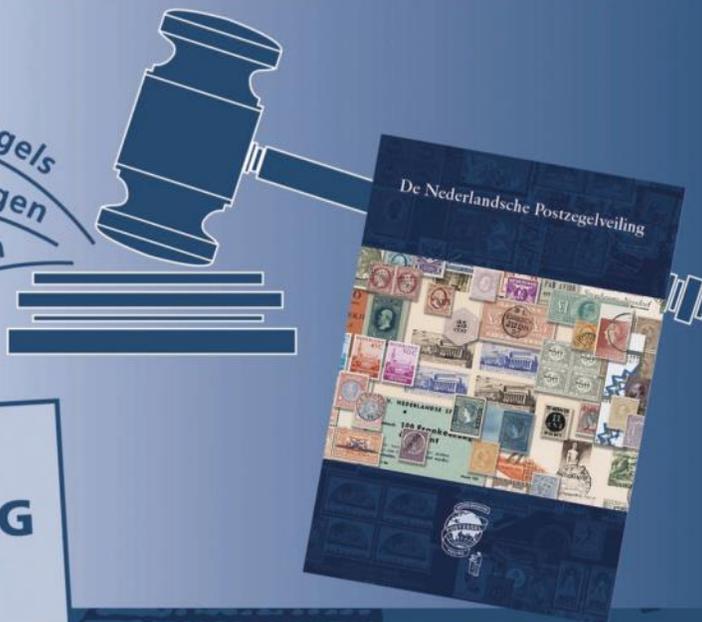




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# NETHERLANDS PHILATELY

## Magazine of the American Society for Netherlands Philately; Volume 43/1

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### Editor's Message

September, 2018

Dear Fellow Collectors,

This is the start of yet another volume of our Magazine. This issue has again a wide variety of articles. Two deal with mail during the era preceding postage stamps. Another article uses postcards to describe the general worker strike of 1903. There is also one that provides details about the mobile post office used in 1953 to sell the postage stamp to aid the victims of the flooding that had occurred earlier that year. Last but not least are the magazine reviews. Surely, there must be something in this issue that you like. If not, feel free to write about your collecting interests and drop it in the (e-)mail. I can always use material!

Things have been relatively calm over here, but September will be busy again with, yes, you guessed it, travel (Canadian Rockies this time). However, I also have expanded my exhibit on mail that could not be delivered or only after great effort difficulty from two frames to five frames. I will present this exhibit at the Greater Houston Stamp Show again later this month. Last year, the exhibit was awarded silver, let's see what this year brings; I'll keep you posted.

In the mean time, stay healthy.

Ben

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### **Advice to Authors**

Please submit your text in MS Word, and indicate where each illustration belongs. Submit illustrations as full color scans (at 600 dpi). Contact the Magazine Editor in case of questions.

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\$30 half page and  
\$20 for a quarter page.

# 1845 letter to Ommerschans; what has that to do with the World Heritage Sites?

by Hans Kremer

I often look on Ebay to see if there is anything interesting regarding Netherlands postal history. Such was definitely the case with the letter shown in Figure 1.

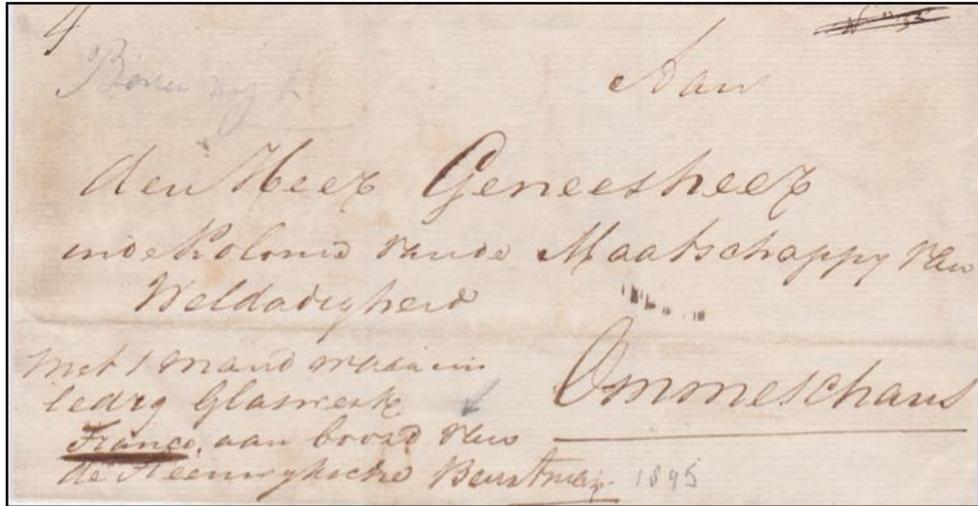
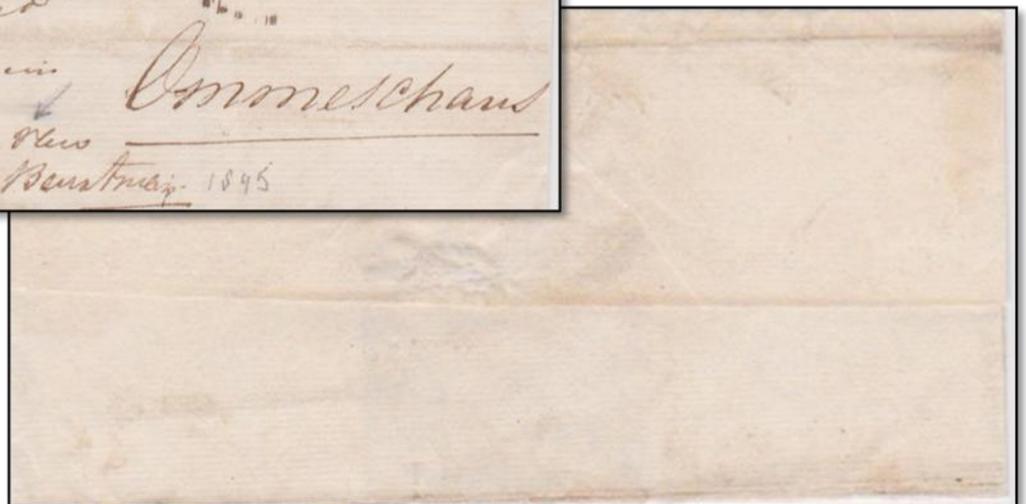


Figure 1: Letter sent to the Maatschappij van Weldadigheid in Ommerschans in 1845.



When I saw this cover, I was intrigued by the address and the hand-written note on it, which read: “Aan den Heer Geneesheer van de Kolonie van de Maatschappij van Weldadigheid” “Ommerschans”, and, “Met 1 mand waarin ledig Glaswerk aan boord van de Steenwijksche Beurtman,” which translates as: ‘To the physician of the Colony of the Benevolent Society in Ommerschans’, and ‘With one basket containing empty glassware, aboard the trading barge from Steenwijk.’

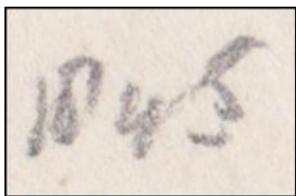


Figure 2: "1845" on inside flap of letter.

The letter was prepaid “Franco” and no departure and receiving cancels are applied. No sender was indicated on the back of the letter. At the bottom of the cover is written “1845”, and on the inside of the flap is also handwritten “1845” (Figure 2).

I’ll discuss the various aspects of the cover one at a time.

## Maatschappij van Weldadigheid (Benevolent Society)

After Napoleon’s defeat in 1815 there was high unemployment and poverty in the Netherlands. In 1818, nearly one third of the population depended on charity. General Johannes van den Bosch (see Figure 3), decided to set up the Maatschappij van Weldadigheid (Benevolent Society), whose Permanent Committee overseeing the operations was located in The Hague.

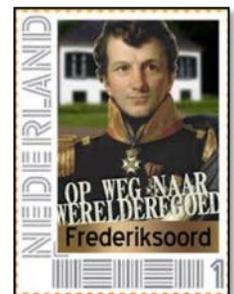


Figure 3: Johannes van den Bosch.

The central idea was: we will pay for land and housing; the poor will work to provide for their own maintenance. In this way it will cost the state nothing. Even better, eventually the poor would be able to repay their debt to the state, thanks to (agricultural) surpluses. The purpose of the Society was mainly to improve the condition of the poor and lower classes by providing these people with work, support and education. Giving these people an education might also improve their status in society and create chances of a better future.

There only seemed to be positives to this approach: an increased domestic food supply, innovative farming techniques, less unemployment.

The Dutch example received a great deal of international attention, with similar experiments taking place elsewhere in Europe.

From 1818 to 1825 the Society founded seven agricultural ‘Colonies’: five in the Netherlands and two in Belgium.



It bought a total of approximately 80 square kilometers of land. The Dutch Colonies were located in the North-East of the country, on cheap, uncultivated heathland (see map in Figure 4). The intention was to develop the land and stimulate agriculture. The first Colony was called Frederiksoord, after the patron of the Society (Second son of King William I).

Each colony was different, but in all Colonies, a new and similar landscape was soon created: with straight avenues, waterways and facilities (schools, churches, etc.)

There were two types of Colonies, free colonies and penal colonies. In the four free Colonies (Frederiksoord, Wilhelminaoord, Willemsoord, and Wortel (Belgium)) lived families, in many cases with children. In principle they could elect to live there of their own accord and could also decide to return to 'normal' society.

In the three penal colonies (Ommerschans, Veenhuizen, and Merksplas (Belgium)) people were admitted against their will. Penal colonists, beggars and vagrants had to work the land collectively, under the direction of successful colonists. At

Figure 4: Map showing the five Dutch locations of the Maatschappij van Weldadigheid.

that time, according to the law, beggars and vagrants were considered criminals.

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the three former free colonies in Netherlands invested in new, larger-scale farms, with forestry being part of the program. Schools for agriculture and horticulture were added, along with buildings for the care of the elderly.

In the 1920s, the Society began with the sale of land and buildings to private individuals. It continued to exist, but had only a limited social function.

After a period of vacancy and decay, but also of new construction (prisons, social institutions, health care), a new era begins. Interest in the cultural landscape with its heritage value and the stories associated with it begins to grow.

Programs to reclaim the landscapes are initiated and the buildings are restored. *In 2018, exactly two hundred years after the creation of the first Colony, the seven Dutch and Belgian Colonies with their typical cultural landscape may become Unesco World Heritage sites.*

## World Heritage

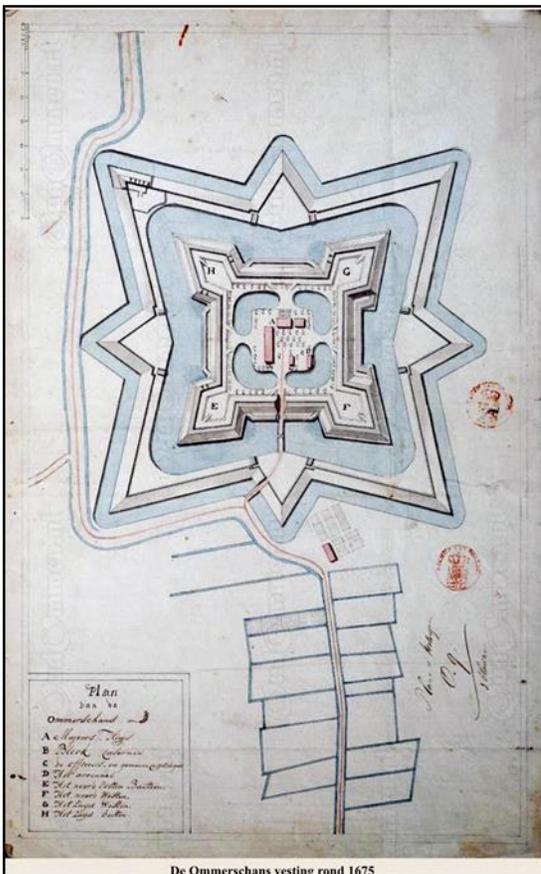
A **World Heritage Site** is a landmark or area which is selected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as having cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance, and is legally protected by international treaties.

To be selected, a World Heritage Site must be an already classified landmark, unique in some respect as a geographically and historically identifiable place having special cultural or physical significance. It may signify a remarkable accomplishment of humanity, and serve as evidence of our intellectual history on the planet. As of July 2017, 1,073 sites are listed of which nine are in the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

In 2014 PostNL issued a set of ten stamps commemorating these Dutch World Heritage Sites (Figure 5). These nine cultural and natural heritage sites are unique in the world. They tell the extraordinary story of the Netherlands and the Dutch in the field of water management and civil engineering design. The Dutch World Heritage Sites are: Schokland and Surroundings (1995) the Defense Line of Amsterdam (two stamps) (1996), Windmill Network at Kinderdijk-Elshout (1997), Willemstad, Curacao (1997), the Ir. D. F. Wouda Pumping Station (1998), Beemster polder (1999), the Rietveld Schröder House (2000), the Wadden Sea (2009), and the Center of Amsterdam (two stamps) (2010). A panorama photo is depicted on each stamp with the image continuing onto the tabs next to the stamp.

## Ommerschans

The Ommerschans Colony was built at the same location as the original defensive redoubt. It was originally built during the first half of the 17th century, and expanded about 1670 with the purpose of halting groups friendly with the Spanish, who had their eyes on cities north of Ommen.



It was originally built during the first half of the 17th century, and expanded about 1670 with the purpose of halting groups friendly with the Spanish, who had their eyes on cities north of Ommen. However, it soon lost its importance after the Republic of the Seven United Provinces signed peace accords with various of her previous enemies. The Ommerschans was ultimately converted to a weapons depot, until the Maatschappij van Weldadigheid took it over.

The first penal colony was built in Ommerschans in 1820, and it was then the largest building of the Netherlands. The building was in the form of a quadrangle, and consisted of two stories, containing thirty large rooms and smaller apartments (Figure 7). Each side of the square was about 100 meters. In the interior were the houses of the underofficers.

Figure 6: Ommerschans Fortress around 1675.

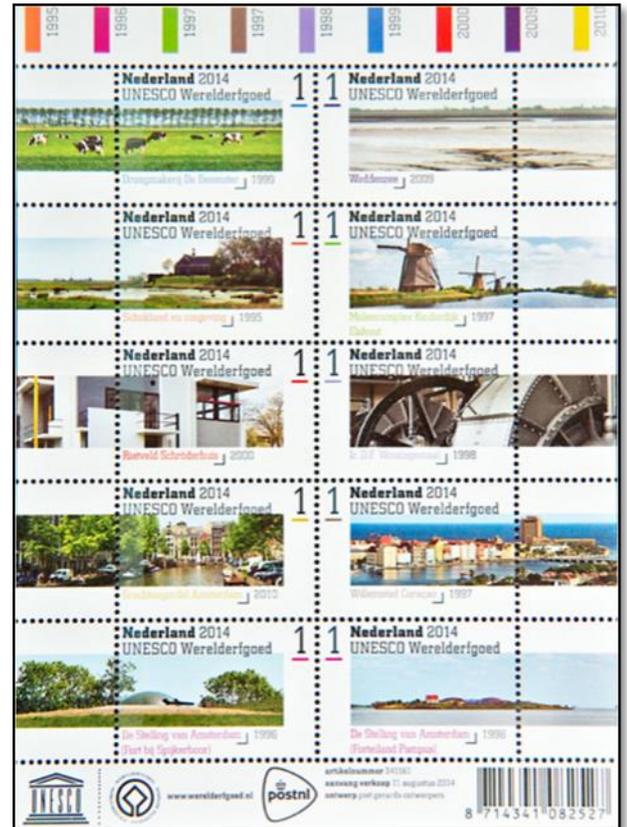


Figure 5: 2014 Dutch World Heritage Stamps.

Each of the thirty rooms in the interior were intended to contain forty individuals, or 1200 in all.

The beds were in the form of hammocks, which were hoisted up to the ceiling during the day. The benches were so made as to contain, separately, the clothes of each of the colonists. They slept and ate in the same room.

A moat surrounded the building with a number of farms (21 at one time) in the outlying area, where the colonists worked under the supervision of soldiers and free farmers (Figure 8).

For those not able to do the hard farm work other work was available as spinning, sewing, weaving, knitting, for women and clothes workshop for men. There was also a boot maker, smithy, a rope yard, as well as a nail-making, and carpentry workshop, plus large jute weaving looms. To keep an eye on the sanitary conditions and to treat its patients a doctor was available, with its own apothecary.

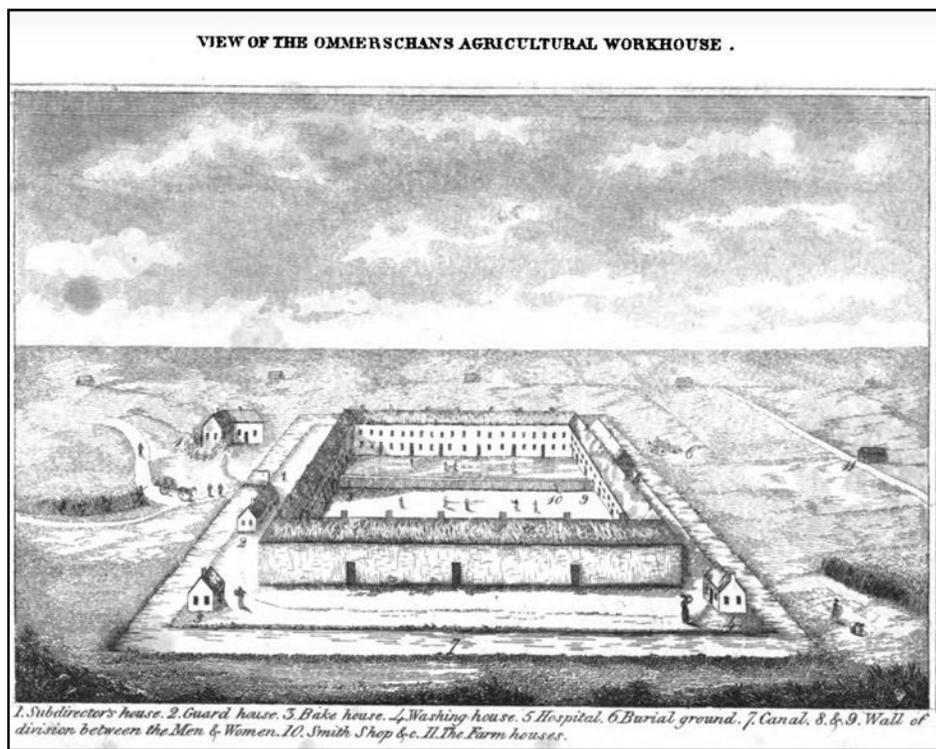


Figure 7: Ommerschans Colony around 1830.



Figure 8: Ommerschans property with 21 farms and guardhouses (Wachthuis).

The colonists were paid for their work. They were paid in money that could only be used in the Colony (Figure 9). The reason was that otherwise too much money (or all of it) would be spent on alcohol purchased some way outside the Colony.



Figure 9: 10 cent Ommerschans coin.

The colonies were also set up to educate the people, so there was a school, annex teachers' house on the premises, but because children (from 8 years) had to earn money not much schooling was done. Although men and women were separated that did not have much effect; most girls and women became pregnant, making the presence of a physician/midwife even more necessary.

Because of financial problems, the colony was taken over by the government in 1859. As of 1870 all women and girls were transferred out. Some of the farms were sold to the residents, together with large pieces of land. In 1889, the colony was razed and its lands assigned to be used by the Veldzicht reformatory located a bit to the north of the Ommerschans.

### Dr. A.A.H. Hamer Physician/Surgeon/Midwife at Ommerschans

In the "Opregte Haarlemsche Courant" (the oldest Dutch newspaper (1656!)) of March 31, 1832 was an ad for the position of "GENEESHEER-, HEEL- AND VROEDMEESTER" (Physician, Surgeon, Mid'wife') in the Ommerschans. The position would pay fl. 700/year and came with a free home and garden. To be married was preferred.

The first Ommerschans physician had been appointed in 1826 and by 1845 (the year the cover in Figure 1 was sent) there had been four predecessors. In 1834 Samuel de Goede had been appointed, but over time he (and his family) had developed a severe drinking problem and after some reprimands he was fired in 1843. An ad, similar to the one shown here, resulted in Augustinus Antonius Hubertus Hamer becoming the next physician in Ommerschans later in 1843. We must assume then that the 1845 letter shown in Figure 1 was addressed to him.

Dr. Hamer was highly regarded and he worked at Ommerschans until the early 1870s. He reorganized the apothecary and from 1851 on medicines for all colonies was supplied by the Ommerschans apothecary. In 1856 Dr. Hamer started growing his own herbs needed for various recipes and he also became the eye doctor for the Veenhuizen colony in 1861.

That he was an able physician/surgeon showed in 1853 when he delivered a baby by Caesarian for which the mother was so grateful that she named the child Caesar Peter August (Dr. Hamer's first name was Augustinus) as shown by the birth registry excerpt presented in Figure 11.

Opregte Haarlemsche Courant  
31-03-1832 © f



Figure 10: Opregte Haarlemsche Courant March 31, 1832.

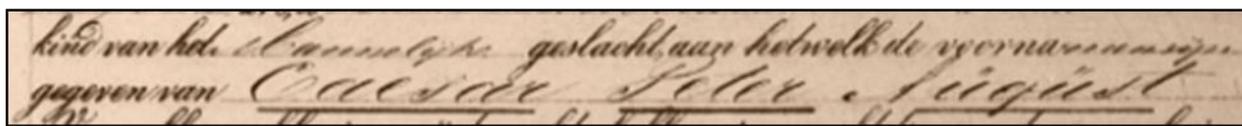


Figure 11: Registration of the birth of a male child in 1853, named "Caesar Peter August."

In 1867 King William III awarded him (and others) with a bronze medal for their selfless work during the cholera epidemic of 1866, in which nevertheless 21,000 Dutch citizens had died.

Dr. Hamer passed away on November 14, 1879, after having retired some time earlier.



Figure 12: Front of Bronze medal awarded to Dr. Hamer in 1867.

## Postal services

Not knowing for sure where the letter from Figure 1 came from we have to make some guesses and go from there.

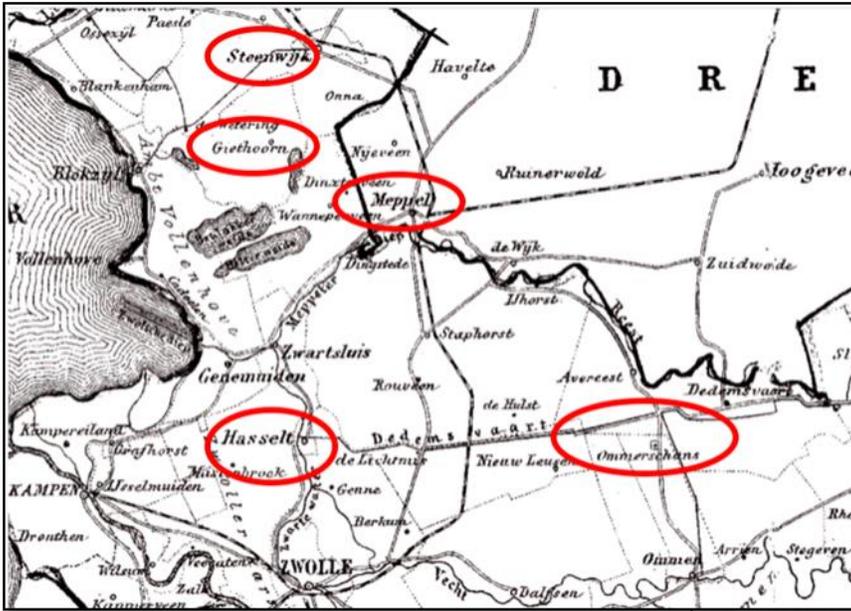


Figure 13: Steenwijk-Giethoorn-Meppel-Hasselt-Ommerschans barge route.

Vincent Erdin thinks that the letter might have originated in Willemsoord, one of the free colonies just north of Steenwijk (Figure 3). The contents was mentioned as “one basket with empty glassware”. I have seen some correspondence in the [www.alledrenten.nl](http://www.alledrenten.nl) Website that mentions a shortage of glassware, because glassware was too often not returned after its use. Maybe this shipment would alleviate the glassware shortage at the Ommerschans’ apothecary. The letter was prepaid (Franco) and most likely was nothing more than a note accompanying the basket on board the barge and never entered the official mail system.

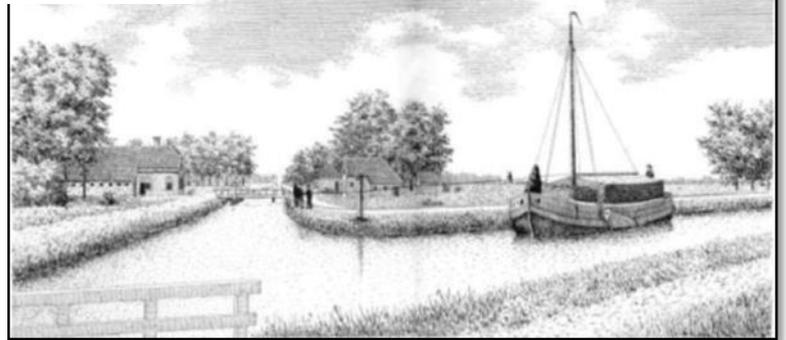


Figure 14: Typical Dedemsvaart barge rounding a corner into a side channel, drawn by a horse.

In 1833 at the request of the mayor of Avereest (just to the north of the Ommerschans) a postal distribution office was opened at de Lichtmis. De Lichtmis is located where the Dedemsvaart crosses the main road between Zwolle and Meppel. Mail from and to the northern provinces was transported along this route by mail coach. Daily pick-up and drop off of mail coming from and going to the Lichtmis, was at bridge #7 across the Dedemsvaart (later renamed Balkbrug). Since by far the most mail came from or was destined for the Ommerschans colony the pick-up/drop off location was moved there later.

De Lichtmis distribution office reported to both Meppel and Zwolle.

Letters going south from Ommerschans received a Zwolle marker, while mail traveling north from Ommerschans would receive a Meppel marker.

Mail sent from the more Northern colonies sent to the main office in The Hague would travel via Meppel but mail sent from Ommerschans to The Hague would go through Zwolle. Since postal rates depended on weight and distance traveled, sending a letter through Meppel would be more expensive than sending a letter through Zwolle. See for example the letters shown in Figure 15 and 16.

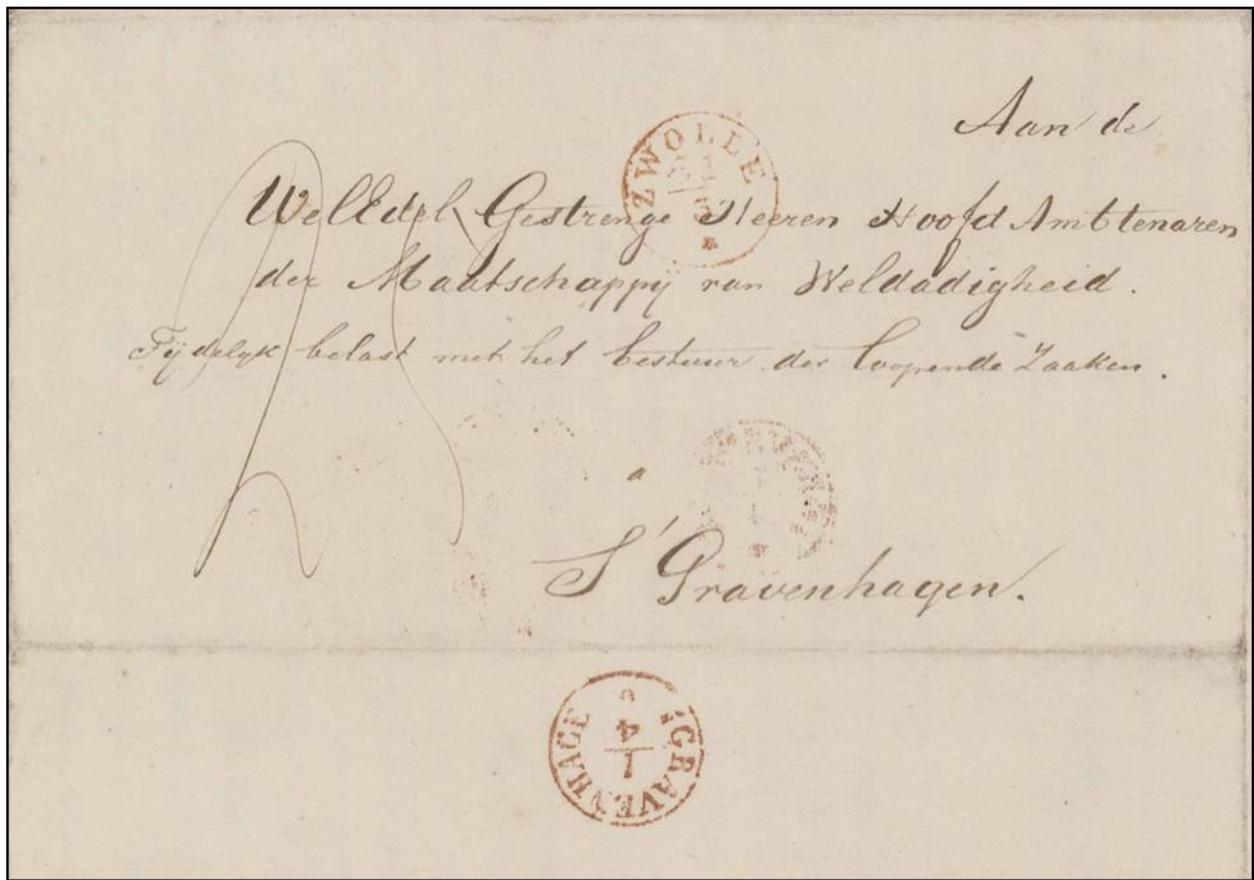


Figure 15: Folded letter, sent March/April 1842 from Ommerschans to The Hague, via Zwolle. 25 cent letter rate; based on distance (between 100 and 175 km).

Anybody looking for an Ommerschans postal marker should consider himself lucky finding one. It was not until 1868 that the Ommerschans got its own sub-post office. The Ommerschans straight line marker was in use only from 1868 till 1874, when it changed its name to Balkbrug.

*Note:* As always: Postal History is History. It's amazing what you can learn from a single cover.

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<http://ommerschans.nl> Vereniging de Ommerschans

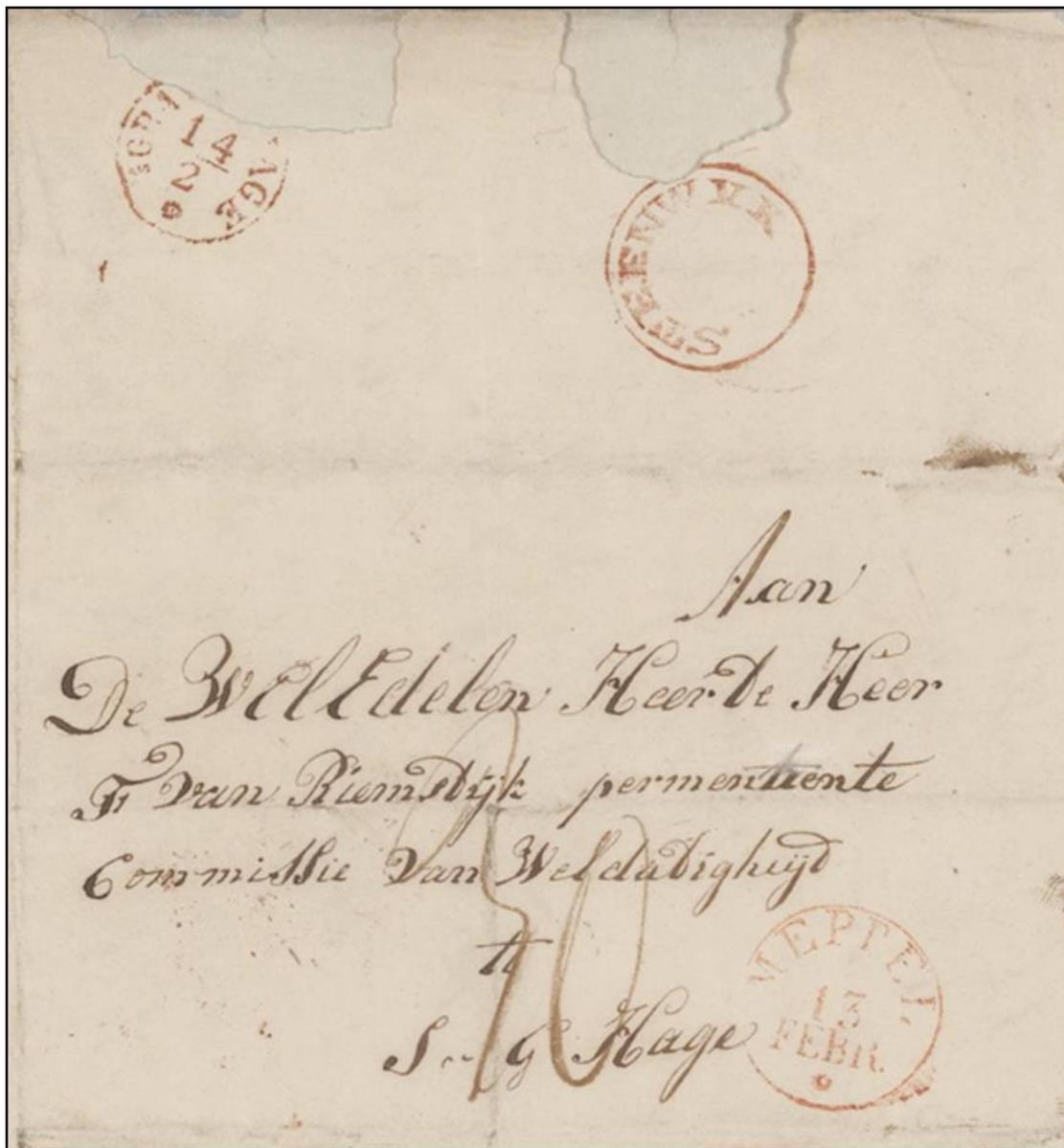


Figure 16: Letter sent in 1843 from the Willemsoord Colony via Steenwijk and Meppel to The Hague. 30 cent letter rate; based on distance (between 175 and 250 km).

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Vincent Erdin [www.mijnzuidzee.nl](http://www.mijnzuidzee.nl); Personal contact

Ans Esselink, Secretary Vereniging de Ommerschans; Personal contact

[Just before going to the printer's, we heard that, unfortunately, the Ommerschans did not get chosen as a World Heritage Site.]



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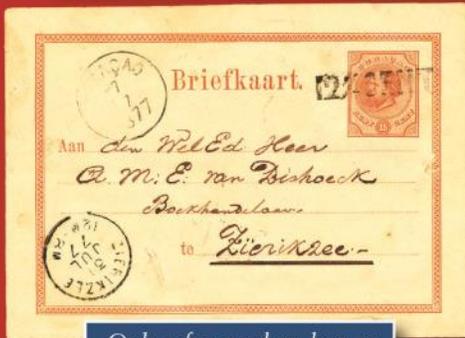
STAMP, COIN AND PICTURE POSTCARD AUCTIONS

## AUTUMN AUCTION

15 & 21-22 SEPTEMBER 2018



Reddingswezen - strip with fading yellow. 1 sheet known!



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STOCKHOLMIA 2019  
29 MAY - 2 JUNE

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Extraordinary single lots of Netherlands and former colonies with many rarities!
- Netherlands 1867 issue and further - the never exhibited parts of the Dr. Albert Louis collection
- Postal History of World War 1 and 2, including the Stefan Drukker collection (Part 2)
- Dutch East Indies banknotes overprinted "SPECIMEN" (Part 2)

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# The workers labor-strike that hardly was, in April 1903

*by Franklin Ennik*

The General Workers Strike of April 3, 1903 really had its beginnings in 1890. At this time there were two competing railway companies in the Netherlands: The **Hollandse IJzeren Spoorweg Maatschappij** (HSM) and the **Maatschappij tot exploitatie van de Staatsspoorwegen** (SS). The State put up with a lot of meddling interference from the railroad industry but in terms of how the companies were run or the matter of employee working conditions the State had no influence. The railroad companies also delivered the mail from the larger cities to the distant rural villages.

It was predicted that this fierce competition, if left to its own devices, would eventually lead to serious rancor between management and workers. Starting in 1900 dissatisfaction reached a peak among harbor railway workers. Wages were low, working hours long, free time scarce, and fines imposed on train engineers for late train arrivals. Also at this time, railway management did not recognize trade unions as a negotiating partner.

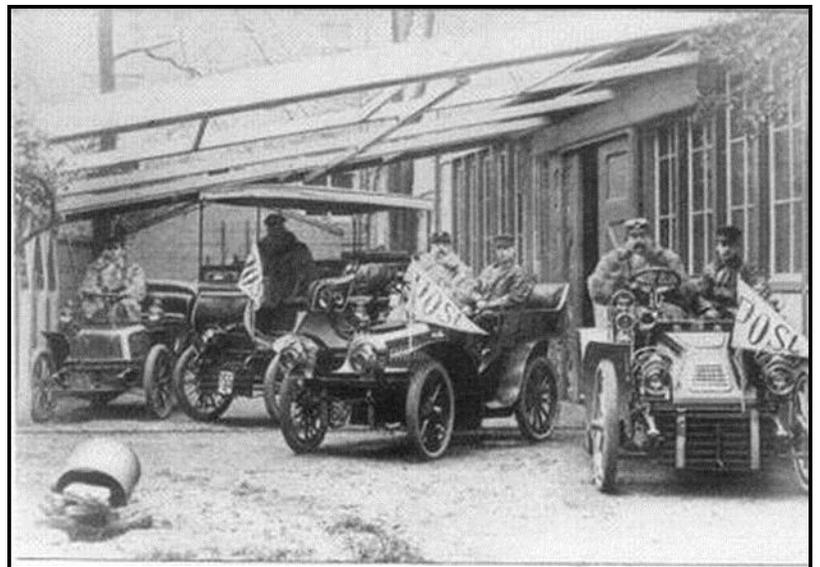
Finally, on 26 January 1903 a strike breaks out in the Amsterdam harbor over disputes about working conditions. Sympathy walk-outs spread to other companies in the harbor. The Directors of the railway companies were powerless to respond and asked the government for assistance. The government made no response on behalf of the situation. Since the harbor is now shut down, the Directors then panicked and agreed to all the demands of the strikers. The strike was lifted and the workers had won a crushing victory, at least temporarily.

Meanwhile, the government realized where this labor unrest was going and on 25 February 1903, members of the Parliament's Lower House introduced several Bills prohibiting strikes by civil servants and infrastructure/port workers. As a result, port workers walked out and municipal workers became restless by threatening further strikes. Scores of ships lay idle in Amsterdam harbor waiting to be loaded or unloaded.

In response, the government put the Dutch army on alert to be ready if there was any further social unrest or disruption of infrastructure services. The strikers got busy, formed a Defense Committee to lobby against and prevent adoption of these "compulsory laws" by giving speeches across the country. There was also wide coverage in the public press. Ultimately, the Upper House Chamber unanimously accepted and passed the anti-strike laws. An attempt by the Defense Committee to call for a general national strike failed.

At the same time, the PT postal authority made insightful arrangements with the Dutch Automobile Club for drivers and the business agents representing the French Peugeot car manufacturer to supply fleets of cars to deliver the mail in case a general labor strike was suddenly called by the strikers Defense Committee. Each of these **PostAuto** cars (Figure 1) had a ride-along soldier to protect the scab drivers. In Amsterdam six cars were deployed; another 22 cars drove from The Hague to Rotterdam, via Gouda to Utrecht then returning to The Hague. The drivers also delivered government documents from Het Binnenhof in The Hague to Palace Het Loo in Apeldoorn where Queen Wilhelmina resided.

Although some 60,000 workers responded to the general strike call on April 5, the movement collapsed April 10, because of poor organization, the failure of the newly formed labor unions to support it, and government intimidation.



*Figure 1: Post Auto cars.*

Some 5,000 soldiers were deployed through-out Amsterdam and elsewhere to guard railway stations and to protect scab workers who performed the work needed to keep infrastructure functioning. The B&W post cards shown in Figure 2 illustrate two examples: the lighting of street gas-lights and keeping the city streets clean. Thousands of railroad workers were fired or penalized by their employers after the strike disintegrated.

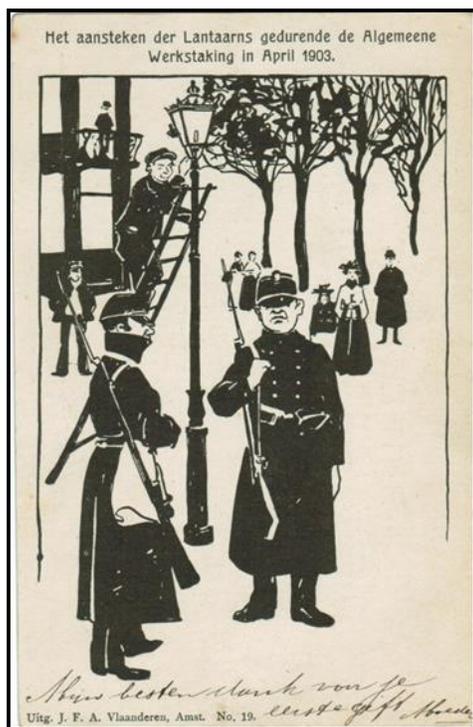


Figure 2: Left: Lighting street gas-lights. Right: Keeping the city streets clean.

Political print illustrators supporting both sides of the strike provided cartoons for media sources. In the example shown in Figure 3, the conscripted military blamed the strikers for disrupting their otherwise quiet lives and now must maintain some social order. The caption on the post card reads in effect:

**Grumbling Conscripts! MEN! This is entirely your fault, you demagogues, we have been taken away from our work just to keep order.**



Figure 3: Conscripted military blaming the strikers for disrupting their life.

## Information Sources:

Robert J. Goldstein. *Political Repression in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe*. Routledge Library Editions: Volume 24. Publisher: Routledge 2010. Page 264.

[https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/spoorwegstaking\\_van\\_1903/](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/spoorwegstaking_van_1903/)

[www.jenneken.nl/bekijk/1900spoorwegstaking1903.htm](http://www.jenneken.nl/bekijk/1900spoorwegstaking1903.htm)

<https://www.vakbondshistorie.nl/dossiers/arbeidsomstandigheden-bij-het-spoor-rond-1900/>

## On-line resources for searching for postal history information

*by Erling Berger*

The following web-sites are useful for those who want to conduct postal history research

### A. Historic Newspapers

<http://god.biboostende.be>

This is a selection of newspapers printed in Ostend, Belgium since 1850

<http://www.belgicapress.be>

This is a selection of newspapers printed in Belgium

<https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten>

Here we find all Netherlands newspapers

<http://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

Here we find a large collection of British newspapers, yet with paid access.  
The three first trials are free during which no credit card information is asked for.

### B. Postal Conventions

<https://www.dasv-postgeschichte.de>

This site is trying to collect all Postal Treaties until 1875. Nearly all Netherlands circulars from the period 1813 – 1870 are present

## Netherlands Collection Stolen

ASNP member John Prince, from Sarasota (Florida), informs me that his entire Netherlands collection consisting of stamps, FDCs, and booklets was stolen during a burglary of his home. He asks that members be careful if they suddenly receive offers to buy a Netherlands collection. If such an offer is received, please contact me immediately at [bjansen@uh.edu](mailto:bjansen@uh.edu).

Ben Jansen  
Secretary, ASNP

# Mobile Post-Office

by Ben H. Jansen

A long-time friend of mine from the Netherlands gave me the slightly tattered envelope shown in Figure 1 when I visited him last May. According to the address on the back, the envelope was mailed from Wageningen to Brunssum. It carries a 10 ct + 10 ct surcharge stamp that was issued on February 10, 1953 to aid the victims of the flooding that occurred in the south-western part of the Netherlands during the night of January 31 and February 1, 1953. Almost sixteen million of these stamps were sold!



Figure 1: Front of envelope mailed on February 18, 1953 to Brunssum.

The 'AUTO-POSTKANTOOR 3' cancel drew my attention. It has the date 18 February 1953 (17 hours), thus barely a week after the stamp was issued. Contemporary newspapers reported that two mobile post offices would start a nationwide tour to sell the flood assistance stamps on February 10 (see Figure 2). Two vehicles were used; the mobile office of the PTT, and a bus from the N.S. (Nationale Spoorwegen = National Railways) equipped as a post office. The list of towns to be visited and the dates the offices would be there show that the N.S. bus was scheduled to be in Wageningen on February 18.

Figure 2: Article in 'De Tijd' of February 12, 1953 showing the schedule of the mobile post offices.

**Rijdende postkantoren  
Voor verkoop watersnood-  
zegels**

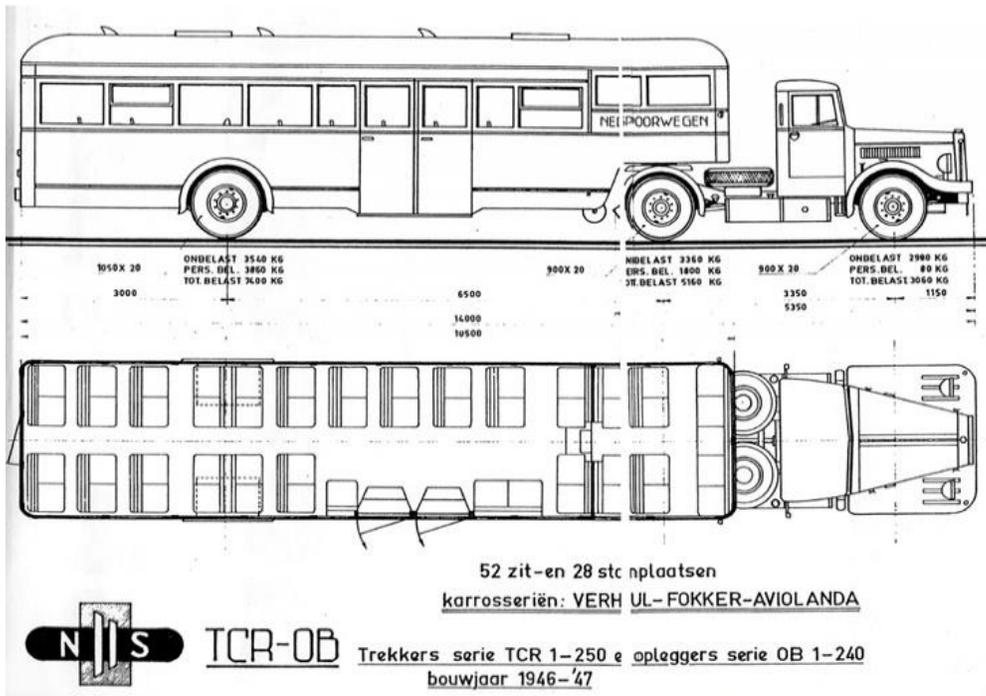
10 Februari zijn het auto-postkantoor van PTT en een, als postkantoor ingerichte, N.S.-bus hun tocht door Nederland begonnen ter bevordering van de verkoop der watersnoodzegel. De route van het PTT-kantoor is als volgt:

14 Februari Alkmaar, 16 Febr. Sneek, 17 Febr. Heerenveen, 18 Febr. Groningen, 19 Febr. Meppel, 20 Febr. Zwolle, 2 Febr. Kampen, 23 Febr. Harderwijk, 24 Febr. Utrecht, 25 Febr. Nijmegen, 26 Febr. Roermond, 27 Febr. Maastricht, 28 Febr. Tilburg, 2 Maart Bergen op Zoom, 3 Maart Roosendaal, 4 Maart Breda, 5 Maart Gouda, 6 Maart Delft, 7 Maart Schiedam, 9 en 10 Maart Rotterdam.

De route van de N.S.-bus is: 14 Febr Heerlen, 16 Febr. Venlo, 17 Febr. Arnhem, 18 Febr. Wageningen, 19 Febr. Ede, 20 Febr. Apeldoorn, 21 Febr. Deventer, 23 Febr./Zutphen, 24 Febr. Winterswijk, 25 Febr. Enschede, 26 Febr. Hengelo, 27 Febr. Almelo, 28 Febr. Assen, 2 Maart Leeuwarden, 3 Maart Harlingen, 4 Maart Zaandam, 5 Maart Hilversum, 6 Maart Baarn, 7 Maart Amersfoort, 9 en 10 Maart Amsterdam.

The PTT bus was a replacement of the one lost during World War II, which was put into service on 18 June 1952 (<http://poststempels.nedacademievoorfilatelie.nl/>). The PTT bus had three service booth, each with its own cancel, marked 'AUTO-POSTKANTOOR 1' and '2' and '3', respectively. The cancels were delivered 29 April 1952.

In 1945, the N.S. asked DAF (van Doorne's Aanhangwagen Fabriek = Trailer Factory) to build trailers for people transport. These trailers were referred to as 'emergency buses' (nood bussen), and they were pulled by tractors built by Crossley (England). Figure 3 shows a blue-print for the transport vehicle.



One such assembly was made available to the PTT for use of a temporary mobile post office to promote the sale of the Children's Welfare stamps in 1948 (see Figure 4). The cancels used showed a picture of the bus, with the period of use, see for example Figure 5.

The same bus was used from February 10 through March 10 for the sale of the flood disaster stamp.

Service Order No H.121 concerning the flood disaster action and dated 11 February 1953, stipulated that the 'AUTO-POSTKANTOOR 3' cancel had to be used in the N.S.-bus and the other two cancels in the PTT bus. Also, the mobile offices were to be

open between 9 am and 5 pm. This fully explains the cancel on the cover shown in Figure 1.



Figure 4: NS-bus used as mobile post office to promote the sale of Children's Welfare stamps in 1948. The bus is positioned on the Dam Square in Amsterdam, in front of the Royal Palace.



Figure 5: First cancel used in N.S.-bus.

# Collecting? That can also be done with ‘Old Paper’

*By Hotze Wiersma  
(translated by Ben H. Jansen)*

[This article appeared previously in Dutch in *Filatelie*, March 2018, and was adapted for publication here with the approval of the author and the Editor-in-Chief of *Filatelie*]

The first time one could buy postage stamps at a window in a Dutch post office was on 1 January 1852. There were three different securities of 5, 10 and 15 cents, which the director of the post office could clip from a large sheet. The sender of the letter pre-paid for the mail by affixing a stamp to the folded letter.

One may ask what the procedure was before 1852. In those days mail was sent as well and the postal services wanted, correctly, to get paid for their labor on behalf of the sender and/or the recipient of a folded letter. In those times, a sheet of paper was inscribed on the inside, after which it was folded and sealed. Envelopes were a rarity. The collecting and studying of these folded letters – literally old paper – is a specialization in the philately focused on mail from the time that postage stamps did not exist. Collectors call this area eo-philately (eo = from the Greek eos = day break) or pre-philately. The study of the marks and notations on the front and back of the folded letter can provide much insight about the postal organizations, the agreed upon rates, and the routes from letter writer to recipient.

## Messengers

As early as before 1600 messengers are known to have transported mail from one town to the next. These messengers often worked for merchants. For example, in 1544 Jan de Vriese was such a merchant’s messenger from Amsterdam, who ‘*reysende in cooplyuden bootschappen mit der stede busse*’ (travelling with messages from merchants with the town’s tube), traveled with a ferry to Dordrecht and Oudenbosch. The ‘busse’ was originally a tube with the blazon of a town, in which the mail was transported. Later on the mail was transported in a postage bag, and the blazon was used as a recognition sign on the jacket of the postman.

From 1581 on, tens of messengers are known from the large cities in the Republic of the United Netherlands (Figure 1).

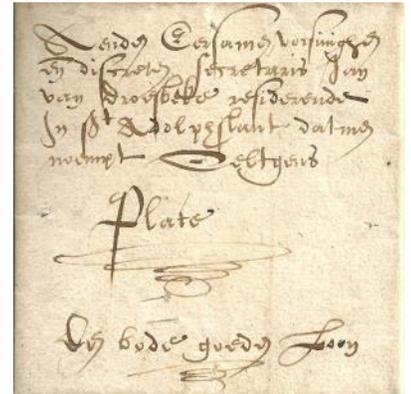
An overarching mail system for the whole country did not exist. The messenger services competed with each other to maximize gain. In case of the large cities, agreements were drafted regarding travel time, routes for the messengers, and rates for letters. The expansion of the letter traffic resulted in the establishment of messenger offices in the most important cities.

A mail system overseeing everything for the whole country did not exist. The messenger services competed with each other because money had to be made. In case of the large cities, agreements were drafted regarding travel time, routes for the messengers, and rates for letters. The expansion of the letter traffic resulted in the establishment of messenger offices in the most important cities.

## Postmasters

Starting the second half of the seventeenth century many of the managers of the messenger offices started to call themselves postmaster. Middelburg was at the forefront of this trend. Around 1585, this town was very important as trading post and financial center within the Republic of the United Netherlands. We know from letters

*Figure 1: 1599. Letter from The Hague to Ooltgensplaat. ‘Aen den Eersame Vorsinnige en discrete secretaries van ? Residerende in St. Adolphslant dat men noemt Oeltgens Plate’ (To the Most Honorable and discrete secretary of ? Residing in St. Adolphs land that one calls Oeltgens Plate). The latter was carried with a messenger from The Hague (?) to Ooltgensplaat. The sender requests that the recipient gives a reward to the messenger (‘dy bode goede Loon’).*



originating from the Italian trading house Corsini that letters were sent with messengers from Amsterdam, Antwerp, Augsburg, Deventer, Dordrecht, Hamburg, and Cologne via Middelburg across the North Sea to the establishment of Corsini in London between 1579 and 1600. In 1589 the city counsel of Middelburg decided to appoint a postmaster to regulate the mail traffic to and from the city in an orderly manner. This is how Anthonij Hartman became the first Duct postmaster. He had to swear an oath '*als postmeester der stad Middelburg in Zeeland, over de boden van Engelandt, Ceulen en de Vrankrijk en Antwerpen*' (as postmaster of the city of Middelburg, of the messengers of England, Cologne, and France and Antwerp). From 1640 onwards more town post offices with postmasters were established in the Netherlands, and especially in the province of North Holland.

## Letters

It was important for merchants that the postal services were reliable, fast, and that they processed letter packages regularly. The following services were delivered at the post offices.

1. *Collecting the letters:*
  - Collecting the letters to be mailed
  - Sorting for destination
  - Keeping records of the number of letters mailed
  - Bundling of packages and wrapping in mail bags
2. *Transport of the letters:*
  - Bill settlement with annotation of time of arrival and departure of a post coach on a travel pass
  - Post run or messenger walk with post bags; sometimes with exchange for horse and post man
3. *Distribution of the letters:*
  - Unwrapping, valuating and sorting of the incoming letters
  - Handing over of letters and packages at the offices to the addressees and collecting postage
  - Delivery of some of the letters in town and collecting fees
  - Record keeping of the number of letters and the collected fees

## Postal treaties

Multiple postal services were needed for the international letter exchange, and certainly over longer distances. Those services had to collaborate and that was facilitated through postal treaties. Sometimes, these treaties had to be adjusted due to changing circumstances: shifts in operating area, change of routes or rates. That was a complicated affair because there was a large variety of languages in Europe, but also in units of weights and distance, and a multitude of monetary units were used. Therefore, small towns became dependent on big towns; Amsterdam was the most important town for mail traffic in the Republic. For example, Amsterdam held the monopoly on letters from and to Hamburg and Great Britain.

## Written annotations on folded letters

Sometime, the sender wrote directions on the address side of a letter. For example '*Loondt den boode*' (pay the messenger) or '*Den boode drie Stuurs betaalen*' (Pay three stuivers to the messenger). Such notes directed the addressee to pay a (un-)determined amount for the transport of the letter. At that time, general postal rates had not been set. Also, it was customary that the addressee paid for the postage upon receipt. Rarely were letters pre-paid. In case the sender had pre-paid, he might write on the letter '*den Bode is betaelt*' (the messenger has been paid) or '*franco*.'

Before 1808, not all post offices in the Republic used written departure markings, frequently an abbreviation of the town where the letter was mailed for further transport. At many offices a departure mark in ink or chalk was written on the backside of a letter. Before 1850, the postmaster determined the postage due for the addressee and noted that on the letter. Remarkable is that this was most often done in the Netherlands before 1811 with red-brown chalk. Some offices used ink. For a long time, there were no standard rates in force for national, and certainly not for international mail. Some post offices used different rates for the summer or winter periods. The rate for a letter from Arnhem to Amsterdam could be different than for an identical letter going in the reverse direction from Amsterdam to Arnhem.

## Regional collaboration

The 'Friese Statenpost' (Friesian States Mail) was established by the *Staten van Friesland* (Friesian States) in 1663. The whole province could mail letters by way of the post office in Leeuwarden for transport by mail coach to Zwolle, where a connection could be made with the mail for other parts of the Republic and also to foreign destinations. The town of Groningen followed this example and had the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe as operational area. Much later followed in Holland (North-Holland and South-Holland) the transition from separate town mail services to the *Hollandse Statenpost* (States of Holland Mail). This resulted in regional collaboration and savings on transport costs.

## Markings on folded letters

The use of markers as departure markers on letters could lead to time savings when processing the mail, and especially at the post offices in the larger cities. Zwolle was the first in our country to use departure markings; in 1790 one used a cancel with the city coat of arms, with on top a small crown and encircling it the characters ZW-OL. Around 1800 there was a variety of markers with differences in shape, size and ink color.

Special is the use of markers in Amsterdam. As early as 1669, Amsterdam used markers for a long time to only mark letters upon arrival that had to be delivered there or forwarded. The novelty is that these so-called three 'stuyver' cancels (also known as route-port-markers) also provide more information. The circular or oval marker contained a post horn with the character H, denoting The Hague (Figure 2) or R for Rotterdam, to indicate the city of origin. The lower half of the marker contained the coat of arms of Amsterdam. Engraved in the center of the marker were a '3' and a 'S' ('stuyver'), to indicate that the addressee owed three 'stuyvers' postage.



Figure 2: 1795 Letter from the post office The Hague via the office in Amsterdam and barge to Edam. In Amsterdam the letter is assessed with the 3 S marker with the character 'H.' There a deliverer sells the letter for three 'stuyver' to a messenger, who arranges for the crossing of the Y. The messenger charges one 'stuyver' ( $3 + 1 = 4$ ). On the north side of the Y, the shipper of the barge to Edam carries the letter for a 'stuyver' and receives six 'stuyver' (see lower left) from the addressee.

Variations of this marker were also used in Amsterdam for mail arriving by way of Texel from Hamburg or Zeeland (Figure 3).

Figure 3: 1755 Letter from Texel to Amsterdam. The city of Amsterdam maintained a post run to Texel, especially for the ships anchored there. Upon arrival in Amsterdam, the letter was marked with the cancel with the characters ATP (Amsterdam Texel Post) and a border of pearls. This mark indicated a postage of six 'stuyvers.'

## Kingdom of Holland: a national postal service

A national postal organization was finally established in the Kingdom of Holland in 1807. Other countries in Europe, with France as a good example, had been used for more than a century to a centrally-directed postal enterprise. The first uniform postage lists for all post offices were introduced for the first time in the kingdom in June 1807. At that time there were 28 offices, of which exactly half were located in the province of Holland. A new postal treaty between the Kingdom of Holland and France, which took effect in 1809, arranged for the use of uniform name markers for the post offices. These are the so-called treaty- or Masson markers (Figure 4). Masson was the





Figure 4: 1809 Letter from Hoorn via Amsterdam-Zwolle-Leeuwarden to IJlst. Hoorn used a departure marker with italic font. The crossed lines in the upper-right hand corner indicate that the was registered. Such letters were entered in the letter book with a number (N 478) date, and names of the sender and addressee. The barge shipper pay seven 'stuyver' at the post office in Leeuwarden and carries the letter to Sneek for the messenger to IJlst. A small vertical line indicates one 'stuyver'; there are two such dashes here for the travel between Leeuwarden and Sneek, and one for the messenger to IJlst. The addressee (the municipal council) paid the relatively large amount of ten 'stuyver' upon receipt.

name of the company in Paris (France) that produced the markers.

In addition to the 28 post offices, there were offices with a more limited responsibility. Specifically, there were 25 sub-offices ('onderkantoor'), of which five were located in the province of Holland. There were also 50 auxiliary offices

('bijkantoor') in 1807, 31 of which in the province of Holland (Figure 5).



Figure 5: August 6, 1809 letter from Ooltgensplaat to Dirksland on Goeree-Overflakkee. The marker maker in Parijs had produced cancels for all post offices in the Kingdom of Holland. The reason was the postal treaty between France and Holland agreed upon in 1808 and which became effective August 1, 1809. The new office Ooltgensplaat did not yet have a departure cancel and used a name marker on this letter. Postage is two 'stuyver.'

### 1811-1813 French annexation

In 1811 Napoleon made the Kingdom of Holland a part of France. Following this annexation, the postal organization was organized following the French model. This meant that the seven Dutch departments were directed from Paris. The same thing had already happened earlier to a number of post offices in the south of Holland. Starting April 1, 1811, the French offices were categorized into two groups of postal establishments: post offices and distribution offices. Basically the distribution offices were the successors to the auxiliary offices. Between 1807 and 1811 multiple towns saw the establishment of new offices. The mailing of letters was now done with new French

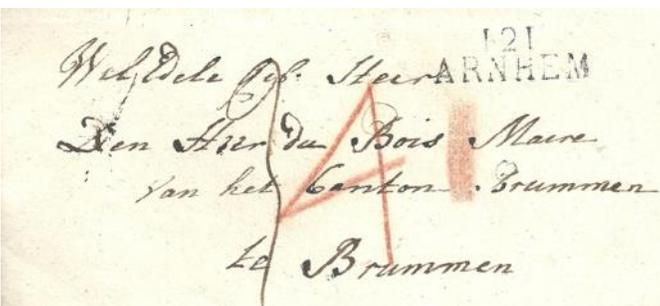


Figure 6: Letter from Arnhem via Dieren to Brummen. Arnhem was the capital city in departement 123. In 1811 all post offices received these markers with town name and department number. Dieren is the distribution office and delivers the letter in Brummen. As of April 1, 1811 all post offices much assess with ink, but red chalk was often used at distribution offices. The distributor charges one 'stuyver' (vertical chalk dash) and notes the total of four 'stuyver' for the addressee.

markers, the so-called department markers (Figure 6). These had to be used at the post office as departure markers. Each marker consisted of the name of the post office, and above it the number of the department. The same markers were used for letters that were paid for in advance ('franco'), with the addition of the characters 'P.P.' (port payé = port paid). New were the so-called déboursé markers. These were used for special cases, when a letter could not be delivered to the addressee. The seven Dutch departments in France had a total of 58 post offices in 1811. The French parts of the south of Holland counted 26 post offices.

Distribution offices were mainly located in the villages along the existing postal routes. The public could give letters ('collecte' = collection) and receive letters ('distributie' = distribution). A distributor was the manager of such an office; for the administration, he was completely dependent on the

post office overseeing the distribution. Placing markings on the letters at a distribution office was not nailed down in the regulations, but some distributors wrote the village name on the back of the letter. After 1829, markers were also frequently used.

### 1813-1852 the kingdom of the Netherlands

After the departure of the French towards the end of 1813, the French rules for the processing of the mail remained largely in force (Figure 7). In 1814, or the following years, many post offices cut the department numbers from the markers as a form of protest against the French occupation.

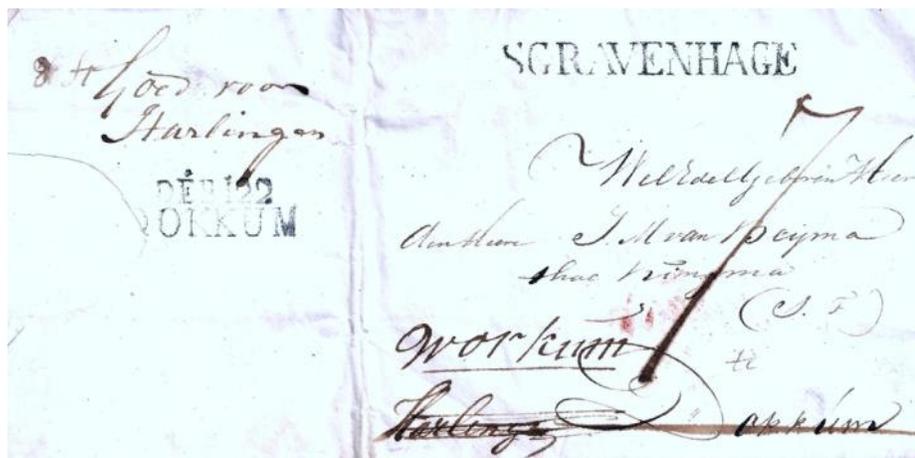


Figure 7: Letter from 1821 from The Hague to Dokkum. In Dokkum seven 'stuyver' port has to be paid, but Mr. Beijma is no longer there. The director in Dokkum stripes through the place name and writes "Harlingen" next to it, because he appears to have information that the addressee could be there. On the reverse he writes "goed voor Harlingen" (good for Harlingen). He also adds the French déboursé marker of 1811 because the seven 'stuyver' cannot be collected in Dokkum. The addressee is not in Harlingen either. Eventually, the letter can be delivered via the office in Workum. The rate is still seven 'stuyver' in Sneek.

An improvement for the public was the introduction of *journalières* in 1817. These were daily post runs between the various post offices. A second improvement was the introduction of uniform circular date markers, enabling better control of the date of departure and arrival at the offices (Figure 8).

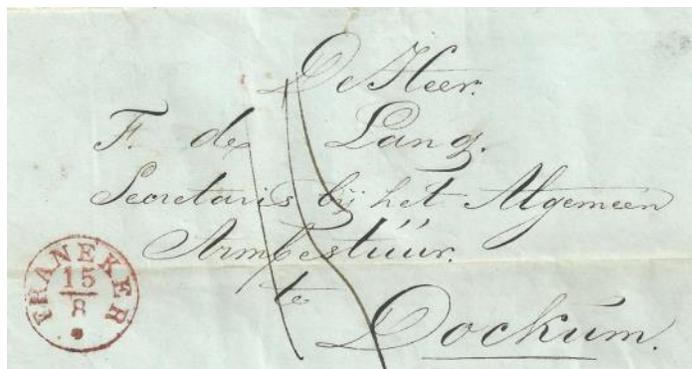


Figure 8: 1842 Franeker marks upon departure with the circular date cancel 15/8, i.e., August 15. Upon arrival, Dokkum places a date marker on the reverse. Date markers were used by all offices from 1829 on, to account for the speed of the mail processing.

A negative was the deficient control on the execution of the mail processing. This resulted that during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century many letters were delivered by transporters and shippers ('sluiken' = smuggling).

A new post act was introduced in 1850, which gave a good start to a more modern postal organization, emphasizing the service to the public. Mailing a letter became cheaper and tens of new sub offices established, also in the smaller towns. Most of the distribution offices were converted to sub offices, managed by a letter collector. A distributor received a provision for each letter, while a letter collector was a government employee and received a fixed income. After 1850, a new means of transportation became very important for the letter traffic across the country: the train.

The year 1851 heralds the end of a long and fascinating development of the postal services. For collectors this is the end of the era of pre-philately.

## 1852 the first Dutch postage stamp

The United Kingdom was the first in the world to start using postage stamps in 1840. The Netherlands followed in 1852 with postage stamps depicting King Willem III. People could elect to mail their (unfranked) letters the old way, or to use postage stamps glued to their letters. Collectors refer to unfranked letters from the 1852-1871 period as 'letters without stamps.' The collaboration between countries to improve international mail contacts led to the founding of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1871.

## Recent Issues



### 50 years “de Fabeltjeskrant”

July 23, 2018

The sheet with 10 stamps celebrates that the popular children’s television series featuring puppetry and stop motion was created in 1968 by Leen Valkenier and produced by Thijs Chanowski (1st series) and Loek de Levita (2nd series). The stamp features Mr. Owl, who opened each program.

*Detailed information about the recent issues can be found at <http://collectclub.postnl.nl/>*

This site also shows the personal stamps and silver stamps issued by PostNL.

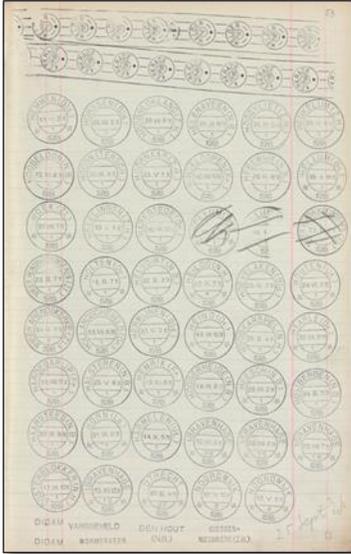
# Magazine Reviews

*Prepared by Hans Kremer*

## Po&PO De Postzak # 222, February 2018

(po-en-po.nl)

Gerard Beckers writes about a 1943 postcard sent from a Jewish family in the Westerbork transit camp in the Netherlands to a family in Amsterdam. In it the lady writes that she is expecting soon and indeed a son was born later that year. However, in April of 1944 the entire family (father, mother, and son) was sent to Theresienstadt, where the baby died, not even 10 months old. Later the father was moved to Auschwitz and Dachau, where he died, while the mother died in Mid-Europe. A truly horrible story.



*Rijksmunt book of cancels (1918)*

Max Verhart talks about the reverend Otto Heldring, who lived from 1804 till 1876. He was, for his time, a very liberal activist. He established housing and education for prostitutes, neglected women under 20, and a “normaalschool” for girls, which was a school created to train female high school graduates to be teachers. Mr. Heldring was honored in 1943 with a Dutch stamp as part of the set of welfare stamps.



*Otto Heldring*

Otto Koene’s article is about the first Dutch machine cancel in the Netherlands, which started in 1867 with a design by Joseph Doffegnies, postmaster in Zevenaar. The machine was built by August Mellet in the Hague. Mr. Koene goes in detail about how to differentiate between hand applied and machine (Doffegnies) applied cancels.

Packages sent through the Schiphol mailing facilities are discussed by Hans TSchroots, while Michael Brekelmans shows examples of the “Stempelboeken” (books with copies of cancels) compiled by the Rijksmunt (Royal Mint), from 1910 through 1967.

## De Aero-Philatelist 2018-1

(de-vliegende-hollander.com)

**AVRO618 en VH-UMF ‘Southern Cloud’** by Jacques Bot.

In 1931 the Fokker F.VIIB-3m Ten VH-UMF ‘Southern Cloud’ disappeared on its regularly scheduled flight from Sydney to Melbourne. Bad weather was the cause of the crash. It wasn’t until 1958 that the wreck was found. The Southern Cloud was owned by the Australian National Airways (ANA), founded in 1928 by Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm. The **Avro 618 Ten** or **X** was a licensed copy by Avro (A.V. Roe & Co. Ltd) of the Fokker F.VIIB/3m. ANA flew passengers and mail from Sydney to Melbourne and Brisbane. The ANA went bankrupt in 1933.

An archived report about **Rocket flight # 402 (July 19, 1945)** is re-printed by Wim van der Helm.

A total of 654 covers were on boards, weighing about 1.4 kg. The rocket traveled a distance of 6.35 km, reaching a maximum height of 2600 m. and a maximum speed of 930 km/hr.

Henk Haverkort discusses two types of the **1966 Special Philips Jubilee Flight covers** flown on their European Tour.

## The Netherlands Philatelist March 2018

(jdkremer.angelfire.com)

### **Early 20th century mailmen sorting markers used in Amsterdam** by H. Kremer.

The emphasis in this article is on the special mailman markers used for P.O. boxes and Receipt markers.

### **Poswesels (Money orders) on the outer borders- West Irian and Riau** by P. Wiffin.

This article is the 4th in a series. In this article Paul covers poswesels (money orders) from Irian Barat (West Irian) and the Riau archipelago.

### **Surinam: Landmail vs. Seamail postal rates** by H. Kremer.

Seamail: The letter was transported directly to its destination. It could include stops on the way, but the mail was not taken off until it had reached its final destination.

Landmail: The letter traveled partially by sea, partially overland to its destination. Since landmail was faster, it required a higher postal rate.

### **Underground Mail via Thomas Cook & Sons** by R. Dellar.

During WWII mail between enemy countries could be exchanged through the offices of Thomas Cook & Son, using 'P.O.Box 506' in Lisbon.

The service could not be used to send letters to Prisoners of War, or to Internees.

### **The Railway from Emden to Hanover 1856** by E. Berger.

Letters from the Northern Netherlands (from Harlingen to Winschoten) to Prussia in 1856 should be gathered in Winschoten, where a closed sack every day was made up and sent by road across the border to Leer (Kingdom of Hanover), a station on the Emden-Hanover Railway. The sack was loaded into the train heading for Rheine in Prussia, where a Prussian train was ready to take over. The sack was opened and the letters were marked in the train. The hand-stamp consisting of two names selected from the group of RHEINE, SOEST, MÜNSTER and WARBURG.

### **The Child Welfare issues of the Netherlands** by J. Lauder et al.

The first Dutch Child Welfare stamps came out in 1924. Although all child welfare stamps had a surcharge, the surcharge was not printed on the stamps until 1949. The article also covers the so-called 'Thank you' cards, sent to organizing committees, participating schools, and other contributors.

## Nederland Onder de Loep # 209, Vol 1/2018

(<https://arge-niederlande.de>)

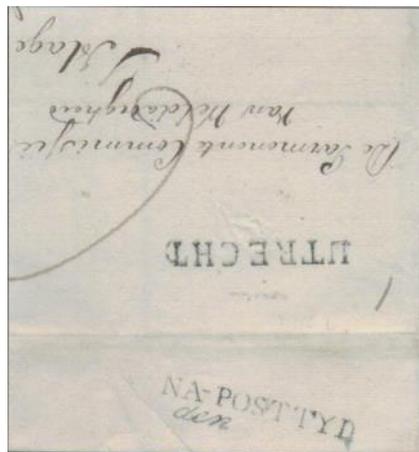
Peter Heck opens with a wonderful article about the "Na Posttijd" markers. Mail arriving at the post office after the last mail delivery of the day had left the post office would receive such a marker. The receiver of the mail thus could understand that it had been impossible to deliver the item the day before. Peter shows 21 examples, covering a period from 1767 through 1875.

N. Neerings discusses some aspects (especially the watermarks) of the printing of the **first issue** (1852).



*Bandung Squared Circle*

*Netherlands Philately, Vol. 43, No. 1*



*1819 Na Posttijd marker*

Udo Zimmermann shows examples of the stamps designed by and the lives of **Willem van Konijnenburg** (1868-1943) and **André van der Vossen** (1893-1963).

H.W. Hönes shows picture postcards of D.E.I **post- and telegraph offices** canceled with the so-called **squared circle** (1892-1912) markers.

Udo Zimmermann gives bit of history of **Surinam** and the ethnic background of its population, its religions and its commerce, illustrated with a number of stamps.

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