

Obituary



Willem Irik (on the right) with Jaap Schipper at Twisk Church, 2001 (Photo Jeremy Bate)

Willem Irik (1927–2018)

It is sad to relate the news of the death of one of our longstanding members Willem Irik at the age of 90 years. Our condolences to his wife Jackie and other members of the family.

Willem's direct involvement in the Society go back to his Newsletter articles from 1995 onwards which, combined with his linguistic skills in the translation of articles by P. W. Schipper and Dr G. Weijns, enabled comparisons to be made between the products of Dutch, Flemish and English chairmakers.

His contribution to the success of the RFS visit to the Netherlands in September 2001 is very memorable and

reflected not only his knowledge of his home country but his awareness of the international influences on Dutch culture, often via the V.O.C (Dutch East India Company) and its links with the Far East, which Willem became familiar with while working for the Allied Chemical Corporation in Indonesia, Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The itinerary for this visit included the Arnhem Open Air Museum, Hinderloopen, Popta Slot Castle, the Friesian Museum, Zuiderzee Museum Depot and the West Friesian Museum at Hoorn. These visits demonstrated the role and significance of painted furniture in many types of Dutch residences during the 18th and 19th centuries. An introductory lecture by Hans Piena had emphasised the diversity of households where furniture with simulated mahogany finishes had been used, although more research into early Dutch interiors and the use of various simulated finishes was still required.

Our visit to the Church at Twisk, where we met up with Jaap Schipper, was also noteworthy because of the lively discussion that ensued regarding the recent reconstruction and restoration of an early tilt table incorporating surviving fragments found in this church and based on what was considered to be a parallel 15th-century design still surviving in St Elizabeth Hospital, Aalst, Belgium.

In his later years he continued to be absorbed by the challenges involved in furniture restoration.

John Boram