

ACCESS

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COMMUNITY

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10 years
of our
redesign

Moving architecture

2020
Autumn

In this issue | Railways | Life as a train journey | Amsterdamned |
Learning Dutch online | Visit Dordrecht | Limburg food and drink |
Storytelling |



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Dear ACCESS readers



Steve Voyce

ACCESS Editor

editor@access-nl.org

Even during these unprecedented (we are obliged to use that word, I believe) times, I think that our magazine, and ACCESS as a whole, is a valuable asset for internationals arriving—or already here—in the Netherlands. ACCESS has always been there to help. I also believe that now is no better time for some positivity. Hopefully we can bring a little of that.

This issue also marks an important milestone for this magazine. Ten years ago, a graphic designer was tasked with redesigning this publication. What you see now is not only the result of that assignment, but the ever-present skill, craft, diligence and creativity of Marek, our brilliant design partner. After a decade, he remains a valued member of the team. And great fun to work with, too. This issue is dedicated to Marek. Find out a little more about his story inside.

For Jacinta Noonan, in our Health & Wellbeing article, life could be seen as a train journey. Perhaps this has been more apparent during recent months, but as Jacinta says, we can look around at our fellow passengers—on their own journey, but sharing ours—and know that things will be ok.

No better time for positivity

We try to use this magazine to tell people's stories. We believe that everyone has one, and every story is remarkable. Jacqueline Pemberton looks at the ways internationals in the Netherlands are sharing their own stories, and how recent events have changed the way that they do. Her Art & Entertainment article is fascinating and inspirational, and, as she says, maybe by telling and listening to stories we can find reassurance during *unprecedented* times.

What better time than autumn to experience the Netherlands on the excellent, and safe, Dutch railways? Take a trip to Dordrecht—a historical gem—or to Limburg for some local cuisine, or simply wonder at the amazing Dutch station architecture—both classical and modern. And when you get home, why not watch one of the greatest Dutch movies? We review it inside, “a joyful journey down 80s memory lane.”

Stay safe.

ACCESS is...

a dynamic volunteer run, not-for-profit organisation that serves the needs and interests of the international community in the Netherlands. We do so by:

- personally responding to inquiries and providing information through our helpdesks
- providing face-to-face support through the expat centres we work with
- offering answers to the most frequently asked questions on our website
- fostering cultural diversity, facilitating connections and encouraging growth for the volunteers we work with
- offering childbirth preparation courses in The Hague, Rijswijk, Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam
- maintaining an on-call Counselling Services Network
- facilitating a network of Trainers to support the community
- producing an informative magazine intended to help the community get to know the Netherlands
- being available to international employers and their HRs to support their staff, partners & families



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MISSION

ACCESS is an independent not-for-profit organisation serving internationals to settle successfully in the Netherlands.

ACCESS

The ACCESS vision is to provide unique, comprehensive and essential services nationally, through the expertise and experience of its volunteers to the community.

Important note

ACCESS' number has changed. You can now reach us on **+31 (0)85 4000 338**. Also when calling from **overseas**.

Colophon

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Without our partners, and their support to our mission and vision, ACCESS could not do the work it does, serving the international community in the Netherlands. Three organisations share their experience of being an ACCESS partner.

Being a Partner

BY OLIVIA VAN
DEN BROEK-NERI



GMW lawyers

“My first impression of ACCESS was a very positive one,” says Godelijn Boonman, a partner at GMW, a law firm in The Hague with a strong focus on internationals. “And it still is.”

A practising lawyer for 30 years, Godelijn was born and raised in Kenya, studied at boarding schools in England, and moved to the Netherlands when she was 14. “ACCESS serves the interests of the international community,” she says. “There is nothing commercial about ACCESS, and I mean that in the most positive sense.”

As a member of the ACCESS executive board, Godelijn is actively involved with ACCESS.

“I love working with people who are so dedicated to the interests of others,” she says.

This working relationship also helps her professionally, by “understanding the international community better, getting to know different people within that community, and of course helping people who reach out to us with their problems.”

“I always recommend ACCESS to newcomers, to assist with practically any question you may have when you arrive in a new country and don’t know your way,” she says.

“ACCESS has been building its knowledge for the international community for more than 34 years and that shows in everything,” Godelijn says. “The website, the helpdesks, and the way the organisation is structured and run.” She looks forward to continuing to work with ACCESS. “I hope to remain a partner with GMW lawyers and will remain a board member for ACCESS for some time to come.”



PHOTO: NATALIYA VOLOSOVICH



Expat Mortgages

Expat Mortgages, founded in 2007, is an independent company devoted entirely to

providing internationals in the Netherlands with mortgage advice.

“We believe three elements contribute toward a better life, the three Hs—Home, Health and Humanity,” says Henk Jansen, owner of the company. “At Expat Mortgages we help to provide the Home, ACCESS provides the Humanity.”

Expat Mortgages has been a partner of ACCESS for eight years. As a partner, Henk gives presentations about housing to the helpdesk volunteers.

“Our relationship is perfect,” he says. The relationship works both ways, “we love to help out ACCESS, but we also get great feedback from the staff and volunteers about what is happening with the international community in the Netherlands,” he says. “ACCESS has its ear to the ground.”

Henk also appreciates that the organisation consists of mainly volunteers. “At my company we value volunteer work for our own employees, so we love to see that in others.” Henk also recommends the helpdesks to both newly arrived and more settled internationals in the Netherlands. “The fact that ACCESS is independent means that you can rely on the information they give,” he says. “ACCESS is a great organisation that we are proud to be associated with!”



The British School in The Netherlands

The British School in The Netherlands is based in The Hague and has five campuses, with a student population of 2,500 who represent nearly 90 nationalities.

“Everyone knows ACCESS,” says Stacey Vickers, Head of Communications & Admissions at the British School in The Netherlands. “They do

important work in welcoming internationals in The Hague.” When Stacey started her position, the school had an existing partnership with ACCESS, and she met with ACCESS’s Executive Director to continue that partnership.

“I speak to the Executive Director of ACCESS quite regularly, and she is incredibly helpful in terms of updating me on the latest information and issues affecting internationals in The Hague area,” says Stacey. “For example, ahead of the 30% tax ruling, she sent me an ICAP survey which was really useful.”

Originally from the UK, Stacey has also lived in Belgium, Chile, Spain, France, and Mexico, and appreciates how ACCESS relates to the international community. “ACCESS Executive Director Deborah Valentine came to speak at an event we had for internationals, and we received excellent feedback on her speech,” says Stacey. “It resonated so much with expats, particularly women, in the audience.”

As a partner, the British School in The Netherlands gives a presentation to ACCESS updating them on their school, and provides guidance on international education whenever needed. “Thank you ACCESS for everything that you do,” says Stacey.

ACCESS partners

Should you approach one of our partners for further support, let them know “ACCESS sent me.” Details about becoming an ACCESS partner can be found at access-nl.org/become-a-partner. «



About the author

California-native Olivia van den Broek-Neri works as Project Coordinator Communications & Events at Holland Expat Center South in Eindhoven, and was previously an ACCESS volunteer.

Moving architecture

BY LYNETTE
CROXFORD

From the classical brick and stained-glass-windowed, to the ultra-modern new builds, Dutch stations offer something for travellers using the country's extensive rail network.

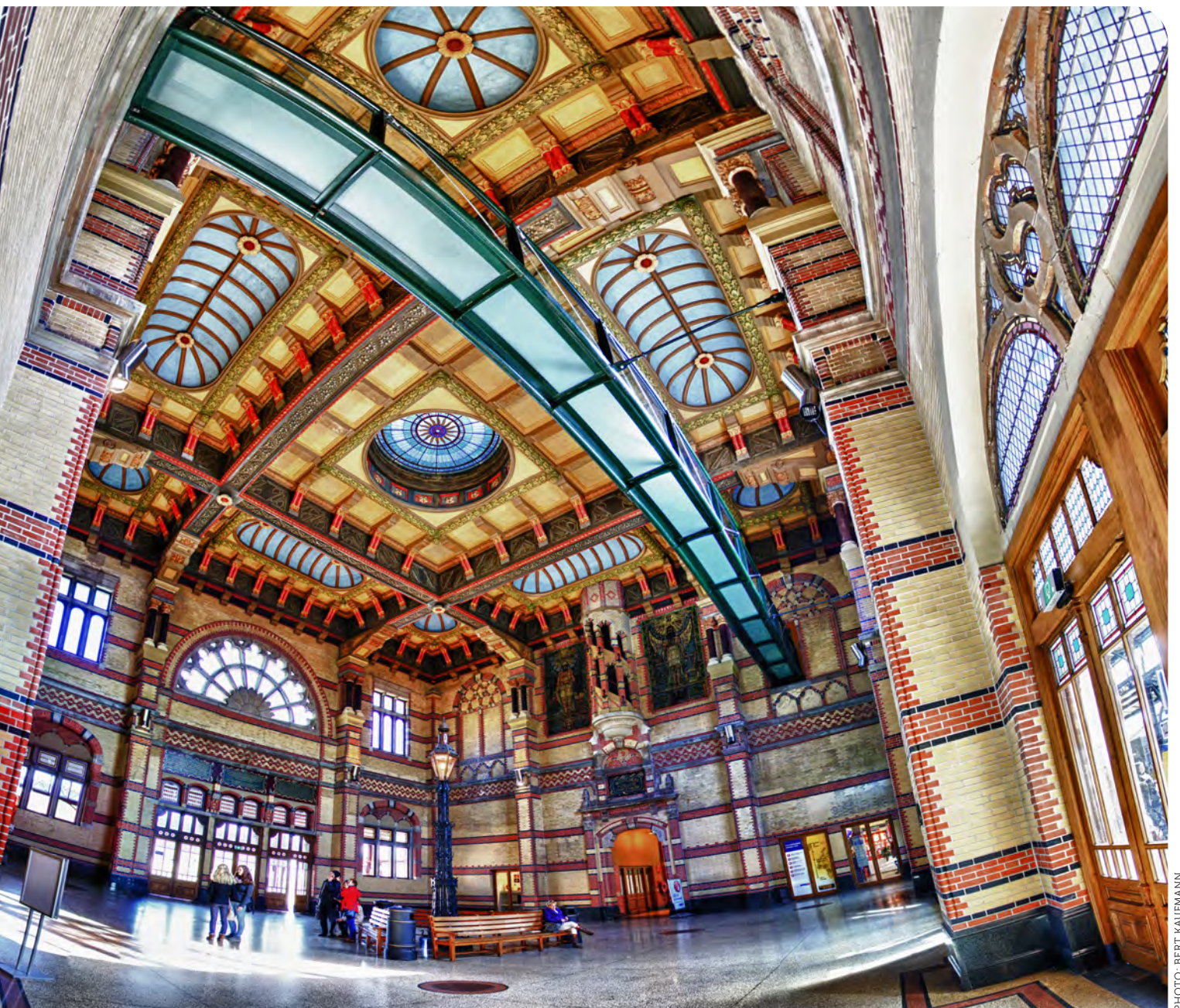


PHOTO: BERT KAUFMANN

Netherlands Railways

The first railway company in the Netherlands was founded in 1837 with a track running between Amsterdam and Haarlem, and train travel has grown to become a constant in the lives of many of the Dutch population. The *Nederlandse Spoorwegen* (Netherlands Railway) or NS makes around 4,500 trips a day across its 3,220 km. network, ensuring passengers get to their desired destinations, to be welcomed by captivating, or at least interesting, buildings.

Connecting people

In 600 BC Greece, a wooden rail was built to transport boats from the builder's yard to the water. It took another few thousand years until 1830 the world's first iron tracks were laid to carry rail passengers between Manchester and Liverpool in the UK. Since then railways have been instrumental in shaping lives—trains cross continents, have transported royalty, and even changed the course of wars. Today, train travel is a daily essential for many commuters, but for others it is an overland adventure, full of romantic connotations harkening back to days when life was lived at a slower pace.

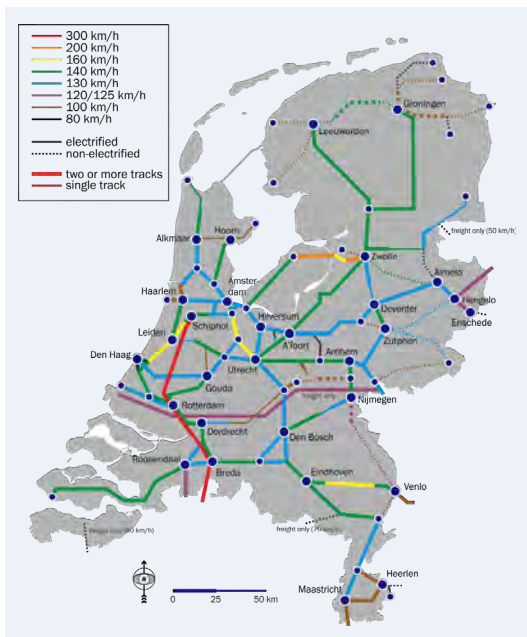


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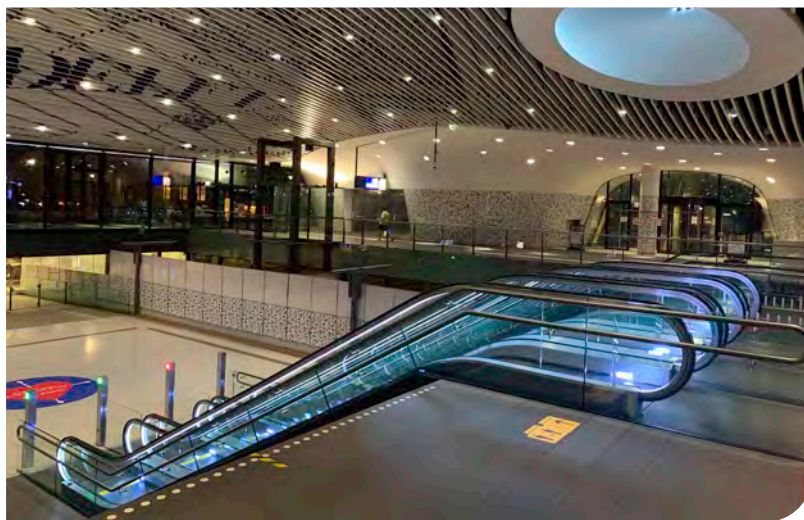


PHOTO: RICHARD CROXFORD

Exciting architecture

The Dutch are known for their adventurous spirit when it comes to architecture, and many new station buildings are truly remarkable in their design and sustainability. This is not to say that the old buildings fall short; in fact, some of the most beautiful old buildings in the country belong to the railway network. With around 400 stations nationwide the variety is staggering. Let's take a look at some of the more noteworthy.

Amsterdam Centraal

As the biggest and second busiest station in the country, Amsterdam Centraal is an international destination and a departure point for the rest of the Netherlands. Thousands of passengers traverse the platforms each day, to travel on one of the thousands of trains servicing this station. The iconic station building, which is for many travellers and tourists their first Dutch landmark, took eight years to complete and was constructed on 8,687 pylons driven into the wet Amsterdam soil.

Amsterdam CS (Centraal Station) was officially opened in 1889 to great fanfare and much public interest. Since then there have been numerous changes made to accommodate the growing traffic, including modernising the terminal, adding pedes- »



PHOTO: SLAUNGER

trian and bicycle tunnels and blocking car traffic from the front of the station. In 2018, after a huge construction project, an ultra-modern addition to the underground station was opened, linking to the new Amsterdam north-south metro line. Renovations to the main station continued throughout 2020, with platforms being made wider and rail bridges to the east of the station replaced.

Royal waiting

Amsterdam CS is one of the few stations to have a Koninklijke Wachtkamer (Royal Waiting Room), originally with parking for a royal carriage, or these days of course, the royal car. The Koninklijke Wachtkamer is located in the east wing of the railway station, and a new glass front means the venue is partially visible to passers-by outside. The Koninklijke Wachtkamer is actually owned by the NS, not by the royal family, so the venue can be used for other purposes such meetings and receptions. It is not usually open to the public, but look out for free guided tours during Open Monumentendag (Heritage Day), usually the second weekend of September. One of the waiting room's entrances

is located on platform 2b, and the elaborate gilded iron gate is unmissable. Behind the gate is the main waiting chamber and inside a stained glass window comprised of the government coat of arms, the provincial coat of arms and the municipal coat of arms. Everything in the main room was carefully coordinated by station architect P.J.H. Cuypers from the mosaic floors, carpets, wall panelling, stone fireplace, furniture, chandeliers, murals and even coat racks.

Den Haag Hollands Spoor

Waiting on the platform at Den Haag Hollands Spoor (Holland's Rail), the city's oldest station, can be quite mesmerising, like being transported back in time. The high steel arches and stained-glass windows create a feeling of old-world opulence and nostalgia. Originally opened in 1843, another of the few stations with a royal waiting room, HS remains a special place and full of history. The original building, which was designed by Frederik Willem Conrad, was demolished in 1891 to make way for the Neo-Renaissance building designed by Dirk Margadant, which still stands today.

Den Haag HS is a hub of daily activity with local, regional and international connections, and links to the city by bus and tram. Hollands Spoor station

Rail travel

At time of going to press, all seats on NS trains are available for use. Travellers are requested to avoid busy periods and travel outside of rush hour wherever possible. The use of masks is compulsory. Go to ns.nl/en for the latest information.



PHOTO: RICHARD CROXFORD

is built on grassland that originally belonged to the municipality of Rijswijk, but since there was initially little need to travel there, they passed the land to The Hague.

Groningen

Voted in 2019 as the prettiest station in the country, Groningen train station is one of the most northern. The current station building was designed by Izaak Gosschalk and completed in 1896. The lofty ceilings and decorative brickwork of the entrance hall combine Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance elements of the 19th century architectural revival. Located around 200 km. north of Amsterdam, the city is experiencing recent growth, so there is an ambitious expansion plan in and around the station until 2023.

Delft

The reconstruction of Delft Station—completed in 2015—was an immense project spanning eight years and including relocating the track underground and erecting a huge station above and below ground to accommodate the growing tourist and student traffic to the busy city. The new station reflects the history of the city, with Delft blue accents and an immense historic 1877 map of Delft and surroundings on the ceiling. The modern station building is also connected to the new *Gemeente* (municipality) building, adjacent and above the station hall.

Alongside the new architecture, the beautiful old station building was preserved, and stands in gardens behind the new additions serving as offices and restaurants. The newer station building includes bicycle parking for a whopping 8,700 bikes, of which 5,000 are underground. From Delft there are connections to all major cities to the north and south of the country and bus services run from the station throughout the South Holland region.

Arnhem Centraal

The fascinating structural design of Arnhem Centraal Station makes this an eventful stop on your journey. Completed in 2015 as the culmination of a 20-year

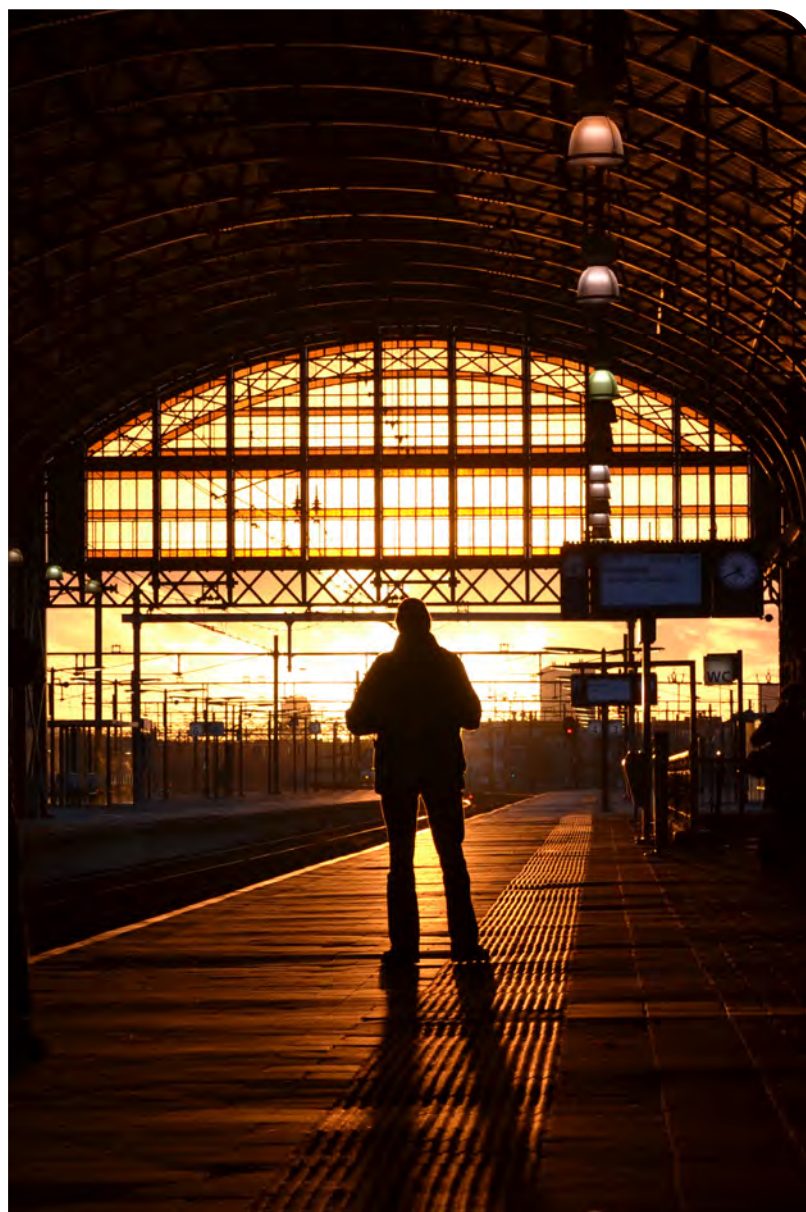


PHOTO: LOUIS ESPÉRET

The rail network has helped keep the nation going

project, it has transformed the face of Arnhem to one of sleek modernity. The station terminal features a central structure with a twist, quite literally, supporting the roof. The design enables openness with no beams or columns obstructing the flow of this busy transport hub, making it feel open and light. As with the other major stations, there are multiple modes of transport converging with bikes, trains, trams, cars, buses and pedestrians all coming and going. From Arnhem you can connect throughout the Netherlands, or even internationally east to Germany or south to Belgium. »



Curious



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Curious, Connected and Compassionate
Inspiring personal excellence in a strong and diverse community



PHOTO: PVL83

Many station buildings are truly remarkable

Valkenburg

Situated in the southern province of Limburg, this station is considered the oldest existing station in the country. Opened in 1853, it now has monument status and is part of the 50 stations in the Netherlands, known as 'the Collection' that is a representation of the buildings owned by the NS and ProRail.

The station's architectural details are reminiscent of medieval castles' balustrades, turrets and arched window frames. Valkenburg Station, voted 'most hospitable' in 2016, has connections to surrounding stations such as Maastricht, and across the border to Germany's Aachen and Heerlen.

Lansingerland-Zoetermeer Station

A new addition to the network—opened in 2018—this futuristic station boasts a huge, green viaduct that spans the road beneath and houses a light-rail stop and serves as a road crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. The fencing around this deck, executed in high-strength concrete especially developed for this project, is shaped like tree branches to represent

the leafy route leading to the station. Spacious flights of steps, a ramp, and glass elevators link the raised avenue with the station below and highlight the countryside surroundings. Waiting areas have plenty of daylight, and a timber ceiling, with a staggered pattern of LED lights, brings a warm atmosphere to the main station building. The building is flexible and forward-looking, with further expansion taken into account by leaving space for additional tracks and catering facilities.

Today and tomorrow

Whether old or new, Dutch station buildings have a charm and style that echoes the national identity and unique landscape. During these strange times of restrictions and disconnection, the rail network continues to maintain a sense of predictability and connection, and has helped keep the nation going. No doubt there will be many more inspiring and futureproof station designs to fascinate and facilitate commuters and travellers as time goes by. «

About the author

Lynette Croxford is a British freelance copywriter and translator living in Delft with her husband and daughters.

Mind the gap



RENÉE SAUER

When it comes to migration law, following the correct process is the best way to prevent problems. One common problem is a residence gap; an interruption of your continuous stay in the Netherlands.

In practice, once you have a residence gap the damage is done; there is seldom a cure.



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If your residence permit expires and it is not extended in time, this will cause a gap in your period of continual residence in the Netherlands. Such a residence gap may cause significant problems later on.

Short-term impact

If you are a highly-skilled migrant, a residence gap can cause you to lose an entitlement to a lower salary criterion. If this happens, it could jeopardise your status as a highly-skilled migrant, as you are not meeting the required salary threshold. This in turn could impact your right to work in the Netherlands.

Long-term impact

If you wish to continue living in the Netherlands for the long-term, you may plan to apply for a permanent residence permit or to hope to acquire Dutch nation-

ality. To qualify, among other requirements, you will have to accumulate five consecutive years of stay in the Netherlands (uninterrupted residency).

If you incur a residence gap during this five-year period, you will have to start again from scratch. In other words, you'll have to start accumulating the five years from day one all over again.

Why you need to avoid the gap

The law offers almost no leniency when it comes to residence gaps. For example, if your employer forgot to renew your permit before the end date, despite you reminding them, it will still cause a residence gap. Likewise, extenuating circumstances such as illness or needing to visit a sick relative will not excuse you in the eyes of the law.

Top tips

Be aware of the end date on your residence permit and have your employer apply for an extension in time. It can be renewed up to three months before the expiration date.

Remember that your residence permit has a "valid till" date – not a "valid up to and including" date – so ensure your employer renews it before the end date.

When things go wrong

In an ideal world, we would all follow the correct process perfectly – but in reality, things can go wrong. If you already have a residence gap, your right to work and residence may already be affected.

If you are in this situation, contact an immigration lawyer for advice on your options. «

Renée Sauer specialises in the international aspects of employment law, together with Dutch immigration law. She has extensive experience in dismissal law, as well as employment contracts and conditions, non-competition clauses, illness and reintegration. Renée works at GMW lawyers and is a contributing expert for Legal Expat Desk.

A decade of design



This issue of ACCESS Magazine marks the 10th anniversary since its redesign, and the team feels incredibly lucky that the project's leading man from a decade ago, Marek Moggré, is still on board. So it's a good time to shine a light on the longest-serving team member.

BY DAPHNE
VLACHOJANNIS

International

With his long, blonde, surfer hair and flawless Dutch, Marek Moggré does not give off the impression of a man who “grew up behind the Iron Curtain.” Born in 1974 in Prague, Marek made the “tricky journey” to the Netherlands at the tender age of five. He recalls

fondly his first months in a Dutch school, when his mother sat by his side. Marek jokes that his mother then did the same with his older brother, receiving an even higher Dutch education.

A life of art

By the time he finished school Marek knew precisely what he wanted to do. Surrounded by art, “my mother was always drawing princes and princesses in Czechoslovakia,” his passion for drawing and painting had begun at a young age. “I went to the Royal Academy of The Hague and told them I love to draw and paint and wanted to do so on logos, posters and CD covers for metal bands. I was shocked when they told me they had a faculty for that—apparently it was called graphic design. Who knew?” Marek’s reference to his young, impressionable self is charming and heart-warming, traits that have clearly stayed with him over 25 years.

Since then The Hague has been home. “I looked at other cities,” Marek says, “but I love the sea. I don’t surf or anything—I’m a starfish—I just lay on the beach.”

Not immediately selected by the college, Marek phoned them every day for a month to ask why. The director of the faculty, impressed by his perseverance and motivation, granted Marek a place in the part-time, five-year evening programme. This suited young Marek perfectly, meaning he could keep his day job as a harbourmaster in Scheveningen. »

A career in design

By the time he graduated in 2002, Marek had already been freelancing and working with a publishing company, but eventually decided to create his own business. The company was initially called 'Marek maakt...' (Marek makes...). "We had our first office on the Brouwersgracht," he reminisces, "but we had to move when the printer, our landlord, moved to a smaller office. Now we have a beautiful office on the Hoge Zand, where we can stay forever."

With each issue the bar was raised



M-space

Founded in 2013, the company is now called "M-space," a nod to the bond between Marek and Maartje Schuurmans, his business partner. "Maartje is also involved with ACCESS. For one year she designed all the magazine covers."

ACCESS

Marek's journey with ACCESS began when his company was still Marek maakt... ACCESS had asked publishing company Dijkman & Partners to redesign its magazine, and Dijkman asked Marek to take on the project. This marked the beginning of a decade-long relationship. It also led to projects with RISS (Rotterdam International Secondary School) and Eerde International Boarding School The Netherlands, referred to M-space through the ACCESS community.

Marek describes his work with ACCESS as "smooth sailing from the beginning." Not only did he enjoy the work, but he revelled in the new exposure to the international community.

"ACCESS and the whole international community were totally new to me," he recalls. "I love their office potluck lunches. My father always said you must take what the country offers, so I always eat locally when I travel. The potluck lunches are like traveling through food." The bounty of food from different cultures at these lunches reminds him of his favourite old adage, 'the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.'

The assignment from Dijkman & Partners was to restyle the ACCESS logo and magazine, so Marek started the revamp by restyling the logo. Mindful of the local culture, he wanted to give the magazine an "uber Dutch look." He reasons that "although it's an expat magazine, it has to have some basis, and that basis is Dutch." Hence the fonts he chose, created by Dutch designers, and the orange logo with a windmill, which doesn't get more typically Dutch.



After logo and magazine, ACCESS asked Marek to design new communication materials, including banners and flyers for the IamExpat Fair, and the identity was developed over the following years.

The magazine

Marek has seen the magazine develop considerably over the course of his tenure. “Over the 10 years, I’ve worked with several editors. With each issue and each editor, the bar was raised bit by bit. I loved working with all of them—they each had their unique approach to the magazine, which I’ve tried to keep in the design.”

Under Deborah Valentine, ACCESS’ Executive Director, Marek says “the magazine really blossomed—she’s a kind of octopus, she knows so many people, she has so many links.” Deborah returns the praise, “In a world of everchanging wonderful teams, having a ‘constant’ is a welcome relief, especially one who truly cares about all we do, and how we reflect all the talents who have made us. That, and Marek is fun to work with.”

“I like the magazine to be easy reading—nice and calm. I call it a quiet magazine. From my point of view, content comes first. It’s made for reading, so let’s make the reading as easy as we can,” says Marek.

Another 10 years?

How does Marek feel about being the longest-serving member of the magazine’s team? “I hope to survive longer—I hope to become the veteran. I love making the magazine.”

Having a constant who truly cares about all we do, is a welcome relief

When he is not designing the magazine or working on other projects, Marek plays ice hockey, goes downhill mountain biking “super-fast,” and does yoga. “If I were a dictator,” he says, “I would say everybody must do yoga.”

Needless to say, ACCESS Magazine would not be what it is today without Marek Moggré, and everyone at ACCESS feels enormously fortunate to have him as part of the team. «

About the author

Daphne Vlachoianis is a New York-qualified international human rights lawyer who has worked around the world. In 2013 she settled in The Hague where she lives with her husband and three children. Daphne is passionate about languages and creative writing.

What's Your Story?



There has never been a better time to release your inner story.

BY JACQUELINE PEMBERTON

Storytelling

With Covid-19 continuing to transform our lives in ways we never could have imagined back in the pre-pandemic world, many of us might be feeling more lonely, anxious and isolated than ever. We may feel detached and disconnected, so perhaps the soothing art of storytelling, whether written or spoken, can help us cope, heal and reconnect. But what exactly is storytelling?

Ever since we sat around a campfire millennia ago, humans have been hardwired for storytelling. Told in small gatherings, these first stories were by their very nature intimate, interactive, and empathetic. Through Shakespeare to Snapchat, storytelling has come a long way, but in its many forms—oral, written, visual, digital-interactive—it is still simply the art of telling stories.

According to Sahand Sahebdivani, a modern-day storyteller, musician, and co-founder of Mezrab, a popular storytelling, cultural centre and expat hangout in Amsterdam, “Storytelling is an art form and even though many things can be storytelling one of the common links is how accessible it is to an audience and how it doesn’t have a fourth wall. In many art forms you have an audience, such as with theatre, whereas with storytelling you are in direct communication with the audience.” Sahebdivani, who arrived in the Netherlands in the eighties as a refugee with his Iranian parents, is doing much to keep this underappreciated art form alive by making it more accessible to a modern-day

PHOTO: MARCOS PAULO PRADO

audience. He says he never questioned becoming a storyteller, “For me, it was intrinsic, but I would say it’s because my father is an incredible storyteller and he was passing down stories he heard in his family. I thought it was such an incredible treasure he gave me, that I don’t want to be the person who stops the stories. It was a kind of calling.”

Between two worlds

The Mezrab (house of stories) is a unique creative space, open to everyone, regardless of age, sex or nationality to come together in a warm, friendly and personal setting, to share stories, play music, dance, and/or participate in open mic (comedy) nights. Set up by Sahebdivani in early 2004 in his living room at the time—complete with sofa, cushions, and soup served up by his mother (who, along with his father, remain involved to this day)—the Mezrab still retains much of its charm. Though now, it also streams to the rest of the world via Facebook as Mezrab TV.

Yet, while Sahebdivani is happy to offer this new platform, he says he misses the connectedness of the physical setting, “I need to be able to look the audience in the eye.”

All in the same boat

Mezrab offers a safe sanctuary for internationals, students, refugees, and expats alike, where they can—indeed, are encouraged to—be their true authentic self and celebrate their cultural heritage. “One thing I notice in the Netherlands,” Sahebdivani says “is that a lot of internationals find it difficult to find a social network. For many people who come to my story nights, it is where their social life in the Netherlands started, because suddenly you are in a room full of people who are all in the same boat.” mezrab.nl

Outsider’s perspective

According to Sahebdivani, many have an outsider’s perspective to convey, “Most people in this situation might have an issue with having more than one ‘identity’ or they’ve kind of ‘gone beyond identity.’”

Mieke Eerkens is a Dutch-American writer and writing lecturer, whose book *All Ships Follow Me: A Family Memoir of War Across Three Continents* goes on a journey through her heritage, in her quest for identity.

She says, “reading about someone else who has gone through what I have, and writing my own narrative with the knowledge that there are others out there who may have experienced the same, stimulates a sense of community. This is especially important for expats who have left their home communities and familiarity behind. Writing is an important way to process our experiences and put them into a context we choose and form.”

Write here write now

Although writers often have the reputation of being somewhat introverted, solitary creatures, they can benefit from joining a writing group. Especially now when social isolation is so acute, being exposed to »

Transforms inner and outer chaos into something beautiful



PHOTO: MOSTAFA MERAJJI

other writers' creative ideas and feedback can be stimulating. Moreover, joining a group helps both experienced and new writers find their storytelling voice and increases confidence. While some writing groups are meeting up again in a physical setting, many are still connecting virtually.

The power of writing groups

Writing coach Hannah Behrens is a member of the ACCESS Training Network (ATN) and founder of *Weeds & Wilderness*, a creative writing group devoted to helping artists and writers break through self-doubt and create their best work. She says that during these times of uncertainty any kind of creativity can help keep us balanced within ourselves and connected socially. "Art gives us hope and gives us a method of connecting with others. Joining an artistic online social group—whether it's writing or music or dancing or book discussions helps to get us out of the feeling of isolation and into a mode of connecting with others."

Creativity keeps us balanced and connected



PHOTO: MOSTAFA MERAJI

While Behrens has had to decrease both her on- and offline workshops, she plans to have her writing group running again in September. weedsandwilderness.com

Word Up

Spoken word poetry is performed in front of a live audience, and harks back to the oral tradition of storytelling. Honest, open, and engaging, performers openly discuss a number of issues, which can be liberating and empowering.

Word Up is a non-profit organisation that celebrates and inspires self-expression through spoken word poetry and related musical and performance expression in order to promote social inclusion and diversity. They regularly hold writing workshops, and have a podcast that "focusses on the people behind the art form and their worldly perspectives." Many of their workshops and events are available online.

"Creative expression is a beautiful way to connect, meet new people, and celebrate togetherness and inclusion. To witness creatives share their stories, pieces, and visions, brings us all closer together. At Word Up, we only provide content in English since we notice that our community is very international, cosmopolitan, and diverse," says Evalina Kwartunaite, the organisation's founder.

"Not just for writers but probably for all, the Covid-19 crisis has brought up a lot of different things to the surface—certainly anxiety, and loneliness and so on, but it has also brought about a more insightful reflection causing us to re-evaluate what is important in life," she adds. wordupamsterdam.weebly.com

Storytelling as stand-up comedy

Stand-up comedy and improvisation also use storytelling techniques, and perhaps there is nothing like comedy to help us make sense of it all. Laughter is the best medicine! "Like we say at Boom Chicago: Life is better when you laugh. Comedy unites, holds a mirror in front of people and it relaxes the highly tense situation we are in," says Boom Chicago's CEO, Saskia Maas.



PHOTO: PRISCILLA DU PREEZ

Boom Chicago is a well-known English language comedy venue in Amsterdam that stages comedy performances, and offers comedy improvisation, and writing workshops. While they have had to move much of their operations online, they currently have live shows with ‘safe seating’, and are still conducting physical workshops.

“We started again in June. Our theatre has a lot of space to do classes while maintaining the required one-and-a-half metre. We do offer some digital writing classes as well, but it is good to see happy faces in our building again.” Maas says. “Comedy makes you look at yourself in different ways. Laughing establishes a much-needed bond between people and it is good not to take ourselves too seriously all the time.” boomchicago.nl

Something beautiful'

Storytelling has always been a way to bring people together, intrinsic to our human condition, and something we have always fallen back on during

Establishes a much-needed bond between people

difficult times. Even in this era of separation, when traditional ways of meeting might be difficult, it is reassuring that storytellers are finding ways to come together to share each other’s stories.

As Behrens says, “Any form of creative activity that helps us makes sense of the craziness of the world at this time can be useful. Art helps to process emotions and transform inner and outer chaos into something beautiful.” «

About the author

Jacqueline Pemberton is a British-Australian freelance writer based in Ubbergen. She has an M.A. in Writing from Swinburne University and enjoys writing screenplays, drawing, and playing guitar in her free time.

Teaching children to embrace diversity

For many parents, talking with children about the realities of race, diversity, equity, and inclusion is a disturbing prospect. These conversations are rarely easy; it is difficult to delicately address these topics while simultaneously protecting a child's innocence.



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admissions@naisr.nl

Where do I start? How far should the conversation go? Is it too much for them to handle? The truth is that oftentimes our children are not naïve to the current realities of our world and by ignoring the systemic racism around them and altogether avoiding the conversations, we run the risk of teaching them to overlook and accept injustices. This can perpetuate the behaviours that have led to the misguided belief that their lives matter more or less than others.

The global pandemic has added “homeschool teacher” to the list of hats that parents wear and has provided an (additional) opportunity to address the elephant in the room. While teaching children to be compassionate, tolerant, and empathetic is not the complete antidote to racism, it is a start. We have a collective responsibility to teach tolerance, kindness and respect, and parents can help their children value and appreciate diversity in everyday experiences.

It will take time and a concerted effort to undo learnt behaviours and unconscious biases. Below are three ideas to jumpstart the conversation:

- 1** Speak openly and embrace curiosity: Be open to curiosity and answer your children's questions about differences among people. An honest conversation about their observations can pave the way for your children to feel more comfortable to ask questions about race and diversity.
- 2** Lead by example: Action speaks louder than words, and we have to be mindful of both our verbal and non-verbal expressions. Be mindful of how you treat and talk about others, as this can cause your children to develop generalised perceptions and stereotypes.
- 3** Challenge intolerance: If your child says or does something indicating bias or prejudice, don't meet the action with silence. Challenge intolerance, and explain why it is unacceptable.

UNICEF has a number of resources, including a guide on how to start the important conversation which is available on unicef.org/parenting/talking-to-your-kids-about-racism

We celebrate diversity at our school

At NAIS Rotterdam, we celebrate diversity at our school by building respect towards all people into our curriculum. From three years old, our students enjoy a rich and diverse learning environment with staff and students of more than 40 nationalities. If you would like to learn more, you can contact the Admissions Team on admissions@naisr.nl «

This article is adapted from a blog written by Tasmaine Coleman from Nord Anglia Education.

Stepping back in time

Dordrecht, a South Holland city locally known as Dordt, has eight centuries of rich and varied history.

BY ANUJA
TIPNIS-RANDIVE

Getting to Dordrecht

Its central location makes Dordrecht easily accessible by rail from most of the Netherlands. An original alternative is to take the train as far as Rotterdam, then hop on the waterbus from a pick-up point along the River Maas. The journey passes Rotterdam's industrial buildings, the stunning Dutch countryside, and the windmills of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Kinderdijk (the world's largest windmill network) before arriving in beautiful Dordrecht. Check waterbus.nl/en for details.

PHOTO: HAKZELF



Vibrant history

Dordrecht was granted city rights by William I, Count of Holland, in 1220, which means 2020 is the city's 800th birthday. Many celebrations planned to mark this momentous year have been postponed, so there is a lot to enjoy in Dordrecht this year and in 2021 too.

Keep an eye open for celebrations and events across the city—from neighbourhood parties, street art and nature walks, to festivals, museum specials, theatre and music, and even a women's football competition (summer 2021).

The birthplace of a nation

Founded in 1275 as a monastery, *Het Hof van Nederland* (the Court of the Netherlands) is probably best known as the venue for the First Free Assembly of States in 1572. Twelve cities, under the leadership of Dordrecht, renounced Philip II of Spain, and recognised William of Orange as their stadtholder (national leader). »



PHOTO: ARON MARINELLI



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Understanding the impact of nutrition on early learning experiences, Zein International Childcare was the first childcare provider in the Netherlands to introduce qualified chefs nearly ten years ago. To ensure your child's nutritional needs are met and healthy eating patterns are developed, our on-site chefs serve a varied range of freshly prepared, organic warm meals and snacks in Day Care as well as Pre-School.

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Zein International Childcare, the #1 choice for internationally minded families



Dordrecht's charm comes alive from the water

Nature

Just east of the city, the National Park De Biesbosch is a protected nature reserve, the largest freshwater tidal area in Europe and a lovely place to spend an autumn afternoon. Search for English information at np-debiesbosch.nl

In honour of the city's 800th year, Het Hof is housing an '800 years of Dordrecht in Resistance' exhibition detailing the city's historical significance and the struggles of its residents. More details are available at hethofvannederland.nl/english

Water-rich Dordrecht

Predominantly an island surrounded by three rivers, Dordrecht's charm comes alive from the water. Discover a different view of the city from a waterbus or a boat tour. Relax and enjoy the calm waters of the historic harbours and drift past ancient quays, or even spend a night at Villa Augustus, a 19th century water tower offering unique hotel rooms and a lively café-restaurant in its former pumping station.

A city for walking

Dordrecht is also perfect for walking. Start at the 700-year-old Groothoofdspoort (City Gate), constructed in the gothic style, and walk past medieval houses, magnificent mansions, museums and some of the oldest churches in the Netherlands.

Travel | Stepping back in time

Be sure to take in the picturesque views from the Three Rivers Point—the meeting of the rivers Oude Maas, Beneden Merwede and Noord, the busiest river confluence in Europe—before an idyllic stroll through the Hooikade or simply roam around the city's market-places. A walk through Dordrecht leads to hidden surprises, such as the 11th century old Grote Kerk, Huis van Gijn and the Dordrecht Patrician House.

Groothoofdspoort

One of the city's architectural gems—on the Three Rivers Point—the Groothoofdspoort was originally built in the 14th century. In the past, counts and kings landed at this spot, and it is said that even Napoleon arrived here. Its façade was designed by Gillis Huppe in 1618 and shows the Dordrecht maiden sitting in the 'Garden of Holland,' holding a palm branch in her left hand and the city shield in her right hand. The façade is based on an earlier design by the Dordrecht painter [Gerrit Gerritsz Cuyp](#).

Dordrechts Museum

Founded in 1842, the Dordrechts Museum is one of the oldest museums in the Netherlands and houses an impressive collection from six centuries of Dutch art. Current exhibitions at the museum include the work of impressionist Willem Bastiaan Tholen, Dordrecht artist Jaap Schlee's remarkable drawings, the 'Life of Leather' exhibition, and Robert Zandvliet's fifty-metre-long mural Aan't Groothoofd—a 'panoramic water reflection.' Go online to dordrechtmuseum.nl/english/ for details of these and other exhibitions.

Great for autumn and beyond

Dordrecht is an under-appreciated Dutch gem for a day trip or even a weekend stay. With its *gezelligheid* (cosiness), gorgeous canals, stunning architecture, river views and history, Dordrecht is a great place to visit this autumn, or at any time. «

About the author

Anuja Tipnis-Randive is an expat living in Amsterdam who loves travelling solo and exploring cities.

Schools: heart of the community

Academic institutions are communities of families, staff, students and support teams—the people ACCESS has been serving for more than 35 years. Below are the institutions who invest in us so we can continue to serve internationals throughout the Netherlands.

ACCESS started in a school in 1986, when a counselling staff member drew attention to a problem within the community. From there a broad community of nationalities and organisations created ACCESS. Since then we have been supporting and serving internationals who are thinking of coming to, or already living in, the Netherlands.

We do so with the experience of people who themselves took that path. Our teams often change, but our mission remains steadfast—to help people arrive and settle, and make the most of their time here. We rely on the support of schools—to allow us to do our work globally—and to introduce us to those we can help. Thank you.

Amsterdam

• Amity International School Amsterdam

Admissions: +31 20 345 44 81
admissions@amity.amsterdam
amityschool.nl



With an emphasis on establishing an international perspective, Amity International School Amsterdam provides a challenging and engaging environment in which students are encouraged to excel intellectually, academically and socially, equipping them with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Delft

• International School Delft

Admissions: +31 15 285 0038
or +31 (0)15 820 0208
admissions@internationalschooldelft.org
internationalschooldelft.com



The International School Delft is an IB World School, offering the Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) in the Primary school and is a candidate school for the Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) in the Secondary school. Once fully grown, ISD will be one out of three schools in the Netherlands to offer the full range of IB programmes.

Amsterdam

• Winford Bilingual Primary School

Admissions: +31 20 7516650
info@winford.nl
winford-bilingual.nl



Winford Bilingual Primary School is a global school in the Amsterdam community focused on the highest quality bilingual primary education. During their time at our school, students follow the Dutch, UK, and IPC curricula. This approach provides children with a very solid emotional, intellectual, and cultural basis for secondary schooling.

The Hague

• British School in The Netherlands

Admissions: admissions@britishschool.nl
britishschool.nl



An international school for girls and boys aged 3-18, BSN is a thriving community of 80+ nationalities. The BSN's blend of traditional British values, educational rigour, and caring and committed staff provides an environment for students to prepare for a happy and successful life, no matter the pursuit.

The Hague

- **HSV (Haagsche Schoolvereniging)**



Admissions: +31 70 318 4951
admissions@hsvdenhaag.nl
hsv.nl

Since 1986, the HSV International Primary School has provided primary-aged children with exceptional educational experiences. Generations of HSV pupils have enjoyed and thrived on the wonderfully diverse opportunities on offer at our school, opportunities that we always have and always will offer within the commitment to developing the whole child to become internationally-minded leaders.

The Hague

- **International School of The Hague**



The International School of The Hague

Admissions: +31 70 328 1450
ishthehague.nl

The International School of The Hague, with its strong diverse community within the International City of Justice and Peace, is well placed to provide a dynamic learning environment that is conducive to intercultural learning and global citizenship.

Boarding

- **Eerde International Boarding School**



Admissions: +31 529 451 452
admission@eerdeibs.nl
eerde.nl

Eerde is the only international school in the Netherlands to offer day school, flexible boarding and full boarding facilities. Located on a tranquil country estate only two hours from central Amsterdam, Eerde offers a safe and healthy environment for your child to focus on study, outdoor activities and having fun with schoolfriends.

Rotterdam

- **Nord Anglia International School Rotterdam (NAISR)**



NORD ANGLIA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ROTTERDAM

Admissions: +31 10 422 5351
admissions@naisr.nl
nordangliaeducation.com/rotterdam

Our school challenges and inspires students from Pre-Kindergarten through to Grade 12 to be principled and resourceful citizens of the world. We go beyond traditional education to transform learning. Your child will study world-renowned curricula, enhanced with global programmes bespoke to Nord Anglia, such as STEAM with MIT and the Global Campus.

Rotterdam

- **Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS)**



ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

Admissions: +31 10 890 7744
admissions.riss@wolfert.nl
riss.wolfert.nl

Our Vision: educating for self-awareness, curiosity and integrity in a changing world. Our mission is for every student to enjoy their youth. We will do this by providing innovative approaches to learning, by encouraging achievement, by fostering international mindedness with local and global engagement, by modelling ethical behaviour and by acting respectfully and with honesty.

City

- **Can we help you?**



Contact: Deborah Valentine
edirector@access-nl.org
access-nl.org

Your support allows us to serve the broad international community in and coming to the Netherlands. Besides being listed on our website, and possible advertising opportunities, our wealth of knowledge and experience can support your new staff, families, and communities before they arrive, and as they settle. Get in touch, we will be happy to tell you how.

Amsterdamned

Delicious 80s Dutch Pulp

Amsterdam as backdrop to international movies and TV series was nothing new, but never had the city played such a prominent role as in 80s action thriller movie *Amsterdamned*.

BY KIM VAN DER
VELDEN

Amsterdamned was released in 1988 and as the title ironically implies, director Dick Maas intentionally created a movie that was to be taken with a pinch of salt. For Dutch standards, this action-packed, visually-strong, fast-paced and humorous movie stands up to many Hollywood movies of the time.

Slasher visuals and comedy

Amsterdamned combines the ingredients of Dick Maas' previous two successes—the superb slasher visuals of horror thriller *Lift* (1983), where a lift in an Amsterdam building seems to go on a killing spree, and the high-paced dry and slapstick humour of comedy *Flodder* (1986), which depicts an anti-social, dysfunctional family moving into an upper-class neighbourhood.

Race against the clock

Maas teamed up for *Amsterdamned*, as in his previous two movies, with lead actor Huub Stapel, who plays detective Erik Visser. Erik has to solve a series of violent murders taking place in and around the canals of Amsterdam. His race against the clock is compounded when the mayor intervenes, fearing tourists will avoid Amsterdam while the murderer is at large. Erik's investigations lead to a local scuba diving club where he meets potential love interest, Laura, played by Monique van den Ven, who unbeknownst to herself brings him closer to the murderer.

80s vibe

Stapel's quintessential 80s vibe is reminiscent of Mel Gibson's maverick cop in *Lethal Weapon* and is completed by era-defining jeans, leather jacket and Ray-Bans. Monique van den Ven exudes the fresh, sexy, sporty energy so characteristic of female leads from that decade. While street views, interior design, food and fashion reflect the times, with retrospect some scenes perhaps have dated, but this only adds to a joyful journey down 80s memory lane.

More info

A sequel to *Amsterdamned* was planned by Dick Maas, named *Rotterdam*, to be released in the 90s, but unfortunately never happened.

The famous speedboat chase scene at the end was partly filmed in Utrecht. Most obviously when both boats jump onto the quay and plough through terrace chairs and tables—there are no such large low-lying quays in Amsterdam!

During the filming of the speedboat scenes, Huub Stapel was almost fatally injured. Due to a mistake by the stuntman steering the boat, the boat hit a quay wall and caused Stapel to be hospitalised. Filming had to stop for three weeks. Stapel still suffers from his injuries—chronic paraesthesia in his fingers (tingling and numb fingers) and a protruding rib.

Pure escapism

The acting and plot are probably not the strongest elements of the movie. Stapel and van den Ven—royalty of Dutch cinema of the 80s—are definitely not at their best, but also not at their worst. Some of the other cast members are unfortunately terrible, but this feels forgivable as the visual creativity of many scenes makes up for any mediocre acting. The plot, what there is of it, hints at an environmentalist agenda, but fast-paced chase scenes through the canals, streets and over the bridges of Amsterdam



Good fun, pure entertainment and stuffed with 80s nostalgia

drown all serious societal topics. Maas has always been very open about the unpretentious goal of his films as entertainment to provide pure escapism to a large audience.

Hollywood-style in Amsterdam

The strength of the movie mainly comes from the pure Hollywood-style filmmaking Maas has adopted, with Amsterdam at its best as the real star. Night-time canal scenes, half above and half under water, representing the murderer's view, are pure genius, especially combined with the sound of breathing in a scuba mask. The chase scenes are spectacular and Amsterdam's narrow streets, bridges and canals are used brilliantly to add suspense.

Editing can seem abrupt at times, but this reflects Maas' strange sense of humour—a gruesome autopsy scene is followed suddenly by a lunch scene that starts with a big dollop of ketchup being splashed on two fried eggs.



Well-aged pulp

Amsterdamdamned is absolutely well-aged pulp, good fun and pure entertainment and stuffed with 80s nostalgia. There is a free version on YouTube, but order the DVD via Amazon or Bol.com to enjoy a higher visual quality of 80s reminiscence. «

Amsterdamdamned
Director Dick Maas
Length 1h 34min
Amsterdamdamned is available to purchase on DVD and/or blu-ray. Or watch the full movie on [YouTube](#)

About the author

Kim van der Velden, a child of the 80s, is obviously biased toward all things from that decade.

The International School of The Hague Home of the Silverbacks

Sports at the International School of The Hague (ISH), home of the Silverbacks, is set up to allow every student the opportunity to participate in a variety of athletics and activities, which we believe is a vital part of a student's education.

Our Athletic and Sports Department aims to inspire personal excellence outside of the classroom and promote active and healthy lifestyles to all students whilst they balance the rigorous IB programme.

We provide three different programmes which encompass both competitive sports and non-competitive activities. Each programme offers its own unique experience and yet focuses on the same goal which complements and supports a challenging academic program. The sports programmes focus on teaching young people values and lifelong skills such as—accountability, sportsmanship, confidence, leadership, organisation, persistence, work ethic, self-discipline, social skills, teamwork, performing under pressure, and the ability to take instruction whilst striving for personal excellence.

Quote from student “I feel that I have so much opportunity to not only show off the skills I have, but to also improve upon them, and develop new ones.”

ISH Sports is part of The International Schools Sports Tournament (ISST) considered

a pioneering organisation in International School sports competition. Being involved in the ISST has allowed the sports programme and sporting culture to grow at ISH. ISH now has its own Sports and Athletic Department with a team working at continuing to move ISH forward in becoming one of the top International Schools in Europe for sports and activities.

Situated in one of The Hague's green recreational areas, near the dunes and the beach of Kijkduin, we are ideally placed to expand links with outside facilities and clubs. This creates more opportunities for ISH students to have access and try new activities, especially in the Recreational Programme.

What's next? Securing a more consistent league and end-of-season tournaments for the Under 12 and Under 14 Junior Varsity teams. We will be working together with other international schools to launch this project by 2021, to make sure that no matter their age, or their level, all students get equal opportunity to experience the comradery of playing sports against other international schools. «


The International School
of The Hague

070 328 1450
ishthehague.nl



Politics... and hats?



PHOTO: FACEMEPLS

Where else in the world could you celebrate a new budget with a carriage ride, fancy horses and lots and lots of hats?



PHOTO: PHOTO RNW.ORG

BY MOLLY QUELL

On the third Tuesday in September, tens of thousands of visitors turn out in The Hague for the yearly presentation of the country's budget and the opening of the country's parliament during the annual *Prinsjesdag* (Prince's Day) festivities.

Opening parliament

Article 65 of the Dutch Constitution requires that "A statement of the policy to be pursued by the Government shall be given by or on behalf of the King before a joint session of the two Houses of the States General." It also stipulates the day this must take place and requires that the official budget be presented.

Though the text specifies a king, it is the Dutch monarch, regardless of gender, who gives the *troonrede*, or speech from the throne. Generally, the speech is written by the Prime Minister together with the monarch. Following the speech, which takes place at the Ridderzaal in the Binnenhof complex, Parliament is officially opened and the Minister of Finance then presents the budget to the lower house.

History

The presentation of the annual budget and a speech of the monarch have taken place in the Netherlands since 1814. In 1848, as the Dutch moved power away from the monarchy, government ministers »

More info

Prince's Day was first filmed in 1931. The microphone was next to the Queen's seat.

Horses

There are usually not enough Dutch horses up to the task of carriage pulling, so the Dutch frequently borrow some from the Belgian military.

began writing the content of the speech. And in 1888, this also became the official opening day of parliament.

A year earlier, the constitution was updated to reflect that the event should take place on the third Tuesday in September. Before it had been held on a Monday in October, but Christian parties objected to the need to travel on a Sunday, and the October date left too little time to settle budget issues before it went into effect on 1 January.

In 1904, the monarch switched from giving the speech in the lower house, *Tweede Kamer*, building to the *Ridderzaal* but the event didn't get the name *Prinsjesdag* until 1930.

Dutch government

Officially the Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy. These days, the monarch has no real political power but mainly serves as a symbolic head of state.

The Dutch have a bicameral legislation. The *Tweede Kamer*, has 150 seats and members are directly elected every four years. The upper house, or *Eerste Kamer*, has 75 seats and is elected by the members of the provincial parliaments. Together they make up the *Staten-Generaal*, or States General.

The government is usually made up of a coalition of different parties, with the Prime Minister coming from the party who won the most seats in the election. Mark Rutte, from the liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, or VVD, is the current Prime Minister. The next national election is scheduled for March 2021.

The day itself

In the morning, the budget is finalised, wrapped in an orange bow and placed in the official suitcase. The suitcase tradition began in 1947 when then Minister of Finance, Piet Liefstinck, presented the budget in a brown leather bag labelled *derde dinsdag in september* or Third Tuesday in September.

He got the idea from the British, who traditionally carried their budget documents in a red suitcase to present them to Parliament. These days, the budget is no longer presented on paper, but in an electronic format. Although it is officially a secret until the day of, information about the budget usually links to the media in the weeks leading up to the event.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, the monarch's procession departs the Noordeinde Palace, with the monarch traditionally riding in the Golden Coach. Decorative panels on the Golden Coach depict slaves which have led for a call for the carriage to be retired into a museum. That carriage, however, is currently undergoing restoration so for the past few years the monarch has been using another carriage, known as the Glass Coach.



PHOTO: FACEMEPLS

The carriage is pulled by horses which undergo serious testing to make sure they are up for the task. On the Monday before, on the beach in Scheveningen, the horses are exposed to loud bangs, screaming babies and smoke bombs to make sure they are up for the task. In years past, large crowds gathered on the beach to watch the exercises.

Until the monarch arrives, a salute is fired every minute on the Malieveld. The trip takes about fifteen minutes, detouring along a route that was first traveled in 1925. The procession arrives at the Ridderzaal, the oldest building in the Binnenhof complex, where the attendees are sitting according to a strict seating chart.

After the speech, the monarch returns to the Noordeinde Palace for the *balkonscène*, or balcony scene, with Queen Máxima, Prince Constantijn and Princess Laurentien who all wave to the crowds.

What's with all the hats?

Dutch politician and former Olympic swimmer Erica Terpstra turned up to her very first Prinsjesdag wearing a fashionable black beret and found she was quite in the minority. Only the queen and a member of the diplomatic corps had on headgear. Afterwards, she urged the other 21 female members of parliament to wear a hat to the occasion and from then the *hoedjesparade* (or parade of hats) was born.

Until recently, it was considered a faux pas to wear a hat larger than the queen's but that rule has fallen by the wayside. These days, the women wear not just elaborate hats, but some wear entire outfits with a political message. Member of Parliament Carla Dik-Faber wore an outfit in support of sustainable fishing in 2016, complete with a hat made of fish scales. But it's Marianne Thieme of the animal rights party who is most famous for her outfits, including a celebration of women's suffrage, an outfit calling out gender disparities and a military outfit with an ammunition belt made of carrots to call for a more sustainable use of the earth.



PHOTO: DEN HAAG MARKETING/FRANK JANSEN

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy

This year

In 2020, Prinsjesdag takes place on 15 September. This year, for the first time since the tradition began, the public will not be invited to participate in the event. "It's a wonderful and festive day but it simply attracts too big a crowd," said The Hague mayor Jan van Zanen. The traditional drive from the Noordeinde Palace to the Binnenhof will not take place and the event itself is moved to the larger Grote Kerk to allow for social distancing. The guest list has also been shortened; no spouses or diplomats will be allowed.

Fortunately, if you're interested in the event, you can watch it all on television. «

About the author

Molly Quell is an American journalist based in Delft. She is The Hague correspondent for Courthouse News Service and a contributing editor at Dutch News. When she's not working, you can find her enjoying a beer and hanging out with her dog. You can follow her on Twitter at [@mollyquell](https://twitter.com/mollyquell).



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Like a train journey, life offers new horizons and new destinations, sometimes challenging us to drop old baggage, while at other times encouraging us to relax and enjoy the surroundings.

If life were a train journey

BY JACINTA NOONAN

On track

Earlier this year, I travelled by train from the city of Melbourne to my hometown, Eaglehawk, to visit my mum. The trip takes about two hours, the train is modern and fast, and an hourly schedule makes the city easily accessible for work and pleasure for country-dwellers.

Growing up, things were different. Back then, going to Melbourne was never a daytrip, it was an event. The train of my youth was very, very long, made up of many carriages, and would arrive at the station with a God-almighty screech of brakes and hiss of steam. This magnificent train only ran once a day and a missed train often meant a missed opportunity.

Fortunately, during the intervening years, the state railway moved with the times and replaced the old, antiquated trains with smaller, faster, and more cost-effective ones, creating opportunities and prosperity for country folk.

As the rhythm of the Eaglehawk train lulled me into a dream-like state, I started thinking about this old and new. In what areas of my life was I still travelling on an antiquated train, stuck in old beliefs and habits? Was my 'train' holding me back from opportunities, new horizons and new freedoms? Was I getting left behind in the past, dragging too much emotional »



PHOTO: SERHAT BEYAZKAYA



Health & Wellbeing | If life were a train journey

**When I am present,
I appreciate what I
tend to take for granted**



PHOTO: TIES RADEMACHER

PHOTO: JACINTA NOONAN

baggage with me or was I moving forward, travelling lightly? Do I need a different type of train at different times of my life?

A quick mental scan reassured me that my 'train' was on track. It was modern, high speed and forward focussed with no excess baggage in sight.

Changing platform

A flash of insight on the metro, whilst on a trip to Singapore a few years ago, made me question the direction my life was taking. Waiting for the train to Marina Bay—departing from Platform A—sweat dripping down my face despite the air conditioning, I was becoming impatient. My thoughts were drifting to the meaning of life, when an announcement came over the PA system that the Marina Bay train would now be departing from Platform B.

With “departing from Platform B” ringing in my ears, I got to wondering, can we change the direction of our lives, or are we stuck with the decisions we made during our younger years? Can an accountant become an artist, or a writer become a speaker? If we’ve seen all there is to see on this part of the journey, can’t we then change direction?

As the train sped towards Marina Bay, I contemplated my career journey. It began on Platform A as a primary school teacher which suited me well for ten happy

ACCESS Training Network

The ATN is diverse group of professionals who offer a wide variety of support for internationals. This is done through courses aimed at providing opportunities for personal growth, to learn something new, prepare for a new direction, or for preparing for pregnancy and childbirth; the ATN also supports the development of ‘community’ and helps with cultural adaption.

access-nl.org/what-we-do/meet-the-trainers

years. However, when I moved to the Netherlands in 1990, the train didn't stop at Platform A anymore and I had to rethink where I was headed. This meant transferring to Platform B and taking the train on a new journey. As a result, the corporate world opened up for me and I experienced sights, sounds and adventures that I had never before imagined. Back on the metro contemplating a potential Singapore posting, I realised I could once again reinvent myself. I was not powerless. All I needed was a platform change, a suitcase stuffed with self-belief and a daring-do attitude.

Enjoy the moment

These days, my regular mode of transport is the car, but on a recent trip to The Hague, I decided to take the train. This simple change of behaviour had a profound impact on me.

Settling into my seat, I noticed the pent-up tension leave my body. Being constantly in the driving seat can be stressful, but as a train passenger I could relinquish control and allow someone else to take responsibility for a while. In this state of relaxation, I felt more present in the moment and therefore able to take in my surroundings.

From the train I watched the ever-changing Dutch landscape as I travelled from cities, and through villages, passing flower fields and farmland. It was fun scrutinising backyards and imagining the stories of families who live there, while grazing cows and graceful swans provided a more delightful backdrop than the traffic-jammed motorway.

This journey made me reflect on the fact that I take on too much responsibility and that it's okay to let someone else be in charge sometimes. It reminded me of the toll that rushing from one thing to another takes on my health. It showed me that relaxation will still get me to my destination. This one-hour train ride reinforced the power of presence. When I am truly present, my relationships become richer and I get to appreciate what I otherwise tend to take for granted.



PHOTO: ALISA ANTON

As a passenger I relinquish control and responsibility for a while

In this together

As I jump aboard a new train, heading towards the future, I remind myself that this too is just a journey and like all journeys there will be ups and downs, as well as new opportunities and experiences.

This year's journey has proved particularly unprecedented for everyone, and the changes to everyday life look to be continuing well into the future.

None of us chose this particular journey, but as I look around the carriage at my fellow passengers, I feel comforted, because we are in this together and, together, we will be okay. «

About the author

Jacinta Noonan is an Australian living in Haarlem. Through her company Platform B, she shares her expertise as an ADHD and Life Coach specialist. Jacinta is passionate about people, creative writing and playing guitar, and is part of the ACCESS Training Network.



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Eerde International Boarding School is the oldest international boarding school in the Netherlands (founded 1934) offering the world recognised International Baccalaureate curriculum to both day and boarding students.

Eerde has a rich history of inclusion and diversity, offering a warm welcome to students from a wide range of countries and cultures. Eerde's student population includes both day and boarding students. The students range in age from four to 19 years, with boarding options available for students age 12 and above.

The campus is located on a tranquil estate, in the forest of Ommen, in the province of Overijssel. Excellent road and rail links put Eerde within easy

reach of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht. The school runs a shuttle service for boarding students between these cities on Monday, Friday and Sunday.

Eerde is unique, its elegant castle—dating from 1715—is home to a modern Library and innovative Study Centre and the student bistro. The separate modern school building architecturally blends into the landscape, and huge windows fill it with natural light and provide wonderful views of the countryside.

The boarding houses are nestled cosily on both sides of the castle, offering boarding students stylish and comfortable accommodations. All boarding students have the opportunity to put their personal stamp on their room, highlighting their personal tastes and individualism while remaining part of the community.

Eerde offers a truly international curriculum delivered by a team of highly-qualified educators. The Primary and Middle School students follow the IPYC and IMYC respectively with the addition of the Cambridge curriculum for English and Math. The High School students follow the Cambridge IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).

At Eerde the focus is on individual development with small class sizes, as well as creating opportunities to develop sporting, cultural, personal and social skills. Eerde is accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the Boarding Schools Association (BSA).

Eerde offers year-round rolling admission. Additional information and submission details can be found at [eerde.nl](https://www.eerde.nl)

To learn more about the educational opportunities at Eerde International Boarding School, please contact the admission professionals: +31(0) 529 451 452 admission@eerdeibs.nl



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With love from Limburg



PHOTO: HUGO THOMASSEN

Some might argue that Maastricht is the culinary capital of the Netherlands. But it is not only the city's delicious delights of restaurants and cafés that offer something for the food lover.

BY TRACEY TAYLOR

With Covid-19 still prevalent, many of us opted for a 'stay-cation' this year. While all of the Netherlands has a lot offer, why not consider a food trip to the capital of the 'sunny south'?

Autumn leaves

In autumn, Maastricht takes on extra special magic. The changing of the season brings with it a slower pace and some gloriously vibrant colours which truly complement the city. Having lived in Maastricht for several years, I have been fortunate enough to try many of its bistros, cafés and restaurants, but there are also other interesting things happening in the world of food and drink.

Life on the vine

While traditionally we might look to the 'big guns' like France and Italy or New World wines from Australia, California or South Africa, did you know that little old Maastricht has its very own vineyard?

The Apostelhoeve on Susserweg has been producing wines since 1970 when vines returned to the lush slopes of the Jeker Valley. The Apostelhoeve wine estate is one of the largest and oldest in the Netherlands. With a focus on five different grape varieties (including Riesling and Pinot Gris), Apostelhoeve has some rather tasty dry, white wines which are beautifully bottled and hugely popular. The vineyard also produces a couple of pretty decent sparkling wines too.

Apostelhoeve is proud to feature in the Dutch Wine guide. Their Cuvée XII is the only Dutch wine to be included in the Top 400 best wines for under 25 euros. The wines of Apostelhoeve can also be found in stores and at various restaurants throughout the city... Cheers! apostelhoeve.nl

A grain of truth

It is rather cool to say that your city has its very own beer brewery, and Stadsbrouwerij de Maastrichter Maltezer (formerly known as De Ridder Brouwerij) is at Oeverwal 12.

Since June 2018, the renowned Maltezer beer is again being brewed (following several test runs) inside a magnificent monumental building overlooking the river Maas. Maltezer beer has been brewed on this site since 1954 and was one of the first specialty beers in the Netherlands. With state-of-the-art techniques, quality ingredients and brewing vats in situ, the Maastricht Maltezer beer has somewhat of a cult following and if you taste, you will understand why!

Also available is the Royale Martinus, a cloudier beer named after the nearby church of St. Martin, and the Powerful Victoria (a dark beer) inspired by the goddess of victory. Special mention too for Sander's Sneaky Stout. Sander is one of the brewers and the story goes that he was asked to brew some beer but couldn't resist formulating a stout at the same time.

The talented people working at this brewery are as passionate as they are inventive, and it's a great spot to pick up some beers or to do a tasting. A selection of their brews are also available at restaurants across the city. stadsbrouwerijdemaastrichtermaltezer.nl

The hum of honey

In Gronsvelt, a little spot just outside of Maastricht, is the Honey Farm, BEEing Pure. Perhaps a small-scale beekeeping business, they are big on their passion for bees. The folks at BEEing Pure are all about the purity of honey and making use of what the immediate countryside has to offer. As a result, the honey they produce is sustainable, made only from local ingredients and contains no additives whatsoever. Sound good? It is, and it tastes amazing too.

BEEing Pure has been going since 1984 and was started by Kenny Essers, who is one of the youngest professional beekeepers in the Netherlands. BEEing

Pure produces an enormous range of honey—check out their website—along with Mede, Honey Mustard and Honey Lollipops. This is a great local business that is also helping the greater good. beingpure.nl

You are what you eat

My grandmother used to say, “you are what you eat” and these days we are more conscious than ever of the benefits to us of what we eat. The societal shift in what we purchase, consume and even grow ourselves, is gaining traction with many looking for food that is fresh from the land, of good quality, sustainable and not processed. Maastricht is blessed to have a wonderful organic market which on Thursday afternoons sells fresh veggies alongside homemade cheeses, jams, chutneys and the like. «

Proost & Smakelijk!

(Note: the above websites are in Dutch, please use Google to translate where necessary.)



PHOTO: MAASTRICHT MARKETING JONATHAN VOS

Did you know...
Limburgse Vlaai, a fruit pie, originates in Limburg, but is available in bakeries across the Netherlands.

About the author

Tracey Taylor lives in Maastricht with boyfriend Dave and cat Little Tubbs. She is Irish, a blogger, radio host and aspiring photographer.

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PHOTO: JESHOOTS

Teaching yourself Dutch

Is it possible, using online tools, to learn a language without entering a classroom?

BY GIULIA
QUARESIMA

Learning a language, particularly as an adult, is a challenge for many. We might need to learn a language for new job responsibilities or simply for personal pleasure. Speaking the local language—or at least knowing some basic phrases—is one of the best ways to tap into a new culture and for internationals to connect with their local community.

Whatever the reason, learning a language might seem anything but fast and easy. It will require time and effort. Difficulties along the way might depend on the mother tongue, on the new language, and on the motivation behind wanting to learn a second (or third or fourth) language.

Learning Dutch

For internationals living in the Netherlands, learning Dutch tends to have more social and community reasoning than being an absolute necessity. As English is spoken almost everywhere in the Netherlands (around 86% of the population speaks English), why learn Dutch? But speaking Dutch can really help in feeling independent, for administrative responsibilities (the dreaded forms), and for practical reasons. It's great to be able to speak to a doctor or dentist in »

Dutch or to the guy who fixes your washing machine—and it will definitely help integration—you can chat with your neighbours and friends.

While only consistent exposure to native speakers creates real fluency (literally, the more you speak Dutch with Dutch people, the better you'll get), there are excellent resources for online language study, both for beginners and those with some experience. From apps to structured online classes and software, learning Dutch can cost from a few euros per month, and many programmes begin with free trial periods.

Apps

One of the most common free apps is Duolingo, offering over 20 languages through sequential programmes divided into levels. To unblock a level

you should finish the previous one, and you earn points for correct answers and win rewards for levelling up. This gamification and setting daily goals keeps motivation high. A bonus is the app's social community—a strong group of learners, who often flag and correct materials and exchange ideas. Please note that for some features, in-app purchase is required.

Babbel works similarly to Duolingo, but it is subscription based and available in 14 languages. The courses simulate real-life speech with lessons by native speakers. Babbel claims to let learners hear authentic language, then duplicate the same, using speech recognition tools to test pronunciation.

Memrise is a free and funny app which creates customised quizzes and games to enjoy the learning experience. One aspect often overlooked in learning a language is reading. Dutchreader meets this requirement, selecting articles and texts according to the appropriate level and learning needs, skills and topic of interest. Moreover, it integrates translations and example sentences which help to understand the meaning.

Podcasts

In addition to apps and tools, podcasts are particularly useful to correct pronunciation and improve listening and comprehension. Podcasts provide flexibility in choosing your area of study and undertaking your learning wherever and whenever you wish, fitting it into busy days.

DutchPod101.com provides audio lessons available from beginners level and includes the fundamentals of vocabulary and grammar. As the dialogues are real-life based, you can also look into some elements of Dutch culture.

Zeg Het In Het Nederlands (Say It In Dutch) is a simplified podcast, ideal for beginners. Speech is slowed down, the vocabulary is simple and the topics cover a range from sports to entertainment. For more advanced

Find the learning method most suitable for you



PHOTO: DOLLAR GILL

Tips for learning a new language

TED translators have seven tips to master a foreign language:

Get real. Set learning goals based on what you want to achieve and so that you don't feel overwhelmed.

Make language-learning a lifestyle change. Find a language habit that you can follow even when you're tired, sick or madly in love.

Play house with the language. Use every opportunity to get exposed to a new language in your daily life (label objects in your house, read a recipe in the language you are learning, change phone and website settings into your target language)

Let technology help you out. Take advantage of the internet and apps, courses, tools available.

Think about language learning as a gateway to new experiences. Transform any fun and new experience into a language learning opportunity.

Make new friends. Find native speakers near you, search for foreign penpals, participate in a Café Language Exchange to practise languages.

Do not worry about making mistakes. One of the most common barriers to conversing in a new language is the fear of making mistakes. But the more you speak, the closer you get to "native-fluency". Plus, native speakers appreciate the effort and any attempt to communicate in their language.

Learning face-to-face

If you do prefer to learn Dutch face-to-face, the British School in the Netherlands' Language Centre offers Dutch and English language courses for both adults and children, bsnlanguagecentre.nl and the Direct Dutch Institute has been teaching Dutch to the international community in The Hague since 1985, directdutch.com

learners, *Echt Gebeurd* (True Story) is a podcast based on more complex grammar and lexicon and features a wide range of stories and tales.

Movies and web series

Another effective way to improve language skills is by watching movies and web series. LLN (Learning Language with Netflix) is a Chrome extension for watching movies and TV shows with two sets of subtitles, as paired translations. A vocabulary-



PHOTO: YURA FRESH

Did you know...
More people are learning a language online than in the entire US public school system

highlighting feature greys-out less common words, and is adjustable to match your vocabulary level. Selecting a word produces a pop-up dictionary and clicking the word allows you to hear it. You can also slow down the dialogue or automatically pause playback at the end of every subtitle, so you can learn line by line. A catalogue recommends movies and shows appropriate to study.

Online courses

Of course, the internet offers thousands of online courses to learn a new language.

Udemy catalogue proposes courses and certifications from institutions around the world and is a great opportunity to study, practise and review material at your own pace. »

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PHOTO: KEVIN CURTIS

Speaking the local language is the best way to tap into the local community

Rosetta Stone has built up courses for 28 languages, offering lessons that are short enough to complete each day but long enough to be effective. Rosetta Stone's interface is generally easy to use, and its lessons incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening, all in one lesson. You can also choose to subscribe to a monthly payment or purchase a lifetime license.

A popular online Dutch course has been developed by the University of Groningen and it includes listening and speaking exercises and direct contact via Skype with a teacher. Oefenen.nl and Learndutch.org are two common websites which offer exercises and video lessons to improve basic literacy in the Dutch language.

Communities

At some point, you need to connect with actual native speakers. Online language communities are growing in popularity as they can connect students and teachers for one-to-one lesson experiences.

HelloTalk, such an app, matches you with someone who speaks the language you are learning and wants to learn your mother language. From chat, to online video calls, the app is focused on conversation.

Italki is a social network having a large database of teachers and language-partners in hundreds of languages. You can find a tutor or a certified teacher to fit your learning style and schedule, book a private lesson or class, or simply chat to practice. Sessions take place over a video conference tool. Similarly, Flowently is an Amsterdam-based company based whose aim is to connect students and tutors. It has packages valid for one year and for all levels.

You can learn online

There is a never-ending dilemma about online learning versus the traditional classroom method. On one side, technology saves money and time, is flexible, and enables you to follow your own schedule, but this independence requires strong self-motivation to get results.

A classroom-based experience gives a structure and routine, and the face-to-face interaction with teachers and students helps in moving forward and practising with immediate feedback.

Each experience is unique and different, so perhaps give a few options a try and find the learning method most suitable for you. The only rule is to enjoy the learning experience. «

About the author

Giulia Quaresima has been living with her husband in The Hague for two years. As a language enthusiast she teaches Italian and as an expat she continues to learn Dutch.

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- Teresa Moynihan • Toastmasters of The Hague
- Veena Joseph • Volunteer The Hague • Women's Business Initiative International

Relocating

Whether you are planning a relocation to the Netherlands, or have recently arrived and are getting settled, these partners have some of the services you may require.

- ABN AMRO • Dutch Tax Returns • Expat Help • FVB De Boer
- GMW Advocaten (Legal Expat Desk) • Independent Expat Finance • Mynta Law Immigration Lawyers • Prijsvergelijken
- Tulip Expat Services

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Another category which speaks for itself, and includes members of our ACCESS Trainers Network.

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- Big Ben Kids • Kinderopvang 2SAMEN • True Colors Childcare
- Villa Bloom • Zein Childcare

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- Amity International School Amsterdam • British School in the Netherlands • BSN Language Centre • Direct Dutch Institute • Eerde International Boarding School • Hannah Behrens • HSV (Haagsche Schoolvereeniging) • International School Delft • International School of The Hague • Nord Anglia International School Rotterdam (NAISR) • Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS) • SPEAK • Winford Bilingual Primary School • Ute Limacher-Riebold

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Acknowledging our Partners, Counsellors, Trainers & Volunteer Managers
ACCESS is grateful for many things, not the least, the work of our strong and diverse volunteer community. They do the work – but the partners invest in us so that we are able to carry out our mission to serve the international community. Should you make use of them, do mention ACCESS referred you. Should you wish to help us serve the international community and include you in our acknowledgements, get in touch with prd@access-nl.org.

The past period has been one of uncertainty for many. We have all learnt things – about ourselves, our neighbours, our colleagues, our families. We have admired and been inspired. But, at ACCESS, we have carried on.



Our **Helpdesk** has attended to over **600** inquiries since this period started.



Our **Childbirth Preparation Courses** are now available **ON** as well as **OFF** line.



Our **Counselling Network** has continued to provide the support the community needs.

And, our back-office teams have supported all the bits, pieces, puzzles and trickiness of transition.

We **thank everyone** who has trusted us, and just as importantly, everyone who has served **you**. And, we thank the **Partners who support** and fund our work. We will continue our work, and hope it continues to serve those it intends to help.

Looking for additional information?

Be sure to check the following expat centres' websites for localised information sessions about living in the Netherlands:

- **IN Amsterdam**
iamsterdam.com/en/our-network/in-amsterdam
- **Expat Centre Leiden**
expatcentreleiden.nl/en
- **The Hague International Centre**
thehagueinternationalcentre.nl
- **International Welcome Centre Utrecht Region**
welcome.utrechtregion.com/en

For additional information, please visit: access-nl.org

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Discover more



Safe and healthy

Our teams have been keeping track of the news over the summer, and keeping tabs on how our lives here in the Netherlands may slowly return to a bit more 'interaction'. There is the anticipation of gathering again, exchanging stories and experiences balanced with the continued trepidation of 'how do we stay safe & healthy'. We have done all we can at the office, to be able to welcome our teams back – but, also keep in mind that for several within our

community, caution continues to predominate. And so, looking at our community and the tools we work with we hope to have found some systems – for all concerns – and look forward to welcoming our teams back, slowly.

Whether from the office, or through our online tools though, know this: we are to continue to serve you, as best we can. Welcome.

Community & Media Partners

Our community partner groups and initiatives are listed below for additional support and information. Looking for something else, missing your community?

Get in touch with our Helpdesk so we can help you further.

- American Women's Club of The Hague • Amsterdam Mamas • Broadcast Amsterdam • Delft MaMa • Dutch Buzz • Dutch News
- Expat Events • ExpatINFO Holland • Expatriate Archive Centre • Expats Utrecht • Expat Republic • Expat Spouses Initiative
- Families in Global Transition • Here in Holland • i am not a tourist (IANAT) bv • IamExpat • ICP International Community Platform
- International Community Advisory Panel (ICAP) • International Locals Amsterdam • M-space Graphic Designers
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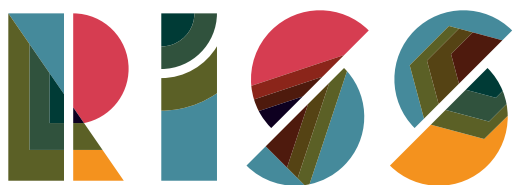
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