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## *Society of English-Native-Speaking Editors in the Netherlands*

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### How SENSE began

On the occasion of the SENSE 5th Anniversary Celebrations, Jackie Senior and Joy Burrough have compiled this brief account to chronicle how the society got started.

Spring 1989: a letter on Dunglish written by Joy and published in *European Science Editing* (the EASE Newsletter) led to Jackie contacting her to suggest organizing a meeting of English language editors, with a view to forming a network. Victoria Thatcher had also been in touch with Joy for some time, urging contact between editors.

July 1989: The first exploratory get-together: afternoon tea at Joy's house in Wageningen. Ten people attended (Joy, Ian Cressie, Marilyn Minderhoud, Joy Mukanyange, Jackie, Jane Sykes, Victoria Thatcher, Nancy van Weesep and her sister, who was visiting from the US and who is also an editor, and Ninette da Zylva). At this meeting we agreed to contact as many people as we could working in the field, through EASE, WERK and personal contacts, and to meet again in November at Jackie's house in Zeist. Even at this early stage we were expressing the need for a group to provide more communication between editors working in the Netherlands, moral support for those working in isolation (either literally, as freelancers, or mentally, in research institutes or companies), to maintain high standards and to help prevent our use of English decaying or suffering from second language interference.

October 1989: a three-day course for expatriate editors from Europe at the Pangbourne English Centre (near Reading, UK), co-organized by Joy Burrough, helped crystallize these aims. It was attended by "founding members" Joy, Jackie, Jane and Marilyn. Barbara Fasting and Alan Broad were also there, and joined the embryonic group. Joy and Jackie had arranged to meet with two representatives of the Society of Freelance Edi-

tors and Proofreaders (SFEP) in Oxford at the end of this workshop, to explore the idea of forming a European satellite to SFEP. However, although SFEP members had some similar concerns (training, social contact, standards), there were clearly strong differences between the UK and Dutch situations.

November 1989: second meeting of the embryonic SENSE group, at this stage known by the ungainly name of ENSEN, 'English native-speaking-editors' network. This meeting, held at Jackie's house, attracted 23 people. The group rejected the idea of joining the SFEP in favour of forming our own independent society for English language editors working in the Netherlands. Susan Hunt and Hans van Bemmelen were to draw up Rules and Constitution and Peter Attwood was to be Chairman. Joy took on the secretarial role and Jackie lent her head to the figures and finances.

February 1990: Third ENSEN meeting, held at Susan's. Thirty-one people turned up to hear a speaker on BTW.

March 1990: the society was registered at the Kamer van Koophandel in The Hague, as the Society of English-Native-Speaking-Editors (a name suggested independently by Victoria Thatcher and Peter Smith). Victoria had pointed out that the acronym SENSE perfectly expressed what we as editors were trying to make of the texts we handled!

May 1990: Book House Training Centre of London (a UK non-profit organisation providing training for the publishing industry) held two workshops (one for three days and one for one day) at Hotel Nol in 't Bosch in Wageningen, co-organized by Joy. This event also helped consolidate the society, since it was attended by most of the newly formed committee and several others who were to become members. At this point there were more than 72 names on the society's mailing list, and the enthusiasm and energy for getting the society going

were evident.

13 October 1990: first General Meeting, held at Baarn and attended by 35 people. The constitution and rules were ratified, and the committee was formally elected:

Chair: Peter Attwood  
Secretary: Joy Burrough  
Treasurer: Jackie Senior  
Membership Secretary: Susan Hunt  
Programme Secretary: Jane Sykes  
Publicity: Marilyn Minderhoud  
Newsletter Editor: Victoria Thatcher.

At that time, Peter Smith summed up SENSE as:

- S Social contact: to reduce the sense of isolation and to establish new professional contacts.
- E Evangelizing: telling others about our services.
- N Newsletters: to keep us informed e.g. about courses, workshops, etc.
- S Sharing: to build a network of contacts, sharing reference books, skills and experience.
- E Education: to promote our professional skills.

19 November 1990: SENSE's constitution deposited with notary.

January 1991: A contest held to create a logo was won by Anne Hawkins, later to become Programme Secretary. Her winning entry, modified by an artist, was launched as our familiar, distinctive logo.

January 1991: Publication of first SENSE Newsletter (two stapled-together A4 sheets) put out by Victoria. There were five issues in this informal format. January 1992 saw the launch of the now familiar quarterly Newsletter, in which Victoria drew on Nancy Forrest-Flier's desktop publishing skills.

May 1991: SENSE's first (green) folder appeared. Its production was coordinated by Marilyn (working with Rita DeCoursey, Jackie and Susan).

16 November 1991: The brainstorming meeting that led to the emergence of the Writing Teachers' Support Group. Co-organized by Victoria and Ruth de Wijs and held at Ruth's house.

9 May 1992: Introduction to Basic Copy-editing Workshop. The first SENSE training event. Given by an SFEP trainer and organized by Ruth, Jane and Marilyn.

So there you have it: background information on the most important SENSE "firsts". We have evolved from a tea party, via a group that met in the premises of the English Church in Utrecht (remember having to rearrange the heavy furniture, and doing the washing up afterwards?). We have been fortunate in attracting interesting and stimulating speakers, and in having expertise in our own ranks that we can draw on as well. Thanks to all who helped make the first five years so worthwhile. We hope the next five years will continue the tradition.