



Association for Low Countries Studies in Great Britain and Ireland

***Lying Low? Low Countries Studies in Great  
Britain and Ireland in the Early Twenty-first  
Century***

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on behalf of the ALCS Executive Committee

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## ***Table of Contents***

Preface .....	3
Introduction.....	4
1. Dutch in the UK and Republic of Ireland: an overview .....	5
2. Levels at which Dutch is taught.....	6
3. Student Numbers .....	9
4. Low Countries Modules.....	13
5. Research in Low Countries Studies .....	13
6. Staff Details .....	14
7. Funding .....	15
8. Additional Dutch Interests .....	15
9. Discussion.....	15
10. Recommendations .....	18
Appendix A: List of participating institutions .....	21
Appendix B: Low Countries Modules Details.....	22
Appendix C: Research details .....	25
Appendix D: Additional Dutch Interests .....	29

## ***List of Figures and Tables***

<i>Figure 1: Universities offering Dutch according to levels of tuition available.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Figure 2: Composition of Dutch courses.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Figure 3: Student numbers 2003-2006 .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Figure 4: Growth rate of total student numbers.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Figure 5: Student numbers for Single and Dual/Joint Honours .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Figure 6: Composition of staff members .....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Table 1: Student numbers by individual programmes.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Table 2: Student numbers for Single and Dual/Joint Honours in table format.....</i>	<i>13</i>

## Preface

The last assessment of the state of Low Countries Studies in Great Britain and Ireland dates from 1992. Since then, much has changed. Within the British and Irish communities as a whole, the climate for language study has changed, as EU enlargement has brought more “lesser studied” languages competing for students’ attention. Within UK education policy, Dutch as a discipline has lost support – symbolically in that Dutch is no longer supported as a minority language by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and very concretely in the discontinuation of Dutch as a subject in a number of institutions. More positively, initiatives like the development of the Virtual Department of Dutch and other regular activities such as our Undergraduate Student Day reflect an ongoing strong commitment to and interest in maintaining the subject within these islands.

Against this changed background, it is high time to take stock once more of the state of Dutch Language and Low Countries Studies in these islands so that we – the ALCS and other interested bodies – have an informed basis on which to plan for the health of the discipline in the years to come. The following report offers food for thought, showing an overall decline in numbers taking Dutch and, simultaneously, a growing tendency to study Dutch and the Low Countries as a smaller part of inter- or multidisciplinary degrees and research initiatives. There is without doubt a significant net loss in expertise in the subject, but, at the same time, a growing awareness of Dutch studies amongst a wider audience, which represents an enrichment of the discipline in one way at least. This is particularly obvious in my own field of German and Germanic linguistics, where – as a result of a series of conferences since 2000 – British and Irish scholars of larger Germanic languages are far more aware of current research of the Dutch language than they were a decade ago. Still, there is no doubt that continued work is needed to maintain and support Low Countries Studies in these islands, and the Discussion section of this report presents a number of concrete recommendations that we in the ALCS and others will need to address if we are to ensure the continued health of Low Countries Studies in Great Britain and Ireland.

I commend the report and its recommendations to you warmly.

Dr Nicola McLelland  
President, Association for Low Countries Studies in Great Britain and Ireland

## Introduction

Between October 2005 and February 2006 the Association for Low Countries Studies in Great Britain and Ireland (ALCS) conducted a survey on the provision of Dutch in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

The aim of this survey was to gather information on student numbers, staff and programmes available to students wishing to study Dutch at UK and Irish institutions of Higher Education. It follows an earlier survey carried out in 1992.<sup>1</sup>

In conjunction with this, we also asked for data on teaching and research carried out within the broader field of Low Countries Studies. By this we mean the scholarly study of the language, culture, history, politics, society, economy and geography of the Low Countries region.

A questionnaire was posted on the ALCS website in October and approximately 3000 further institutions and individuals were reached via a number of mailing lists including:

- ALCS list
- German Studies list
- Association for Language Learning
- University Council for Modern Languages
- Association of University Language Centres
- Standing Conference of Heads of Modern Languages
- Linguanet
- Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies e-bulletin December 2005.

We also gratefully acknowledge the access we were given to the database of teachers of Dutch in the UK maintained by the Education Attaché at the Royal Netherlands Embassy in London, Ms. H. van Kerkoerle.

We received responses from 42 institutions compared to 47 in 1992. With a total of 225 higher education institutions in the region (130 in England; 20 in Scotland; 13 in Wales; 61 in the Republic of Ireland; 2 in Northern Ireland), this is a response rate of just under 19%. For the full list of participating institutions see appendix A.

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<sup>1</sup> Roel Vismans 'Low Countries Studies in the Nineties.' *Dutch Crossing* 46 (1992): 102-107; also in *Bulletin of the Conference of University Teachers of German in Great Britain and Ireland*. September 1992: 11-14; a Dutch version was published as: 'Lagelandenkunde in Groot-Brittannië en Ierland in de jaren negentig.' *Publicatieblad van de Nederlandse Taalunie* 26 (1992): 10-12.

## 1. Dutch in the UK and Republic of Ireland: an overview

22 out of the 42 (52%) participating institutions offer Dutch in some form compared to 20 (43%) in 1992. Nine out of the 20 institutions who are currently not providing Dutch courses, in fact used to offer some form of tuition in the Dutch language. Reasons for its demise or suspension were, for the most part: lack of staff, dwindling student numbers, lack of funding, or (in the case of the University of Bournemouth where it was taught to prepare students for a study placement abroad) the lapse of exchange agreements.

Of the remaining eleven responding universities not offering Dutch, eight have no plans to introduce it owing to very little demand, and two would like to if resources and funding were available. It is also worth noting that City University London, although not offering any Dutch classes, does offer preparation for the Institute of Linguists translation diploma, for which a number of the candidates are translating from and into Dutch.

Three out of the 22 institutions (13%) presently offering Dutch are due to suspend all their courses in the next couple of years for the same reasons as cited above. They are: University of Brighton (in 2007), University of East Anglia and University of York (both at the end of the 2005-06 academic session).

However, perhaps the most dramatic developments of the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are those at the University of Hull, which has had a thriving Dutch section since 1976. This has now almost completely disappeared and with effect from the academic year 2006-07 Dutch at Hull will only be available as part of its Institution-Wide Language Programme (IWLP; see section 2b, below). This has been balanced by more positive moves elsewhere in Yorkshire: the University of Sheffield has seen a modest but strategic expansion in terms of its Dutch Studies programmes and staff.

Two of the responding universities, University College Dublin and University College Galway, have Harting Scholars<sup>2</sup> but provide no Dutch courses.

According to our responses, the number of institutions offering Dutch per nation is as follows: Scotland 1, Republic of Ireland 4, Wales 1, and England 16. We had no responses from Northern Ireland.

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<sup>2</sup> A Harting Scholar (now referred to as a 'Project Student Assistant') has his/her fees waived at a foreign university of their choice in exchange for teaching and assisting in examining Dutch. The Harting scholar teaches a maximum of four hours a week and in exchange is entitled to take one or more undergraduate or postgraduate courses at the same university. See also section 6, Staff Details and [http://taalunieversum.org/taalunie/toelage\\_voor\\_studentassistenten/](http://taalunieversum.org/taalunie/toelage_voor_studentassistenten/).

In terms of institutional structure, there is one actual Dutch Department in the UK, at UCL. Elsewhere Dutch may be integrated in another department, usually a Department of German or of Germanic Studies, or a Department of Modern Languages. Where it is part of an IWLP, it is often taught in a university's language centre.

## 2. Levels at which Dutch is taught

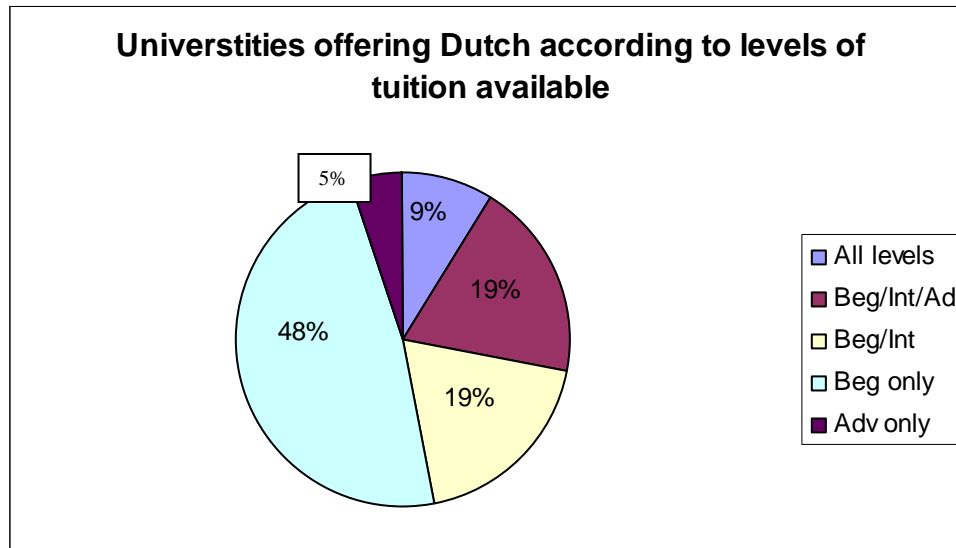


Figure 1: Universities offering Dutch according to levels of tuition available

Dutch is taught at all levels (i.e. Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced and Masters) at two of the 22 universities: University College London and University of Sheffield (see figure 1).

At four institutions Dutch is taught at Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced levels: Trinity College Dublin, University of Brighton, Cambridge University and Leeds Metropolitan University.

At four institutions Dutch is taught at Beginners and Intermediate levels: University of Newcastle, University of Nottingham, University of Manchester and National University of Ireland Maynooth.

At ten institutions Dutch is taught at Beginners level only: University of Reading, University of Oxford, University of Surrey, University of Durham, University of Wales Bangor, University of Bath, University College Cork, Cork College of Commerce, University of Leeds and University of York.

The University of Hull is the exception with only a group of final year advanced students remaining, although they previously provided Dutch tuition at Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced levels.

Over the past three years no new Dutch courses have emerged at any universities which did not previously provide it. On the contrary, a significant number have suspended their courses.

### **a. Breakdown of degree programmes available**

First a brief explanation of the degree programmes as we have categorised them for the purposes of this survey:

- *Single Honours* = the large majority of the course (i.e. at least two-thirds) consists of Dutch modules.
- *Dual Honours* (major/minor) = Dutch is studied throughout the course alongside another subject (usually German), includes time spent on a year abroad and is worth no less than 25% of course work;
- *Dual Honours* (major/major) = Dutch and one other subject are studied on an equal footing (also known as *Joint Honours* and as a *Two subject Moderatorship* in Trinity College Dublin).
- *Other* = students of German (Single Honours or Dual Honours with another subject) taking Dutch as an option worth less than 25% and not necessarily continuous throughout the duration of their degree.

The same two institutions as in the 1992 survey offer Dutch as a *Single Honours* course (University College London and University of Hull). However, this will be reduced to one as of 2006-07 when Hull closes its programme. Five institutions (Cambridge University, Trinity College Dublin, University College London, University of Hull, University of Sheffield) offer Dutch as *Dual/Joint Honours*, compared with seven in 1992. 13 institutions (Cambridge University, Leeds Metropolitan University, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Oxford University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Bath, University of Brighton, University College London, University of Hull, University of Newcastle, University of Nottingham, University of Sheffield, and University of Wales Bangor) offer Dutch as part of a *Combined Languages/Studies* or *Other* type of programme. Due to different categorisation in the previous survey, it is not possible to give comparative numbers for this last category.

### **b. IWLPs (Institution-Wide Language Programmes)**

IWLPs emerged in many universities in the mid-1990s in response to requests from students who were not enrolled on language programmes but wished to increase and/or improve their foreign language proficiency. IWLP modules may or may not be accredited as part of a student's programme (depending on



institutional policy). They are usually taught in a university language centre, often by part-time staff, sometimes in 'twilight' hours. So-called less-widely taught languages (like Dutch) often figure in IWLPs.

IWLP Beginners comes a very close second to Other Beginners in terms of student numbers (see section 3, below). In particular, there is a remarkable rise in student numbers for the academic session 2005-06: an increase of 260% from 2004-05 (see *Table 1* on p.9), making IWLP Beginners the largest category of students taking Dutch in 2005-06. However, a word of caution: these figures should be taken with a pinch of salt owing to the difficulty in securing exact numbers for each academic year. It is uncertain whether this is a trend or a one-off.

Ten out of the 22 universities (45%) offer Dutch as IWLP. Seven of them offer Dutch solely as part of IWLP, whilst the other three (Oxford University – independent study at the Language Centre, Trinity College Dublin, University of Hull) offer Dutch both as IWLP and degree programmes (see *Figure 2*, p.8). The number of 'IWLP only' institutions will increase to eight in 2006-07 when Hull's Dutch department closes and provision changes to IWLP only. Meanwhile, University of Wales Bangor hopes to offer Dutch soon as part of an expanding IWLP.

It is extremely difficult to arrive at precise and definitive numbers of IWLP students. Though many institutions were able to give us exact numbers, a few were only able to give a rough estimate and other institutions had no data available. This may well be a result of the 'casual' nature of many IWLP courses. Numbers tend to fluctuate throughout any given year. In reality, therefore, the totals are most likely a little higher.

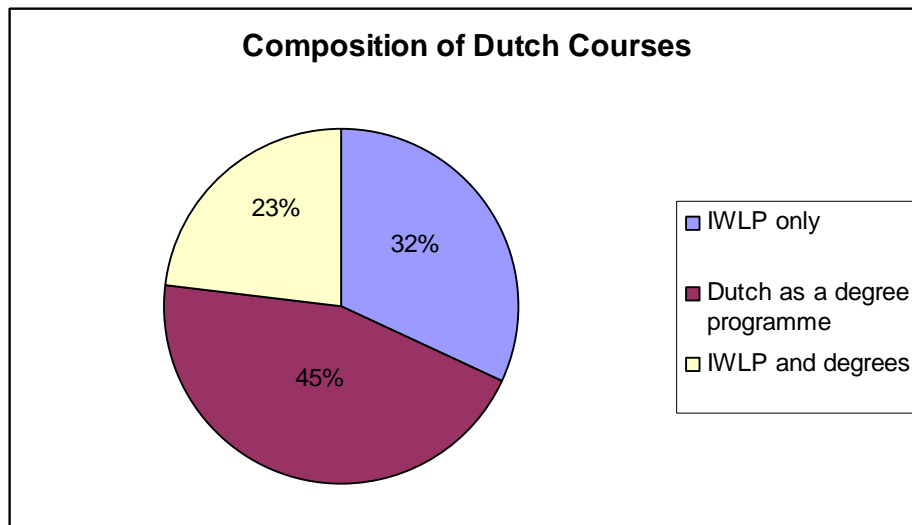


Figure 2: Composition of Dutch courses

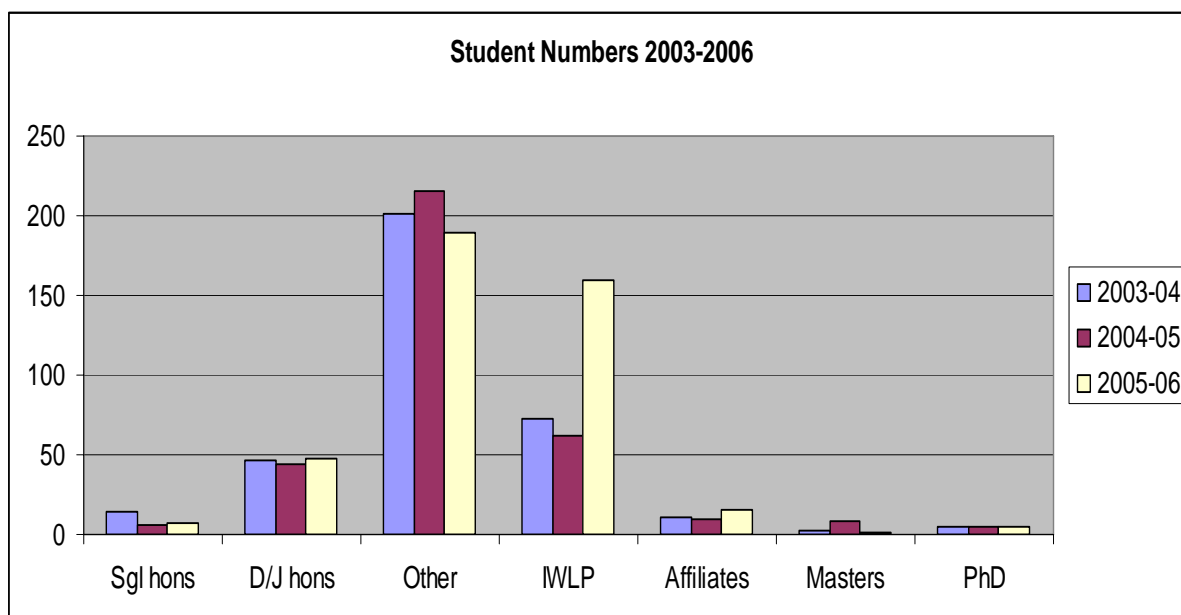
The large majority of IWLP courses are available only for beginners. The University of Manchester is the exception with beginners and intermediate courses.

### 3. Student Numbers

In the questionnaire we asked respondents for student numbers from the academic sessions 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 (See *figure 3* and *Table 1*).

**Total student numbers** (where available) for the academic session 2003-2004 were **342** (353 if including affiliates such as Socrates and Erasmus students). For 2004-05 the numbers dropped slightly to **330** (339 if including affiliates) and in 2005-06 the numbers rose again to **410** (425 if including affiliates).

#### a. Student numbers by individual programmes



*Figure 3: Student numbers 2003-2006*

\***Other Programmes** include: Dutch as *option* module or compulsory subsidiary on German degree programmes; Dutch as minor subject with Dual Honours German, BA in Modern Languages, BA European Studies; Dutch as *option* with BA Modern European Studies, BA European Political and Social Studies, BA Language and Culture; Dutch as part of BSc in European Nursing in Brighton (where students receive a *certificate for professional purposes*); Certificate in Dutch and Diploma in Dutch at Cambridge, and Dutch as a 'closed course basis'

for students of the Law Faculty (i.e. not open to students from other disciplines other than Law).

**\*\*Taught Masters courses** include: students taking Dutch modules in MA Translation Studies and in MA Germanic Studies at Sheffield; Certificate in Literary Translation and MA in Modern Dutch Studies (both discontinued in 2005) and MA in Dutch Golden Age at UCL; MA in Interpreting and Translating and MA in Translation and Professional Language Skills at Bath (note: beginners passive knowledge for MA only).

**\*\*\*PhD** students for the past three years have been based at Cambridge University, University of Hull and UCL. For research specifics see individual universities in appendix C: *Research details*.

<b>Programme</b>	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Single Honours Dutch Beginners	4	2	2
Single Honours Intermediate	4	1	1
Single Honours Abroad	1	2	2
Single Honours Advanced	5	1	2
Double/Joint Honours Beginners	18	10	15
Double/Joint Honours Intermediate	8	16	11
Double/Joint Honours Year Abroad	10	8	14
Double/Joint Honours Advanced	11	10	8
Other Beginners*	142	126	136
Other Intermediate*	41	56	30
Other Year Abroad*	10	8	8
Other Advanced*	8	17	15
Affiliate Students	11	9	15
IWLP Beginners	73	59	153
IWLP Intermediate	0	3	7
IWLP Advanced	0	0	0
Masters Taught**	2	7	1
Masters Research	0	1	0
PhD***	5	5	5

*Table 1: Student numbers by individual programmes*

### ***b. Rate of change in student numbers***

By looking at the totals from the survey carried out in 1992, we can to some extent assess the rate of change in student numbers for Dutch in the UK and Ireland over the past 14 years as well as within the last three (see *figure 4*). The student totals in question exclude affiliate students.

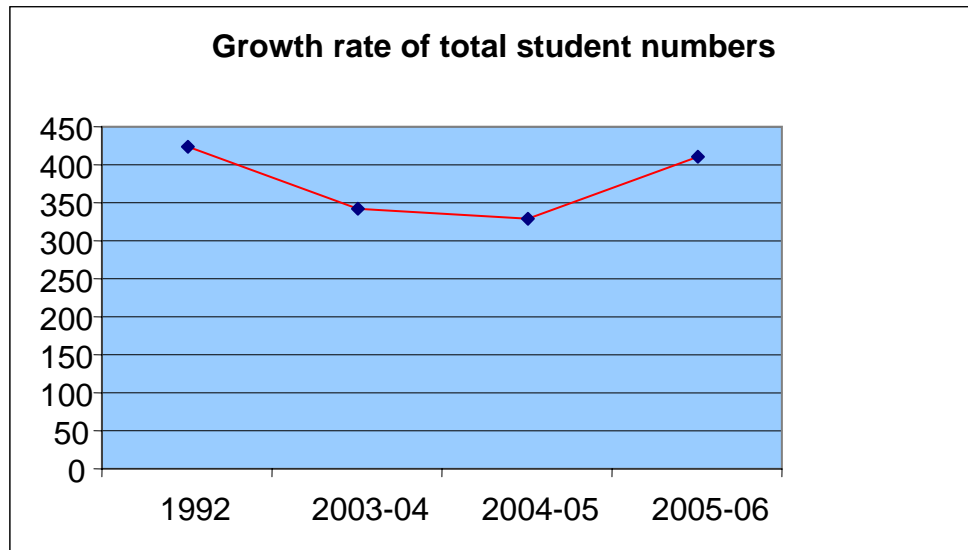


Figure 4: Growth rate of total student numbers

**Rate of change between 1992 and 2003/04**

Total students in 1992 = 425: 2003/04 = 342. A 20% decrease in numbers.

**Rate of change between 2003/04 and 2004/05**

Total students in 2003/04 = 342: 2004/05 = 330. A 3.5% decrease.

**Rate of change between 2004/05 and 2005/06**

Total students in 2004/05 = 330: 2005/06 = 410. A marked 24% increase. Yet, numbers still fall short of what they were in 1992 by 3.5%.

A number of factors could account for the decline in numbers. The 1992 survey, which looked at the academic sessions 1989/90, 1990/91 and 1991/92, attributed the then high student numbers to the introduction of the Single European Act, its consequences for trade and the subsequent increased awareness of the need for foreign language skills in Britain. This interest was not limited to just German, French and Spanish, but also to less widely spoken languages. By the same token, the expansion of the European Union in May 2004 may have marginalised the position of Dutch as one of the popular ‘smaller languages’, as the languages from the accession states took the focus. There is no hard evidence for this speculation.

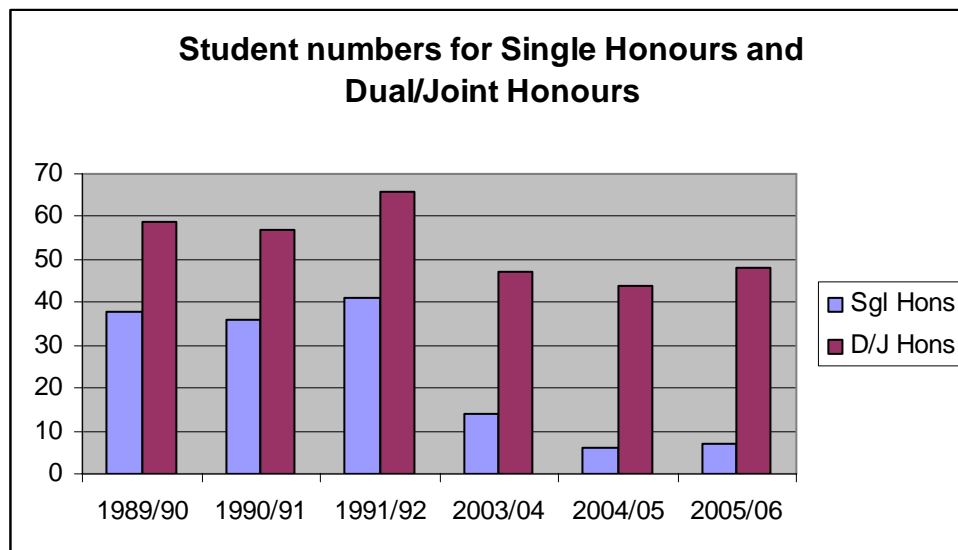
A further consideration is the trend in German language student numbers over the past few years. Footitt (2005: 8-9) demonstrates that ‘undergraduate numbers in Languages have declined sharply - by 15% in the period 1998/9 –

2001/2' and that for German this figure is even higher, 17%.<sup>3</sup> This trend is continuing. A large proportion of students are introduced to Dutch as a result of first studying German. A decline in Dutch language students would most likely be a direct consequence of a decline in German numbers.

Furthermore, the prognosis for Dutch student numbers might be somewhat brighter, were it not for the fact that a number of institutions are due to close their Dutch programmes soon.

### ***c. Individual programmes compared***

In the last decade there have been clear shifts in the degree programmes which Dutch language students choose. This is in line with trends in other languages. Where in the early 1990s a large number of students were studying Dutch for Single and Dual/Joint Honours degree programmes, these categories of students are now in the minority. This is particularly evident in the case of Single Honours students (see *figure 5* and *table 2*).



*Figure 5: Student numbers for Single and Dual/Joint Honours*

However, the number of students opting for *combined language/other* programmes in 2006 would appear to be on a par with the numbers from the early 90s. Again, due to a different categorisation in the 1992 survey, it is not possible to compare exact numbers. There was also no IWLP category in the 1992 survey.

<sup>3</sup> Hilary Footitt *The National Languages Strategy in Higher Education*. Southampton: Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (2005). DfES research report no. 625

	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Single Honours	38	36	41	14	6	7
Joint/Dual Honours	59	57	66	47	44	48

*Table 2: Student numbers for Single and Dual/Joint Honours in table format*

## 4. Low Countries Modules

By Low Countries modules we mean modules concerning the scholarly study of the language, culture, history, politics, society, economy and geography of the Low Countries region.

Six out of the 22 universities (41%) offer modules in an area of Low Countries Studies. University College London, University of Sheffield, Cambridge University and Trinity College Dublin offer a wide variety of modules on the history, literature, art history, society and culture of the Low Countries, and on translation into and out of Dutch, Dutch text analysis and Dutch linguistics at all undergraduate levels. For more specifics see appendix B: *Low Countries Modules Details*.

In a number of other universities where such modules are not available in the language departments, Low Countries Studies history modules are offered in the History department. These modules can also be taken by non-linguists, which adds to the wider awareness of Low Countries culture and society in the UK and Ireland.

## 5. Research in Low Countries Studies

The questionnaire also asked respondents to give details on any research currently being conducted by staff or research students at their university in the broader field of Low Countries Studies. We were interested in any research projects concerned with the language and literature, culture, history, politics, society, economy or geography of the Low Countries region.

14 of the participating universities (64%) are currently conducting some form of research in the field of Low Countries Studies.

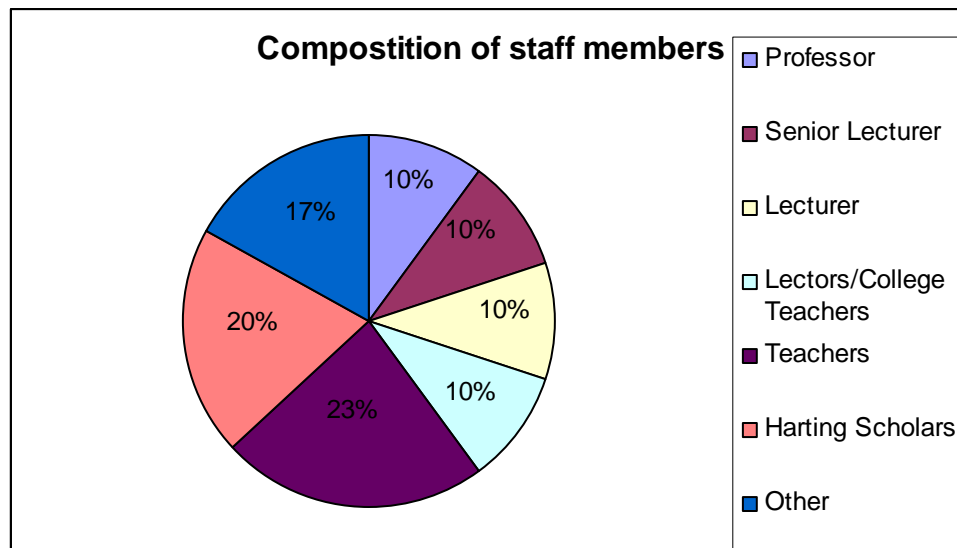
Responses showed a very encouraging amount of wide and varied research activity being carried out in Germanic Studies, History, Art History, Landscape and English departments throughout the country. In view of the notable research contribution from the History departments throughout the country, it is highly

likely that a good deal more is to be found in the History departments of the non-participating universities.

Research topics include Dutch and Belgian History (in particular the Dutch Golden Age, the World Wars and the Middle Ages), 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch Art, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Belgian Art, Dutch and Belgian contemporary, postcolonial, migrant and sports literature, linguistics and language, Dutch drama, Dutch-Scottish links, history of translation in the Low Countries, the Flemish movement and Dutch landscape, to name but a few. Again, for exact topics and authors see appendix C: *Research Details*.

## 6. Staff Details

Throughout the UK and Ireland there are currently 27 academic members of staff teaching Dutch. In addition, there are 13 Harting Scholars and Socrates Student assistants. To break the total down (see *figure 6*), there are four full-time **Professors**, three full-time and one part-time **Senior Lecturer**, three full-time and one part-time **Lecturer**, one full-time and three part-time **Lectors/College Teachers**, two full-time and seven part-time **Teachers** (this includes: tutors, teaching officers and teaching fellows), one **PhD student** assisting with teaching, one **Project officer** eight **Harting Scholars**, and five **Language assistants/Socrates assistants**. It is not clear for how many of the 27 academics teaching (and research in) Dutch Studies is the main focus of their work. An educated guess is that this is no more than a dozen.



*Figure 6: Composition of staff members*

## 7. Funding

The majority of universities have no specific funding available for students of Dutch and/or Low Countries Studies. Research students are, of course, eligible for funding from research boards such as the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) in the UK.

Four universities receive funding from the *Nederlandse Taalunie* in the form of student assistantships (incl. Harting Scholars), start-up grants subsidies or basic grants for the purchase of teaching and learning materials.<sup>4</sup> However, some of the costs for Harting scholarships are absorbed into the universities' own budgets.

## 8. Additional Dutch Interests

As part of the questionnaire we also asked respondents to provide any further information they may feel relevant e.g. teaching initiatives, use of ICT, Dutch societies at the university, etc. Responses to this question came from UCL, University of Sheffield and University of Hull. They are listed in appendix D: *Additional Dutch Interests* and testify to some lively activity away from formal educational settings.

## 9. Discussion

### *a. The context*

This report presents a snapshot of the state of Dutch language teaching and of Low Countries Studies at British and Irish higher education institutions in 2005-06. However, a report like this can only be as good as the data on which it is built and we are aware of its limitations in that respect. Section 5 noted that 'it is highly likely that a good deal more [research activity] is to be found in the History departments of the non-participating universities.' This is true in one other respect too: section 2 highlighted the difficulty in arriving at exact figures for Dutch in IWLP (Institution-Wide Language Programmes), so what about IWLP activities in universities that did not respond to our survey? Furthermore, it is a fact that

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<sup>4</sup>For an English version of the *Taalunie*'s grants system go to [http://taalunieversum.org/taalunie/grants\\_system\\_for\\_dutch\\_studies\\_abroad/](http://taalunieversum.org/taalunie/grants_system_for_dutch_studies_abroad/)



many departments outside the arts and humanities have contacts with the Low Countries through socrates/erasmus exchanges, but we have not looked into the extent of this nor, more significantly, into the linguistic preparation that may take place for such exchanges. Some of these questions will have to be left for future surveys of this sort.

The last inquiry into Dutch took place 14 years ago against a very different background. Events in Europe are as important now as they were then. In 1992 The Single European Act had just been signed and there was much discussion about the need for improved language capability for it to work. Moreover, EU membership was relatively stable. The expansion of the EU in 2004 with ten new members and nine new official languages was not accompanied by a similar discussion about language capability. Yet the position of Dutch in the pecking order of European languages has radically changed.

The higher education context is equally important for our evaluation. Since 1992 students' choices in degree programmes have changed significantly. There is a general tendency towards more vocationally oriented courses at the moment, a trend that appears to have set in the second half of the 1990s. Modern languages have suffered because of that, as have the pure sciences, for example. Whether there is a link between this and the introduction in 1998 of fees for undergraduates in England is a moot point. However, there can be little doubt that the decision in the late 1990s by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to scrap its special support for Dutch as a minority subject, contributed to Dutch being discontinued in several places.

### ***b. Student numbers, programmes and levels***

The tables 1 and 2, and figures 3-5 in sections 2 and 3 of this report demonstrate the decrease in numbers studying Dutch since 1992. The decision in Hull to stop recruiting for Single Honours Dutch from 2001 onwards makes itself clearly felt between 2003-04 and 2004-05: from an already very narrow base there is a sudden drop of 50%. In October 2004 the numbers fell into single digits, to just under 15% of the 1992 level. From 2006-07 there will be just one named Single Honours degree in Dutch: at UCL. The number of Dual Honours students has decreased by approximately a third since 1992. Overall this entails a halving of the number of specialist graduates in Dutch Studies, a much more dramatic figure than the 17% reduction in students of German reported in section 3b.

This must be seen in the context of a reduction in linguistic specialists in other languages, with only Spanish bucking the trend. However, in anglophone higher education it is usually through German that students enter into Dutch, and the reduction in numbers of students specialising in German is more pronounced than for other languages. Hence, numbers of Dutch specialists are not only

affected by the general downward trend in languages, but also by a significant additional factor in German.

There are some positive signs, however. The number of students in the category 'other' (taking Dutch as a secondary subject alongside German) remains stable. And although a direct comparison with 1992 figures is not possible, this stability appears to have been maintained over a longer period. Similarly, the take-up of Dutch in IWLPs seems on the surface to be increasing at a healthy rate, from 73 in 2003-04 to 160 in 2005-06. Still, these figures are not stable – 2004-05 saw a dip of 15% to 62. Moreover, the numbers for IWLP and 'other' students are not sustained in any significant sense beyond the beginners level. We are definitely not making up for the loss of specialist linguists here.

A further cause for concern is the geographical distribution of Dutch in anglophone Europe: it is taught not at all in Northern Ireland and at only four institutions in the Republic of Ireland. In Scotland and Wales it is virtually non-existent. Specialist teaching takes place at three English institutions (Cambridge, Sheffield and UCL) and just one Irish one (TCD). The English regions that traditionally have had the strongest links with the Low Countries are East Anglia, Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire. With effect from the autumn of 2006, however, the only institution in this area with a significant Dutch presence will be the University of Cambridge.

### ***c. Staff***

Only approximately 40% of staff teaching Dutch are permanent academics. The remainder are employed on casual contracts, usually as part-timers, often very junior or even students (in the case of Harting Scholars undergraduate students). The strength of their voice within institutions is very weak and this situation makes it easy to suspend Dutch modules and indeed programmes. It also brings a risk of deprofessionalization: the subject often lacks the depth that full-time specialist staff bring.

There are two further related staffing issues that will be important in the longer term. First, the small number of research students means that there is little scope for succession planning. The subject is simply not training the professors of Dutch for the future. This has resulted, and will continue to do so, in such staff being imported from the Low Countries. A further result of this is that the number of permanent staff teaching Dutch who are native speakers of English is extremely low. Yet a good modern languages department has a healthy balance of target language and home language natives. Native speakers of English with a high proficiency in Dutch are the best role models for our students.

#### ***d. 'Culture' and research***

We have already hinted at the likelihood that our survey has not uncovered all the teaching activity in the broader area of Low Countries Studies, nor all research activity. On the assumption of more such activity existing in History departments we carried out a preliminary search on [www.history.ac.uk](http://www.history.ac.uk), a resource of the Institute for Historical Research. This revealed the name of just one individual academic in addition to those in appendix C. Needless to say, more information on this aspect of Low Countries Studies must be sought as a matter of urgency. However, the present picture leaves the impression of Low Countries Studies as a peripheral subject, that, outside a few small centres (London, Sheffield), is largely dependent on individual effort and interest.

### **10. Recommendations**

Despite the gloomy tone of the above discussion, we believe that Dutch and Low Countries Studies are worth pursuing in the UK and the ROI. The Low Countries and Great Britain and Ireland have always had important bonds in all kinds of respects. They may have fought trade wars, but are now among each other's most important trading partners. There are strong diplomatic relations and lively cultural links. But in a modern, fast moving world, it is important for Great Britain and Ireland to maintain, develop and improve the knowledge of their friends and partners, including the Low Countries. For this, they need to continue to train specialists.

We therefore present the following recommendations, which are aimed at three broad constituencies: the academic community active in Low Countries Studies, the educational and academic authorities in the UK and the ROI, and those in the Low Countries. To some extent this is a matter of presentation, because in many instances these recommendations are valid for two or all of these constituencies.

1. **Recommendations to the Low Countries Studies community** (i.e. institutions and individuals involved in teaching and research, ALCS members, ALCS itself):
  - 1.1. recruitment to specialist undergraduate programmes in Dutch must (continue to) be improved, especially by promotion of Dual Honours programmes involving Dutch plus another language (not exclusively German) or other subject (esp. Dutch with History), as these combinations appear to be the best format for this;
  - 1.2. recruitment of high-calibre postgraduates must be improved, ideally by securing postgraduate funding via AHRC grants (whether for specific students or through funding for specific projects);
  - 1.3. the Virtual Department of Dutch should be rolled out to institutions where Dutch is not taught as part of a specialist programme; it could similarly be deployed for training students in other disciplines who undertake courses

- and/or field work in Low Countries Studies outside languages departments;
- 1.4. Dutch language and culture must continue to be promoted through high-visibility events such as the Dutch Student Day (<http://alcs.group.shef.ac.uk/studentdays.htm>) that emphasize (both to students and to institutions) that the subject is alive and well; such events should be advertised more widely to include institutions where Dutch is only taught as part of the IWLP;
  - 1.5. the ALCS should develop a database of culture courses in Low Countries Studies; this database should be linked to the database of research in Low Countries Studies mentioned below;
  - 1.6. highly visible regular conferences (i.e. ALCS biennials) and periodic larger scale conferences (e.g. The Bookshop of the World in 1999, Trading Cultures in 2006) must continue to take place in order to promote contacts between widely scattered researchers (in terms of disciplines and geography), and to maintain awareness of Low Countries Studies as a fully-fledged interdisciplinary field of academic study (<http://alcs.group.shef.ac.uk/conferences.htm>);
  - 1.7. involvement of Low Countries Studies in interdisciplinary research must (continue to) be promoted (e.g. by supporting conferences dealing with the Germanic languages, although not dedicated to Dutch exclusively);
  - 1.8. the Centre for Dutch Studies at University of Sheffield is developing a database of research in Low Countries Studies in Great Britain and Ireland; the ALCS and its members should be proactive in contributing to this and ensuring its success; this database should be linked to the database of culture courses in Low Countries Studies mentioned above.
2. **Recommendations to the educational and academic authorities in the UK and the ROI** (e.g. in the UK: the higher education funding councils; the Arts and Humanities Research Council; the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies; CiLT the National Centre for Languages; in the ROI The Higher Education Authority; The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland; The Committee for Modern Languages, Literary and Cultural Studies, and The Committee for Historical Sciences, both at The Royal Irish Academy; The Department of Education and Science):
- 2.1. the position of languages in British and Irish higher education institutions must continue to be supported; this is true for languages generally, but also particularly for 'minority' languages; the strong link between Dutch and German must be borne in mind here;
  - 2.2. staff must be adequately supported in their professional development by means of a continuing programme of in-service training for teachers of Dutch, especially part-time, temporary tutors (e.g. as a wider package for tutors of lesser taught languages);
  - 2.3. the recruitment and training of the next generation of scholars in Low Countries Studies should be aided by means of more targeted PhD scholarships;

2.4. the statistics for Dutch must be kept separate from those for German (cf. the treatment of Scandinavian Studies in HESA statistics).

3. **Recommendations to the educational and academic authorities in the Low Countries** (the Nederlandse Taalunie, but also the diplomatic representatives of Flanders and the Netherlands in the UK and ROI):

- 3.1. Dutch must continue to be secured where it is relatively strong – in University College London, the University of Sheffield, and Trinity College Dublin;
- 3.2. the presence of Dutch in Scotland and Wales must be expanded to include at least one institution where it is offered as part of a Dual Honours programme;
- 3.3. support must continue at current levels at least for existing and new initiatives (e.g. the Virtual Department of Dutch) to maintain visibility of the subject;
- 3.4. summer courses in Dutch language in the Low Countries must be widely promoted, not just to students already studying Dutch as a (major) part of their degree;
- 3.5. the problem must be addressed that many institutions have with inexperienced, junior and/or part-time teachers;
- 3.6. exchanges between Dutch/Flemish and British/Irish universities should be further promoted, especially exchanges of staff.

## Appendix A: List of participating institutions (Total: 42)

1. City University London
2. Cork College of Commerce\*
3. King's College London
4. Leeds Metropolitan University\*
5. London School of Economics
6. Loughborough University
7. Napier University
8. National University of Ireland Maynooth\*
9. Oxford University\*
10. Trinity College Dublin\*
11. University of Aberdeen\* (AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies)
12. University of Bath\*
13. University of Birmingham
14. University of Bournemouth
15. University of Brighton\*
16. University of Bristol
17. University of Cambridge \*
18. University College Cork\*
19. University College Dublin
20. University College Galway
21. University College London\*
22. University of Durham\*
23. University of East Anglia\*
24. University of East London
25. University of Hull\*
26. University of Keele
27. University of Kent
28. University of Leeds\*
29. University of Liverpool
30. University of Manchester\*
31. University of Newcastle\*
32. University of Nottingham\*
33. University of Portsmouth
34. University of Reading
35. University of Salford
36. University of Sheffield\*
37. University of Strathclyde
38. University of Surrey\*
39. University of Wales Aberystwyth
40. University of Wales Bangor\*
41. University of Wales Swansea
42. University of York\*

\* Indicates which institutions presently offer Dutch

## **Appendix B: Low Countries Modules Details**

### **Trinity College Dublin**

Beginners (Level 1)

**Dutch Area Studies  
Textual Analysis**

Intermediate (Level 2)

**Dutch Area Studies  
Dutch Language History  
Literature**

Advanced (Level 3)

**Literature and Textual Analysis**

### **University of Cambridge**

Intermediate (Level 2)

**Dutch literature, history, and culture, since 1860  
The literature and society of the Low Countries, before 1585  
The literature, history, and visual arts of the Netherlands, from 1585 to 1700**

Advanced (Level 3)

**The literature and history of the Low Countries, before 1585  
The literature, history, and visual arts of the Netherlands, from 1585 to 1700  
Dutch literature, history, and culture, since 1945**

**Other:** Year Abroad students prepare a dissertation in English on a topic related to the Literature, History or Culture of the Low Countries or a Translation Project.

### **University College London**

Beginners (Level 1)

**Identities and Communities in the Low Countries  
Aspects of the History of the Low Countries  
Introduction to Dutch and Belgian Contemporary History  
Modern Dutch Literary Texts**

Intermediate (Level 2)

**Investigating Cultures: Concepts & Methods  
Sociolinguistics of the Dutch Language Area  
Structural Aspects of Modern Dutch**

**Twentieth-Century Dutch Literature I: Themes**  
**Introduction to colonial and postcolonial literature**  
**Themes in Dutch and Belgian History Since 1930**

Advanced (Level 3)

**Year Abroad Project**  
**Advanced Translation**  
**Dutch Literature 1930 - Present: Major Authors**  
**Colonial and Postcolonial Literature**  
**History of the Dutch Language**  
**Project in Dutch**  
**Contemporary Culture and History of the Low Countries**

Masters (Level M)

**Language and Literature of the Dutch Golden Age (MA Dutch Golden Age)**  
**Dutch Golden Age Advanced Reading (MA Dutch Golden Age)**  
**Contemporary Culture and History of the Low Countries + Contemporary Culture and Society of the Low Countries (as one course) (MA European Culture, Dutch pathway)**  
**Dutch Linguistics for students MA German (MA German)**  
**Art and Culture in the Northern Netherlands, 1578-1672: Dutch Genre Painting (MA in History of Art)<sup>5</sup>**

**University of Hull**

Intermediate (Level 2)

**The Dutch in the Golden Age**

Advanced (Level 3)

**The Anglo-Dutch Connection in the 17th Century**

**University of Nottingham**

Advanced (Level 3)

**Language (and) Politics in the Low Countries (50% language and 50% language politics, past and present, in the Low Countries)**

**University of Sheffield**

Beginners (Level 1)

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<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere in London modules in the history of Dutch art are also taught at the Courtauld Institute, but no details are available.



**The level-1 module contains an introduction to the culture of the Low Countries, but there is no separate module**

Intermediate (Level 2)

**The level- 2 language module contains an introduction to the multicultural society in the Netherlands  
Introduction to the history of the Low Countries  
Literature in Dutch 1**

Advanced (Level 3)

**The level-3 language module contains a course in early modern literature  
Dutch Sociolinguistics  
Literature in Dutch 2**

Masters (Level M)

**Approaches to Dutch Literature since 1945  
Approaches to Dutch Linguistics  
Advanced Translation from Dutch**

Other

**Dutch Language for Research  
Further Dutch Language for Research (these are Postgraduate Training Modules)**

## **University of Wales Swansea**

Advanced (Level 3)

**Britain and the Dutch Revolt, c. 1560-1660 (final year special subject)**

Masters (Level M)

**Culture and Society in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century (elective module in MA degree in Early Modern History)**

## Appendix C: Research details

### **Napier University**

*Scottish Centre for the Book*

**Dr William A. Kelly:** C17 and C18 printing in the Low Countries.

### **National University of Ireland, Maynooth**

*Department of History*

**Prof Richard Vincent Comerford:** Political mobilisation and its social and cultural bases in modern Ireland but also particularly in the Netherlands.

### **Trinity College Dublin**

*Department of Germanic Languages*

Research Project: Fagel Library collection.

*Department of Modern History*

**Prof John Horne:** First World War/Belgian history.

**Dr Philip Mc Evansoneya:** 20<sup>th</sup> century Belgian and Dutch art.

**Dr Helga Robinson-Hammerstein:** Dutch history 1500-1700

*Department of History of Art*

**Prof Roger Stalley:** Dutch/Flemish Paintings.

Dutch/Flemish paintings 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century.

### **University of Aberdeen**

*Research Institute for Irish and Scottish Studies/History department*

**Dr Esther Mijers:** Dutch History; Scottish and Dutch connections/partnerships. Currently researching: Scotland and the Dutch Connection in the American Colonies.

### **University of Bristol**

*Department of Germanic Studies*

**Dr Nils Langer** Socio-historical issues of German and Germanic linguistics.

### **University of Cambridge**

*Department of Other Languages, Dutch Section*

**E.G.C. Strietman MA, Senior Lecturer in Dutch:** Drama and Culture of the Rhetoricians (1400-1600); translation into English of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Rhetoricians plays; General Editor of EEDTS (Early European Drama in Translation Series) under the auspices of the Medieval and Renaissance Drama Society of America.

**Charlotte Steenbrugge, PhD student:** (shared with the English Faculty) *The sinnekens* in Rhetoricians Drama and the vices in English Drama.

## University College London

*Department of Dutch*

### Staff:

**Ms Jane Fenoulhet:** (a) women writing in Dutch, mainly in the period 1920-1960 (including Jo van Ammers-Kuller, Vasalis, Anna Blaman, Hella Haasse). Writers and texts are approached from a number of related perspectives: literary history, cultural and social history, feminist thought, and gendered narratology. (b) The pedagogy of Dutch literature outside the Netherlands and Flanders in relation to the canon of literature written in Dutch.

**Prof Theo Hermans:** theories of translation; history of translation in the Low Countries and Europe since the Renaissance.

**Ms Gerdi Quist:** intercultural studies and teaching Dutch as a foreign language; ethnographic methods in cultural studies.

**Prof Reinier Salverda:** critical edition of the complete works of Maria Dermout; colonial and postcolonial literature, including comparisons between Dutch and English literatures of empire; history of linguistic thought in the Netherlands; the modern Dutch language; language and multiculturalism.

**Dr Ulrich Tiedau:** relations between the Low Countries and Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries; issues of place and identity in the modern Low Countries.

### Research students:

**Esther ten Dolle:** Fact and fiction in the Netherlands during and after the Indonesian war of independence.

**Katie Featherstone:** Conrad and Multatuli. A comparative study from a postcolonial perspective.

**Jill Stern:** Orangism in the Dutch Republic 1650-1672 (PhD thesis, submitted December 2005).

### Recent PhD theses:

**Mieke Desmet:** Anglophone literature for young girls in Dutch translation 1945-1995 (2003).

**Kris Steyaert:** Shelley and the Tachtigers (2000).

**An Vanderhelst:** Hendrik Niclaes in English and Latin translations (2004).

*Department of History of Art*

**Charles Ford:** Dutch art of the 17th century.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere in London research into the history of Dutch art is also conducted at the Courtauld Institute, but no details are available.

*Department of History*

**Prof Ben Kaplan:** Dutch history of the 17th century.

## **University of Hull**

*Department of Modern Languages*

**Ms Henriette Louwerse, PhD student:** Dutch migrant literature (esp. Hafid Bouazza).

**Ms Miranda van Rossum, tutor:** Culture in language learning, blended learning of languages.

**Prof Brigitte Schludermann, emeritus professor:** historical linguistics and language mixture.

**Dr Sabine Vanacker, lecturer:** Dutch crime fiction.

*Department of History*

**Dr Les Price (Reader in Early Modern History):** At present Dr Price is working on a study of the extent to which the Dutch were different from all other Europeans during their Golden Age. In the longer term, he is trying to organise a large scale study of the social structure of the towns of Holland in the third quarter of the 17th century.

## **University of Kent**

*Department of History*

**Dr Elizabeth Edwards:** Seventeenth century Dutch political and cultural history.

**Dr David Ormrod:** The Dutch Golden Age.

## **University of Liverpool**

*School of Modern Languages*

**Dr Godfried Croenen:** Social and cultural history of the Low Countries in the Middle Ages. He currently has two research students engaged in projects on medieval historiography, one working on French texts and one on Dutch.

## **University of Newcastle**

*School of Modern Languages*

**Dr Carol Fehringer:** German and Dutch linguistics; two recent publications on Dutch phonology/morphology.

## **University of Nottingham**

*Department of German*

**Dr Nicola McLelland:** history of linguistic thought in the Low Countries, esp. in the early modern period

**Dr Bram Mertens:** Nationalism and language in Flanders, the Flemish movement.

## **University of Sheffield**

*Department of Germanic Studies*

**Ms Henriette Louwerse:** Modern Dutch literature, esp. migrant literature.

**Eddy Verbaan PhD thesis:** Dutch Golden Age, esp. urban histories.

**Dr Roel Vismans:** Dutch linguistics, esp. pragmatics, currently working on 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns.

*Department of History*

**Dr Tim Baycroft:** French Flanders

**Dr Anthony Milton:** The Dutch Golden Age; Dutch East Indies.

**Dr Bob Moore:** The Netherlands during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War

*Department of Landscape*

**Dr Jan Woudstra:** Dutch landscape and garden design.

*Department of English Literature*

**Dr. Duo van Rostrum** Dutch sports literature.

## **University of Wales Swansea**

*Department of History*

**Dr Hugh Dunthorne:** Relations between the Netherlands and Britain, 1560-1800.

**Sarah Plimmer:** PhD thesis on British opinion of the Dutch Republic at the time of the Second Anglo-Dutch War 1665- 67

## Appendix D: Additional Dutch Interests

### University College London

- The Department hosts an annual Writer in Residence who spends up to five weeks at UCL and is externally funded.
- There is a small Dutch Society.
- ICT: UCL acts as the lead institution for Virtual Dutch, an ICT-based teaching and learning collaboration set up in 2001 and involving also the universities of Sheffield, Cambridge and Hull. The main activities consist of (a) inter-institutional learning and teaching with the use of a virtual learning platform (currently WebCT) and videoconferences and (b) the creation of web-based learning and teaching resources such as online multimedia study packs and learners' grammars. Virtual Dutch was featured in the chapter on 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning' in HEFCE's 2003 annual report. See: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dutch/virtualdutch/>
- The Dutch Department is closely involved with the newly established Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning 'Languages of the Wider World', a joint venture between UCL and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). See: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/cetl/>

### University of Hull

- Hull has contributed to the Virtual Department of Dutch.
- There is a Dutch-Flemish student society.

### University of Sheffield

- The University established a Centre for Dutch Studies in spring 2005 to coordinate university-wide research activity in the broader area of Dutch Studies. See: <http://dutchcentre.group.shef.ac.uk/index.htm>
- In January 2005 the University Library took possession of the Peter King Collection, the private library of the erstwhile professor of Dutch at the University of Hull.
- The Department of Germanic Studies is an active partner in the Virtual Department of Dutch.
- The Association for Low Countries Studies in Great Britain and Ireland is administered from the Department. See: <http://alcs.group.shef.ac.uk/>
- The Department organises an annual excursion to Amsterdam for its (beginners') students.
- In spring 2006 a Dutch student society was launched.
- The Dutch section is closely involved with the newly established Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning 'Centre for Inquiry Based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences' (CILASS). See: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/cilass/>