

17 January 1992

ERASMUS FOUNDATION - NEWSLETTER

At the start of a new year of Erasmus activities your Committee felt that you will be interested to know what we have in store for you. It also gives us an opportunity to explain a few new developments and some changes we want to introduce.

FUTURE PROGRAMME.

In the programme for the coming months we have tried to present variety and a balanced fare of Dutch and Australian cultural aspects of life which are at the same time topical and presenting a contemporary view. The following meetings are planned:

February 12th: gallery owner and Aboriginal art expert Mr Hank Ebes will address us on Aboriginal Art, an art form now very much in the public's eye. See our convocation.

April 7th: this month we will be trying out a new format. After an introduction by our member Dr. Robert van de Graaff, he will be showing us an excellent film illustrating the advances made in environmental technology in Holland. The Dutch have become leaders in this field by making a virtue out of their predicament of high population density, high industrialisation and a high standard of living. This will be a talk on a very vital and topical issue. As environmental consultant with intimate local knowledge Robert will also be able to touch on some of these problems in Australia. Watch out for our convocation.

May 12th: our guest speaker will be Mr Hendrik Kolenberg, curator of prints, watercolours and drawings at the Art Gallery of N.S.W. in Sydney. He will be speaking to us on a topic which has occupied him for some time: the influence of Dutch art on Australian painting. In his work he has found that this connection is much stronger than generally realised by the Dutch as well as the Australians. A fascinating subject of which our convocation will give you more details in due course.

The programme from June onwards is still on the drawing board but the offering so far, we hope you will find varied and interesting.

THE WILLEM VAN OTTERLOO MEMORIAL FUND

With last November's convocation you received information on this Fund and an invitation to attend the presentation of the Annual Award, so you should now be more familiar with what the Fund attempts to do.

The new Dean of Music of the VCA, Ms Gillian Wells, has interesting plans to give the Award presentation a much stronger profile which will spill over onto Erasmus as sponsor of the Award. This is a welcome development.

The Willem van Otterloo Memorial Fund is the only cultural activity outside the Erasmus programme shared between Australians and the Dutch and we hope that you will give it your financial support (which is tax deductible !). Attending the Award presentation is an enjoyable occasion as the prize winners are always very accomplished musicians who treat us to a fine recital. For details contact Jan Stracke (ph. 836 1239).

JACOB SMIT PRIZE

The response to this prose prize, on a subject dealing with Dutch culture (in Dutch or English) or an essay written in Dutch, was very disappointing in 1991: no entries were received.

We have however decided to give it another try this year with the full support of Dr. Bruce Donaldson, lecturer Dutch at Melbourne University.

The problem is that the Department Dutch at the University will close at the end of 1992, due to lack of funds and interest. As Dr. Donaldson will not be able to guide his students to enter for the prize after 1992 we may be forced to abandon the prize if non-students show no interest. Let's hope that will not be necessary.

COST OF DINNER MEETINGS

We regret that, due to an increase in cost of meals and drinks, we have to charge an additional dollar per person for the dinner meetings. It should be realized however that we still get very good value for money at a very special Erasmus-rate and at a venue which is extremely suitable for our purpose.

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUND

You will remember our questionnaire last year in which we canvassed ideas to "widen our horizon". In our attempts to bring variety, topicality and a suitable mix of Dutch (European) and Australian subjects, as expressed in the questionnaire responses, we find that we are often constrained by costs.

For instance, there are very attractive and informative videos available but good quality large screen projection equipment hire costs in the order of \$250 per evening. Highly suitable interstate speakers, even if they don't charge for their lecture, attract travel and accommodation costs. Inviting notable Dutch cultural personalities when they are in town also carries extra expenditure. Then there are cultural activities which now form part of Erasmus' sponsoring field such as the Jacob Smit Prize and the Willem van Otterloo Memorial Fund. We also need to plan for sharing in European Community cultural activities.

Indeed, to be an active cultural Society in multicultural Australia of the nineties requires money. As we want to keep our annual subscriptions modest and we don't want to introduce an entrance fee nor want to load our dinner-lecture price, we have decided to establish a Special Purposes Fund specifically designed to pay for these cultural "extras". Here we follow the example of other organisations in offering members the opportunity to make regular or occasional donations or special bequests. We are confident that there will always be members who want to honour their old ties with the Netherlands in this manner.

In future our membership fee reminder will have a donation space: attached to this Newsletter you will find a donation slip. Any contribution is welcome and, unless anonymous, will be publicly acknowledged. We are happy to report that the Netherlands Consulate General has agreed to start the Fund with a healthy contribution and we hope that this excellent example will find many followers.