



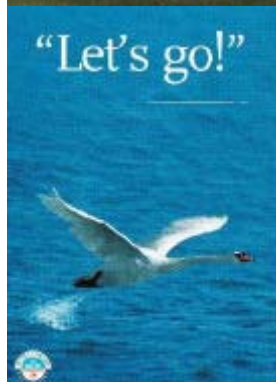
# Somsen horizon

*Volume 10 - number 19 - May 2007*

## Back to our roots: Terug naar onze wortels!!!

- ◆ **REUNION NEWS AND  
REUNION NEWS  
AGAIN !  
and furthermore:**
- ◆ **The perpetuel fight  
against water**
- ◆ **The Origin of  
Gelderland**
- ◆ **Reward for a tough  
weekend: a new motor  
cycle**
- ◆ **Cycling holiday in  
Cuba**
- ◆ **Without transport  
everything is paralysed**
- ◆ **What is that rooster  
doing on the church  
tower?**
- ◆ **Modern pilgrims**
- ◆ **Another volume of  
poetry by the inhabi-  
tant of the Somsenhuis**

*Half-yearly  
familymagazine*



*Last chance to  
register for the  
3<sup>rd</sup> worldwide  
Somsen reunion  
17-19 august  
2007*



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**Objective of the Foundation**

*The aim of the foundation is:*

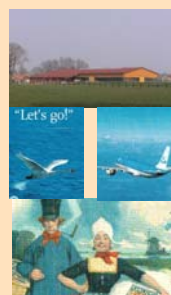
To preserve and promote the solidarity between people bearing the family name of Somsen, those who are/were related to them or those who are interested in them.

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

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

**Cover:**

*Back to our roots!*





## Preface



*This year it is 10 years ago that we had our first worldwide Somsen Reunion. More than 400 Somsens or people related to Somsens gathered together at the places of our roots on those beautiful summer days in August 2007.*

*This reunion lives on in the memories of nearly all those who were there as a unique highlight. And a highlight it sure was – in fact it was a happening that can never be equalled for a great number of reasons. In the first place it was the first meeting ever for all Somsens who had been tracked down, their curiosity was great.*

*They came to the Achterhoek from far and near – many Dutch Somsens, but also large groups of foreign Somsens from a large number of countries: the USA, Canada, Portugal, Norway, South-Africa, Ireland, Great-Britain, Germany, Greece and Italy. Furthermore two splendid documents were presented: the beautiful movie by Ben Somsen: "Somsen Panorama", which will be available as a DVD at our reunion in August, and our marvellous family book "Somsen Omnes Generationes", by Dick and Theo Somsen, of which only a few copies are still available. In the wake of this impressive reunion we have founded our Somsen Foundation and for ten long*

*years we have been occupied with our family.*

*Family foundations do not have the same nature as sporting clubs, bridge clubs or any other clubs where there is commitment on a weekly basis, but in spite of this we have been able to reach a considerable number of Somsens in the years gone by. Twice a year our family magazine, Somsen Horizon, was published with contributions about many different subjects by an equally varied number of family members. Moreover the hard core Somsens took part in the annual camping weekends in IJzerlo that used to be very special and enjoyable and we made a few boat trips on our beautiful rivers.*

*The Baldwin reunion of 2002 is still fresh in the memories of a large group of American Somsens and eight Dutch Somsens.*

*And now we are on the threshold of our third Worldwide Somsen Reunion that we are going to celebrate at the place of our roots: IJzerlo.*

*We started with the preparations last year and now they are in full swing, the number of participants that registered after the first announcement in Somsen Horizon is very promising and the programme is growing into definite shape. You will find more about it in this volume.*

*This reunion can never be a repetition of the reunion of 1997, nor can it be compared with the American reunion of 2002, but what this reunion certainly has in common with the previous ones is the fact that it will be a gathering of the offspring of one common ancestor:*

*Roelof Boeinck of the Sompssteden, who was born at this site at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

*At this site we will all come together, for next to many other items of the programme we will also have a meeting at the place of the roots of all Somsens with a dignified character. At the **Somsenhuis in IJzerlo** we hope to commemorate the fact*

*that nearly 400 years ago the Somsen history began there.*

*You should not be lacking there!*

*On behalf of the board,  
Johan Somsen*

## Errata

On page 12 of SH-18 in the article "Meeting old friends" the following name is mentioned:

*Marie Henriette Jager Gerlings-Noordendorp [1473]*

**That's wrong!** It should be: *Jeanette Marianne Somsen [717]*

The board of our foundation has already rebuked the editor (see colophon) who is responsible and has announced to dismiss him on January 1, 2008.



**LAST CHANCE TO  
REGISTER FOR THE  
3RD WORLDWIDE  
SOMSEN REUNION**

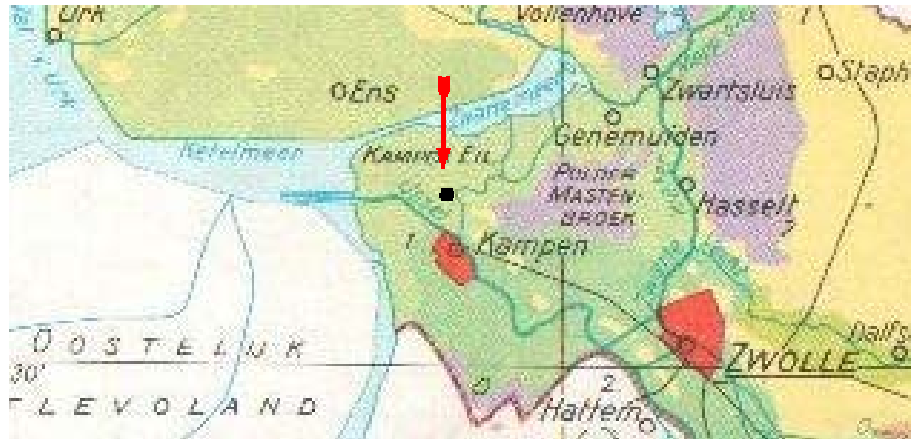
# The perpetual fight against water

by Dick Somsen [130]

***The Dutch people and water: they have been friends and enemies for centuries. As a sailor Dick Somsen loves all that water, but sometimes that water loves him a little bit too much...***

About 37 years ago we became the owners of a piece of grassland – nowadays you would call it a “recreational lot” – along the river the Ganzendiep in the municipality of IJsselmuiden, just north of Kampen. The first years we had to work hard to make the place liveable. Making sanitary facilities such as sewage, making a water well, planting a green fence etc. At first our trailer was used as summer accommodation but in 1973 it was replaced by a made-to-measure mobile home. Every weekend together with our children we enjoyed the quietness and the Ganzendiep: water for swimming and sailing.

The Ganzendiep has an open connection with the IJsselmeer (the old Zuiderzee) through the Ketelmeer. In 1975 a new dyke was built, the Hout-



The environment of Kampen

ribdijk, between Lelystad and Enkhuizen, which divided the IJsselmeer into halves. The consequences were that the entry point to the Ketelmeer became an estuary in which, by stormy weather, the IJsselmeer water is pushed.

That is why in the north-western part of Overijssel we get very high water levels with nasty floods. The first time we experienced this, the water was also in our trailer, which we then moved 30 cm higher. Once every couple of years there is a very strong Northwest wind and then our lot is covered with about 30 cm of water. In 1997 we got a guesthouse next to our trailer which is regularly used by our kids and grandchildren. They also enjoy sunbathing, sailing and swimming.

In 2002 a balloon dam was built near Ramspol, which is inflated when there is a Northwest storm and that is how the IJsselmeer water is stopped. Unfortunately on January 18 2007 this dam couldn't stop the water from the Zwartemeer so our lot was flooded once again. After about a week the water receded and luckily we didn't have any damage. Of course there is always a lot of sediment left, but with the high pressure hose that's not a problem.



The day after the storm





# The Origin of Gelderland

by Theo Somsen [227]

**All Somsens originally come from the area of IJzerlo close to Aalten. Aalten lies in the province of Gelderland and this province has a very long history. That's why we try to let you understand it a little better.**

After the death of the Emperor Charlemagne in the year 814 his great European empire fell apart. Many powerful men took the opportunity to take hold of big land rights.

Around the year 1100 one particular nobleman chose a castle in Geldern (still a German city, just across the border near Venlo) as the centre of his power.

From then on his descendants spread their influence to the north and around the year 1250 they controlled big parts around Roermond, Nijmegen, Arnhem and Zutphen.

In 1339 the Emperor of the German Empire gave the Count of Gelre the right to call himself Duke of Gelre.

The world changed when in 1486 Maximilian of Austria became Emperor of the German Empire. He was a descendant of the noble family of Habsburg and he concen-



Tomb of Duke Charles of Gelre in Arnhem

trated on powerful central authority. Through corruption he tried to acquire the area from Charles of Egmond, Duke of Gelre (1467-1538), who of course resisted.

This led to several small wars between Gelre and the Habsburgers, which lasted till far into the 16th century. Only after Maximilian's grandson Charles V (1500-1558) became Emperor, the resistance of Gelre would break. The resistance of Charles of Gelre against centralisation was finally without success because when he died in Arnhem in 1538 his successor William, Duke of Gulik and Kleef (originating from adjacent Germany) had to surrender shortly after that. When the Treaty of Venlo was concluded in 1543 the Duchy of Gelre was finally controlled by the Habsburgers.

From that moment Charles V also ruled the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg, until these countries started the Eighty Years' War in 1568: the fight for freedom of the Netherlands against Spain. One of the reasons for this war was the philosophy of centralisation of Charles V and his successor Philip II: that was a bridge too far for the Dutch. Duke Charles of Gelre was born too early...



Gelderland (Gelre) in 1543

## Reward for a tough weekend: a new motorcycle

adapted by Gree van Daatselaar-Somsen [53]

**Henkjan Somsen [425] has only one real passion: riding a motorcycle. And a passion like his could easily result in a speaker announcing after a race: "And the winner is... Henkjan Somsen from Eibergen!"**



His hands are heavily blistered and his heels are marked with torn pieces of skin.

Eibergen resident Henkjan Somsen (christened: Hendrik Johan) has had a tough weekend. The 39 year old former national off-road champion competed in a heavy three day trial. And brought home victory and a new off-road motorbike.

Henkjan Somsen, nowadays working in Haaksbergen and living in Eibergen, is still wearing slippers at home two days after the race. Socks rolled down below his heels. The blisters will need to dry before he can wear decent shoes again. These are the silent witnesses of the almost superhuman effort it took to compete in the Yamaha Motoplus Dakar Challenge in Valkenswaard.

An extreme, three-day ordeal for man and machine. The contestants had to run, drive cross-country bikes, walk at night using satellite-navigation and shoot with a longbow. Oh, and a lot of motorcycle riding in between...

In Valkenswaard (North-Brabant, NL.) Yamaha Netherlands tried to copy the atmosphere of the real Dakar Rally. Contestants had to pay € 1,000 (about \$ 1,200) registration fee, but received in return a full set of motocross gear, including crash helmet and boots.

"I can imagine € 1,000 is a lot of money to most people", Henkjan Somsen said. "But you do get something in return. By the way, I could do with the clothes, helmet and boots, for my own gear was really worn out.

And so is my bike, by the way."

We are talking to the 1992 Dutch national Off-road champion in the "national" class. Henkjan Somsen then moved on to the "royal class" - the seniors- where he finished 6th in the two-day trial in Assen. And he achieved all this on a 1982 Honda two-stroke.

### Jump-starting

In 1997 Henkjan decided to stop, but never quite got over the infection. So he decided to jumpstart his career. "Off-road racing cost me too much time and money, but I never left the sport out of my eyesight. I always went to look at races, and competed once in a while too.

And I always made sure I was physically fit. Now that really paid off in Valkenswaard."



He proved himself right, as he came out victoriously after the survival trial in Valkenswaard. Indeed he came prepared. "At first I was anxious, dreading some kind of hide-and-seek in the dark. But it turned out to be a real happening. Just like in the real Dakar Rally, the ultimate challenge for body and mind", Henkjan recalls. "In order to get used to night time exercise I decided to compete in the midnight Marathon in Haaksbergen, where I ran for 30 kilometres. The very next day I ran a long endurance-run, and the day after I competed in a cross-country run in Lochem. You know, I needed to test my fitness."

The motorcycle challenge took place at the Eurocircuit in Valkenswaard, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The different challenges would have worn an ordinary man down to the bone. From the mountain bike to a training track, then back on the motorbike.

Taking your last strength to push the bloody motorbike up a high ramp. Looking back on it Somsen can smile again. Every day he ended up in the top three on all items, including two individual victories. "Except for the archery. That was really rotten." He came out 22nd. "Fortunately my closest competitor didn't do much better, he was 21st, and so in the final ranking I stayed ahead of him in first place. That was really thrilling. I was only three points ahead of him."

#### His prize!

In two weeks time he can pick up his prize, a new Off-road motorcycle. There can be little doubt that one day Somsen will compete in a proper race again. "And all spic-and-span", the racer laughs. "Including the bike. And all this for a thousand Euros and a couple of rough nights. And of course a couple of blisters on my hands and feet."

Source: Article by Marco Krijnsen in De Twentsche Courant Tubantia of September 20, 2006

Copied with permission and with a few minor changes by the editors of Somsen Horizon.



Henkjan with his prizes and a brand-new Off-road bike.  
(photo: Wouter Borre - De Twentsche Courant Tubantia)





## Cycling-holiday on Cuba

by Frederik Somsen [551]

***It takes some nerve! Bicycle riding on the other side of the world. Daredevil Frederik Jan Somsen, born 1977, mounted his bike, conquered Cuba and allows us to share the adventure with him.***

Cuba is a country like no other. It has this unique mixture of sun, beach, salsa and communism. It is neither a developing country, nor comparable to the western world. It's just Cuba.

Three weeks of cycling through a country like Cuba is an experience I'll never regret. I sincerely hope more people will visit Cuba after reading this.



Frederik in the hart of Cuba

The transition from the Netherlands (7 degrees centigrade and rain) to Cuba (sun and 27 degrees centigrade) went smoothly. After a couple of days to acclimatise I decided to start exploring the country. That's why I had dragged along my trekking-bike from the Netherlands, after all.

I immediately enjoyed cycling there. The roads are well looked after and really quiet. There are no traffic jams in Cuba. There simply isn't enough traffic to cause one. This is caused by an oil crisis that started when the Soviet Union began to fall apart in the nineties, ceasing all their support for Cuba. The following years ("periodica especial") proved very tough for most Cubans. Shortage of everything, but mostly fuel. To overcome this, over a million Chinese bicycles were imported.

Back to the motorised world. Everything on wheels stems either from the American period (before 1959) or from the Russian period (1959-1990). But most vehicles are assembled from a combination of both. Thus the engines breathe undefined thick black smoke, causing people to breathe during intervals in between the trucks. The only "clean" vehicles you see there are old Dutch (!) busses that no longer complied with the European environmental rules.

It is allowed to ride your bicycle on the highway, it's even considered normal. So I went there too. Dangerous? No, not really, if you manage to avoid horse-and-carriages, slow cyclists and inattentive pedestrians. The highway was built in the 1980s and was intended to connect the western part of Cuba to the east, but with the demise of the Soviet Union work ceased somewhere in the middle of the country. There were even no more funds to connect the flyovers that had already been built to the existing roads.



My journey consisted of twelve stages, each of them between 70 and 135 kilometres. Most stages were flat on good roads, sometimes hilly and once in a while a real climb. But it was always quite easy, for both beginners and experienced cyclists. I usually left for the next village in the morning, so I could settle in the village square in the late afternoon. You will most certainly attract the attention from the Cubans, so very often people will come and try to talk to you.

Sometimes I stayed in local people's homes. You could compare this to an English Bed & Breakfast. It's affordable, but you really have to speak Spanish and you get to know the 'real' Cuba.

Cuba has no Indian temples like Central America. But they do have many beautiful colonial houses. These stem from the 18th century when lots of money was made in the sugar trade. By the Spanish occupants, that is. One of the best known tourist cities is Trinidad. It's very popular with travel agents, but I wasn't much impressed. Tourism is the city's only aim and therefore it has lost some of its beauty. Cienfuegos however is a real treat. The buildings are much more attractive and the streets aren't crowded by tourists yet. Or by people who want to make some money out of the tourists. Well there's the real problem with tourism; it is hard not to ruin a country's beauty while admiring it.

I like strolling around cities, because that's where the people live. Especially in Cuba. People really live in the streets. They dance, play music, or a game of dominos. The children also have good times in the streets. Soccer is played in most streets, but the #1 sport is baseball. At every street corner you find kids playing it. One of the greatest dangers in Cuba is being hit by a stray baseball.

Havana, or Habana as they call it here, is of course a must. There are lots of beautiful buildings and of course also lots of awful ones. And of course a brisk nightlife. There is

so much going on there. There's something there for everyone. If you ever get a chance to visit Cuba, don't wait too long, for now it is still beautiful and unspoilt.

Should anyone want more information, please mail me at:  
Frederiksomsen@hotmail.com

### **Another volume of poetry by the inhabitant of the Somsenhuis**

For the second time within a very short period of time another volume of poetry was published by Hendrik-Jan Lammers, the 83-year-old inhabitant of the Somsenhuis.

In *Somsen Horizon 18* there was an article about this special man. His first volume of poetry in the dialect of The Achterhoek was such a great success that it inspired Hendrik-Jan to publish a second volume: *Het lêaven deur met Hendrik-Jan*. (A walk through life with Hendrik-Jan)



This volume appeared in April and can be obtained for € 10 at the author's home address, Westendorpweg 6 (the Somsenhuis) and at the local supermarket Brunsveld, both in IJzerlo.

Of course this volume will be available at our stand with Somsen books and Somsen Horizons during the great Somsen Reunion on August 18, 2007.

Perhaps we will hear more about this poet from IJzerlo before long.

**New poems**



## Programme of the 3<sup>rd</sup> worldwide Somsen reunion 17-19 August 2007

**Location: Riding-school De Achterhoek in IJzerlo  
(Aalten)**

### Friday August 17

**from 16.00**

Informal welcome for all Somsens from abroad and all the other fans (e.g. the campsite Somsens) at the campsite farm 't Hoftijzer (adjoining Riding School De Achterhoek) in IJzerlo (Aalten).

**A foretaste to get into the right mood!**

### Saturday August 18

Festive morning programme in the brand-new hall of Riding School De Achterhoek in IJzerlo (Aalten). Nursery and programme for children.

**from 09.30**

Follow the signposts - arrival - free parking - free coffee and currant bread - payment reunion - distribution badges, reunion buttons and programme

**10.30** Festive welcome (surprise)

**11.00** The Big Somsen Game (surprise)

**12.00** Lunch

**13.00** Meeting each other (much time and opportunity to meet one another)

- ♦ Exposition by Somsen painters and of paintings of historical Somsen houses
- ♦ Exposition of artistic photographs, poems, sculptures and woodcarving
- ♦ Genealogische helpdesk
- ♦ Permanent DVD-show: Reunions 1997 and 2002 + Campingweekends
- ♦ Market stalls with:
  - The family pictures, documents, subjects you brought
  - Books about De Achterhoek, The Netherlands and English books
  - Somsen collector's item: Our Family book (the very last copies), Somsen Horizons, T-shirts, Posters, DVD-Somsen Panorama, Buttons, Stickers, etc.
- ♦ Products of traditional Old-Dutch trades: wooden shoes, clothes and honey
- ♦ Workshop Violaar (see Somsen Horizon 18)

**16.00** Unveiling commemorative plaque at the Somsenhuis (the origin of our family)

**17.00** Spraying the Somsen-lime-tree at the Japikshuis with gin

**18.00** Drinks at Riding School De Achterhoek

**19.00** Buffet

during which: demonstration horse riding, permanent show Somsen Panorama

**vanaf 20.30** Amusement after party: chatting, drinking and music.

### Sunday August 19

*A free morning, but for who is interested a few options:*

- \* Church service in the Protestant Helenachurch in Aalten (the 'Somsen-church')
- \* Guided walk through the old centre of Aalten
- \* Church service in the Protestant Walburgis Church in Zutphen (a majestic church in the capital of De Achterhoek) with next a walk through this 14th-century Hanseatic city.

**13.00** Departure from IJzerlo for the Pakkebier farm in the Hamlet of Dale (Aalten).

From this farm Jan Hendrik Somsen and Janna Rauwerdink emigrated to the USA in 1881

**16.00** Climbing the Aalten water tower (splendid view of Aalten and its surroundings)

**18.00** Drinks and farewell dinner in Stegers restaurant in the marketplace in Aalten (price ca. € 25 per person).



**Monday August 20 - Friday August 24**

Though the 3<sup>rd</sup> worldwide Somsen Reunion is over, yet there must be foreign visitors and guests at the campsite who would like to enjoy their stay in The Netherlands a little longer.

The Somsen Foundation could be helpful. We do not have a programme for this, but we have facilities to meet with the wishes of our guests.

So please let us know what you are interested in and we will try to make an attractive programme!

A few suggestions:

- ♦ Boat trip on the IJssel River from Zutphen to Arnhem (capital of the province of Gelderland) and back.
- ♦ Roundtrip through the Achterhoek by car
- ♦ Cycling-tour of one or more days
- ♦ Visit to the Kröller Müller Museum (many Van Goghs)
- ♦ Visit to the castle of 's Heerenberg
- ♦ Visit to the former Zuiderzee-islands Urk and Schokland
- ♦ Visit to the ancient Hanseatic cities of Deventer, Zutphen, Hattem or Elburg
- ♦ Visit to Amsterdam
- ♦ Visit to a German city: Münster, Cologne

**The nearest hotel:**

Hotel Restaurant Brüggenhütte in Isselburg-Anholt, (ca. 5 km. from IJzerlo, just across the border in Germany). The Klein Hesselink family runs this hotel and they speak Dutch and English. The hotel has 6 double rooms (€ 65 per night, breakfast included) and 3 single bedrooms (€ 40).

**Telephone:**

**+49 287491470**



# Brüggenhütte

Please bring old family pictures, documents and objects!  
And do not forget your pictures of the 1997 and/or 2002 reunions.  
Many people are interested in them!  
We see to it that there is a place to display them.

Would you please let us know if you have video recordings of the 1997 and/or the 2002 reunions. We borrow them from you, copy them, edit them and make a DVD.  
Then we will show these historical pictures at the reunion.

**Have you got any preference for one of the options on Sunday? Contact Theo Somsen as soon as possible (see colophon).**

*If you want to take part in one or more of the activities between August 20 and 24, please contact Theo Somsen as soon as possible (see colophon). Also tell us which activit(y)ies appeal to you most of all.*

**In the neighbourhood of Aalten there are numerous places where you can stay. Information can be found at VVV-Aalten: +31 543 473052 or [www.vvvaalten.nl](http://www.vvvaalten.nl) Yet we give you some possibilities:**

**Hotel Golden Tulip in Winterswijk**

**Camping 't Hofijzer in IJzerlo**

**Hotel Restaurant Brüggenhütte in Isselburg-Anholt**

**The finest campsite:**

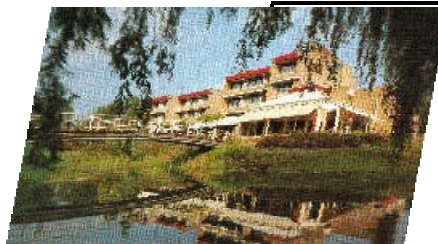
Of course campsite 't Hofijzer (Riding School De Achterhoek) in IJzerlo.

This campsite, owned and run by Eddie en Alice Sticker-Westervelt has been booked by us and you can make a reservation directly at the campsite. Phone: +31 543466693.

**Other hotel (more expensive):**

Hotel Golden Tulip in Winterswijk (ca. 15 km. from IJzerlo).

The hotel has many rooms.  
Phone +31 543517755  
or their site  
(in English):



[www.goldentulipwinterswijk.nl](http://www.goldentulipwinterswijk.nl)

If you want to take part in the farewell dinner in Stegers restaurant on Sunday evening (see above) please register: Theo Somsen (see colophon).

Please contact Theo Somsen (see colophon).

# Without transport everything is paralysed

by Ard Johan Somsen [544]

**If you have ever driven behind a truck in the Netherlands you must have seen the sticker: "Without transport everything is paralysed". Ard Johan Somsen from Aalten has got such a sticker at the back of his truck and in this article he is going to show us the ropes about his job.**



Flat container transport

I am Ard Somsen, 38, and I have been a truck driver for six years now -the last two years I have also been the co-owner of our company: *Soyer Transport*. There are several branches in the transport business and they all have their own specialism.

I have mainly transported containers in the past six years. In this branch there is regular container transport but there is also the so-called "flat container transport".

What is the difference? A flat container is an open container for freight that does not fit into a regular one because it is too wide or too long. It also depends on the way the freight has to be loaded or unloaded if you need a flat container or a regular one. The freight in a flat container also has to be covered with a canvas as a rule. Just think of it what would happen if chipboard gets wet: it is worthless.

Of course the cargo is also fastened with belts and, if necessary, uprights are placed when trees or pipes are transported.

Most truckers you meet on the road hate this kind of transport. They think they get dirty from it and that they have to work much harder. My answer is always: "There are show-



Ard

ers and there is always a fitness centre nearby." When you have more experience it is not so hard after all. I like to be active myself instead of drinking lots of coffee while waiting

for the truck to be unloaded. Of course I also grumble when I have to cover the freight with a canvas and there is a strong wind blowing so that you can start all over again. But you are proud when you have managed to get the load covered, when you have conquered the wind.

It is not always sorrow and misery though. Flat container drivers are a closely-knit group. We are always prepared to help each other when there are a few of us around so that the job is finished much faster. We very often go to the same addresses so that the people there know us much better because of which they are much more helpful.

Of course the job has disadvantages: we are away from home for long periods and we are always alone. But in due course you get used to this. In our company it is sometimes even possible to go home in between trips. That is because in container transport we do not have extremely long drives. Very often we are in the Port of Rotterdam where we very often meet other truckers we know. At my former employer I worked in shifts, so very often at very irregular hours. Because of that my wife Angelique got used to this irregular existence and the same goes for my kids who were very young at the time.

Now that you know something about my duties I would like to evoke everybody to be a bit more tolerant in traffic. I am on the road for a substantial part of the day and I see the weirdest things. Very often truck drivers have to do their utmost so as to prevent accidents and in these dangerous manoeuvres they have 40 to 50 metric tons behind their backs which they have to keep in check. Mostly it is somebody else's money. People should realise that truckers like to get home safe and sound at the end of their working week. So please, show some understanding and do not get irritated when trucks are overtaking. OK, it takes some more time but we also want to get home.

read further on page 18



## What's that rooster doing on the church tower?

by Theo Somsen [227]

***Sometimes someone from abroad asks you about something in your neighbourhood, and you don't exactly know the answer. Well, what can you say?***

Recently an 8-year-old girl in the United States took part in an educational project at school on the history of weathercocks. In this project she learned that since the 12<sup>th</sup> century Roman Catholic churches have had cocks on top of their towers. A pope had ordered this, as a permanent reminder for believers of the Apostle Peter's denial of Jesus. According to the gospel Peter denied knowing Jesus three times, before Jesus was tried and crucified. And the third time the cock crowed...

Then Peter remembered Jesus' prediction: "Before the cock crows, you will have denied Me three times." (Matthew 26:75)

An American relative of mine talked about this project with the girl, and said he thought it were protestant churches having cocks on their towers, whereas Roman Catholic churches had a cross.

Neither of them knew the answer, so my cousin sent me an e-mail to find out what I, from the ancient continent, knew about it.

In all fairness: I had never thought about that. However, I found the question intriguing. The very next weekend the weather was nice, so I decided to take a ride on my bike in and around Vaassen on March 11th, 2007. Of course I took my camera with me.

I was in for a surprise, for what did I find? All the spires I passed supported both a cross and a cock; both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches!

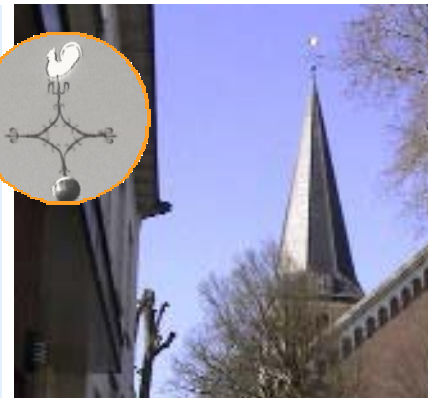
Since I didn't think it obvious for Protestants to adopt the decisions of a deceased pope, I decided to look this up in some old books. And the results were surprising, for what did I find:

In times long ago our Germanic ancestors put live cocks in their May-trees and other high trees. They did so because to them the cock was the symbol for vigilance and attentiveness. Vigilance towards lurking dangers and attentiveness for the beginning of a new day. The cocks-in-trees were therefore a symbol for the dawning of spring.

In the Scandinavian heroic poem of "Edda" there is also mention of putting roosters in Mimahéidr, the miracle-tree.

I suppose this ancient tradition proved ineradicable among the newly christened Germanic peoples, causing this 12<sup>th</sup> century pope to give a religious 'twist' to it. Nowadays the descendants in the Netherlands of these Germanic tribes get along just fine with this heritage (whether Roman Catholic or Protestant).

By the way: in the Dutch language we still use the cock in many proverbs, like "letting the red rooster crow", which means something like: someone committed arson. Fire-fighters know this proverb well; there are even staff associations among fire-fighters that are actually called "The Red Rooster". And finally: some say that without the cock on the tower not even a chicken would come to church; however, that's a joke . . .



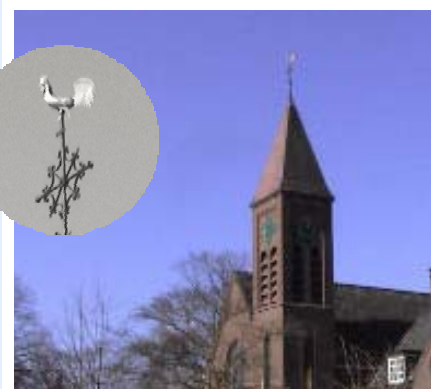
Village Church-Vaassen (Protestant)



St. Martins Church -Vaassen  
(Roman Catholic)



Village Church-Nijbroek (Protestant)



St. Antonys Church -De Vecht  
(Roman Catholic)

# Modern Pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela

by Johan Somsen [1089]

*Together with Rome and Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela has been one of the most important places of pilgrimage in the catholic tradition. Where millions of people left for Santiago in the Middle Ages to seek both their physical and their spiritual well-being, there has been a large procession of pilgrims again for the past few decades who have come from the far corners of this earth to walk these one-thousand-year old paths. But now the motives are very different, there may be a stray pilgrim who goes to Santiago for religious reasons, but they are a minority. Now you come across Protestants, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, anarchists, atheists, countrywomen, you name it. The attractiveness to walk this path has not become any weaker though. To conclude my working life as a teacher I walked the Camino Frances, a 500-mile path, about which there was a publication in Somsen Horizon 18. In this article I would like to pay attention to some important backgrounds.*

## Historical backgrounds

St. James belonged, together with his brother St. John, to the first of the apostles who were called upon by Jesus next to St. Peter and St. Andrew. St. James the Great belonged, together with St. Peter and his brother St. John

to the three most favourite disciples. The addition "the Great" is used to distinguish between him and his namesake and fellow disciple James the Minor, who was the son of Alfeüs. After the Ascension of Christ St. James preached the gospel in Palestine, mainly in Judea and Samaria. Since the 4th century the so-called Epistle of John has also been ascribed to him.

Around Easter in the year 44 king Herod Agrippa of Palestine (37-44) ordered him to be beheaded. Thus he became the first martyr among the apostles. According to several documents from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries his grave is on the Mount of Olives.

From the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century there is a story that St. James the Great was supposed to have preached the gospel in Spain. Around the year 40 AD he must have gone to the Iberian

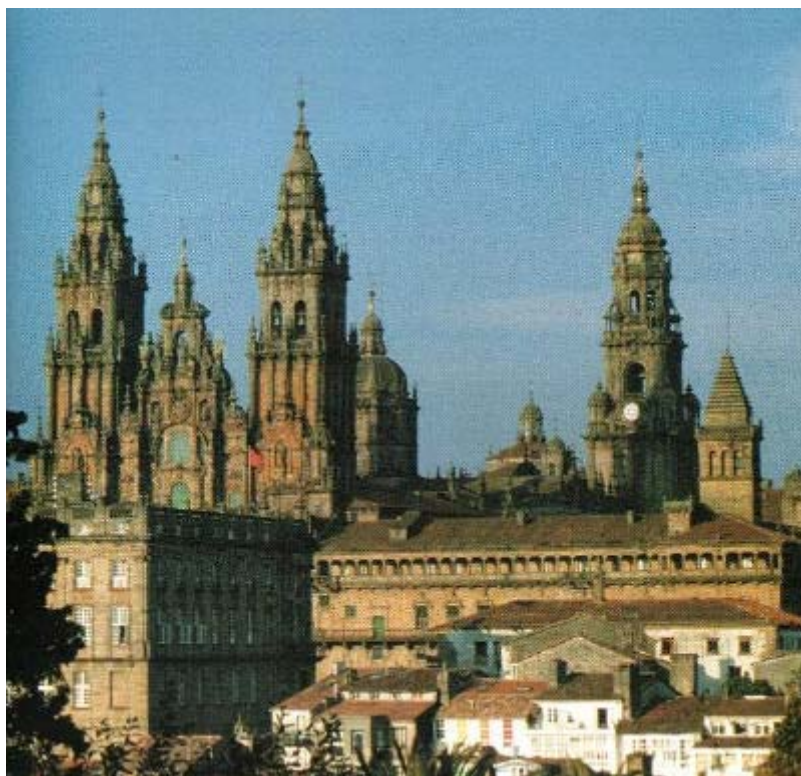
Peninsula. Nine of his disciples were supposed to have accompanied him. The fact that the Spanish name for St. James is "San Iago" explains the name of the city Santiago. According to this legend St James spent some years in

Galicia is the only area in Spain that was never occupied by them. Therefore it was from this area that the Reconquista, the reconquest, of Spain started. From the 9th and 10th centuries there are legends that his disciples did not get permission to

bury St. James the Great in Jerusalem and that they transported his mortal remains after the martyr's death to Compostela in Spain. He is supposed to have been taken from Jerusalem to Spain by his disciples Athanasius and Theodorus in a stone ship which all by itself sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar. They landed in El Padron in the Northwest of Spain in the county of Galicia and they buried the apostle 8 miles inland.

We know that there are traces, dating from the 9th century,

of the worship of relics on the site of the grave at Compostela. The fact that this grave had not been paid attention to for ages and all of sudden had become so important had to be explained: the grave, which had been neglected so much that it had



Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

Spain and returned to Jerusalem where he was beheaded in 44.

The fact that it has apostolical origins probably encouraged the young church in Galicia in a period that it was faced with big problems because of the raids of the Moors.



fallen into oblivion, was supposed to have been rediscovered. In the year 813 the hermit Paio discovered the tomb of St. James the Great in the centre of the place called "Finis Terrea" (the end of the world). This hermit, who lived in Amahia, received a message from angels about the location of the grave; the site was supposed to have been illuminated by supernatural light. Subsequently the place was named after St. James: San-Iago.

The Vikings, for that matter, had already called the whole area "Jacobsland" (St. James' land). The name of Compostela can etymologically be explained by the legendary discovery of the grave due to the miraculous light, afterwards interpreted as the light of the stars; hence "Star Field", in Latin: "campus stellarum". In the Middle Ages another meaning is added: the place of pilgrimage is associated with "Finis terrea". From a continental European point of view this region in Spain was looked upon as the "end of the world" indeed.

With this legend in the background the apostolic tomb developed into a major place of pilgrimage after its rediscovery. In the Middle Ages the grave of St. James was beyond any kind of suspicion as for its authenticity. Pilgrims flocked in from all quarters and numerous miraculous tales arose. Santiago developed into a very important place of pilgrimage with many churches and an impressive cathedral. At the peak of its renown, in the 12th century, half a million

pilgrims came to the city annually. From a total population of Western Europe of approximately 50 million in those days this is 1 percent! In the period of Humanism, which is characterised by a more critical approach (consult the discussion of Erasmus of about 1500 about this subject), we see the first signs of doubt. Yet Pope Leo XIII did not hesitate to declare

the skeletons that were excavated in 1879 the authentic bones of St. James and his disciples.

In the course of the centuries pilgrimages to Santiago gradually fell into abeyance. The low was in the first half of the 20th century – only a



Alone but not lonely

few individuals made the journey to Spain.

After World War Two pilgrimages to Santiago took a turn for the better. In 1993 nearly 100,000 people arrived

pilgrims and in 2006 over 100,000.

### My own experiences

If I would commit my own experiences and meditations to paper I could easily fill a whole book. Therefore I would like to restrict myself to the most essential elements of my trip.

For a start I had a strong desire to do something special after a long working-life as a teacher. Therefore I waited for the school to start again after the summer holidays and then I seized the opportunity. When everybody went back into the straitjacket of everyday-life I set out along ancient roads and paths with only my small backpack.

In the first place it was very satisfying for me to realize that I was walking on a 1000-year-old path. Knowing that I followed in the footsteps of millions of people before me also connected me with them in a very peculiar way. It very often crossed my mind how they must have felt, how they must have experienced the beauty of the landscape, their solitude at times and the great sense of freedom and, last but not least, the encounters with so many other people. Of course my medieval ancestors

had a different purpose: they set out for their spiritual welfare. From many literary sources though we know that our medieval fellow man was not averse to pleasure, adventure and enjoyment during a pilgrimage and in this respect they did not differ from us very much. Of

***There is a legend that tells us about a knight who plunged into the sea because his horse had bolted. He prayed for the assistance of St. James. He remained afloat. When he finally reached the shore he noticed that he was overgrown with shells.***



St-Jacques cockle



Shell-logo

***The St. James-shells (St-Jacques cockle) were and still are found on the coast of Galicia in the North-west of Spain.***

in Santiago. This was a so-called Holy Year because the saint's day of St. James (25 July) was on a Sunday. In 1999, the next Holy Year, there were well over 150,000 pilgrims. 2004 was another Holy Year: 180,000 people set out for Santiago. For the past couple of years the stream of pilgrims has been growing steadily. In 2005 there were 94,000

course there are great differences as well: the circumstances were much more primitive, there were far more dangers and when they had finally reached their destination a heavy return-journey lay ahead of them. For us this is so simple being in a position to take the first possible plane or train home where we arrive in just a few hours.

Another important element, perhaps the most important one for me, was the experience to be nearly completely free in many ways. Because I only carried 8 to 9 kg on my back (the weight of the rucksack, food and water included) I hardly needed to worry about matter. There was no need for me to choose garments, for I only had two of each: the one that I was wearing and one in my rucksack, furthermore just a minimum number of toiletries and that was it. Liberating! Moreover the coherence between things is so big – since I did not have to worry about material things I developed so much space in my mind and in my heart that I could completely devote myself to that. It afforded the biggest possible freedom to get in touch with other people, if desired, but it also created space for thinking about everything that I wanted to allow to enter my mind. When you experience this for days and days on end on a new and different level of existence arises, something hard to explain but many fellow pilgrims had similar experiences. In my opinion there is a condition that you should travel alone so that your thinking and acting is not frustrated by your travelling companions. This is more or less comparable to the minimum of luggage, which also limits you very minimally.

Then there was the great feeling that your body tells you that you can do the job, that it is possible to cover long distances, almost without any effort. This very substantially intensified this sense of freedom that is so hard to explain. The awareness that you set out early in the morning and that you will travel along unknown tracks, that your body is going to do the job and can do it not only gives

you a great sense of freedom but it is also very satisfactory. Moreover: never before have I enjoyed simple food and ordinary water more than during this trip.

**Historical sources:  
various sites on  
<http://camino-de-santiago.startpagina.nl>**

My homecoming felt like a shock. Whereas I live in a cosy, picturesque little cottage with not too many things around I felt flooded with matter. The first couple of weeks after my return home I was only busy putting away and getting rid of superfluous things. In the course of time this desire weakened but I was so well aware of it that you should not travel through life with so many things since they are a real burden.

I was not left with disillusionment though, but there has been a gnawing desire to go on a new pilgrimage and the one and only solution is to suit the action to the word and go again. In May this year I will put on my walking-shoes again for a long walk from Sevilla in the South of Spain to Santiago de Compostela. It is a 650-mile trip along an old Roman road.

*I already packed my rucksack, I can hardly wait!*



Pilgrim Johan



Breakfast





On November 29, 2006 Ester Reijnen got her doctor's degree at the University of Basel (Switzerland).

Ester is the daughter of Josta Somsen [2896] and Henk Reijnen [2897].

The title of her thesis: *A contribution to the understanding of visual perception and attention.*

No wonder that she studied at the Faculty for Psychology.

And yes, our webmaster John Howard Somsen [2353] landed in Florida with his Golden Falcon. He still can be reached at his e-mail address and by cell phone (see colophon), but anyone who wants to visit him, can find him at the following address:  
4579 Daisy Drive Kissimmee, FL  
34746-6386



## Remarkable items

John Somsen  
4579 Daisy Drive  
Kissimmee, FL 34746-6386  
(407) 397-9107



Of course our chairman Johan Somsen [1089] was young too, a long time ago. But would you still recognise him in this old picture? This picture was taken in his year of birth 1944 and he was cherished by his aunt Willemina Everdina Somsen [1187], mostly called aunt Zus, and his grandmother Everdina Wilhelmina Somsen-te Kamp [1082]

## PUPIL VAN DE WEEK: EVA SOMSEN (F8M)

De F8-leiding is gevraagd of wij de pupil van deze week wilden kiezen. Eigenlijk hoefden we daar niet lang over na te denken. Onze pupil van de week is Eva Somsen!

Eva staat in de spits en is een handige voetbalster. Ze is snel en behendig met de bal.

Eva kan lekker met de bal aan de voet door gaan en er dan ook nog leuk uit scoren. Ze is niet bang voor de tegenstander of voor de bal. Verder is het een leuke en gezellige meid die ook met de training altijd enthousiast mee doet. En wat natuurlijk helemaal leuk is, dat haar hele team komende zaterdag 'team van de week' is. Wij wensen AZSV 1 een fijne wedstrijd toe. Mannen, pak de punten!



We still have a short message about Eva Somsen from Aalten in "Aalten Vooruit" (newspaper) of November 29, 2006.

Young Eva appears to be a very gifted soccer player. So she is heading towards a very nice future!

## Hand in your latest family data!

by Dick Somsen [130]

**On the occasion of the next worldwide Somsen-Reunion in August 2007 the plan arose to publish an update/supplement of our family book *Somsen Omnes Generationes* on CD-Rom. It is time to update the family data in the book after 10 years since we have had a great many mutations in the past decade. We have had well over 1800 additions to our database since 1997 because of birth and marriage.**

If you have supplementary data and/or rectifications that you would like to be placed in our family book we would like you to hand them in in the short term, preferably in writing:

**Somsen-Genealogie, Monteverdilaan 175, 8031 DL Zwolle, The Netherlands**

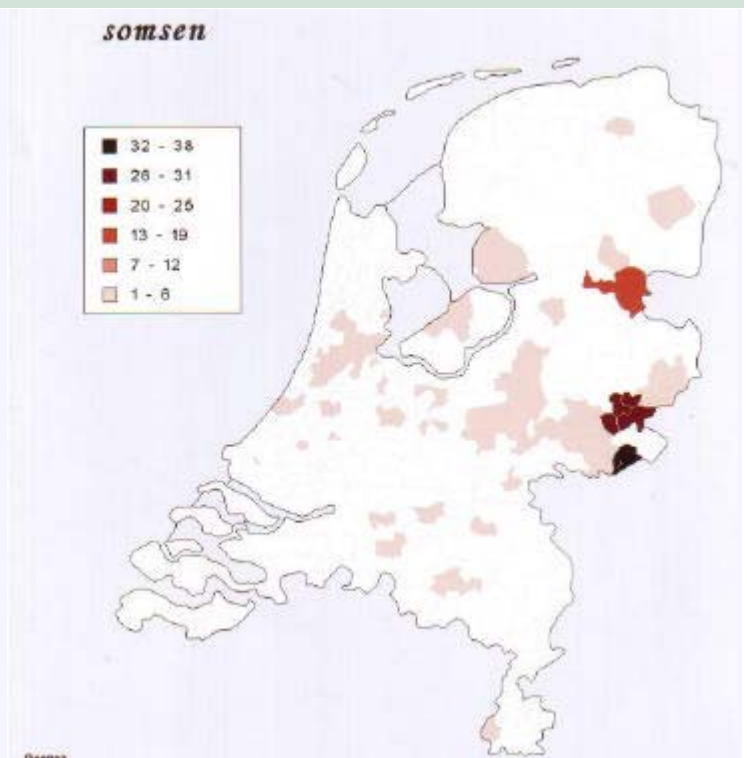
Or by email to: [somseogenealogie@kpnplanet.nl](mailto:somseogenealogie@kpnplanet.nl)

Then your data will be listed in the update/supplement of our family book.

In order to get an impression of the number of CD-Roms we need we would like to know in how many CD-Roms you are interested.

### Somsens in the Netherlands

*Where do the Somsens live in the Netherlands? And where do we find most of them? This map gives an idea of it. It is a pity, though, that these data come from the telephone directory. For now we don't know where all the Somsen-girls are who bear different family names.*



*continue from page 12*

Maybe you are thinking now that there is one of those truckers who thinks he always right, but to be honest: we also make our mistakes. If you ask me what attracts me so much in this job the answer is: What more could a man desire, you come to all kind of places and you get paid into the bargain! Especially for those who go on long trips it is sometimes like being on a holiday. In summer there is always sunshine and in winter the snow is so beautiful. This is a guarantee for beautiful pictures, but as I said before, we, in our company do not get that far from home. We only cover Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Finally I wish everybody to have many safe miles on the road, both in private and for business. And I hope to meet you on the road some time!



Pen drawing Japikshuis

#### The lost masterpiece

The second masterpiece of Aart Dirkzwager (see page 11 and 20 of SH-18) has been traced down!

Marnix Somsen [228] discovered it and took a picture of it in the apartment of Henry Northrop Somsen [2456] in Rochester, Minnesota on August 2, 1999. In 1962 Henry N. together with his wife and two children visited IJzerlo and the Japikshuis. Through the inhabitants he ordered a pen drawing of the Japikshuis – Aart Dirkzwager was the artist.



## Family Announcements

*In this column we would like to draw your attention to the family announcements that have reached us. We are very much pleased to present them to you and are grateful to everybody who took the trouble to inform us about the merry and sad events in their and our family.*

*This also enables our advisor Dick Somsen from Zwolle to keep our genealogical files up-to-date, so that we, in turn, can inform you in Somsen Horizon.*

*We really appreciate it very much that you send in your family announcements (together with pictures please!) to our secretariat: Somsen Foundation, Jan Tooropstraat 2, 3817 PZ Amersfoort, The Netherlands.*

### Born

**24-05-2005:** Anneke Mae Jensen [5584] d.o. Cullen Andoen Jager Jensen [4865] and Andrea Paulsen [5581]

**21-10-2006:** Hannah Marie [5571] d.o. Kent Jerome Kippes [4009] and Leah Rachel Somsen [2698]

**03-01-2007:** Mingo Robbie Donas [5613] s.o. Robertus Theodorus (Rob) Wennekendonk [3875] and Maruschka Elisa Jeanette (Maruschka) Somsen [2881]

**12-02-2007:** Pascal Hendrik [5675] s.o. Guido Reijnen [5456] and Janine Petra Schoch [5457]



Mingo



Pascal

### Married

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

**13-10-2006:** Ronald Arnold Jan (Ronald) Kerst [5596] and Nicolette Monique (Nicolette) Somsen [1195]

**12-05-2007:** Coby Lynn (Coby) Somsen [2699] and Emmanuel Akuntah (Emmanuel) Raleigh [5700]



Ronald en Nicolette

### Living-together

**20-10-2006:** Eduard (Ed) Wijngaard [5574] and Johanna Margaretha (Joke) Somsen [132]

### Deceased

**23-03-2006**

Clinton Harold Gillmore [764]  
76  
Cool, CA. USA

**28-10-2006**

Thomas Richard Bear [3505]  
70  
Buchanan, ND. USA

**24-02-2007**

Tijs Martinus Cernéus [1862]  
82  
Eibergen

**26-02-2007**

Jan Somsen [1801]  
79  
Eibergen

**07-03-2007**

Arend Jan (Jan) Mengerink [1851]  
83  
Neede

**14-04-2007**

Dirkje Smits-Hoopman [385]  
82  
Winterswijk

## Historical Somsen-farms



### \* **Somsenhuis (hamlet of IJzerlo)**

The first Somsens lived here from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century



### \* **Japikshuis (hamlet of IJzerlo)**

Aaltjen Somsen and her brother Hendrik Jan lived here before leaving for the USA in 1847 and 1851 respectively



### \* **Pakkebier (hamlet of Dale)**



Jan Hendrik Somsen and Janna Rauwerdink lived here before they left for the USA in 1881

