In the early 1950s, migrants' building activities were also greatly reduced by the restriction placed on the purchase of only one bag of cement per person, per week.³⁶ He subsequently built the rest of the house over many years. This story of the Berens family is highly representative of the times.

Homes built or renovated by Dutch migrants are still dotted around the Perth metropolitan area. More often than not they tend however to be on the city fringe, in the hills or in rural towns. A key element in their completion was patience, flexibility, or as noted by the Wiemans family - innovation. The Wiemans built their house from the doors, which their father had imported to WA from the Netherlands (see the Wieman vignette). Many Dutch and Australians will recall the factory that locals referred to as the 'Door House', which Mr Wieman established in Bentley to manufacture doors.

Other migrants working in the building trade took the opportunity of constructing a temporary residence from the packing crates, which encased the kit homes they were erecting for the State Housing Commission (SHC). Generally, building and organising a home was a long and tedious process, and was nothing like the possible course of action suggested in migration propaganda. The harsh reality was - there were no 'gold nuggets lying on



Figure 30
John and Tony Berens helping with house building activities, St James, Perth c1951. Courtesy: Berens Family.



Figure 31
Toon and Cor building their home, Victoria Street, St James, Perth c1955. Courtesy: Berens Family.



Figure 32
Berens family one-car garage home. c1952. Courtesy: Berens Family.



Figure 33
Jan (John) and Eddie Peters, making bricks c1955. Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 34
Cor Berens, making a one-car 'garage' into a home for 5 people. Perth c1951
Courtesy: Berens Family.

the streets' in Australia and nothing but time and hard toil (or an extremely lucky break), would buy the quality of life of which migrants dreamed.

To build the foundation of our own house, my parents, my brother and I collected large rocks from around the Northam countryside in our old Utility. Our bricks were made from sand from the Avon riverbed. My mother made the bricks every day, using a hand concrete mixer and brick moulds until she was eight months pregnant, when she subsequently gave birth to my twin siblings. My father only employed a 'brickie' when the time came to erect the walls of the two-roomed dwelling, into which all six of us would move in June 1955. It had a 'lean-to' makeshift, unlined kitchen with a bath in one corner, hidden behind a curtain. The toilet (collectable box) stood outside. The laundry was a concrete floor with four wooden uprights to support the corrugated iron roof, situated some distance from the main 'house'. There were no walls at all and it was built to give some protection to our first washing machine - a *Simpson* single tub with an electric wringer - which was purchased second-hand, to help my mother with washing the twins' nappies. As the oldest child, my bed was placed in the lounge-come-dining room – there was no privacy in those days! The other three children and our parents all slept in the 'bedroom', in areas separated only by cupboards. Five years later we had another two rooms added to the brick structure, but this time made out of timber and sheets of asbestos.

Only the more financially well-off migrants could afford to have a complete house erected by Dutch builders, such as *Swarts and Terpstra*, *Woerlee* or *van Oorschot* (see the Woerlee vignette) or other such building contractors.³⁷ Some of these builders followed the European tradition of 'topping out' (sometimes referred to as 'topping off'), to celebrate the completion of the home built for their clients. This was a builder's rite - traditionally held when the last beam (or its equivalent) is placed atop a structure during its erection.³⁸

Later, many more Dutch could afford to have a home erected when the Dutch Credit Unions emerged in the 1960s. This helped to relieve much of the stress attached to the long-winded process of achieving home ownership. When the Netherlands Credit Union (WA) opened for business in 1964, an article '*Iets over de lenings faciliteiten van onze credit union*' [information about the loan facilities offered by our credit union] appeared in the *Contact Newsletter*, it noted:³⁹

The foundation of every Credit Union is finance, received from savers, or received from other authorities at the lowest possible interest rate to members. The minimum amount made available for loan is to be £150,00 and the maximum £2,000.00. The maximum period allowable for repayment of the loan is four years in monthly instalments. All loans must also be insured against the death of the lender, at the cost of the lender.⁴⁰

With the low interest rates on offer, families could now have their homes quickly erected and move in straight away. However it was more often the



Figure 35
Van de Wege family in their Albany home.
Courtesy: Van de Wege Family.

second generation, who had migrated here as children with their parents and whose socio-economic and cultural networks had evolved in Australia, who were able to take the greatest advantage of these rates. For example, Ray Schaafsma, who came here as a teenager, acquired a house loan in 1960 from the Netherlands Credit Union (WA) at 1.5 per cent per annum interest. Simultaneous changes to the banking system transformed this period. It enabled people with an adequate 'down-payment' to borrow money to build or buy a house, although mortgage interest rates with banks were much higher than with the Netherlands Credit Union (WA).

HOMEMAKING IN AUSTRALIA: WOMEN AND MIGRATION

Compared to other ethnic groups, Dutch migration was overwhelmingly family-oriented. Women had generally accompanied their husbands, as it was considered a woman's duty to go wherever her husband chose to earn a living. Both Dutch Calvinist and Catholic clergies also expected the woman to safeguard the family's spiritual welfare by creating a *gezellige* (convivial) home in Australia, wherever the family had to live - be it in a reception centre, tent, garage, caravan, back veranda or house.⁴¹ Dutch women did their utmost to comply. However, creating a space that was aesthetically Dutch was quite difficult for the earlier migrants, whose baggage was restricted to one suitcase of personal belongings and a couple of tea chests containing some loved household items.

This was indeed the case with my family. On arrival we could only afford to purchase beds, so we had to sit on 'orange' crates in our shared Subiaco rental. Our family of four had the two front rooms, hall and front veranda, while the Gannaways, an Irish family, had the rest of the house. Both families, (nine people in total), shared the bathroom and the one toilet. Our few Dutch 'knick- knacks', including an oil painting created by a friend of the family, were all we had to transform the space into a home. Later Dutch arrivals, who gained entry under the Dutch Immigration Agreements of 1951, were able to bring in a container full to the brim with their household goods.

Most first generation Dutch women were 'stay-at-home' mothers.⁴² They would proudly declare that their husbands did not want them to work outside of the house. Consequently making a Dutch home in Australia was their main focus. A common remark among these first generation Dutch women was that Australian homes were just not '*gezellig*' (cosy). This focus on home interiors has led researchers such as *Taft*, to describe the Dutch as having a 'living room' culture. He notes:

Dutch homes are more 'furnished' than Australian homes, especially in the living room. The window are typically framed by lace curtains and there is often a small rug on the coffee table which is encircled by large, comfortable arm chairs. There is a great deal to look at - copper miniatures, wall hangings, wall tiles, wall clocks, paintings and pot plants - much of which



Figure 36
Marige Gortmaker peeling potatoes
in the family rental - Miller Street,
Victoria Park, Perth - 1955
Courtesy: Nelli Hodge.



Figure 37
Mary van Look, with Elisabet in the pram
and Gon (holding son) and Josie (deceased),
playing on the ground.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 38
A 'gezellig' home in Albany, Australia.
Courtesy: Mulder Family.

is miniaturised and hanging on the walls, as if otherwise the room would be too 'small' to hold everything. With its indirect soft lighting and armchairs placed invitingly around the coffee table, the living room is the focal point of the house.⁴³

The Matriarchal powers of the mother in Dutch homes at that time were pervasive, but restricted however to the home front. Also having been raised and educated in a different country with a different language, customs, traditions and beliefs, there was not much about their pre-migration lives that could be shared with their children besides stories. The lack of familiarity between children and parents' lives, which was greater than a normal generational gap, in fact created a sense of 'disconnect' between parent and child. Few mothers were unable even to assist with their children's homework.

Staying at home and not driving – few Dutch women had cars - further reduced their chances to become proficient in the English language and to fit in with either Australian society or their children's lives. Australia provided some language tuition during the three-week orientation course at migrant camps, and this continued for the women left in 'holding camps' after their husbands had left to find work. However, for women whose families went straight into a rental, language learning posed great difficulties. *An* (Ann), from the *Neerlandia* craft club recalls in one of her more humorous misinterpretations:

We lived next door to an Australian family and I could not talk to them because I did not speak English. Every day I would hear her shout "Tea is ready, tea is on the table! Come on, tea is ready"! Ann mentioned this to her family, "I do not know what the neighbours eat, but they drink heaps of tea".

An (Ann) eventually did learn English, like other more educated migrants at that time, by reading her children's school books. Another favourite method used among migrants in order to acquire English language skills, was reading comic books because the actions you could 'see' in the illustrations were explained by the text in the 'speech bubble' above.

At this early stage in resettlement, few migrant women would appreciate that in the future they would be avidly swapping recipes for cakes, scones and roast dinners with their Australian neighbours, many of whom continued to try to bridge the friendship divide created by the linguistic difference.

My research also shows that those Dutch families, who were prepared to learn English, weathered the transition more successfully than those who resisted. This was because the acquisition of a working knowledge of English, gave newcomers the tools to engage with the locals in meaningful communication. This filled the void that would ordinarily have been completed by an extended family. However, for most first generation Dutch women, their closest friendships were with other Dutch women from their hometown, social class and/or religion. However, the relatively few women



Figure 39
Musicians at Northam from many migrant and Australian backgrounds. You did not need a common language to play music together! Far right is Bill van der Hoek.
Courtesy: Herman van der Hoek.

who did enter the workforce, actually picked up the English language much quicker than the 'stay-at-home' cohort. The 'stay-at-home' Dutch women did however, manage to make life in Australia work for them, by looking for a humorous angle to overcome their difficulties and this comedy first appeared when they went shopping.

Shopping did continue to be quite an ordeal for these women, until they had at least acquired a working command of the English language. The butchers shop offered an especially entertaining 'street theatre' venue. Here women would 'moo' to have the butcher think along the lines of beef, jump around the shop for rabbit meat, 'grunt' for pork and 'baa' for lamb. Butchers viewed the women's performances with a great deal of incredulity and all the time tried to keep a straight face. The same women also enjoyed each other's attempts to act out for the butcher the meat 'cut' of their choice. Hence the popularity in the early years of resettlement, of *Klaashorst's* Dutch Butcher shop. In this store all transactions were actually in Dutch. Grocery shopping also presented further challenges. An example which created much hilarity was afforded by women setting out to purchase caster sugar from the local grocer – no self-service at that time – as the Dutch terminology for this product is '*basterd*' - (pronounced Bustard) *suiker*! There are many more examples, some exceedingly rude and consequently beyond the scope of this chapter. It would not be long before the Dutch Biscuitman and importers of Dutch grocery items were pedalling their wares to a captive willing consumer, desperate for items from home.

In the first years after arrival, looking for familiar grocery products was mostly in vain and women went about creating surrogates. I can recall my mother grating chocolate for our sandwiches - to mimic Dutch chocolate flakes, and making *Chocolade Pasta* (chocolate paste spread) from softened butter mixed with cocoa powder and icing sugar, because there was nothing like 'Nutella' available commercially in Australia at that time. Dutch readers will recall many other substitutes.

Another surprise was that women were not allowed into hotel bars. If women wanted to drink they had to go to the 'Ladies Lounge'. Drinking in bars and sales at beer and wine shops was also restricted. Bars in Perth closed at 6.30 pm and were shut altogether on Sundays. Nor could you drink in cafés - they only sold soft drinks. This all came as a shock to the Western European migrants. In their homelands, it was possible to obtain alcoholic drinks on every day of the week, at hotels and in cafes and even to purchase in grocery stores.

Hence the popularity of Saturday and Sunday afternoon drinking sessions in country town hotels and in hotels in the Perth foothills. Mundaring was particularly popular. Located just outside the restricted 25-mile radius from the General Post Office in Perth, you could combine a trip there with a picnic overlooking the overflowing Mundaring Weir, and with drinks at the Mundaring Weir Hotel in the afternoon. In the late 1950s and 1960s, it was a popular stopover venue for many European migrants on weekend



Figure 40
Jazz booklet - Northam Function - late 1950s.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 41
Sjaak Verschuren - Goalie for Jadran - a mixed migrant group soccer team at Northam - early 1960s.
Courtesy: Verschuren Family.



Figure 42
Wieman family - making their own fun in their 'gezellig' Dutch home - c1960s
Courtesy: Wieman family.

outings. However, the latter did not cater for children who were at the time not allowed into hotels. Consequently they were forced to spend the ‘session’ time either sitting in their parents’ car or playing on the fringes of the beer garden. Drink-driving, although prevalent, was not then considered to be such a major problem as it is today.

The networks that new migrant groups ordinarily established on arrival in a new country greatly assisted those recently arrived Dutch, and helped to organise a place to live, a car, job, schools for the children, shopping and church attendance. When these were all in place, the breadwinners and their partners could begin thinking about the future, becoming Australian citizens and creating a sense of place identity and belonging in their new homeland. Issues relating to working in Australia are addressed in the Peters’ chapters on work in Section IV and citizenship and sense of place, identity and belonging in Section V.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Peters, N, ‘Just a Piece of Paper: Dutch Women in Western Australia’, *Studies in Western Australian History*, 2000a.
- 2 Appleyard, R.T., ‘The Economic Absorption of Dutch and Italian Immigrants into Western Australia 1947 to 1955’, *R.E.M.P. Bulletin* 4:3 (1956), 45-54, 48. Because N.G.A.S was administered and financed by the Netherlands Government the Commonwealth could not direct these immigrants to employment. The job placement of N.G.A.S immigrants was arranged by agreement with the Netherlands Emigration Offices, attached to Netherlands Consulates. In Australian cities in conjunction with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). These migrants made arrangements with the Netherlands Emigration Office regarding repayment of their travel costs although the Commonwealth allowed them to use its facilities at the Reception and Training Centres. However, the Netherlands Emigration Office was charged for these services.
- 3 A great number of Dutch immigrants have fond memories of one of the three Victory ships - named after stars and constellations – *Groote Beer*, *Waterman* and *Zuiderkruis* were built with a multi-purpose design: to be used during as well as after the war. The immediate purpose of the three ships (Model VC2-S-AP 5) was to transport troops (about 1,500-1,600 men). At the end of 1946 the ships were purchased by the Dutch government and in the summer of 1947 made their first voyage to and from the Netherlands East Indies, now known as Indonesia. *MS The Groote Beer* then was managed by the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland*. In 1951, the *Groote Beer* was refitted for a civilian purpose: she became an emigrant ship able to accommodate approximately 850 passengers. The ship was placed under management of the Holland-America Line (HAL). In 1960, she was again transferred, this time to the *Scheepvaart Maatschappij Trans Ocean*. The *Waterman* and *Zuiderkruis* also became this company’s responsibility (<http://www.godutch.com/newspaper/index.php?id=308>).
- 4 ABS 1954; ADL Newsletter December 1954, 7.
- 5 Peters, N., *Milk and Honey But No Gold, Postwar Migration to WA 1945-1964*, UWA Press 2001, 123.
- 6 *ibid*.
- 7 I have written extensively about migrant camp life in *Milk and Honey But No Gold: Post-war Migration to Western Australia 1945-1964* published by University of Western Australia Press in 2001. As I noted in that text Dutch migrants were also placed in Graylands migrant camp but less likely to be placed in Point Walter camp in Bicton which was mainly kept for British arrivals. Although there are always exceptions to this rule as some Dutch who arrived in the late 1970s have pointed out to me as they were accommodated at Point Walter. Noalimba migrant centre opened some years later.
- 8 Hélén Meinema-de Boer, *per.com* August 2011.
- 9 Graylands Camps Booklets, Nedlands Public Library forthcoming in 2016.
- 10 NAA. PP340/1/0, Item 210/1/4 Pt 2.
- 11 Peters, 2001.
- 12 *West Australian Newspapers*, Thursday 27 October 1949 p.2
- 13 *ibid*
- 14 Peters, N., ‘Trading Places: Greek, Italian, Dutch and Vietnamese Enterprise in Western Australia’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia 2000.
- 15 Peters 2001.

- 16 Wolfs, F., interview, 1993.
- 17 Peters, 2001, 152.
- 18 Oosterman, 1975, 22, these authors claim that an additional motive driving Calvinists and Catholics was the Dutch Government's secular outlook — the emerging welfare state — that both religions resented being put into practice. To them it represented the destruction of their old-world values. Both religions had well-expressed purposes and programs in keeping with their basic beliefs, and because they came from authority-oriented backgrounds, were open to advice and imperatives from official immigration bodies. The fact, that Calvinists could immediately join a familiar Reform church groups in the new land, also helped cultivate a positive attitude towards emigration.
- 19 Deenick, J.W (Ge, Ed), *A Church En Route: 40 years Reformed Churches of Australia*, Reformed Churches Publishing House, Geelong, Victoria, 1991.
- 20 Arent de Graaf, 'My Memories of Piet Pellicaan' 2008 (Unpublished observations).
- 21 ibid
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CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

IMPRESSIONS – REFLECTIONS

Beth Vermeulen



Figure 1
Family Vermeulen arriving in Australia
Courtesy: Vermeulen Family.

Some forty years or more ago I had the privilege to become part of the Vermeulen family. I would like to give you an insight in to the family as it was then and how it is now. You can, or I hope you can, imagine the culture shock for me. I had come from a family of only four people, one of whom was hardly ever at home, so there was just Dad and Mum and myself - a really quiet family where there was never much discussion!

I vividly remember my first Sunday at 45 Leschenault Street in Lockyer. Nel and her boyfriend, John Spaanderman had picked me up from David Street where we were living and had taken me to church, which at that stage was all delivered in Dutch.

Rene translated the service into English, as it went along. After church, it was back home to Leschenault Street for coffee, cake and lunch. Poor Oma Vermeulen, here she was with someone for lunch who only spoke English, and to think her eldest son did this to her!

Lunchtime approached, the girls set the tables and Oma called out: “Tafel sitten”. There must have been about eighteen or more of us. What a noise, all talking at once and then Oma places this huge pot of soup on the table and proceeds to give everyone a generous helping, but before we start to eat she asks for a blessing on the food. All is now quiet except for the clinking of spoons on the plates – delicious soup – as only Oma could make it. I’ve tried and tried over the years, but mine never tastes as good as Oma’s.



Figure 2
Family Vermeulen's first house
Courtesy: Vermeulen Family.

After the soup, the noise starts again but only until the main meal. Let's face it, there were many different personalities around the table, some talkative, some argumentative and some just happy- what a special day this was turning out to be for me.

Now to the main meal.

Can you visualise me sitting at the table with all these people and being used to usually having my meal placed in front of me, already served up by my mum – no saucepans or dishes in sight? To my amazement, out comes the meal and also the saucepans which held enough to have fed our own family for about two weeks; there were potatoes, beans, cauliflower and yummy meat balls and, of course, gravy or jus and sometimes even *Appelmoes*. Then, to top it all off, usually custard and fruit or something just as nice. The Bible is read and thanks given for the food. The table is cleared and the dishes, many of them, are washed and put away.

Games are played or just talking together, but all of this is so special, a real happy family life.

Oma didn't have it easy, yet she loved each one of her children. Each one was special and she was always there for them, not only for her children, but for others children too. She was always there to listen to them in their time of need, and as I stand here tonight, I can't help but think how the Lord has used each one of Oma's children to help build His church, through children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

So you can see by just this brief outline, how the Vermeulen family have become my family, a different culture maybe, but all serving the same Lord.

Figure 3 and 4

Left, Family Vermeulen - all grown up.
Right, Family Vermeulen and their partners.
Courtesy: Vermeulen Family.



CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: SECOND GENERATION DUTCH MIGRANTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA¹

Kim Negenman

How do you say goodbye
To somewhere you've never been?
How greet a world where you don't arrive?²

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will tell the story of the second generation Dutch migrants who grew up in Western Australia during the 1950s and 1960s, when the ideology of assimilation dominated immigration policy. The story is based on anthropological research carried out for my Masters' thesis about the ways in which the first and second generation Dutch in Perth constructed their identity. My motivation for choosing this subject was the fact that I grew up in a multicultural neighbourhood in Alkmaar, The Netherlands. My own experience of migrants living a life in between two worlds and their consequent identity problems, made it interesting for me to see how Dutch migrants abroad were dealing with these similar issues.

I will draw my conclusions from focus group data, obtained from Dutch-born as well as Australian-born second generation migrants. Seventeen migrants, divided into two groups, homogeneous in their demographic and socio-economic characteristics, all participated in the group discussions which took place in *Neerlandia*, the Dutch club in Perth. By organising several focus group discussions and participating in the Dutch community, I came to understand some of the challenges and pressures that were experienced by Dutch migrants and their children in Australia. What struck me most, were the problems the second generation faced in their efforts to develop an independent identity within the Dutch private sphere, distinct from the Australian public sphere in which they were raised. My account of the research will be illustrated by quotations from the focus group discussions.

Most parents had the expectation that their children would adjust without any problems to the culture of the new environment.³ They believed that growing up in Australia was all that their children needed in order to develop a sense of being Australian. This chapter, however, will tell a different story.

The second generation was confronted with the pressure to assimilate imposed by their parents, the Australian children, the schoolteachers and Australian society as a whole. For them, both finding a sense of belonging within this Australian society and of creating an identity, was a very complex process. These pressures made a huge impression on the children and still are important in the construction of their identity as adults.



Figure 1
Frances McManus nee Verschuren came to Western Australia as a 10 year old child in 1954 with her parents and nine siblings. Courtesy: F. Mcmanus.

Assimilation ideology dominated Australian immigration policy until the mid-1960s. The so-called 'White Australia' policy focused on maintaining a homogenous Australian society, both in appearances and lifestyle. As Prime Minister John Curtin pointed out after the outbreak of hostilities with Japan:

This country shall remain forever the home of the descendants of those people who came here in peace in order to establish in the South Seas an outpost of the British race.⁴

In this way, the old Australians were assured that the newcomers would soon become indistinguishable from them. The migrants were encouraged to learn the language and adopt the Australian customs as soon as possible. Whatever cultural heritage and language they brought with them were seen as irrelevant to their new lives.⁵

BEING DIFFERENT

Ninety per cent of the Australian population before the post-war wave of migration was Australian-born and English speaking. A sense of being different was therefore the most dominant feeling that migrant children faced as they grew up in Australia in the Fifties and Sixties. Since anything not Australian was labelled inferior, the children had to deal with constant discrimination and prejudice. A lot of the misunderstandings can be attributed to both the Australians and the Dutch being ignorant of one

Figure 2

"We want to be like all the other kids."
Sjannie Berens (third left, 2nd row without a school uniform) Our Lady Help of Christians School, 1953.
Courtesy: Sjannie Crick nee Berens.



another's culture, customs, traditions and beliefs.. Especially in the outback, the locals were not used to migrants from different cultural backgrounds:

I had difficulties settling, because we moved into the country. It was really hard because there were only a few other migrants; two Italian families and certainly no Dutch. So the people were not used to migrants. They looked at us as if we were not normal.⁶

The Dutch soon realised that they were expected to assimilate without any changes being made by the old Australians.⁷ To make sure that the newcomers would not interfere with the Australian way of life, some Australians took it upon themselves to pressure the migrants to speak only English. Others pushed their Dutch friends to apply for naturalisation. Dutch parents were shocked when they were stopped in the street by Australians for speaking Dutch to their children. The teachers shared this point of view and told both Dutch parents and children to speak English at home and to forget their Dutch background.⁸ The Education Department and the teachers believed that the migrant children would adjust without any problems. They did not consider it worth discussing. Once the migrant children were enrolled in school they were, from the teachers' point of view, considered Australian children.⁹ Children had their difficult Dutch names changed for them immediately. There were no support systems for migrant children and their specific disadvantages were ignored by the teachers. When learning problems arose, teachers subsequently blamed the children or their migrant home background and definitely not the school system. Part of the problem was that teachers did not know how to help the migrant children. This is illustrated by John's school experience:

The teachers hadn't been set up to know what to expect and many were absolutely blind to the fact that we couldn't understand their language, with no experience and no idea how to help us. They basically thought we were deaf and dumb because we never said anything in response. We couldn't!¹⁰

The migrant children believed that being Dutch was a distinct disadvantage to them. Mixing with their Australian classmates made them very aware of the differences in culture. Children felt ashamed of their Dutch language, their ethnic parents, their European-style clothing and Dutch cuisine. As Deanna says:

I can remember being 13 years of age and walking down the street in Bunbury thinking if I keep my mouth shut, no one will know who I am and what I am, because as soon as I spoke there was my accent, because I only had been here one year.¹¹

Jennifer did not eat her lunch with other kids around. All she wanted was her mother to buy Kraft Cheddar - a processed cheese in a packet - instead of any other of the various cheeses from Europe. Her good quality European clothes also marked her as a new Australian, who was thus labelled inferior

by the Australians. She saw acceptance by her Australian classmates as the ultimate form of success.

Because of their insufficient knowledge of the English language, especially for the description of their emotions, children did not talk to classmates about the problems they faced. The children of working-class families could not talk to their parents either, for they strongly believed that growing up in Australia was all that was required to make their children feel Australian.¹² Besides, parents were too busy solving their own problems. Frances recalls:

I think there was a sort of in-built sense that you came to terms with things that were not important enough. You sorted it out yourself. It made you very independent and tough.¹³

Children with educated parents experienced fewer problems, since their parents were better able to cope with the demands of both cultures. Working-class families tried to cover up any social characteristics defined as 'ethnic' by the Australians, in order to become more accepted and to avoid any discrimination. They complied with the assimilationist dictates.

In the privacy of their homes however, working-class women stayed committed to the Dutch culture, as was expected of them by the Dutch Calvinist and Catholic churches - the two religions that encouraged emigration. According to them, the Dutch wives had the important task of ensuring their family's successful immigration by creating a convivial Dutch home in Australia. This however rarely included passing on the Dutch language to their children.¹⁴ Yet some more highly educated people continued to transmit the homeland culture and language to their children. Anton recalls how his mother told him:

Be proud of what you are, you should be very proud of where you came from, Europe. You have nothing to be ashamed of. Never be afraid or ashamed of where you came from, the hell with them, just go out there and do what you want to do, if they don't like it, tough!¹⁵

However, the positive attitude of his mother still could not prevent him from feeling different. He recalls:

We (second generation migrants) all have the same experience. We all grew up and we felt very different. You grew up with different food and a different culture. You looked at your friends' houses and you became very aware how different you were. And then you as a young self-conscious child think: 'What is wrong with me? Why am I different? It affects your self-worth. It affects the way you think, talk and believe and the way you grow up.'¹⁶

As children or teenagers, the second generation migrants tried to find a strategy to deal with the feeling of being different and less worthy. Peter studied really hard to prove himself:



Figure 3
Anton Ottenhof receiving his Science degree at Murdoch University, WA.
Courtesy: Nell Ottenhof.



Figure 4
Nonja and Nancy Peters 1955 - without any extended kin, the older children became live-in babysitters.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.

You felt like you had to do so much better. That sort of pushed me. It has never been my choice to come here, but you develop a value that you want to do better than anybody else. I didn't just study, because I wanted the piece of paper in the end. I just felt it as a competition. Everything had to be better.¹⁷

Others tried to be the best at sport, hoping that this would gain them recognition as a person. Deanna dropped out of school after finding a job at a very young age:

I was in grade two for two weeks. I never spoke and I wouldn't stand up because I towered over the other students and I was embarrassed. They got rid of me by putting me in grade four, and then they moved me to another class, and then another. I had no idea why. I did speak some English but I was never tested, never taken aside and spoken to. I was just put in these classes, never introduced to the teachers, so I felt alien, a nuisance and a problem to everybody and very scared. I couldn't handle the situation and I left school before my fourteenth birthday.¹⁸

For her the school experience was unbearable. The lack of specific help with lessons and the shifting from class to class confused her. Deanna's father supported her decision to leave school. He felt she should go to work and hand over her weekly earnings. Most Dutch parents, like many European parents at that time, depended upon their children's income to purchase a house or set up a business.¹⁹ Older migrant children like Deanna who wished to complete high school, experienced difficulties with written and spoken English, caused by the lack of language assistance. These circumstances also reduced their possibilities to gain a higher education scholarship, since these were only given to students with high English marks. As a consequence these migrant children were often unable to realise their pre-migration dream to enter a certain career path.²⁰

DUTCH FAMILY POWER STRUCTURES IN A NEW LAND

Conflicts with the parents about differences in values and beliefs between the two cultures, increased migrant children's sense of being different. Isolated from their family in Holland, the first generation tried to be good parents exactly in the way their own parents had fulfilled that role in the past, unaware of the child-raising techniques that were beginning to be promoted in Australia at that time. Instilled via the socialisation practices in the Netherlands, Dutch parents continued to attach value to the Calvinist principles of discipline, commitment to hierarchy, obedience, industry and frugality.²¹ They were seen by their children as very dominant figures, especially in comparison with the experiences of their Australian classmates. Dutch children did as they were told and were afraid to speak up.²² Although Australian society was also still patriarchal and hierarchical, the dominant

position of the Dutch parents, especially of the father, was increased by the migration process. Deanna explains:

In my situation, where I have a very dominant father, the immigration allowed him to continue that, because we became that little unit and there were no aunts, uncles, grandmas and granddads. Whereas when we lived in Holland, he would still be dominant, but he could only do so much, because my mother was one of nine children and had a very close family. If he went too far, somebody would say something. But here he became the boss, he was the controller. The immigration did that.²³

For women it was even more difficult to create an independent identity and to have some self-respect, since they also had a subordinate role within the male-dominated Dutch family-life. Deanna reflects on her position within the household:

The boys would all sit and Mum and I served the food. Then they sat back and we cleared the table. There were fights sometimes, I used to object, but you still did it, because if you didn't you had to find a place to sleep somewhere else. That was tough: very dominant and very strong.²⁴

Girls more than boys, were pushed by their parents to find a job at the age of fifteen and then to give up a substantial amount of their salary. They were in fact destined to be housewives, and the curtailment of their education made it easier financially for their brothers to be then educated to a higher level.



Figure 5

150 Durlacher Street, Geraldton - owned by the RC Church.

In front (from left to right): Rita, Angela, Pat and Theo van Beek

At the back with the family cat 'Black Beauty'. The family arrived from NL on 28 October 1953 and moved there on 30 October. The residents of the house at the time were: the van Beek's 10 children, the Oorschot's 13 children and both sets of parents - thus 27 people. It had no refrigerator and no electric fans for cooling.

Courtesy: Van Beek Family.

This led to friction between siblings because of a difference in economic situation and in worldview.²⁵ Most Dutch girls did not tell their Australian friends about these aspects of their family life, because they felt ashamed that they paid their parents that much money and could not save for the future.²⁶ Mixing with their Australian classmates was therefore difficult, since they had less available spending money. These imported traditions obstructed the children's economic development, just like the prejudices and discrimination in the public sphere.²⁷

Later in life female migrants empowered themselves and tried to find a strategy to deal with this inferiority, hoping that this would bring them acknowledgement. Elisabeth felt very disadvantaged, and so at the age of forty-one she went to University to get a degree in English and Communication Studies. Higher education ultimately gave her the desired sense of belonging. A side-effect however was that she drifted even further away from her less educated family. She had broken with the Fifties tradition, where education



Figure 6
Gannaway neighbour's boy with Nonja
Peters, Subiaco, 1951.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.

was not necessary for a woman. For these women the process of identity-construction was an ongoing battle.

Growing up in a Dutch family also meant that the eldest children were confronted with enormous responsibilities. Kirsten reflects:

Because I was the eldest, I did everything. It didn't matter, nobody asked how old you were, you just did everything; telephone calls, telegrams to be send, shopping to be done or somebody's birthday in the family. We lived in the country and we had only one bike and it would always be me. It was amazing really the responsibility that you were given as the eldest of the family.²⁸

Others had to be interpreter at the doctor's surgery, hospital or government agencies or had to baby-sit at a very young age, in the absence of other direct family-members. Many of them realised later in life that they were in fact deprived of their childhood. In some cases this ultimately led to a reversal of the parent-child role. Elisabeth, being the eldest daughter, had to take care of her depressed mother. In reality, one third of my focus group participants came from families in which the loneliness and homesickness of their parents, resulted in alcohol abuse, domestic violence and depression. Elisabeth tells about her memories of living in a household in which domestic violence and depression played an important role:

I am sure my mother went through severe depression, because she wasn't told. She only found out the night before departure that we were going to Australia. And I can remember it was a very big fight between my parents. For all these years she never forgave him. I think that completely dominated our family life. That complete tension that was there in the family. And my father also was a very angry man, till this day very difficult to talk to. But the drama and the tension and the violence that was there was horrific. Most of my childhood I spent under the bed, not in my bed. I was so terrified of what my parents were up to. I think it caused a very dysfunctional family and we are.²⁹

For many years she resented the fact that she was her mother's carer. She rebelled and tried to cut herself off. However just recently, the situation transformed into something positive:

My mother with her dementia needed a keeper to have her affairs looked after. So just recently, only this year, I became my mother's keeper because someone had to do it. It has worked out for her and I feel more empowered by it.

Some of the second generation migrants stated that they believed they had lost their mother after arriving in Australia. Louise thinks her mother never accepted the fact of living in Australia:

Looking back, I think my mother was in total depression all of the trip. She actually never came out of the cabin. She had a three year old baby, who I think probably nearly died on the way over, because my mother was so ill. I think it came as a total shock that she was actually on this ship. And for years afterward when we were here she was depressed. It took me a long time to figure that out, that that is what actually happened. My mother was emotionally unavailable for the greater part of our childhood and that does make a huge impact. I do a lot of therapy to come to terms with a lot of stuff.³⁰

Because of the lack of emotional support from their parents, children were not able to create a strong sense of personal self. Parents were far too busy solving their own problems and were therefore emotionally unavailable for their children. Moreover, most parents and children were not able to share their emotional feelings. Parents were not fluent in the English language and children understood only the important words in the Dutch language. The continual absence of a strong sense of self can have serious consequences. Its most common symptoms are prolonged restlessness, lack of employment stability or delinquency and mental disorders.³¹ In the case of four respondents, who arrived in Australia at a very young age, it led to psychological disorders and depressions.³² They had the feeling of always being pushed into the background. They were always the ones left behind; no one listened to them, no one took them seriously. They sort of plodded along.³³ They undertook, and some still do, a lot of therapy to come to terms with what happened to them. Dientje reflects on her feelings as a five-year-old girl:

I experienced the difficulties many years later. As a child you withdraw. I was the youngest of ten children, so you withdraw. Everyone else around you is so busy with their own problems, shit and depressions that you as a five year old child feel your place is 'back', at the end of the line. For many years I felt that my place was 'back'. But now that is changing. But it has had a very bad effect.³⁴

Her subordinate position and the lack of a sense of belonging resulted in two nervous breakdowns and six years of therapy. She recently finished therapy, but still experiences a lot of anger, especially towards her mother, who was depressed during her childhood:

I still experience a lot of anger. I experience more anger to my family and my parents. I have no feelings for my mother, because I didn't have a mother as I have been told, I had mothers and none that I could specifically go to. It was very sad to come to terms with the fact that I lost my mother when we arrived in Australia.³⁵

Her mother and the rest of the family never understood her situation. Parents were overwhelmed with their own problems when trying to cope

with the migration experience. Besides, much of their mental problems were also linked to their wartime trauma, the loss of family members and the devastation of their home country and livelihood. In dealing with these issues, they easily forgot that the youngest children needed more attention and emotional support. Dientje continues:

My psychologist told me that being the youngest of ten children, which I have never been able to express to my family, and I am not looking for sympathy here, that I was probably affected the most. I don't think that my family will ever understand that, which is a total tragedy. But I must move on . . . ³⁶

Two sisters of Dientje, who were 10 and 12 years old when they arrived in Australia, were participants in another focus group. When I asked them about the differences between the siblings in their family, they both answered that they believed the eldest children in the family experienced most difficulty:

For the older ones the social changes and the differences were just too great to bear. Not only did you have to leave your family, you had to leave your friends too. Which when you are 14, 15, 18 to 20 would be dreadful. Pete [their elder brother] is an example, he was 21 and had already a good job in Holland and was an excellent goalkeeper. He had experienced friends and social clubs and social events, whereas the younger ones had not, so it was easier for the younger ones to adapt.³⁷

On reflection, Dientje notes that she believes all ages experience the transition differently.³⁸

LIFE IN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Deprived of a sense of pride in their own heritage and the opportunities for creating a strong self-image, most second generation migrants were confronted with an existence in between two worlds. They derived their meanings about identity from the two cultural milieus in which they were raised. They were as children, not firmly rooted in one culture and therefore were not capable of creating a separate private and public sphere, like their parents. The assimilation push denied them access to their own cultural background and created a lack of a sense of pride in their heritage. Confronted with discrimination, this second generation tried to be accepted by changing both their appearance and behaviour at a young age. The assimilation ideology of Australia that time, is responsible for the second generation's strong aspirations for acceptance in Australian society.

Dutch migrant children have tended to feel alienated in Australia as well as in their country of origin. Frank's experience is representative of most of the second generation migrants I interviewed. For him identifying with one culture is not possible. In his poem about his parents' decision to emigrate he says: 'How do you say goodbye to somewhere (Holland) you've never

been? How greet a world where you don't arrive (Australia)?³⁹ A reason for this dilemma is that children had rarely been involved in the discussion about whether or not to go to Australia. The parents, and in most cases only the father, made the decision to leave the Netherlands. Children certainly did not have a choice. Deanna's emotions are representative of this:

I was 12 when I came to Australia and I knew that we were coming to Australia about three months before. I don't think it was even three months. It was a huge shock, because I knew nothing about it. I just started a new school in Holland, high school and I really loved it. I made some new friends and for the first time in my life I was really happy at school. I was doing really well. And all of a sudden my father told me that we were leaving. There was a letter for my school and that was it! It was just horrendous. I just couldn't believe this was happening!⁴⁰

Since the Seventies, when the Australian policy of assimilation changed to one of multiculturalism, Dutch migrants have no longer had to repress their ethnicity. The Australian mainstream attitude towards ethnicity of any kind began to change; ethnicity became authentic and relevant. Multicultural Australia not only recognised, but also encouraged members of ethnic groups to cultivate cultural differences with respect for and understanding of each other's differences.⁴¹ As a result, many second generation Dutch who survived assimilation by rejecting their ethnicity, have now acknowledged and reclaimed their cultural heritage and ethnic identity. Deanna could not deny her background for ever:

You don't forget your heritage. It may go underground for a while, but it won't be denied for ever . . . I really didn't think of myself as Dutch even though I married Dutch. But as I am getting older I am beginning to realise that there is quite a lot there really, still. I have kept up the Dutch language and I have encouraged my children to speak Dutch and to be proud of their Dutch heritage.⁴²

Frank explains multicultural Australia in terms of a melting pot of cultures: 'I think there is this growing awareness that 'I am Australian first and multi second or Dutch second'.⁴³

For most second generation migrants, it is easier now to find a balance between both cultural worlds. Elisabeth went to visit Holland in 1986 to find her roots:

I met all of my mother's family before they passed away, except for my grandparents. I spent some time with my aunts, uncles and cousins and we had fun. I made a fool of myself with the Dutch language, but that didn't matter. I was there for about three weeks and I think I felt more in touch with myself when I came to Australia. I knew I couldn't live in Holland, because Australia was home and I was married and had three

sons as well by then. That was very important; knowing that I do feel Australian, but I like the Dutch attachments that I have got at the same time.

Other second generation migrants became involved with Dutch aged-care problems. The Dutch population in Western Australia has not been able to raise the funds necessary to establish an ethno-specific nursing home.⁴⁴ First and second generation Dutch migrants therefore established the Dutch Australia Community Service (DACS), whose volunteers visit the elderly Dutch in their homes or in mainstream nursing homes. This is very important because the knowledge of a second language, in this case the English language, is often severely reduced by the aging process and it can even completely disappear after a stroke or severe illness. Especially for those Dutch who did not transmit the Dutch language to their children, this has had serious consequences. They experience difficulties in communicating with their Australian-speaking children and grandchildren. Elisabeth tells about the fact that she is struggling to have a conversation with her mother:

My parents are in the eighties and my mother is in a nursing home and has dementia. She is switching back to her Dutch a lot and I am struggling to have a conversation with her. I am enjoying the Dutch idioms that come out and I have a giggle, but I can't actually conduct a conversation with my mother. When I get a phone call from my relatives from Holland, I can't have a conversation with them about the medical things, about the bigger topics. So I have become friends with an old friend of my mothers in Adelaide. She is bilingual and can speak Dutch and English very well. I use her as translator. But it is very difficult.

Some second generation migrants, who arrived in Australia at a young age, fear that such loss of language will eventually happen to them as well. Riki, 15 years old when she arrived in the Fifties, notices that she is now developing a much stronger sense of being Dutch:

I suppose when you get older you go back to your roots. We are involved with Neerlandia (Dutch club) now. Over the last five years our Dutch is coming back a lot more. I think that is a natural thing. I hope it doesn't go back as far as my mother. My mother cannot speak English anymore. That happens a lot with people losing their second language. I hope it doesn't happen to our generation. I have spoken more English in my life than I have Dutch. But it is coming back very well!

The fact that most Dutch migrants wanted to become 'invisible' as migrants in the public sphere during the assimilation push, has had very negative consequences in recent times. It is very difficult now to convince the Australian government that these 'invisible' Dutch now need extra facilities for their older first generation migrants.

Conclusion

The focus group discussions and the conversations with my Dutch host families, gave me a much better understanding of the migration process and the different factors that influence identity construction in another country. I came to understand the problems caused by being raised within the Dutch private and the Australian public spheres. The second generation had to create an independent identity on the basis of the limitations and the possibilities within the Australian society.⁴⁵ Under the assimilation policy they did not have free access to their cultural background. As a consequence they tried to fit in to the public domain as quickly as possible, in order to become invisible as a migrant. Since most Dutch parents stayed committed to the Dutch culture inside their homes, this caused frictions about differences in values between the two cultures. Also, sharing their emotional feelings was almost impossible because children were not fluent in the Dutch language.

None of the problems second generation migrants faced were ever able to be publicly discussed, because of the assimilation policy. It was only when multiculturalism entered the migration policy in Australia that the migrants started to speak about their migration experience. During the focus group discussions I noticed that the participants felt the urge to share their feelings and they even suggested organising weekly or monthly gatherings. For their sake and for the sake of their children in the future, it is important to develop a better understanding of their personal migration process, which will be a part of their lives forever.

The process of writing about the Dutch in Australia has made me more aware of how ethnic groups in the Netherlands deal with growing up in two cultural environments, how they cope with their existence in between two worlds, and how a strong emphasis on integration in Dutch government policy influences the minority groups.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Kim Negenman's thesis was supervised by Dr Nonja Peters at Curtin University. She would also like to thank Mrs Nell Ottenhof and the Wieman family in Cannington for providing her with accommodation for the duration of her study visit.
- 2 F Talen, 'Salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)', 2000.
- 3 Children are recognised as having the ability to rapidly learn another language and to have great mental flexibility. See R Johnston, 'The immigrant child', *Immigration in Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, 1979a, pp. 64-79.
- 4 Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Fact Sheet 8, 2003.
- 5 A Reimer, 'Between two worlds', *The Bold Experiment*, 1995. p. 277
- 6 D Vlam, focus group discussion.
- 7 N Peters, 'Just a piece of paper': Dutch women in Australia', *Being Australian Women: Belongingship, Citizenship and Identity Studies in Western Australian History*, vol. 21, 2000, pp. 53-75.
- 8 K Negenman, 'Identiteitsvorming bij eerste en tweede generatie Nederlandse migranten in Perth', MA thesis, Free University of Amsterdam, 2005.

- 9 A statement made about the expectations of the Australian education as it concerned migrants by Dr. Wyndham, Director-General of Education in New South Wales. See N Peters, *Milk and Honey, but no Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, UWA Press, Perth, WA, 2001, p. 271.
- 10 Vlam, J., 'Reis vol verwachting', *Jouneys of hope: Six Stories of Family Migration to Western Australia 1937-1968*, [publisher], Perth, WA, 1994.
- 11 D Vlam, focus group discussion.
- 12 N Peters, 'Just a piece of paper'.
- 13 F.M focus group discussion.
- 14 N Peters, 'Just a piece of paper'.
- 15 A Ottenhoff, focus group discussion.
- 16 *ibid.*
- 17 P Lieshout, focus group discussion.
- 18 D Vlam, 'Reis vol verwachting'.
- 19 E Burrell, focus group discussion.
- 20 Peters, N., *Milk and honey, but no Gold*.
- 21 N Peters, 'Just a piece of paper'.
- 22 K Negenman, *Identiteitsvorming bij eerste en tweede generatie Nederlandse migranten in Perth*.
- 23 D Vlam, focus group discussion.
- 24 *ibid.*
- 25 N Peters, *Milk and honey, but no Gold*.
- 26 Australians only associated these practices with migrants from Southern and Middle Europe and not Western Europe. See N Peters, 'Just a piece of paper'.
- 27 Peters, N., 'Trading places: Greek, Italian, Dutch and Vietnamese enterprise in Western Australia', PhD thesis, University of Western Australia, 1999.
- 28 D Vlam, focus group discussion.
- 29 E Burrell, focus group discussion.
- 30 L van Houten, focus group discussion.
- 31 R Johnston, 'The immigrant child', *Immigration in Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth WA, 1979, pp. 64-79. N Peters, *Milk and Honey, but no Gold*.
- 32 My (Nonja Peters) research, and that of some of my postgraduates about the 'second-generation' - defined as the children of migrants either born overseas or in Australia - has uncovered a significant degree of mental illness. Anecdotally, this appears to be greater among those who were children of early to mid - primary school age, rather than those who were older at time of arrival.
- 33 Elisabeth Burrell, focus group discussion.
- 34 M van der Sluis, focus group discussion.
- 35 *ibid.*
- 36 *ibid.*
- 37 N Meijer, focus group discussion.
- 38 Personal Communication March 2008.
- 39 F Talen, 'Salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13', 2000.
- 40 D Vlam, focus group discussion.
- 41 Petterson, L., 'Immigration policy during the twentieth century in Australia', *Scandinavian and European migration to Australia and New Zealand: proceedings of the conference held in Stockholm, Sweden, and Turku, Finland June 9-11*, Turku: Institute of Migration, 1998, pp. 42-53.
- 42 D Vlam, 'Reis vol verwachting'.
- 43 F Talen, focus group discussion.
- 44 Peters, N., *Milk and Honey, but No Gold*.
- 45 For second generation migrants identity is more a question of 'becoming' than 'being'. S Hall claims that their position calls less upon tradition and ancestry and more on an individual's ability to utilise all available resources. See S Hall, cited in N Peters, 'Just a piece of paper'.

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SECTION FOUR:

MERCANTILE

Nonja Peters

Mercantile is introduced as the last of the four themes promoted in this book. However, it is in fact relevant to all themes invoked to describe the 400 year Dutch connection to Western Australia - maritime, military, migration and mercantile.

Building and Construction Trades

	4	1	6	UK		
Bricklayer	45✓	30✓	30✓	-	105	105
Carpenter	400✓	40✓	200✓	-	640	640
Joiner	20✓	-	-	-	20	20
Plumber	50✓	20✓	50✓	-	120	120
Painter	40✓	-	27✓	-	67	67
Spray Painter	7✓	7✓	6✓	-	20	20
Plasterer	15✓	15✓	15✓	-	45	45
Woodmachinist 1st Class	✓	-	7✓	7	21	21
Shipwright (OCEANICAL)	✓	-	-	-	27	27
Chainman	20✓	10✓	-	-	30	30
Rigger (Steel scaffolding)	13✓	7✓	-	-	10	10
Bridge Carpenter (Drawn)	30✓	10✓	10✓	-	50	50
Crane Driver (Tramway)	5✓	5✓	-	-	10	10
Builders' labourer	150✓	-	-	-	150	150
Electrician (B. & C)	30✓	3✓	-	-	33	33
Bricksetter	-	6✓	-	-	6	28
Brickburner	-	-	-	20✓	-	20
Brickdrawer	-	21✓	-	-	21	21
Brickmaker (Settlescorburn)	-	13✓	-	-	13	13
Clayholemen	-	-	-	10✓	-	10
Machineman	-	10✓	-	-	10	20
Brick & Pottery worker	27✓	7✓	-	-	34	54
Dragger (Truck drawer)	-	13✓	-	-	13	13
Cement plant operators	-	-	-	50✓	-	50

Rural workers

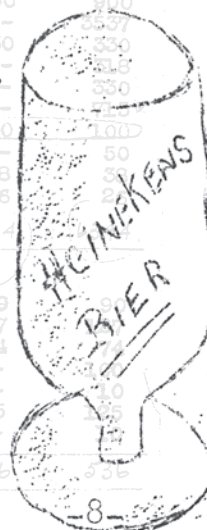
C Married couples (450)	250✓	250✓	100	300	600	900
Farm Hands (must have bled)	-	-	3537✓	-	-	3537
Domestics for farms	100✓	130✓	-	100	230	330
Forestry workers	-	-	-	-	-	330
Timber fallers and getters	-	-	-	-	-	330
Bush sawmill hand	-	-	-	-	-	330
Sleepercutter (Italy)	-	-	-	-	-	330
Town sawmills hands	-	-	-	-	-	330
Tailor out and benchman	28✓	10✓	-	38	50	50
Sawyer	16✓	10✓	-	26	30	30

Process workers

Iron & Steel	20✓	-	20✓	-	40	40
Agricultural machinery	50✓	-	47✓	-	97	97
Munitions	40✓	-	34✓	-	74	74
Aircraft	-	-	-	-	-	100
Fertilizers	-	-	-	-	-	10
Electrical machinery & Equipment	30✓	-	30✓	-	95	95
Railway equipment	-	-	-	-	-	10
Hands	145✓	30✓	13✓	-	306	306
lizers	15✓	5✓	15✓	-	35	35
als	20✓	20✓	20✓	-	60	60
Bricks & Tiles	10✓	7✓	10✓	-	27	27
Electrical machinery	5✓	4✓	5✓	-	14	14
	50✓	36✓	50✓	-	136	136

SCHENKVERGUNNING AANWEZIG.

GLAZIEN MEEBRENGEN.



TOEGANGS-PRIJS

6 SHILLING PER PER
inc. tax.

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines mercantile: ‘as of or relating to the business of buying and selling products to earn money and of or relating to trade or merchants.’¹ The maritime trading pursuits of the VOC gave birth to Dutch mercantilism and the two centuries of incredible wealth that subsequently followed. The Mercantile focus in this chapter relates to the history of recruitment of the Dutch for the Australian labour market in the immediate post WWII period, by a Commonwealth Government pursuing trades skills to develop its economy. It associates the disproportionately larger number of Dutch (compared to many other ethnic groups) who became self-employed, to how they positioned themselves in the commercial life of Western Australia (WA).

Research on immigrant entrepreneurship carried out in Europe, the United States of America (USA), Canada and Britain (UK) has shown that immigrant enterprise has played an important role in the economic progress of a variety of immigrant groups in host environments. Research also reveals that in Australia, immigrants - as in other host environments in the present day and in the past - are over-represented among the self-employed. However, there are distinct differences in the proportion of the self-employed amongst the various immigrant groups. In Western Australia during the peak of postwar migration 1951-1981, the Dutch, along with the Greeks and Italians, had the highest self-employed profiles of all other ethnic groups. The conceptual approaches that originated from attempting to explain the overrepresentation in business of particular ethnic groups, variously attributed the emergent differentials to a group's culture, structural barriers, ecological factors, global economic factors, situational influences, the opportunity structure, the need to be upwardly mobile, or combinations thereof.² My research with Greek, Italian, Dutch and Vietnamese self-employed, also noted the importance of the individual in the decision making process.

In this Section, my own chapter sets the scene for the vignettes by Rietveld, Woerlee and Ward, Plug and Wieman that follow later. Their focus is starting up and running a business in a host environment with a particular skills set. As such, their stories convey the cultural, personal and social price – the risks, pain, adventure, passion and hard work, challenges and benefits that entailed ‘making it in postwar Australia’ as a self-employed migrant. The chapter by Arnold Stroobach traces the impact of Dutch mercantilism in Australia in the 21st century.

ENDNOTES

I <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mercantile>

2 Peters, N., 'Mixed Embeddedness: Does it really explain immigrant enterprise?' *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, Vol.8, Nos 1- 2. 2002

[illegible]

Figure 1
Commonwealth Government of Australia
requisition document showing the type of
Dutch immigrants recruited by Australia in
1950. NAA.445/1, Item 118/1/4 Courtesy:
NAA

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

DUTCH LABOUR IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Nonja Peters



Figure 1
'Limburgia', the Family Ottenhof's grocery store c 1960s. Courtesy: Nell Ottenhof.

INTRODUCTION

The rate and content of migration to Australia correlates closely with its economic history. Migrants have therefore always been an integral part of the workforce planning and also reflect the country's changing fortunes. Post WWII, during the 1950s and 1960s, Dutch migrants recruited for their trades skills and their strong work ethic were among the most wanted employees by Australian employers.

Income statistics indicate that the Dutch have made a good living here, and that is also how they assess their migration. Dutch males were well thought of as house builders, painters, tool-makers and business people. First generation Dutch women are lauded as first-rate homemakers, as dressmakers, beauticians, market gardeners, cleaners, nurses aids and less frequently office workers.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Censuses from the 1980s to 2000 show the Dutch, along with Greeks and Italians had the highest self-employment profile of all European migrants to emigrate to WA after WWII. They were located in businesses that ranged from market stalls to multi-million dollar corporations. These entrepreneurs were noted as viewing their entry into the self-employed sector as being either a source of economic survival or a source of economic advancement.

First generation Dutch tradespersons were prominent as self-employed contractors. Their concentration in trades-related industries was a result of the Australian Government's selection procedures pre-migration. The location of the second generation in sales-related occupations or businesses was a function of a booming economy, and also of parents being more inclined to send their children into the overabundant labour market at 15, rather than into an apprenticeship or higher education. Many of the second generation attended night-school to gain specific skill sets to improve their job opportunities.

In terms of 'big business' they were/are most prominent in shipbuilding - the foremost ones being *ASI Ships*, established by the Verboon Brothers and *Austal*, established by John Rothwell. Dutch professionals are currently also employed in management positions as architects, engineers, accountants, health professionals, as well as in local government, town planning, entertainment and academia. The Netherlands-born have in addition made a name for themselves in fine arts such as painting, sculpture, textiles, installations and photography.

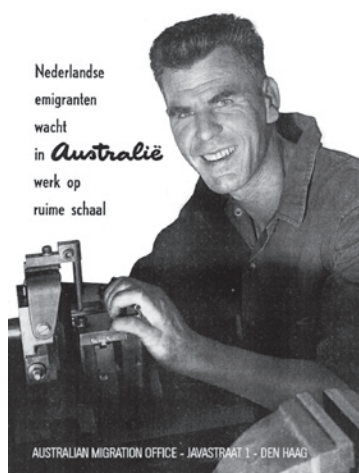


Figure 2
Australian Propaganda - seeking Dutch skilled Trades. Courtesy: Australian Migration Office, NL.

Table Three

Birthplace By Labour Market Status Western Australia 1991 - Males

Country	Employer %	% Self-Employed	Employees %	Unpaid Helper %	Unemployed %	Total Employed	Total %
Australia	7.2	11.9	67.5	0.5	12.8	289493	546603
Vietnam	4.8	8.0	50.3	1.3	35.7	2692	4264
Netherlands	10.5	18.4	60.2	0.3	10.9	4128	6222
Greece	14.2	17.2	55.8	0.8	12.1	1151	1858
Italy	15.1	18.8	56.1	0.7	9.3	9161	14570
Yugoslavia	6.5	13.8	64.5	0.4	14.7	4213	6828
Poland	4.0	15.6	55.1	0.3	24.9	1712	3594
Malaysia	8.3	7.7	68.5	0.4	15.2	4167	7642
Germany	7.3	15.7	62.4	0.6	14.1	3580	4945
UK & Ireland	5.2	11.9	68.8	0.2	13.8	76265	108826
Other	6.3	10.2	67.5	0.3	15.8	47383	71976
Undefined	4.6	9.2	63.5	0.8	21.8	1517	16381
Total	7.8	11.1	67.2	0.4	13.5	445424	793709

Source ABS 1991 Census for WA.

Table Four

Birthplace By Labour Market Status Western Australia 1991 - Females

Country	Employer %	% Self-Employed	Employees %	Unpaid Helper %	Unemployed	Total Employed	Total %
Australia	4.7	7.8	75.8	1.4	10.2	211540	550896
Vietnam	5.3	9.2	40.2	2.2	42.9	1907	3951
Netherlands	4.4	13.2	69.6	3.0	7.7	2220	5527
Greece	11.2	18.1	59.0	2.7	8.9	525	1690
Italy	10.6	15.9	64.3	3.3	6.3	3814	12301
Yugoslavia	5.0	11.0	70.9	1.2	11.8	2429	5814
Poland	2.8	7.8	63.9	1.9	23.6	1213	3516
Malaysia	4.1	5.9	74.2	1.1	14.6	3475	8395
Germany	6.8	10.9	69.3	1.3	11.7	2308	5217
UK & Ireland	3.8	7.6	64.8	1.0	10.1	51540	108490
Other	4.1	7.2	72.9	1.1	14.6	33430	72413
Undefined	4.0	6.4	71.9	1.2	16.5	951	14906
Total	4.6	7.9	75.2	1.3	10.9	315442	793116

Source ABS 1991 Census for WA.

The focus of this chapter is the period from 1947 to 1970, when one of the main criteria for the Commonwealth Government's deliberate enticement of emigrants to Australia was to overcome crucial labour shortages in heavy industry, the burgeoning building and construction sectors and public utilities and to restore essential services to pre-war levels and maintain the war-boostered economy. Those most sought after by Australia, and in order of preference, were persons with trade skills, semi-skilled machine operatives



Figure 3
Immigration propaganda - Australian Government in collaboration with the Government of the Netherlands.
Courtesy: Australian Migration Office, NL.



Figure 4
Dutch Butcher c 1950s.
Courtesy: van der Klashorst Family.



Figure 5
Collie Ice Delivery business. c1950s.
Courtesy: Rikki Schaafsma.

and other vocational skills, followed by unskilled labour - although these were not always the skill sets which relinquishing governments wanted to lose. It was at the time much harder to gain entry to Australia as a person with higher educational qualifications and a great deal of professional closure stopped many academics, doctors, lawyers and architects from finding employment, until they had completed an Australian accredited degree.¹

In line with immigration recruitment procedures, over forty per cent of those Dutch males selected to come to Western Australia between December 1951 and February 1955, were classified as craftsmen, in contrast to only 18 per cent of the local workforce.² The trades that figured most among arrivals included carpenters, fitters, painters, electricians, tool makers and bakers. A low 13 per cent were tertiary workers (in contrast to 31 per cent of the local workforce). The rest were semi-skilled operatives.³ The largest number of Dutch metal tradesmen - toolmakers - were employed mainly by large engineering firms, particularly 'Chamberlains Tractors Pty Ltd', which produced farm machinery. Dutch un- and semi-skilled operatives were also employed as labourers by the company constructing the Kwinana Oil Refinery, and after that at the refinery itself.

In contrast to other migrant groups, the greater marketability of Dutch trades skills resulted in a rapid dispersal of tradesmen throughout the Australian organisational structure. The Dutch, like most first generation migrant's trades skills were especially important because they were being inserted into the Australian labour market, that was in any case experiencing a dearth of skilled workers, without apprenticeship costs.⁴ This was thus an added advantage for Australia.

However, since selection did not hold the promise of a particular job,⁵ when immigrants set foot in Australia their most immediate concern was to get a job. The official procedure for assisted migrants was to be assigned work by the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) in accordance with the Government's placement priorities. All migrant reception centres had a CES Office. Conversely, the unassisted were free to procure a job of their choice. Most migrants commenced the process of looking for a job with a visit to the nearest employment office in the state where they had disembarked.

On arrival, the skilled - trades faced an additional requirement. In spite of the satisfactory assessment of Dutch trades training by the Eltham Mission, once the foreign-trained tradesmen arrived here the Australia unions insisted they prove conclusively that their 'training and ability' was on a par with local standards, via a test set by the Local Trades Committee.⁶ Migrants lacking English language capacity often failed these tests many times, even with the aid of a translator - supplied at a cost to the migrant. The stress was relieved somewhat when they discovered they could work under an Australian tradesman, until their English was of a sufficient standard to pass the test. This was also the way many painters and plasterers acquired their papers and union membership.

On the other hand, Dutch bakers were sent for testing to two bakehouses. Failure by Dutch bakers to gain recognition in their trade was mainly due to the vastly different baking methods in the two countries. In fact, Dutch bakers found it easier to gain recognition in Australia as pastry cooks than as bakers. Many Dutch became independent tradesmen to avoid these onerous procedures. Even so Dutch trade recognition was high compared to many other immigrant groups. In WA, 34 per cent of the Dutch metal tradesmen who applied for recognition between January 1950 and March 1955 were successful, compared to 32 per cent of the British and only 20 per cent of the Italian.⁷ The first post-war Dutch migrants to enter WA, also found union power repressive.

Many Dutch migrants whom I interviewed from the cohort of immediate post-war arrivals, believed that Australian trade unions deliberately kept alive an image of 'the employer as the natural exploiter of the labouring man,' to enable them to maintain a negative relationship between employer and employees. Consequently many Dutch joined the union anyway, because they felt they had no option. This was especially the case in WA, where a preference clause operated in the building industry which effectively meant that preference was given to workers with union membership.⁸ Dutch religions who were ideologically against union membership, negotiated with the unions to have their fees paid to a charity, thus enabling them to work on union sites. This was certainly the method for members of the *Gereformeerde Kerk* (Free Reformed Church) in Albany.

Regardless of the tendency for the Dutch to find work in their own specific occupations, they also showed an inclination to seize any better opportunities offered by other occupations. Sales was a particularly popular choice, especially among the unskilled. This was primarily because sales, insurance or real estate (being the most popular), offered greater financial rewards than most other types of work. Also those professional Dutch, who were excluded from working in their profession in Australia, were however able to find employment in sales and small business. As a consequence the Dutch in Australia most often found the employment they wanted.⁹ The extent to which selection worked towards positive readjustment for the Dutch, is perhaps best noted by the fact that the Netherlands-born had higher than average incomes, whilst those from Italy and Greece maintained the lowest.¹⁰

Employers placed great value on Dutch employees because they were 'ambitious, hard workers, who were keen to do overtime, to save enough money to buy or build a home, or to become self-employed.' Dutch researchers noted that 17 per cent of prospective Dutch emigrants had specified that 'to become self-employed', was the principal motivation for their emigration. Another sixty per cent 'hoped' to become self-employed.¹¹ The philosophical basis for the desire to be self-employed, was linked to the traditional Dutch ideology that revered the entrepreneur and placed business ownership high on the hierarchy of acceptable career paths.¹²



Figure 6
Wieman doormaker. Courtesy: Wieman Family.



Figure 7
Mrs van Welie selling home-grown vegies to Mrs Gielens – late 1950s. Courtesy: van Welie Family.

Researchers also found the Dutch were keen to work hard, long days and sought employment which offered the opportunity to earn large bonuses and overtime money, in order to speed up the process of becoming independent tradespersons or shopkeepers.¹³ Information supplied to Dutch emigration officers by prospective emigrants, lead to them to speculate that at least 50 per cent of Dutch immigrants would become independent tradesmen or shopkeepers. ¹⁴ However, employment satisfaction, a full employment

Table One

Birthplace by Occupation Western Australia Census 1961 and 1976 - Males.

BP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Aust												
1961	6.39	7.82	9.24	6.09	19.6	1.99	8.67	34.8	3.38	1.20.	.65	149 321
1976	9.67	8.66	8.81	6.20	13.4	1.71	7.46	34.6	3.80	.97	5.02	211 153
Greece												
1961	.85	10.17	.42	11.08	21.2	1.28	4.71	39.5	8.99	.....	1.71	1 867
1976	2.38	10.00	3.80	8.33	5.05	1.07	6.72	52.0	7.61	.05	3.03	1 680
Italy												
1961	.41	4.18	.31	2.84	19.3	5.59	4.58	58.8	2.60	.05	1.28	12 216
1976	2.68	6.27	2.31	4.09	9.7	1.29	7.14	59.9	4.15	.01	2.42	12 642
Netherlands												
1961	5.17	6.2	3.89	5.30	8.16	.82	9.03	54.2	5.35	.60	1.14	4 616
1976	10.80	10.41	5.36	5.50	5.69	1.22	7.19	46.4	4.65	.66	2.04	4 812

Source: ABS Census Data for WA - 1961 and 1976.

Table One and Two Birthplace by Occupation Code: 1 = Professional and Technical; 2 = Administration, Executive & Management; 3 = Clerical; 4 = Sales; 5 = Farmers, Fishermen, Hunters etc.; 6 = Miners, Quarrymen and related; 7 = Transport and Communication; 8 = Labourer, Production Worker & Tradesperson; 9 = Service, Sport & Recreation; 10 = Armed Services; 11 = Inadequately described; 12 = Total Employed Workforce.

Table Two

Birthplace by Occupation, Western Australia - 1961 and 1976 - Females.

BP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Aust.												
1961	16.3	4.04	31.7	16.08	4.71	.....	2.53	5.74	17.26	.09	1.52	47,987
1976	15.3	2.56	31.3	11.97	8.95	.02	2.39	4.02	15.18	.08	8.24	1110,107
Greece												
1961	1.03	8.24	2.06	24.05	17.5 25.1	.....	.34	23.4	18.21	.....	5.15	291
1976	1.87	2.41	12.8	18.65	.....	.....	.....	29.7	21.47	.....	8.05	745
Italy												
1961	2.40	4.44	6.56	12.60	8.25	.....	.38	35.9	26.90	.....	3.57	1 539
1976	2.24	2.04	16.0	12.49	10.7	.....	.53	20.5	24.89	.....	10.7	4 507
Netherlands												
1961	11.2	4.54	18.7	22.84	1.16	.....	.87	10.3	27.58	.....	2.12	1 033
1976	14.3	3.39	24.5	12.93	5.28	.....	2.74	5.87	21.58	.10	9.37	1 856

Source: ABS Census Data for WA - 1961 and 1976.

economy and three decades of boom, kept most first generation Dutch employed rather than self-employed, although this changed as their less skilled children entered the workforce.¹⁵

Since the 1950s when the bulk of Dutch migrants arrived in Western Australia, there has been a steady growth in their participation in the self-employed sector. Despite their slow start, by 1991 when approximately 10 per cent of Australia-born males and 8 per cent females were self-employed, the rate among Dutch males at 18.2 per cent (females 13.0 per cent) was only slightly less than that of the Italians at 18.8, who had the highest self-employed profile of all the ethnic groups [see Table One]. The majority of these were second generation Dutch – those who arrived as children in the 1950s and 1960s. In contrast to their parents, because the second generation had most of their schooling in Australia, they had two sets of networks to utilise in business – their migrant networks and also local peer group networks – which gave them a competitive advantage in business.

HOW THE DUTCH WENT ABOUT ENTERING THE BUSINESS SECTOR

The following extracts from oral history interviews which I conducted for my PhD on migrant entrepreneurship, show how the Dutch went about entering the self-employed sector in Western Australia. There are of course a myriad of further examples that are unfortunately beyond the scope of this chapter.

A number of the tradesmen in the first generation sample I interviewed, became sub-contractors in the building and construction industry almost as soon as they had arrived in Australia, despite a lack of capital. Most of this group set about it in much the same way as John:

I arrived here with only £4. I only worked for a boss for three months. I could see how much money he was making so I put



Figure 8
Nonja and Nancy Peters running the Greenmount grocery store while their parents were on holiday in the Netherlands, 1974. Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 9
Toodyay Café
The Peters and Maasen families established and ran this store together for 18 months from 1951 -1953. Courtesy: Peters Collection.

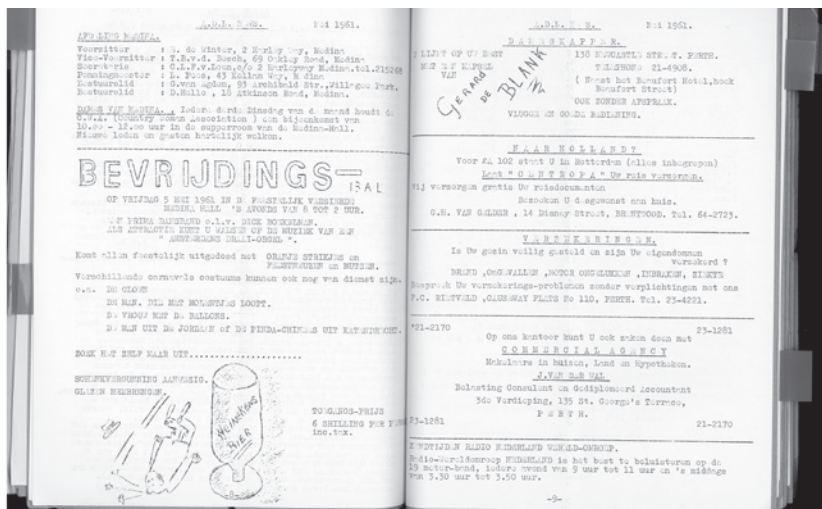


Figure 10
Toodyay Café advertisement in the local Toodyay paper c1952.

Figure 11
ADL News letter Business adverts: Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



Figure 12
Tutts Broodjes Winkel CBD Perth newspaper advertisement, c1960s.

an add in the paper - 'Painter Wants Work', P.O. Box No. I went to see the people that contacted me - personally. Bought a 1928 Ford Model A and away I went. During the 1950s building boom I employed 15 people. I worked for builders around the metropolitan area and up north...and made lots of money.¹⁶

Many sole tradesmen moved back and forth between subcontracting and employment throughout the course of their working lives, depending upon where the greatest financial rewards were available at a given time.

As noted before, the reasons and ways into the business sector varied. My father affords an example of how self-employment appealed to the unskilled. A musician in the Netherlands, he started work in Australia as a steward in the prestigious Claremont Sailing Club. He left that position to work in the Silks Department (fabric and textiles) in the basement at *Boans* Department Store in Murray Street, Perth. However, he was advised to leave that job, by the doctor on the *MS Maetsuyker*, a ship that plied between the NEI and Fremantle until the hand over of sovereignty from NL to Indonesia in December 1949, because the artificial lighting was disorienting him. Therefore, eighteen months after arrival in 1951, we moved to Toodyay, a country town about 90 kilometres from Perth, where he was employed as manager of the Toodyay Club. A few months later, my parents and another Dutch couple – Jan and Tanya Maasen – started a café in the town from scratch. They hired a premise, and the men made the tables and chairs for the café, but hired refrigerators. They sold hamburgers, grills, fish and chips, steak and eggs and so forth. The local next door gave them lessons in how to cook a steak - Australian style – and as a result, the café was full to capacity, especially on weekends after the local footy match and for late suppers. Local primary school children loved the Dutch style chips in cone shaped paper wraps, that the women prepared especially for them at lunchtime.

When we moved to Northam in 1953, another rural Wheatbelt town about 30 kilometres from Toodyay, Dad ran the local *Malvern Star* bike store, then sold *Watkins* products door-to-door, and finally sold Insurance for Colonial Mutual Life (CML). In 1966 he left insurance to run the 'one-stop shop' which he and my mother had purchased freehold in Glen Forest, selling groceries and greengrocery – it also functioned as a liquor store (Gallon License) and newsagency with a paper delivery round. Three family members also joined him in the business. He purchased two more delicatessens - one on Greenmount and another in Cottesloe. In this way, a family business culture developed under our father's leadership. My three siblings now all operate businesses, which include a Honda franchise, Office furniture, office outfit factory, a lighting business and a country grocery and delicatessen store. I am the odd-one-out, although my late husband started married life in 1968, building wheat silos at farms throughout WA. However, I write about migrants in business and worked in and sold the family businesses when my father passed away.



Figure 13
Noordeman Engineering Firm.
Courtesy: Noordeman Family.

Bert Creemers (deceased), who arrived in Australia in 1955, had a similar story to tell. He recalls:

When I first arrived here I started off making margarine for Meadow Lea, then I was a brickies labourer working up in the bush. When that fell through I started as a bread vendor and even had my own bread round. I also sold Mr Whippy ice creams over the weekends to make extra money. The baker had me establish many 'Bread Rounds' as I was good at attracting customers. Once established, the boss would put someone else to work on that round while I set about starting another one. I decided I might be better off with a milk round and became a milk vendor but I wasn't really suited to night work — I needed my sleep — and I had a bad car accident. Following my rehabilitation from the accident, I started work as a truck driver carting fresh skins and bales of wool, that is until there was a strike on the wharf and we all [employees] were 'turfed out'. Shortly after, I met a friend who had made it to insurance supervisor and he got me involved selling insurance.¹⁷

For the last 18 months before his return to the Netherlands, Bert sold insurance for 'Associated National', which he described as the 'daughter company' of a Netherlands Firm established in 1845. Bert later gained a real estate license.

Immediately on arrival here in 1950, Peter Noordeman, a trained diesel mechanic, found a job as a travelling field services mechanic in his area of expertise. This entailed servicing the tractors of farmers around the Wheatbelt area. In 1966 he decided to go it alone, and he established a business in the backyard of his home. Many of his clients employed him in this new role. However, he did not start expanding until 1980 when his son joined the firm. They bought a property in Welshpool and erected a custom-made building. In 2014, Noordeman Diesel Pty, Ltd, Welshpool, was still going strong under the leadership of his son. The second generation sons or daughters of migrants who have a local education and networks, are often the catalyst for taking first generation firms into the corporate level.

Dirk Verboon, a Netherlands trained marine engineer, found his way back into his trade of boat building more by chance than design. He notes:

...When dad came to visit me [from NL] in the early 1960s and he became bored, he decided to build a boat. He grabbed my wife to go and buy him the needed materials because he couldn't speak English and because my brother and I said we were too busy delivering bread. When he had finished that one we (Dirk and brother Nick) sold it and we started getting contracts for more boats. We ended up building quite a few in a yard in Osborne Park. We had a number of Dutchmen working with us. To start with we all kept our day jobs and built boats at night. It became so lucrative that my brother and



Figure 14
Spandbroek Business Albany c1967.
Courtesy: Spanbroek Family.



Figure 15
Dad Verboon - while on a holiday to see his sons in Western Australia - became the catalyst that led to the establishment of ASI Ships. Courtesy: Dick Verboon.

I started a company and shifted the business to a property in Naval Base with a large slipway. The other Dutchies also left their other jobs and worked for us full time.

The Australian Ship Building Industries Ltd (ASI) that developed from these humble family beginnings, eventually had the capacity to build all types of sophisticated 'small ships' to any world classification (Lloyds, ABS and DET Norske Veritas) (ASI Prospectus 1985). ASI and Austal (Ships) – an even bigger shipbuilding Corporation established by John Rothwell – hold the status of the largest businesses established by Dutch migrants in WA.

First generation Dutch males from upper-middle class backgrounds often entered the business sector, because in Australia they were free to attempt new endeavours unfettered by their family's working tradition. Ric Smits, an accountant from an upper-middle class background, explains:

I went to university for a couple of years. I studied for a job in the Indonesian Civil Service, but after a year with the troubles in Indonesia and my rejection for military service - a requirement for the job I shifted to Law. However, I couldn't settle in it and shifted to economics and accountancy. But you also have to do years and years as an assistant and do exams every three years. I started as an assistant accountant. However, when a recession hit as the youngest I was retrenched. It was the time of migration and my neighbour had migrated to Canada so we migrated to Australia in 1951. I started with an accountancy firm in Perth but it was the same it was going to take years to become a fully-fledged accountant. I would have to do all the exams again. The pay was £11 per week and for that you had to have decent clothes, cigarettes car and all sorts of things. At the same time a farmhand in the Wheatbelt earned £9 per week all found, house the lot. And there you could do what you wanted. We took the farmhand job in Bruce Rock. Then shifted to a similar job in Donnybrook. I had an argument there with the farmer, and within 24 hours I arranged with the CES for a job with a saw mill. We shifted to a mill house in Northcliffe. The running water the CES talked about came straight from the sky - there was no water laid onto the house. We stayed there until we could afford to buy an abandoned group settlement farm with an old dilapidated farmhouse on it - I had always wanted to go farming. You couldn't do that in Holland, you couldn't change from one profession to the other. The social structure was fixed. You couldn't study at university and then become a bulldozer driver even if you earned more...that way.

For men like Ric Smits, self-employment in Australia endowed them with a greater degree of personal and working autonomy than they would ever have had in the Netherlands. Researchers distinguish between *innovating* and *conservative* migration. The former is 'when a person migrates as a

means of achieving the new, the latter when a person migrates to retain what they have had - they move geographically to remain where they are in all other respects.¹⁸ Smits and the other examples in this chapter fit the *innovating* category. A number of Dutch who also fitted this category, gave the impression that they were the 'black sheep' of their families and that it had been a relief for both sides when they emigrated. For example, Henry, who had been an administrator and time-and-motion researcher in the Netherlands and had hated it, was able to become a truck driver in Australia, which he loved. This would not have been possible in the Netherlands of the 1950s. He would have been expected to uphold the family status with an appropriate job. The employment reality for Dutch females differed entirely.

DUTCH WOMEN AND THE WORKFORCE

In Australia most married Dutch women were enveloped in domestic life and the production of children, in much the same way as they had done in the Netherlands. Despite having attained suffrage, the working wife was still uncommon and women remained subservient socially, legally and domestically.¹⁹ These inequalities were most clearly exemplified in the strict division of labour: men earned the family's living so that the women would not have to work outside the house. As late as 1968, the Netherlands still had the lowest rate of working wives and the largest number of male-dominated jobs of all the European Community Countries (ECC).²⁰ Dutch women's labour market participation in Australia - around 18 per cent in the mid 1950s - differed little from that in the Netherlands. This was also the ideology in post-war Australia. At close of war, the women who had been employed by the war effort were expected to go home and have lots of babies, who would eventually bolster the labour market. The childcare set up during the war to support women's war work in employment, mysteriously disappeared.

Women who did want to work, were thus constrained by the lack of kinship support and a disenchantment with the quality of available childcare.²¹ The size of many Dutch families would have also been a contributing factor to women's 'stay-at-home' status. The majority of Dutch women in business were, therefore, usually partners in a family firm.

The position of the second generation women, differed little from the first. The majority still sought self-fulfilment as wives and mothers. By 1961 their workplace participation, Australia-wide, had only increased to 20.4 per cent. A quarter of these were seamstresses or clothing factory workers, a similar number were clerk-typists and the remainder worked as shop assistants, domestics or cleaners. A small percentage were nurses and teachers.²² Many younger Dutch acquired commercial and other skills at night school while also working at a day job. A small percentage gained university degrees - some after marriage in the mid-1970s, when the Whitlam Government supported free university education. I am one of these women. However, I had also worked in the family businesses when my father became too ill. After his death I sold his three businesses to secure enough finances to purchase a



Figure 16
Kitchen Staff at Holden Camp.
Courtesy: van Welie Family.



Figure 17
Floraco Flower grower.
Courtesy: Rene de Kok.

house and car outright for my mother, who lived on for another thirty years as a widow. One second generation women I interviewed had a very successful recruitment agency, but the majority were running businesses from home, as the childcare situation had not improved and they were involved in some form of hairdressing, beauty therapy or dressmaking.

EDUCATION

Very few post-war Dutch had higher education qualifications. A university education was more likely among the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) Dutch, evacuated to WA for rehabilitation from internment camps. For example Dirk Drok, an evacuee from the NEI who arrived here in 1945, had enough credits from his NEI education to enable him to enrol in 1947 at the University of Western Australia (UWA) to study languages. An Australian family, who had befriended Dirk's younger brother while he was being educated at Wesley College in the pre-war period - when the family still lived in Java - had been willing to sponsor the Droks as migrants, which enabled them to stay in Australia. (see the Drok vignette and story on www.daaag.org)

The trend towards a dearth of tertiary qualifications among the Dutch continued into the next generation. Aldridge provides as an example, the 230 person-strong eastern states *Hervormde Kerk* congregation, that as late as 1991, had not a single member who had or was attending a university.²³ The third generation, thus children born to second generation Dutch, are finally changing these statistics. The second and third generation Dutch are found in all levels of the Australian workforce, including the professional fields. There is another more recent category of Dutch in Australia, which exists at the 'top end of town'. These are the Dutch Multinationals that have established themselves in Australia, who bring out Dutch professionals for specific periods of time - as expatriates (see Stroobach chapter).

To conclude, I would say that the Dutch and their progeny who stayed have made a major contribution to the Australian economy. There are of course a plethora more stories and personal experiences that have yet to be told and this chapter provides only a brief overview of Dutch employment in WA. More can be found on the 'Dutch Australians At A Glance' website www.daaag.org. Perhaps you too have a personal story which you would like to add to the website?²⁴

ENDNOTES

- 1 Peters, N., *Trading Places: Greek, Italian, Dutch and Vietnamese Enterprise in Western Australia*, PhD thesis, University of Western Australia (WA), 2000; 2002; Peters, N, Mixed Embeddedness: Does it really explain immigrant enterprise? *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, May; Peters, N., 'The Dutch migration to Australia: sixty years on' in M. Schrovner and M van Faassen (eds) *It's Time to Burn the Wooden Shoes in Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis*, 2010: Year 7, No. 2; 2011: Selling a dream - expectation versus reality - post-war Dutch and other migration to Australia 1945 - 1970, *AEMI Journal* Volume 8, pp. 49-63; Bottomley, G., *From Another Place, Migration and the Politics of Culture*, Oakleigh, Vic, 1992; Bottomley, G., 'Culture, Ethnicity, and the Politics/Poetics of representation', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, Vol 28.no.2.pp.208-23.

- 2 Appleyard, R.T., The Economic Absorption of Dutch and Italian Immigrants into Western Australia 1947 to 1955, *R.E.M.P. Bulletin*, 1956, Vol.4. No.3, 45-54, 51;
- 3 Beijer, G., *Characteristics of Overseas Immigrants*, The Hague, 1961.
- 4 Hempel, J.A., 'Dutch Migrants in Queensland', Canberra : Australian National University, 1960, 38, both noted that the type of migrant wishing to come to Australia sometimes changed. For example during the mid 1950s there was a decrease in the proportion of Dutch farmers, tradesmen and professionals and a relative increase in farm labourers, clerical, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.
- 5 Appleyard, R.T. 'The Economic Absorption of Dutch and Italian Immigrants into Western Australia 1947 to 1955'. *R.E.M.P. Bulletin*, Vol.4. No.3, 1956, 91.
- 6 Peters, 2000.
- 7 Appleyard 1956 also noted that of the 154 Dutch persons who had applied for electricians certificates, 74 (48 per cent) passed the test. Metal tradesmen comprised a disproportionately large number of the Dutch tradesmen in WA and Queensland Dutch.
- 8 Johnson, R. (ed.), *Immigrants in Western Australia*, Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 1979, 88.
- 9 This was additionally confirmed by the high percentage (74 per cent) of Dutch migrants who reported having had no employment problems after arriving. The fact that 85 per cent of the Beijer et al. sample were content with their work against 66 per cent of the those not working in their area, led him to conclude that employment in one's own occupational field was an important stabilising factor in the resettlement process, and that work satisfaction was related to it (see also Hempel, 1960, 23; & Appleyard, 1956).
- 10 See ABS Census for Population and Housing cross-classifieds, occupation by birthplace for 1976.
- 11 Beijer, G. Frijda, N.H. Hofstede, B.P & Wentholt, R, and Hofstee, E.W., *Some Remarks on Selective Migration*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952.
- 12 Beijer, G. Frijda, N.H. Hofstede, B.P & Wentholt, R. 1961. *Characteristics of Overseas Immigrants*. The Hague: Government Printing and Publishing Office. Beijer et al noted that the desire to be self-employed was strongest among the 45 years and older among whom nearly 75 per cent desired to be self-employed. Moreover, they claimed the desire to be self-employed was strongest in prospective Dutch emigrants among whom personal ambition was uppermost. Beijer et al noted that of the among those who cited self-employment as the principal motive for emigrating that: seven per cent had achieved this within two years and that 30 per cent of these had been self-employed in the Netherlands - although not always in the same occupation. Around 37 per cent were in the building-trades (carpenters, plasterers, brick layers, painters); the others range from rag-and-bone-man to bee keeper (the sample contained no agrarians, 1961, 288.)
- 13 Hempel 1960; Appleyard 1956; Zubrzycki 1964; Julien, R. 'The Dutch in Tasmania : An Exploration of Ethnicity and Immigrant Adaptation'. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. Department of Sociology. Faculty of Arts: University of Tasmania., 1989..
- 14 Appleyard 1956, 88.
- 15 Cahill, D., 'Lift the low sky: Are Dutch Australians Assimilationist or Accommodationists' in: N. Peters, *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, Perth, 2006, 218.
- 16 Peters 2000.
- 17 Bert Creemers interview, 1992.
- 18 Hofstede. B.P. *Thwarted Exodus*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1964: 192 cites Petersen.
- 19 Oudijk, C. 'The Netherlands: In the Unions, the Parties, the Streets and the Bedrooms'. In Robin Morgan (ed.) *Sisterhood is Global* : New York.
'The Netherlands: In the Unions, the Parties, the Streets and the Bedrooms'. In Robin Morgan (ed.) *Sisterhood is Global*, New York, 1984: According to Oudijk, in 1960 there were still only 6.8 per cent married women in the Dutch workforce compared to 27 per cent in Britain.
- 20 Huggett, F. E., *The Modern Netherlands*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971, 70.
- 21 Some young Dutch children were forced to take younger sick siblings to see a doctor while their mothers were at work.
- 22 Beltz, C. 1964. Dutch Migration to Australia, 1946-1961. Unpublished Thesis. Canberra: Australian National University, 196; Zubrzycki, J. *Settlers of the Latrobe Valley: A Sociological study of immigrants in the Brown Coal Industry in Australia*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1964 , 99; Hempel, 1960, 41. Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data, birthplace by Occupation for 1981 show that Dutch females had moved away from clerical and domestic jobs, 34.5 per cent were involved in community services.
- 23 Waldinger, R, Ward, R. & Aldrich, H. 1990. *Ethnic Entrepreneurs*. London: Sage Series on Race and Ethnic Relations Vol.1. 151.
- 24 Dutch Australians At A Glance: Acknowledging the Past, Preserving the Present and Future, *AEMI Journal* 2010, Volume 7, pp. 42-49.

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

EMIGRATION: MY STORY

Peter Rietveld

In the early 1950s my father considered the possibility of emigrating out of the Netherlands. He had six grown up children, some still at home, and had encountered difficult times. His flourishing taxi business did not survive the ups and downs of the war and it was difficult to make a living out of his Import-Export Business. In 1953, when my mother passed away at the young age of 49, the idea of starting again in a new country re-kindled in my father's thoughts.

As a young man, my father had been Second Mate in the Merchant Navy and had also lived in New York. Consequently the idea of setting up home elsewhere was not too difficult to contemplate. Initially his focus was on New Zealand. However, this changed when an acquaintance who was employed by the Netherlands Emigration Service conveyed his enthusiasm for Perth. He said, [to father] "if you ever experience any homesickness, just visit beautiful Kings Park in the middle of Perth and your homesickness will soon disappear." This must have convinced my father into thinking Perth was a better option for our 'new home'.

With hindsight it would be considered irresponsible to make such an important decision to relocate the family. For a start Australia wanted trades or unskilled labour and neither my father nor his children were tradespeople or manual workers. His eldest son Frits (1928) had an engineering degree and worked for Philips as a design draftsman and Ruud (1931) had a Merchant Navy degree and was Third Mate with the Merchant Navy. Hugo (1932) completed Grammar School and qualified as a chemical analyst working for Philips' Research Laboratories, José (1935) worked in the office of the local hospital, my twin sister Meta (1936) did our house-hold work after our mother had passed away, and I (Peter 1936), had completed a Diploma at Technical School and was employed as a Product Design draftsman.

In addition, and from a social point of view, all three brothers had partners. Frits had already been in a relationship for several years with Trudy Reichardt. She was prepared to come along, with the proviso that they would get married first. Ruud was engaged but his fiancé decided to follow him later. Hugo was also engaged but his fiancé had to stay behind, as her parents would not consent to her leaving the Netherlands. Her family nonetheless, arranged accommodation for the three brothers through kinship networks in Perth upon their arrival.

Our father decided that the family would make the move in three stages. The older three brothers first, followed by the three youngest, with my father to follow last. They must have realised at the time how difficult it would be for Ruud to find work. The local Council in the Netherlands ran

Figure 1
Rietveld family home early 1950s
Courtesy: Peter Rietveld.



special re-skilling programs, which Ruud followed, and he qualified with a Boilermaker-Welder certificate. Australia, they were informed, had particular interest in people with these skills.

On 25 January 1955, the three older brothers as well as Frits' wife Trudy all boarded the *Sibajak*. It arrived in Fremantle on 24 February 1955. They made their home to Kadina Street and Coronation Street in North Perth. Their limited finances, meant that the three brothers had to look for work immediately. Frits found suitable employment within a week as a design draftsman with 'Steam Generators Pty Ltd'. Luckily for him the Chief Engineer of the company, also a Dutchman, recognised his qualifications and the fact that he had the experience needed for the position. For Ruud however, finding a job was more difficult. He soon discovered that he would not get a job as a Boilermaker-Welder without a Trades Ticket. His first employment was as a Mill-hand at 'Hoffmans-Mill' and 'Jarrah-Wood' Timber Mills, before moving to a welder's position with 'Tomlinson Steel Pty Ltd'. This position had come about due to Frits' connections. Hugo's first job was as a cleaner at the laboratory of 'Cresco Fertilizers' in Bassendean, before securing another job with 'Cumming Smith' in Fremantle as a Laboratory-assistant.

The bridgehead was now established and the next three members of the family could board a ship to Australia. The planning and the decision to emigrate had all been discussed and decided by the seniors in the family. Both my sisters and I - even though we were 19 years at the time - were never included in the decision-making process, nor our opinion asked. I can still vividly remember the time I was asked by my father to give notice to my employer. Firstly, it came as a complete surprise that I was going to emigrate. It had never occurred to me, even after my three brothers had left, that I too would have to leave. After all, my father, his two daughters and I had formed a close-knit, caring family. In fact, with the three older brothers gone, my sisters and I had been able to open up and make friends and we were quite happy with our existence.

When I gave notice to the chief engineer of my department, he was stunned. He could not believe I was making such a big move. I can still recall that when he asked me where I was going and I said "Australia", it also all sounded foreign to me! His astonishment left me wondering, "What had I done?"

During my employment with Grasso, I had moved up the ranks within the company very quickly. I had found my vocation, "the love of being employed as a design draftsman". In the first year of my employment with the company I was honoured with the "Most innovative person of the year" award.



Figure 2
The *Groote Beer* arrives in Fremantle harbour
Courtesy: Peter Rietveld.

On 20 November 1955, José, Meta and I arrived in Fremantle on the refurbished troopship *Groote Beer*. The family photo taken at the wharf that afternoon captures our arrival.

When the ship moved close to the wharf where my family was waiting to greet us, my brother Rudi called to the ship's Captain for the three of us to come to the bridge. Meta appeared first and could be seen waving to her brothers.



Figure 3
Peter and José arrive at the Fremantle wharf
on 20 November 1955
Courtesy: Peter Rietveld.

José and I can be seen on the wharf after we had disembarked, and a family group photo was taken later that afternoon at my older brother's home in Kadina Street, North Perth. Unfortunately the timing of our arrival in Perth and the prospect for work, were not well matched. The Western Australian economy was in a bad state. There was a great deal of unemployment and jobs of any kind were hard to find. I registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) in town, which I would visit several times a week, as well as scanning the local newspaper daily for job vacancies. It was a difficult time and not being in control of the English language, limited my chances for an engineering position.

I recall the employment officer took great interest in me and I was strongly advised to go and study as soon as time would allow. Earning my first dollar was the greatest challenge I faced. Always neatly dressed (in my suit) to visit the employment office, I was one day told to go immediately to the Capital Theatre in Perth, as they were preparing the stage for the Ice Show 'Rose Mary I Love You'. Someone was needed there for a couple of hours. Handing me a note to pass on to the stagehand, I worked there that afternoon scraping

the ice for several hours. At last I had earned my first few dollars. I cannot remember how much it was that I earned, just that I wanted to frame it. However, having been out of work for some time, it was a luxury I could not afford. Instead I had to contribute my earnings towards my living expenses. I was boarding at that time with my brother Ruud and cannot thank him enough for helping me out through those trying times.

Having found work, albeit manual employment with Peter's Ice Cream, I was to move the stock from the freezers to the production floor. Both my sisters were employed at that time as well - Meta at a cake shop in Leederville and José as a typist at Westfarmers in Perth. The next stage in our migration had arrived. Father could now also make his arrangements to come to Australia.

No one had thought that our father's departure from the Netherlands would present any problems. We were surprised therefore, to find his emigration permit was delayed, due to his age. This delay affected us all very much. In the end, it took a personal letter from the late Harold Holt, then Minister for Emigration, for father to be granted an emigration permit.

Father arrived in Fremantle on the *MS Sibajak* 11 July 1956. The reunion with his family at the wharf closed a chapter that had started in the early 1950s. It is recorded with a photo, which appeared in the *West Australian Newspaper*¹.



Figure 4
The Rietveld family together in Kadina Street, North Perth (left to right) Trudy, Frits, José, Hugo, Meta, Ruud and Peter
Courtesy: Peter Rietveld.

Figure 5
The West Australian, Thursday, 12 July 1956.



Looking forward to having the family together again, the five single children met up before father arrived, and decided to set up home and share the rent and operational expenses. We were lucky. We found a lovely new modern place overlooking beautiful Lake Monger, West Leederville. Together with our father, we created 'a home away from home'.

All of us enjoyed the beautiful weather, visits to the beaches and watching the movies from deckchairs at the open-air theatres. On summer weekends, we sat on our front veranda and enjoyed watching the local Cricket Team play on the beautiful grass field adjoining Lake Monger. We tried as hard as we could to understand and fit into the new environment and culture.

I personally found it hard at times. The world had changed so much for me, mostly without my concurrence. I had to constantly drive myself forward to grasp the opportunities on offer. Emigration was presenting many challenges for me. In the years that followed, the homely family structure started to unwind. The two brothers started relationships and married, and so father moved with the rest of us into a smaller more affordable home

When two of my older brothers returned to studies again, one at Perth Technical College and the other at the University of WA, I thought it was time to join them and further my own education. I had already been employed in the manufacturing industry as a design draftsman, when I decided to join the Public Works Department and take up some part time courses at Perth Technical College.

I qualified with a Diploma in Electrical Engineering in 1968. By that time I was already married and the proud father of three lovely children. The state of Western Australia at the time was opening up to the mining industry and I decided to take part in this development. I left the Public Works Department to join Bechtel, a large construction company where I worked as a construction engineer for the next 14 years. The family status position which I held with the company, allowed me to also take my children on most of the projects, covering the State's North West, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia.

I am retired now and living in Perth, which will always remain my home. It took me many years to overcome the feeling of being forcefully removed in my teenage years from my uncles, aunts and cousins. However, in summing up I can say, that the feelings and interrelationships I formulated with my adopted country are now part of me – I love the place. When I return with my wife from visiting relatives in the Netherlands, I return to my newfound fatherland.²

Author's Postscript

This story is dedicated to my wife Anne, my three children Michelle, Jeff, Mark, my four grandchildren Caitlyn, Jason, Mia, Morgan and my extended family.

Father He watched the development of his children very closely. He never remarried and decided to spend the last years of his life in the Netherlands. Those were happy times for him, catching up with his brothers and sisters. He passed away in 1973.

Frits Studied in the evening at Perth Technical College for an Associateship in Mechanical Engineering. In 1963, after joining an international engineering company, Frits moved subsequently to Sydney, the USA and to Germany. In 1971 he settled with his family in the Netherlands, where he worked for many years until his retirement in 1991. Married, they have two Australian born children and three grandchildren.

Ruud After working in the Goldfields as a Boilermaker Welder, he returned to Perth and started a cleaning business from where he retired. Ruud and his wife passed away and he has three children and four grandchildren.

Hugo From 1958 he worked his way through university (University of WA) and obtained his Ph.D degree in Physics in 1964. That year he resettled in the Netherlands as a research officer with the Netherlands Research Foundation ECN at Petten, from where he retired in a managerial position in 1992. He developed the worldwide known Rietveld Method for the determination of the molecular structure and/or composition of materials by means of X-ray or neutron powder diffraction. For this he was awarded the Aminoff Prize from the Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1995, the Barrett Award from the Denver X-ray Conference in 2003 and the Dutch Royal Order of Officer, in the Order of Oranje Nassau in 2004. He is married and has three Australian born children and four grandchildren.

José After the breakup of her marriage, José resettled with her two children back in the Netherlands (1972). She remarried and passed away in 2000. She has five grandchildren.

Meta Meta is married and lives in Perth. Her husband passed away and she has two children and one grandchild.

ENDNOTES

¹ West Australian Newspapers 11 July 1956, page 3

² References: Family members in my story.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE OF THE WOERLEE FAMILY

Gerard Woerlee and Anna Ward



Figure 1
Anna's family outside their home in Java
before WWII c 1960s
Courtesy: Gerard and Anna (Deceased)
Woerlee.

The lives of Gerard Woerlee (1919) and his wife Anna (1923-2006) both born in the Netherlands - in Zaandam and Rolde - were greatly influenced by the 1930's Depression and the Second World War 1939-1945.

Despite the personal impact of these worldwide events, Gerard found a way to pursue his goal to work his way up into the management of a large timber business in the Netherlands, just like his grandfather had done. His grandfather was a manager for *NV. Houthandel v/h William Pont*, which at peak times employed upwards of five hundred workers. Wanting to succeed, Gerard enrolled in trade school night classes and worked during the day as an unpaid intern for various timber companies owned by William Pont. He wanted to gain additional experience in the timber industry in areas such as sawmilling, plywood manufacture and quality control, which could ultimately give him a competitive edge in realizing his future goals in management. In contrast, Anna, whose parents were both teachers, completed her secondary education and then, during the German occupation of the Netherlands, studied to be a chemist.

Gerard's bright future and plans were affected by the advent of World War Two. After a time in military service fighting the German invasion forces, he and two other ex-army soldiers were employed by the Zaandam Council to establish a card system to record all males of employable age living in the '*Zaanstreek*'. After working on this project for one and a half years, they made the decision to destroy all of their records. Destroying the card system meant that this information would no longer be available to the Nazis, who



Figure 2
Gerardus Woerlee with his Building
Supervisor and Contractor on a building site.
c 1960s
Courtesy: Gerard and Anna (Deceased)
Woerlee.

wanted to access the records in order to recruit young Dutch males as forced labour in Germany for their war effort. Compelled to flee as a result of this action, Gerard hid for some time in the rural areas of the Netherlands, not able to return to his home. During this time he became involved in the resistance movement. He found work in Arnhem selling timber products for the *Zaanse Houthandel* until all residents were ordered to leave their homes by the German Army Command. Later, Gerard returned to Arnhem, now an empty city, to help the resistance movement source information about enemy strength for the advancing Allies, south of the Rhine and Waal rivers.

In 1945, Gerard volunteered to join the Artillery division, in the military, for deployment to the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). He was then sent to England for training to upgrade his artillery skills. After returning to the Netherlands in 1946, Gerard met Anna and they were married after just six weeks! Later in 1946, Gerard was sent to the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) with the 8th Regiment Veld Artillery. Anna followed him some months later as a Sergeant with the *Vrouwen Hulp Korps* (VHK), to work as a secretary to the Colonel of Supplies (VTD *Verenigde Transport Dienst*) - victualling.

For Anna, it was a return to the NEI. She had gone there previously with her parents and sisters in 1935, when her father took up a position as a School Principal. Later in 1939, Anna, her mother and two sisters returned to the Netherlands, to seek urgent medical attention for Anna's eldest sister. Two years later, her father, who stayed in the NEI, was interned in a POW camp, where he spent the rest of the war during the Japanese Occupation. His seriously depleted health led to his untimely death, shortly after being repatriated to the Netherlands in 1946.

Gerard and Anna were demobilized in Java, after serving for three years in the NEI army. They opted for migration to Australia rather than returning back to the Netherlands, 'because in 1949 work was hard to come by in Holland'. Gerard went about seeking employment in his area of expertise in the timber industry, which now included his specialist knowledge about tropical timbers gained while employed in the NEI.

Western Australia became their destination when Millers Timber and Trading replied to Gerard's letter, with an offer of employment. The army paid the couple's fare to Darwin and they paid their own way from Darwin to Perth. After working for some time, Gerard made the choice to become self-employed when his boss declared, despite his expertise, that 'Australians were not yet ready to take orders from a immigrant!'

The couple already owned a block of land by this time, as Anna had insisted on arrival that they spend £60 of their £80 army payout on a property. It was this decision that 'put us on the road to success!' On the property, Gerard built a shed in which the family could live. This was standard practice among migrants at that time, as due to the war, Australia's housing stock was down by hundreds of thousands of houses. During this time, Anna, then pregnant with the second child, lived in temporary accommodation in a city 'pension'. On completion of the shed, the family moved in with their two



Figure 3
Early days in the building business - Anna Woerlee and her children on the site of a new building contract.
Courtesy: Gerard and Anna (Deceased) Woerlee.

Figure 4

One of the first houses, which Anna designed and Gerardus built. This is their young family of four children with their Grandmother - Anna's mother.

Courtesy: Gerard and Anna (Deceased) Woerlee.



small children, despite having no water or sanitation facilities. Luckily one of their neighbours was willing to supply them with buckets of water daily for washing, drinking and cooking. Anna never complained, 'because it was sort of an adventure...a holiday and you put up with all sorts of things.'

Eighteen months after gaining his trade papers Gerard became self-employed as a carpenter, handyman, and builder in the country areas for farmers where the work was plentiful and the competition was less keen. He went from job to job on a motorbike with a sidecar. Gerard attributes the success of his contract business on a commitment to hard work, long hours and happy clients, who would recommend him to other farmers and business owners wanting work to be done. However, Anna and the children saw little of him in those early years.

Over time, Gerard and Anna established a number of successful building companies in Perth.

Anna's capacity for innovative ideas, house designs, costings and accounting procedures played a huge role in the Woerlees' ultimate success. For example, they found that they could establish companies under the umbrella of a 'Limited Company', which enabled them to utilize their working capacity more profitably. Furthermore, Gerard's quest for learning, together with his natural ability to transform concepts into tangible outcomes, helped to turn Anna's designs into highly saleable homes.

Within two years they had already built a speculation (spec ...) home for sale. From here Anna says they never looked back. Gerard had built the first few houses with a dislocated shoulder after a car accident. The insurance paid his wages during this critical time. Luckily Anna, very aware that they had

nothing to fall back on while establishing themselves in new country, had taken out insurance against sickness and injury.

They attribute their business success to their combined skills, team work and good business sense. She designed the houses, organised the necessary building permits and managed the finances. On the other hand, Gerard's skills were in building management and the careful estimation of the quantities and types of materials, which included bricks, timber and other materials required to complete each building. Their careful planning enabled them to reduce the overall price of each building, making it more attractive to the market while simultaneously decreasing the potential for pilfering from their work sites.

Gerard notes with pride how his wife's designs continue to dominate some Perth suburbs such as Thornlie. The city of Gosnells have formally acknowledged the Woerlee's building of many homes, which established Thornlie as the suburb it is today.

The couple raised four children, who now are in well-established careers in the areas of medicine, research and business.

The 'Woerlees' attribute their achievements and considerable financial success to having found each other and working as a team. Anna's belief was that they had found the right combination: 'What he couldn't do, I could do! We were born for each other ...but you've got to have luck in your life too, and we've had a lot of it.'

What they deem to be most important is making choices, then 'giving it a go' and 'make it happen! Don't be afraid, just get on with it and above all persevere!'



Figure 5
Anna and Gerardus Woerlee - Military service in Java 1946 to 1949. Courtesy: Gerard and Anna (Deceased) Woerlee.

Figure 6
Anna and Gerardus on their wedding day - 10 September 1946 in military style. Courtesy: Gerard and Anna (Deceased) Woerlee.



CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

THE PLUG FAMILY BUSINESSES

Aart Plug

The Plug family has its roots in Katwijk aan Zee, a fishing village along the North Sea coast of Holland. The two brothers Dirk Plug (b. 1903) and Jan Plug (b. 1906) had spent their childhood at sea, and each had established successful businesses related to the fishing trade in the Dutch port of IJmuiden. In the aftermath of World War II they made plans to migrate to Australia with their families, with the intention of starting a fishing venture based in Albany. At the time, there were severe restrictions on taking currency out of Europe. Consequently, along with the usual household possessions, they brought with them two fishing boats, a small truck and other equipment. In addition to their own families they were accompanied by their widowed mother, a married sister with her family and three unmarried siblings. They arrived in Fremantle on board *MS Sibajak* in 1950.

In any event, the fishing venture, as originally envisaged, never got off the ground. Dirk Plug and his family moved to Spearwood, near Fremantle, where he and his sons established themselves within the WA fishing industry. Their activities ranged from Dongara to Shark Bay, and more recently some members of the family have been based in Rockingham and Fremantle. Right up to the present, the Plug family name is still quite well known in the WA fishing, boatbuilding and marine industries.

My father Jan Plug was more of a businessman. In 1954, he set up a small grocery and general store on Marbellup Road, in the new State Housing development of Mount Lockyer, on the outskirts of Albany. My mother Jacoba Anna de Zoete was much younger than my father. She was a city girl, and had rather more business education than was common for young women of her time. In addition to raising a large family, she played an active role in running the business.



Figure 1
Plug's Save Way store
Courtesy: Aart Plug.

For its time, Plug's Store was a typical family-run neighbourhood shop. There was no self-service in the early years – it was all personal service from behind the counter. Most of the staples (such as sugar, flour, biscuits and cheese) were delivered to us in bulk and were weighed, packed and sold by the pound. The family dwelling was at the back of the shop. Each of us in the family had our own chores – mine, among others, was to make up and dispense threepenny and sixpenny bags of mixed lollies to the local children after school. My two older sisters worked as full-time shop assistants.

The neighbourhood trade was steady if not spectacular. I suspect that quite a few customers came to us when they ran out of credit at Adams' Four-Square up the street. But a good part of our business came from the Dutch families living all over Albany. In an ancient and decrepit Hillman quarter-ton ute, my father made his rounds, picking up a weekly order on Thursdays and making the delivery the next day. For many of these families, this was a very useful arrangement. The mothers were at home all day, with no access to a car. Groceries were delivered, and my father, who was sociable and talkative, provided a welcome break to what was often an isolated and tedious daily existence. I have vivid memories, as a very young child, of tagging along with my father on these weekly expeditions. Saturday mornings were a busy time in the shop, often with more Dutch spoken than English. Our business must have done well, because within three years my father had bought a brand-new Holden station wagon.

One great highlight was our stock of imported Dutch foods – baked goods, meat and smallgoods, confectionery, and the like. The Dutch families were not accustomed to Australian cuts of meat – steaks, chops and snaggers – and much preferred the traditional Dutch cuts. We had an arrangement with a Dutch butcher in Perth: weekly orders of fresh meat cut in the Dutch style, *spek* (cured fat bacon), continental sausages, smoked meat and other smallgoods were shipped down from Perth by the overnight train and delivered to our customers the same day. We did learn to like Vegemite, but we never gave up our *appelstroop*. And to this day, a deep-rooted addiction to *zoute drop* – strongly salted licorice candies – still distinguishes descendants of Dutch immigrants from the general population.

In 1961, when I was ten, my father passed away. My mother was left, as a 36-year-old widow, to bring up a houseful of children as well as manage a fully-fledged business. She did both with remarkable success. This was also the time when the first self-service supermarkets began to make their appearance. That was a huge challenge: neighbourhood shops such as ours could never compete on price or product range. In addition, more and more families had cars, and were no longer dependent on deliveries from neighbourhood shops for their weekly supplies.

My mother carried on with Plug's General Store until 1965, at which time she sold the business as a going concern, migrated with eight children to Canada, and remarried. She lived a happy, productive and blessed life in a small town in northern British Columbia until her death in 2010.



Figure 2
Plug's General Store
Courtesy: Aart Plug.

CHAPTER THIRTY

THE DOORHOUSE

The Wieman Family¹

Piet Wieman (42), a joiner and also owner of an ironmonger's store in Schalkwijk, a town located in the province of Utrecht, together with his wife Aagje Wieman nee Vosmeer (37) and their twelve children, were among many Roman Catholics to take the plunge and to migrate to Australia in the early 1950s, even though they were among the minority of more affluent Dutch families in the Netherlands at that time. In contrast to the majority of the population, they already owned a home of their own. Be that as it may, after a great deal of deliberation, Piet and Aagje had come to believe that their many children stood a greater chance at economic success post-war in Australia. Unemployment, underemployment, severe housing shortages and rationed fuel, food and clothing typified the economic and social climate of the Netherlands after WWII. Consequently the mood of the populace was extremely gloomy as they were unable to see a future for themselves. Furthermore the Monarchy and Government were also urging people to emigrate, to find a future in other lands.

Prospective emigrants were enticed with placards, fliers and brochures showing Australia's booming industries, boundless self-employment opportunities and full employment economy with good working conditions. This was a place where an immigrant could own their own motor vehicle and a home filled with electrical goods. This level of materialism was not on the radar of possibilities after the war in the Netherlands. Furthermore, it could be reached with 'passage assistance', to which the Australian and Netherlands governments contributed. Passage assistance was not, however, relevant to the self-funded Wiemans. They had decided to pay the family's passage from the proceeds of the sale of their Schalkwijk family home and business. Passage assistance being heavily means tested by the Dutch Government, this may well have been the more economical way out for the family.

Originally their intention was to migrate to New Zealand, but after having purchased a house in Auckland, the New Zealand government rejected their application to enter New Zealand due to the large size of the family and Perth in Western Australia was their next choice.

In preparation for their migration the Wiemans sold their home and business, then 'farmed out' the younger children to kin and friends, while they packed the furniture and other domestic goods into large shipping containers for transport to Australia by freighter. Most of their personal items went into suitcases so that they would be available on the *SS Waterman*, the passenger liner that was to take them to Australia.

The day before departure, all the children were collected from relatives. The following morning, 7 August 1954, after a hasty breakfast and nervous

goodbyes to neighbours and friends, the family travelled to Lloyd Kade (Lloyd Quay), Rotterdam harbour to board the *SS Waterman*. A troop ship, it had only recently been converted to a migrant ship. Once on board, being such a large family, they were allocated four cabins.

Piet Wieman was seasick the entire voyage. Aagje was therefore kept extremely busy attending to the welfare of all their children. Despite having to help with the younger children, the Wieman's two teenage daughters thoroughly enjoyed the attention they attracted from the younger male crew.

The voyage took a lengthy six weeks and one day – via Surinam, Panama Canal, Tahiti, Wellington (New Zealand), Melbourne and finally ended in Fremantle WA. The food was simple and the four allocated cabins were basic and crowded with such a large family.

The *SS Waterman* berthed at Fremantle Harbour on 19 September 1954. Disembarkation needed some strategic moves to organise twelve children, whose ages ranged from 16 years down to five months: Alie (16) and Leni (15), Hans (13), Karel (12), Ineke (11), Tom (9), Dini (8), Theo (6), Bert (5), André (4), Maria-Anna (2) and Peter (5 months).

On the Quay they had still to clear customs, before the family could board the buses to Holden Camp, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration Accommodation Centre in Northam, which functioned as a 'holding' and reception centre for new arrivals.

A Wheatbelt town situated 98 kilometres from Perth – it was the first accommodation in Western Australia for the majority of non-English speaking migrants and Displaced Persons (DPs) who came to WA from 1949-1966. The Displaced Persons (DPs) who were first to arrive from Europe, were housed in very austere barracks at the Military Camp on Great Eastern Highway. In contrast, the voluntary migrants were placed in barracks in Hutt Street, to the north of the town in the former military hospital. Although only minimally furnished, these unlined barracks were nevertheless in better condition than the structures at the army camp.

Compared to other migrant groups, Dutch migration was overwhelmingly family oriented. Although many womenfolk found it difficult to leave their families behind, they did so because it was considered a woman's duty to accompany the menfolk – to go wherever their husbands chose to earn a living. Dutch Calvinist and Catholics were two religions that promoted emigration.² Their clergy also charged Dutch wives – to ensure their family's successful migration by safeguarding their family's spiritual welfare and by creating a *gezellige* (convivial) home in Australia. This was to be wherever the



Figure 1
The 'Doorhouse'. Courtesy: Wieman Family.



Figure 2
Doors become walls.
Courtesy: Wieman Family.



Figure 3
Weiman family and church.
Courtesy: Wieman Family.

family had to live – be it reception centres, tents, garages, caravans, tram or train carriages, verandahs or houses.³

Most Dutch women remained stay-at-home mums. This is reasonable given the large families under their care. However, the fact that these women also perceived their confinement to the domestic sphere as advantageous, rather than oppressive or subservient or as an outcome of male dominance, adds an interesting element to Dutch resettlement. The women in fact saw it as giving them status. Aagje's experience in fact adds another element to the employment mix, for as well as looking after her large family, she helped with the family business.

The Wiemans found the adjustment from shipboard life to the primitive accommodation in unseasonably hot Northam, very difficult. Two weeks later, they moved into a 'small house' in East Cannington, a suburb of Perth. Not long afterwards they purchased a half-acre (0.4 hectare) vacant block of land at 54 Railway Street, (later called Treasure Road) and now Mallard Way, Queens Park (now also in Cannington).

In the meantime, Piet Wieman commenced work at the joinery business of Peter van Gerrevink and Peter Bakker. Peter van Gerrevink, the son of an acquaintance of the Wiemans, had sponsored them to Australia. Van Gerrevink had also warned them about the shortage of building supplies in Western Australia at that time. His advice prompted Piet to purchase numerous doors from ex-army officer van Winkel. These doors were packed into large crates (2m x 1m x 1m), together with kitchen utensils, a stove, a copper, clothes and many other personal effects and articles considered useful for their resettlement and were all shipped by freighters to Western Australia.

The arrival of the 188 doors from the Netherlands, put paid to any weekend leisure time for Piet for some time to come and in the future. Instead he would spend this time constructing the family home. He began by setting the doors into 'T' bars to form walls and then covering them outside with asbestos cement sheeting. On completion, on the inside the walls were duly covered with wallpaper, on the outside they were painted. Apart from the asbestos cement sheeting and the concrete stumps, Australian materials were only used in the construction of the roof and ceilings. The 'Doorhouse' had four bedrooms, one bathroom and toilet, a laundry and a combined kitchen-living room. Piet also dismantled the crates and used these for flooring and to build cupboards and chairs. The family moved into the partly completed 'Doorhouse' on 19 July 1955, less than a year after their arrival in Australia. This was unusual, as it took most families years of living in partly constructed dwellings before they could afford to finish building their residence. Although at this stage, Aagje and the girls still had to wash the dishes in the concrete trough outside. They did this until the kitchen, laundry and bathroom were finished some weeks later.

Not long after moving into the 'Doorhouse', the opportunity arose for Piet to go into a business partnership with another Dutch migrant Jan Coppens and



Figure 4
Wieman family. Courtesy: Wieman Family.

so the business of door manufacturing was started in a shed at the back of the house, using the name 'Hercules Joinery Works'. The partners made doors and nearly everyone in the family had to pitch in to help to get the business off the ground. Piet's two oldest boys, Hans and Carl, and Aagje, his wife, spent most days on old and homemade machinery, gluing doors together and finishing them off ready for sale. In the meantime the oldest daughter had started work in a Cannington delicatessen, and their next daughter had left school to help her mother look after the large family.

In 1964 the Wieman's purchased a block of land in Mandurah near the beach, and they relocated an old timber framed house from Kwinana onto this property to be used as a holiday home. (This was demolished in 2003 and replaced with 2 new brick dwellings, one used as the new 'beach house' and the other was to become a new home for Maria Anna [Marian] and her husband Ken.)

Jan Coppens left the business partnership in the mid 1960s, but Piet carried on by himself after renaming the business 'Doorhouse Joinery Works'. However, around that time the Canning Shire insisted that he could no longer continue to run the business in Railway Road, as it was gazetted

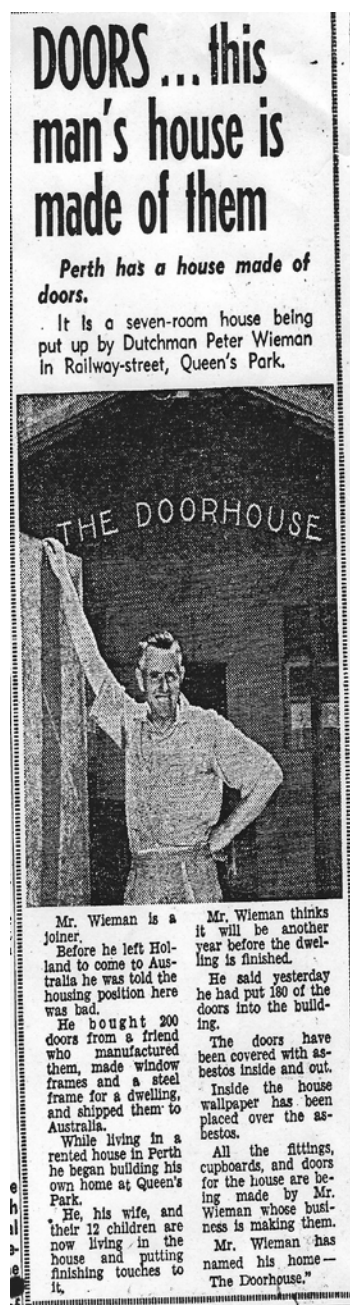


Figure 5
West Australian Newspapers c 1956.

as residential. This resulted in both the 'Doorhouse Joinery Works' and the family moving to a four hectare industrial property, which had an old 1930s style two-bedroom dwelling upon it. This home was two kilometres away at 232 Welshpool Road, Queens Park. They remodelled the house to accommodate the large family by enclosing the verandahs. However, the children still had to sleep four to a single bedroom. The 'house of doors' in Railway Street was rented out later to other Dutch families. The Wieman family had by then increased in size, with the addition of Frank born in 1959 and Rick in 1961. Seven of the family members were married between the years of 1958 and 1969.

In 1975 Piet and Aagje finally built a new house at 26 Derisleigh Street, Queens Park, which is currently owned by their son Frank. The 'house of doors', commonly known as the 'Doorhouse', was sold in 1985, when it was demolished and replaced with residential units by the new owner.

The 'Doorhouse Joinery' business on Welshpool Road flourished and expanded with the production of jarrah joinery and by importing plywoods and timber from overseas. However, this came to an end when Piet Wieman suffered a serious stroke in 1975. The business finally stopped production in 1979 and the property was sold in 1980.

The siblings are unanimous in praise for their parents – Carl speaks for them all when he states: "We are all very proud of our parents and most grateful for what they have achieved and done for us".

Post Script

Tragedy struck in 1972, when Piet and Aagje's daughter Alie and 3 of her children, John, Peter and Carla were killed in a traffic accident in Invercargill, New Zealand. Her husband John and eldest child Patti survived. Piet Wieman passed away on 6 April 1986 and Aagje on 21 November 1992. Ineke passed away on 2 March 2015.

Their descendants in April 2015 comprised;

Children 14 (2 deceased)

Grandchildren 44 (4 deceased)

Great-grandchildren 58

Great-great-grandchildren 20



ENDNOTES

- 1 The Wieman family wish to thank Michael Beerkens, without whose great input this vignette would not have happened.
2. Walker-Birckhead, W., 'A Dutch Home in Australia: Dutch Women's Migration Stories' in *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, N. Peters, Coordinating Author, UWA Press 2006.
- 3 *ibid.*

Figure 6
House of doors. Courtesy: Wieman Family.

CHAPTER THIRTY ONE

THE DUTCH IN BUSINESS: THE HIGH END OF TOWN

Arnold Stroobach

The spirit of trade has been important for the Netherlands over many centuries.

Four hundred years ago this spirit led to the discovery of Australia. It was no accident that the *Duyfken*, the first European ship to reach Australia, was in this area. Her mission was to find new trade routes and make new contacts for the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC). In the following period as a result of changing ocean routes that incorporated the use of the 'Roaring Forties' winds to reduce the journey's timespan, a number of VOC ships were drawn too close to the treacherous Western Australian (WA) shore by challenging sailing conditions. Four were shipwrecked on the shore another four are still missing. Over the 200 years, the VOC traded for spices and other goods in the Indian Ocean Region and until its demise in 1795 (*vergaan onder corruptive* – also VOC), another 30 - mostly Dutch vessels - mapped large tracts of the Australian coastline. However, their skippers failed to see any trading advantages on the Australian shore.

That changed when England established colonies in NSW in 1788, and in WA forty one years later in 1829. Trade with the Netherlands East Indies for foodstuffs - until the new British settlers were more self-sufficient - commenced from then on. Formal ties were also established in the early days. Within decades after its settlement in 1829, the first Consul of the Netherlands to WA was appointed in Albany in 1863, which, was then the WA Port. WA recognizes the heritage tourism value of the early shipwreck sites and the Hartog 400 year festivities at Denham in October 2016 are witness to the 'value add' of these less fortunate beginnings, that continue to link WA to the Netherlands and provide post-mining boom income.

As a small nation, surrounded by larger countries, the Netherlands has always worked very strategically in order to realise the opportunities that came along. Innovation was and is the key, and new complex structures emerged from the mercantile Netherlands. One of them was the appearance in 1602 of a new concept - a 'listed Company'. The States General noted that by uniting a number of independent Trading Firms (*voorcompagnieën*-pre-companies), then in fierce competition plying the SE Asian route, under the VOC banner and trading its shares on a stock exchange, they could minimize competition, maximize gains and take over Portuguese holdings. The eventual unification into one company did not happen spontaneously, but was therefore enforced by the government. The Dutch Republic was at war with the king of Spain and Portugal.¹ An additional motive for amalgamating the *voorcompagnieën* was that one united Company could be a powerful military and economic weapon in the struggle. The States of Holland under the guidance of Johan van Oldenbarneveldt, paved the way for a fusion.

On 20 March 1602 the States General granted the charter by which the *Generale Vereenichde Geotroyeerde Compagnie* (General United Chartered Company) was created. The charter (*octrooi*) was valid for 21 years. Rivalry was now out of the question: the charter laid down that nobody except the VOC could send ships from the Netherlands to or conduct trade in the area east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan. This area was called the *octrooigebied* (trade zone). The VOC or the Dutch East India Company was thus the first listed company in 1602. In that same year, Amsterdam was the birthplace of the first ‘modern’ securities market in the world: The Amsterdam Bourse. Prior to that, the market existed primarily for the exchange of commodities.

However, the voyages to obtain precious goods and resources in the East and West Indies were risky. Threats of pirates, disease, misfortune, shipwreck, and various macroeconomic factors all heightened the risk factor and thus made the trip wildly expensive. So, the stock issuance made possible the spreading of risk and dividends across a vast pool of investors. Should something go wrong on the voyage, risk was mitigated and dispersed throughout the pool and investors all suffered just a fraction of the total expense of the voyage. Still, to attract more investors, the trade missions and explorations had to be de-risked and insurance companies went through a massive innovative change, that resulted in new financial products that suited the missions. Companies like the VOC and the WIC (West-Indian Company) spearheaded this new way of doing business.

MULTINATIONAL – STOCKS AND SHARES – SHARE TRADING

Two criteria also acquired the Dutch East India Company (VOC) the nomenclature - multinational, or world’s first mega-corporation:

1. It operated in more than one country
2. It issued shares

While trade exchanges were common in Medieval Europe, these were typically for currency, commodities and bonds – not shares. In fact by 1669, its shares were bringing a 40 percent return.² However, buyers of VOC shares could not cash them in, only sell them on – and so share trading was born. Many investors were employees, including humble carpenters and bakers. In the early days they were paid their dividends partly in cash and partly in spices – pepper, mace, or nutmeg. Expensive items are often still referred to as being *pepperduur* (as costly as pepper).³

The new Stock Exchange and listed company concepts changed the Dutch financial sector dramatically. Both in its public and private components, it came to provide a wide range of modern investment products beside the possibility of investment in trade, industry and infrastructure projects. Such products were the public bonds, floated by the Dutch governments on a national, provincial, and municipal level; acceptance credit and commission trade; marine and other insurance products and shares of publicly traded and their derivatives. Institutions like the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, the Bank of Amsterdam and the merchant bankers helped to mediate this investment. In the course of time the invested capital stock generated its own income stream that caused the capital stock to assume enormous proportions. As by the end of the 17th century, the stream of investments was redirected more and more to investment abroad. The Netherlands came to dominate the international capital market up to the crises at the end of the 18th century, that caused the demise of the Dutch Republic. This was only a few years before a British settlement was established on the western coast of Australia.

In the early days of Western Australia (WA) - then called the Swan Colony - life was tough. Scarcity of capital for industry was still the major barrier to economic development during this period. Lack of funds to establish infrastructure and the difficulty of obtaining supplies, meant that initially, the State's population grew very slowly. In fact, 20 years after first settlement, not more than 4,500 people were living in the colony. At the turn of the century [1900] the population of WA had risen to about 175,000 people. The main goods to be produced and traded were sheep, wool, sandalwood, whale products and livestock. The Dutch, via their trading post in Batavia, Java (now Jakarta), were already a trading partner from the beginning of the WA Colony.

The discovery of gold in Halls Creek in the Kimberley region in 1885 was fundamental in shaping the economic and social landscape of the Colony. News of the discovery travelled internationally and brought an unprecedented rush of immigrants and a level of economic growth previously unknown in the State. Although the Halls Creek goldrush was short-lived, many prospectors stayed in Western Australia and explored other regions, culminating in the discovery of gold at Kalgoorlie in 1893. This discovery of large deposits of gold, brought thousands of diggers from other colonies and from overseas. It also attracted a large amount of investment in mining ventures, marking not only a period of rapid expansion in the Colony but also, for the first time, the new position of being a Colony rich in money capital.

The 'black gold' or oil instigated the next acceleration of the Australian economy. The year Australia became a Federation in 1901, is also the year *Shell* arrived in Australia, which can be seen as a milestone in the history of the oil industry in Australia. On that day, the *SS Turbo* sailed into Melbourne's Hobsons Bay, with the first cargo of bulk kerosene ever to reach Australia.

In 1925 *Shell* began its conversion to bulk trading. Storage facilities were constructed across the country and land was bought for a string of country

depots. Rail sidings and tanks were built to allow main country depots to convert to bulk handling, with motor trucks delivering product locally. By 1928, *Shell* had organised its system of oil distribution over Australia: in the great unpopulated and unexplored areas of central and northern Australia, and in the isolated and sometimes remote pastoral and agricultural districts of every State, as well as in the cities and larger country centres. In 1932, The State office building, the *Shell House* in Perth, opened its doors; *Shell* was here to stay in WA.

Dutch expertise was already a recognised commodity in Australia from before the turn of the 20th century. In June 1898, *BHP* invited Guillaume Daniel Delprat - an engineer, metallurgist and pioneer industrialist, educated at Delft University - to become assistant general manager. He became general manager of *BHP* the next year. His daughter Francisca Adriana (Paquita) Delprat married Douglas Mawson (the Antarctic explorer). Current Dutch involvement in the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) at Geraldton in WA, is just one example of the continuing relationship of Dutch expertise in Australia.

However, the real Dutch influx started after the Second World War, when thousands of Dutch people moved 'Down Under' for good. They had a chance to make a new life here. The Dutch immigrants that came post-war to WA were often trades and craftsman people. Many of them started their own business: carpenters, electricians, bricklayers, builders, butchers, bakers, shop owners and so on. In the period from 1947 until 1970, 170,000 Dutch immigrants came by boat or plane and around 75 percent of them made Australia home.

Also the Dutch 'big end of town' started to recognise Australia as an interesting destination to which to extend their business. *Shell* already established itself over the country to satisfy the need of more and more oil products, but more Dutch companies were to come.

In the 1960s, the iron ore boom in the Pilbara generated an avalanche of opportunities that attracted Dutch interest. In 1964, the Netherlands Harbourworks Co (*N.V. Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Havenwerken*) entered into a joint venture with Clough: the Harbourworks Clough

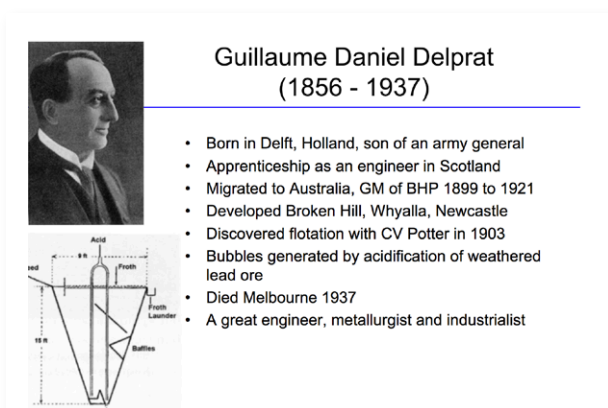


Figure 1
Guillaume Delprat, General Manager BHP
Courtesy: Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Company. The rationale was to take advantage of opportunities associated with the Iron Ore boom in the Pilbara. In 2002 Harbourworks was taken over by BAM and in 2009 the joint venture changed its name to Bam Clough.

The interesting thing about the BAM-Clough marriage was that it illustrates the expertise that the Dutch companies brought ‘to the table’ in Australia, which was highly appreciated by Clough. Clough was essentially a land-based contractor and Harbourworks had a lot of experience in maritime engineering and handling big equipment over water. With Clough’s local expertise and connections and Harbourworks’ (BAM) maritime ‘know-how’, this turned out to be a successful combination, which is still going strong.

While the resources sector was growing, the number of Dutch companies in Australia was growing accordingly - especially the maritime related companies. The Maritime Industry has been an important export sector for the Netherlands over the last 400 years. Since the 17th century, this sector has built up quite a reputation globally. With the acceleration in Australia of the Mining industry in the 1960s and the Oil and Gas industry in the 1970s, more and more Dutch maritime and engineering companies found their way to this side of the world. *Fugro, Boskalis, Herema, Dockwise, Jumbo Offshore and shipping, Damen Shipyards, Huisman, Mammoet, Royal Haskoning, Smit Lamnalco, Strukton, Van Leeuwen, Van Oord and Vopak* are just some. Also suppliers and international partners for these companies followed suit: *De Jong Hoists, Gemco International, DHV, Groeneveld, M&I Labtech, Pon, Primo Marine* and many more.

The Netherlands is a diversified economy and with Australia now in the picture as a favorable destination, other sectors were also trying their luck in Australia. For example: Financial institutions like ING, RABO and Aegon and the Food sector with companies like Unilever, Campina and DSM. Also there are companies that you do not expect to be Dutch: such as Australian Homemade (chocolates from *Veenendaal*), G-star (jeans etc.), TomTom (navigation systems), Randstad (staffing) and AKZO Nobel. Nowadays over 100 Dutch companies have established themselves on Australian soil - on top of that there are numerous companies that use agents or have joint ventures with Australian companies.

The biggest group of companies with a ‘Dutch touch’ is those set up by Dutch immigrants. Some, like *Austal* and *Lendlease*, have become major players both in Australia and globally.

Over the last few decades, the Netherlands became a significant investment and trading partner for Australia. In 2014, the Netherlands was Australia’s fourth largest source of foreign direct investment (\$38.4 billion) after the US, UK and Japan and was therefore the second largest European investor. There is good reason for this. Australia has a lot to offer investors: The Australian economy has been growing for 20 years without a break. It is one of the most vibrant economies in the OECD. Like the Netherlands, Australia supports free trade and because of its location and ‘know-how’, Australia is

an excellent base for companies that want to do business in the extensive Asian market.

It works both ways. The Netherlands is a great springboard for Australian companies wanting to enter the European market. Not only because of the strategic location of the Netherlands, but also of its excellent infrastructure. Take Rotterdam, for instance - one of the world's biggest ports. Also Schiphol Airport - a major hub for Europe and the world. And not to forget the digital infrastructure; the Netherlands is a world leader in broadband Internet.

The mutual successful relationship between Australia and the Netherlands is based on shared fundamental values and a similar global outlook. Furthermore, a very important factor is the human factor: Australia is a pleasant, open and tolerant country. Dutch people feel at home in Australia, just as Australians do in the Netherlands. We both like the informal way of doing business and do not take ourselves too seriously. These basic personal connections build the foundation of a solid and long-term relationship.

Nowadays, the Netherlands continues to adhere to the philosophy of being outward looking, progressive and innovative. The Netherlands is highly dependent on foreign trade and therefore has a direct interest in, and seeks to promote, a stable international legal order. Trade brought Dutch people to this part of the world. And trade is still a cornerstone of the outstanding relations between the Netherlands and Australia.



Figure 2
Alluvion – Southern Ocean Edit – TM.
Courtesy: Fugro - TSM.



Figure 3
Southern Ocean and *REM Etive* –
in Field Transfer.
Courtesy: Fugro - TSM.

ENDNOTES

- 1 In 1568 the Netherlands, led by William I of Orange revolted against Philip II because of high taxes, persecution of Protestants by the government, and Philip's efforts to modernize and centralize the devolved-medieval government structures of the provinces. This was the start of the Eighty Years' War.
- 2 *ibid*, p.41.
- 3 Traditionally, all partners were subject to unlimited liability of the company's obligations. However, the VOC differed in that it was the company that was liable and not its partners. Instead, the liability of the partners was limited to the amount they agreed to pay for shares. In this way the shift from unlimited to limited liability further reduced the risk to the non-managing partners. In fact the role of VOC participants would now be called investors. Moreover, the shares they were issued became tradable at the Amsterdam stock exchange, which was probably the first of its kind in the world.



SECTION FIVE:

21st CENTURY DUTCH INTERESTS

Nonja Peters

Four issues dominate Dutch-Australian conversations into the 21st century. From the community perspective these are the preservation of Dutch-Australian cultural heritage; identity and belonging and the second generation; aged-care; and the legacy of the Dutch in Australia. In contrast, the governmental concerns of both countries are world security, trade and bilateral mutual heritage relationships.

From the mutual heritage perspective, in 2012, Dutch-Australian connections were further strengthened when the Netherlands designated Australia as a 'priority country' under its mutual heritage policy. Moreover, it was becoming exceedingly more apparent that Dutch-Australian maritime, military, migration and mercantile connections with WA (that began with Dirk Hartog's visit in 1616), were also providing a solid basis for cultural heritage tourism, which could strengthen the flagging economy left in the aftermath of the mining boom.

The multinational Dutch corporations involved in Australia's mining, oil and gas extractive industries, as well as in Dutch banking and investment, have all attracted Dutch expatriates to Australia. A Dutch school keeps their children up to speed with the Dutch language and curriculum, so they can seamlessly assimilate on their return to the Netherlands.

The Dutch - Australian migrant experience of 'hard work and commitment', has also gained significantly more traction as an expressive and enriching addition to Australia's national narrative. Trending along with the many other Western communities, more Dutch-Australians, especially the second generation, are now delving into their heritage as we prepare for the 400 year *Hartog* anniversary in October 2016.

However, aged-care on foreign soil is an ongoing battle. It is especially sad to end your life in a mainstream nursing home, when illness has robbed you of your second language capacity and you can no longer communicate effectively with your children - who were not taught the Dutch language. However, even when your second language capacity remains intact, your life narrative loses its potency in a mainstream nursing home, as it differs markedly from the life experiences of many of the other Australian residents.

The chapters in this section by Leeftang and Parker, Bly, Cornelisse, Peters, Schwarz, Ingelse-Yarrall plus Peters and Snoeijer, all attempt to interpret and address some of these issues and concerns.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

A SENSE OF PLACE: BEING DUTCH IN WA

Nonja Peters

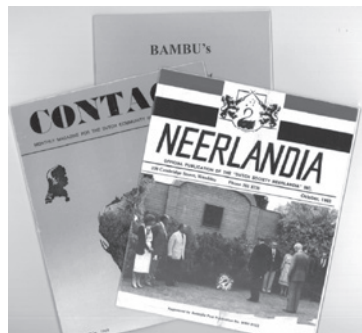


Figure 1
ADL and other Dutch Newsletters.

This chapter sets out to determine how Dutch migrants accomplished the ultimate challenge - that of (re)creating a sense of self, place, identity and belonging in Australia.¹ For when this seemed impossible, many Western European migrants would eventually give up and just return to their homelands. In fact, between 25 to 40 per cent of British, Dutch, German and Italian post-war migrants are believed to have done just that. This was not the case however for 'Displaced Persons', as their countries would remain inaccessible behind the Iron Curtain until 27 June 1989.² A significant number of the Western European returnees would become 'rollercoaster'—travelling back and forth between home and host-land, leaving members of their families abandoned on both shores. This was a tragedy for all involved [see the Anne Rietveld nee Rijnders story]. Consequently in the early years, any resettlement support provided to these migrants by the Dutch community, was of prime importance to shaping a successful resettlement.

DUTCH SUPPORT FOR DUTCH

In early 1952, a group of educated Dutch migrants, led by Mr. Arriens (the Consul of the Netherlands) as the honorary Chairman, established the Australian Dutch League (ADL). The ADL's mission was to help any newly arrived Dutch with a variety of resettlement issues.³ During the years when the ADL functioned, a succession of newly-arrived Dutch men and women gained great support from the League. It offered assistance and advice about how to navigate and understand Australian policies, laws, customs, traditions and language.

The League members' profiles lend support to the claim that 'Dutch Emigrants to Australia were not always the less educated or untrained people from the lower classes', although 'up to the present day in the Netherlands, the emigrants from the 1950s and 1960s are still believed to be mainly farmers with little education'.⁴

A similar observation was made by John Hempel in his 1960s study of the Dutch in Queensland. Hempel recorded a changed trend in the profile of Dutch emigrants coming to Australia that began around 1957. This date coincides with an influx of Dutch leaving Indonesia, as a consequence of the Indonesian government nationalising Dutch businesses. It saw less tradespeople coming to Australia and more white-collar workers.⁵ These immigrants tended to seek more resettlement information.

The ADL committee met at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) headquarters in Adelaide Terrace, Perth, and hired venues around the city for its various activities. ADL activities included information nights, music and



Figure 2
ADL Kersmis Newsletter.

film nights, dinner dances, literary readings, chess, bridge, tennis, Dutch cultural events, such as the *Oranje Bal* and drinks at the Dutch Consulate to celebrate the Queen's birthday, carnival balls and so forth. Especially popular was the Saint Nicholas Feast that was held at the Perth Town Hall in December 1955 and at Monash House in King Street in 1956 - the latter also being a popular venue for Dutch Community dinner dances. The fact that *St Nicolaas* and *Zwarte Piet* (Black Peter) would arrive by boat at the Barrack Street jetty, added just the right amount of authenticity to the event. There was no controversy at that time about the *Zwarte Piet* (Black Peter) tradition as being racist. A different spin in recent years has characterised him as a chimney sweep instead of as a servant to *Sinter Klaas* (Saint Nicholas). This is a less controversial way of keeping the story in the loop and yet it being still relevant to the 21st century. In the first two years after my personal arrival in Australia in the 1950s, we children considered ourselves to be especially lucky as our family celebrated both Saint Nicholas on 5 December and Father Christmas on 25 December.-

By 1953, Dutch migrants could subscribe to the ADL newsletter and brochure, which the committee produced to inform non-English-speaking Dutch migrants (who comprised 90 per cent of the new arrivals) about environmental, political, health and social matters of importance to them. They contained practical information including the addresses of organisations, which migrants might need to access on arrival, how to find accommodation, where to store baggage until they had found lodging and where church and Dutch clubs met. Advice was also offered about the criteria required for domestic and commercial leaseholds, how to purchase a property or obtain a block of land to build one's own home, where to have your house designed and where to buy building materials.

The ADL also arranged for English lessons to be taught near to where most Dutch migrants lived. Another significant contribution was its commitment to inform Dutch migrants about the Australian way of life. This included any compliances which newly arrived Dutch needed to heed in respect to the legal system, how to achieve citizenship and gain access to Australian social services: health, the labour market, the education system for their children and for adult education classes, plus how to join a medical benefit fund, how to purchase and license a car and where to obtain travel insurance. They even informed landowners about the need to register their fruit trees with the Department of Agriculture in St Georges Terrace, Perth, in order to help combat fruit fly. On a more mundane, yet everyday level they offered information about the differences between the cuts of meat available at Australian butchers, in contrast to the meat cuts available in the Netherlands



Figure 3
Sinterklaas at Miss Mauds restaurant.
Monique Hill and daughters dressed in
Dutch costume. c1990s
Courtesy: Grandmother Nell Ottenhof.



Figure 4
English lessons – Schools did not invoke
English as a second language programs for
migrant children until the 1970s. Courtesy:
Batye Library 816B/CA555.

from the same stock animal. In addition, they organised for a financier to liaise with banks who did not know the newcomers, so that they could gain access to venture capital in order to establish a business.

In the same year (1953), the ADL was notifying members from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) that there were three doctors in WA with knowledge of tropical diseases. It made the migrants aware that dental care could be obtained at the Perth Dental Hospital, 179 Wellington Street, Perth, but that it would however be means tested. It beseeched members to organise a Will — especially those who owned property — and persisted in alerting migrants to join a health scheme, as a way to amortise huge hospitalisation costs. In August 1953, the basic wage was around £12 per week and hospital costs ranged from between £10/10/- to £12/5/- per week in a public hospital, and from £14 to £35 per week in a private hospital.⁶

For leisure activities, the ADL organised cultural and educational gatherings that would enlighten; for example it would provide information about free concerts given by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. It also advised readers not to throw away their old newsletters, as the ‘Catholic Club for Seafarers’ in Fremantle would be very pleased to receive them. The ADL catered for classical music buffs by sponsoring opera nights, for which Mr and Mrs Pennock of Peppermint Grove, willingly offered their home as a venue.⁷

In 1953, W Arriens, Mr J Scheeren and Mr HP de Groot of the ADL executive attended the first Good Neighbour Council (GNC) regional conference, held in Western Australia at Point Walter migrant hostel. The conference, which was opened by the then Premier A R G Hawke, prioritised migrants’ resettlement issues - accommodation, language, employment, assimilation and naturalisation, as well as the need to entice more female migrants to Australia in order to achieve a better gender balance, as this would improve male morale.

The calibre of the ADL executive membership inspired local clubs such as the Goodwill League and the very traditional Royal WA Historical Society (RWAHS), to invite the club’s executive to presentation evenings. In 1955, the ADL newsletter made specific mention of a reading from the *Diary of Frans Pelsaert* by Henrietta Drake-Brockman. *Pelsaert* was skipper of the doomed *Batavia* that floundered on the Abrolhos Islands off the coast of WA in 1629. The combined information sources provided by Drake-Brockman’s book - which in turn relied heavily on the translation of *Pelsaert’s Journal* by Dirk Drok, a Dutch migrant from the NEI - both helped to identify the area where the wreck was eventually found in the 1960s by Max Cramer, Hugh Edwards and other individuals of Geraldton [see Drok vignette by Summers].⁸ Until Drok’s arrival, the only other reference was the earlier translation of the *Ongeluckige Voyagie* by Willem Siebenhaar, who had also translated *Max Havelaar* into English. Its foreword by D.H. Lawrence describes it as a work of genius.

Under the auspices of the ADL, a carnival, soccer and Dutch women's social clubs were also established. In addition it ran a loan library of Dutch books from the YWCA headquarters in Adelaide Terrace. This opened every Saturday morning and during the 'interval' at some Dutch events. The joining fee was two shillings and it cost three pence per book loan. By January 1956, the ADL was affiliated with: The Dutch women's *Handwerk* [craft] Club; the Repertory club *Elckerlijck*⁹ established by Frans Hock (in Maniana and G. Sapelli); the *Nederlandse Volksdangroep* [Dutch folk dance group]; as well as the Windmills Soccer Club. By 1955, all were advertising their events in the ADL newsletter, and in the case of the soccer club, also their dinner dances held at the Aquatic Club and Riverside Drive Hotel. The ADL newsletter also advertised the church services and venues of all relevant denominations under 'Church News' [*Kerknieuws*].

Dutch ex-service men and women established specific associations to celebrate significant events and to facilitate friendship among people with similar experiences. The Netherlands Ex-Service Men's Association in WA (NESA) was founded in 1972 by 35 ex-Navy men, who had served with the Royal Netherlands Navy during World War II in the Far East and for whom Fremantle had been their home base from 1942. As time passed, NESA also attracted several Ex-Army and Air Force Personnel into its ranks, including the Ex-*Stroottroepers* of the Royal Netherlands Army. In 1974, the club was officially incorporated and the main aim was to assist Dutch Ex-Servicemen to obtain their overseas pensions. However, as the membership grew to over 300, its interests also included arranging social events for members. Particularly popular and memorable were the once a year 'Tulip Ball', the 'Amsterdam' and 'Indonesian' nights and the New Year's Eve party. During its existence, the venues for its meetings included the *Neerlandia* Clubhouse at Hehir Street in Belmont, the Coolbinia Football Club and the R.S.L. Club Hall in Nollamara. The club is no longer in existence, as most of the relevant generation have since died. However, the men's involvement in the defence of Australia is told in Jung, Eaton and Mays' chapters.

In 1953, the Australia Dutch League (ADL) also established a Kwinana 'Chapter' to cater for the many Dutch employed by British Petroleum (BP) and living in nearby Medina and Fremantle. These outreach groups organised events in their particular areas - even a 'Marching Girls' team emerged. However, in the 1960s, all these clubs merged to establish *Neerlandia*, and by generating funds, they built a clubhouse in Cambridge Street [see the Leeftang and Parker vignette].

In the early years of resettlement, such clubs helped ease the strangeness of life in the new environment. The clubs fulfilled an important function in the emotional resettling of the immigrants, because they enabled newcomers to meet and speak Dutch with people from the same cohort and to exchange information about work opportunities, shopping and schools. They were especially important for women at home, who would rely on their husbands to bring them to the club on weekends, as few first-generation Dutch women



Figure 5
Ageing on foreign soil: These Dutch Australian ladies regularly attend events at the Dutch club. Courtesy: Lianna Parker.

drove cars.¹⁰ Some Dutch clubs also organised group outings that included the beach, Swan River or King's Park.

First generation women also found it difficult to establish themselves as independent identities in the Dutch social clubs.¹¹ This was because most clubs were established on the principles of the traditional Dutch family, which had an authoritarian patriarchal male at its head. Although his wife had matriarchal power, this did not extend beyond the confines of the home. Women therefore always occupied 'subordinate' positions in the club structure; this only began to change when the community started to age. Currently, second generation and more recent arrivals fill leading positions in the *Neerlandia* Club, Associated Netherlands Societies of WA (ANSWA) and Dutch Care - the aged care organisation.¹² However, the 'Card' and 'Seniors' clubs are still organised by the first generation.

However, not all the Dutch migrants participated in Dutch social club life. Language was an issue within the Dutch community at large, since not all Dutch migrants spoke *Algemeen Beschaafde Nederlands* [standard Dutch]. Many spoke regional dialects or a *patois*, which meant that only those from the same region could really understand each other. Consequently, many Dutch preferred to entertain friends from the same region of origin in their own homes, where they could speak the dialect Dutch language that made them feel most comfortable.¹³

Dutch Clubs flourished in the 1940-1980s, but they declined thereafter. There has recently been a resurgence, and an increase in club numbers mainly for reasons of age care. However, it is noteworthy to mention that according to academic Henk Overberg, Dutch club membership in Australia was never more than 10 percent of the larger Dutch population of any State and this included few Dutch from the NEI.¹⁴

THE INDISCH OR 'OTHER DUTCH' CLUBS

In 1995, Eve ten Brummelaar of Sydney introduced the term 'Other Dutch' to define those Dutch-Australians, who spent their youth in the NEI. In 2001, Wim Willems in *De Uittocht uit Indië*, observed the difficulties posed by the Australian migration agents' fixation on 'outward appearance' - in particular the colour of skin and other external features, as being most problematic during the 1950s and 1960s for this cohort.¹⁵ Consequently, in relation to being able to meet the 'selection criteria' for migration to Australia as noted earlier, the Dutch from Indonesia made up a complicated category, as many were of 'mixed race'. Those Dutch-Eurasians, [with Indonesian or Chinese origins], needed to pass the extra test of being 'light-skinned enough' [see Peters' earlier migration chapter].

It was not until the 1990s, that these *Indisch* Dutch began establishing the separate *Bambu* club. Like the Dutch clubs established in the 1950s, *Indisch Dutch* social gatherings rely on collective memories. However in their case, memories of war under a Japanese oppressor and the Indonesian



Figure 6
Images associated with the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) Dutch culture. Inneke Macintosh's visual diary of her memories of growing up in Java pre WWII. Courtesy: Odyssey Quilts produced by Frances Larder.

Independence revolution in the NEI set them apart from the Dutch from NL, whose war experience was under the Nazis and who tended to dominate the membership at the *Neerlandia* clubhouse. So too did the food served at *Indisch* social gatherings. At *Bambu* events, members enjoyed Indonesian style cooking that included *rijstafel* [a series of meat and rice dishes], plus *Nasi* or *Bami Goreng*, *Beef Rendang*, *Gado Gado* and *Sáte*. These foods contrasted greatly with the pea and ham soup, bread rolls with cold meats and cheese with mustard, beef croquettes, *bitterballen*, *patate frites* and fresh herrings that graced the tables at the *Neerlandia* clubhouse events. Sixty years later, when asked about their food tastes since migrating to Australia, the women in the *Neerlandia* Craft club focus groups said that they were still cooking some traditional Dutch dishes at home. The dish most often mentioned was the *hutspot* - made up of potatoes and a vegetable such as kale or carrots and onion mashed together and served with beef – stewed Dutch style.¹⁶ However, they had also eaten dishes from the whole spectrum of ethnicities which characterises multicultural Australia today, and which is the ‘Australia’ encountered by the Dutch who entered from the late 1970s.

ARRIVALS AFTER MULTICULTURALISM

The Dutch arrivals from the mid-1970s to the dawn of the 21st century also differed from their earlier ‘selected’ compatriots, in that they had to satisfy the Numerical Multifactor Assessment System-(NUMAS) points system.¹⁷ In order to gain entry, they need to fit the age, education, economic and job criteria which Australia currently seeks and that are considered relevant for the country’s evolving and changing economy. A few with financial collateral have also entered Australia as business migrants.

The reasons that this Dutch cohort gave for their emigration from the Netherlands, were often not so very different from those of earlier Dutch migrants. They included wanting to escape the oppressive social system or the restrictions placed on enterprise by the Dutch Socialist Government; the threat of nuclear war and other nuclear disasters; the high unemployment rate (in the 1970s and early 1980s associated with a stagnant economy); and overcrowding. Informants also mentioned removing their children from Dutch ‘social’ problems as another reason for emigrating. The following quote from Robert de Bruin, a flower-grower of note, is typical:

“I wanted to get out of Holland because of its small-mindedness and I wanted to give my kids a better life away from drugs. We were at a stage where it didn’t matter so much where we went, so long as it was away from where people watch each other constantly and interfere with each others’ private lives.”

The destination of Australia was arrived at by the de Bruin family, in much the same way as it had been by earlier immigrants: “We certainly didn’t go to Australia because we wanted to go to Australia. We went to Australia because we wanted to get out of Holland. That’s a big difference”.¹⁸

Among this group there were also individuals, such as John and Elisabeth Hutten, who emigrated because they knew that starting a business in WA was easier than in the Netherlands, and also because they could access a lifestyle in WA which was not available to them in the Netherlands. This couple went on to establish two successful hairdressing salons in a Perth Hills suburb, where they also keep horses. One interesting difference between the earlier and later arriving Dutch business groups, is that the latter are more inclined to help their children enter the Australian ‘middle class’, either by sending their children to private schools or by settling in middle class suburbs. The earlier working class migrants who ‘made it big’, would have ‘generally’ more readily opted for the best house in the street of a working class area - suggesting that the hierarchical *verzuiling* system was still impacting on their worldview.

EXPATRIATES WORKING IN AUSTRALIA

In recent decades, as a result of the mining boom and extensive oil and gas exploration, WA has become host to a significant number of Dutch expatriates, who come to Australia for a few years to work for multinational firms such as *Woodside*, *Shell*, *Asko Nobel*, *Chevron* and *Fugro* - to name but a few. Many of these workers bring their families with them. Although they do attend local WA schools, their children are also kept up to speed with language and the Dutch curriculum through the work of Wilna Cornelisse and her team of Dutch teachers, who established the Dutch school *De Schakel* in WA. The school has recently been taken over by the Dutch Government and is now called ‘Language One Perth’ [see Cornelisse vignette].¹⁹

These recently arrived Dutch expatriates also have playgroups and a business club, yet traditionally there has been little connection between them and the older Dutch community. However recently and to the delight of the *Neerlandia* committee, some of these young Dutch migrants and their children have begun to attend ‘Drinks’ events at the *Neerlandia* on the last Friday of each month. In order to preserve Dutch-Australian cultural heritage before it is all lost and to sustain actual premises and buildings, the clubs continue to need an even greater influx of younger Dutch [see Leeftang and Parker Chapter]. Conservation of cultural heritage was however made difficult by the policy of ‘assimilation’ that dominated in Australia after the post-war cohort of migrants arrived from the early 1950s until the mid-1970s, when multicultural policy was put into operation.

Before leaving the Netherlands to move and work for Dutch companies in Australia, some expatriates today undergo orientation training, which is designed to familiarize them with the socio-economic, physical and emotional environment in which they will have to operate, including customs and traditions. Such pre-migration support helps the expatriates to choose an appropriate suburb in which to find accommodation, schools for their children and so on. Those without this pre-migration service, must find

other ways to negotiate the new environment and they often rely initially on work colleagues.

In response to the question about how she likes living in WA, Maria – an expatriate who came here four years ago with her husband and young family – describes her family's 'biggest challenge' as being the huge distance needed to travel to see her family back in Europe, as opposed to their 'biggest opportunity' - that of experiencing a different country and culture. Like most other expatriates, Maria utilises all possible forms of communication to stay in touch with friends and family overseas - mostly email, video chats and phone calls. She saves to travel home once a year and her parents have also been able visit her annually in Australia. They even try to meet somewhere halfway on a yearly basis too. Her brother who lives in San Francisco has a similar arrangement. This level of contact with family from the homeland was out of the question for earlier migrants. My parents who arrived in WA in 1949, brought out the grandmothers in 1962. However, they were unable to afford to go home until 1974, when my father was dying from cancer.

Maria says she does not have contact with Dutch migrants from the earlier migration waves. Nor does she 'miss' food from the Netherlands, apart from 'Peanut butter', which in any case she can now buy at the 'Dutch shop' in Guildford, but which she usually brings back from the Netherlands herself. She also notes that although she mixes with both locals and other expatriates, her best friends are still Dutch. Some she met here and others she already knew from previous international work locations.

Maria's two children, Willem and Frank, who came here when they were 3 and 4 years old respectively, already spoke English as they were born in Scotland and have an English-speaking father. Consequently this made their transition to WA much smoother than for those children without any prior knowledge of the English language. The children love the outdoor life in WA and all the space and playgrounds. Maria "loves the weather, the camping, space, parks, the ocean, the fresh air, the beaches and the easy commute to work." She also likes the fact that Australia is a sporty, healthy place - at least where their family lives in the 'Golden Triangle' in the western suburbs – the wealthiest part of Perth city, just around the corner from the school and from where they can also see the Indian Ocean.

However, there are also some issues that Maria dislikes about Australia. For example, she finds Australia lacking when it comes to gender equality, especially in marriage. She also deplores some of the negative views voiced by some about asylum seekers, and the car-stickers she often sees displaying expressions such as: 'We drink beer, we eat meat and we speak bl...dy English'.

Maria mentioned feeling very frustrated on arrival in WA by the lengthy and costly process of having her qualifications verified, especially since they had already been translated and accepted as valid in Scotland. However, most difficult to bear are the Government charges for 457 visa holders since 2015 of \$4000 per family, per annum for public education, especially given that

this group already pay in the region of \$140,000 on tax per year.²⁰ For this reason, Maria feels that expatriates are not always made very welcome here, even though they try to integrate into the local community and economy. She has however made determined efforts to become pro-actively involved in her local community, by acting during the last year as Secretary of the P&C Association at her local school.

The response to similar questions from a permanently settled Dutch migrant who married an Australian twenty years earlier, are quite different to Maria's responses. This couple have two children and both are fluent in Dutch and English. She has some Dutch friends and her job keeps her in touch all week with other Dutch people. However, in contrast to Maria, she flies home to the Netherlands only once every two or three years. In the meantime she communicates with friends and family in the Netherlands via email, *Skype* and other forms of social media such as *WhatsApp*. When she goes to the Netherlands, she tries to eat all the food which is difficult to acquire in Australia. She only buys Dutch food in Australia around *Sinterklaas* (Saint Nicholas on 5 December). She likes living in Australia because of the weather, blue sky, outdoor living and the feeling of space, but dislikes the extreme heat, the lack of historic buildings and '*gezelligheid*' (sociability).

Despite the great social and economic difference between post-war migrants and the expats of today, both groups hold in these in common- the passage of time and having other Dutch as their closest friends and also as missing Dutch sociability and a sense of history.

HOW DID THE DUTCH FARE IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY?

The expectations engendered by the Australian ideology of assimilation, created conflict for both the receiving and relinquishing countries. From the 1940s to the mid- 1970s, newcomers were expected to transition quickly into becoming 'New Australians', by discarding whatever cultural heritage and languages they had brought with them and by integrating themselves instead into the existing social structure: "Australians assumed that the opportunities which mass migration and the assisted passage afforded, would make the newcomer feel obligated to fit in, to learn the language and to adopt the customs and traditions of the receiving country".²¹ Nobody thought about the difficulties this process might present. The over-whelming view was that the past was irrelevant to the new life that migrants would now be forging.²²

Research has shown that *Aanpassen* or assimilation ideology and practices among Dutch migrants are distinctive, because throughout the assimilation period the majority of Dutch appeared willing to conform, whether they considered them agreeable or not. This seemed true at least in the public arena, where they covered-up any social characteristics that Australians defined as 'ethnic'.

In fact, outward conformity to ‘assimilationist dictates’ became the hallmark of ‘Dutch identity’ in Australia. In the public sphere, researchers maintain that the Dutch in Australia, without exception, tried to be more Australian than the Australians.²³ The tendency of an immigrant group to assimilate can also relate to the advantages in doing so. For example, a hierarchical environment in which ethnic groups are clearly ranked is believed to encourage assimilation.²⁴ Considered in this way, Dutch invisibility in Australia could be viewed as a way the Dutch preserved their privileged second place (after the British), on the preferential ladder, as this facilitated access to economic benefits in the Australian market place and to better treatment in the work force.²⁵

Conversely, Dutch sociologists relate the characteristically skilful manner in which the Dutch make themselves invisible in the public sphere, to those traits instilled via socialisation practices in the Netherlands. These practices positively value self-possession and the Calvinist and Stoical values of discipline, frugality, industry, responsibility, obedience and indefatigable allegiance to leaders, regardless of circumstances.²⁶

In Australia these socialisation practices, when combined with the assimilationist dictate, eventually led many first generation Dutch migrants to develop distinctive public and private persona as a strategy for maintaining their cultural integrity. In interviews with the first generation, they discuss their conformity in the public domain, but they report that simultaneously they remained unwaveringly Dutch in the privacy of their homes. This led some social scientists to label ‘Dutch’ as a ‘closet culture’.²⁷

By the 1970s ‘Dutch invisibility’ was generally accepted as the way in which the public and Government viewed Dutch resettlement. For example on 2 February 1978 *The Adelaide Advertiser* noted:

The typical Dutchman who came to Australia and assimilated for all his individualistic reasons, is a man without and out of history. He is ‘strong willed, fast thinking, often stubborn and possessed with a fanaticism to succeed’. (1)...²⁸

Although the assimilated Dutch was a persuasive stereotype, not all members of the Dutch community agreed with it. Many preferred, like the Dutchman quoted by *The Canberra Times* on 13 May 1978 – to believe that the Dutch were the best [of all migrants] at playing the ‘assimilation’ game’.²⁹

The Catholic newspaper *De Tijd* - 1 September 1950 - provides an alternative perspective. It notes:

Only for the man and woman who have given up all ideals of a Dutch home life, and who are capable of putting themselves on the level of the average Australian, is there a chance of success. The authorities in Holland should warn migrants that on arrival in Australia they have no rights, but only responsibilities to become ‘New Australians’ in the shortest possible time.³⁰



Figure 7
Being an Australian: The van Lieshout girls
c 1954. Courtesy: L. van Lieshout.



Figure 8
Sjannie Berens and Nonja Peters enjoying
Australian wildflowers season in bush near
Toodyay, c 1953.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.



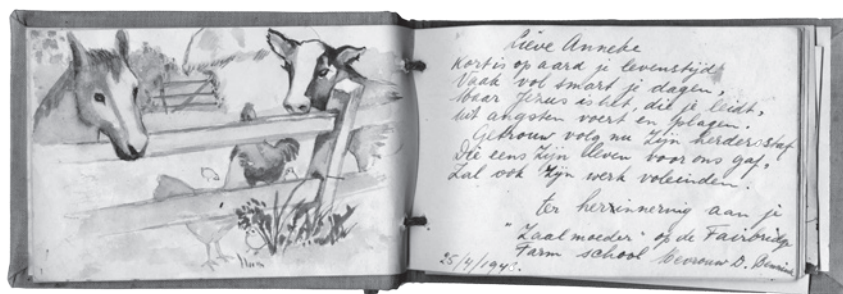
Figure 9
Nell Ottenhof reading Dutch stories to
her Australian born children Anton and
Monique (sitting either side of her) and
a friend c 1963.
Courtesy: Peters Family Collection.

Figure 10
Poesie Album (autograph Book) created by
NEI evacuees at Fairbridge Farm School.
c1945.
Courtesy: Anneke Slik nee Jongs.

However, when the immigration policy shifted from ‘assimilation’ to ‘integration’ in the mid-1960s, resettlement procedures and processes greatly improved for all newcomers, including the Dutch. This change is expressed in Dutch newsletters at the time. For example, whereas in the decade starting with 1952, the ADL was advising its Dutch membership to ‘assimilate’; during the 1960s the emphasis switched to ‘integration’. This switch is also emphasized in other newsletters; for example, in an article in the *Contact* newsletter of March 1969 entitled ‘Assimilatie of Integratie’, the author urges the Dutch to strive for integration and not for assimilation. He also warns against mixing only with Australians and allowing “your Dutch customs and values to fly in the breeze”, since this would eventually lead to feeling “bereft of background”.³¹ Instead, he suggests that migrants should assess their customs and values against those of Australians, with a view to optimising the best of both in their daily lives.

In the mid 1970s the immigration policy shifted again, this time to multiculturalism. The main principles of multiculturalism were social cohesion, cultural identity, equality of opportunity and notably, for the first time, the Australian Authorities acknowledged and accepted that cultural differences were socially enriching.³² Multicultural policy prompted the many Dutch who came here as children to begin to acknowledge their cultural heritage, and to reclaim the Dutch names they had lost when teachers ‘anglicised’ them at school.

Researcher Des Cahill (2006) describes first generation Dutch as ‘accommodationist’ and the second generation as ‘amalgamationists’. In his opinion the first generation have been allowed to be as Dutch as they wanted to be. The second generation, although proud of their *Dutchness*, were not overwhelmingly passionate as to its salience! Cahill’s perspective is open to debate. My own research with second generation Dutch, (who were children on arrival or born here of Dutch parents), challenges Cahill’s belief that they felt pride in their *Dutchness*. The rescue of their names and culture from the mid 1970s onwards, would tend to suggest that this process only presented as a possibility when Australia had abandoned assimilation and integration and operationalized multicultural policy.³³



The main principles that Australian multicultural society instigated, included social cohesion, cultural identity and equality of opportunity. Cultural differences were now to be acknowledged and accepted as socially enriching. Issues of migrants' social and economic access and equity increasingly commanded the attention of government and the general public alike. These changes made non-European migration to Australia possible and enabled second-generation migrants to celebrate their Dutch cultural heritage.

When it comes to immigration terminology, it is still a tricky business deciding whether to use first-generation or second-generation to describe an immigrant. There is nomenclature consensus and many reputable groups disagree on the usage. Some social scientists also use the term the '1.5 generation' - to describe people who arrived in Australia as children and adolescents. This is based on the hypothesis that unlike their first-generation parents or Australian-born siblings, their identity is split. They are often described as either playing the role of bridge-builder and cultural interpreter by helping parents and grandparents navigate their new home, or they can feel like 'outcasts' - neither here nor there. From a personal perspective as the eldest child in the family, I believe my experience covers both of these positions. However, I am most comfortable with the term 'inbetweeners'. Then again, whatever the label, it seems undeniable that second-generation immigrant experience is a vastly different resettlement process from that of their elders, for it entails tackling a dissimilar range of intra and inter-ethnic opportunities and risks. From an intra-ethnic perspective, the impact of *Aanpassen* ideology on Dutch children and parents affords a relevant example of long-term impact.

The following quote from a Dutch mother, who had pushed *Aanpassen* in reference to her five children's socio-cultural adjustment in Australia, is representative of Dutch stay-at-home mothers: "They all know no better than that they belong here!" However, interviews with migrants who arrived as children, would tend to suggest that the adjustment process for many had not been nearly as seamless as their parents, and especially their mothers, had thought. Interviewees reflected on the dramatic change imposed by migration on their lives, and how migration had not been the result of any decision they had personally made [see Anne and Peter Rietveld vignette]. They also spoke of how migration had forced them to negotiate and communicate in two linguistic and cultural spheres - often at odds with each other and mainly without support from home or school [see Negenman chapter].

Social anthropologist, Herbert Mead would argue that although an individual's awareness of 'self' is always there; it most often exists quietly, causing no problems and its creation and maintenance is a fairly routine process. However under particular circumstances, such as migration [my emphasis], that awareness becomes heightened and conflicted, as the 'self' needs more conscious attention and reflection, in order to cope with unfamiliar attitudes, values, customs, beliefs and language.³⁴

To fully comprehend how well migrants who arrived here as children had handled migration, we added ‘age at arrival’ to Mead’s perception. For example, Marika from Albany, who was a teenager on arrival, talked of feeling highly emotionally charged about coming to Australia. Like the majority of this age group, she too felt extremely angry at her father for forcing migration upon her without giving her a say in the matter. Marika was 18 at the time and in love with a boy of 19. Under Dutch law she was considered a minor until age 21 and so she had to come to Australia. Marika’s 20 year-old sister, thus also a minor and also in love, had to come too. The sister’s young man subsequently followed and they later married. Marika felt, “the chair had been pulled out from beneath me”. At home she was obliged to be obedient to her father. In the mainstream Australian community in Albany where the family were resettling, she felt “like an intruder”, and was “treated like a nobody”. Reflecting on her resettlement, she credits her Australian husband with assisting her to find stability and to put down new roots in Australia. She is happy with her marriage and is very happy with her life.

Many of the younger children coped by denying their *Dutchness*, as more often than not it attracted negative connotations. Research also shows that the Dutch migrant children who grew up in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s, when assimilation ideology reigned supreme, experienced more difficulties settling in at school, than both the authorities and their parents appreciated. The ‘sink or swim’ education policy that prevailed at the time, ensured that once they were enrolled in school they were considered to be Australian children. This attitude enabled education authorities to totally ignore specific disadvantages and special needs, such as teaching English as a second language, and to refrain from collecting overseas-born statistics. Under this system, if a migrant child presented with learning difficulties, the authorities could maintain that the fault lay with the child or the migrant household, rather than the school system’s failure to deal with the specific needs of the child.

The lack of special help with language problems and ‘skewed’ IQ tests both diminished these Dutch children’s chances of procuring higher education and scholarships, and few parents could afford the education fees to send them to independent schools. Moreover in reality, even the enthusiastic application of the euphemism ‘New Australian’ and the ‘anglicising’ of children’s names, did not change the fundamental fact that in the schoolyard, migrant children were really thought of as “refffos, wogs, dagos, spags, kikes, Yids, and Poms” – although the only names actually relevant to being Dutch were ‘Dutchie’ and ‘clog wogs!’³⁵

The ultimate symbol of success at school was to be seen as part of the ‘venerated’ Australian crowd, since everything ‘New Australian’ was considered ‘inferior’ [see Negenman chapter]. The children therefore suffered many hidden consequences and each child had to find ways of dealing with being different. Learning to speak English like their Australian

peers and working to gain good grades were preferred options for some of the children while they were still at school.

The goal therefore for school-aged migrants was to 'fit-in'. In contrast to their parents and older siblings, these school-aged migrant children also grew up in the midst of multi-ethnic migrant communities. A 'pan-second' generation experience emerged, that had them feeling more comfortable among the range of ethnicities that the post-WWII mass migration movement spawned, than in the Dutch community clubs where they were in fact not often made to feel welcome. The *Aanpassen* imperative that Dutch parents supported, gave extra impetus to them finding comfort among their migrant cohort. However, anecdotal evidence would also tend to suggest that children who arrived here aged between 5 and 11, and thus grew up with 'a foot in both cultures', were more likely to suffer depression or other mental illness in later life, compared to their older siblings who were more strongly grounded in their culture of origin.

Settling in the new land was not just about illness nor a break in communication - it was also about homesickness and lack of kinship support networks. Intense emotions typified the first years in the new country, when migrants were at their most susceptible to homesickness because they were still feeling detached from the unfamiliar surroundings. The rate and degree of coming to terms with the 'Australian' way of life also varied between migrants, depending upon gender, national background and social class. From 1950 onwards, State Ministers for Health started complaining about the rising cost of health care due to the increasing numbers of immigrants requiring hospitalisation for reasons of mental, rather than physical care. Although emigration, wartime trauma, torture and dislocation were held responsible for this greatly increased incidence of breakdowns, there was little in the way of specialised treatment to deal with it, nor did the authorities gauge its effects on the second generation. It is impossible to determine the number of people who were affected, firstly because nationality statistics were never collected, but also because migrants requiring psychological treatment, but unable to speak English, did not go to doctors.³⁶ The cost to individuals and families, where members of a family sometimes resorted to alcoholism, domestic violence or suicide, was never calculated. As always it was the most drastic suicide situations, which made the news.

Most Dutch children who arrived here during the period of booming post-war economy when jobs were super-abundant, left school at 14 or 15 to start work. This is reflected in statistics of the time, which showed that the males were generally less well educated than their trades-skilled fathers.³⁷ However, interview data also shows that many acquired the necessary skills at their workplaces, or they later returned to night school to acquire job-related qualifications and self-employment skills sets.³⁸ A high percentage of this cohort worked in sales and eventually became self-employed [see Peters - Section IV].³⁹

Many of these Dutch children were never taught to speak their own language and so consequently most can now only communicate in English [see Pauwels chapter]. How well they do so is also not well understood, given the fact that their family may also have limited English capacity. A lingering thought is the extent to which this state of affairs also impacted upon their family interactions, especially at an emotive level. Personally, I never felt that I knew the Dutch words that would enable me to express my deep emotional feelings to my parents, nor did they seem to know the English equivalents.

A backlash relating to the lack of language maintenance between first generation Dutch migrants and their children became apparent as early as 1961, when grandparents began making their first visits to Australia. The January 1961 ADL newsletter relates the story of grandparents who could hardly wait to return home after a visit to their children and grandchildren.⁴⁰ On arrival, one couple's son who had married an Australian woman, gave each parent a Dutch-English dictionary, telling them that only the English language was acceptable in their home. This couple felt that a barrier had been erected between them and their son, who now seemed like a stranger. Another couple spent four months in WA looking after their three English-speaking grandchildren, while the parents worked long hours in the business. Although not all grandparents had bad experiences, the two different cultures and languages often raised insurmountable barriers between grandparents and grandchildren, which stood in the way of them getting to know one another more intimately. An additional and unexpected disconnect emerged, when the first generation Dutch migrants began to lose their second language capacity due to illness and ageing, and subsequently reverted back to exclusively speaking Dutch.

Dutch households demanded a great deal from their children over and above the expectation of *Aanpassen*. Many handed over entire wage packets to their parents at the end of each week, and were given a small amount of 'pocket money' in return. They were also expected to help with building the family home and if relevant, to work in the family business in the evening or at weekends.

The first-generation Dutch male participants who were interviewed, described how they imparted the socio-cultural and economic behaviours and attitudes of the Dutch work ethic and self-possession, which they wished their children to also follow. Rolf, a first generation manufacturer, began this conversation: "I'm not a believer in protecting my children too much - they have got to make it by themselves, my dad never protected me". Rolf paid a one way trip for his 17 year old son David to go to the Netherlands, with the expectation that he would earn his own money over there and save enough to come home. David not only achieved this aim, but returned home 10 months later with a sizeable saving! The expectations that Herman had of his son were not so different:

I have a business producing custom made ...wheels. He [son] is working every night but sometimes on a Saturday. If I also need him and he wants to go out with his girlfriend, then I say,

“No, that girl can wait, when you have finished the job then you can go, you have to help me when it suits me not when it suits you”.⁴¹

A common complaint from this cohort of Dutch-Australian children – male and female – was of feeling jaded by the ever ready critique they received from their parents and the absence of a ‘pat on the back’ to acknowledge their successes.

The issues for Dutch girls were often more closely related to gender bias. Rikki still smarts when she relates how it was in her family, and that her experience was not uncommon in the 1950s and 1960s in Dutch working class families. Rikki noted:

Like all Dutchmen, he [Dad] was arrogant. When he wanted a cup of tea in the morning he would just push the cup out. He expected me and my sisters to fill it without asking. Nobody accepts treatment like that and I certainly feel that there were many times he went overboard. The boys sat at the table drinking, smoking and having fun, while the girls served the meal and did the dishes. My brother Tony had never washed a dish in his life until he got married, and then he did them voluntarily.⁴²

In the 1950s and 1960s, Dutch girls were also expected to start work as soon as was practicable to help the family to financially ‘get on its feet’, and in some instances to enable male siblings to acquire an education. As a result, by the time most working class Dutch girls were 15, they had dropped out of the school system.⁴³ The subservience expected at home (mainly by working class families), played havoc with their self-esteem, especially among their Australian friends. Consequently most Dutch girls felt compelled to hide these aspects of their family life from Australians, who only associated such practices with migrants from middle and southern, and not Western Europe.⁴⁴ Such oppressive childhood practices also engendered a great deal of conflict in cross-cultural marriages, since the women raised in this manner often felt compelled to subjugate their needs to those of their spouse and children. Inevitably this caused a great deal of resentment.

To confront and accommodate these obstacles and develop and maintain an independent identity in this socio-cultural arena, required ingenuity and determination. Eldest children were especially disadvantaged, since they were forced to negotiate a society without a template to follow and, which their parents could not yet fully comprehend. Younger children, watching the conflict that often ensued between parents and elder children who were at odds with one another’s worlds, unconsciously modified their own behaviour to comply with the parent’s wishes, at least on the home front. This sometimes led to major division and even long-term estrangement between siblings, as the younger ones turned out to be favoured by parents for their conformity. Lacking a sense of pride in their own heritage and having to make vital decisions about their ‘identity’, whilst being caught between these

conflicting power sources - home, Australian school and peers - challenged many migrant children's sense of belonging - both at home and in the wider community. Their experience is captured splendidly in Wilma Hedley's poem. It picks up on the vast dissimilarities in the cultural backgrounds of Dutch children compared to locals, as well as in the immeasurable environmental differences that migrant children needed to negotiate, in order to adjust.⁴⁵

*WHO ARE YOU MY STUNTED GUM [TREE]
MIRRORED FLAT IN RIVER'S RUN,
WHO ARE YOU HARSH BIRD OF BROWN,
YOU AGE OLD ROCK AND HILL AND MOUND;
CAN THERE BE FOR YOU AND ME
TOGETHER AN IDENTITY? ⁴⁶*

Some children were able in later life to turn the drive, ingenuity and creativity required to survive the school years and oppressive home practices, into innovation in the market place or academia. Their accomplishments helped ease the upheaval and dislocation the family had endured during the resettlement phase. Their success ratified the migration undertaking – 'to give their children a better life'.

VISITS BACK HOME

Before the obligations of the 'two-year work agreement' had been discharged, migrants soon became aware that building a new life in Australia would entail not only hard work and sacrifices, but also major lifestyle changes. However, by mid to late 1960s, most Dutch in Australia had established a permanent home of sorts. Many well-off grandparents also came of their



Figure 11
Obtaining Citizenship 1960s. Courtesy:
Peters Research Collection.

own accord to visit family in Australia, and prosperous migrants began visiting their families back in the Netherlands. Travel agents took advantage of the increased affluence of these migrants by chartering airline flights and establishing budget-priced trips back by ship [see Leeftang vignette]. Also the financial wellbeing of many migrants had improved sufficiently to enable them to borrow enough money, so they could bring out the grandparents to meet their Dutch-Australian grandchildren. My father paid for both of my grandmothers to visit us.

There are many and varied stories surrounding visits home, which have entered Dutch-Australian folklore. A common story is how the family in the Netherlands perceived 'the visit' as a sign of having made it in the 'promised land'. Consequently they expected the migrant to 'wine and dine' them throughout their holiday. In reality most migrants had scrimped, saved and often borrowed funds to book a passage back to NL, and often they did so in the hope that going 'home' for a holiday, would settle forever the residual effects of homesickness. The return to Australia from the 'home' visit was sometimes the catalyst for them to register to become naturalised here.

CITIZENSHIP

The proportion of those born in the Netherlands, yet now with Australian citizenship, shows a strong positive correlation to their period of residence. Those pre-1976 arrivals, recorded an 84 per cent naturalisation rate against only 34 per cent for those who came after 1976, when the immigration policy had shifted from 'assimilation and integration' to 'multiculturalism' (ABS 1991). However, what the statistics do not reveal is why they decided to become naturalised. It seems that many became Australian citizens for practical reasons: for example, to gain a liquor store or a post office licence, or to avoid having to register a change of address at the local post office — a requirement under the *Aliens Act*. At that time you also needed to be a citizen to be eligible for a pension or a government job and it also made travelling much easier.⁴⁷

Like the decision to leave the Netherlands, the decision to become naturalised was among the first generation, overwhelmingly made by the male head of the family. The women usually supported, consented or complied with their husbands. Most working class women also voted for the political party which their spouse endorsed. The Dutch interviewed from this cohort also tended to believe that their children had no issues about settling in Australia, although when probed, the members of the craft club *Neerlandia*, noted that some of their children had also been reluctant to take up Australian citizenship.

Their internal feeling was that being born Dutch or Friesian, meant that from an emotional perspective you would always remain so, but that functionally since you were living in Australia, you should obtain citizenship and take up the right to vote. Maria Linden believes that wherever you work and live is your country - so her family are all Australians. She described it as where you 'hang your hat, is home'. Some Dutch have never taken up Australian citizenship and neither have all the migrants who came here as children.



Figure 12

The research focus of Nonja, a naturalised Australian, is recording the history of Dutch-Australians. In this photo she is standing near a panel of the State Library of WA exhibition (SLWA): 'Dutch on the Western Edge 1616-2016'. She was Guest Curator of the Exhibition. Image: State Library Western Australia (SLWA) Photographer. Courtesy: State Librarian Margaret Allen.

Those born here of Dutch parents are of course automatically Australians. A few Dutch even 'Australianised' their first or surnames in order to fit in more effectively. There are also extreme, although rare cases of those Dutch who claim they had lost the capacity to speak Dutch after a short time living in Australia. It is unclear as yet, if prejudice was the driver of this perception.

After the naturalisation ceremony they were officially 'Australians', but that was not always how they saw themselves. The sentiments of one Dutch woman I interviewed is representative:

It's 'just a piece of paper' but it did not change how I felt inside. On the outside I was an Aussie but on the inside I stayed very Dutch, you can't escape your early years, your *Dutchness*, it is all you know.⁴⁸

The better educated Dutch were more inclined to question the implications and benefits associated with the acquisition of Australian citizenship.⁴⁹ Marie, for instance, traded Australian political rights to retain Dutch citizenship because:

I am still Dutch, I feel Dutch, I like to feel Dutch. ...lots of people have become Australian citizens because of jobs or because their children wanted it. My husband was a businessman and we didn't have to become 'Australian' to survive.... My son and my daughter are self-employed. What more can the Australian Government ask of us?⁵⁰

After 1994, migrants were much happier about being naturalized, when the pledge to renounce all former alliances and proclaim allegiance to the British Queen was replaced by the 'Pledge of Commitment as a Citizen to Australia':



Figure 13

Nonja in Kindergarten -Tilburg - The Netherlands-1949
Courtesy: Nonja Peters.

From this time forward, *under God*,* I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.⁵¹

Inevitably therefore, the move from *Dutchness* to presenting as Australian was not as seamless as the label the ‘Invisible Dutch’ would indicate. The image of the Dutch immigrant which is held by Dutch people as well as Australians, is an ideal image and it corresponds to what the Australian and Dutch governments expected of the immigrants. This stereotypical image is based on the assumption that Dutch immigrants have little interpersonal contact among themselves and live scattered all over the country; and in the belief that they have adapted so well, that they have become mainstream Australians. It is true that in general they tried to behave as ‘ideal’ immigrants and gained a fair-to-good command of the English language. This was made easier by the two languages’ close linguistic ties [see Pauwels’ chapter], and by the lack of many striking physical differences between European Australians and European Dutch, that characterised the early post war years.

AGED DUTCH

Having spent the largest part of their lives in Australia, most of the older Dutch tend to describe themselves as ‘Dutch-Australians’. Some fifty years later, in conversations with Dutch-Australian aged pensioners about their relationship with Australians, most generally note that they had relationships with their work colleagues throughout their working life. However they say that their closest friends were and still remain, other Dutch, especially people from their own region of origin and whom they had met on the ship when they migrated. These individuals, in the absence of any extended family, had accepted the role of surrogate aunt, uncle or cousin to their children.

The elderly Dutch also noted that, despite having adopted many Australian attitudes, they had remained connected to their Dutch identity in many respects, gaining succour from the familiar and the distinctive ‘*gezelligheid*’ (conviviality), which it embraced. In the process, they came to realise the extent to which they were still Dutch, no matter how assimilated they had believed themselves to be, and the extent to which they had suppressed their Dutch identity in order to work and live among Anglo-Australians. As one man noted: “On retirement I left my Australian friends at the office when I closed the door behind me.” The assessment differed however for Dutch women. Since few had been in the workforce, they continued to value their neighbours’ friendship into old age, although their best friends were drawn predominantly from their Dutch cohort. However, in summing up their migrant experience, the general consensus among these women was that the first years were very difficult and that most had often felt like going back to NL, until they had mastered enough of the English language to function in the new society.

Since the turn of the 21st century we have observed a rapid growth in the numbers of the Dutch Aged, followed more recently of course by a decline in



Figure 14
The Dutch shop in Guildford, 2016.
Courtesy; Nicola Coles.

numbers. According to demographic projections, the numbers of the Dutch who are 60 years and over in Australia peaked at over 50,000 in the first half of the 2010s.⁵² Demographers claim the proportion of Dutch aged 75 years and over could remain around one third in the present decade, and rise to 45 per cent in 2021 and to 73 per cent in 2031. The difference between these and the earlier cohorts is that they are mainly those Dutch who were children on arrival, and that they entered the Australian work force or school system. This category of Dutch can readily negotiate with other Dutch and with Australian and other migrant networks.⁵³

Aged-care on foreign soil is an ongoing battle. It can be especially sad to end one's life in a mainstream nursing home, when illness has robbed you of your second language capacity and you can no longer communicate effectively with your children. However, even when second language capacity remains intact, personal 'life narrative' loses its potency in nursing homes, which can be predominated by local Australians residents who are not able to identify with the home and heritage backgrounds of others. In the mid-1980s, a group of younger Dutch met and formed the Dutch Australian Community Service (DACs). They included Deanna Vlam (Chair), Nonja Peters (Secretary), Giel Baggen (Accountant), Adri van der Worm (Fund raising), Siska Zwaan (Member) and with Honorary Consul Mr Thom Dercksen (recently deceased) as its Patron. Over thirty years later DACs, now called 'Dutchcare', continues to function to care for the ageing Dutch population of WA.

A RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

Income statistics show that the Dutch have made a good living here, and that this is also their benchmark as to how they assess their migration [see Peters - Section IV]. Dutch workers gained an excellent reputation as house builders, painters, tool-makers and business people, and Dutch women as first-rate homemakers. First generation Dutch tradespersons were prominent as self-employed contractors and were among the most wanted employees of *British Petroleum* at Kwinana. Some set up and worked in businesses such as *Oosterhof*, *Oorschot* and *Woerlie* and many more established large building and construction firms. Western Australia's largest shipbuilding yards were founded by the Dutch. *ASI Ships* was established in the 1960s by the Verboon Brothers (born and educated in NL). Likewise in the 1980s, John Rothwell, a second generation migrant who was born in NL and educated predominantly in Australia, established *Austal Ships*, which now has large shipbuilding yards in both the USA and WA.

Dutch professionals are currently also employed in management positions as architects, engineers, accountants, health professionals, as well as in local government, town planning, entertainment and academia. The Netherlands-born have also made a name for themselves in the area of Fine Arts such as painting, sculpture, textiles, installations and photography.

Prominent among these are the aerial photographer Richard Woldendorp, Hans Arkeveld, Aatje Bruce, Nien Schwarz, Rinske Car-Driesens and Theo de Koning, to name but a few - there are many more [see Schwartz and Ingelse-Yarrall - Section V].

The Dutch-Australian connections that were celebrated extensively as part of the 'Australia on the Map 1606-2006' commemorations in 2006, are still ongoing. In fact they were strengthened in 2012 by Australia being designated a priority country under the Netherlands' mutual heritage policy. Increasingly more Dutch-Australians are delving into their heritage as we prepare for the 400 years 'Dirk Hartog' anniversary in October 2016.

How might first generation Dutch migrants sum up their *Dutchness*?

Comments from the late Bert Creemers are poignant and representative:

I pride myself on being Dutch even though I have been in Australia longer than I have been in the Netherlands. I believe that in another generation our children will be like the American-Dutch children I encountered in the Netherlands when I went back for seven years in the 1960s. They were making trips to the Netherlands to specifically search for [genealogical] evidence of their family's roots. I believe our grandchildren will be the first to start the trend to become interested in their Dutch-Australian cultural heritage.⁵⁴

Perhaps we are already doing just that, given that the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics show there are currently around 15,000 Australians living in the Netherlands.⁵⁵ The Dutch-Australian maritime, military, migration and mercantile connection with WA, which began in 1616 with Dirk Hartog's visit to our coast in the VOC vessel the *Eendracht*, provides a solid basis for cultural heritage tourism along the WA Batavia coast. The stories of the Dutch migration experience of hard work and commitment enrich both Australia's state and national narrative.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The chapter derives its information from oral history interviews archival documentation and photographs.
- 2 http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Iron_curtain.aspx
- 3 The initial executive committee included Mr Harland, Manager of the Shell Company of WA and Mr Nettleship, Manager of Phillips Electrical industries (WA). Committee members comprised G. Ligtermoet of Applecross, C. Krijgsman of South Perth, Mrs Swarts of Cannington and Nvan Orsouw of Belmont. Assisting the committee were J. Swartz of Cannington and J. Diephuis of Bassendean.
- 4 Elich, J.H., *De Omgekeerde Wereld: Nederlanders als Ethische Groep in Australië*, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1985
- 5 Hempel, J.A. 1960. 'Dutch Migrants in Queensland.' Canberra: Australian National University
Peters, N., 'Trading Places: Greek, Italian, Dutch and Vietnamese Enterprise in Western Australia', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia 2000.
- 6 ADL, Newsletters, 1953.
- 7 ADL Newsletter from its inception until it was taken over by the newsletter *Contact* 1969.
- 8 Drok, E. D. (Evert D.) Correspondence, 1973-1985, Batty Library, Library Service of Western Australia (LISWA); Drake-Brockman, H., *Voyage to Disaster*, Sydney, 1963; Siebenhaar, Willem,

- Ongeluckige Voyagie (1647), translation of Jan Jansz's account of the 1629 Batavia shipwreck and mutiny on the Western Australian coast. Published by Siebenhaar under the title 'Abrolhos Tragedy' in the *Western Mail* in 1897.
- 9 Pieter Leeftang in an email dated 9 December 2013, noted the name of the theatre group was "Elckerlijck", which is 'Old Dutch and roughly translated into English means: "Everyone likes it "or "To everyone's satisfaction".
- 10 Peters, N, 'Just a Piece of Paper: Dutch Women in Western Australia', *Studies in Western Australian History*, 2000a, 53-74.
11. Intra-ethnic relations in the Dutch community in Australia in the early postwar years emulated the cleavages in Dutch society. Differentiation and club allegiance occurred on the basis of province, religion, class and gender; Overberg, H., 'The Dutch in Australia' in James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People*, 1988.
- 12 Dutch working class parents' failure to pass on their language to their children keeps the second generation away from Dutch organisations.
- 13 Peters, 2000.
- 14 Overberg, H., 'Dutch Communal Life in Victoria', in Nonja Peters (ed) *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006* (Perth 2006).
- 15 Willems, W., *De Iuttocht uit Indie 1945-1995*, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, 2001.
- 16 It is interesting to note that historically this was the meal the Spanish left standing when they retreated from Leiden on 3 October 1574. However, whether the ready to eat *hutspot* (a dish made of carrots, onions, meat and parsnips) they left behind was a Spanish or Dutch dish is a moot point. The Oxford dictionary claims the word first appeared in Dutch records in 1527.
- 17 <http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/general-skilled-migration/pdf/points-test.pdf>; <http://migrationblog.immi.gov.au/2011/06/16/new-points-test-for-general-skilled-migration-visas/>
- 18 Peters, 2000.
- 19 Pers. Com. Wilna Cornelisse, 10 November 2014.
- 20 <http://www.irishecho.com.au/2014/05/09/wa-govt-scales-back-457-school-fee-plan/31688>
- 21 Reimer, A., 'Between Two Worlds', in J. Lack and J. Templeton, *The Bold Experiment*, New York, 1995, p. 277.
- 22 *ibid.*
- 23 De Longh is cited in 'It's the Dutchness of the Dutch', *The Bulletin*, Sydney, 1976.
- 24 van den Berghe, P. *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, New York: Elsevier, 1981, 259.
- 25 Wilton and Bosworth, 1984.
- 26 SWAH & PhD
- 27 Walker-Birckhead, W., 'A Dutch Home in Australia: Dutch Women's Migration Stories' in *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*.
- 28 *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 2 February 1978.
- 29 Walker-Birckhead, W. (1988) Dutch Identity and Assimilation in Australia: An Interpretative Approach. PhD thesis, the Australian National University (ANU).
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- 31 Contact Newsletter, 1969, p.13.
- 32 Peters, N., *Working it Out: Multiculturalism and the Western Australian Economy*, Exhibition Catalogue, Battye Library 1994, 10.
- 33 It was the Whitlam Labor government who removed the last vestiges of 'race' as a factor in Australia's immigration policies during 1973: <https://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/o8abolition.htm>
- 34 Mead, G.H., 'The individual and the social self': unpublished work of George Herbert Mead / edited with an introduction by David L. Miller, Chicago, 1982.
- 35 Peters, N. *Milk and Honey But No Gold, Postwar Migration to WA 1945-1964*, UWA Press 2001.
- 36 Laksiri Jayasuriya, David Sang and Angela Fielding, 'Ethnicity Immigration and Mental Illness: A Critical Review of the Australian Research,' Bureau of Immigration Research, AGPS, Canberra, 1992; The incidence of mental illness among immigrant groups, especially refugees, is higher than among the Australian-born.
- 37 Cahill, D., 'Lift the low sky: Are Dutch Australians Assimilationist or Accommodationists' in: N. Peters, *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, Perth, 2006, 218.
- 38 Peters, 2000.
- 39 *ibid.*
- 40 In the article 'Out of the experiences of a migrant woman'.

- 41 Interview 1998, JL.
- 42 R.B. interview, 1996.
- 43 Peters, 2000.
- 44 Generally Dutch males rather than females were educated or helped into business. Daughters were often expected to help the family by handing-over all their wages. Such practices made it difficult for them to mix with peers who had more dispensable cash.
- 45 Hedley, Wilma, 'Identity', published by Realist, (South Yarra Victoria 1968).
- 46 2010: N. Peters, 'The Dutch migration to Australia: sixty years on' in M. Schrover and M van Faassen (eds) *It's Time to Burn the Wooden Shoes in Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis*, Year 7, No. 2.
- 47 *ibid.*
- 48 Peters, 2000a, 10.
- 49 Castles, S., Kalantzis, M., Cope, B., & Morissey M., (eds), *Mistaken Identity. Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Sydney, 1988. In the 1950s to be accepted for naturalisation required a person to: be of good character, have resided in Australia for five years, be able to speak and comprehend the English language and have knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship. Women were most disadvantaged by these criteria as working and non-working woman alike found it difficult to go to English classes.
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- 51 *Post Migration*, No. 99, June 1995, 3.
- 52 Neeleman, P., 'Care of the Dutch Aged in Victoria: Today and Future Options', in Grüter, Benoit and Stracke, Jan (editors), 1995, 97-106.
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- 54 Bert Creemers, interview, 1993.
- 55 DFAT Factsheet, 2013.

Figure 15
Dutch Annex, Australian War Cemetery, Smyth Road, Nedlands. Dutch who died at Broome 1942 are buried there. Memorial Service 2015. Courtesy: Stella Groenhof.



CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

THE HISTORY OF DUTCH CLUBS IN PERTH – WA 1950s-2016

Pieter Leeftang and Lianna Parker

INTRODUCTION – MIGRANTS CLUB TOGETHER

The first official Dutch Club premises was established in October 1945 by the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA)¹ in the Cloisters building, St Georges Terrace - to rehabilitate evacuees from Japanese internment camps in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI); [see Summers and Peters chapters]. The Cloisters finally closed its doors as a Dutch Club at the end of 1946.

The Dutch who were left in Western Australia subsequently returned to meeting in each other's homes and at specially organised Consular events,



Figure 1
Celebrating New Year's Eve in the Claremont Showgrounds in 1969 when 1500 people turned up. Courtesy: P. Leeftang.



Een herinnering aan de eerste reisgroep van de
Dutch Society Neerlandia Inc. (1969)

Wij vertrokken met Air India naar Singapore en moesten daar 24 uur wachten voor de aansluiting met de K.L.M.
De tijd in Singapore werd goed benut. We maakten een bustrip door de stad en besloten het met een bezoek aan de Tiger Balm Gardens. 's Avonds vertrokken wij naar Nederland en kwamen daar Maandagochtend om 7 uur aan.
Onze groep maakte een afspraak om op 11 Augustus bijeen te komen voor een dineetje en een rondvaart door Amsterdam als besluit van onze vakantie, waarna we op 18 Augustus weer terug keerden naar Australië.

M.O.

The Good Old Times

I recently looked up some old Neerlandia Magazines and found this photo. My thoughts went back to that wonderful time at the Perth Airport in 1976. Lots of people were saying "Have a nice Trip" On the right is the Group Travel Organiser, Mr. Piet Leeftang.

President

Figure 2
First Group Travel Neerlandia 1969.
Courtesy: P. Leeftang.

Neerlandia page 6

as they had always done. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that there was a newsletter circulating among the Dutch from as early as 1890, although a copy has not yet been located.

This standard practice of congregating in each others' homes, continued well into the post-war period, until the first Dutch Clubs were established. For example in the late 1940s, the *Klaverjas* club [a card game], met in the evenings at the home of Mr and Mrs Clarke of Claremont - which they referred to as the 'Dutch Club'. Migrants needed each other in the initial phases of resettlement because only another migrant really understood the upheaval of migration, such as the difficulties encountered in the new setting and the specificities of the culture and families left behind. Sharing struggles often helped reduce a migrant's level of distress. Migrants felt more secure amongst their own people, until they had picked up enough information about both the new environment and its language to be able to then navigate on their own, and with some confidence, new socio-cultural and economic spheres.

In the first years of mass migration, the urge to find comfort with people from the same country and who spoke the same language drove the Dutch, (as it did other migrant groups), to establish many social, sporting and cultural clubs in both the city and countryside. The short-lived *Dirck Hartogh* Society, established by NEI Dutch, was among the most acclaimed. Principally because it had strict social class-based entry criteria but also because it was unable to afford the labour costs required to maintain such an establishment - the calibre more suited to a gentlemen's club in the Colonies than to Perth in the 1950s.² Labour costs in WA were exorbitant, compared to the NEI at that time and soon the Society folded. However not before upsetting many newly - arrived Dutch from NL, who had been excluded from its membership due to the specificities of entry requirements.

In 1950, Henk Beumer with the help of Klaas van Eck, founded the 'Morley Windmills Soccer Club'. Here Dutch migrants would come to participate in or watch the soccer game or just enjoy the friendship. However, for most of the 1950s, the most prominent and popular Dutch rendezvous was Monash House in King Street, Perth. Every Sunday you could find 'Dutchies', young and old, dancing the night away to the strains of the European-style music provided by Kees Hermans on the accordion, and Neil Boon on the clarinet.

By early 1952, it was also becoming obvious that newly arrived Dutch migrants needed help and support with various aspects of their resettlement activities. A group of educated Dutch migrants led by Mr Arriens, (the Consul of the Netherlands) and honorary Chairman, made such information available to the community by establishing the Australian Dutch League (ADL). It aimed to gather relevant information to be made available to the Dutch community [See Peters' chapters].

In 1959 a few '*Klaverjas*' enthusiasts, namely Nico Feddema, Bart Bos and Toon van Brussel formed the 'Windmills *Klaverjas* Club'. After a few years, this club split into two, with the largest group forming the *Neerlandia*

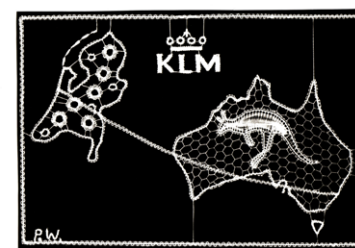


Figure 3
KLM Lace. Courtesy: Petronella Wensing.



Figure 4
First Honorary Memberships handed out.
Left to right: Recipient Secretary Pieter Leeftang; President Ben Schrandt; Recipient Social Convenor & Committee Member Bob Hoogeveen; Hon Dutch Consul for WA Thom Dercksen; Frank van der Worm on behalf of his late father Henk van der Worm, Magazine Editor and Committee Member c1969.
Courtesy: P. Leeftang.

Klaverjas Club - a very powerful club that had well over 150 members. This particular club also began to organise cheaper 'Group Travel' to the Netherlands, of which any Dutch community group or individual could take advantage. It also planned other events such as local picnics. The largest event, which they organised annually, was the very popular Christmas event – the St Nicholas Procession. This began at the Barrack Street Jetty, where St Nicholas (*Sinterklaas*) would alight from a ferry and mount his white steed, attended by a number of *Zwarte Pieten* (Black Peters). He would then move through the centre of Perth to finish at Supreme Court Gardens, where he would talk with the children, hand them *pepermotens* and other sweets, before returning to the ferry.

Many other small clubs emerged at the same time. These included the *Klaverjas* Clubs of Medina and Midland, two ladies choirs, a male voice choir, the Repertory Club *Elckerlijc*, the *Hollandia Biljard* Club, the Dam Club, the King *Damas* and several Church Organisations. Even a Credit Union materialised! However, despite discussions on several occasions about the benefits of joining forces, attempts in the mid-1960s to pull together existing small clubs under the one banner, continued to fail. The main reason given for the failure was the strong-willed nature of the Dutch character.

It was not until early in 1969, that a change in attitude to mergers was becoming apparent. A series of meetings that took place at that time managed to attract enough support to publish a combined newsletter. This was in part due to the calibre of the people, which the meetings had attracted. They included the Dutch Consul van Oordt, Kanselier Leo Kwakkenbos, Emigratie Ambtenaar (emigration agent) Jan Maassen, Pater van Os, Dominee (Rector) Zuiderduin plus delegates from almost every WA Dutch club. Among the delegates to attend were Nico Feddema, Pieter Leeftang, Karel Nissen, Karel Mijnsbergen, Henk van der Worm, Gerard Spanjers, Joop Klashorst, Leo van Noort Sr, Jan van Dijk and Henk Heesemans.

At the initial meeting, all the clubs agreed to support the publication of a single newsletter under the banner of the *Contact* - an existing Church magazine. This was accepted with great enthusiasm. The only drawback, which they could foresee was the lack of income being generated to cover the printing cost of the magazine.

At a follow-up meeting held on 20 May 1969, it was disclosed that the 'Contact' magazine had accumulated a debt of over \$800. A proposal was raised on the spot to establish a Federation of Dutch Clubs in WA. The advantages of the Federation would be many. Firstly because it would be combined, they could organise large functions to raise more funds and thus clear the accumulated debt. Secondly, it could establish a large membership and thirdly, only by merging could they hope to eventually obtain a clubhouse.

In the meantime, Nico Feddema and Pieter Leeftang of the powerful *Klaverjasclub Neerlandia*, had decided that the *Klaverjasclub* should go it alone to obtain a clubhouse, never believing that the Dutch Community would ever get their act together. In order to do this, by October 1968 they had drawn

up and adopted a Constitution, changed the name of the *Klaverjasclub* to the *Dutch Society Neerlandia of WA* and applied for Incorporation. This was granted on 4 March 1969.

At the aforementioned meeting, they heard the good news that a Federation of Dutch Clubs and Associations would be formed. They also offered to hand over their Constitution, the Incorporated name '*Dutch Society Neerlandia of WA Inc.*' and the Travel Scheme which they had established to the yet unnamed Federation.

The proposal was accepted by all the delegates with open arms, as it would save the Federation a great deal of time and money, both of which were in short supply. Particularly, as the Federation had also proposed to take over the existing debt of £800, which the church had incurred producing the magazine *Contact*. However, before they could proceed, this proposal had also to be accepted by the membership of all the individual clubs. This was achieved with great enthusiasm, with the exception of the 'Windmills Sports Club'. They only wanted to participate if they were given full control of the 'Group Travel' and its proceeds.

At the next meeting held on 24 June 1969, the proposal to proceed was officially accepted and a steering committee elected comprised of: President-Nico Feddema; Secretary-Pieter Leeftang and Treasurer - Karel Nissen. Nico Feddema and Pieter Leeftang were at the time the President and Secretary of the *Klaverjas Club Neerlandia* and Karel Nissen was the President of the Checkers Club 'King Damas'. Nominations were soon also held for independent executive and non-independent committee members. The first official Executive Committee of the Dutch Society *Neerlandia* included President - Teun Verboon; Secretary - Iet van Lunteren, and Treasurer - Karel Nissen. The Committee Members, comprised Karel Mijnsbergen, Taets van Amerongen, Henk Heesemans and Pieter Leeftang.

At the same meeting, the Dutch Society *Neerlandia Inc.* was officially instituted and the arduous task of acquiring members and raising funds began. Attracting members proved the easier task, as all the supporting groups had insisted that their membership should join the newly founded Dutch Society *Neerlandia*. An additional publicity campaign for members soon raised the membership to 800 people.

In this spirit, it was not long before the *Contact* magazine was renamed the '*Neerlandia* magazine'. This much larger, and greatly improved, publication was edited for many years by Henk van der Worm.

The *Neerlandia* Committee also began to organise regular Balls, held mainly at the Claremont Showgrounds. Often up to 1500 people would attend such functions as the *Koninginne Ball* (Queen's Birthday Ball) and New Year's Eve Ball. Even *Klaverjas* 'Drives' attracted up to 250 people. Income from these events and the ongoing Group Travel meant that the £800 debt was soon paid off. Now the Society could start saving in earnest for its ultimate aim – to purchase its own clubhouse.



Figure 5
Neerlandia Clubhouse - Cambridge Street -
July 2016. Courtesy: Lianna Parker.

Three years later in early 1972, the *Neerlandia* Committee decided that a clubhouse could now be realised. They began discussions with several local Councils but when this proved unproductive, started to look for possible building sites. It was Nico Feddema, working at the time as a hairdresser in Cambridge Street, Wembley, who changed the course of events. He alerted the Committee to the fact that the four-year-old 'Kiama Wedding Lodge' in Cambridge Street was now empty and up for sale. The Committee viewed it and was greatly impressed by its possibilities. They subsequently invited their membership to also view the building and suggested that if they also liked what they saw, the project could be supported by the purchase of one or more \$100 Debentures at 6.5 percent interest. They also made \$1 Building Stones (Bricks) available for the members who could not afford the \$100 Debentures, but still wished to contribute.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. *Neerlandia* members subscribed to 126 Debentures and quite a few \$1 Building Stones (Bricks). Close to \$13,000 was raised. The Treasurer Gerard Neervoort and Secretary Pieter Leeftang then paid a visit to the R & I bank, offered the bank a \$15,000 deposit and were successful in acquiring a loan of \$80,000 over eight years. An offer was made on the building and the rest is history. It needs to be noted that a few members even went so far as to generously deposit their House Title Deeds in the bank for security. The bank loan was serviced within the eight years, which had been agreed upon. However, it took a further two years to buy back the Debentures. Even so, by 1982, *Neerlandia* was debt free.

Once the building was acquired, *Neerlandia* gained the support from its membership of an army of volunteers, who were prepared to make a plethora of alterations to the building. The committee subsequently applied for and were successful in gaining, a Liquor License. Today the *Neerlandia* Club is still going strong and continues to be operated only by volunteers – and that is a remarkable achievement!

Peter Leeftang (Editor *Neerlandia* Magazine)

NEERLANDIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Figure 6
King's Day - Cambridge Street -30 April 2013.
Courtesy: Lianna Parker.

As times were changing and *Neerlandia* moved into the 21st century, it became apparent that society and the expectations of an influx of new Dutch migrants, was changing. *Neerlandia* started to suffer from loyal but aging volunteers, who were not replaced by younger members. Therefore less functions could be organized and the club's income decreased by the year. This combined with rising costs for the maintenance of the building, forced the committee to look for a change in direction. It was obvious that WA needed a Dutch Club in Perth, a place where those with a Dutch background are able to celebrate their culture. However, the club would have to be run in a different way – a way adjusted to the change in capability, mentality and expectation of club members.

Neerlandia needed to be less dependent on volunteers to secure a healthy future for its members. While *Neerlandia* was still in a position where it could take its destiny in its own hands, the committee started to look for alternative options.

Initial negotiations to work together with 'The Morley Windmills' did not result in the desired outcome, and in May 2015 *Neerlandia*'s President had her first meeting with the President of the *Rhein-Donau* Club, the German speaking club in WA. It was a logical and sensible move for the two Northern European cultures to join forces, thereby creating a 'win-win' situation for both clubs that were both recognizing problems with a declining and aging membership.

The negotiations soon resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) being signed by both parties in November of that same year. Consequently, in January 2016, *Neerlandia* moved from its original club house in Wembley to that of the *Rhein-Donau* Club in Myaree. After a period of emotional uncertainty, *Neerlandia* club members settled into the new club house and as younger members joined, a new era for *Neerlandia* began.

Lianna Parker (President, Dutch Society *Neerlandia* WA Inc. May 2016)

ENDNOTES

- 1 NICA were located in a second floor office in the Colonial Mutual Building, St Georges Terrace, Perth.
- 2 Pers.com D. Bekker, 1992.



Figure 7
New Premises - Lake Street 2016.
Courtesy: Lianna Parker.

Figure 8
Young Dutch New Premises 2016
Courtesy: Lianna Parker.



CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

THE DUTCH SCHOOL ‘DE SCHAKEL’

Wilna Cornelisse

‘De Schakel’ is a Dutch School in Western Australia, which was established in 1995 by Dutch educator Wilna Cornelisse. The purpose of the school is to assist Dutch expatriates living in Western Australia (WA) to maintain educational standards for their children, which are still relevant to the curriculum in The Netherlands. Since the start of 2014, ‘De Schakel’ (means The Link) has been taken over by a Dutch educational organization. Since then the school acquired the name LanguageOne Perth and it is now part of a worldwide umbrella for Dutch schools abroad.

The school’s aim is to make it possible for expatriate children to slot back seamlessly into the Dutch education system, after a few years in Australia. LanguageOne also believes that mother tongue proficiency strengthens the foundation for acquisition of language skills and academic achievements of students. Mother tongue education is an essential investment in future success, especially for children growing up abroad.

It is not the only Dutch school that Western Australia has ever had. There was a Dutch Primary school at Fairbridge Farm in 1945-1946 and a High School at Burt Hall, St Georges Cathedral immediately after WWII, for the

Figure 1
Teaching in the Dutch room at the Quintilian School 2014. Courtesy: Wilna Cornelisse.



children of the second evacuation out of The Netherlands East Indies at the close of war.

The students of LanguageOne Perth are partly drawn from the fairly large Dutch expatriate community residing in Western Australia, brought here to service Dutch institutions; mainly Mining and Geophysics companies. These include *Fugro*, *Royal Netherlands Shell*, *ING Group*, *Rabobank Boskalis ABN-AMRO*, *Fortis*, *AEGON*, *Unilever*, *Delta Lloyd*, *Philips*, and *Akzo Nobel*.

Before leaving The Netherlands to work for these companies, some Dutch expatriates had to undergo orientation training in The Hague, designed to familiarize them with the socio-economic, physical and emotional environment in which they would need to operate, including its customs and traditions. However, this program did little to help the children overcome the disadvantages associated with the disruption to their education. Parents had few options but to send them to local schools or pay the high fees for an International School education, which incidentally they would also need to maintain on their return home.



Figure 2
In the Quintilian Room - reading and talking
about a picture book.
Courtesy: Wilna Cornelisse.

Consequently 'De Schakel' emerged just in time to fill a much-needed gap in the system. Its founder and coordinator Wilna Cornelisse – who is also married to a Dutch-Australian migrant whose parents settled in Australia in the 1950s and later returned to The Netherlands – had been a teacher in both The Netherlands and abroad for over 20 years. However, as Wilna now recounts, the school's beginnings were modest.

Wilna began by tutoring just one student, and at that time could never have guessed that her endeavour would develop into an official Dutch school that would attract funding from the Dutch Government.

Wilna currently employs a group of 10 qualified Dutch teachers who work with the students on weekdays between 7.30 am and 7.00 pm. Parents can choose to have their children taught individually, or in small groups of two to three at a location of their choosing. However, around eighty per cent of the lessons are taught during school time at their usual school. Children are taken out of their general classrooms and given intense instruction in Dutch curriculum subjects. The home-schooled are taught at home before or after school. Comprehensive liability insurance covers both student and teacher in every teaching situation.

The educational package offered at LanguageOne Perth follows the Dutch curriculum and is supervised by the Dutch Ministry of Education. Every student of 2 years and 9 months who has at least one Dutch speaking parent, is welcome to the school. Extra aids are available including; a free up-to-date library of over a thousand books for 2 to 17 year old children, text books for the same age ranges, the newest educational computer software developed in The Netherlands, a variety of puzzles, mind teasers, games, Dutch DVDs, movies and educational television programs, celebrations and activities around *Sinterklaas*, Children's Book Week, the King's Birthday, a yearly school camp and other social events.

The school keeps up to date with any changes to the Dutch curriculum by communicating actively with the *Stichting Nederlands Onderwijs in het Buitenland* (NOB), Cito and other LanguageOne locations around the world. Working together on cultural festivities, enables them to invite children's book authors to come over from The Netherlands every year to work with the children. Another way the school maintains its Dutch standards is by a yearly trip to The Netherlands by several of its teachers, to attend educational courses organised by LanguageOne and NOB.

LanguageOne Perth currently has 130 students and 10 teachers. One teacher is located in Karratha and the others work at 16 different schools scattered around the Perth metropolitan area. Its broad educational program is directed at children from 2 years and 9 months to 17 years of age.

Approximately 50 per cent of its students are expatriates and the remainder are children of Dutch birth or descent, whose parents wish them to keep up a familiarity with the Dutch language. LanguageOne Perth also runs four

pre-kindergarten groups: three at the community centre in Claremont and one in Marangaroo.¹

LanguageOne's structured and schematic approach to the children's Dutch education has shown results in the past years. Those students who have returned to The Netherlands, found that they were able to merge back into the Dutch education system without any great difficulty.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ In The Netherlands, the equivalent term to kindergarten is kleuterschool. From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century the term Fröbelschool was also common, after Friedrich Fröbel [who opened the first kindergarten in Germany in 1840]. However this term gradually faded in use as the verb Fröbelen gained a slight derogatory meaning in everyday language. Until 1985, it used to be a separate non-compulsory form of education (for children aged 4–6 years), after which children (aged 6–12 years) attended the primary school (lagere school). After 1985, both forms were integrated into one, called basisonderwijs (Dutch for primary education). The country also offers both private and subsidized daycares, which are non compulsory, but nevertheless very popular. (Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindergarten#History>).

Sinterklaas, Leah van Lieshout
Leah van Lieshout - a second generation Dutch artist - grapples with her identity as being between two cultures.
Courtesy: Leah van Lieshout



CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

FLOATING: AN EXHIBITION OF ARTWORKS AT THE FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE BY DUTCH-AUSTRALIANS

Nien Schwarz

Juanita Sherwood calls for decolonization with “every Australian to examine the impact colonization has upon their past and present in order to formulate a future that does not reinstate the past ... a discourse [informed by] ... a balance of truths and histories.”¹

PRELUDE

I cherish an early photograph by Richard Woldendorp taken in 1966 at Brooking Springs cattle station in the Kimberley, Western Australia. Two Aboriginal women, both in flowered dresses, are on a veranda. One woman is heading inside with a clothes iron. The second woman has a commanding presence; she stands next to seven double mounds of white bread dough. The caption on the back of the photograph reads ‘White loaves (cook)’.

The cook looks strong, determined, yet tired. She is not young. Although her body is directed towards the house in which she works, she’s looking intently in the opposite direction, beyond the veranda, towards bright sunshine. What does she see, what is she thinking? Why did Woldendorp photograph her? The contrast of the white floral print against the cook’s black skin and the puffy white dough in the blackened bread tins is striking, both formally and metaphorically. I treasure this photograph; it is a daily reminder of this country’s complex history, and as a Dutch-born citizen, who has become an Australian citizen, I have become part of this history. We will return to this image later.

INTRODUCTION

At Edith Cowan University where I teach in Perth, Western Australia, we occasionally have international exchange students from Amsterdam coming to study Visual Arts for one semester. I like to quiz them, just a little bit, about colonial and twentieth-century Dutch history. I’m curious about what younger-generation university students from The Netherlands might think or understand about Dutch encounters in Australasia, about the smattering of Dutch place names along Australian coastlines, and about the post-war exodus of Dutch citizens who sought refuge and were accepted as immigrants in such geographically far-flung corners of the world. The students express amazement at my questions, admitting little knowledge or interest in Dutch offshore history. Inevitably, they politely steer the conversation towards their creative interests and desire to experience Australian Aboriginal culture first-hand.



Figure 1
Richard Woldendorp, *White Loaves*, 1966
Courtesy: Nien Schwarz.

In 2005 I wrote ‘Dutch artists in Australia: Artiesten in Australië van Nederlandse oorsprong’ a chapter for the book edited by Dr Nonja Peters, *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*. This book contributed to ‘Australia on the Map 1606 — 2006’, an international event marking four hundred years since the first recorded (or extant) charting of the Australian continent by Europeans, who happened to be Dutch. In my essay I introduced the visual arts practices of fifteen nationally and internationally prominent artists of Dutch birth or descent. While conducting interviews with the artists, I was deeply impressed by their carefully expressed accounts of their identities, philosophical orientations and humanist concerns. For the most part, these artists migrated to Australia as children and arrived by ship. Collectively they recounted memories of leaving fragmented war-torn Europe and entering into radically unfamiliar landscapes and previously undreamed-of experiences in nature. Although an umbilical cord of nostalgia stretches back to the mother country, especially with respect to food and Renaissance art, these artists have embraced Australia and its diversity and complexity with truly open arms.

As an extension of the research for the book chapter, and as a means to further dialogue with the artists spatially, visually, materially and conceptually, I invited several of the WA-based artists to participate in a thematic exhibition conceived to explore each artist’s concept of a response to ‘floating’. Some focused on Dutch seafaring history, others chose Australia’s history of immigration by boat, and a few renegotiated pieces of their personal puzzles from an aerial perspective. The artists either made new artworks specifically for the exhibition or chose appropriate existing works.

In the following pages I describe the artworks in the exhibition *Floating* by artists Hans Arkeveld, Aadje Bruce, Rinske Car, Theo Koning, Rick Vermey, and Richard Woldendorp. I also explore how these artists have come to embody this place Australia. Occasionally I return to Woldendorp’s photograph of the cook as a device/catalyst to further consider Australia’s complex cross-cultural histories, palpable sometimes as an undercurrent, and, at other times, as a crosscurrent.

Floating

My involvement in the curatorship of *Floating* was inspired by an earlier exhibition initiated by Dr Nonja Peters and curated by Rinske Car. In 2002, *Transpositions: Contextualising Recent Dutch Australian Art*, featured works by fourteen artists of Dutch descent living in the vicinity of Perth. They were: Hans Arkeveld, Aadje Bruce, Rinske Car, Madeleine Clear, Lieneke de Rover, Andrew Hayim de Vries, Theo Koning, Nien Schwarz, Frank Talen, Leah van Lieshout, Elsje van Keppel, Robert van Koesveld, Rick Vermey and Richard Woldendorp. *Transpositions* developed out of meetings with participants of the Dutch Cultural Heritage Group established by Peters to question the sociology of migration. In the catalogue foreword Car explains:

To transpose is to change places. Transposition in music means to re-write or play in a different key. Music when transposed is



Figure 2
Rick Vermey, *Swell*, 2005
Courtesy: Rick Vermey.



Figure 3
Rick Vermey, *Terra Incognita*, 2004
Courtesy: Rick Vermey.

not merely higher or lower but is altered in mood and colour by the new key. The Dutch are no strangers to changing places. They have witnessed waves of migration into Holland and have emigrated themselves.... The exhibition seeks to document how the work of these artists reflects a shared cultural heritage that is shaped and reshaped by the individual artists' dialogues between two places; a space between poles that is altered in mood and colour by a new key.²

The production of the *Transpositions* exhibition, catalogue, and accompanying sociological display was contributed to by the Australian Netherlands Society of Western Australia (ANSWA), Curtin University of Technology, WA Museum Link, and Edith Cowan University. The collaborative project was exhibited in the WA Museum for four weeks. Between 2003 and 2004 the project, including twenty-five artworks, toured with 'Art on the Move' – a member of the National Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS AUSTRALIA), – to the following regional centres: Mandurah, Geraldton, Kellerberrin, Katanning, Esperance, and Narrogin. 'Art on the Move' also developed an education pack for primary and secondary school visitors to consider and learn about migration and notions of personal, cultural and national identity.

The exhibition *Floating* surfaced four years later, in May 2006, at the Fremantle Arts Centre by invitation of Gallery Manager Thelma John. *Floating* was eloquently welcomed and officially opened by local Nyungar elder, Marie Thorn. Thorn speaks frequently on behalf of Aboriginal interests and at events that publicly acknowledge original Nyungar owners and custodians of this land. She provided a highly insightful rendition of local Aboriginal history and welcomed Dutch immigrants to her country. She requested also that we collectively care for this land that we now share. Thorn's inclusive approach to welcoming foreigners implies wearing the mantle of stewardship, the necessity of acknowledging social and political injustices and jointly negotiating interruptions past, present and future. Instead of an exhibition catalogue being provided, Professor Richard Read gave a lecture titled 'Violence and tranquility in the Golden Age of Dutch painting'. Additionally, a contextualising essay I wrote and sets of seven postcards (for seven seas and seven artists), each featuring an image from the exhibition, were offered to the public. These postcards travelled outwards from Fremantle to friends and family around Australia and overseas, with many destined for addresses across the Netherlands.

THE ARTISTS

Rick Vermey

Through his mixed media paintings and prints, artist Rick Vermey responded to the concept of 'floating' by revisiting his mixed heritage. Known for subtly critiquing 'the myths and legends of popular culture' (both Australian and Dutch), Vermey speculates 'on themes of individuality, ideology, colonial

history, national identity, political ambiguity, and social dislocation'. *Swell* (2005) depicts an expanse of ocean overprinted with a large single fingerprint. Vermey prompts us to ponder what it means 'to be an island nation, "girt by sea"' and whether 'as a country largely populated by immigrants, the journey across water from overseas may well be the one defining act in the making of Australia's identity.'³

Vermey's *Terra Incognita* (2004), in stark black and white, makes reference to the wrecking of the Dutch ship *Batavia* in 1629 off the coast of Western Australia. This image too is overprinted with a fingerprint, but in this instance the fingerprint, as a universal marker of personal physical identification, refers to Vermey's Dutch ancestry. He raises the question of whether the stranded passengers of multiple Dutch shipwrecks off the coast of Western Australia were this continent's first asylum seekers. Although this southern landmass was to the best of our knowledge uncharted by Europeans at the time, the Dutch clearly understood this was occupied country. Research into transmission of genetic diseases, alludes to the possibility that there may have been survivors of Dutch ships who co-habited with Indigenous people along the central west coast of Western Australia.⁴ Viewed in this context, Vermey's fingerprint suggests another way of seeing the history of this country. In any case, *Terra Nullius* it clearly was not! A blank canvas is what many later visitors to these shores wanted to see, chose to believe, and blindly and cruelly put into widespread practice.

Vermey explains that the heavy pixelation of *Terra Incognita* alludes to 'our contemporary context of rapid, digitally downloaded, vicarious experiences', and that the oversized pixels are intended to 'obscure immediate recognition of the pictorial content'. This is 'a perceptual device' frequently employed by Vermey to engage viewers in 'both physical and intellectual acts of seeing'. Is Vermey suggesting that what we see is what we want to see or what we are conditioned to see? Born in Perth of an Australian-Welsh mother and Dutch father, Vermey perhaps also grapples with the vicarious experience of absorbing a dislocated British heritage, its overprinting of Aboriginal Australian cultures, and a personal Dutch heritage that, although partially embedded psychologically early in life, only in adulthood became a first-hand experience, geographically and culturally. He states: 'I believe internally we occupy an undiscovered place somewhere between a mythic Wide Brown Land and an equally mythical Motherland.'⁵

Theo Koning

Theo Koning exhibited several works. *Images of Port Fremantle (Boats)* (1990-94) is a variety of boats, ships and swimmers assembled from driftwood and colourful flotsam and jetsam. Varying in scale and detail, to suggest both near and far on the horizon, the vessels, for recreation and cargo, articulate his home of Fremantle as an active port of call to seafaring nations, visitors, and immigrants from around the globe. Owned by the City of Fremantle,

this work is a favourite amongst locals who strongly identify with the set of floating local iconography.

Many people in Australia with Dutch heritage have a pair of real or toy clogs somewhere in their possession and Koning, being a collector of specific wooden objects over many years, has many. In *The Dutch Fleet* (2006), Koning set several Dutch wooden clogs adrift in a child's inflatable green plastic wading pool. The clogs, some in pairs and others single, were either natural-size or smaller souvenir types painted red or yellow. Some were decorated with traditional motifs of windmills, sailboats and even bootlaces. For four weeks, more than thirty clogs floated across and around the implied Earth. Some eventually became waterlogged and sank. The possible innuendo with Dutch feet/fleet was whimsical, yet psychologically charged. And which fleet might Koning refer to? The Renaissance fleet of spice-trading tall ships that started to chart the Australia's coastlines more than one hundred fifty years before the British, or the fleet of post-war passenger ships such as *Johan van Oldenbarnvelt*, *Willem Ruys*, and the *Sibajak* (the ship Koning's family arrived on) which transported almost five hundred thousand Dutch migrants to Australia? Or perhaps Koning was making reference to a museum display he once saw in The Netherlands, of wooden box lids nailed to the bottoms of clogs so that people in waterlogged areas could stay afloat above the muddy water, much like snowshoes on soft snow.⁶

For many, *The Dutch Fleet* was a poignant expression of how some objects, despite being marginalised and embedded with a kitschy sort of nationalistic popular culture, can in another context take on a very personal association. How often do we experience a floating or drifting sensation, particularly when we face family responsibilities both here and in the Netherlands or elsewhere? As we zigzag our way back and forth across the equator, what is shed or lost each time, and what is gained? What do we carry with us as gifts from Australia and what do we bring back with us from The Netherlands? What informs our choices, and what do others give us via their perception of our 'Dutchness'?

Like *The Dutch Fleet*, Koning's *Constructed City* (2006) is assembled out of various blocks of recycled wood and domestic wooden objects; it is also circular in form and invites the viewer to circumnavigate an imaginary globe or city in curiosity, recollection, or even suspicion. Italo Calvino's book *Invisible Cities* was Koning's springboard for this work.⁷ It is not hard to imagine explorers returning to port and reporting to a king, queen, or to other major investors, highlights of the journey and visual descriptions of unusual faraway places. Of course, in the telling and the retelling of these accounts, the descriptions become increasingly distorted to the point where mythical constructions begin to emerge. Memories are also reconstructed with each re-telling. Perhaps this is why Koning prefers to construct his city out of wooden blocks that can be easily disassembled, transported (even floated), and constantly reconstructed into new cities and associated stories.



Figure 4
Theo Koning, *The Dutch Fleet*, 2006
Courtesy: Theo Koning.

In four small drawings from 1984, we see Koning's rich imagination at work. *Boat Drawing 4* depicts a floating clog with a Dutch flag. On the front sail is drawn the likeness of a rough farmer type, which Koning describes as similar to those in van Gogh's *Potato Eaters*. In *Boat Drawing 2*, a little chap in a boat is swamped by a big shark. *Boat Drawing 3* shows a folded paper boat floating past a lighthouse, and *Boat Drawing 1* depicts a man's head surfacing from water with a boat on his head. One sail has a globe on it and the other the head of a person. Who might that person be?

Richard Woldendorp

In 1951 Richard Woldendorp was bound for Sydney from Indonesia on the *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt*, but changed his mind and instead disembarked in Fremantle. Quickly becoming aware of the unusual flora and fauna, and the visually and texturally striking forms, patterns and colours of coastal landscapes and the outback, he soon started using photography as a 'rewarding medium to develop a relationship with one's natural environment'.

The landscape has always meant a lot to me and more so as a professional landscape photographer. In Holland where I grew up it was predominantly a man-made landscape — the Dutch word is 'landschap', well used by the early Dutch and Flemish painters. I have been attracted to the Australian landscape because of its size and subtle differences — a sense of wonderment, how it all came about, the evolution of the landscape... On my arrival in the early 50s, very little had been recorded on film. Painters had given us their interpretations, often with a European flavour... I had seen photographs of Ayers Rock and the Great Barrier Reef, but there was a great deal in between waiting for general and personal interpretations to be made.

Woldendorp is now world-renowned for his iconic photographic landscape images of Australia and sixteen books have been published that feature his work. In *Floating*, he invites us to accompany him on aerial sojourns to capture some of the 'essence and reality' of Australia's urban, agricultural and bush environments.⁸

We travel with Woldendorp first to Queensland, where the little ship *Duyfken* explored Cape York Peninsula in 1606 and Dutch navigator Willem Jansz charted and named a few of the coastal features.⁹ We head to the flood plains of the Fitzroy River and slow down to float above a large flock of corellas. The interplay of small brown floating fragments of land, submerged trees, and reflective, meandering streams of water is mesmerising.

Traversing several centuries, we arrive over the present-day bronzed bodies and highly colourful beach cultures of Manly and Bondi. From this perspective, the scene is reminiscent of a Fred Williams painting. Heading further south we explore elegantly shaped islands and isolated sand-patterned estuaries of



Figure 5
Theo Koning, *Boat Drawing 4*, 1984
Courtesy: Johannus Koning.



Figure 6
Richard Woldendorp, *Ploughing in rocky farmland near Toodyay, Western Australia*,
Courtesy: Richard Woldendorp.

the southeast coast. Then we cross the cold Tasman Sea. Pushing against air currents over cloud-shrouded peaks in Tasmania, we really start to appreciate the scope of Australia's geological and biological diversity. Drinking in more beauty than we ever thought possible, we head west and lurch against the strong westerly winds while hugging the sheer brown-red and white-layered cliffs along the exceedingly blue waters of the Great Australian Bight and then across Western Australia's Wheatbelt region, studded with tiny islands of remnant native vegetation.

In 2002 Woldendorp wrote 'I feel very much at home now'.¹⁰ He estimates that in a fifty-year period he has taken 155,000 colour and black-and-white photographs of Australia.

There are a million pictures out there. I am the only limitation. I can tune in and absorb the reality of the variations, combined with my way of seeing and my attitude. The older I get the harder it becomes, and the more I am drawn to nature. It is the creation of all life and matter that appeals to me now. Maybe I can make a small contribution to its well-being, which is in jeopardy.¹¹

In parallel with the exhibition *Floating*, Woldendorp was also invited to exhibit some of his earlier black-and-white photographs from the 1960s and 1970s which have seldom been publicly viewed. A selection of these portrayed his excursions into villages in Irian Jaya and the small towns, big inner city squares, and arid vastness of Australia. The Australian city images reflect a restless, crowded urban energy and modernist formality; much of the landscape is gridded and liberally dotted with suits, hats, and ties. In stark contrast is the image of the two Aboriginal women on the Kimberley cattle station who reach out to us across time.

I look again at the aforementioned women in Richard's photograph, taken almost fifty years ago. The women would have witnessed vast swathes of traditional Aboriginal country and land management practices succumb to increasingly widespread and unsound forestry and agricultural practices. Whose land was it before the cattle station was established, and whose land was it now according to Australian law? In their lifetimes, these women would have experienced firsthand the massive social, cultural, and political upheavals that disrupted the forty thousand year old foundations of many Aboriginal families and communities across Australia. Where were these two women from, were they related, and what was their relationship to the land occupied now by the station? Were they local, or had they been forcibly removed from their families as young children by the Native Welfare Department and relocated to a mission school where parents were forbidden to visit and many Aboriginal children toiled for years to train as domestics? Were these women paid wages for their domestic services? If the station on which they were working was not in the country of their birth and language group, how did these women feel about trespassing on land that was not

theirs and traditionally cared for by a different Aboriginal language group and unfamiliar set of laws?

Hans Arkeveld

Hans Arkeveld's art frequently focuses on those caught trespassing on water. Perhaps his immigration to Australia in 1952 on the *Johan van Oldenbarnevelt* inspired him to explore the concept of vessels and migration and, coupled with his training in human anatomy, expanded his focus to include the embryonic and foetal stages of life when we float in the womb. His numerous drawings, prints, paintings, and finely crafted wooden sculptures frequently include vessels overloaded with passengers; whereas in other works, single individuals float nebulously in space and water.

Arkeveld's floating figures seem to battle fate or drift past destiny. The multiple ships with decks packed with human cargo, such as *Transmigration 90* (1990), and ships with cargo holds packed with stowaways, call out to us well before and beyond the media frenzy of SIEV X, the Tampa and Prime Minister Howard's false cry of children overboard. Arkeveld's work is a poignant reminder of the fragility of life and of our floating dependence during the first months of life and often later in life when we are too exhausted to care. En route, many of us lose the umbilical cord to the spiritual mother of life.

In *Pram* (1974), Arkeveld presents us with a sculpture of a foetus in a pram. Floating overhead and attached to the foetus by an umbilical-like cord or life-support tube, is a winged image like a dragonfly. It is difficult to determine whether the hovering entity is benevolent or destructive.¹² Do these wings presage escapism, forerunners of Arkeveld's winged humans who seek to flee from earthly demands or untenable situations? And what is the relationship between our body in one place and our thinking of another place?

When questioned about the pram, Arkeveld tells me he has six wooden row boats in his backyard. He used to have eight. He tells me he's waiting for the big flood and for the waters in local Jane Brook to rise. He's joking, but adds he read the Bible as a child and of course we are all aware of rising sea levels.¹³ I reconsider the two women in Woldendorp's photograph. What kind of impact did the Bible have on their lives? I then reconsider Arkeveld's pram. If these two women had children, what might this younger generation's relationship be to their families and their culture's spiritual beliefs?

Aadje Bruce

The palpable tension in Arkeveld's overcrowded boats and vulnerable children is echoed in Aadje Bruce's *Preserves* (1997), in which dismembered dolls' limbs are packed into small fish tins formally arranged into an uncompromising grid. Little toes and fingers tentatively reach out, perhaps testing the water. Is it safe? Where am I? Who am I? Is it safe to come out and is there any food? Bruce's collection of plastic, naked body fragments is not



Figure 7
Hans Arkeveld, *Transmigration 90*, 1990
Courtesy: Edith Cowan University.



Figure 8
Hans Arkeveld, *Pram*, 1974
Courtesy: Hans Arkeveld.



Figure 9
Aadje Bruce, *Preserves*, 1997
Courtesy: Doug Bruce.



Figure 10
Aadje Bruce, *Domestic Bliss*, 2004
Courtesy: Courtesy: Doug Bruce.

imbued with childhood innocence, imagination, dreams, and role-playing. The fragments are anything but hopeful of a comforting and dignified life. *Preserves* reminds me that contemporaneously migrant children are locked into detention camps, sometimes for years. In the experience of racial, religious, or political persecution, the body and mind struggles to stay intact, whether young or old.

Domestic Bliss (2004), entailed Bruce installing a convoy of sixteen wooden toy wagons on the gallery floor. Each wagon piled as high as possible with a specific collection of everyday objects and utensils found in the home. The convoy is colourful and playful — almost inviting us to step between the wagons and pull one along. On closer analysis, we begin to query each wagon's selective cargo of baby soothers, plastic yellow ducklings, human hair, toothbrushes of many colours, plastic rings from milk bottles, and toddlers' shoes. A toy wooden soldier and an erect meat tenderiser travel in the opposite direction against this tide of humanity. Then we spot a wagon bristling with long handled meat forks and another brimming with dolls' limbs. Feelings of nostalgia float out the window. Is this a convoy of the lost, the stolen, the killed, and the forgotten: the innocence of childhood cut short in senseless crossfire? Across the room above Arkeveld's pram with foetus, the dragonfly hovers.

Rinske Car

The hearth or kitchen has traditionally been the centre of the family home. In the main gallery of the historic Fremantle Arts Centre are two large fireplaces. By flanking each side of one fireplace with a different life-size predominantly black-and-white photographic print, Rinske Car reflects both on the family she left behind in the Netherlands and the family she has created here.

The first image, *Bye My Loyalty* (2006), is of Car at South Beach, South Fremantle, with her extended Australian family. We see only their backs as they head from the beach up through the dunes. Car lags behind the others; her legs are hobbled by a large length of bright orange elastic. The orange colour is representative of the Dutch national colour and in this image she communicates that she feels pulled backwards by the mother country and its associated memories and family responsibilities.

On the other side of the fireplace is the second body-length image, *In Place of Language* (2006). Car, her children and grandchildren face the camera. They are outside but it looks as though they are posing for this image at home. Car, the matriarch in the centre, is radiant. The manner in which she openly and laughingly faces the camera suggests she has found inner peace and happiness, through her relationship with the next generation of her Australian-born family.

Car did not see herself as a migrant when she took assisted passage to Perth in 1970. To her, migration is associated with economic hardship and this



Figure 11
Rinske Car, *Bye my Loyalty*, 2006
Courtesy: Rinske Car.

did not fit her 'happy-go-lucky attitude' to travel in the direction of the other side of the world. 'And yet', Car recounts 'I remember leaving Holland with a headache I can really never forget. Did I know deep down that I was somehow seriously stepping out of my box, jumping gates, fences, and rules for the first time?'¹⁴

In the same conversation Car reflects that she has no regrets about moving to Australia, but :

The transition into another language during my adult years has left me with a mild ongoing struggle ... English has eventually become embedded, but emotional distance persists. When translating 'belonging' into Dutch, the meaning of the word slips and floats away ... What happens when one language becomes overlaid with another?

Again I consider the women in Woldendorp's photograph, which was taken close in time to the turning-point in Car's personally-tailored destiny. Did the women in Woldendorp's photograph speak the same language as each other? If so, were they allowed to speak their native tongue at the station in the presence of non-aboriginal people, or were they forced, like so many others, to renounce their language and culture and assimilate under the pressures of the *Aborigines Protection Act 1905*? I asked Woldendorp some of my questions. He responded:

I was fascinated by the Aboriginal way of life and culture... Brooking Springs was particularly interesting because this was before the time when the Whitlam Government decided that anyone working on a station had to be paid standard wages. Before this the station owner looked after the community with food and accommodation. This included the women and children, all living on the station which was part of their tribal area. Hence the Aboriginal community at Brooking Springs, as it was on other stations in the Kimberleys, was quite large. After the new law was implemented most Aborigines were forced to drift to the towns such as Fitzroy and others.¹⁵

Many Aboriginal Australian cultures have been irrevocably damaged by State and Federal policies.

Comparatively speaking, Dutch migrants to Australia have had a 'fair go', and they know it, even though some felt tremendous pressure to assimilate into Australian culture as seamlessly as possible. In stark contrast it was not until the 1967 referendum that Aborigines were eligible to be included in the Commonwealth Census.¹⁶ Only in the decade following Richard Woldendorp's photograph, *The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* were introduced, to provide for the protection of places and cultural objects of significance to Aboriginal people. How have the Aboriginal people in the vicinity of Brooking Springs station fared? According to Patrick Sullivan, 'During the 1980s, Bunuba people began to



Figure 12
Rinske Car, *In Place of Language*, 2006
Courtesy: Rinske Car.

reassert their identity. About one hundred speakers of the language survived at this time.¹⁷

In the context of the Howard government's refusal to apologise for injustices meted to Australia's Aboriginal people, many of the artists in *Floating* felt that to celebrate 'Dutchness' was somewhat inappropriate. The general consensus was that like any other artist, Aboriginal Australian or otherwise, they were responding to historical sets of circumstances and personal experiences that were being shaped and reshaped within the context of living in contemporary Australia.

Conclusion

The multiple international events, publications, and exhibitions that acknowledge the four hundred years of connections between The Netherlands and Australia have now passed. Presumably the Dutch migrant community in Australia enjoyed and benefited from learning more about the history of the mother country and their collective migrant history in Australia. But at the same time, despite former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology, Australia's inability to foster the well-being of many Indigenous Australians continues to fester.

In response to her own question: 'What happens when one language becomes overlaid with another?' Rinske Car responded 'You do not question your own language; you speak it from within'.¹⁸ I'm sure that Marie Thorn, the Nyungar elder who opened the *Floating* exhibition, would concur. Through art as a visual language of personal and community expression, many of us mediate our place in the world as these six artists have done. Collectively, Rick Vermey, Theo Koning, Richard Woldendorp, Han Arkeveld, Aadje Bruce and Rinske Car have exhibited in over 380 professional group exhibitions and, in a further 62 solo exhibitions. Clearly the Dutch migrant experience has made a significant contribution to the cultural diversity and visual strength of art in Australia.

It is uncanny. While writing this final paragraph, I received an 'event alert' email from the Australian Embassy in The Hague notifying of the exhibition *Brilliance* at the Aboriginal Art Museum in Utrecht. The city of my birth in the Netherlands has a museum devoted to the exhibition of Indigenous art from Australia, and in *Brilliance* Emily Kame Kngwarreye, and Dutch artist Maria Roosen are exhibiting side-by-side. Thus cultural understanding happens within and across boundaries.¹⁹



ENDNOTES

- 1 J. Sherwood, 'Who is not coping with colonization? Laying Out the Map for Decolonization.' P. S24.
- 2 N. Peters, R. Car and N. Schwarz, *Transpositions: Contextualising Recent Dutch Australian Art*.
- 3 R. Vermey, written correspondence to author, 16 March 2006.
- 4 Gerritsen Rupert, 2006, *The Evidence for Cohabitation Between Indigenous Australians, Marooned Dutch Mariners and VOC Passengers*, in *The Dutch Down Under, 1606-2006*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, Western Australia, pp.45-6.
- 5 R. Vermey, R, written correspondence to author, 16 March 2006.
- 6 T. Koning, personal conversation with author, 28 October, 2007.
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 N. Peters, R. Car and N. Schwarz, *Transpositions: contextualising recent Dutch Australian art*. Woldendorp artist page.
- 9 McCarthy Michael, 2006, 'Dutch Place Names in Australia', in *The Dutch Down Under, 1606-2006*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, Western Australia, p. 26..
- 10 N. Peters, R. Car and N. Schwarz, *Transpositions*, Woldendorp artist page.
- 11 R. Woldendorp, written correspondence, 30 October 2007.
- 12 H. Arkeveld, personal correspondence, 26 October, 2007.
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 R. Car, personal correspondence, 24 October, 2007.
- 15 R. Woldendorp, written correspondence, 30 October 2007.
- 16 National Archives, *The 1967 Referendum*.
- 17 P. Sullivan, 'ICGP Researcher's case study overview: impediments to effective aboriginal service delivery by mainstream agencies in the west Kimberley, WA - a scoping project'.
- 18 R. Car, personal correspondence, 24 October, 2007.
- 19 P. Beilharz, 'Rewriting Australia' public lecture, University of Western Australia.

Figure 13

Negotiating a Dutch-Australian Identity
Rinske Car c2000.

Rinske Car is a Dutch artist who made Australia her home as an adult. She nevertheless constantly feels the pull of her Dutch roots, which she depicts here as a section of one leg of the overalls - cut off. Courtesy: Rinske Car.

CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF RICHARD WOLDENDORP

Di Ingelse - Yarrall

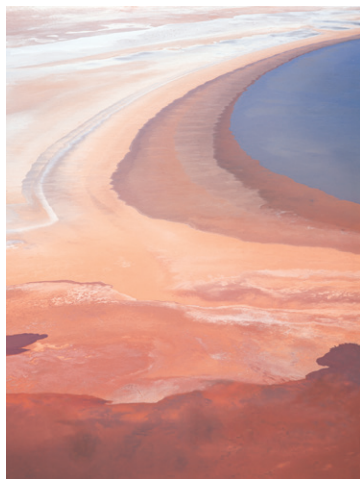


Figure 1
Receding water lines, Lake Moore, Western Australia – *Abstract Earth*.

Richard Woldendorp was born in The Netherlands, in the city of Utrecht, on 1 January 1927. After spending three years in Indonesia while serving in the Dutch army, he decided to migrate to Australia in 1951. His original intention had been to go to Sydney, but he was persuaded by the friends he met on the boat to stay with them in WA, and he never left.

Richard had studied art, painting and commercial design as a young man in Holland. Being unable to find work in this area when he arrived in Perth, because of his lack of English, he worked as a house-painter and eventually started his own business. He acquired his first camera in 1955 and immediately saw its artistic potential; he joined the Cottesloe Camera Club in order to hone his photographic skills, and won first and third prizes in a national photographic competition.

The purchase of his first camera coincided with his discovery – almost by accident – of aerial photography. One of his house-painting assignments involved a trip to the Kimberley in a DC3, to paint the office and crew quarters of MacRobertson Miller Airline in Derby. The trip took all day and as the plane was not pressurised - they had to fly low, giving Richard his first aerial impressions of the outback.

He then started working as a freelance photographer and began obtaining assignments from magazines, government agencies and mining clients. It



Figure 3
Richard Woldendorp Self Portrait 1961.



was not until the 1980s that he started photographing from the air, as he realised that certain parts of the country are better seen from that point of view. He quickly became well known for his artistic approach to Australia's infinitely varied landscapes, which he has continued to photograph ever since.

Richard Woldendorp is one of WA's most popular and successful artists, and has built up and sustained one of the most significant bodies of photographic work in Western Australia. His work developed to become highly individual, evidencing a keen formal and structural sensibility and interest in land use, ecology and history. Richard was invited to exhibit at the Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara and before the exhibition went there, it was shown to Gary Dufour at The Art Gallery of Western Australia and as a consequence it was exhibited there in 1986 before going to USA. It subsequently toured the USA and Holland. The State Art Collection now holds 17 of Richard's works, and in 2009 presented a second survey of his work in the exhibition, *Abstract Earth: The Photography of Richard Woldendorp*.

Figure 5
Pindan coast, near Broome, WA – *Out of the Blue*.



Figure 2
Small tidal river with flood plain, east of
Darwin, Northern Territory – *Abstract Earth*.

He has lived for many years in the Perth Hills suburb of Darlington, in close proximity to the homes of renowned, [now deceased], Western Australian landscape painters Guy Grey-Smith and Robert Juniper, both of whom flew with him on many occasions and whose work also had a strong relationship to aerial perspective.

Richard is the author of 25 books, the most recent being *Out of the Blue*, which was published in 2013. In the introduction to this book he sums up his affinity for his chosen profession: ‘To some people flying is a way of getting from A to B, but for me it is an opportunity to observe the landscape from a different perspective. It is quite surprising how revealing the landscape can be, even from a commercial jet.’

He goes on to contrast the difference between the landscapes of Australia and those of the northern hemisphere, from where he came, thus:

At first this age-old worn-down landscape does not appear to lend itself to the spectacular photography that can take place in the northern hemisphere, or in Africa, with its obvious diversity and dramatic wildlife. But Australia has its own strong identity, which has evolved over millions of years and requires careful observation. Everything – rivers, coasts, mountains, plains and deserts – changes with the seasons and with the light at different times of the day. As much as possible, I like to be inspired by what I see: this is where I experience a sense of wonderment of a world so complex, varied and beautiful. I emphasise the highlights by pointing the camera down and focusing on the subject, excluding the horizon so one loses a point of reference and reality often takes on an abstract form. At all times I take great care to retain the reality of what is there.

Richard Woldendorp has been recognised for both his photographic work and his contribution to the Arts. He has won many awards with the Australian Institute of Professional Photography (AIPP); he was made a Fellow of the Institute in 1998 and an Honorary Life Member in 1998. In 2002 he was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Australian Commercial and Media Photographers (ACMP), and in 2004 he was honoured as a Living Treasure of the State of Western Australia. Most recently, in the 2012 Queen’s Birthday Honours, he was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his service to the Arts as an Australian landscape photographer.

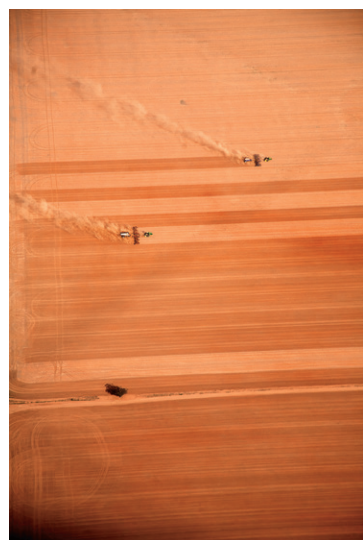


Figure 6
Ploughing, Southern Cross, WA –
Out of the Blue.



Figure 4
Eighty Mile Beach between Port Hedland
and Broome at low tide, WA –
Out of the Blue.

ENDNOTES

R. Woldendorp, *Out of the Blue*, 2013, Sandpiper Press Pty Ltd, Glen Forrest, in association with Fremantle Press.

R. Woldendorp, 2008, *Abstract Earth: A View From Above*, Printed Singapore: Tien Wah Press, Singapore

CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

OUR MOB: SHIPWRECK SURVIVORS AND WA ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Nonja Peters and Geert Snoeijer

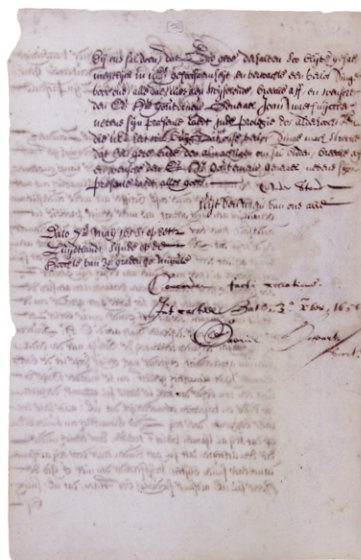
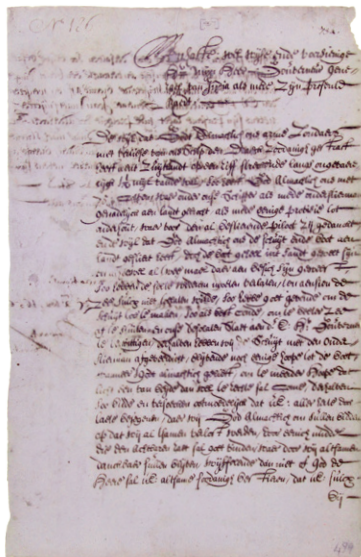


Figure 1
Survivors letter written on the WA coast at Ledge Point in 1656 and sent to Batavia with the longboat crew who were sent there to obtain a rescue ship. The letters were copied and forwarded to the Cape to inform rescue ships where to look.

Courtesy: Steve Caffery of the *Gilt Dragon* Research Group.

Over 200 survivors from *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* VOC shipwrecks are estimated to have been marooned forever on the coast of Western Australia (WA). A single copy of one of the only two letters known to have been written by the 68 survivors of the *Vergulde Draeck* (Gilt Dragon) wreck – who were left on the shore near present day Ledge Point – was found recently by archivists at the Western Cape Archives in Cape Town SA who are working with Steve Caffery from the “Gilt Dragon Research Group”.¹

The letter imploring the Governor General in Batavia to send rescue ships was taken to Batavia by the seven other survivors of the ‘Gilt Dragon’ chosen to make the onerous journey to Java to seek help in the one remaining longboat. Copies of the letters were subsequently sent to the Cape of Good Hope to inform VOC ships, en-route to the Indies, of the last known coordinates of those left behind. Despite a number of rescue attempts, what exactly happened to them still remains a mystery.

The Gerritsen chapter in Section I speculates further on the possible fate of all those stranded forever on the desolate Western Australian shore during the 17th and 18th Centuries from shipwrecks of the *Batavia*, *Gilt Dragon*, *Zuytdorp* and *Zeewijk*, as well as those left behind from the ships sent to rescue them.

Aboriginal folklore tells that some of the fortunate shipwreck survivors cohabited with the local Aboriginal people. Aboriginal oral history tradition indeed links the fate of those marooned from the *Vergulde Draeck* to the Noongar People. Specifically the sub group *Yued* whose traditional ‘country’ butts onto the shore where the ship sank, but also possibly the *Wadjuk* and *Belardang* whose country was closeby.

The survivors of the *Zuytdorp*, that went down against the steep cliff faces (now known as the Zuytdorp Cliffs)- north of the Murchison River- are linked to the *Yamaji* peoples particularly the subgroups: *Nanda*, *Malgana* and *Wadjarri*. It is possible, but less probable, that those from the *Batavia* and the rescue ships *Sardam* and *Goede Hoop* may also have ended their lives with indigenous Australians.² This is supported by Nanda oral history, which claims one or more of the many castaways fathered children with Aboriginal mothers. Barry Maguire, of Noongar Aboriginal descent, recalls that his family told stories about the “tall men from the North” – referring to the *Yamaji* peoples from the Murchison-Gascoyne regions.³

Australian newspapers have at various times carried compelling articles about shipwrecks, Albino Aboriginals or those with European features - from the beginning of European settlement in Western Australia. In March 1833,

in a *Perth Gazette* newspaper article – the Aboriginal man Yagan⁴ is noted as being with his two sons, Narli and Willim (a very Dutch name) whom the journalist estimates are around 9 and 11 years old. Born thus before the British settled there four years earlier. The journalist's portrayal of Yagan is also thought-provoking:

a subject of terror to the white people, yet commanded their admiration with his... greater stature than the average aboriginal' and 'head and shoulders above his fellows, in mind as well as in body.⁵

A myriad articles in the 1890, from papers around Australia describe Jungun an Albino Aboriginal as being on show at Wax Museums and the like in various States.⁶ An article in the *West Australian Newspaper* on Saturday 3 February 1934, by a journalist who only identifies as E.H. recounts the recollections from 40 years earlier of Miss K. McPhee, the daughter of Mr Alex McPhee - the owner of La Grange Pastoral Station. Who claims her father had 'discovered' Jan Gun (Jungun) the Albino Aboriginal. Moreover, that she owned an enlarged photo of Jan Gun that had a lock of his reddish brown hair attached to it.⁷ Folkloric tradition of the times also reported groups of Albinos as purportedly seen on the plains behind Hall's Creek and Wave Hill.

In another article by E.H. in the same edition of the *West Australian* on page four, he speculates about Pieter Ngarras of Shark Bay, an aboriginal who he describes as displaying "European features and behaviours". In fact, he proposes, as evidence of Pieter Ngarras' *Dutchness* his physical presence and his obsession with fishing as quoted below:

With a great blonde beard, not white but bright golden, sturdy sinuous limbs decidedly bandy, a noble, girth and a passion for the sea – none of these aboriginal characteristics; Provided that there is the same 'strong.- atavistic tendency among white races as there are among the Negroid and Asiatic, Pieter is quite possibly, an amazing throw-back over 14 or 15 generations to the early Dutchmen, it may be to the two desperadoes marooned by Pelsart near Champion Bay in '1627. The supposition is not an absurdity in that Mendel himself allows the passing of 17 generations for the verification of his theories.

E.H. also noted how the:

Residents of Shark Bay have assured me that Pieter's forebears were all typical aborigines, and his ancient sister *Mithie*, the only, other full-blood



Figure 2
Nonja Peters interview with Uncle Clayton
Drage, Northampton 2016.
Courtesy: Geert Snoeijer.



Figure 3
Rodney Ogilvy. Photo: Geert Snoeijer.



Figure 4
Lily Kickett. Photo: Geert Snoeijer.



Figure 5
Cathy Kickett. Photo: Geert Snoeijer.

that now exists there, is unremarkable. With a hollow nose and black skin incongruous with his white characteristics, this man spends his life cruising the shallow waters of Hamelin Pool ... His most cherished possession is a little dinghy, which he has fitted with a mast and sail, and in which and on which he is eternally working – a trait in itself most un-aboriginal, harking right back to the *Eendracht*, the *Vergulde Draeck* and other adventurers who scoured those seas in the dawn of our history, with many crews marooned and shipwrecked there.⁸

A genetically identifiable disease – Ellis van Creveld (EvC) syndrome – is also linked to possible cohabitation. This autosomal recessive gene syndrome is distinguished visibly by polydactylism – the growth of extra fingers and toes.⁹ WA medical researchers Goldblatt et al 1992, noted that the feature has a vastly increased incidence among persons of the Old Order Amish and people of WA Aboriginal descent.¹⁰ The Amish incidence is estimated at 5 cases per 1000 live births. The Aboriginal population in south west WA having a purported carrier prevalence of 1/39 live births.¹¹ The existence of the Ellis van Creveld syndrome among the *Nanda* and their many light-skinned, blue eyes and fair-haired offspring, boosts their belief in the cohabitation legend – notwithstanding the great admixture of UK colonists post settlement.

Although conclusive evidence to support the claim to cohabitation would be exceedingly hard to find, the connection here is that a particular portion of the 17th and 18th century Dutch population from which the crew of the *Zuiddorp*, *Batavia* and *Gilt Dragon* were recruited, included Mennonites. Mennonites were important players in the culture, economy, intellectual and social life of the Netherlands from the 17th Century ‘Golden Age’.¹² They were also some of the largest investors into VOC Spice Trade voyages. Mennonites were also among the Skippers and sailors on VOC ships, but unlikely to be soldiers given that their religion opposed all forms of violence. However, they were purchasers of the natural science goods that the ships brought in from countries around the Indian Ocean Rim. Moreover, large groups of Mennonites lived in the towns of *Franeker* and *Harlinger* in the bay opposite Texel – the departure harbour in the Netherlands of many VOC vessels.

The Aboriginals depicted in the portraits accompanying this vignette are all related; albeit sometimes distantly.

Rodney Ogilvy

The Ogilvy family claim their Dutch heritage is from survivors of the *Zuiddorp*, which sailed from the Cape of Good Hope in April 1712, and later disappeared. No survivors arrived by boat at Batavia (Jakarta), and no search of the Western Australian coast was organised. Wreckage was found at the *Zuiddorp* Cliffs, 60 km north of the Murchison River. Of particular interest in the case of the *Zuiddorp* is archaeological evidence that some survivors lived ashore for an undetermined period of time. Campsites have been located inland from the wreck site, and the possibility of absorption into the local Aboriginal community is feasible.

Cathy and Lily Kickett

They are sisters and they share the same parents, yet Cathy has freckles.

Her response to the researchers' bewilderment prompted her to declare: "You do not have to be black to be Aboriginal."

Jacko Whitby

He notes:

I was one of the [people] that was born with the extra finger so my genes' association with the survivors of the Dutch wreck is probably a little bit stronger ... and there are quite a few people in the area around now with the effects of that disease or what[ever] they call it, the connection of the Dutch ... and the different other things that go with it ... I am probably the only one that has got [it]... of our family because of the extra finger that I was born with.¹³

Bethany Mallard

Aboriginal oral tradition supports the Mallards' claim to an alleged Dutch heritage. Bethany's grandfather, Charles Mallard - who was photographed with the figurine from the bulkhead of the *Zuiddorp* - is among those who passed on the story to his grandchildren. Many stories also abound about how Aboriginal children on Murchison and Tamala Stations used to play with coins found at the *Zuiddorp* shipwreck site.

Peidence Lawson

She is related to the Mallard family. The blonde hair of Peidence Lawson and Cathy Kickett's freckles are considered signs of a purported Dutch heritage by the Mallards.

The information in this vignette is part of a larger exhibition project by Geert Snoeijer and Nonja Peters, together with Bart de Graaff - Historian of South Africa - and Linguist Aone van Engelenhoven (Kisar). Entitled 'The Forgotten of the Dutch East India Company', it is a photographic and oral histories venture to comprehend and gain a clearer understanding of the far-reaching impact - upon the lives not only of indigenous peoples of Western Australia but also of Indonesia and Southern Africa - of the VOC incursion into the Indian Ocean Region during the 'Age of Exploration'.

The researchers are eager to find out what it is exactly that connects the distant 'orphans of the VOC' with their real or imagined ancestors. Also why recognition of this ancient 'umbilical cord' continues to play such a central role in their lives today. The exhibition will be on display in the WA Museum Geraldton, as well as in museums in South Africa, Indonesia, the Netherlands and Brussels.



Figure 6
Jacko Whitby. Photo: Geert Snoeijer.



Figure 7
Bethany Mallard. Photo: Geert Snoeijer.



Figure 8
Peidence Lawson. Photo: Geert Snoeijer.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The letter was translated from ancient Dutch to English by author and novelist Dr Dan Sleight with the assistance of Steve Caffery.
- 2 http://www.nederland-australie2006.nl/geschiedenis/nl/html/ontdekkingsreizigers_scheepsreizen.html
- 3 Geert Snoeijer and Nonja Peters, *Verlander: Forgotten Children of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC)* - October 2016
- 4 *Perth Gazette*, 1 June 1833, p.87.
- 5 <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/yagan-aboriginal-resistance-hero>
- 6 https://www.google.nl/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=s8TWV6SBAevG8Ae3orWYBw&gws_rd=ssl#q=trove+newspapers
- 7 *The Queensland Observer*, 22 October, 1898; *Argus West Australian*
- 8 *West Australian Newspapers*, 3 February 1934, p.4
- 9 Goldblatt JC, Minutillo PJ, Hurst J 1992. Ellis-van Creveld Syndrome in a Western Australian Aboriginal Community, Postaxial Polydactyly as Heterogenous Manifestation *Medical Journal of Australia* 157 pp. 271-272. Disproportionate dwarfism, postaxial polydactyly, ectodermal dysplasia, a small chest, and a high frequency of congenital heart defects characterize this autosomal recessive syndrome, which has increased incidence among persons of Old Order Amish descent.
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 Goldblatt JC, Minutillo PJ, Hurst J 1992. Ellis-van Creveld Syndrome in a Western Australian Aboriginal Community, Postaxial Polydactyly as Heterogenous Manifestation in *Medical Journal of Australia*, 157 pp. 271-272.
- 12 Lecture one: Mennonites, Natural Knowledge, and the Dutch Golden Age, Ernst Hamm, *The Conrad Grebel Review* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2012). <https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/publications/conrad-grebel-review/issues/winter-2012/lecture-one-mennonites-natural-knowledge-and-dutch-golden>
- 13 Jackos extra digit was removed soon after birth.

Figure 9

Zuytdorp Cliffs - the Zuytdorp Cliffs mark the western edge of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area. They tower up to 200m high and stretch more than 200 km from Steep Point to Kalbarri, they are the longest fault scarp in Australia. Courtesy: Alec Coles.

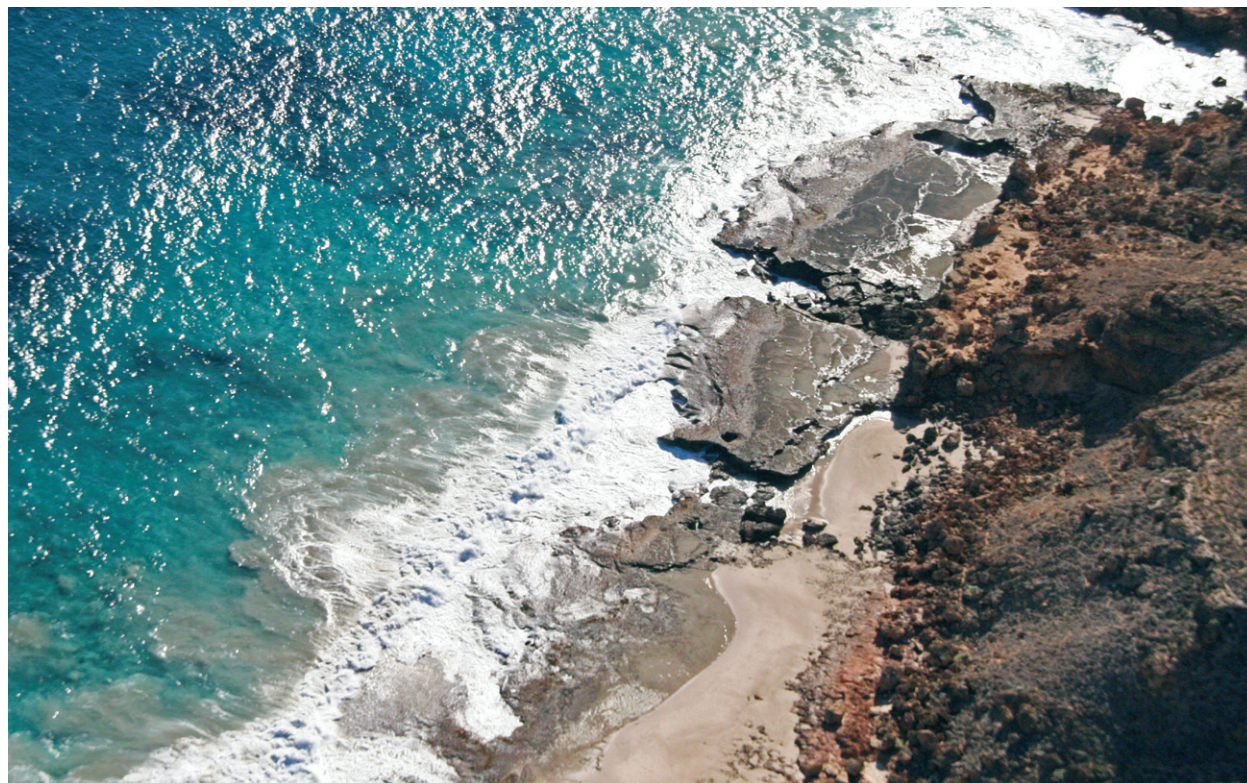




Figure 10
A collage of the research travels of Geert Snoeijer and Nonja Peters, 2016.

CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

TRACING YOUR DUTCH ANCESTORS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

Marjorie Bly



Figure 1
Bly mum & baby
Courtesy: M.Bly.

While academic researchers and historians have long been aware of the wonderful resources to be found in Archives, the average family historian is only just becoming familiar with the wide range of records that can throw some light on who our ancestors were and what they did.

Migration records in particular are rich sources of information as detailed entries are kept for individuals and families at the different stages of entry, residency and citizenship. They can make fascinating reading, with every page telling a story.

The National Archives of Australia holds an abundance of material of relevance to researchers interested in Dutch migrants, especially family historians tracing their Dutch heritage. While the Archives hold some colonial records, most records were created after Federation in 1901, reflecting the growing involvement by the Federal Government in the lives of individuals since then. This period also coincides with the great wave of migration after World War II. Here are the stories of two people of Dutch origin who made this journey of discovery through records held by the Archives.

MY STORY

I came to Western Australia as a very young child with my parents, who felt they had to leave an ailing post-war Europe for the 'promised land'. My father had heard about Australia's wonderful opportunities while he was serving with the Dutch army in Indonesia during the Indonesian War of

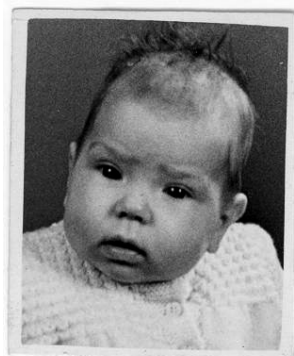


Figure 2
Passport photos Blijlevens family
Courtesy: M.Bly.



Independence. In 1951 he returned to the Netherlands full of enthusiasm and managed to talk my mother into emigrating. There was a delay as my mother found she was pregnant and approval to travel was deferred, until after I was born and could pass a mandatory health check¹. Finally, when I was seven months old my parents packed up their belongings, (one small crate and one suitcase²) and set sail in the *MS Fairsea* in February 1953 under the Netherlands Australia Migration Agreement (NAMA). This agreement, which involved financial assistance to qualifying migrants, was one of several developed with various governments and international organisations, in order to encourage mass migration to Australia and to help bolster its defence and development capabilities after World War II.

Upon our arrival in Fremantle on 14 March 1953, we were sent to the Holden Immigration Camp at Northam, about 100 km east of Perth. During this post war period of migration there was a critical housing shortage. This led to the leasing of Department of Defence camps, which were no longer required for the war effort, and their conversion into migrant accommodation by the State and Commonwealth Governments.³ Unless migrants were fortunate enough to have friends or family with whom they could stay, they could expect to spend their initial 'settling in period' in their new country in such camps. We stayed in the 'Holden' Camp for six months, before moving into our first rental house on the outskirts of Northam. As required by the conditions of the assisted passage, my father worked for the then State Electricity Commission for two years, after which he became a mechanic at Page Motors.

For my parents, their new life in Northam was not as rosy as they expected, although there were positive aspects. They had little in the way of possessions; luxuries were few, the Northam summers were very harsh and two boys were added to the family, increasing the financial pressures. However, after living in tenement style housing in Rotterdam, the wide spaces, including a large garden, were amazing and there was always the knowledge that with some hard work, the possibility of advancement and improvement of their standard of living was very real.

By 1959 my parents were ready to make the commitment of becoming Australian citizens and my father took advantage of the naturalisation process to abbreviate the surname, as it was causing significant pronunciation and spelling issues.

Nine years after arriving in Northam, our family moved to Perth where my parents were looking forward to both better opportunities and lifestyle, which were realised in the remaining years of their lives. Difficult as some of the early times and conditions were, my parents never regretted their move away from the Netherlands; Australia had become home.

I was delighted to discover that the National Archives holds the official government records documenting our family's migration and that access to them could be requested, when they entered the open period under the provisions of the *Archives Act 1983*.

Figure 3
NAA PP208_1, W1959-5529 AR
Courtesy: M.Bly.

Figure 4
NAA PP208_1, W1959-5528, alien registration
Courtesy: M.Bly.

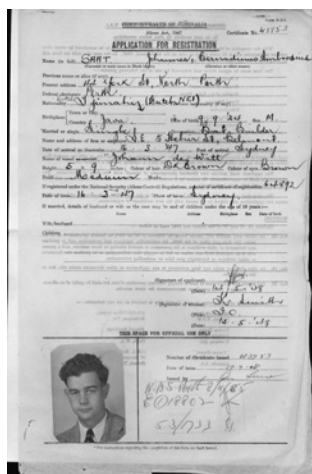


Figure 5
K1331, 1955 SAAT JBA application for registration as Alien. Courtesy: M.Bly.

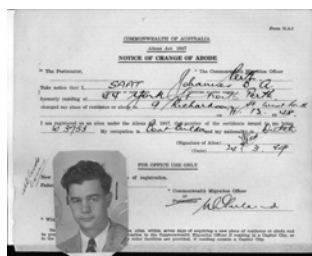


Figure 6
K1331, 1955 SAAT JBA change of abode
Courtesy: M.Bly.



Figure 7
NAA K1331, 1955 SAAT JBA
Courtesy: M.Bly.

I still remember vividly my excitement when shown my family's passenger arrival information. As I carefully turned the fragile pages of the *Fairsea's* passenger list, my family's details leapt out at me "Schemers disembarking at Fremantle – Blijlevens J J, wife, 1 child"⁴. Further details emerged in the following pages – my father was 26, a driver by occupation, my mother was 25 and a housewife and we all intended to stay in Western Australia as permanent residents. In addition to the passenger list, I found the nominal roll for the voyage, which contained very similar information, but did include some extra detail such as the quantity of luggage and accommodation arrangements after landing⁵. Searching further through the collection, I located our migrant selection documents held in the Canberra office, digitised and able to be read online. In this file I observed the application and approval process for the assisted passage and the delays while my parents waited for my birth⁶. The Perth collection held the alien registration papers completed by my parents upon landing, as required by all non-British persons aged over sixteen years, in accordance with the provisions of the *Aliens Act 1947*. Our original destination was shown as Melbourne, and was crossed out and replaced by Fremantle. This revived the memory of an early family story regarding our change of destination during the voyage due to fluctuations in state immigration quotas, and which resulted in our lives being lived on the west coast instead of the east coast. The alien registration forms and other papers had been collated by the Department of Immigration into a file documenting my parents' applications for naturalisation. There were in the forms filled out by my parents and other administrative pages, important details relating to our migration story⁷.

JOOP'S STORY

Other Dutch migrants came from the Netherlands East Indies. One, Joop Saat, was a member of the Dutch Merchant Navy serving on ships, which carried Australian and US troops and war materials to the various war zones in the south west Pacific area during World War II. During this period Joop became a frequent visitor to a number of ports on the northern and eastern Australian seaboard.

After the war and the demise of the Netherlands East Indies, Joop decided to emigrate to Australia, arriving on the *Johan de Witt* on 16 March 1947⁸. Like other migrants, Joop had to undergo a medical examination, register as an Alien, notify the authorities of changes of circumstances and comply with other bureaucratic requirements.

Joop's alien registration papers show that although he arrived in Sydney, he intended to live in Western Australia and his occupation is given as "boat builder"⁹. This file includes also passport-sized photographs, one of which shows him as a dashing young naval officer. By 1953 when Joop applied for naturalisation, he had become a joiner working for The Millars Timber and Trading Company¹⁰. The application forms reveal much information about his life and work before he came to Australia, including his birth in 1924 in

Java, details of his parents, the years spent in the Netherlands, his period of service in the Dutch Merchant Navy from 1941 to 1947 and his marriage in Australia in 1948. Joop recently discovered his records in the Perth collection and he had this to say:

Recently I decided to find out something about my earlier days in Australia, so I approached the Perth office of the National Archives. I was amazed at the number of records they had available. They were able to arrange for me to receive copies of documents, the existence of which I had forgotten about or never knew existed.

These included the name of the ship I arrived in (*SS Johan de Witt*) complete with passenger lists and date of arrival. The Archives had the originals of my application for permanent residency in Australia, my application to become a naturalised British subject (and an Australian citizen) complete with the character references supplied by an erstwhile neighbour, the foreman at my then place of employment and a police constable. There were the results of my medical examinations, even my notification as to changes of my abode; this latter requirement was something all foreigners had to comply with at that time. I was impressed with the amount of information available.¹¹

Joop and I share a Dutch heritage, although we came to Australia from different parts of the world. The records documenting our journeys form part of the Archives' collection, along with those for hundreds of thousands of other migrants, just waiting to be discovered.

Migration and other records are listed on the Archives' online database at www.naa.gov.au. Some have already been digitised and purchasing a copy is easily arranged. The records are generally held in the state where the person lived at the time of their interaction with the Commonwealth Government and the Archives has a head office in Canberra and an office in each state and territory.

ENDNOTES

- 1 NAA: A2478, BLIJLEVEN J J.
- 2 NAA: PP353/1, 1953/63/1694
- 3 Peters, N., *Milk and Honey but no Gold*, UWA Press, 2001, pp117-119.
- 4 NAA: K269, 14 March 1953 FAIRSEA
- 5 NAA: PP353/1, 1953/63/1694
- 6 NAA: A2478, BLIJLEVEN J J.
- 7 NAA: PP208/1, W1959/5528 and PP208/1, W1959/5529
- 8 NAA: K1331, 1955/SAAT J B A
- 9 NAA: K1331, 1955/SAAT J B A
- 10 NAA: PP15/1, 1953/65/1733
- 11 J B A SAAT (personal communication, 7 November 2006)

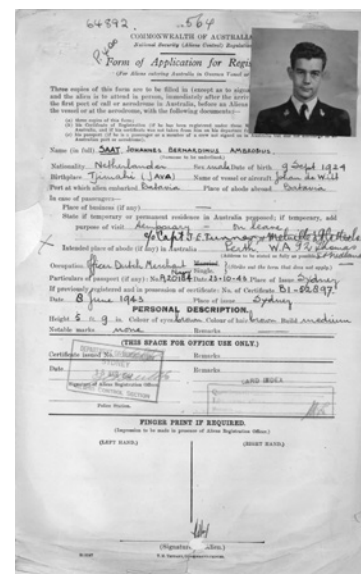


Figure 8
NAA K1331, 1955-SAAT J B A AR
Courtesy: M. Bly.

AUTHOR AND CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Reginald Appleyard PhD AM

Reg is an Emeritus Professor and Hon. Senior Research Fellow at the Business School, University of Western Australia and past President of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society Inc. His main field of research is economic demography, with emphasis on the economics of international migration and the economic history of Australia. His recent research projects include the economic history of Trayning Shire and a longitudinal study on the adaptation of Greece-born women in Australia. Appleyard has authored/co-authored 10 books, edited/co-edited 14 books and written over 100 articles/chapters and 20 reports for governments.

Marjorie Bly

Marjorie is the Assistant Director of the Access and Communications branch in the Perth office of the National Archives of Australia, where she manages a small team of reference staff to make the records in the collection available to a wide range of clients. One of the many pleasurable things about her current position is the opportunity to observe Australian stories and events unfolding through the pages of original records in the Archives' extensive collection.

Nicola Coles B.Ed

Nicola is a qualified Teacher with extensive experience of teaching in government schools in the UK. For many years she acted as Curriculum leader for Literacy, Humanities, Visual Arts and Design and Technology, and she also mentored and assessed Postgraduate trainee teachers. Nicola migrated to Western Australia in 2010 and is employed as a Research Assistant in Tertiary Education at Murdoch University WA. She is currently researching and providing administrative support towards the History of Murdoch University, and from 2014 to 2015 worked with the late Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton to edit the book *Murdoch Voices*.

Wilna Cornelisse MA

Wilna graduated from Teachers Academy in Middelburg in 1974 as a Primary School Teacher, teaching special needs children. She also taught adult classes in Dutch as a second language. In 1976-1978 she accepted a two-year commission to establish a Dutch school for expatriate children in Saudi Arabia. Six months after arriving in Australia she established 'De Schakel' – a Dutch School in Australia to assist expatriates' children maintain the Dutch curriculum. She attends NOB (Dutch Organisation for education abroad) courses annually, to keep up with the national educational developments of the Dutch curriculum in the Netherlands. Wilna retired in 2014.

Henny Crijns-Coenen

Henny migrated to Australia with her family as a child in 1953. She was educated in WA and is now retired. Her main jobs were working with Aboriginal communities in the North West and Central Desert region, and as a Prison Officer. She continues to be involved with the Dutch Community in WA, as Secretary, Princess and also Jester of the Carnivals Club 'The Sandgropers', and as Secretary and Newsletter editor of the 'new' VOC Historical Society. She is a naturalized Australian and proud of both her Australian and Dutch heritage. She enjoys writing essays and poetry.

Family Doornbusch

Kornelis Carel Edward Doornbusch (1929 - 2016) - his sister May and his daughter Alet contributed to the Doornbusch family vignette. Con was a Town Planner and his sister May, a schoolteacher. Alet currently teaches English as a second language and tests the English skills of professional migrants.

Charles Stuart Eaton PhD

Charles has been working in Corporate Agribusiness in developing countries for the past 35 years. He holds an MPhil from the School of Social and Economic Studies, University of the South Pacific and a PhD in Geography from the University of Western Australia. He has published a number of papers on the subject of contract farming systems. Eaton is the younger son of Group Captain Charles 'Moth' Eaton and has researched and written a biography of his late father that includes WWI India, the Central Australian desert air searches, WWII and post-war Timor and Indonesia 1940 -1950.

Marijke Eysbertse-van Schaik

Marijke, a writer and translator, migrated from the Netherlands to Australia in 1967. Her second husband Dirk Eysbertse came to Australia in 1956. He opened the first gallery of Oriental Art in Melbourne in 1972. Dirk and Marijke shared a strong interest in travel, culture and history. They were particularly passionate about recording and preserving Dutch migrant history such as the Bonegilla Migrant Camp. They nurtured and encouraged each other creatively, resulting in the co-production of three exhibitions and a book, as well as plays written by Marijke. Dirk sadly passed away in July 2014.

Neil Foley MA

Neil was born in WA in 1956. He has postgraduate qualifications in urban and regional planning, property, real estate and archives administration. He has worked as a town planner in State and local government for over 25 years. He is currently Project Director, Urban Innovation in the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. Since 2003, he has been a Board member of the Swan River Trust. He has been researching in archives around the world for some 30 years, including searching for information to write the story of his Dutch great-great grandfather who jumped ship in Fremantle in the early 1850s.

Daniel Franklin PhD

Daniel is currently Interim Director and an Associate Professor at the Centre for Forensic Science, The University of Western Australia. His research involves the validation and exploration of alternative approaches for the quantification of skeletal biology and he advocates potential applications in the Forensic Sciences. He has published extensively in a variety of journals, most recently in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*; *Forensic Science, Medicine and Pathology*; *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* and the *International Journal of Legal Medicine*.

Rupert Gerritsen (1953-2013)

Rupert was an independent Dutch Australian scholar, and was born and raised in Geraldton, where he experienced first-hand the excitement of the discovery of the wreck of the *Batavia* in 1963. His best known work is *And Their Ghosts May Be Heard*, a detailed exploration of the fate of the Dutch mariners marooned on the Western Australian coast in the 1600s and early 1700s. He also published extensively in Historical, Ethnographic, Cartographic, Archaeological and Linguistic journals. In 2012 he was awarded the Dorothy Prescott Prize in Historical Cartography. Rupert co-founded Australia on the Map: 1606 – 2006, now located in the Australasian Hydrographic Society. Rupert passed away after a brief illness in 2013.

Christina Houen PhD

Christina returned to study in 1999 and completed a Master of Creative Arts degree (Curtin University 2002), then a PhD in Life Writing (Curtin University 2009). During that time she collected, edited and published an anthology of contemporary Australian women's writing, *Hidden Desires: Australian Women's Writing*, with a co-editor, Jenna Woodhouse. In 2009-10 she worked as Project Officer in Architecture Interior Architecture at Curtin University. Since then, she has worked as an editor of academic and creative writing; her website is <http://www.perfectwordsediting.com/>. She has published short stories and articles in international journals, and has two memoirs submitted to publishers.

Di Ingelse-Yarrall

Di is a migrant to Australia, having arrived from New Zealand in 1979. She also experienced being a migrant in a non-English-speaking country, when she worked in the NZ Embassy in Brussels between 1971 and 1975. Di has spent the last 40 years working in broadcasting and the Arts, having worked for TVNZ, Channel 7, Channel 9 and the ABC. Between 2006 and 2015 she worked as a senior manager in marketing/community relations areas at the Art Gallery of WA. Her husband Peter Ingelse, who migrated from the Netherlands to NZ in 1953 as a 6 year old, passed away in 2015.

Silvano Jung PhD

Silvano studied Archaeology at the University of New England in NSW. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts 1988 and Master of Letters 1991. He travelled to Darwin in the NT and became interested in researching the WWII Catalina flying boat wreck sites in Darwin Harbour. This led him to commence a Master of Arts thesis in Aviation Archaeology at Charles Darwin University, 2001. In 2002 Jung commenced studies for his PhD at Charles Darwin University on the Aviation Archaeology of 15 flying boats sunk at Broome, graduating in 2009. He is currently working as a consultant archaeologist.

Pieter Leeftang OAM

Pieter came to WA from Rotterdam in 1954. He was employed by Perth Zoo for 42 years where he held several managerial positions. The family lived at the Zoo for 30 years, and in 1981 Pieter was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to support his visits to 55 zoos overseas. The information he acquired was later put to use in the design of the Great Ape and Lesser Primate enclosures, the Zoo Hospital and the Elephant Enclosure. Pieter was also co-founder of the Dutch Society *Neerlandia* and served for 25 years on the committee; seven years as President. In 2014 he received an *Order of Australia* for Service to the Dutch Community.

Sally R May MA

Sally was born in Perth in 1953. After her family moved to New Zealand and then Queensland, she obtained her Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Queensland and later a Post Graduate Diploma at Curtin University. Sally worked for the Queensland Museum from 1982 to 1985, when she was involved in excavation of *HMS Pandora* and locating and surveying various shipwrecks. In 1985 she was employed by the Maritime Archaeology Department of the WA Museum. In 1995 she became Head of Maritime History, and coordinated the exhibition development for the WA Maritime Museum that opened in December 2002.

Kim Negenman MA

Kim studied Cultural Anthropology at the VU University in Amsterdam. For her Masters thesis, she carried out an Anthropological research on the ways in which the first and second-generation Dutch immigrants in Perth constructed their identity. Currently she is a manager in Human Resources within the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice.

Lia Anne (Lianna) Parker-van Straaten

Born in The Hague in the Netherlands, Lianna spent a year in the UK after high school. Later in The Hague she was employed by the American Embassy and Shell. In 1986 her husband was seconded to a gold project in WA where they lived from 1986 – 1990, followed by a year in Melbourne where she was engaged as a graduate librarian. After a year in Madrid, Shell returned her husband to the Netherlands and in 1996 they decided to migrate to Australia. Lianna retired from Real Estate in 2004. Since then she has been very involved with the Dutch community and is currently President of the Dutch Club *Neerlandia*.

Anne Pauwels PhD

Anne is Professor of Sociolinguistics, Dean of Languages and Cultures, Director of the London Confucius Institute and Head of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Programme at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She was Professor of Linguistics and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Western Australia between 2001 and 2008. Anne's research specialisation concerns multilingualism, the study of language maintenance and shift, language policy in Higher Education and language and gender. She has worked and published for many years on the Dutch language in Australia and the Dutch-Australian speech community.

Nonja Peters PhD

Nonja is an historian, anthropologist, museum curator and social researcher whose expertise is transnational migration and resettlement in Australia, immigrant entrepreneurship and the sustainable digital preservation of immigrants' cultural heritage. She has a special interest in Dutch maritime, military, migration and mercantile connections with Australia and South East Asian Region since 1606. She is currently involved in academic, community-based and bilateral research and events in all these areas. In 2006 Queen Beatrix awarded her the decoration *Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau*.

Aart Plug

Aart was born in Albany WA in 1951, one of an extended family group that came to Australia from Holland in 1950. His father established a neighbourhood grocery store in Albany, which he ran until his death in 1961. Subsequently Aart moved to Canada with his mother and seven siblings. He married Idske Broersma, of Friesian descent and returned to Australia in 1976. Aart has been a teacher at various Christian schools in WA. Aart and Idske have four children and seven grandchildren. They live in Armadale and are active members of the (largely Dutch) Free Reformed Church. They are long-time supporters of the Nulsen Association-a leading disability service agency in WA.

Jan Pritchard PhD

Jan Pritchard (nee Jannie Bargerbos) was born in Ureterp, Friesland in 1943 and migrated to Australia in 1952. After her marriage to Leon Pritchard, an English immigrant who lectured in Ceramics, and after the birth of two daughters, in 1968 she enrolled at UWA, specializing in Philosophy and English Literature. She taught English literature at UWA from 1976 to 1991, when she retired to travel around Australia with her husband. This confirmed her belief that in order to put down roots in a new country, it is important to be familiar with its many facets.

Anne Rietveld nee Rijnders

Anne was born in the Netherlands and migrated to Australia with her parents in 1954 aged thirteen. Her qualifications include primary teaching with expertise in Early Childhood Education and Remedial Reading. While childrearing, she studied Accountancy and became Assistant Accountant for Kailis & France, and later was Financial Controller for a printing firm. Anne also translated Mike Lefroy and Rick Martin's book *The Trees That Went to Sea*. She is Chair of the Associated Netherlands Societies in WA and co-editor of its Newsletter. Her interests are athletics, netball, sewing and crafts. She is retired has five children and eight grandchildren.

Peter Rietveld

Peter is a retired electrical and mechanical engineer. He was born in 1936, in The Hague (Kijkduin), Netherlands and educated at Technical School (LTS) 'Electrical', Den Bosch, at the Netherlands and at Perth Technical College for the 'Diploma Electrical Engineering' – Western Australia. Highlights of his international career include: employment with 'Bechtel International' as Construction/Contract Engineer at Mount Newman Mining in Port Hedland, Mt. Newman and Robe River Mining Co; in the Philippines with Construction Nonoc Nickel Mine in Surigao City; in Saudi Arabia with Construct Jubail City/Infrastructure for the Saudi Kingdom; and in the Netherlands with Flour B.V. as Electrical Design Engineer in Haarlem.

Nien Schwarz PhD

Nien (Janien) was born in 1962 to Dutch parents in Utrecht. She completed a BFA from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, and doctoral studies in visual arts at the Australian National University. Since 2000 she has been lecturing in visual arts at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. Nien's research is based on geo-political mapping and various visual, material and conceptual strategies that interrogate connections between people and places. Her artistic practice has been featured in the Perth International Arts Festival and she is a regular contributor to *Art Monthly Australia*. For more information see www.nienschwarz.org

Geert Snoeijer LL.M

Geert started his career as a documentary and portrait photographer at the Dutch newspaper *Het Parool* (2004). Over the years, he has been developing his work and research to include anthropological elements. In 2009 Snoeijer portrayed descendants of the first settlers in New Amsterdam (17th century New York). In 2012, he portrayed both the descendants of Dutch settlers in Turkey over the past four centuries and present immigrants in modern Turkey (Amsterdam Museum 2012, Yasar Art Gallery Izmir 2012). Since 2015 he has been working on 'The Forgotten Children of the VOC' – an exhibition which will be on display at the WA Museum-Geraldton, Australia and in other countries.

Arnold Stroobach MSc MBA

Arnold has a Medical Technology background and has been working on Board level over the last 20 years in the fields of ICT, the commercialisation of technology, innovation and strategic consultancy. In Australia he was CEO of Zernike - a large Dutch corporation based in Perth and Brisbane. He currently runs his own business consultancy and investment company. Furthermore, he is founding Chairman of Spacecubed Ltd, non-executive director of Alzheimer Australia WA, Chairman of Dutch Australian Foundation and Australian Dutch Business Council and Hon. Consul of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Perth, Western Australia.

Sue Summers PhD

Sue is Managing Editor of Black Swan Press at Curtin University and has published in the area of migration and war with a special emphasis on displacement and resettlement, war-service and repatriation. From 2002 to 2006, she worked as a Research Associate with Nonja Peters. In 2005 they travelled from Perth to South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Canberra and Queensland collecting more than 450 interviews and archival information on Dutch presence in Australia. Sue also enjoys creative gardening, textile artwork, and exploring art and design in digital and visual formats.

Wendy van Duivenvoorde PhD

Wendy, a native to Amsterdam, is a Senior Lecturer in maritime archaeology at Flinders University and the deputy director of the Australian Consortium of Humanities Research Centres. She is also an Adjunct Lecturer at The University of Western Australia and affiliated faculty with the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University. From 2006 to 2011, she worked as a maritime archaeologist for the Western Australian Maritime Museum. Wendy's research primarily focuses on ships of exploration and Indiamen, and includes the archaeological remains of Western Australia's Dutch East Indiamen shipwrecks.

Marianne van Velzen

Marianne (1953) is a Dutch journalist who has worked for a number of newspapers and magazines in the Netherlands. She grew up in Australia but moved back to the Netherlands when she was a teenager. Growing up, she developed a special interest for Dutch-Australian history. Together with the Australian journalist, Juliet Wills, they combined skills to tell the story of a forgotten Australian mystery: the raid in 1942 on the small town of Broome.

Beth Vermeulen

Beth was born in 1938 at Plantagenet District Hospital in Mount Barker, to Charlie and May Kearsley. She grew up on Brackenhurst Estate – the family farm. She was educated at Mount Barker Primary and Junior High School and also attended the Methodist Church. She was employed as a Fashion Buyer by Foy & Gibsons Department Store. In her spare time, she became very involved in Red Cross work. Beth and her husband were blessed with two children, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. In 2010 they moved to Fair Haven Village in Armadale, where her husband passed away in August 2014.

Anna Ward-Woerlee

Anna is a Director and owner of a property investment and residential rental business. She has been acknowledged by the business community for the success of her business with two 'Home Business of the Year' Awards. Previous to being in business full time, she held many positions within education including co-leading an education delegation exchange to China, Curriculum Consultant, Human Resource Management, as a School Deputy Principal and finally as a Principal. She has completed an Arts Degree in Anthropology and a Graduate Diploma in Education at the University of Western Australia- also a Graduate Diploma in Business at Curtin University and qualified in Real Estate Management at TAFE.

Karel Wieman

Karel is the son of Piet and Aagje Wieman. He compiled the article about his family in this book with significant input from; Michael Beerkens (the son of Leni, and grandson of Piet and Aagje) and also with assistance from Carolyn Pen nee Wieman (daughter of Tom, and granddaughter of Piet and Aagje). The Wieman Family continues to grow, with strong familial bonds throughout all generations.

Juliet Wills

Juliet is an author and journalist and she has worked for all four of Australia's major television networks and reported for overseas networks. Her articles have been published in some of Australia's leading newspapers and magazines. She has lectured and tutored in broadcast journalism at two Australian universities. Marianne van Velzen and Juliet Wills joined forces to bring together research from across the world to tell the story of *The Diamond Dakota Mystery*, which was published by Allen and Unwin in 2006. For more on this story visit the website: www.diamonddakota.com

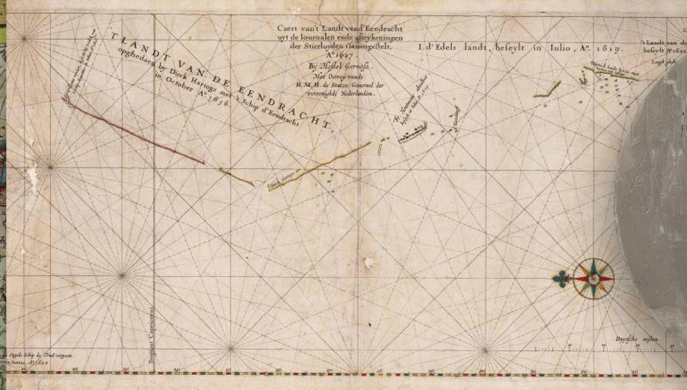
Gerardus Woerlee

Gerard has retired after many years establishing a successful business with his wife Anna Woerlee-Schoppen, in building houses and blocks of units and developing residential rentals. He migrated to Australia in October 1949 with his wife and child from Java, Indonesia. Surviving a five-year involvement in wartime Holland and three years in war torn Java, Australia was a welcome place to settle and prosper. Now he is involved in a number of community organisations, contributing by publishing articles of interest in Dutch newsletters, as well as being an active committee member and participant.



Image Courtesy: www.smithsculptors.com





Back cover collage (l-r)

- 1 Caert van't Landt van d'Eendracht uyt de Journalen ende afteykeningen der Stierlyuden t'samengesteld. Cartographer: Hessel Gerritszoon, 1618–1627. National Library of Australia, MAP RM 749 (<http://nla.gov.au/nla.map-rm749>).
- 2 Hartog Inscription Plate, 1616. Rijksmuseum collection, object number NG-NM-825.
- 3 Survivors letter written on the WA coast at Ledge Point in 1656 and sent to Batavia with the longboat crew who were sent there to obtain a rescue ship. Courtesy: Steve Caffery of the Gilt Dragon Research Group.
- 4 Duyfken on her way: Courtesy: Dutch Maritime Artist, Leentje Linders www.leentjelinders.nl
- 5 Flying boats on the way to Broome, March 1942. Courtesy: <http://www.avonmorebooks.com/images/content/jmag-Mavis-flying-boats-photo.jpg>
- 6 Information Booklet – Dutch Government.
- 7 Rinske Car, *Bye my Loyalty*, 2006, Courtesy: Rinske Car
- 8 Jacko Whitby. Photo: Geert Snoeijer



This splendidly detailed book is about the 400-year heritage Australia shares with the Netherlands, that began with the movement of the Dutch East India Company into the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) from the late 1500s. Its involuntary encounter with the Western Australian shore literally put *Terra Australia Incognita* (the Great South Land) on World cartographic maps. It is the first ever, comprehensive volume written on the maritime, military, migration and mercantile Dutch-Australian connections. Its 34 contributing authors present various aspects of a very rich and diverse heritage. During WWII, Australia and the Netherlands cooperated in defence of Australia and the region, under the American, British, Dutch, Australian Alliance (ABDA). The war was also the catalyst for the mass migration program, that began in the late 1940s and brought the largest ever influx of Dutch and other migrants into Australia to escape the aftermath of WWII. This book compares their experience to that of their second-generation children, who are now also fast approaching retirement age.

Dutch-Australians' adaptive strategies are located within the context of the historic, socio-economic and cultural expectations generated at the point of departure, by both the relinquishing and the receiving societies. These strategies are shown to be further influenced by ethnicity, generation, gender, social class and religion. The authors highlight the compelling and sometimes dissimilar imperatives that drove the Australian and Dutch governments' post-war emigration/immigration programs and how these fashioned 'aanpassen and invisibility' – the strategies now viewed as the 'hallmark' of Dutch resettlement in Australia. The book takes the reader from 17th Century Dutch pioneering ventures to 21st Century influences of this long Dutch-Australian relationship.

