



# *Somsen* horizon

Volume 18 – number 29 – July 2015

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**Colophon**

Somsen Horizon is issued by the Somsen Foundation  
 Published: Once a year, in June/July. Printings: Dutch: 200, English: 100

Somsen Newsletter: October  
 Copy and pictures for the next issue before September 2015

Supporters  
 The magazine is sent free of charge to all who transfer an annual gift of at least \$ 20,- A gift above this amount will be greatly appreciated! Please use PAYPAL on our website

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 Copy and pictures for the next issue before May 2016

Lay-out: Ruud Wassink  
 Printed by: Arboris / Copyshop Zelhem.

We gladly permit copying of articles  
 on condition that the source is mentioned

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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 achieve 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 photo

**John. H. Somsen**

## Preface



Johan Somsen

In this 29th edition of our family magazine Somsen Horizon you will find a number of very different articles about the trials and tribulations of a number of Somsens. You can read how two Somsens were put in the spotlight in a special way: in 1817 Garrit Jan Somsen [782] received a gratuity for his participation in the Battle of Waterloo,

this year exactly 200 years ago, and our editor Harry Somsen [146] became a member of the order of Orange-Nassau in April 2015.

Of course contributions from some American Somsens are not lacking and you can read about the history of a special family business: Somsen Eibergen.

We also received the sad message that John Howard Somsen [2353] passed away. In the early years of our family foundation John did much important genealogical work and he was the one who developed our website. In a separate article we dwell on him.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to two issues.

The section "Family Announcements" sometimes took a whole page in the past. Currently it has only one birth and one death. This certainly does not imply that there are so few events in our family in this area but that, unfortunately, we do not get the proper information. You can help us by looking around in your part of the family and send in your information to us for which we will be very grateful to you, of course.

The second case concerns our search for "young" Somsens who are willing to maintain our family foundation in the future. The current board consists largely of old age pensioners. Fortunately there are also a few who are in their fifties but it would be nice if that age group could be extended. If you are interested please contact us.

All that remains for me is to wish you much reading pleasure and you are also always welcome to contribute or report a special event in the Somsen family.

Johan Somsen [1089]

## Once upon a time... Somsen Eibergen

by Henk Sieben

**The following article about the family business Somsen Eibergen is written by Henk Sieben. He has written this for the "Old Ni-js" of the Historical Circle Eibergen. It appeared in December 2014.**

*We are very grateful that he has given us permission to publish this special article about a special Somsen family.*

### Introduction

For decades the Somsen company was an important part of Eibergen. It belonged to the core of the Eibergen business community. Both the installation company and the shop were known in the region for their reliability, diversity and quality. The company was founded in 1929. Somsen BV had to close its doors in 1993. In this article the history of this company that gave Eibergen so much colour is described.

### IJzerlo

It was Dirk Johan Somsen [361] (12.15.1905 - 29.11.1988), also called Derk, who founded the company in 1929. Derk Somsen was, like many other Somsens, born in Aalten. His father was Berend Hendrik Somsen [344] (03.28.1879 - 01.18.1914) who married Gesina Johanna Theodora Navis [345] (10.01.1880 - 10.30.1972) on May 7, 1903. Father Berend died at the age of thirty-four. This had a big impact on the young family. Mother was left behind with four children. The family took care of the children as it was customary at the time. Thus eleven-year-old Derk came to live with his uncle Jan Hoopman and aunt Anna Hoopman-Somsen in IJzerlo. Aunt Anna was a sister of his father. Derk Somsen lived in IJzerlo for about ten years, spent his boyhood there, went to elementary school and learned to work in the smithy and bicycle shop. In 1922, mother Gesina remarried Bernard Nijman (1878-1966) from Eibergen. Meanwhile Derk had started working as a bicycle mechanic in Lieveelde. His stepfather pointed out to him that electricity was being installed everywhere and that there was a future in that business. He knew someone in Eibergen who could get him a job in this industry. This job came just at the right time because in Lieveelde, Derk met Drika Smits [362] from Eibergen. So available jobs in Eibergen might be useful.

On November 26, 1925 he went to work as an electrician in Eibergen. The work suited him just fine. His uncle Jan Somsen [352] advised him a





*Derk Somsen 4th from left at work in the forge, annex bicycle repairshop, of Jan Schutten in Lievelede*

few years later to start his own company. He took this advice and in June 1929 Derk Somsen bought a building at the then Groenlosche Straat, no. A 149, currently JW Hagemanstraat. That's where he started his installation company. He bought one house of the so called 'Vier Evangeliën' (Four Gospels), which were four cottages (now called Roosenbeek) across the former post office. While working, he became familiar with the installation branch. When he joined Mr. Wansink, director of the electricity company De Berkelstreek, to ask for more work he answered that there were already two installation companies in Eibergen, the firm Reith and the firm Prins, and that there was no need for a third one. Moreover, he was a member of the Reformed Church, which worked as a disadvantage. Derk



*Willemina Hendrika Somsen-Smits [362]*

Somsen however was not taken aback by it and went to work: successfully! Besides that he married Wilhelmina Hendrika (Drika) Smits (12.27.1908 - 05.26.1993) in 1929.

### **The first job**

Together they worked hard and could not to be defeated. Derk worked as an



*In 1929 Derk Somsen bought a building in J.W. Hagemanstreet and started an installation company*



*The children in front of the building in J.W. Hagemanstreet.*

installer and Drika worked in the store that they had started as well. In no time, there was plenty of work. His first job was the construction of the electrical installation in the new house of the Wormgoor family at the Groenlosche Straat. One of his first big jobs was the construction of the electricity in the Reformed Church in the Hemstea which opened on Thursday, October 23, 1930. On Sunday, October 26th the first church service took place.

Because things went well, servants could be hired. On August 15, 1931 the first real electrician was employed at the Somsen company. His name was Egon Winterberg. He had come to the Netherlands with a children's transport from Germany after WWI from Wuppertal. The reverend Renting from Winterswijk placed these children in Reformed families in the Achterhoek.

As a child, Egon Winterberg was placed with the Klein Hesselink family in Rekken. He had a good education and mastered the installation branch. So it was unfortunate that he had to return to Germany for mobilization in 1937. Even though he had to return they have always kept in touch. Even after World War II, there was a warm relationship between the Somsen family and Egon Winterberg who died in 1979.



*Derk Somsen and Egon Winterberg at work.*

After his active career as an engineer and entrepreneur Derk Somsen wrote down his memories carefully. From his part 'Overpeinzingen' (Meditations) came the following moving anecdote: "New Year's Eve 1930 we had the house full of 'Smits', Somsens and other acquaintances. There was coffee, anise- and chocolate milk, not to mention peanuts. We had a lot of fun together. I wasn't paying much attention to mother. When I looked at her again, I was shocked and thought: "quickly get rid of the people." It still took till eleven o'clock before everyone had left. In the first hours of 1931, not much sleeping was possible. Mother was in charge. Doctor Strumphler and the nurse Mrs. Ordelman had to be warned. Furthermore the cradle and the full diaper hamper had to be brought down and many more things had to be done. Honestly, I felt like a helpless man."

Thus on New Year's Day, 1931, their first child, a son, was born. They named him after their deceased father, Derk Berend Hendrik also called Ben [396]. The young parents decided to make him a special cradle made of wicker: the most beautiful cradle that existed. After Ben, eight other children were born, known as: Wil [398], Sien [400], Henk [402], Hans [404], Annie 406, Dick [408], Riet [410] and Joop [411].

### Yad Vashem

The war brought intensive years for the Somsens but they managed. There was not much opportunity to do any business. The store was robbed by the Germans and the entire staff and Derk Somsen himself were arrested, interrogated but fortunately released. These were some tense years because they were also committed to Jews in hiding. Derk Somsen and Wilhelmina Somsen Smits are mentioned in the book "Righteous among the Nations" (published in 2005). This book contained all the Dutch who received the Yad Vashem medal and were recognized by Yad



*Derk and Drika Somsen-Smits are decorated by the Israeli Ambassador in our country with the Yad Vashem Medal.*

Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. This book extensively tells about their resistance work. This information was drawn from the book "'Kom vanavond met verhalen, Eibergen in oorlogstijd' deel 1 van E. H. Wesselink. From this book comes the following section: "Throughout their time in hiding at the Matemans, Derk Somsen kept contact with the family Zion. He saw to it that there were enough food vouchers to provide everyone with food, even if it meant he had to falsify papers. He brought the Zions newspapers and even managed to get them a radio. All these activities had been a great risk for him, as well as for his wife and children. Derk also made himself useful as an electrician; he repaired the radio or other things if a problem occurred.



*Nostalgic switchboard from earlier times*

He was also responsible for arranging hiding places for Joseph and Salomon, to Berthe Meijer and other Jews. Derk had later been arrested on suspicion of helping Jews. He was interrogated and then released. With the support of his wife, driven by charity and a strong religious conviction, Derk fought to save lives and fight the evil reign throughout the war. For this help, they were awarded the Yad Vashem medal on September 18, 1981. Mayor Cappetti spoke a few appreciative words at that meeting.

### Straightforward

Their religious belief was the reason that the church played an important role in the life of the Somsens. Derk Somsen was a member of the church council of the Reformed Church for a long time and he was also socially involved. He was a member of the board of the Technical School and was part of the Civil Defence.

He was also a board member of The Ente, the former organization for social work which was started by the Reformed Church in Hemstede.





*Derk Somsen [361]*

Derk Somsen was a man of hard work and he was always straightforward, a man who loved justice. Just like his wife, he was guided by the words of the Bible which was read at the dinner table every day. Drika Somsen ran the store and was busy with the family all day. After World War II, a building on the 'Nieuwstraat', facing painting company Kiffen, was equipped as a workshop. This property belonged to Anton Rosing who went to Germany on the orders of the Nazis because he was an German. When Anton Rosing returned to Eibergen in 1953, a 'tweede evangelie' was purchased and converted into a shop. That was also the moment that the sale of household appliances significantly expanded. The sale of lighting and sound equipment including records, was energetically pursued. It was especially mother Drika Somsen who was involved in these sales activities. With promotional activities the wide range of products was announced. Business went well in those years. Because of the opening of a new store on November 27, 1959 a new newspaper was made for Eibergen and surrounding places. This promoted the entire stock of Radio Somsen: tape recorders, irons, mixers, the Philishave which more than a million men around the world were excited about, the electric coffee grinder and of course the television that could be demonstrated at home without obligation. Furthermore the newspaper paid attention to the service department: "Because you are not only buying a machine from us, but you will also get the service! Even after the purchase, you can count on us.

### **A flourishing company**

In 1963 another Somsen Guide was released in style with 'Our Guide'. In this paper there were all sorts of facts, puzzles, stories and recipes. Of course the reader was well informed about the



*The new store after the renovation in 1959 in J.W. Hagemanstreet.*

now wide range in the field of household appliances. Also mentioned was where the Somsen company was at work. At that time they worked at the nursing home "Beth San" in Aalten where the electricity was installed. No less than 14 kilometers of pipeline were processed and 30 kilometers of wire. Also they worked in two Eibergen retirement homes. Furthermore, they build an electrical installation in the castles Nijenhuis and Warmelo in Diepenheim. The Somsen firm worked and business was going well.

The installation activities were expanded rapidly in these years. From the entire region work came towards them. Business was good, so good that Ben [396] and Henk [402] Somsen were trained to get involved in the business. In 1962 a firm was founded and in 1965 Dick Somsen [408] joined the company. He had until then worked for the Hoopman firm, for his uncle and aunt in IJzerlo had become skilled as buyers and sellers of farming machinery and equipment for road construction.

As mentioned Drika Somsen had a feeling for and fun in the sales activities. It was her passion in life. For example, she made sure that the supply of the LPs remained topical. She was subscribed to numerous music magazines. Noteworthy was that she was always well informed about the charts and that she knew numerous pop groups by name. Creedence Clearwater Revival and Shocking Blue were certainly no strangers to her. The store had a record bar with three headphones to listen to the records. Drika Somsen was a woman with a broad cultural interest. Besides following developments in modern music (although she preferred sacred music herself), she was also politically interested and she had always a listening ear.



*In later days a jewelry shop was housed in the former Somsen shop.*

### **New property**

In 1970, the shop at the J. W. Hagemanstraat became too small so had to be expanded. A new building was designed, spacious and modern.



*The Eibergen Retailers Association organized an entrepreneurial fair in an empty part of the Picker factory in the 1950s. Here is the stand of Somsen Radio.*



From there the sales activities could be continued because all went well with the Somsen firm. The brothers Somsen had courage and enterprise and were successful with that. So there was tremendous interest on September 7, 1971 at Nieuwstraat where the new premises opened. The Somsen firm had become one of the larger companies in the region.

The official opening was performed by former mayor of Eibergen FJ Hermesen who had been appointed in Nieuwegein in that year. In that year also Riet Somsen [410] came to strengthen the



*Excavation for the new building*



*Foundation for the new building*

firm. She made sure the music department was expanded and kept up to date and attractive. The new building had a record bar with eight places and there was a stock of 2,000 LPs. At first mother Somsen just remained behind the counter. Everywhere in the store were seating areas where one could enjoy a cup of coffee. The Somsens did everything to make the customers feel at home. After a few years, Gerrit Beumer



*Opening by former mayor F.J. Hermesen*

took over the music division from Riet Somsen. He was a music lover and had an ear for new developments in pop music. It should be mentioned from the sixties the Somsen company had the



*A lot of interest at the festive opening of the new shop building in Nieuwstraat*



exclusive sales for the East Achterhoek for the famous Danish B&O audio and video equipment.

Somsen Eibergen were a familiar sight throughout the Achterhoek.



Advert "Once upon a time". The colour yellow was the trademark and appeared in many ads with the words:  
It is yellow ..... and it is there for you.

Father Derk Somsen had, because of his retirement, withdrawn from the firm, and now the three brothers Ben, Henk and Dick were responsible for business operations.



The new shop building in Nieuwstraat

After his retirement Derk Somsen worked amongst others for the Eibergen Reading Society established in 1861.

In 1972, a jubilee newspaper was released with again attractive offerings. A modern portable tape recorder with FM, beautiful toasters and LP's under twenty guilders like Abbey Road by The Beatles, Obscure by Clouds of Pink Floyd and the 1st solo album of Lou Reed.

### It is yellow. . . . and it is there for you

These were golden years for the Somsen firm. It profited from population growth and expansion plans and had plenty of work in the region. Moreover Somsen was reliable, they did what they promised to do. Problems were tackled and solved. The Service Department was excellent and known everywhere and the yellow vans of



Advert July 1973

### Acquisition of Lammers plumbing company

In 1973 the Somsen company took over the Eibergen plumbing company Lammers. This meant that also the Chain Case Factory and shop at Kerkstraat were bought. The land was later sold for housing and in the former shop of Lammers later the organization for social work 'De Ente' was settled.

The plumber workshop was placed in the new factory premises of factory Somsen on 'De Mors'. This new property was opened exactly two years after the opening of the new shop, on September 7, 1973, and was especially designed for the installation engineering department. Until then these workshops were to be found in the Hondevoort. In the new factory premises also the office, warehouse and storage were located. Further to be found were the staff of the installation department, the drawing and design department, the repair workshops for both white- and brown goods and the service department.

### World Press Photo in Eibergen

The Somsen company did not only work in the area of installation. They were also active in the cultural field. So a few weeks after the opening of



The new building on industrial site De Mors.



the building on 'De Mors' the Somsen family had the honor to host in that building the World Press Photo. Mayor Cappetti spoke in his opening remarks words of praise and was very excited about this initiative of the Somsen family.

### A modern business

In the seventies and eighties Somsen Eibergen BV further evolved into a dynamic and thriving company that provided employment to seventy people. It was a healthy company with an excellent reputation for quality, not only in Eibergen but in the entire region. Through years of experience and expertise the company had developed into a modern company in the field of electronics and mechanical systems in industry and housing. Also new activities developed in the fields of telecommunications and security technology. It was also active in residential construction, renovations, plumbing, kitchens and central heating. The Somsen company even had work in the port of Rotterdam. The company had its own service department, the Somsen Service Guard.

Ben Somsen was the man with the creative ideas within the company. Besides taking care of brown goods, sound and audio equipment, he worked PR. He designed the ads, brochures and so on. Henk Somsen was responsible for the installation. When Dick Somsen joined the company, he was



Ben Somsen [396]

across café Overkamp at that time. Later it was moved to the Haaksbergerveen. This beacon is now known by pilots as the Rekken beacon.

A modern business also includes business trips to promote team spirit. On the occasion of the opening of the factory building on 'De Mors' the entire staff was offered a three-day trip to Norway. On the boat of Tor Line they sailed from Amsterdam to Gothenburg. They had unforgettable days. Another time they went with the entire staff to London with the partners. Again it was a party.



Henk Somsen [402]



Advert of Somsen installation



Dirk Somsen [408]

### Setbacks

In the early eighties priorities had to be changed. Discounts such as The Great One arrived and had to be competed. This was a great challenge and took a heavy toll on the business. In 1981, under the responsibility of Dick Somsen a branch opened in Haaksbergen where white and brown goods were sold. This business

was excellent and got good turnovers.

A big blow, both in personality and in business terms, was the sudden death of Henk Somsen in 1988. He was in charge of the installation branch. Dick took charge of installation. This was at the expense of the Haaksbergen branch which was closed a year later. In the early nineties there were financial setbacks in a number of projects



Rita Somsen -  
Schuurman [409]

such as the indoor pool De Wilder in Haaksbergen. In 1991 Ben Somsen left the business after which Dick Somsen and his wife Rita [409] were on their own. Together they tried to make the best of it.

### The curtain falls

However, the final blow was when the main contractor of the housing projects and apartment complexes in the Molenpoort Lochem went bankrupt. This dragged the Somsen firm along in its demise. It had such a great impact that the bank withdrew the credit in 1993. In effect this meant the end of a once thriving company which at that time had existed for almost sixty-five years. At the request of the managers of Somsen Installatietechnieken Eibergen BV, the company was declared bankrupt due to liquidity problems. The shop in the Nieuwstraat was sold to the Dangremond company from Rijssen. The Installation Somsen BV was acquired by two former employees Gerrit Koele and Jos Weenink. They decided to continue under the name K&W installation.

Heartwarming were the many supportive comments from the Eibergen community after the collapse of the once flourishing business Somsen Eibergen BV.

Meanwhile director Dick Somsen had become an importer of Pro-art articles, a German company in exclusive kitchen systems. Dick Somsen focused on issues including the purchase and sale of kit-cases, compact kitchens that are often found at fairs. His wife Rita was closely involved. She translated the German brochures into Dutch. There were close contacts with companies like KLM, Albert Heijn and Ahrend office furniture. In 2003 Dick Somsen stopped his career after many stormy year.

Rekken, september 2014 Henk Sieben

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## A river cruise

by Stephen Somsen [2459]

*In the fall of 2014 our American cousin Stephen Somsen and his wife LaNay travelled to Europe for a river cruise from Amsterdam to Budapest. Stephen is our American family member who takes care of the collection of the annual contributions of the American donors of our family Foundation. Their journey began with a few days in Amsterdam where a few Dutch Somsens spent a great day with them.*

Although I grew up in a small town surrounded by farmland in Southern Minnesota, over time I developed a deep affection for travel on the water. Most of my adult life that travel has been by sail-boat or cruise ship and mostly on large bodies of water like the Great Lakes of North America, the Atlantic Ocean or the Pacific Ocean.

With that perspective I was not sure what to expect when my wife LaNay and I booked a two week river cruise in Europe aboard a modern river-boat. However, it turned out to be quite a memorable experience.



Buildings in Amsterdam

Our journey began in Amsterdam where we stayed for a few days prior to boarding the Viking Lif. We had one quite fascinating day exploring the very best of the liberal city with some of the Somsen family likely familiar to you: Johann, Yvonne, Theo and Hanna (all four in attendance at the 2012 Somsen Reunion in New Ulm). We had mid-morning coffee at a café that first opened its doors long before the American Revolution.

We toured the famous canals of Amsterdam by boat, winding our way past beautiful homes and



notable landmarks on a perfect autumn day. We savored some of the world's finest art at the Rijksmuseum and had a lovely evening dinner together before saying our good-night after a brief tour of the most colorful section of Amsterdam.



*Stephen and LaNay at the Leidseplein.*

Among other things, we learned that "coffee houses" don't really serve much coffee.



*Stephen and LaNay at the Rijksmuseum.*



*The itinerary for our excursion on the Viking Lif.*

The itinerary for our excursion on the Viking Lif included river travel on the Rhine, the Main and the Danube. As we settled in to our comfortable quarters we cruised the Rhine as we departed Amsterdam by night. After breakfast the next mor-

ning we explored some of the windmills at Kinderdijk, Netherlands, and saw a windmill owner engage the sails by working the wheel created for that purpose.



*Kinderdijk: windmills*

Throughout our journey we would often greet the new day with a new town or city to explore, often by foot and always guided by a local expert who offered insight into the culture and history of the land and the local people.



*Windmill Owner working the sails*

Usually our ship would remain docked as we explored, but sometimes the captain and crew would navigate to the next port and we would finish our daily tour on an air-conditioned motor-coach with a drive over the hills and along the river valley to find our comfortable vessel waiting for us in a new port.

I was amazed at the considerable amount of river traffic, especially in the Netherlands and Germany, to include commercial and passenger boats and ships at all hours of the day and night.

One of the highlights of our journey was in Passau, Germany where we visited the beautiful St.



*Stained Glass Window at Cologne Cathedral*

Stephan's Cathedral. Here is the home of one of the largest organs in the world, by some accounts THE largest of them all. We were quite fortunate to be present for a mid-day concert and we wisely heeded the advice of our guide to be seated well away from the organ itself.



*Bar of the Longship Viking Lif*



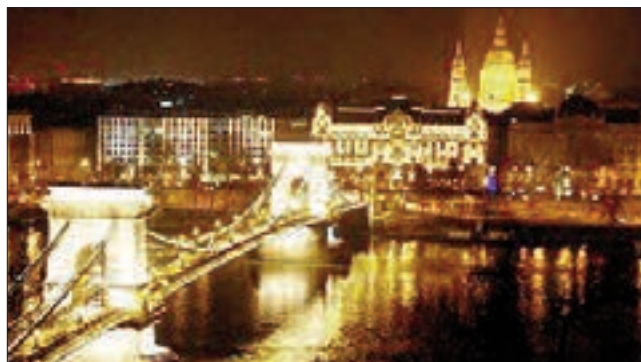
*Passau at the Donau*



*Organ of the St. Stephan Cathedral*

In a short time the cathedral was filled to capacity and the concert began. I have always enjoyed the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, but on this day I heard and felt the music as I never had before. I believe that what we experienced was what Bach had in mind when he wrote his magnificent music.

Another highlight was near the end of our adventure. As I studied the itinerary, I wondered why we were scheduled to arrive in Budapest at ten o'clock in the evening as most of our arrivals had been in the morning. The answer became clear as we powered steadily along the Danube River and embraced the spectacular vista of our approach to Budapest by night. There are really two cities: Buda to the east and Pest to the west.



*Arrival at Budapest*

Many of the grand buildings and bridges are beautifully illuminated to include the Parliament Building that dominates the view and the Chain Bridge that connects the two famous cities. Arriving in Budapest, Hungary at night was a perfect way to end our delightful journey.

Stephen Somsen, Darrington, Washington, USA

### **Keeping them out of the hands of the Americans**

#### ***An interview with Marnix Somsen [228]***

*NRC Handelsblad, by editors Anne Dohmen and Teri van der Heijden in December 2014.*

Marnix Somsen is a fraud lawyer for De Brauw in New York. He aids Dutch companies that run into the law in the US.

For Marnix it's a natural thing: communicating via video link.

From his office in the Rockefeller Centre in New York –“near the ice-skating rink, near the Christmas tree”- the fraud lawyer from the Dutch firm De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek often has “professional rows” over the video link.

This interview is also done via video link. One





*Marnix Somsen in New York  
Photo: De Brauw Blackstone  
Westbroek*

screen hanging in New York, the other in the offices of The Brauw on the Zuidas in Amsterdam. Marnix agreed to come to Holland for the interview, but ended up being too busy with his Dutch clients, like SBM Offshore, builder of floating oil rigs, who paid a record fine of € 193 million to the Dutch state for bribery abroad.

While co-worker Jorge is still working on setting up the video link, Somsen is seated and ready. Big coffee mug in hand. Marnix Somsen left for the States in the summer of 2014 to keep Dutch firms out of the hands of the US Department of Justice. Which is hunting them down and issuing enormous fines.

For instance: Dutch Rabo Bank: last year the bank paid a whopping 581 million euros fine for manipulating the British interest rate Libor. Philips paid a 3.6 million euro fine for bribery in Poland. And ING, which paid 455 million euros in 2012 for prohibited transactions with Cuba and Iran. All "Dutch euros that end up in the pocket of the American state."

Marnix is involved in practically every big fraud case. But is not very forthcoming about who his clients are. He will say that the number of companies seeking help in fraud cases will increase in the future "for as long as there is political pressure to combat fraud".

Because of his move to New York it's easier to gain trust with the US authorities in DC and New York he says. So they agree for instance, that Dutch cases are handled by Holland.

Because that is the objective of a Dutch fraud lawyer. "First of all, for the company, Dutch fines are more reasonable. But also because it is better for the Dutch treasury."

#### **When do companies contact you?**

"If one of their employees is caught using bribes somewhere in the world. Or if someone blew the whistle. The main concern is often: are we going to inform the authorities or not? The general feeling in the States is that if you voluntarily report these acts of wrongdoing, your penalty will be reduced. But this is virtually non-existent. You never hear: initially we were thinking of this amount of money, but because you turned yourselves in, it is now this amount."

#### **So in case of bribery, you say to your client: "keep it under your hat"?**

Not necessarily, but I will say that a company should consider it. And if a company decides to report:

I advise on what, with whom and when. My advice is generally to report it with the Dutch authorities.

#### **Like in the case with SBM Offshore. How does that work?**

"I can't go into detail about SBM, but the idea is that, on behalf of a Dutch company, we ask the Dutch government to pose fine in Holland. We ask the Dutch authorities to take the lead in reaching an agreement that also includes the US Department of Justice. By saying: "listen, this is a Dutch company. We are the Dutch Department of Justice. Cooperation is fine and dandy, but we handle the case."

#### **And will the Dutch authorities always do this?**

"There are limits to what they can do for a company. But they are always willing to look if it is possible for a case to be handled in Holland. For that, they deserve a compliment.

#### **SBM Offshore is no longer prosecuted for this bribery case in the States. Are you trying to do the same for other clients?**

"That would very well be possible, but I can't elaborate on that." How is the US Department of Justice different from its Dutch counterpart? "I would say they are very rigid. A company has made extensive internal inquiries, even delivers the evidence and reports voluntarily. But still the attitude is one of: "sign here and pay up!" There is no empathy for a Dutch company or the Dutch economy whatsoever for that matter. They only want to punish. They should have a broader view of things. I find their Dutch counterparts much more reasonable."



*Marnix Somsen at the office by the  
Christmas tree  
Photo: Chantal Heijnen*

**Why?**

"Not because they don't punish as hard, because they do. But if you provide them with evidence on the contrary, they do listen."

**Shouldn't they be tough and wouldn't it be better if companies couldn't hire expensive lawyers to solve their case?**

"I don't say this as a lawyer. As a citizen I would hope that a prosecutor is not an irreversible old war-horse, hurdling blindly towards a damning judgement. I would want him to be a servant of the law carefully coming to a well-considered conclusion. The American standpoint is: "We've got what it takes, to take what you've got." The Dutch authorities don't suggest that. They listen and then they judge.

**Is it hard to interact with the American officers?**

"It is hard to confront them with an uneasy truth. For instance: why would you think you have the right to exercise judicial power? Americans think they have the right – whenever, whatever. I say: first of all you don't always have the right, and secondly, IF you do, Holland has the same right. That is not a popular view around here." Somsen is similarly unhappy about some of his American fellow lawyers. He calls their habit of always reporting fraud "an industry" Reporting is what they do, all the time. Also – and maybe especially- where it concerns foreign companies. There are 8 foreign companies listed in the top 10 of biggest fines. "It's a monopoly game" says Marnix Somsen.

Go via "reporting" to "settling" and "pay". "Saying is paying". Not in the interest of the client, but more in that of lawyers and the US Treasury. It's a "revolving door culture" says Somsen. "The supervisory bodies come from big law firms and vice versa." Companies complain to him about that.

"Their American lawyer calls his American friend at the Department of Justice and then tells the company what should be done".

And what they suggest must be done is also very different from what Dutch companies are used to. For instance: how aggressive is the lawyer during an internal fraud inquiry? "The American way of interrogation resembles a cross examination". They are immediately treating you as a suspect". Another example: "American lawyers start calling directly for approximately half of the employees to be sacked. "Discipline is what they call it. It is window dressing to show the Department of Justice how forcefully they are tackling the problem. Dutch lawyers – I myself included- think this is "not done".

**American lawyers must think of you as a softie?**

"Because I don't want to sack people without evidence?"

**Americans are more hardnosed; you have more of a soft touch.**

"I would call it more moderate. If I work with my American counterparts on a case, we usually disagree. For instance: How to handle the investigation into bribery. How big things should be set up.

Here they would say: an immediate investigation into all countries ending on "-a n" or "stan". That would take years. I don't always agree. And about reporting, that is almost always a discussion. Sometimes in a loud voice. We always try to have a common advice for the client, but there have been times this proved to be impossible. We then each presented the client with our own advice.

**Have you learned anything from your American colleagues?**

"They are not only out for personal gain, they also serve the national interest. They truly believe in their system. Their national identity is much stronger than ours. I feel an increased indignation that Dutch companies are not primarily legally handled by Holland."

**So that American national sentiment has rubbed off on you?**

"Yes, but then about my own country. " He smiles. "That's why I'm picking fights with them all the time."

***CV Marnix Somsen [ 228 ]***

Straight after graduating law school and Public Administration and Public Policy Studies Marnix Somsen (Arnhem 1969) started work at De Brauw. After studying American Law at Harvard and Columbia, Somsen worked for the New York branch, until he became a partner in Holland in 2003.

Last summer he was the first Dutch (and as far as he knows European) fraud lawyer to open a department in the New York branch to help Dutch companies with prosecution for fraud by the American State.

***Spare time***

Music and riding motorbikes. Marnix plays the piano and also the church organ, but the latter not very often lately.

Piano: "Bach and Prince". His grand piano, a Steinway, model S, he had shipped to Connecticut, where he lives with his wife Alette [3757], a psychotherapist, and kids (Julia [4939] and Friso [5429]).



He loves to ride his Harley Davidson, which he bought in the States ("not because of some mid-life crisis, I have biked since I was in college.") He loves riding around the countryside with his son at the back. "Sounds corny, I know, but I love it."

\* Note by the editors of Somsen Horizon: Marnix J.C. Somsen [228] is the son of Theo Somsen [227] and Josette Joosse [394] and married to Alette W. Zoethout [3739].

## Who fought in the Battle of Waterloo?

by Derk-Jan Somsen [130]

In June 2015 we commemorated that 200 years ago the battle of Waterloo, just south of Brussels, took place from 15 to 18 June 1815.



*Battle of Waterloo*

In a bloody 10-hour fight Napoleon was finally defeated by an allied army commanded by the Duke of Wellington on June 18, 1815. There were tens of thousands of casualties from all over Europe, including Dutch soldiers. The Prince of Orange, later King William II of The Netherlands, was injured by a bullet to his left arm.



*The Prins van Oranje at the heat of the National Militia in the Battle of Waterloo.*

In recognition of and out of gratitude for the services provided the allies were entitled to a payment in cash. The so-called Waterloo-bonus.

In March 1817, Lieutenant-General De Constant Rebecque received an invitation from the Duke of Wellington to come to Paris to discuss the distribution of the moneys for the Dutch army as thanks for their share in the Battle of Waterloo.



*Napoleon Bonaparte*

To give all soldiers what they were entitled to the War Department made a collective list of all officers and men who had fought in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

The bonuses were fixed for the various ranks. The generals are in the highest, the 1st class. The corporals, the drum majors and the soldiers we find in the lowest, the 6th class.

The bonuses for the 1st class amount to 30.589 francs and 7.5 centimes; converted it was 14.453 guilders and 34 cents. The men of the 6th class were given a bonus of 61 francs and 60 centimes; converted it was 29 guilders and 10.5 cents. Searching for Somsens we discovered that an ancestor of the current Slagharen Somsen-branch fought in the battle of Waterloo.

It is Garrit Jan Somsen [782], born on 12 July 1786 in Aalten, oldest son of Derk Jan Somsen [779] and Lutte Prinsen [780]. In March 1819 he married Aleida Wiggers [783]. The couple got eight children.

At the age of 29 Garrit Jan fought as a fusilier in the 2nd company of the National Militia No. 6 in the Battle of Waterloo.

As thanks for his participation he was given a bonus of 29 guilders and 10.5 cents paid out to A.P. Glazer (probably his acting manager) by the paymaster of the War Department in The Hague on 12 November 1817. Unfortunately it could not be determined who A.P. Glazer was. (Source: Amsterdam City Archive)

## More Dutch Roots

by Jeanie Jacobson – Somsen [773]



Jeanie Jacobson-Somsen [773]

*I found an ancestor report (attached) for my mom's great grandmother Kipp, who was also Dutch and for her father DeWint who was Dutch as well and owned a plantation on St. John Virgin Islands (formerly Danish West Indies). Some of these ancestors are from Gelderland (Arnhem and Zwolle). I thought you might like to see if any of the names on the attached document are connected to Somsens. Here are a few interesting stories about the French-Dutch-American Kipps.*

The name was originally de Kype. A Roeloff de Kype who had a manor house in the Alencon region of France was involved in the massacre of Protestants at Vassey. As a result, the outcry of the people forced him to run for his life. The manor house was burned to the ground and he and his 3 sons were forced to live underground, staying in monasteries under assumed names until they could reach safety in Holland. When a certain duke came into power, the father and one of the sons returned to France to fight with him. The father died in battle and that son went to war in Italy where he also perished. Of the two remaining sons, one became a priest and the other became a Protestant. This was Roeloff, Jr. It was one of Roeloff's descendants who came with the Dutch East India Company to New Amsterdam. He was a tailor. It was said that the Dutch who came over with that group were different from the norm. They all came with money while others came to make money. This group soon found that they were able to make 7 times what they could have made in Holland doing the same things. George Washington bivouacked in their home on Long Island during the Battle of New York, and Kips Bay in New York was named after them.

That name has since changed.

A Kipp was on the Lewis & Clark expedition, and there is a mountain called "Kipp's Peak" somewhere along their path. There was a "Kip's Bay" on Long Island, and the Kip (Kype) Farm was where the Chrysler Building is now standing. The Kip Farm grew mainly hops for local beer, called Kip's Beer. The current owners have revived the old Kip homestead --- The Roosevelts were neighbors--- and are getting the Kip's Beer trade marked.

The original Kipp in America, Henrik Kipp (or Kip, or Kype) was fairly wealthy and owned the ship 'Half Moon'. That ship was the ship Henry Hudson had rented when he discovered Hudson's Bay. (You may not know that the crew mutinied and sent Henry and his son a-sailing on a rowboat in that Bay).



Kips Bay New York

It has been fun finding out about my "Dutchness" on the other side of my family tree.

## The coat of arms of the new municipality of Aalten

by Harry Somsen [146]

**As of January 1, 2005, the towns of Aalten and Dinxperlo merged into the new municipality of Aalten. By Royal Decree of 8 June 2010 No. 10.000541 the new municipality was granted the following coat of arms:**

### Profile

I. In silver a planted lime tree in green;  
II. In black two reversed crossed swords of silver, both at the top embraced by a bow of gold with drooping tips. The shield is covered with a golden crown of three leaves and two pearls.

### Expired coats of arms

The coats of arms of the municipalities that have disappeared:

Aalten: in silver, loaded with a green tree situated against a background of the same. (granted by a decision of the High Council of the Nobility of 7 October 1818).

Dinxperlo: Profiles; I: in blue the image of Lady Justice, face, hands and hair in natural colours, dressed in a scaly armour of silver, with a silver helmet on the head and in the right hand a sword of silver with the point up and in the left hand holding a pair of gold scales; II: two silver swords placed crosswise with the points down against a black background, each partially embraced by a





*Expired coat of arms  
of Aalten*

bow of natural colour with drooping tips. (Granted by Royal Decree of 28 July 1897, no. 31).

At the time of the Batavian Republic the municipality of Aalten used a seal with a lime tree. According to popular legend this referred to the solitary lime tree at the Aalten Es (highland field), known since the

eighteenth century. This was probably not a judgement tree, because justice was administered at the Walvoort.

But it is possible that those who owned land on the Aalten Es gathered here to discuss their common interests.

An etymology of the name Dinxperlo points towards an old place where judgement was administered: a "loo", which is a clearing in the forest where the legal proceedings (Dutch: "geding") took place. But this explanation is questionable. "Dinke" or "Dinksk" can also mean creek or stream. Compare the river Dinkel in Twente. But be that as it may, justice was administered in Dinxperlo as early as 1326. All in all reason enough for the Town Council to apply for to the above-mentioned coat of arms in 1897. The High Council of the Nobility was of the opinion that the two crossed swords with bows were sufficient to characterise Dinxperlo as an old place where judgement was administered and found the image of Lady Justice not only unnecessary but also historically incorrect as this classical image was not yet known at the time. The City Council held firm and finally got its way.

### The new coat of arms

Mid-2008 the Council intended that the new municipality would bear the name Aalten and that the coat of arms of Dinxperlo would be retained but after a referendum, when the name Aalten became definite, they went back on this.

The High Council of the Nobility was consulted on three possibilities: the continuation of either of the two existing coats of arms - possibly in a modified form, a new coat of arms using elements of the old coats of arms or an entirely new coat of arms. The High Council of the Nobility made a design with the coat of arms of Dinxperlo



*The old coat of arms  
of Dinxperlo*

as a starting point but then without the image of Lady Justice, using the same arguments of the Council in 1897. The swords could also refer to Aalten as an old place where justice was administered. The background colour would have to be green then referring to the green lime tree but also referring to "the green element" as a characteristic of both towns. The proposal did not fully meet the expectations of the Town Council and therefore they reverted to the second option: a new coat of arms with elements from both expired coats of arms.



*The new coat of arms  
of Aalten*

### Harry Somsen from Zelhem decorated

On Friday, 24 April, our editor, Harry Somsen from Zelhem, was decorated for his contributions to the local society. Now he is an official member of the order of Orange-Nassau.



*Harry Somsen [146], member of the order  
of Orange-Nassau, with Ellie and the mayor.*

He received the award in the Smedekinck museum, formerly a dilapidated farmhouse which was restored and turned into a museum. Somsen's wife Ellie lured him to come with her to the museum where his suit was hanging ready for the ceremony. According to Harry Somsen it was not so difficult to make him interrupt his other work and lure him to go to the museum because it is difficult for him to say "no". Therefore it is not surprising that he works or has worked for more than ten associations and foundations.

Since the 1970s Somsen has been involved in mapping the history of his hometown. Also most of the other functions that he held were linked up

with history, culture and tourism. For example, he is a board member of Heritage Day, of the historical society Salehem (Old Zelhem), of the historical miller's society and of the cultural "Atlas Zelhem". Somsen says he has no historical background but he is very much interested in local history. "In the 1970s I had a book store. At one point the book store itself published a book with old photographs of houses and farms in Zelhem. That really fascinated me very much. After that I started finding out who had lived in those farms. For a one hundred-year-old music Association I made a book of their history."

Somsen remains busy with local history. He tells that tonight there will be a book presentation in Smedekinck in which he was also partly involved: "Forever 21". It is about the planes that crashed during wartime in the municipality of Zelhem. In the preparations for the salvage of a plane in 2013 Somsen gathered information about the aircraft and in cooperation with the municipality of Bronckhorst he developed teaching programs for primary schools in which planes that crashed during the Second World War were discussed. This information can be found on the website [www.oudzelhem.nl](http://www.oudzelhem.nl) under WW II Bronckhorst.

Harry and his wife Ellie work together to keep this site up-to-date. Part of this material formed the basis for the book. Mapping and passing on local history he finds important. "It's very interesting to see how the village arose and developed. Of many street names you wonder where they come from. You can find out when you delve into history. Moreover, after research, some old buildings or graves at the cemetery turn out to have monumental value and they are worth keeping."

Somsen is very happy with the decoration. "I'm very grateful that I was selected. It is a very beautiful award for the volunteer work I've done." He is also very happy with the large number of visitors. His relatives are there but also members of the various associations and foundations that he has laboured for. Somsen seems a bit overwhelmed by the large attention. While watching the table with all the flowers he got he says: "I should have come by car instead of on my bicycle."

*Editor's note:*

*In this press release his work for the Somsen Foundation and the editorial work for Somsen Horizon and the Somsen Newsletters is not listed.*

## Family barbecue on Saturday 22 August 2015 in IJzerlo

*by Harry Somsen [146]*

Last year it was very hopeful that in addition to a number of "older" visitors a number of newcomers were present and they also enjoyed it very much to be there. We hope that this time again we can welcome new people.

The lime tree was checked again last year and we drank a toast to its further growth.



*Family members arrive at the site of the family tree*

At the end of the Saturday afternoon more Somsens arrived for the barbecue and the small reunion of the family. Wim Somsen and Rudolf Brunsveld had provided ample food and drink.



*Toast to the family tree*

I would like to invite every Somsen this time, but beware, you might become addicted.

If you want to join the BBQ 2015 in IJzerlo then make a reservation before August 15. Register by phone or email at Wim Somsen.

You are welcome for the tree inspection at 17.00 and for the barbecue at 18.30.

Wim Somsen  
Hoge Heurnseweg 8  
7095 CJ De Heurne  
Telefoon: 0315-652115  
e-mail: [jwsomsen01@hetnet.nl](mailto:jwsomsen01@hetnet.nl)



## John H. Somsen, Jr. [2353] passed away

by Johan Somsen [1089]



John H. Somsen, Jr.  
[2353]

*"John H. Somsen, Jr. [2353], passed away on February 17, 2015 in Kissimmee, Florida. He was born on January 1, 1942, in Indianapolis, Indiana to John H. Somsen Sr. [807] and Janet Somsen [2324]. John was cremated on March 13th in Kissimmee. His family scattered his ashes in the desert in Arizona.*

*He spent most of his childhood in Rocky River, Ohio, moving to South Miami, Florida as a teenager. After graduating from high school there, he enrolled in the Army reserves and served for six years. He moved to Connecticut after basic training and attended the University of Connecticut.*

*Most of his career was in the technology field. He owned a computer consulting firm in Holyoke, Massachusetts and later he was the technology director for the town of East Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Upon retiring he moved to Kissimmee, Florida.*

*One of the joys of his life was researching his Somsen family genealogy and connecting with family members all over the world at the family reunions in the Netherlands and the United States. He created the family database and maintained it for many years, and he remained an enthusiastic supporter of the Somsen Foundation. He leaves four sisters, three children, and nine grandchildren".*

The above obituary was published in memory of John H Somsen. Within our family, John, or John Howard, as we used to call him, played a special and important role. In the USA he stood at the cradle of an important piece of research into our family genealogy and he developed a very extensive database and, last but not least, our family website.

When many did not have a computer yet he had already deeply penetrated into the world of computer science and he could benefit from it and so could we. We are grateful that he designed our family website which he maintained for years until he preferred to move it to The Netherlands after his retirement.

I very well remember the moment of great surprise when I first had an e-mail connection, that was

in 1996, and when I first exchanged electronic letters with John Howard.

He was present at our first worldwide reunion in 1997 and after that we welcomed him several times in The Netherlands and there were also many contacts with him when visiting the USA, both at American Somsen Reunions and during private tours in that country.

After the impressive reunion in 1997 John Howard with his mother Janet Somsen-Flaskamp [2324] and a few more American Somsens including Jeanie Somsen [773] made a long car trip through Europe and also visited the ancestor of the Portuguese Somsen branch, Ad Somsen [98].

In 1998 I visited him in Avon, Connecticut where he had organized a complete family reunion with all his sisters with their families at the home of his mother.

Until recently John Howard was our advisor in the Somsen Foundation for American Affairs but in the last year it became quieter partly because of his declining health until the sad message reached us in March that John Howard had died.

We remember him as one of the pioneers of our worldwide Somsen family and we remain very grateful to him for his hard work for our Somsen family on the other side of the ocean.

## Somsen genealogical family database

We would like to thank all the family members who took the trouble to inform us about births, marriages, divorces and death of their family members, parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. This allows us to draw up an up-to-date survey of our Somsen genealogical family database.

Please do not bother to visit our website and verify if the mention of your family is up-to-date and whether the published photograph of yourself, your parents and/or your children needs renewal. Send me your comment and I will be happy to help you with your "update work".

With kind family regards,

Derk J. Somsen [130]  
Monteverdilaan 175  
8031 DL Zwolle  
+31 38 4542360  
d.somsen2@kpnplanet.nl

## 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)

### Born:

**30-12-2014:** Bob Thomas Somsen [7896], s.o. Mike Somsen [261] and Vanessa Gabriëlle Priscilla Biesheuvel [7710]

**Married:** no entries

### Deceased:

**17-02-2015:** John Howard (John) Somsen [2353], 73, Kissimmee, FL. USA



*John*



*Bob Thomas  
[7896]*



*John H. Somsen and Alice Sticker*