

## Holland trip 1970

### 27 April (Monday)

Left Oxford at 9 am and arrived Lenham 5:30 pm, after spending a few hours at Hampton Court and Palace in London. Very beautiful. Hyacinths and tulips are out.

Hotel hard to find. Found *Caravelle*, small (6-8 rooms). Run by young couple. Spent comfortable night. Cost £7 for bed and breakfast, £2.17 for supper. Talked with engineer from Yorkshire and watched TV.

### 28 April

Left for Dover and arrived there about 9:40. Got on ferry almost immediately. Sun bright with a few hazy clouds. Breeze a bit chilly still, but trip across very good. It took about 5 hours, and became a bit boring towards the end. Entry into Belgium was simple, and crossing into Holland even more so. Dutch officials did not even open our passports. We crossed another ferry from Breskens to Vlissingen (about 20 minutes) and drove on to Goes, where we found *Hotel Ockenburg*, a small hotel with 10-12 rooms. Stayed there for fl. 64 plus supper fl. 26. Quite comfortable.

### 29 April

Solved first problems with language re restaurant. Packed up and left towards Rotterdam. Zeeland with much farm land, ready for seeding. No leaves on the trees. Cool and stormy. Crossed Zeeland brug (new, 5 km long), about 22 feet above the water. Van hard to control in the strong crosswind. Drove through Rotterdam and cashed some cheques. Traffic through Rotterdam was quite easy, with main roads well signposted and laid out. Drove on to Delft, and from VVV got a place to stay near market square (Nieuwe Kerk), for fl. 60. Bare but functional. Saw Nieuwe Kerk, huge, with nice windows and nice organ. Saw beginning of wedding, then left for Madurodam. Church was cold (feet), and bride probably had woollies on. Madurodam was beautiful. Weather was bearable, in between a couple of rain showers. Back in Delft ate supper at *Reynsdorp*, for fl. 51. Food good, but expensive.

### 30 April

*Koninginnedag*. Bands started to arrive on Market Square at 7:30 am. One band started playing already at 7:00. About six bands marched up, some students (?) with bottles and glasses livened up the proceedings, and the mayor held a speech. Then the rain began, and things slowed down a bit. Games started and continued, rain or no rain. We left for Keukenhof where we saw lots of beautiful flowers. About half the tulips were out, but in the greenhouse the tulips were gorgeous. The weather was quite good, with occasional sun—at least it was not cold. On the way north passed through classy areas near Wassenaar, even saw Canadian Embassy, new Canadian flag and all (nice to see that), and soon reached Haarlem. From VVV got place to stay (fl. 70)—Schreuder's. 4 Spaarnhofstraat (?). Nicest place we stayed, with six beds and a big shepherd dog. Had a nice talk with Mr. and Mrs. Schreuder. Before that had warm meal (*biefstuk*—very tough) at *De Lantaern* on Frankestraat, at 3:30 (everyone hungry). Visited with Wytze and Gebby Brouwer in Leiden for about 1.5 hours (a surprise for them). They rented a furnished large old house for fl.350 per month. Not bad.

### 1 May

Left Haarlem about 9, after an excellent breakfast, for Alkmaar. Got to cheese market in good time. Were contacted (pushed) by some pushy tourists but saw lots of cheese and cheese carriers. Weather beautiful. Afterwards made boat trip through Alkmaar canals, under some very low bridges, ate pancakes and pea soup for lunch, and headed for Terschuur, where we arrived about 3:45. Warmly received by *oom* and *tante*.

After supper we drove to Woudenberg to pick up Henk and Reina van Bentum who were to help entertain the English-speaking guests. They were married about 6 weeks earlier (used a bus to transport bride and groom and relatives). Had a near-accident when turning into the narrow drive from the left-hand lane. A little 'bug' thought to pass on the right-hand side while we were turning. He squealed but stopped in time.

Tante Fo apparently had been depressed prior to our arrival but was OK most of the time when we were there.

### 2 May

Dull and rainy. In the morning Henk van Bentum gave me a guided tour through the plant. Quite an impressive operation. In the afternoon we went to Achterberg via the back roads—interesting sights and smells here and there. Drove past the old house to the mill site. Found the place sold to a Randewijk, a contractor, married to Corrie Apeldoorn (since 1948), about 4 months earlier. They had, in several months, stripped about 12 tons 'oud ijzer' out of the place and had remodelled the old office. The grain and feed business thus has vanished. Had a nice visit with the family, then crossed on the ferry east of the Grebbeberg and drove along the winter dike of the Rhine as far as Arnhem. The Rhine was quite high. Saw one of the three *stuwen* in the Rhine to keep the water level up.

At Arnhem crossed over the bridge, drove past my old school, now called *Christelijk Atheneum*, and over the Veluwe back to Terschuur. Got back at 6:30, half an hour late for supper. However, we still ate. At night saw Henk's *dias* of Canada, and showed ours of Alberta and California. Jan and Jurri, and Hans and Henrietta (to be married June 5) also came.

### 3 May (Sunday)

All went to church in the morning. Also tante Fo who, according to Reina, had not gone for 6 months. Children behaved well, though they understood nothing. Minister was not too inspiring. Had coffee and Wim and Henny's, close to church. He is 33 now, with rapidly greying hair, and looks quite a bit like grandpa WHH. Good dinner back at tante Fo's, and in afternoon drove to Garderen to see Pé and wife Henny and two children in their new house. Married in 1967. Still as opinionated and loud as ever. Friendly but not likeable. Church in Garderen supposedly dates to 1000 AD. Pé took us to some old hillocks on the *hei* (heather), burial places from 1000 BC (urns with ashes were dug up there). Also walked at *Hummenschans*, a circular defense barrier (apparent) of unknown origin. At night I beat Henk (only just) at a game of chess. Fairly good game, though dull at first.

#### 4 May

Wim picked me up at 6:45 am to go to the calf market at Barneveld. Very interesting. Farmers sold their fat calves (160-180 kg) to packing plant buyers with a lot of hand-slapping and price-whispering. Prices were quite good apparently, at fl.4 per kg live weight. Soon after breakfast we went to Dronkelaar. Had dinner and a nice visit. They even postponed their *middagslaap*. Showed about 50 slides. Oom Jan asked too many questions. Kids messed up the hay a bit. Uncles and aunts are still the same, though older (63 to 73). Tante Gijs is getting ready to go to Canada for 3 weeks in July.

Later stopped at tante Eef and oom Lubbert in Nijkerk (Bunschoterweg 50). She is 75, he almost 79 and shaky. She looked old but still in quite good shape, with skirts to the floor. They were used to neighbour children, so easily put up with ours. We had tea and talked, oom Lubbert mostly about two sons, one of which (Evert) drowned in Canada. The other one (Lubbert) is in Fort William, apparently is accident-prone. Therefore, Canada is bad. We stopped in a store in Amersfoort, had some supper there, and went home. At night visited with oom Jan and tante Mien. According to her, oom Jaap "*staat hoger aangeschreven*" than oom Jan. According to him he wrote the last letter to Dad and is still waiting for a reply. Had a nice visit, including war stories.

#### 5 May

*Bevrijdingsdag* 25 years ago. Excitement all over the country. Parades and games everywhere. We went about 75 miles south, via Arnhem and Nijmegen, to the War and Resistance Museum at Overloon, near Limburg. Quite impressive, particularly the documentation section inside, on the pre-war and war years. The tanks and guns outside were more meaningful to the children than the pictures and posters, but the fighting and hunger pictures also conveyed a message.

On the way home stopped at the Canadian war cemetery at Groesbeek, where several thousand Canadian soldiers are buried. Many wreaths were laid there on May 4, the eve of the liberation. Many of them were killed in the fierce battle of Overloon. Got home about 7:30 pm and watched a TV program-documentary about war years. Mostly interviews with various types of people. Very well done.

#### 6 May

Visited Muiderslot. Nice, though I had to translate all the comments of the guide (made in Dutch). The castle is set up as in use by P.C. Hooft in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He used to meet there with the Muiderkring. Saw various ingenious devices in the kitchen, including a built-in well, an automatic rotisserie, and a waffle iron. In the *wapenzaal* saw a *ribbenlichter*, a *ploertendoder*. Learned the origin of expressions like *in de gaten houden*, *achter de ellebogen*, *op zijn tellen passen*, *hij zit op zijn geld*, *halve gare* (from the picture of the head-baker), *klinkende munt*, *het geheim van de smid*. By the fire in the *ridderzaal* saw a bench with reversible back, to alternately warm front and back.

Headed for Amsterdam. Parked easily on the Stadhouderskade, walked through an open-air market, and took the tram to the Dam where we saw the *Damslapers*, but not too much of the National Monument. Went on a boat trip of canals and harbour (hot, but interesting, with a guide who spoke English acceptably and asked for money). Saw the old merchants' houses on the Herengracht, and big ships in the harbour. This guide did

Dutch first, then English and German. Our guide in Alkmaar did German before English, and spoke English badly.

Visited the Bijenkorf. And had no time for the 'Rijksmuseum'. We ate at Wimpy's Bar and headed for Terschuur again. Watched *Feyenoord* beat *Celtic* (Scottish) at soccer for the Europa cup, played at Milan. Good game, tied 1-1 at the end, and won 2-1 towards the end of 30 minutes over-time. Jan is quite a soccer enthusiast.

Dropped off one of the Edmonton folders (in Dutch) at *oom* Jan's. Undoubtedly appreciated. Had to talk some more. Dixie rescued me to come and say good bye to Henk and Reina who were heading home on their scooter.

### **7 May, Ascension Day**

Packed up and left about 9:30. Beautiful day. Traffic fair, not too busy yet. Drove through Voorthuizen, Elburg (bypassed Zwolle), to Kampen, Meppel, Assen, Groningen, Uithuizermeden. Saw tents and people in bathing suits on the beach of the Veluwemeer. Crossed the IJssel on a narrow bridge at Kampen and the Zwarte Water on a ferry near Meppel. We had to wait about three ferry trips to get across. Followed Drentse Hoofdvaart for quite a distance. Finally arrived at uncle Ben's place about 3:30 pm and had tea there. He had been waiting for hours and had almost given up hope. Along the way in the morning (e.g., in Elburg) we saw many people all dressed up, walking or on bicycles, presumably coming home from church. A few women in old costume.

After talking a bit, uncle Ben came along and we visited Dirk Werkman (*commissionnaire*) and Harm and Julia Werkman (cousins to Herman Werkman from Edmonton) and Zus and Ebel Kremer (she is also a Werkman cousin). Were invited to stay at Harm and Julia's place (he is a part-time *spruitenboer*). Kremer seems smarter and more sensible than the other two men. Julia is Hungarian by birth and was very nice. Gave us supper and breakfast and made us feel very much at home. Much appreciated. She needed some listeners for some sad stories about relatives and past happenings. Harm took us to look at polders, old and new, and showed us the inside of some big farm buildings. Everything under one roof. One with five tractors, farming about 250 (500?) acres. Grain, potatoes, *spruitkool*. Other? The area is described as the breadbasket of Holland.

Also stopped in 't Lage van de Weg to see the old Wierenga home.

### **9 May**

Packed up, picked up uncle Ben in Uithuizermeeden, stopped to see his cousin Trijn (née Wierenga), and went to Gronigen. Saw the Martinatoren, had coffee, and went to Hoogkerk. Saw the wife of Eeltje Werkman (Herman Werkman's brother), and dropped Ben off at a bus stop. Headed for Leeuwarden where we walked around, saw some Fries ladies in costume (coming from the cattle market?), had lunch at V&D, and bought some Fries *krentenbrood* and *suikerbrood* (very good, both).

### **10 May**

Looked at some Fries farms from a distance and soon reached the Afsluitdijk. Stopped at the monument. In Noord Holland went off the main road and drove through Medemblik and Andijk. Lots of water and lots of tulips, accessible only by water. Came through Grootebroek and Lutjebroek, and soon reached Amsterdam. Passed there easily on good

roads and got to Leiden about 6 to eat and do some shopping. Ate in V&D (pork chops and beans and potato for four, plus milk and tea, all very tasty, for fl.19.70). Looked for souvenir shops but found none, sad to say. Did manage to get a cheese knife and a little windmill. Left about 8:25 for Hoek van Holland where we arrived about 9:15 and soon were on board the St. George, after parting with fl.274. Boat left about 11. Cabin with four berths was a bit cramped for six, but we survived, and slept at least part of the time.

### **May 11 (Saturday)**

Awakened with orange juice at 6, and got off shortly after 6:30, in foggy England. The weather had been nice all week apparently, with sweltering temperatures as high as 73F. After breakfast in Colchester (bacon and eggs and fresh soft rolls, all for 30 shillings) we reached home about 1:30 pm, tired, and glad to be home again. It had been a good trip, covering about 1400 miles.

The 'Canada' sign on the van resulted in comments from several Dutch people, and also from some Britishers in Colchester, one from a man who spent 16 years in Ottawa with the airforce.

In Holland, hotels and food were expensive, as was gasoline and colour film. Ferries and admissions were generally cheap, as were parking and booklets about tourist attractions. VVV service was very good. Roads and traffic in Holland were busy in spots, but generally better than in England. Many good main roads, four-lane in important areas, made distance covered easily.