

Almost 50 years of our Bulletin "Hermes"

Frans Bruna

Every member of our society is familiar with the "Hermes". We now have a look at the history of our magazine. The first issue appeared in March 1969 (2½ years after the establishment of the Contact Group of collectors of Greek stamps). A small-format magazine, half-folio, stencilled.

Somewhat further along in the text of this edition the magazine appears to be an initiative of the first board, which was elected on September 16, 1968, consisting of: Mr P.F. Kühler, H.C. van Ginhoven and drs. E. van der Vossen.

The first issue was edited by E. van der Vossen, who himself took care of the preface, the minutes and three articles. Secretary Van Ginhoven wrote the fourth article, on "Forgeries of Greek Postage Stamps" (Even then, yes indeed!).

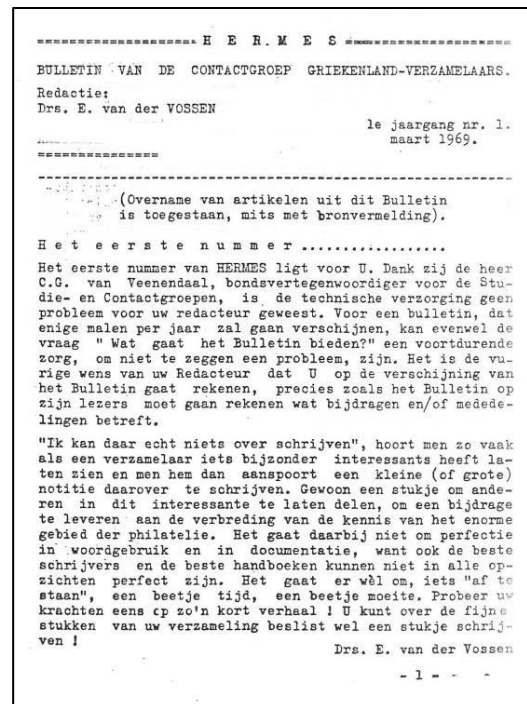
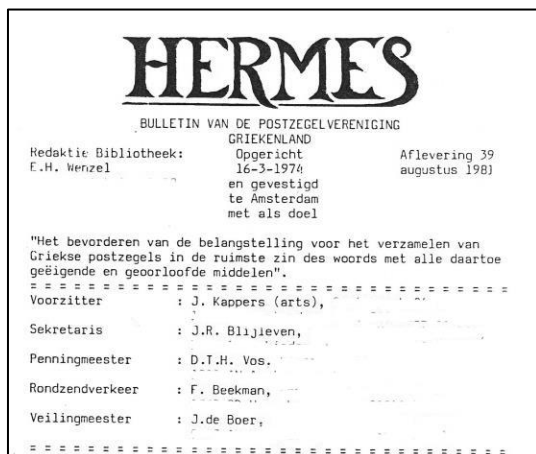
The editor wrote about "Philatelic journals in Greece before 1900".

The first two (Greek) periodicals also carried the name "Hermes"; the first existed for five editions, the second appeared four times.

Another topic was "Some details of the Issue from 1913", with details about paper types ('If you touch the front with your fingertip, you will feel the difference') and the perforation-varieties.

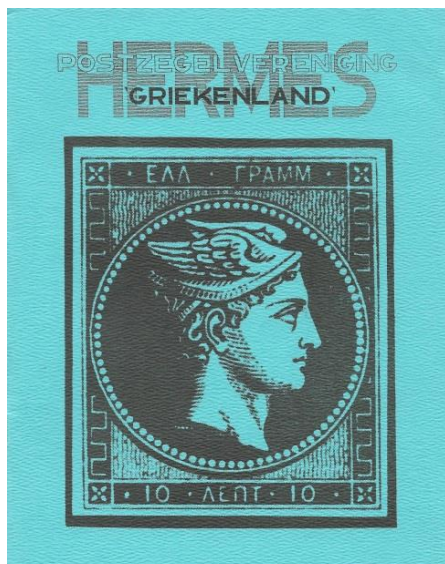
Finally, a piece about "The K.P. overprints 1917": a social welfare stamp, with a tariff that was very inconsistent for different items of mail.

The Contact Group became a Society, the magazine retained the same shape, without a cover, but with a smarter looking heading. The final edition with this appearance was number 39, of August 1981.



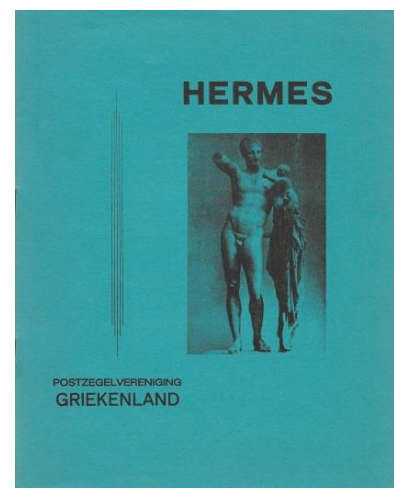
A dark blue cover appears from number 40 onwards. First with an illustration of the Hermes of Praxiteles, perhaps better known to our members as the Hermes of the 2 drachma stamp of 1896.

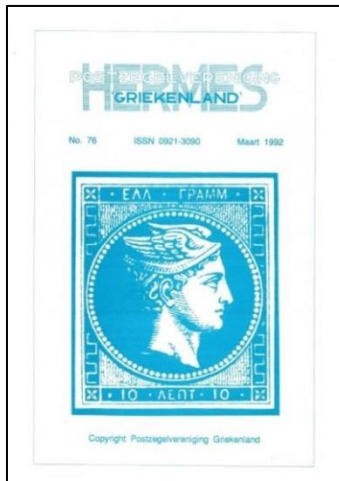
The cover that is reproduced here is the one of edition 40 of October 1981 - but you cannot see that; the cover sheets were created in large numbers for multiple use over a longer period of time.



In March 1989 (edition 64) the time was ripe for a new cover design, with the well-known Hermes Head from the stamp-issue of the "Large Hermes Heads" (we always - disrespectfully - speak about the 'head' of the god Hermes).

In March 1992 (no.76) Erik Wenzel (editor for a long period of time, since the April issue of 1980) started a revolution: a larger sheet format, (A4), still in use today. In his preface he refers to interesting things, for instance about the number of members (over 200, at that time), the number of text pages (20, then) and about the font size of the articles (twelve points). A selection of this preface - reduced (and in Dutch) - can be found on page 2.





VAN DE REDACTIE

In maart 1969 verscheen HERMES 1e jaargang nr. 1. Dit eerste bulletin van de Contactgroep Griekenland-verzamelaars bevatte 16 bladzijden van het half-folio formaat en bereikte ondermeer de toen 49 leden.

Het formaat en het aantal bladzijden bleef met enkele uitzonderingen (20 of 24 bladzijden) ongewijzigd tot bij aflevering 56 van maart 1987 werd besloten kleinere letters te gebruiken, zodat met vrijwel dezelfde kosten meer copie geplaatst kon worden voor de inmiddels 150 leden van de Postzegelvereniging Griekenland. Het aantal pagina's bleef 16.

De volgende wijziging liet niet zolang op zich wachten. Met ingang van aflevering 60 van maart 1988 werd HERMES niet meer met de schrijfmachine, maar met de computer vervaardigd en het aantal pagina's werd uitgebreid naar 24. Ten opzichte van 1986 was de hoeveelheid tekst nu verdrievoudigd, maar er kwamen wel signalen van enkele leden, dat de gebruikte kleine letter de leesbaarheid niet bevorderde.

Nu - begin 1992 - heeft de vereniging ruim 200 leden en kon zonder contributieverhoging worden besloten tot een iets ruimer budget voor HERMES. Dit resulteert in enkele ingrijpende wijzigingen in de lay-out. In de eerste plaats is na 75 afleveringen half-folio verwisseld voor het A4-formaat. Dit houdt tevens in, dat we weer terugkeren naar de vertrouwde grote letters. Het aantal pagina's blijft 24, maar nu inclusief de omslag. De effectieve ruimte voor tekst bij eenzelfde aantal afbeeldingen wordt door deze opzet flink vergroot.

Technical innovations eventually led to further improvements for the members.

From the October 2003 issue (no. 121) onwards, the layout was entirely the work of the editor. In earlier days, illustrations were still added to printed text with scissors and a glue pot; the printer took care of the rest.

The result was that from that issue onwards the complete Hermes files came available digitally - and in colour - for members who wished to have a digital copy.

The Hermes continued to appear entirely in **black and white** - a matter of cost!

Hesitantly colour appeared: in December 2006 (nr.133) we saw a retrospective in colour of the 40th anniversary of the Society: four pages.

In the years 2007-2009 a series of articles by Bill Ure (and Ruud Verberne) about counterfeits of the LHH, naturally appeared in colour, but colour was also limited to these pages.

In August 2009 (nr.143) a painting by Lord Byron (in Albanian costume) appeared in colour on the cover; from that moment onwards, the cover and eight of the 16 text pages were printed in colour. In April 2011 (nr.150) four more colour pages were added (12 out of 16).

The situation remained the same - with the exception of the big anniversary issue ('45 years of the Hellenic Philatelic Society of the Netherlands', no.152), which appeared entirely in colour - until August 2013 (nr.159) when the whole edition was printed in full colour.

And we are now fully accustomed to that. Actually at the moment there is nothing more to be wished for. But who knows what the future will bring!



Editors of the "Hermes":

Remarkably only a small number. More than 5 editions were edited by:

W.F.H. Stroër (June 1973 - June 1979): 25 editions

Erik Wenzel (April 1980 - March 1996): 59 editions

Frans Bruna (March 1996 - present): 82 editions.

Articles were obviously written by many authors. One can check all titles (and authors) on our site www.pv-griekenland.nl under the topic "Library".

The largest number of articles come from Ruud Verberne (121), Jacques van Welzen (104), Rienk Feenstra (98) and Jaap Koopmans (58). They are followed - as it should be - by a large platoon, led by Ad van Groesen (38).

Enough about the numbers. We will not give markings for the often high quality.

However, with pride we must mention that in 2014 the Prize for best Philatelic Magazine was awarded to our Bulletin, by the Stichting Nederlands Maandblad voor Philatelie.

Topics of the articles? A wide variety. What does stand out in this are: forgeries and LHH /Large Hermes Heads. Crete also scores high numbers.

Thanks to all the writers!

Frans Bruna, editor