

# Somsen horizon

Volume 9 – number 18 – November 2006

## *Meet these people at the Reunion in 2007:*

- From the ladder to the linen
- After 40 years English teacher “runs away”
- Hiding in the “Japikshuis”
- Meeting old friends
- Seen through my own glasses
- Family growth because of the Somsen Foundation
- Living on the bank of the river Zaan
- “Violaar”: a musical hobby
- And again:



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3<sup>rd</sup> WORLD WIDE SOMSEN REUNION  
17 - 19 AUGUST 2007

*Half-yearly familymagazine*

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**Objective of the Foundation**

*The aim of the foundation is:*

To preserve and promote the solidarity between people bearing the family name of Somsen, those who are/were related to them or those who are interested in them.

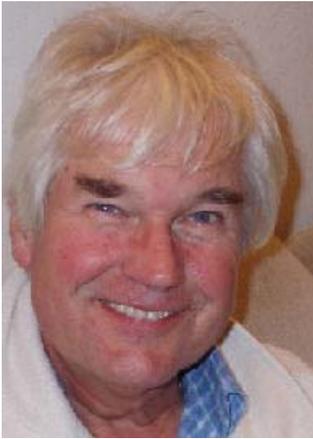
*The foundation will try to achieve this object for example by:*

- ♦ doing historical research into the family history and the history of the region
- ♦ collecting documentation and genealogical data
- ♦ keeping and taking charge of a family archive and data bases
- ♦ publishing a periodical
- ♦ providing information to persons, institutions and official authorities
- ♦ organising activities so as to realise the object of the foundation

**Cover**

*Logo 3<sup>rd</sup> Worldwide  
Somsen Reunion 2007  
(also obtainable as stick-  
er and button)*

## Preface



*This new issue of Somsen Horizon -number 18 again- has been accomplished under very special circumstances. Our editor, Theo Somsen [227], had to cope with the schedule since I was on a hiking tour to Santiago de Compostela. Because of that the translations and this preface could not be finished in time. Fortunately, however, we have been given excellent assistance by **Marlou van der Burg-Sprik** [115], who had helped us with translations before, and to our great enjoyment **Jobim Zwarts** [2034] volunteered the other day to assist with the translations. We appreciate it very much that our appeals for help did not stay unanswered and these two Somsen descendants certainly deserve words of gratitude.*

*I started my hiking tour towards Santiago after my early retirement in July. For me it was a splendid transition to this new phase in my life and it has become a trip never to forget. The 500 miles (approximately) that I covered -this is the Spanish part of the road to Santiago, the so-called Camino Francés- enabled me to think about every possible subject of life in all freedom. Besides I met innumerable other pilgrims from practically every country on earth. Very often these contacts were very special and in a number of cases not without results. I was invited by an Englishman to come over to China so as to assist him in teaching English to Chinese businessmen. Though I retired only quite recently it is still quite a challenging invitation. Furthermore I was invited by a Brazilian gentleman, who had also just retired, to come over to Brazil and travel throughout his country for a couple of months. But first of all there are others matters now. The people in the Somsen Foundation have to focus on the oncoming reunion from **17 - 19 August 2007**. There is still a lot of work that has to be taken care of and I cannot resist the temptation to once more appeal to you for help. Assisting us does not imply that you have to take a load of work on your shoulders; it is so simple: many hands make light work.*

*One more thing remains to be said: I wish you very pleasant reading when you open this unique magazine. For it sure is unique that there is a family that publishes such a magazine, always carefully taken care of and, moreover, in two languages. Something to be proud of!*

*On behalf of the board,  
Johan Somsen*

### Striking observations

*The editor of Somsen Horizon, who is always attentive, took some striking observations the other day.*



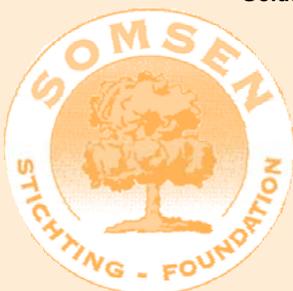
**Theo and his  
Veluwe lass**

In Epe (a village on "De Veluwe", a part of the province of Gelderland) our former chairman and editor Theo Somsen [227] performed as the husband of a lass from "De Veluwe". Both were dressed in traditional costume of "De Veluwe". As far as we know Theo is already married. Does bigamy occur more often than we might think?



**John Howard's  
Golden Falcon**

The discovery of the future house of our webmaster, John Howard Somsen [2353], was not less surprising. John is going to retire at the beginning of 2007 and will move house from Holyoke, MA, to Florida. We do not know his new address yet but that is not really necessary, for like a snail John carries his new mobile home with him. But we can always get in touch with him through e-mail and his cell-phone.



**Jan Veerbeek with certificate and  
Saint James' shell**

And finally: on May 12 our chairman appointed Jan Veerbeek keeper of the Somsen lime tree. Besides a fine certificate (see back page of our previous issue) Jan also received the shell of Saint James the Great, for the name "Japikshouse" has been derived from his name.

## Almost 200 registrations!

### COME TO THE 3RD WORLDWIDE SOMSEN REUNION ! 17 - 19 AUGUSTUS 2007 (AND CERTAINLY WHEN YOU ARE YOUNG!)

After the first unforgettable reunion in Aalten in 1997 and the equally magnificent reunion in Baldwin, Wisconsin, USA, in 2002, there will be another family reunion in The Netherlands after 10 years.

A must for everybody !

Later you should be able to tell your children and grandchildren about it. Moreover, this is a unique opportunity for all young Somsen descendants (and their children) to get acquainted with the "Somsen-feeling".

It is inevitable that this reunion will be different, but it will certainly be unforgettable again.

A selection from the temporary (!) programme:

#### FRIDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 17, 2007

Informal welcome for all Somsens from abroad and all the other fans in the camping farm 't Hoftijzer in IJzerlo (Aalten); so as to get in the proper mood already !

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2007

Festive morning programme in the new riding school of camping farm 't Hoftijzer in IJzerlo (Aalten)  
Nursery and programme for children.

Lunch all together

Afternoon programme:

Much time and opportunity to meet one another

Traditional Old-Dutch trades and games (also for children)

Toy balloon contest

Pleasure flights over Aalten and IJzerlo

Buffet

Evening programme full of surprises.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2007

Festive commemoration at the Somsen Lime-tree  
and the Somsen-house in IJzerlo, the place of our roots.

Walk through the old centre of Aalten

Walk through the swamps

Farewell dinner all together.

Lingering at the dinner-table "obliged" !

#### FROM MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2007

Would you like to see and experience more of The Netherlands ?

Especially for members of our family from abroad we organize amongst other things:

\* Three-day round trip of The Netherlands by coach or car

\* Five-day cycling tour through the Netherlands (especially for the younger ones)

\* Maybe we can arrange a boat trip and/or an "art"- trip

## From the ladder to the linen

by Henk C. Reijnen [2897]

**Having stood on a ladder painting for sixty years is an enormous achievement. But everything has to come to an end. So what do you do when the painting brush has actually become a limb? This is what happened to Johan Dirk Somsen [1085], as his son in law Henk sketches his life for us.**

His father was a painter, both his brothers were painters and his sister (aunt Zus) got married to one. So they were bound to become a picturesque family. Even his daughter Josta already has an easel. So after his professional training soon he came "home in the family-business"! After a few years working he suddenly found himself on the forward deck of a troopship headed for the (then) Dutch colonies in Indonesia. During his three years of military service he probably won't have done a lot of painting. But after that he stood on a ladder long enough. He did so for about sixty years. And more important, he usually stayed on that ladder! Except of course that one time he was found, lying on his back in the garden still clutching to a piece of balcony... It was his own house that gave way! After a few weeks in hospital he went back up his ladder.



Johan with his "ladder"

When he became a grandfather he appeared to be artistically gifted as well. He hand painted toy houses, toy-shops, little beds and many more toys and stuff for his grandchildren. They were, and will be, preserved.



Johan at the linen

One of his first big assignments was painting a row of single-family dwellings in Gendringen. Of course the job had to be done at a knock-out price, and could it be done yesterday? So Johan got there, put his ladder up against the wall, climbed up and then... fell through the wall. These walls clearly didn't stand the test of time. Distances grew larger, so he needed to go to jobs by car more and more. This didn't always work out well. He drove his Lloyd into a ditch, so the entire car got soiled in red lead and brush-cleanser. A professional risk?

The painter's life changed substantially while he was self-supporting. Wintertime became a real issue. Of course there was the odd decorating job in a farmer's house, and replacing broken stable windows, but money was tight those days.

Competition became more intense, also from outside the region, so Johan also needed to widen his view. Eventually an exciting opportunity arose, in the city of Utrecht, in the late sixties. Very high and very dangerous. However, winters were still a problem. Until he got an interesting assignment in the early seventies. Due to a fire the roof on the Lundia factory in Varsseveld needed repainting, quickly. This happened around Christmastime. Using a forklift truck, Johan developed a sophisticated method to get the job done in no time.

The board were so interested they offered Johan a job as chief of the painting department. There, he developed plenty more new ideas. These were crucial in setting up a completely new spray-painting line. By the end of the eighties he got attracted to the real paintwork again. He took an early retirement, and started all over again. Good customers were never scarce. If he were to do all the jobs they asked him for, he'd need to become over 125 years of age.

But, after his seventy-fifth birthday, a new life began. The ladder was replaced by the easel. With a little help (and a little pressure) from his children he took lessons in water-colour painting. Soon after this he started oil painting. Already he painted some 20 attractive works of art. The objects reveal the artists broad interests, spanning from still lives through landscapes to abstract work. Johan still follows art classes with joy and engagement, and he also exposes. There is foreign attention to his work as well. For a good impression of his work please check the internet:

[www.bubastis.nl/classes/cursus.htm](http://www.bubastis.nl/classes/cursus.htm)

Once again, his work is so much appreciated he will need to paint until a very old age to fulfil the demand. We sincerely wish he will be able to do so!

## After 40 years English teacher “runs away”

adapted by Gree van Daatselaar-Somsen [53]

**Johan Ferdi Somsen [1089] has been a prominent member of the Somsen Foundation from the beginning. Presently he is chairman and has translated nearly all Somsen Horizons. In July Johan said good-bye to his job as a teacher of English.**

**In "De Stentor", a newspaper in the Epe area, Johan's place of residence, we read about his farewell:**



“Management may think that they run the school,  
but I run the students”  
(photo: Yvonne Peters)

On the way to Santiago de Compostela (famous place of pilgrimage in Spain) he looks back on his career in education. Was it the right decision 41 years ago or would it have been a better idea to be an antique dealer or a professional singer? Today Johan Somsen says good-bye to his colleagues of the “Rijksscholengemeenschap, RSG, Noord-Oost Veluwe”. He starts his retirement with a hiking tour through Spain.

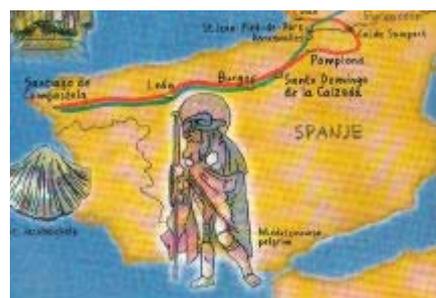
Not everybody will be sad that English teacher Johan Somsen (62) finishes his career. Although he was loved by his students, the school management found him a difficult person. He fought for his job and was seen as a pain in the neck of the management.



Of the old stamp? Forget it!

A teacher of the old stamp who connected specialized knowledge to communication with young people and who had a natural predominance. “He was worried about the degeneration of the educational system and unfortunately time has proved him right”, a colleague observes.

With a few people of his generation Somsen belongs to a rare breed of teachers from before the “Mam-



Camino de Santiago

moetwet” (1968). After this law education was killed, according to Somsen, due to the influence of officials who have no knowledge of education, and politicians who think that everything and everybody is malleable.

“Everybody has different talents and a different temperament and you have to reckon with that in education”. Even the school management doesn’t escape his criticism. “We need some managers, which is all right, but at our school there are a dozen around and that is too many. The management may think that it runs the school, but I run the students.”

### Glue

With a pigskin school bag from 1966 which almost falls apart in spite of pounds of glue -it is nearly decayed- he goes to his classroom for one of the last times.

From behind an antique writing desk he overlooks the classroom with a large map of England on the wall and books for the first year students on the table: *Superhorse*, *Heroes*, *The Wrong Trousers*.



The North Spanish plain

When he was forty he had his doubts about teaching and started an antique business, but he missed contact with the young people and decided to keep going on teaching English.

"With a lot of students I still have close contacts", he says modestly. According to a colleague it takes hours for Johan to take a walk through the main street of Epe, simply because he meets so many students and former students.

Besides English he loves music and singing and he feels deeply united with the Irish male choir Doetmaes: [www.doetmaes.nl](http://www.doetmaes.nl)

#### Five hundred miles

Without choir members, students or family Johan Somsen will start on a very long walk soon. He will walk the 500-mile-long pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, not to be converted to the true faith, but to be alone for a couple of months.

After that he intends to travel across North and South America, Russia and England.

#### His career

When he was 21 he started teaching in an elementary school on Curaçao, graduated in a very short time for his diplomas in English, German and handicraft and after 2 years he became a teacher in secondary schools.

Even though he was in his element in Curaçao, he returned to Holland with his wife and daughters Maruschka [2881] and Natascha [2882] after 6 years. He studied English in Groningen and became a teacher in Grou, Friesland.

In 1975 he moved to Epe and started his career at the Rijksscholengemeenschap (secondary school), now called RSG Noord-Oost Veluwe. He says he misses the democracy at the RSG in Epe more and more. "It is surprising that they didn't order us to walk around in a monk's habit", he

says critically about the school management.

Without a monk's habit he starts his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, with just a backpack and a lot of memories.

**This article is  
also in  
fullcolour on our  
website  
[www.somsen.org](http://www.somsen.org)**

Source: Article by Jan Visser published in *De Stentor*, 7 July 2006. Borrowed with permission and slightly adapted by the editor of *Somsen Horizon*.

## Hiding in the “Japikshuis”

by Theo Somsen [227]

**Picture this: You drive your car through Valkenswaard (Noord-Brabant) up the wide and tree lined Merendreef. Behind these trees beautiful villas. So you take the service road to the driveway of #28. Soon enough you'll find yourself face to face with a man who, over 60 years ago, was forced to spend many nights a long way from home, in a pit in the forest near IJzerlo... That's hard to believe, isn't it?**

### Evert Jan van Barneveld (born 1923)

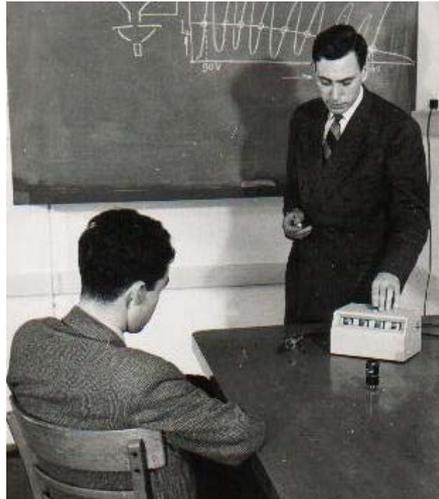
One of the subjects that were taught in his primary school was geography. Therefore Evert knew that, apart from “his own” province Noord-Holland, there was also one called Gelderland. Gelderland was where the Van Barneveld family went on holiday regularly: by steam train to the “Veluwe”. Gelderland, whose capital is Arnhem, also has one specific region which is called the “Achterhoek”, with towns like Zutphen, Doetinchem, Winterswijk and... Aalten.

He had never suspected that this last town would play such an important role in his life. But when he started studying Electrical Engineering in Delft in 1941, the Second World War had broken out. The Netherlands were invaded by the Germans and occupied.

### Declaration of loyalty

Initially it seemed as if everyday life would go on like before. However, the influence of the occupying force was felt more and more. In 1942 all civil servants and students were asked to sign a “declaration of loyalty”. Loyalty to the occupying army? Those who signed were allowed to go on working or continue their studies. Those who refused were fired. Students were denied entry to their Universities and were forced to work in Germany, the so-called “Arbeits-einsatz”.

Most students refused to sign! So did Evert, and so he needed refuge somewhere in the Netherlands: he went into hiding.



Evert as a student (standing up)

### Headed for IJzerlo

His friend Piet Zaaijer had already gone into hiding in the hamlet of IJzerlo near Aalten, so Evert decided to go there too. He packed his suitcase, tied it on his bicycle, and pedalled to the station.

Once there he shoved his bike-and-trunk on the train and started the long journey to the Aalten station and then he tried to find the way to IJzerlo. Eventually he found accommodation at the Ruesink family, who lived between IJzerlo and Aalten, somewhere across the Farmers' union. Very soon, however, he was told to find another shelter, although they never told him why. It was only after the war that he found out why: the family had taken a little Jewish boy in hiding. For a short period he went to the Eekink farm of the Sondern family, IJzerlo 75, straight across the Japikshuis. The Japikshuis was then inhabited by Herman and Dina Wisman and their fifteen-year-old daughter Hanneken \*. Herman Wisman's mother, Opoe Wisman, also resided at the house. She suffered from rheumatism, and she couldn't do much more than sit in her chair. She died in the first year Evert stayed at the Japikshuis. Herman Wisman, who was a farmer, said he could do with an extra pair of hands to run his farm, so Evert moved across the street on 7 June 1943.

### Getting used to language and customs

It took some time for Evert to get used to the dialect the friendly people in the Achterhoek spoke.



Dina and Herman Wisman

Japikshuis  
(Joâpikshuus)





Aart Dirkzwager: Farmhouse Japikshuis about 1946 (oil on canvas)

This differed a lot from the official Dutch language (Standard Dutch) he had grown accustomed to, both at home and at the University. Take the vowels, for example, those were pronounced so differently. The Dutch word for "walking" sounded so different it took him ages to find out what it meant. It took him quite some time to master this dialect, but he was a student, wasn't he? So eventually he succeeded.

The Wisman family were pleased that, like so many other Dutchmen, Evert liked coffee very much. But strange things happened when they had guests. For when someone had emptied his cup and put it neatly back on its saucer it was instantly refilled without asking. It took Evert a while to find out that, when you laid the cup sideways on the saucer, this meant you had enough... Talk about funny customs.

### Life underground

In fact, Evert lived the everyday life of a farmhand. He worked on the land, chopped down trees, learned how to butcher chickens, periodically allowed farmer Wisman to cut his hair and ate with the Wismans.

During the day, there was not much of a threat from the German occupants; they usually held their raids at night time, chasing people in hiding

(Jews, resistance fighters, students and others). And since there were few collaborators (NSB) in Aalten, they never posed a real threat at daytime either. But at nights it was a different story; Evert couldn't stay at the farmhouse.



Hanneken and Herman setting up rye

Then he would sleep in a pit they had dug in the woods across the street. This proved a fine accommodation in summer, but in winter groundwater levels rose, so he needed to find a better lodging. Furniture maker Hendrik Kämink helped out. He had his workshop in a wooden shed next to the house where he and his broth-

er Johan Kämink lived. Johan ran a shop selling fabrics and household articles at the crossroads of the Kruisdijk and the Dinxperlosestraatweg, opposite the blacksmith Hoopman. Under Hendrik's workshop he had dug out a cellar where he kept chips of wood and shavings, so he could burn them in the stove in winter. In this cellar there was ample room for Evert and a few other youngsters, all hiding from the enemy: Henk Dekker from Hoozevee (who later became an architect in Warmond) and the late Aart Mudde from Eindhoven (who was hiding at the De Prins farm, next-door neighbours to the Japikshuis in the Rengelinkweg). It proved to be a fine accommodation in winter!

Evert frequented catechism, organised especially for the young men in hiding. Sundays he would visit the local church, like so many other people in hiding. However, this became more and more dangerous, so Evert visited only secret services in private homes. One day a service was held by the famous resistance fighter Frits de Zwerper (Rev. Slomp), and Evert

also preached there himself. But even these services were cancelled for safety reasons: soon after this there was a raid on Sunday morning, proving them right, it was too dangerous to go on. The "Westerkerk" in Aalten was surrounded and several people in hiding were arrested, including his friend Piet Zaaier.



Five hiding men

l-r: Evert van Barneveld, Henk Dekker, Piet Zaaijer, unknown and Aart Mudde

### The end is nearing

By the end of the war a couple of German soldiers (3 or 4) were put up in the Wisman farm, but they paid no attention at all to the farmer's help Evert who always left in the evening and returned early next morning. These Germans manned the anti-aircraft battery that was stationed in the

ous that war would soon be over, especially after the English troops crossed the Rhine near Rees (Germany) after fierce fighting, then started shooting Dinxperlo and invaded The Netherlands from the east. In the morning of 30 March 1945 (Good Friday) the Germans appeared to have left IJzerlo.

approached.

The column turned onto the Kruisdijk, because the bridge in the shortest road to Aalten had been destroyed, but the wheel and tracks completely destroyed the road. So it took a bulldozer the next Saturday to make the surface passable again. But never mind, it was time to celebrate and breathe more freely!

Oh, by the way, farmer Wisman and his horse were reunited a few weeks later, albeit the horse had become deaf.

### Going home

After the liberation Evert stayed at the Japikshuis for a few more weeks. Farmer Wisman didn't like the idea of him leaving while he wasn't sure he could go home. But eventually, on 25 May 1945 Evert got on his bike and started his journey home. Blacksmith Bram Hoopman [381] lent him the amount of 100 Dutch Guilders, which was quite an amount



After a service at home for those in hiding

l-r: (at the back) Aart Mudde (4), Piet Zaaijer (11) and Evert van Barneveld (14, half visible)  
middle (halfway): Henk Dekker

middle of the Es (a stretched and elevated ridge between IJzerlo and Dinxperlo). They also operated the telephone-switchboard that was set up inside the Japikshuis. In early spring 1945 it became obvi-

They took Wisman's horse with them. Early next morning Evert heard a distinct humming, closing in from Dinxperlo, growing stronger and stronger: on the gravel road a column of tanks, trucks and jeeps

in those days! Because the Western part of the Netherlands had only just been liberated, and therefore difficult to reach, Evert decided to go to the south, which had been free since the end of 1944, to Eindhoven.



**English tanks on the Market Square in Aalten**  
(Garretsen collection)

There he heard a temporary university had been set up, to allow (former) students to jump start their studies while the Technical University of Delft was still closed or out of reach. Here Evert resumed his studies and also took some exams. But he needn't stay there very long, and soon he was able to travel to The Hague to meet his parents.

**Gratitude**

His parents weren't just happy with his safe return, but also very grateful to the Wisman family. Evert's parents expressed their thanks by having two oil on canvas paintings made of the Japikshuis. Two artists from The Hague were hired for the job: Aart

Dirkwager and Piet Dirkwager \*\*. They accepted the order, set off for IJzerlo, made several sketches of



**Aart Dirkwager**

**Piet Dirkwager**

the Japikshuis and started working. Aart and Piet Dirkwager weren't unknown to Evert. In fact they were brothers to his mother, so they were his uncles. In everyday life they

acted as the Dirkwager Bros. Co., housepainters. They decorated houses for a living, but they had other passions!

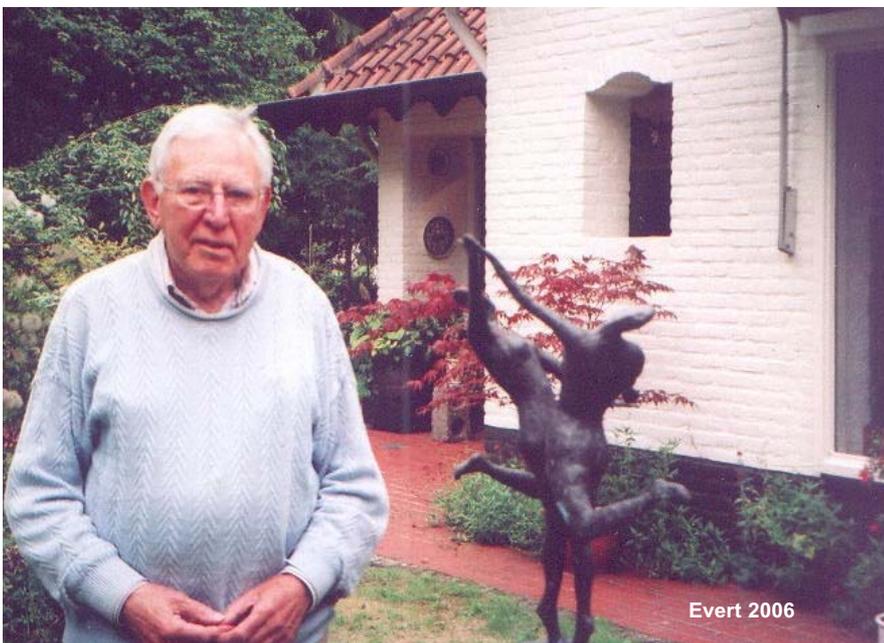
And so the world saw two beautiful paintings -quite different in style- of the Japikshuis (see back page!)

Piet Dirkwager's painting still honours Evert Jan van Barneveld's living room in Valkenswaard. In this painting (very small, left of the farm) their daughter Hanneken is portrayed. Aart Dirkwager's painting was given to the Wisman family and has ever since had a prominent place in the living room of the farmhouse. After over 60 years the painting had become rather dirty and the frame weathered. The new inhabitants \* of the Japikshuis have recently had it restored and reframed.

Thus for Evert (and very probably for some others too) history revives, and gratitude!

\* Hanneken Wisman later married Johan Verbeek and lived with him at the Japikshuis. The farm now belongs to their son Jan Verbeek and has been inhabited by his parents-in-law, Gerard and Shirley Smits (see elsewhere in this magazine), since 2005.

\*\* Aart Dirkwager (Rijswijk 31 May 1892– The Hague 15 April 1979)  
Piet Dirkwager (Rijswijk 7 May 1894 – The Hague 18 October 1979)



**Aart Dirkwager's daughter thinks her father made a second painting of the Japikshuis, for an American principal. Perhaps one of our American readers knows of this principal, or where the painting is now?**

## Meeting old friends

On the front page of Somsen Horizon # 17 there was a prominent picture of Marieke and Mike Edwards-Jager Gerlings [725 + 3159]. Marieke, who was born in The Netherlands, is our financial centre in the USA. From the additions to the article by the editor it turned out that her father, Jacobus Jager Gerlings [718] had passed away on April 12. It was his last wish that his ashes were buried in Hoenderlo (Gelderland) with his wife Marie Henriette Jager Gerlings-Noordendorp [1473].

In the beginning of July Marieke, her family and her sister Anneke Jensen-Jager Gerlings [726] fulfilled this wish. They came over to The Netherlands to fulfil their sad, but sensible duty.

They stayed at The Golden Tulip hotel in Hoenderlo.

Their stay was long enough to spend a very pleasant day with a number of board-members of the Somsen Foundation on July 6.

We show you some pictures of this encounter.



I-r: Johan, Marieke and Anneke



I-r: Yvonne Reijs-Edel, Anneke, Gree van Daatselaar-Somsen and Marieke



I-r: Anneke, Marieke and Johan



I-r: Ty Edwards, Anneke, Marieke and Mike in front of "Daams" mill in Vaassen



I-r: Marieke, Anneke and Mike in front of the castle "De Cannenburgh" in Vaassen

# The 10<sup>th</sup> Camping weekend in IJzerlo

by Wim Somsen [518]



The weekend starts as usual with a board meeting. This time the main subject is the 3rd worldwide Somsen-Reunion of 17-19 August, 2007. Elsewhere in this magazine you can read more about it. Friday, 11 August 2006 most of the other guests arrive -a few are still hesitat-

it all a nice, rural atmosphere. Theo Somsen is trying to close some contracts for participation in our own reunion in 2007.

Later in the afternoon we go to Japikshouse, where we are friendly greeted by the new owners. Not entirely new, because being the parents-in-law of Jan Veerbeek they are not complete strangers in the region. Our chairman holds a passionate speech, brings to mind the fine relation which we have had so far and emphasizes this with a bouquet of flowers and the famous bottle for the inhabitants of the Japikshouse.

We admire a beautifully restored painting of the house and also the big Afghan chickens.

Our tree is doing wonderful.

With about 30 people we enjoy the barbecue, again taken skilfully care of by Rudolf Brunsveld. It is way past midnight before the last people go to bed, but not too late because we all are getting a little older. And now ... up to next year. Exciting!



Mowing rye  
the the  
scythe



Mowing  
rye with  
the horse



Binders

ing- the weather predictions are not very positive this time.

And again the diehards of the group are present in spite of the weather. They will all spend the night in a trailer, because the tents are all gone. Even our chairman Johan traded his tent for a nice soft bed in the guest room of the Sticker family. Even though he will go on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, which will probably give him a tougher time.

On Saturday we go the harvest party in De Heurne (Dinxperlo). It is dry, just in time, so they take the old machinery out of the barns. Mowing rye with the scythe, with a horse or with a self-binder, here you can see the whole development of harvesting. Then the sheaves are threshed with a flail or a threshing-machine, the grinding of the grain and after that baking bread in a traditional oven, fuelled with wood. With live music from a harmonica which gives



New residents of the Japikshouse  
Shirley and Gerard Smits (2nd and 3rd from the left)

## Seen through my own glasses

adapted by Gree van Daatselaar-Somsen [53]

**Hendrik Jan Lammers from IJzerlo, 83 years old, living in the Somsen house ("Somsenhuus") at the Westendorpweg, had never thought that one day he would publish a book.** "Ah!, I'm not such a rowdy character", he says. **But other people thought that it was time for his collection of poems to be published. Most of them were written in the dialect of the "Achterhoek". The title of the book is "Deur eigen brille bekeken": Seen through my own glasses.**



Hendrik Jan and Truida Lammers-Prinzen: married 60 years  
(photo: Theo Kock)



Hendrik Jan Lammers with volume of poetry  
(photo: Theo Kock)

### Somsen Hendrik

Hendrik Jan Lammers, mostly called *Somsen Hendrik*, because he lives at the *Somsenhuus*, is a well known person, especially for the farmers in the neighbourhood. That is not only because he was a crop farmer but also a cattle dealer.

He has been writing as long as he could hold a pencil in his hand. Rhyming went all by itself. Hendrik liked to leave a rhyme on the kitchen table for his wife Truida. Sometimes on pieces of paper which are now

lost. He decided to copy the saved rhymes and to paste them in a book. And in this way the family had some idea what he had been working on. His children said: "Dad, let's publish it".

The poems didn't come from a highly educated brain, Hendrik said. But his subjects are very personal and seen through his own "eyes". And the use of the dialect is excellent! He wrote his notes in different places: at the kitchen table, at parking lots, at the cattle market.

### About the past and the present

The oldest poem in the volume is from 1944 and is about the farmhand Tinus, who trimmed the hair of the persons in hiding (World War 2). Also see *Somsen Horizon, Volume 2, nr. 4., page 16: Christmas at the Somsenhuis*. The poems of Hendrik Jan are about the past and the present. Very nice reading.

### *Den Achterhoek (part of Holland)*

(-)

*O, den Achterhoek, you're high in my appreciation  
Where the neighbours know each other so well  
Where there still is neighbourly help  
Where the people  
Share the love and sorrow together  
Where they have parties and weddings  
Celebrated as a hundred years ago  
Where for school and church  
The community helps each other  
In this part we all live  
What a privilege it is  
We don't think about moving  
We hope to live here for a long time*

Source: Tubantia: 7 June 2006

It is a lovely book with a coloured cover and 64 pages  
Published by Fagus, 600 printings  
For sale in IJzerlo at Brunsveld, Lammers Garage and at the Author's home: Westendorpweg 6. Price € 10.

## Family growth because of the Somsen Foundation

by Stephen D. Somsen [2459]

***Of course we have a website of our own where you can find practically everything about our family. And of course the family history you can find there is never complete. But sometimes our website is an essential aid for someone who is searching for his or her own roots. Stephen Somsen from Edmonds, Washington, USA, experienced what this can lead up to. An astounding story ...***

I don't know how many families around the world are fortunate enough to have a quality family magazine like *Somsen Horizon* or a wonderful organization like the *Somsen Foundation* that has now sponsored two family reunions and has plans for a third well under way. I do know that I have learned so very much about just how important it is to celebrate our family and to share our news. If you attended the 1997 Somsen Family reunion in the Netherlands, you may recall that I played a backup role in planting the tree at *Japikshuis* when my son Jay and daughter Kelsey sought out the cool waters of a nearby lake on that hot August afternoon. While that tree still stands as a growing symbol of our Somsen family, I must tell you of another way that our family has grown in part because of the Somsen Foundation.



Vanessa [5464]



Thanksgiving 2005  
Jay, Vanessa, Kelsey and Stephen

One day last year I listened to my telephone voice-mail upon returning home to hear a young, clear, confident voice say something like this: "Hi. My name is Vanessa and I'm trying to reach Steve Somsen. I think you knew my Mom, Coreen, when you lived in Hawaii. And I'm just calling to find out."

I listened to the voice-mail at least five times, with tears first coming to my eyes slowly, then flowing freely. It turns out that Vanessa, age 25 and then a senior at San Diego State University, is my daughter.

Her voice-mail erased a quarter-century of denial on my part.

Vanessa and I talked by phone the next day and for a long time the weekend that followed. I told Vanessa that I was honored and delighted that she made the effort to reach out and make a connection that was long overdue. We exchanged letters, phone calls and e-mails and then, on the Wednesday of the long Thanksgiving weekend, Kelsey and I greeted Vanessa warmly with hugs and smiles and tears at the Seattle airport.

Including Jay, the four of us spent the next four days together celebrating Thanksgiving, Vanessa's birthday, and the fact that we were family. We all wore embroidered sweatshirts that said "Thanksgiving 2005" with our names in bright gold script on a black background.

In March of 2006 the four of us enjoyed an Ocean cruise that included a stop in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico where my sister Pennell Somsen was on vacation with her family. We spent the day at a sea-side resort where Vanessa had a chance to bond with even more family.

Father's Day this year was especially memorable as Vanessa and I flew from Los Angeles and Seattle respectively to spend a long June weekend with my 97 year old father Henry at his home in Rochester, Minnesota. Without exaggeration we looked at 2 dozen photo albums with Henry often pausing to share a story or good memory about people and places. A casual observer of this gathering would not guess that it was the first meeting of Henry and his "new" grand-daughter.

Our family indeed has grown. Vanessa now knows that she is loved and welcome and truly part of our family. We all feel very fortunate that she did the research and made the inquiries that led her to make that phone call more than a year ago. But I also want to express my profound gratitude for the *Somsen Foundation* and the network it has created which I believe helped Vanessa to be in our lives today.



Formal night on the  
Ocean cruise



Family meeting in Mexico

**Register for the**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> world wide**  
**Somsen reunion**  
**17-19 August 2007**

## Living on the bank of the river Zaan

by Ben Somsen [438]

**The Zaan area, north of Amsterdam, is the oldest industrial area of Europe. In May 2006 Ben and Corry Somsen-Houpsst [438+439] moved to a fine apartment in Zaandam with a view of the river Zaan. Everyday they watch inland vessels and yachts passing by their balcony. Reason enough for them to tell us something about the history of this area.**

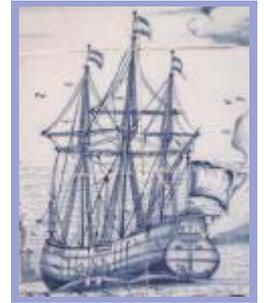
became so famous that in 1697 even the Russian Czar Peter the Great came to Zaandam in his own person to work in shipbuilding for some time.

At first the mills were only fit for sawing timber. Later they were used for many more purposes such as the production of cocoa, mustard, paint and paper.

Thus the Zaan area became the first real industrial area in Europe. This was given additional stimulation when in the middle of the 19th century the wind-mills were replaced by steam-engines. Huge multinationals such as Verkade, Albert Heijn (Ahold), Bruynzeel, Honig and

Duyvis arose. Even today Zaanstad is still the largest cocoa producing town in Europe.

Tile  
(Delft ware)



Ben and Corry



A view of the Zaan

Little is known about life in the Zaan area from before 1600. It was an important event when at the end of the 16th century the city of Amsterdam, pressurized by the guild of the sawyers, decided that all saw-mills had to be banned from the city. A decision which was welcomed with cheers by the settlements along the river Zaan for here these saw-mills were more than welcome. They brought about all kinds of activity, for example in the field of timber-trade, shipbuilding and whaling.

Zaandam became world-famous when ships were built at 65 shipyards on the Zaan (among other things for the Dutch East India Company), ships which were sold all over the world. These shipyards



The river "Zaan"

## “Violaar”: a musical hobby

by Wim Somsen [440]

**Johann Sebastiaan Bach never saw a piano nor a saxophone and certainly no “Violaar”. Our most musical inventor invented this instrument. And everybody who thinks he or she cannot play a musical instrument will be surprised how Wim can help you.**



Wim Somsen

My name is Wim Somsen and I am 66 now. I live in Wageningen and I stem from the Ede branch of our family. I have shared the love for music and much more with Greet van Erp [441] for nearly 40 years now. We are the parents of two grown-up children and they are darlings: Iris [2849] is married to Bert Morelissen [4020] and Jasper [2850] married Juliëtte Logman. Our lovely grandson is called Tom Morelissen [4369].

The Somsen genealogy lot was kindly disposed to me: I was given number 440 which is equal to the vibration-number of the tuning fork that is known everywhere. That was a nice coincidence for me as a musician.

I worked as a music teacher at the local music school and as a music consultant for elementary schools in Wageningen. Besides my hobby: building musical instruments and playing the carillon, the recorder and my own invention: the Violaar, I practice athletics and skating. (By now I have already done 20 alternative “Eleven-city-tours”). For forty years I tuned in to 4 to 12-year-old kids and they tuned in to me.

We sang songs and we played the percussion instruments that were developed for school music around 1950 by the German composer Carl Orff (who does not know his Carmina Burana?). In the year 1985, during a music project week, I invented an instrument with two strings which could both be played as a guitar and as a violin: the Violaar.

The original instrument had a can that served as a resonance box. In a very presumptuous mood we called this can-Violaar: “Conservarius” with a hint at the famous Stradivarius violin.

A whole school class playing this instrument produced a sound that reminded you of a huge swarm of bees.



Violaar-workshop 2006  
Gesina van Roekel-Somsen  
in the foreground

The pupils built and played about 800 can-Violaars. All the songs we sang were accompanied by either playing the Violaar with the bow or by plucking the strings. We also developed a method to play melodies from sheet.

After having developed a much better sounding model, completely made of wood, I received international patents for it under the name of Violaar. The students gave hundreds of concerts at school and outside.

At the moment I am busy demonstrating in music schools and I also give workshops for grown-ups. (See the short report below).

One of the nicest surprises of playing the Violaar is that you can learn really fast how to play the soprano-Violaar (with the bow), the tenor-Violaar (like guitar) and the bass-Violaar (plucking the strings).

You will also find out that you can play what you have practised in combination with a well-known piece of classical or popular music.

Perfection is not necessary when you start playing the Violaar.

**So do not hesitate to join us during the activities at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Somsen Reunion in IJzerlo in 2007. Instruments will be available.**



*From a report of a Violaar-workshop in Castricum, organised by Gesina van Roekel-Somsen [443]:*

### Creative afternoon 31 March 2006

Forty women had volunteered for the annual creative day of the Red Cross without even knowing what they were expected to do. This remained a surprise for practically everybody until the very last moment.



We were going to make music on stringed instruments (Violaars).

There was a starter’s course. For most people it was a totally new experience.

When entering the hall it was like entering a concert hall full with instruments, which somehow scared many people off. Everybody was thinking: “Can we do that?”.

But thanks to Wim Somsen’s skilful direction we very soon knew how to play. Therefore we had to even work much harder after tea break and fortunately we finished the day like professional musicians. We played *Que si, que no* swingingly!

## Family Announcements

*In this column we would like to draw your attention to the family announcements that have reached us. We are very much pleased to present them to you and are grateful to everybody who took the trouble to inform us about the merry and sad events in their and our family. This also enables our advisor Dick Somsen from Zwolle to keep our genealogical files up-to-date, so that we, in turn, can inform you in Somsen Horizon. We really appreciate it very much that you send in your family announcements (together with pictures please!) to our secretariat: Somsen Foundation, Jan Tooropstraat 2, 3817 PZ Amersfoort, The Netherlands.*

### Born

**30-09-2003:** Dion [5526], d.o. Marco Weikamp [5523] and Annemieke ter Horst [3117]

**19-10-2004:** Nina Isabella [5499], d.o. Ernst Jan Somsen [254] and Ellen Theodora Helena van Aken [3944]

**08-06-2005:** Lieke Rosalie [5500], d.o. Marcus Johannes (Marco) Louter [4067] and Ingeborg Esther (Inge) Somsen [256]

**10-03-2006:** Famke [5527], d.o. Marco Weikamp [5523] and Annemieke ter Horst [3117]

**06-04-2006:** Lize Geerte Joanne [5488], d.o. Bernd Somsen [1277] and Marjolijn Korevaar [5487]

**03-05-2006:** Julia [5498], d.o. Joost Iserief [2884] and Ilse Karen Vloothuis [4666]

**12-05-2006:** Jonathan (Jona) [5497], s.o. Jan Dijksterhuis [5421] and Willemina Johanna (Jos) Somsen [1426]

**04-06-2006:** Quinten Modesto [5522], s.o. Arnold Edgar Somsen [2041] and Thirza Beaumont [4821]



### "Living-together" contract

**08-02-1999:** Marco Weikamp [5523] and Annemieke ter Horst [3117]

**00-11-2004:** Gerben ter Horst [3118] and Ilse de Jong [5531]



Quinten Modesto

### Married

**05-08-2006:** Ty Edwards [3872] and Taryn Michel Coe [5562]



Ty and Taryn

### Back page

The back page shows three paintings (down):

1. Japikshuis – IJzerlo ca. 1946  
Piet Dirkwager (Rijswijk 7 May 1894 – Den Haag 18 October 1979)  
Owner: Evert Jan van Barneveld at Valkenswaard
2. Japikshuis – IJzerlo ca. 1946  
Aart Dirkwager (Rijswijk 31 May 1892 – Den Haag 15 April 1979)  
Before the restoration in 2006
3. Idem, after the restoration in 2006  
Owner: Jan Verbeek at Dinxperlo and Gerard and Shirley Smits at Aalten (IJzerlo)

### Deceased

**11-07-2000:** Clinton Stram Gillmore [734], 91, Orem, UT. USA

**19-11-2000:** Stanley Elwin Reese [746], 80, Littlerock, CA. USA

**19-06-2005:** Frederik Heyerman [34], 86, Grand Rapids, MI. USA

**27-06-2005:** Bruce David Somsen [5466], 64, Riverside, CA. USA

**02-04-2006:** Bert Horstmanshof [5184], 83, Spring Hill, FL. USA

**08-04-2006:** Sterling Sean Somsen [2527], 66, Littleton, CO. USA

**01-05-2006:** Lorraine Bertrand [3217], 85, Lemmon, SD. USA

**02-06-2006:** Garrett Frank Somsen [896], 86, Rupert, ID. USA

**21-06-2006:** Abram de Vries [3173], 68, Grotegast

**02-07-2006:** George (John) van Os [393], 61, Haarlem

**22-07-2006:** Sally Somsen-Forman [811], 91, Woodville, WI. USA

**22-07-2006:** Jeanne Marie Somsen [808], 89, Baldwin, WI. USA

**27-07-2006:** Florence Ree Somsen-Walton [893], 85, Wayan, ID. USA

**01-08-2006:** Dina Johanna (Dien) Somsen [1094], 94, Dinxperlo

**09-08-2006:** Arent Jan (Jan) Somsen [495], 86, Aalten

**06-09-2006:** Ammy Hogenhorst [3882], 64, Meerkerk

**19-09-2006:** Grada Berendina Hendrika Somsen [1843], 78, Eibergen



Sally Somsen-Forman



George van Os



**Japikshuis ca. 1946**  
Piet Dirkzwager (1894-1979)



**Japikshuis ca. 1946**  
(before and after the restoration  
in 2006)  
Aart Dirkzwager (1892-1979)

