

are slow in paying these fees or, if they are not planning to attend the next congress, reluctant to pay them at all. In other words, the fees paid are related by many members primarily to the forthcoming congress, and whether or not they attend is something that they may decide at a very late stage. The fluctuation in membership is therefore dependent on a number of factors, of which the fee paid to the IVG is probably the least important, since this has been kept at a relatively low level; and it has always been the policy of the IVG that those in less well-developed areas or where currency restrictions apply should be accepted as members without payment of these fees. The IVG has consequently been able to finance its activities primarily through the generosity of the institution where the president is located and the sponsors that he or she is able to obtain. The attendance of members at the congresses has also been supported partly by their own institutions, partly by such German organizations as the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung), the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst).

However, institutional support at the local level has declined in recent years, as have also the budgets of the organizations listed above. The result is an unfortunate development that seems likely to affect not only the IVG congresses but all kinds of congresses in the future. Most members cannot afford to travel, but the precondition for a travel grant is evidence that a paper has been accepted. There is, therefore, on the one hand pressure on the organizers to accept papers, since they well know that rejection means that the proposer of the paper will not attend. On the other hand, the number of those attending but not giving a paper is sharply reduced. Since the number of papers that can be accommodated at the congress is in practice limited, the number of participants will not greatly exceed the number of those giving a paper and will consist primarily of those who live locally. At the congress in Vienna, for example, 53 percent of those attending came from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, although these countries together account only for 41 percent of the membership. Partly to ensure some degree of continuity between congresses and to convince members that the IVG does not exist for the sole purpose of mounting a quinquennial conference, the originally rather haphazardly distributed, later annual, newsletters from the president to the membership have been expanded. They are now much more substantial and contain not only material relevant to the forthcoming congress, but also reports of other, usually national, conferences, obituaries, and so forth. The IVG is much more international than it was in its early days, and it is hoped that the newsletter will materially assist in maintaining and fostering connections worldwide in the field of Germanic studies.

International Association for Dutch Studies (IVN)

Internationale Vereniging voor Neerlandistiek

Roel Vismans

Dutch is the mother tongue of some 21 million people. It is the official language of the Netherlands and Flanders as well as Suriname, Aruba and the Dutch Antilles. The strategic

position of Flanders and the Netherlands in Europe has meant that, for centuries, trade between the Dutch-speaking countries and enterprises beyond their borders has been of great importance. The extensive spread of Low Countries culture is closely connected with these trade links. Any scholar with an interest in the Low Countries soon discovers that the Dutch language has been the key to the region's culture from the Middle Ages to the present day: the key to artists like Rubens and Rembrandt, to political trends like the Flemish Movement and pillarization, to architects like Berlage, and to choreographers like Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker.

Ever since the Middle Ages, speakers of Dutch have established themselves outside the boundaries of the Dutch language area, which means that in numerous places across the world archive material can be found in Dutch. In Indonesia it fills kilometres of shelf space, but also in India and Japan, Sri Lanka, North America and at the Cape there are many thousands of texts in Dutch which are centuries old. And in South Africa some 6 million people speak Afrikaans, a language closely related to Dutch.

Dutch Studies Internationally. Knowledge of the Dutch language is of great economic, cultural and historical importance in many parts of the world. People look mainly to university courses in their locality for the transfer of this knowledge. This is why Dutch Studies is taught at some 250 universities around the world. 'Dutch Studies' means the study not only of the Low Countries' language and literature, but also of their history, art and culture.

The International Association for Dutch Studies. The International Association for Dutch Studies (Internationale Vereniging voor Neerlandistiek – IVN), founded in 1970, is an organization for people teaching Dutch studies at universities outside the Netherlands and Flanders. Its main purpose is to promote and facilitate these 'extramural' Dutch Studies. For the people involved, close contacts with colleagues in their field at universities both inside and outside the Dutch language region are essential. Their teaching and research requires that they also have regular access to up-to-date information about academic, cultural and political developments in Belgium and the Netherlands. The IVN provides help of this kind.

Colloquium Neerlandicum. One of the IVN's most important activities is therefore the 'Colloquium Neerlandicum', a conference which the IVN organizes every three years. The colloquium, which is held alternately in the Netherlands and Flanders, offers a one-week programme focused on Dutch studies outside the Netherlands and Flanders. It gives people teaching Dutch studies 'extra muros' the opportunity to present their own work and to enter into dialogue with colleagues inside the Dutch language area, many of whom are also drawn to the colloquium by the promise of this interaction. The proceedings of each colloquium are published by the IVN.

Neerlandica Extra Muros (NEM). NEM is the academic journal of the IVN. It publishes 3 issues a year, with a volume extent for one year of 216 pages. NEM contains articles about the Dutch language and its history and about literature and culture in the Netherlands and Flanders, together with reviews of academic publications, textbooks, and other materials for teaching Dutch to foreign students. Particular attention is given to the subject of teaching Dutch as a foreign language. There are also regular features on poetry, prose, literary theory, linguistics, language acquisition, and culture and society.

The IVN and the Dutch Language Union. For many of its activities, the IVN receives a subsidy from the Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union), an intergovernmental institution of the Dutch and Flemish governments. In joint ventures with the Dutch Language Union, the IVN produces three publications: *Lijst van docenten in de neerlandistiek aan extramurale universiteiten en ledenlijst IVN* (List of Teachers of Dutch Studies at Universities outside the Netherlands and Flanders, and Membership List of the IVN), which also contains details of all teaching posts in Dutch studies at universities outside the Dutch language area; *Wie en wat in de neerlandistiek in Nederland en België* (People and Organizations in Dutch Studies in the

Netherlands and Belgium), a guide with information about Dutch studies inside the Dutch language area, including details of academic journals, libraries, research institutes, associations, societies and the like; and *Basisboekenlijst extramurale neerlandistiek* (List of Core Titles for Dutch Studies), which is meant to help people teaching Dutch studies outside the Netherlands and Flanders to select course material and to build up a library of essential works.

The IVN is closely involved with the organization of a 3-week course for some 150 students of Dutch from other countries, which takes place each year under the auspices of the Dutch Language Union.

Other Activities. The IVN lobbies on behalf of its members and represents their interests. For example, the *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst*, the standard grammar for Dutch, came into being as the result of an IVN initiative. The IVN has its own website, which offers, amongst other things, information about job opportunities and access to files such as the IVN membership list and the list of core titles for Dutch studies. The IVN strives every two years to offer an intensive course on 17th-century culture for non-Dutch-speaking art historians who do research on 17th-century Dutch and Flemish art. The IVN publishes the *IVN-krant* (IVN Newsletter) several times a year; it is available electronically as well as in print. The IVN provides printed and electronic information on job vacancies in Dutch studies abroad. Finally, the IVN maintains close contact with regional and national organizations promoting Dutch studies abroad. IVN members, associate members and sponsors receive all the Association's publications free of charge.

www.ivnnl.com

The Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA)

David A. Wells

The great differences in size, administration, and function of the member-associations of the FILLM are in one sense an obvious source of strength, but no less obviously can cause difficulties, since those who are active in the management of the very large overarching associations such as the MLA and ICLA with their regional and thematic subgroups have quite different perceptions of our subject, and quite different activities to organize, from those involved in the smaller and more specialist societies. As a multidisciplinary society the MHRA has some characteristics of both the larger and the smaller bodies, and at the same time has some fundamental differences from all the rest, but also a history which in some respects links it as closely to the FILLM as any other member-association.

The MHRA was founded as the Modern Language Research Students Association in 1918 in Christ's College, Cambridge, in the rooms of Dr Brian W. Downs, a College Fellow whose name appears elsewhere in this collection since, in 1956 and by then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, he again showed his support for modern languages through his involvement as a founder of the International Conference on Scandinavian Studies, soon to develop into the IASS. On the occasion of the 1918 foundation Downs, together with a small group of colleagues, felt that, at a time when the modern and medieval languages and literatures were still seeking to establish themselves beside the established discipline of Classical studies, with even English occupying a relatively subordinate role, an association of scholars dedicated to the modern languages on an interdisciplinary basis with its own publication