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25 years BCN

School for behavioural and
Cognitive Neurosciences

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School for behavioural and
Cognitive Neurosciences

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BCN-nieuwsbrief

1
SEPTEMBER
1992

Groningen Institute for Behavioral, Cognitive and Neurosciences

LECTORI SALUTEM,

Het bestuur van het BCN is verheugd over het verschijnen van deze eerste nieuwsbrief. Wij hopen dat deze en de komende afleveringen een vitale rol zullen gaan vervullen in het functioneren van het onderzoeksinstituut. Het BCN is groot, in hoge mate multidisciplinair en de activiteiten overschrijden vele grenzen van vakgroepen en faculteiten. Dat geeft ons instituut enorme mogelijkheden tot integratie. Maar mogelijkheden alleen zijn niet voldoende. Om die te verwezenlijken is er juist vanwege die grote spreiding van disciplines aanzienlijke inspanning nodig om de communicatie tussen de deelnemende groepen onderling en die tussen bestuur en basis te optimaliseren. Deze nieuwsbrief is één van de middelen. Wij hopen dat het middel werkt.

R.H. van den Hoofdakker (Voorzitter)

Geen STIMULANS-1992 aangevraagd.

In de ronde STIMULANS 1992 heeft de RuG geen BCN-aanvraag ingediend. Dat betekent ook dat van de daarin aangevraagde ondersteuning van f 1,4 miljoen voorlopig geen sprake is. Een aantal elementen heeft bijgedragen tot deze universitaire besluitvorming. Hiervan volgt ter informatie, en aansporing tot bijdrage aan verbetering, een korte opsomming:

- Ten eerste liep de presentatie van het onderzoeksprogramma niet goed in de pas met de binnen het BCN juist op gang gezette operatie tot het formuleren van de basis voor een 5-jarig onderzoeksprogramma. De tijdsdruk was, vooral in de eerste concepten, te duidelijk zichtbaar.
- Ten tweede, ten dele overigens mede om het voorgaande, waren de adviezen van de faculteiten niet alle voldoende positief. Ze werden bovendien niet bijgesteld na substantiele bijstelling van de conceptaanvraag. Met name de PPSW-brief was negatief.
- Hoewel op veel plaatsen multidisciplinariteit met de mond wordt beleeden, wordt in de praktijk snel prioriteit gegeven aan monodisciplinaire onderwerpen, zeker als die van vergelijkbare kwaliteit zijn. Dat betekent dat multidisciplinaire programma's zoals die van het BCN, alleen kans van slagen hebben als ze op alle essentiële punten uitstekend scoren. Dat punt verdient extra aandacht.

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Preface

It is with great pleasure that I announce this special issue of the BCN newsletter dedicated to the 25th anniversary of BCN.

This special issue was developed in a special way. Together with some previous directors of BCN we initially intended to write a booklet about the history of BCN. Due to time constraints, however, we had to temper our ambitions and we therefore decided, with the help of Sander Martens (current editor-in-chief of the BCN Newsletter), to produce a special issue of the BCN Newsletter looking back at 25 beautiful years of BCN history.

The exact birth date of BCN proved a controversial issue, but thorough research revealed that the basic plan for the founding of BCN was born in autumn (probably November) 1987; and this is the date we celebrate. Many individuals have unselfishly worked for – and contributed to – BCN and I wouldn't know where to start thanking everybody. First of all, I would like to thank the BCN staff office, who during the past 25 years formed the rock solid basis of all BCN activities. Secondly I would like to thank all BCN directors for their guidance of BCN and of course for their help with the anniversary issue of the BCN newsletter. Many more people have served on the BCN board of directors, the educational board, the PhD council, the editorial staff of the BCN Newsletter, and even more people have provided numerous hours of inspired teaching for BCN; thank you all, you are the foundation of BCN!

This anniversary newsletter issue is not an exact historical account of BCN, but it shows beautiful snapshots of characteristic events. For this reason we took excerpts of old issues of the BCN newsletter even though the first extracts were of course in Dutch. In fact it took BCN quite some time to switch its Newsletter to English. Secondly, as mentioned above, by no means have we been complete in our choice of people and special events that were important for BCN. Yet, thanks to the flawless memory of Prof. Diek Duifhuis we have a reliable account of the origin of BCN and its first development. The second part of this issue features excerpts of special events from the past 25 years, sometimes accompanied by comments. The third part highlights some of the many important people for BCN.

I do hope that this issue brings back good memories and makes you realize the special things we have done. BCN has educated hundreds of PhD students and has been the signpost for Groningen Neuroscience for 25 years!



Erik Boddeke

Frans Zwarts

De nieuwe voorzitter van het BCN bestuur

De benoeming van Frans Zwarts (Nederlandse taalkunde) tot voorzitter van het bestuur van het BCN, als opvolger van Rudi van den Hoofdakker, was een goede aanleiding tot het gesprek dat Sietse van Netten en Hans Vos onlangs met hem hadden. En we treffen hem al dadelijk op de dag na zijn eerste bestuursvergadering. Zijn mede-bestuursleden zijn Daniel Kernell, Paul Luiten, Hans den Boer, Paul van Geert en Ger de Haan.

Zwarts studeerde Algemene Taalwetenschap in Amsterdam. Hij werkte, nu al weer lang geleden, o.a. met John Michon (Functieleer RUG) aan de automatische verwerking van taal; zijn bewondering voor Chomsky zal nog een paar keer blijken. Inmiddels is voor hem het trefwoord 'cognitie' geworden, maar zijn betrokkenheid bij het zenuwstelsel maakt het onwaarschijnlijk dat het vertrek van Van den Hoofdakker een koerswijziging voor het BCN zou betekenen. Gelukkig, want nog wat verdergaande consolidatie is voor het BCN goed.



De breedtestrategie

Ons gesprek gaat om te beginnen over de strategie voor de nabije toekomst: 'in de breedte' of 'in de diepte'? Zwarts wil zich in de eerstkomende jaren op de breedtestrategie richten nu het BCN niet in het tijtje van top-onderzoekscholen zal komen. Uiteindelijk hebben we daarvoor wel voldoende kwaliteit in huis, maar vanwege onze multidisciplinaire samenstelling kost de organisatie extra moeite. Zwarts beschouwt dat laatste overigens niet als een handicap, maar ziet er juist een eigenschap in die ons van de andere twee 'neuro-scholen' onderscheidt. Terwijl de onderzoekschool Neurowetenschappen Amsterdam eigenlijk vooral de traditionele neurosciences omvat, en het NICI (Nijmeegs Instituut voor Cognitie en Informatie) juist sterk is in taalwetenschappen en psychologie, zou onze eigen brede samenstelling juist de niche betekenen waarin wij 'iets anders' en niet 'meer van hetzelfde' vormen. Zo noemt Zwarts als voorbeeld van interdisciplinair werken dat hij, samen met Koster (Algemene taalwetenschap), bij Biologie een reeks colleges geeft over taal, spraak, kritische

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RUG



BCN: fundamental issues

About the origin of BCN

In the late 80's, the acquisition of funding for Dutch universities had become much more of a challenge than it had been in previous decades. The decline in funding had already started in the 70's, and in order to maintain the level of research funding, new criteria for research evaluation had to be fulfilled. A favourable argument to obtain funding was multidisciplinary of research projects. During this period the neuroscience research field gained interest, not only nationally and internationally, but also in Groningen. Interestingly the local contacts for multidisciplinary collaboration were often made during train rides to and from Amsterdam. Examples are the train meetings between profs. JW Kuiper, HFR Prechtel and R Giel. They initiated meetings for interested senior staff members in various fields of neuroscience research in Groningen. These meetings obtained the status of a Neuroscience Council¹, and remained in operation for the next years, with prof. JW Kuiper as chairman. The group members were: profs. B Bohus, RH van den Hoofdakker, H Duifhuis, JP Kruijt and J Zaagsma. In September 1988 they presented the 'Beleidsoverwegingen' (policy considerations) to the members, the involved faculties and the University. Initially the name "The Groningen Centre for Behavioural and Neurosciences" was used.

On October 5th, 1988, the Amsterdam universities, in cooperation with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) established the Amsterdam "PhD-network", an event that preceded the 17th Swammerdam-lecture. This was founded by signing the cooperation between the UVA and VUA, and by prof. D De Wied as Academy representative. At this event, a representative of the ministry of Education and Sciences stated that the network would be expanded, that Groningen would join shortly, and that a starting budget of 3 Mf was made available. This information was forwarded to our Rector Magnificus LJ Engels, and in a subsequent meeting in early 1989 he recognized the relevance of the local Centre.

In line with the the so-called NWO-63-x-operation in 1990, BCN was awarded a budget of kf 455. At the end of May 1990, BCN submitted an additional proposal to the RUG board, aiming for the subsequent NWO-programme: 'Extra stimulerend onderzoekscholen 1990'. The total budget required amounted to kf 1855 for equipment and kf 440 for internationalization activities. A total of 1 Mf was awarded, to which local matching up to kf 380 had to be added by the RUG. This allowed for investments in histology, imaging techniques (PET, MRI analysis and EEG), and for a smaller budget for internationalisation.

¹ The first Neuroscience Council meeting was organised in Haren on November 19th, 1987. Participants were: Bohus, Kruijt, Drenth and Daan (biology), G Mulder (psychology), van den Hoofdakker and Korf (psychiatry), den Hertog, Horn and Zaagsma (pharmacy and pharmacology), Prechtel and Schuiling (developmental neurology), and Kuiper and Duifhuis (biophysics).

During the fall of 1990, BCN submitted a RUG proposal within the framework 'vernieuwingsgelden'². At the February 1991 meeting the University Council allocated the following budget (in kf):

	Central	Faculty
Medicine	200	200
Sciences	250	250
Social Sciences	50	50
Arts	50	50

During the April Neuroscience Council meeting, the internal allocation was discussed and specified, as well as participation in the Stimulans-NWO-programme.

Until this time the neuroscience research organization had dealt mainly with policy and finances, but meanwhile the original name ((GC)BN) was changed to BCN with the inclusion of the C to represent the participation of cognitive research. And in 1991, BCN tentatively appointed its first board:

- RH van den Hoofdakker, chairman
- B Bohus
- F Zwarts
- J Michon
- H Duifhuis, scientific director,

Prof. Kuiper remained coordinator of the Neuroscience Council.

In addition, a first Neuroscience Research Council was appointed, with the task of evaluating and ranking local neuroscience research proposals. The Neuroscience Research Council also contributed to the preparation of the RUG Innovation Budget Proposals, the NWO-Stimulans proposal and the proposal for Accreditation of the Neuroscience Graduate School³.

² RUG Innovation Budget(s)

³ This recognition was done by the ECOS, an Academy committee for the evaluation of graduate schools "Evaluatie Commissie Onderzoek-Scholen".



Figure 1: Distribution of Neurosciences projects funded through the Medical Sciences section of NWO.

Although the NWO-Stimulans Neuroscience Proposal was prepared, it was not submitted to NWO by our University. The graduate school proposal for accreditation, however, was submitted to the Academy in the summer of 1993. It presented the Groningen Neuroscience Research Organization BCN both in national and international perspectives. The national perspective was elucidated by Fig. 1, which was prepared by prof. FH Lopes da Silva, Amsterdam.

The proposal was approved by the ECOS committee on June 16th, 1994. From that moment on, the graduate school BCN operated as a recognized entity with a proper academic mission and coherence, and an education programme. BCN maintained good connections with Neurowetenschappen Amsterdam (NWA) and the Network "Pathofysiologie van het Zenuwstelsel (NPZ)", Utrecht.

As mentioned above, in 1991 the 1st board was appointed. Some time later, BCN was supported by an office, with Mark Kas as office manager, supported by Diana Koopmans, Frederike Slichter and later Henny Zondervan.

BCN Educational Programme

One of the initial two primary objectives of ‘onderzoekscholen’ (research schools) like BCN was the organization of an educational programme for PhD students (the other primary objective was the coordination of top research in a field of science). Although this was a clear goal right from the start of BCN, the actual implementation of its educational programme and maintenance of its quality has continuously been a major task. BCN’s strength in research resulting from an exciting combination of a wide range of disciplines ran the risk of being its weakness in education. Since PhD students tend to be very focused on their own specialised topic of research (and they need to do so in order to complete their projects within four years), BCN PhD students and supervisors always needed to be convinced that BCN offered a golden opportunity to broaden their horizons with respect to neuroscience research outside of their own specialised field.

The educational programme as devised in the early days of BCN offered both a broad horizon and room for specialized courses related to the PhD student’s research project. A committee represented by four of BCN’s five faculties (profs. Bela Bohus, Jaap Koolhaas, Jaap Korf, Jan Koster and Bert Mulder) proposed a programme of 1 + 4 ‘layers’. The first layer (I for Introduction) was an obligatory course for all BCN PhD’s about general and philosophical foundations of behavioral and cognitive neurosciences. The next layer, A, consisted of four multidisciplinary courses in BCN’s main research field. Of these, the students had to follow three. The layers B, C and D consisted of more specialized training, for instance with courses in experimental techniques, or participation in scientific meetings, and was offered both within and without BCN. The committee estimated that the obligatory layers I and A would take about 60 hours of study. This was only a small part of the total of about 1.000 hours that a PhD student had to participate in educational activities. The implementation of the programme met a

number of challenges. The first one was that, although layers I and A were ‘obligatory’, the terms of the PhD contract were such that PhD students could not be ‘forced’ to actually follow the courses. The second challenge was the suitability of the courses on offer. The courses were often established, specialized undergraduate courses, which were difficult for PhD’s who had no background in that particular field of study. On top of that were practical issues including the variable time schedules of the participating faculties and the availability of an overview of all the relevant courses. There were also political challenges. As the board of the University wanted to focus on their ‘own’ local research schools, participation in other research schools operating at a national level under the aegis of other universities was discouraged. However, in some fields of study such as linguistics, these national research schools offered an educational programme with highly relevant activities.

Since BCN could not ‘force’ its PhD’s into the educational programme, it had to ‘attract’ them by making an offer they could not refuse. Since these were the (hard to imagine) days without websites, practical hurdles were taken with the publication of an educational guide and by making deals with relevant research schools, like the national research school for linguistics, LOT, and the Groningen-Utrecht school for pharmaceutical research, GUIDE, about access to each other’s courses. In addition, the formula for an international ‘Summer School’ was introduced, with an intensive programme of two weeks with renowned scientists from all over the world. The first Summer School was held in 1996 in the (then) brand new educational wing of the Academic Hospital. The latest summer school organized by BCN was entitled the NEU4EU summer school (a new international PhD network, in which BCN participates) Translational Neurosciences Summer School ‘Ageing Brain’, which just took place in the last week of August 2012. Actually, this summer school was organized by the research institute

BCN-BRAIN ('Research Institute for Neurosciences and Healthy Ageing'), which was founded in its present form in 2005, with the establishment of the new faculty-based graduate schools and the research master programmes in the Netherlands. BCN-BRAIN is part of the multidisciplinary and interfaculty research school BCN, and also part of the Graduate School of Medical Sciences (GSMS). The close relationship of BCN(-BRAIN) with the GSMS has led to several complex discussions in the past years regarding the costs of BCN's education programme, which has always been available to all BCN PhD students, from all five participating faculties. Now, in addition to the regular BCN courses, all GSMS courses are also available to all BCN PhD students for a lump sum paid by the faculties or the individual student to BCN.

Despite these political changes, the structure of the initial educational programme has left its marks and is still visible in today's programme which requires every BCN PhD student to take 14 EC (392 hours) in BCN's Standard Courses and Activities (category A) – which includes an updated version of the above mentioned introduction course – and 16 EC (448 hours) in the remaining course categories: Other Courses (B), Conferences (C), Teaching (D) and Educational Activities (E). Interestingly, although the total number of hours to be spent on the educational programme has apparently decreased, the number of hours for the compulsory courses has increased. This is probably a reflection of the fact that BCN finds it very important that PhD students are not only trained in the specific knowledge related to their research field, but also that they are trained to become able researchers. Therefore, a compulsory statistics course was introduced a few years ago and courses on (PhD) project management, presentation skills and publishing in English are now also taught as part of the compulsory programme. In recent years, BCN has listened to its PhD students and developed and included many new courses in category B which are specifically targeted to the neuroscientists in training with a variety of backgrounds. BCN now offers

philosophy of neuroscience, human neuroanatomy, both introductory and advanced fMRI courses ("From Voxel to Networks"), an EEG course, a Matlab course and advanced statistics courses. However, all BCN PhD students are free to fill the non-compulsory programme with courses of their own liking as long as they are relevant for their research.

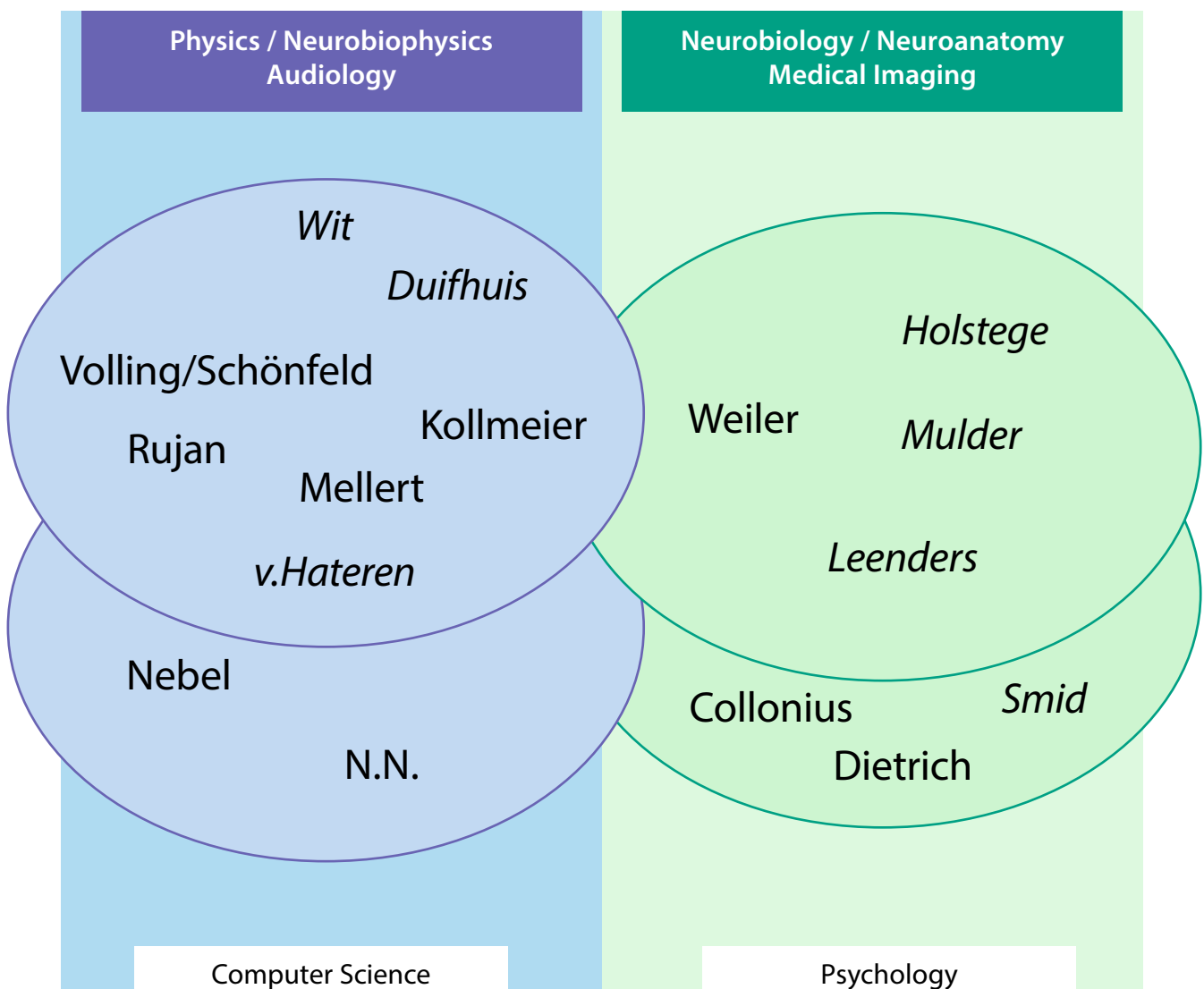
Initially, BCN's Educational Committee only occasionally met with BCN's PhD Council to discuss all kinds of matters relating to the BCN educational programme. But for the past ten years, representatives from the BCN PhD council have been participating in BCN Educational Committee meetings. The direct interaction of BCN staff, BCN senior researchers and the BCN PhD council (which represents the whole BCN PhD student community) has improved BCN's education programme over the years. One of the important initiatives and tasks of the PhD council has been to develop, distribute and analyze a biannual questionnaire on all aspects of the BCN PhD educational programme (including supervision and support for foreign students). As a result of this, the BCN Education Committee drafted the "10+ rules of good supervision" in 2006. In addition, an alumni database was set up, employing new developments in social media such as LinkedIn. Other initiatives taken by the BCN Education Committee were the initiation of a thesis prize and, a little later, a prize for the best thesis laymen's summary. The BCN PhD council has always been very active in making the PhD student community into a closely knitted one by organizing social activities and since a few years, a PhD Day. This year's version was dedicated to PhD "Social Media and Clear Communication" in science and how to use it to promote scientific work to the broad public as well as to one's peers. Furthermore, the PhD council runs a blog and a Facebook page to inform all BCN PhD students about new developments. Over the years, the educational programme has thus been regularly evaluated and adjusted to the experiences and needs of the BCN population, resulting in a well thought through and established education programme today.

EuroGK

The proposal for the EuroGK collaboration between Oldenburg and Groningen was formulated in 1998. It was intended to cover a period of at least 8 years of fruitful cooperation from 2000 – 2008. The 60-page long proposal outlined the general theme for cooperation, as well as areas of research and education, and presented the links between the Oldenburg Sonderforschungsbereich 517 (Neurokognition) and the Groningen School for Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience (BCN). The main part of

the proposal provided a description of the (international) state of the art in the topics of scientific interest in relation to previous and planned work. In fact, the link with the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg and the University of Groningen goes back further than 1998. Already during the 80's there was contact at the central University board level.

The setup for EuroGK started with the following sketch:



Names in italics identify RuG staff; the rest identify Oldenburg staff.

Effectively, BCN profited from an increase of joint meetings and symposia, which were particularly useful for the PhD students. A first meeting took place in Oldenburg on February 27-28, 1998, with additional participants from the University of Bremen. BCN received some financial support for this cooperation from NWO, but the Oldenburg groups received considerable additional support from the DFG.

Several meetings were held, both in Oldenburg and Groningen, and these have been reported in the BCN Newsletter (e.g., by Ron Zonneveld in his characteristic style in BCN Newsletter 28, 1988; by Phillipa Butcher and Reint Geuze in BCN Newsletter

44, 2000; and another classic “The Oldenburg connection”, in Dutch, by Rob Visser in 49, p17).

A recent visit has been reported in the latest BCN Newsletter 86, 2012. Research groups in Oldenburg flourished, within and outside the university. Kollmeier (2nd from the left in the back row) successfully established the “Haus des Hörens” which started in 2002. The cooperation between the groups working on (normal and impaired) hearing research has a long history, and was revived in the setup of regular Groningen – Oldenburg seminars. This network has continued under the name InterGK (2002 – 2010).



Photo taken near the Oldenburg House of Hearing shows a group of staff and students from Oldenburg and Groningen (BCN Newsletter 86, June 2012).

Delmenhorst

At about the same time that EuroGK started, a group from Bremen looked for support from Oldenburg and BCN to set up a research retreat unit in Delmenhorst, a small town between Oldenburg and Bremen. This was called the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg (H-W-K).

Prof. Gerhard Roth (*left*; behavioral physiology and developmental neurobiology Bremen) was both the initiator and first Rector of the institute. After his retirement, Prof. Reto Weiler (*right*; neuro-biology Oldenburg) was appointed his successor.

In the NeuroNorthWest meeting in February 27 and 28, 1998, Gerhardt Roth participated as acting chairman.



Prof. Reto Weiler



Prof. Gerhard Roth

Broad investment strategy

> (BCN Newsletter 31, 1998)

In 1997, shortly after the introduction of the top research schools known as the 'depth investment strategy', the Dutch Ministry of education, culture, and sciences released a new plan, the so-called 'broad investment strategy', to support promising science programs within research schools. The primary goal of this initiative was the selection of superior science and stimulation of (inter)national collaboration. Accordingly, universities were asked to present their 'promising' research programs. In order to finance this initiative, a 100 Mf was set

apart from the regular national university budget. The central goal of this initiative was producing fertile soil for future research. The Dutch Research Council (NWO) was appointed to advise the ministry on its choices. All in all, the entire 'depth' and 'broad' investment strategy has cost 200 Mf.

Of course BCN participated in the broad investment strategy, and under the guidance of BCN director Diek Duifhuis in 1998 an elaborate research proposal was produced by the BCN board of directors in cooperation with the Groningen Biomolecular Sciences and Biotechnology Institute. The proposal, called "*Neurobiological Control In Human Performance*", described a four-year program addressing BCN's overall scientific theme: *The role and organization of internal control mechanisms in behavior and cognition, and their relation to underlying populations of nerve cells*, which was published in BCN Newsletter 22, 1996. In collaboration with the Research Institute GBB, the final proposal was submitted to the University Board on October 5th 1998. Four major research lines representing the broad research scope of BCN were selected:

1. Performance, fatigue and recovery
(primary investigator: Prof. S. Daan)
2. Neuroimaging of cognition and emotion
(primary investigator: Prof. K. Leenders)
3. Cellular signaling
(primary investigator: Prof. H. Boddeke)
4. Computational modeling of structures in performance
(primary investigator: Prof. T. Kuipers).

The total grant request amounted to 3.998.214 Dutch guilders. The program was presented to a committee advising the University Board and was well received. In 1999 BCN started its 'broad investment strategy program', which lasted four years. It has supported both BCN organizational structure and BCN research, and has provided the basis for the subsequent KNAW re-accreditations of BCN in 1999 and 2004.

Cover page of the BCN broad investment strategy proposal.

SCHOOL OF BEHAVIORAL AND COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCES



**(in cooperation with the Groningen Biomolecular
Sciences and Biotechnology Institute)**

NEUROBIOLOGICAL CONTROL IN HUMAN PERFORMANCE

**BONUS INCENTIVE SCHEME
FOR RESEARCH SCHOOLS**

LOCAL ROUND

RJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

SECOND-STAGE PROPOSAL

Version: October 4, 1998

Applicant:

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> BCN Newsletter 30, 1998

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OKTOBER 1998

bcn
Groningen Graduate School for Behavioral and Cognitive Neurosciences

Nieuwsbrief

De tweede ronde Breedtestrategie

Op maandag 5 oktober jl. is de tweede (of, zo men wil, de eerste volledige) versie van de aanvraag voor de breedtestrategie van BCN (in samenwerking met GBB) naar het College van Bestuur verzonden. Zoals te verwachten viel, was het opstellen van deze aanvraag geen eenvoudige zaak. Toch zijn alle betrokkenen het erover eens dat de finale versie van de aanvraag van hoge kwaliteit is.

De eerste versie (officieel de vooraanmelding) van de aanvraag voor de breedtestrategie werd op 26 mei j.l. bij het College van Bestuur ingediend. Nadat de Universitaire Commissie voor de Wetenschapsoefening (UCW) zich een oordeel over alle ingediende aanvragen had gevormd, nam het College van Bestuur begin juli, tegen alle verwachtingen en eerdere aankondigingen in, de beslissing dat alle elf onderzoekscholen die een vooraanmelding hadden opgesteld zouden worden uitgenodigd om een uitgewerkte versie in te leveren. Het voornaamste argument van het College was dat "de vooraanmeldingen te weinig inzicht geven in de kansrijkheid van de voorstellen in een volgende ronde Dieptestrategie." Het

College van Bestuur meent pas op basis van uitgewerkte voorstellen te kunnen bepalen welke onderzoekscholen mogelijk hoge ogen zullen gooien voor de dieptestrategie.

Meteen na de zomervakantie is serieus begonnen met de voorbereidingen voor de tweede versie van de aanvraag. In de vooraanmelding werden vier onderzoeksthema's geïdentificeerd die in het kader van de breedtestrategie verder uitgewerkt zouden moeten worden. Met het oog op de doelstelling van het College van Bestuur, dat de breedtestrategie in de allereerste plaats ziet als een voorbereiding op de volgende ronde waarbij het gaat om de dieptestrategie (die naar verwachting over twee à drie jaar zal plaatsvinden), hebben bestuur en directeur van BCN in nauw overleg met de Wetenschapscommissie gekozen voor een opzet die reeds op relatief korte termijn resultaten moet opleveren. Dat betekent dat er geen promovendi zullen worden aangetrokken, maar postdoctorale onderzoekers die al over de nodige ervaring beschikken. De vier 'trekkers', Serge Daan (Gedragsbiologie), Nico Leenders (Neurologie), Erik Boddeke (Medische Fysiologie) en Theo Kuipers (Wijsbegeerte), hebben elk een aantal projecten beschreven waarvoor

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EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BCN ...

... Maar ja, hoe kom je daar achter? Ook de redactie kende dit probleem. Daarom spraken wij met prof. Duifhuis, wetenschappelijk directeur van het BCN, over vragen als: Wat is het verschil tussen een onderzoeksinstituut en een onderzoeksschool, wie of wat zijn nu eigenlijk het BCN, wat hebben NWO en KNAW ermee te maken, enz. Hieronder volgt een beknopte weergave van de stand van zaken.

Wat is nu eigenlijk een onderzoeksinstituut?

Volgens de Wet op het Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (WVO) kunnen aan een universiteit onderzoeksinstituten worden ingesteld "ter bevordering van de wetenschapsbeoefening". Een onderzoeksinstituut kan facultair of interfacultair zijn. Het BCN wordt een onderzoeksinstituut tussen vijf faculteiten: Wiskunde en Natuurwetenschappen (FWN), Geneeskunde (FG), Psychologische, Pedagogische en Sociologische Wetenschappen (PPSW), Letteren (FL) en Wijsbegeerte (FW). De FWN zal als penvoerende faculteit optreden, d.w.z. dat ze de wettelijke bevoegdheden m.b.t. het instituut uitoefent, maar ze doet dit in overleg met de andere faculteiten.

Het BCN-instituutreglement is inmiddels door alle betrokken faculteitsraden goedgekeurd en wordt dit najaar aan de Universiteitsraad voorgelegd. Daarna zal het BCN als onderzoeksinstituut officieel bestaan. In verband hiermee is de naam inmiddels veranderd van Groninger Centrum in Groninger Instituut voor Gedrags-, Cognitie- en Neurowetenschappen.

Wie zijn er nu eigenlijk lid van BCN?

Volgens de WVO bepaalt het faculteitsbestuur (uiteeraard op voorstel van het BCN-bestuur, en na overleg met de betrokken vakgroepsbesturen) (WP) en het ondersteunend en beheerspersoneel (OBP) in het instituut werkzaam zijn, en welke (docto-

raal-) studenten tot het instituut behoren.

Het instituut bestaat in principe dus uit individuen (in het algemeen voor een percentage van hun werktijd), en niet uit vakgroepen, secties, onderzoeksgroepen e.d. Anderzijds is hoogwaardig onderzoek meestal een groepsproduct, zodat in de praktijk het BCN voornamelijk uit gehele onderzoeksgroepen zal bestaan.

Welke groepen en individuen op dit moment BCN-lid zijn, is historisch gegroeid en nog niet officieel vastgelegd. BCN hanteert zelf een lijst met 25 groepen, van zeer verschillende omvang en organisatieniveau (zie elders in dit nummer). Dit leidt nog wel eens tot onduidelijkheden, bijvoorbeeld bij het verzenden van stukken en convocaties voor vergaderingen. Deze gingen soms alleen naar hoogleraren, soms ook naar vakgroeps-secretariaten, enz. Het BCN-bureau doet zijn uiterste best om dit op korte termijn te verbeteren.

De procedure voor toelating van nieuwe leden zal geregeld moeten worden in het huishoudelijk reglement van het BCN-instituut, waar het bestuur binnenkort aan gaat werken.

Wat is/wordt de bestuurlijke structuur van het BCN?

Dit is in grote lijnen geregeld in de WVO, en verder vastgelegd in het BCN-reglement (dat op verzoek bij het BCN-bureau verkrijgbaar is).

Het bestuur van het instituut bestaat uit een voorzitter, zijnde een hoogleraar, liefst uit de FWN of de FG, met een zittingstermijn van vier

jaar, en maximaal vier leden, één uit elke faculteit (FL en FW doen samen), met een zittingsduur van twee jaar. Het bestuur wordt benoemd door de raad van de penvoerende faculteit.

Het bestuur stelt eenmaal per vijf jaar een onderzoeksprogramma, en voor de beoogde onderzoeksschool een onderwijsprogramma op, dat goedgekeurd moet worden door de faculteitsraad. Jaarlijks worden binnen dit kader nadere onderzoeks- en onderwijsplannen opgesteld in overleg met de betrokken facultaire commissies.



Prof. dr. ir. H. Duifhuis
Foto: H. Leertouwer

Impressions of the past: events reported in the BCN newsletter

Interview with prof. H. Duifhuis

> BCN Newsletter 1, 1992

BCN has seen many directors. One prominent director, Prof. Diek Duifhuis, guided BCN through an important time period during which essential issues including reaccreditation, the Stimulans program, the broad investment strategy, and the organizational structure of BCN. In a comprehensive interview in the *first* issue of the BCN Newsletter (1992), Diek Duifhuis addressed the proper definitions of research institutes and research schools, and discussed the BCN rules and regulations, which were strictly defined, and included regular meetings with the BCN-member faculties. In those days the national organization of neuroscience was in its infancy and essentially concerned three large PhD networks: 1) the Amsterdam Universities together with the NIH and IOI, 2) the Universities of Nijmegen, Utrecht, and Wageningen and 3) the University of Groningen¹. Given this, BCN opted for the Stimulans program that was meant to support the formation of national research schools. During the first round in 1991, the BCN proposal was considered too broad and showed “interference” with the other national neuroscience research programs. The second proposal was prepared in 1992, but was withheld by the University Board. At the same time, the national Neuroscience Organizations founded a Dutch Neuroscience Federation which is still active and represents the national network for Dutch neuroscientists. Thanks to the efforts in the early 90’s, we now have a national forum for neuroscience research and as well as the yearly Endo-Neuro meeting.

¹ See also “About the origin of BCN”



Photograph of Prof. Diek Duifhuis during his interview for the BCN newsletter no 1.

> BCN Newsletter 6, 1993



BCN-PhD retreats

> [BCN Newsletter 1 and 4, 1993](#)

In 1991, the BCN board of directors appointed a committee to develop and coordinate the PhD training program. Initially the course involved 60 hours of lectures on general and specific topics, and communal activities including workshops and meetings. Clearly the PhD retreat has remained one of the most important features of the BCN PhD training program. In various issues of the BCN newsletter, reports on the BCN PhD retreat have been published. After the first PhD retreat on cognition, the second retreat on October 8th 1992 (published in the 2nd issue of the BCN Newsletter) addressed neuroscience in general such that B, C, and N were discussed in detail. In response to the moderate interest for the PhD retreat, the organization of the meeting was changed (BCN Newsletter 4, 1993). Not only the format was changed; fewer and shorter PhD-presentations as well as presentations of research groups were arranged. In addition, it was decided that meetings would be organized three times per year. Since then, the BCN-PhD retreat has continuously been remodeled and improved. In

recent years, the BCN-PhD retreat has become very popular and is attended bi-annually by all BCN PhD students. Nowadays, the focus of the retreat is on presentation skills and communication.

BCN celebrates its accreditation at the annual theme day

> [BCN Newsletter 11, 1994](#)

On December 14, 1994, BCN organized its annual theme day. The programme contained exclusively presentations by BCN-members. The Graduate School accreditation by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences added a festive atmosphere to the meeting. For the central theme of the day, the organizing committee picked the ambiguous title: "If things go wrong..."

Paul Luiten was the acting chairman. He introduced the speakers:

- Rudy van den Hoofdakker, on the first 6 years of BCN
- Serge Daan, on the accuracy of frequency and phase of the human clock



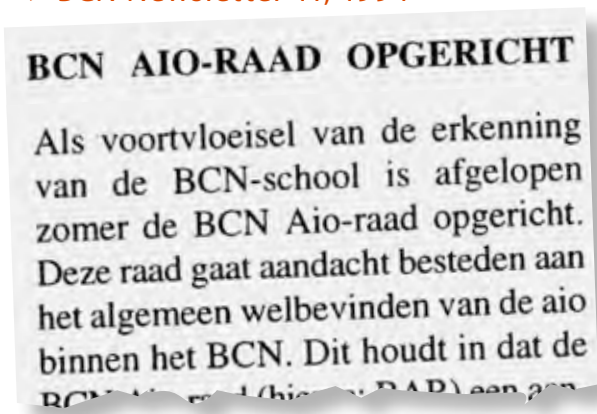
Britta Küst, Janine Wieringa, and Diana Koopmans in action during the BCN retreat.

- Jan Koster, on concept forming in language processing
- Theo Meijman, on how occupational psychology shows that many errors are made around 3h00
- Robert van den Broek, on schizophrenia as a cognitive 'error'
- Jan-Jacob Mooij, on detection and surgical approach of brain tumours
- Theo Kuipers, on the difference between system errors and theoretical errors.



During the concluding get-together, Prof. Diek Duifhuis presented Dr. M.A. Kooijman, vice-chairman of the University Board, with the first copy of the updated BCN brochure.

> BCN Newsletter 11, 1994



> BCN Newsletter 16, 1994



De eerste BCN-Aiogids verschijnt

Tijdens de themadag van het BCN op 13 december a.s. zal de eerste BCN-Aiogids het levenslicht zien. In de eerste weken van november werden de laatste werkzaamheden verricht om de gids drukklaar te krijgen. Tijdens hun activiteiten werden de makers van de gids, Rick Ruhland, oio bij Psychologie en Mark Kas, beleidsmedewerker van het BCN, gestoord door de stukjesschrijver van de BCN-Aioraad die het plan had opgevat om hen eens nader aan de tand te voelen over deze Aiogids. Hieronder volgen zijn bevindingen.

Wat moeten we ons voorstellen bij de BCN-Aiogids?

Rick: Op initiatief van de Aioraad hebben we alle aio's en oio's gevraagd om in het kort iets te vertellen over hun onderzoek. Deze bijdragen zijn gebundeld en per faculteit gerangschikt in de Aiogids. Het is dus een verzameling van beschrijvingen van de projecten van de aio's en oio's die participeren in het BCN. Daarnaast konden de auteurs ook aangeven welke interesses ze hebben, welk toekomstperspectief ze voor zichzelf zien en dergelijke. De meeste bijdragen zijn bovendien voorzien van een foto van de aio of oio.

Mark: De gids heeft een tweeledige functie. Hij is zowel voor intern als extern gebruik bedoeld. Het blijkt dat de bekendheid over en weer van de BCN-ers nog niet zo groot is. Met deze gids hopen we daaraan iets te verbeteren. De gids zal dus ook aan alle BCN-ers worden uitgereikt. Daarnaast willen we de gids ook naar de relaties van het BCN sturen, zoals andere onderzoekscholen, Nieuwsbrieflezers en bedrijven. Op deze manier hopen we dat men ook buiten Groningen beter bekend raakt met het BCN en het onderzoek dat daarbinnen uitgevoerd wordt. Dit kan voor aio's en oio's interessant zijn, omdat tussen deze contacten potentiële toekomstige werkgevers kunnen zitten. Het verschijnen van de gids heeft dus ook

een functie in de zorg van het BCN voor het toekomstperspectief voor de aio's en oio's.

Hebben er veel aio's en oio's gereageerd?

Rick: Van de 66 aio's en oio's die zijn gevraagd, hebben er 43 een bijdrage geleverd. Dat valt ons niet tegen. We hadden natuurlijk gehoopt op meer, maar we hebben een aantal pogingen gedaan om degenen die nog niets hadden geschreven aan te sporen dit wel te doen. Op een gegeven moment moet je daar mee ophouden. De aio's en oio's die niet hebben gereageerd, zullen slechts met hun naam en natuurlijk achterin de Aiogids worden opgenomen.

Is dit nu het begin van een traditie?

Mark: Waarschijnlijk wel. Het is de bedoeling om elk jaar zo'n gids uit te brengen. Daarnaast hebben we ook plannen om de bijdragen en de foto's een plaats te geven op het World Wide Web. In de toekomst moet het

dan ook mogelijk zijn dat geïnteresseerden via het Net informatie over BCN-ers en hun projecten kunnen vinden.

Maar voorlopig blijft het dus nog bij een papieren versie. Tijdens de themadag zal elke bezoeker hem krijgen (een reden te meer om naar de themadag te komen): de BCN-Aiogids. Vol verwachting klopt ons hart!

[Roel Jonkers]



> BCN Newsletter 25, 1997

Groepsportret Ethologie: het waardoor en het waarom

Op een vrijdagmiddag in mei spoeden uw redacteuren zich naar de kamer van prof. Serge Daan, de nieuwe hoogleraar Ethologie. We zijn al laat, maar Serge blijkt de afspraak vergeten te zijn: "Godja, dat is waar ook!" Wij schuiven aan aan een ruime tafel, waarvan het blad verborgen blijft onder stapels papieren. Wij verkeren in de veronderstelling een complete onderzoeksgroep te gaan interviewen, maar naast Serge Daan blijkt alleen Ton Groothuis (TG) beschikbaar. Vandaar dat er geen groepsfoto op deze bladzijden te zien is. Wij hebben ons voorbereid middels de oratie van Serge op 20 mei j.l.: *Werken en slapen, een ethologische visie*. En natuurlijk met het groepsportret Chronobiologie in BCN-Nieuwsbrief 11, oktober 1994, waarin gewag gemaakt wordt van een ontvangst met koffie en stroopwafels. Het BCN-elan is duidelijk niet meer wat het geweest is. Misschien daarom gaat FM deze keer zonder vrijblijvend voorspel aan de slag.



Prof.dr. Serge Daan (links) en dr. Ton Groothuis

> BCN Newsletter 27, 1998

Dames en Heren participanten in het BCN, zeer gewaardeerde oud-bestuursleden en bestuursleden!

1 januari 1998 is een mijlpaal in de geschiedenis van het BCN. De eerste bestuurstermijn van vier jaar sinds de KNAW erkenning zit er op, en om verschillende redenen heeft het vertrekkende bestuur zich niet herkiesbaar gesteld. De belangrijkste reden is dat alle leden er al veel meer dan vier jaar op hadden zitten. In het bijzonder geldt dat voor de vertrekkende voorzitter en vice-voorzitter, de founding fathers Rudi van den Hoofdakker en Bela Bohus die inmiddels op een periode van ruim 10 jaar terugzien. Bohus doe ik daarmee nog tekort, want hij is in feite de initiator, die in 1986 startte met het vooroverleg, en begin 1987 een eerste conceptplan voor het Centrum rondstuurde met als naam 'Groningen Centre for Neuroscience and Behavior (Groninger Centrum voor Neurowetenschappen en Gedrag)' en als omschrijving 'Fysiologie en pathologie van informatieverwerking op moleculair en gedragsniveau bij dier en mens.'

Onderwijs

Van de BCN-opleidingscommissie en de AIO-raad

Op woensdag 30 september is er een gezamenlijke bijeenkomst geweest van de Opleidingscommissie en de Aio-raad van het BCN. Deze commissies houden zich onder andere bezig met het opleidingsprogramma van aio's binnen het BCN. Ze bestaan uit afvaardigingen van stafmedewerkers die aan het BCN geleerd zijn van BCN-aio's. Het doel van de bijeenkomst was om het opleidingsprogramma van BCN te bespreken en op poten te zetten.

Er bestaat een aantal problemen met het onderwijs binnen het BCN.

- De aio's zijn op dit moment niet in staat om hun verplichte onderwijsprogramma te volgen, omdat er onvoldoende cursussen worden aangeboden.
- Als er al cursussen worden aangeboden, laat de informatievoorziening vaak te wensen over.
- De registratie van studiepunten die aio's binnen het BCN of bij geassocieerde onderzoekscholen halen verloopt gebrekkig.
- De BCN heeft geen sancties op het niet afronden van het onderwijsprogramma.

- Momenteel wordt de aio vooral beoordeeld op het feit of zijn/haar promotieonderzoek goed vordert. De begeleiders leggen vaak weinig nadruk op het volgen van onderwijs.

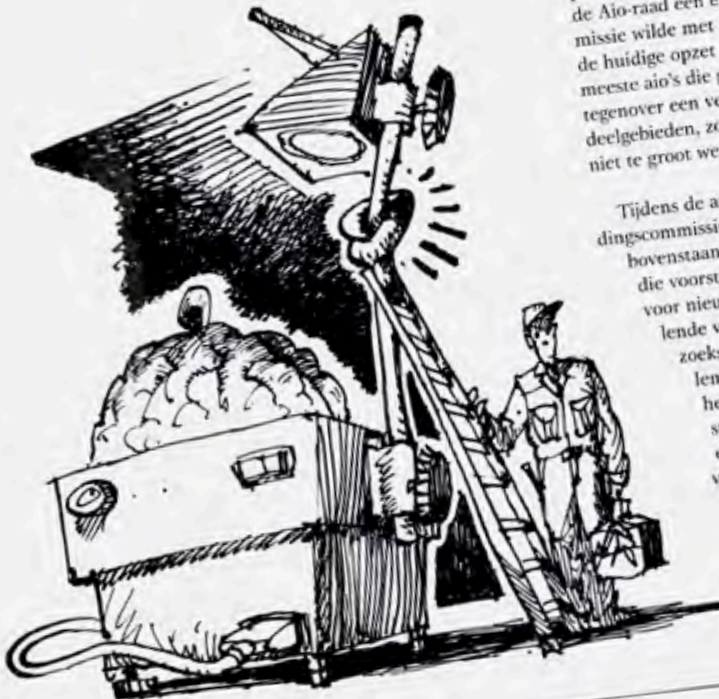
Het is van het grootste belang dat er op korte termijn een oplossing komt voor deze problemen. Immers, een aantal jaren geleden zijn de salarissen van aio's fors gekort met het argument dat de aio's gedurende hun project onderwijs krijgen. Daarom heeft een onderzoek-school de plicht om die aio's een goede opleiding te bieden met cursussen die ook daadwerkelijk gegeven worden.

Op dit moment is het zo dat aio's geacht worden minimaal 26 (en maximaal 36) studiepunten te halen, waarvan een klein deel verplicht is. Dat deel bestaat uit de verplichte inleidende cursus die wordt verzorgd door Theo Kuipers. Verder moet iedere aio minimaal één cursus elk uit de B-, de C- en de N-poot volgen. Daarnaast vormt de Summer School een belangrijk onderdeel van het BCN-opleidingsprogramma.

Om te achterhalen wat de BCN-aio's nu eigenlijk precies van hun opleiding verwachten en vinden, heeft de Aio-raad een enquête gehouden. De opleidingscommissie wilde met name weten wat de aio's vonden van de huidige opzet van het onderwijsprogramma. De meeste aio's die gereageerd hebben stonden positief tegenover een verplicht deel met cursussen in alle drie deelgebieden, zolang dat verplichte onderdeel maar niet te groot werd.

Tijdens de afgelopen vergadering heeft de opleidingscommissie nagedacht over voorstellen om de bovenstaande problemen aan te pakken. Eén van die voorstellen is om begin december twee dagen voor nieuwe aio's te organiseren, waar verschillende vertegenwoordigers van de BCN-onderzoeksgroepen iets over hun werk zullen vertellen. Ook worden er plannen ontwikkeld voor het opzetten van een registratie van de studiepunten die de aio's behaald hebben en voor de verbetering van de informatievoorziening. Eind oktober komt de opleidingscommissie opnieuw bijeen om de bovenstaande punten verder uit te werken.

■ RIENK WITHAAR



BCN starts a project management course for PhD students

> BCN Newsletter 30, 1998

PhD projects often exceed the regular duration of 3-4 years, and the duration of a PhD project is thus a serious issue. In an attempt to improve the success rate of PhD projects, the project management course was added to the BCN PhD training program. Initially this program was started by the Research Institute GUIDE and was later adapted by BCN. In an announcement titled “Project management course”, Joyce Boucard (Dept. Ophthalmology, UMCG) gives an account of one of the first project management courses offered by BCN (BCN Newsletter 30, 1998). The first courses were facilitated by Prof. J. Aarnoudse (Dept. Obstetrics & Gynecology), Prof. L. de Leij (Dept. Medical Biology), Prof. J. Korf (Dept. Psychiatry, UMCG), and Prof. G. Molema (Dept. Medical Biology, UMCG). Based on the teaching program of the ‘Kern Consult’ group, the basic principles of project management were applied to the PhD project. Joyce was very enthusiastic about the course and recommended the development of a parallel English course for foreign PhD students. This has been one of the many changes that have been implemented in the BCN project management course, which continues to be refined.

BCN, a Research School in transition

> BCN Newsletter 52, 2003

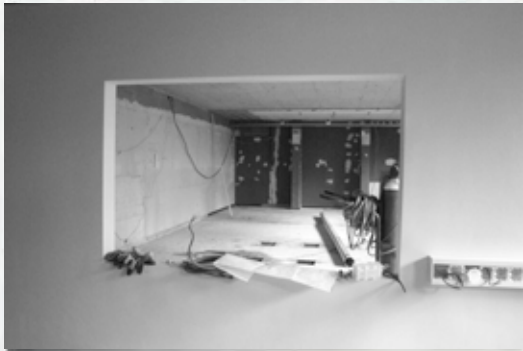
As BCN is a very large and diverse organization, every now and then the BCN newsletter provides an update on our structure. For example, when the RUG introduced the concept of faculty graduate schools, BCN felt the need to explicitly define its purpose. As chairman of the BCN education committee, Anton Scheurink (Centre for Behavior and Neurosciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences) wrote a comprehensive article

“De BCN als onderzoeksschool” on the activities of the education committee concerning the evaluation, maintenance, and development of the BCN PhD training program (BCN Newsletter 52, 2003). Interestingly, at that time Serge Daan, Erik Boddeke and John Nerbonne (with Gert ter Horst as BCN director) were preparing the novel BCN research master program. Of course the education committee had its say in the organization of the education committee and board of examiners of the novel master program. In the same period, the concept of the BCN-masterclass by visiting scientists was introduced and became part of the BCN PhD training program. In the meantime, the concept of the faculty graduate schools was fully established, and thanks to the relentless efforts of the BCN educational committee, BCN has successfully adapted its activities such that they are both serving the needs of neuroscience education at the faculty graduate schools, as well as maintaining the neuroscience research community of the RUG.



Photograph published in BCN Newsletter 52, 2003: Prof. Anton Scheurink and Dr. Cerien Streefland discussing the core activities of the BCN Newsletter.

> BCN Newsletter 52, 2003



Het heeft lang geduurd, te lang eigenlijk, maar nu is het dan zover, de bestelling van de 3T-MR-machine is de deur uit. De verbouwing van Antonius Deusinglaan 2 is in volle gang en ook het fMRI-onderzoek op de 1.5T-machine verloopt voorspoedig. De 3T-machine zal in de maand april worden geleverd en na de nodige installatie- en testprocedures vermoedelijk eind mei operationeel zijn.

> BCN Newsletter 61, 2005

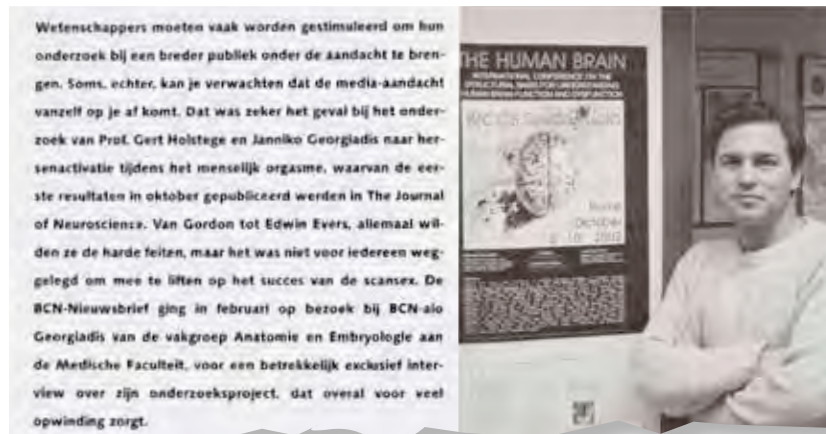


The accreditation of BCN revisited

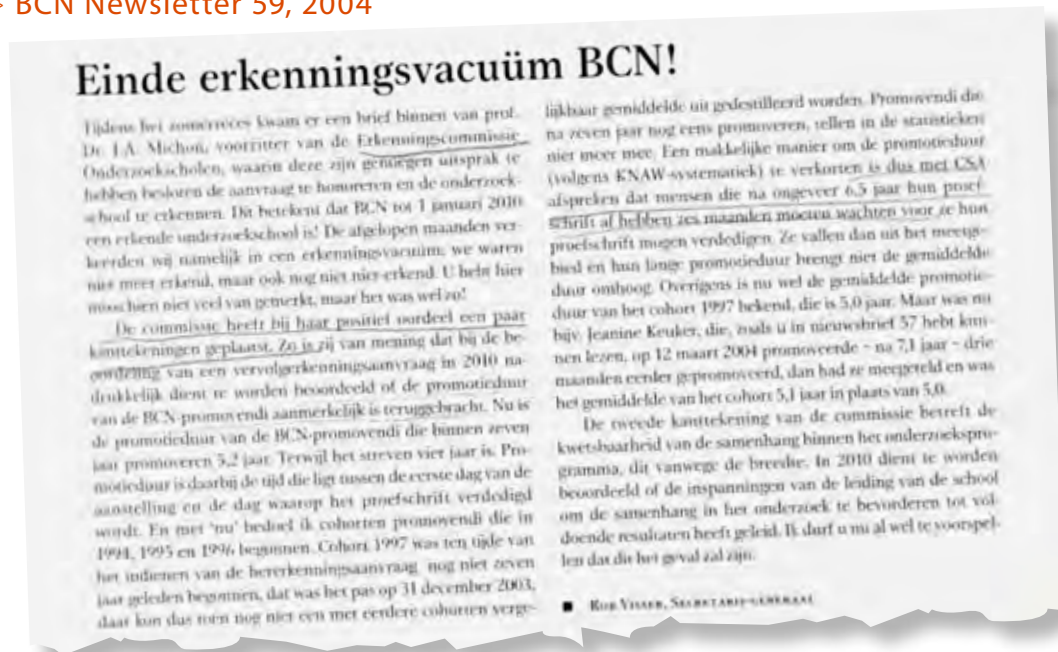
> BCN Newsletter 57, 2004

It is already 8 years ago that BCN was reviewed for accreditation. Due to the founding of the faculty graduate schools, BCN was not allowed to apply for reaccreditation. Only recently was a proposal for reaccreditation submitted. In 2004, the 6-yearly BCN site visit procedure was performed, and a summary of the site visit was presented by Gert ter Horst, BCN director at that time (BCN Newsletter 57, 2004). The peer review committee was very appreciative about the BCN teaching program and the system for PhD supervision. The BCN research programs and their integration were also judged favorably. An important issue raised by the KNAW committee ECOS concerned the career development of past PhD students. Fortunately BCN was able to provide a satisfying response, and the site visit was considered to be a success. Recently, BCN received permission to initiate a new reaccreditation procedure, and has prepared both a self-study and a proposal. We expect reaccreditation to take place in the spring of 2013.

> BCN Newsletter 57, 2004



> BCN Newsletter 59, 2004



> BCN Newsletter 60, 2004



Giant Steps for PET Research at BCN

> BCN Newsletter 64, 2005

PET (positron emission tomography) is a technique which provides images of the living brain of animals and humans. PET imaging provides unique information on the structure and function of the brain, for example the activity of nerve cells via measurements of their glucose consumption. Using PET imaging, precise information can be obtained on brain diseases as well as on performance of brain functions related to cognition and behavior. Thanks to the pioneering work of the late Wim Vaalburg, Groningen was the first center in the Netherlands where PET know-how was developed. PET requires dedicated expertise from various disciplines that are well available within BCN, including medicine, biochemistry, pharmacology, animal modeling and physics, indicative of the typical interdisciplinary collaboration which is representative of BCN. In 2005 we were very lucky to welcome to Groningen a prominent PET expert, Rudi Dierckx, who accepted a professorship here. Anyone who knows Rudi Dierckx will agree that we are dealing here with a highly motivated and active PET scientist who, in the short time-period of only seven years, brought the PET center and the PET supported studies in Groningen further to the national and international frontline. One of the major achievements is the installation of innovative PET-CT cameras which allow high-specificity PET images in high-resolution CT images of the same brain. Small animal PET facilities are available for state of the art experimental PET study in rats and mice. In short, PET is booming in BCN Groningen thanks to a dedicated and supportive staff, and opens great possibilities for a new generation of PhD students.

> BCN Newsletter 68, 2006

On September 15th, this year's orientation course started in the Academy building – for the first time with a nearly equal participation from master- and PhD- students who all were freshly affiliated with BCN. The course will take place on every second Friday until November 24th, when it will be concluded with a drink-event and the writing of a treatise.



> BCN Newsletter 70, 2007



The BCN Research Master

> BCN Newsletter 71, 2007

Although preparations for the BCN Research Master began in 2003, the first group of Research Master students only arrived in 2005. For the director Serge Daan and organisers Erik Boddeke and John Nerbonne (later Hedderik van Rijn), this was a challenging but interesting and rewarding year. In a brief press release (BCN Newsletter 71, 2007) the graduation of the 1st generation of BCN Research Master students was reported. Seven out of ten students graduated Cum Laude and were already offered PhD positions before their graduation.

According to one of the N-track BCN Research Master Students, Marc Schipper, the two years passed by very fast. He considered the hands-on experience with neuroscience research the major advantage of the BCN-Research Master. B-track student Paulien Barf experienced that time was flying. She appreciated the opportunity to combine the research areas of both neuroscience and behaviour studies, thus keeping true to the interdisciplinary match between the B- and N-track. Under the supervision of professor Koolhaas, the BCN Research Master has thrived well; it has obtained re-accreditation of the KNAW, was nominated to be the best Dutch Neuroscience

Master in the Elseviers Rating 2010, and delivers approximately 20 outstanding Research Master students every year. At regular intervals (e.g. BCN Newsletter 75, 2009) various reports and announcements on the BCN Research Master appear in the BCN Newsletter.

bcn Graduate School for Behavioral and Cognitive Neurosciences RUG

University Medical Center Groningen

OPEN HOUSE Saturday March 4
13.00 - 17.00

Research Master

Behavioral and Cognitive Neurosciences

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The BCN training programs are focused on:

- animal and human behavior (Evolution, functional & physiological analysis, timing)
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Meet and talk to master students, teachers and researchers of our graduate schools. The day will be concluded with drinks in a nearby "Café". Registration at b.m.kust@med.umcg.nl will be appreciated.

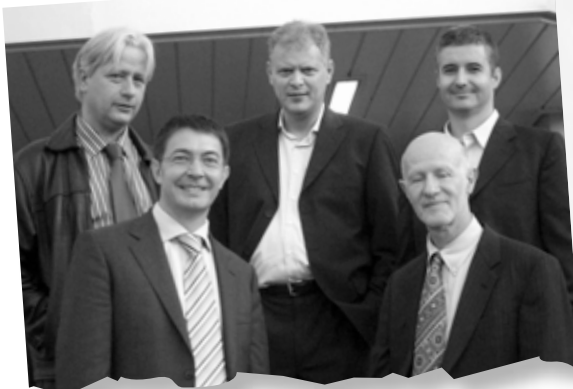
University Medical Center Groningen Ronde zaal of the UMCG Education Center
main entrance Hanzplein 1 9713 GZ Groningen follow signs inside building

Announcement of an open house presentation of the BCN Research Master, published in BCN Newsletter 66.



The first graduated BCN Research Master students. Photo published in BCN Newsletter 71, in 2007.

> BCN Newsletter 73, 2008



About a year ago the various pre-clinical research neuroscience groups and departments of the UMCG (sector F) decided to combine their forces and to create an environment in which joint neuroscience research activities would be stimulated. The new Department, officially formed in April 2008, is headed by Erik Boddeke (Medical Physiology) and includes the research groups of the sub-section heads Andre Aleman (Cognitive Neuropsychiatry), Knut Biber (Medical Physiology), Gert ter Horst (Neuro-ImagingCenter), Christian Keyzers (Social Brain Lab) and Benno Rozendaal (Anatomy).

> BCN Newsletter 74, 2009

BCN thesis prize: Jury reports 2005-2009

Prize in 2005: thesis in 2003/2004

Corine Eijssing – Mother knows best? Costs and benefits of differential hormone allocation in birds
 Sjoukje Kuipers – Stress, gender and psychopathology
 Judith Rispen – Syntactic and phonological processing in developmental dyslexia
Christel Westenbroek – Influence of gender and social environment in an animal model of affective disorders

She has delivered a well-organized and readable thesis, of which four chapters have already been published. The subject of the research was fully suggested and worked out by herself and is right in the heart of BCN: with all three components of behaviour, cognition and neurology represented. The impact of the research in her own and related fields is large, being cited already by others, and being asked to present her research in lectures and book chapters. Although her research was limited to an animal model, follow-up research has already shown that similar results can be found in the human population.

Prize in 2006: thesis in 2004/2005

Ineke Dijkstra – Chemokines in neuroimmunology
 Nikolaus von Engelhardt – Proximate control of avian sex allocation
 Sabine Hunnius – Through the eyes of an infant
 Simone Reinders – From methods to meaning in functional neuroimaging

Despite the rather specialized topic, the winner has delivered a well-organized and readable thesis. The series of experiments that is described is elegant and set-up logically. The subject of the research was fully worked out by the winner and resulted in several publications. The impact of the research in the winner's own and related fields is large, being cited already extensively by others. And, last but not least, the research was finished within four years.

Prize in 2007: thesis in 2005/2006

Karin van der Borgh – New neurons in the adult brain
 Melanie Rüger – Lighting up the clock
 Joanna Udo de Haes – In vivo imaging of dopamine and serotonin release

The topic of the winning thesis is very challenging and compelling and her results have received quite some attention because of their possible applications in humans. Despite the rather specialized topic, the winner has delivered a well-organized, transparent and accessible thesis. Her introduction is very elegant and the final chapter integrates her findings nicely in a broader context. She has written a nice and true BCN book, combining pure brain topics with issues from memory and psychology, making it equally interesting for neurologists, movement scientists and cognitive psychologists.

Prize in 2008: thesis in 2006/2007

Hiske van Duinen – The interaction between motor fatigue and cognitive task performance
 Liesbet Ruytjens – The hearing brain in males and females
 Lobke Vaanholt – The rate of living in mice

The winning thesis is right in the heart of BCN: one specific phenomenon was analyzed from different perspectives, using multiple methodologies. And, at the moment when current technologies turned out not to be sufficient, a whole new tool was developed within the four years of the PhD project, allowing innovative research. The thesis indicates progression throughout the project and a steep learning curve for the author. The thesis was written in a clear style, making it understandable also to non-experts in the field. Finally, at the time of the defence four papers were already published or in press and an additional two were submitted. All were published in high impact journals and were already being cited by peers.

Prize in 2009: thesis in 2007/2008

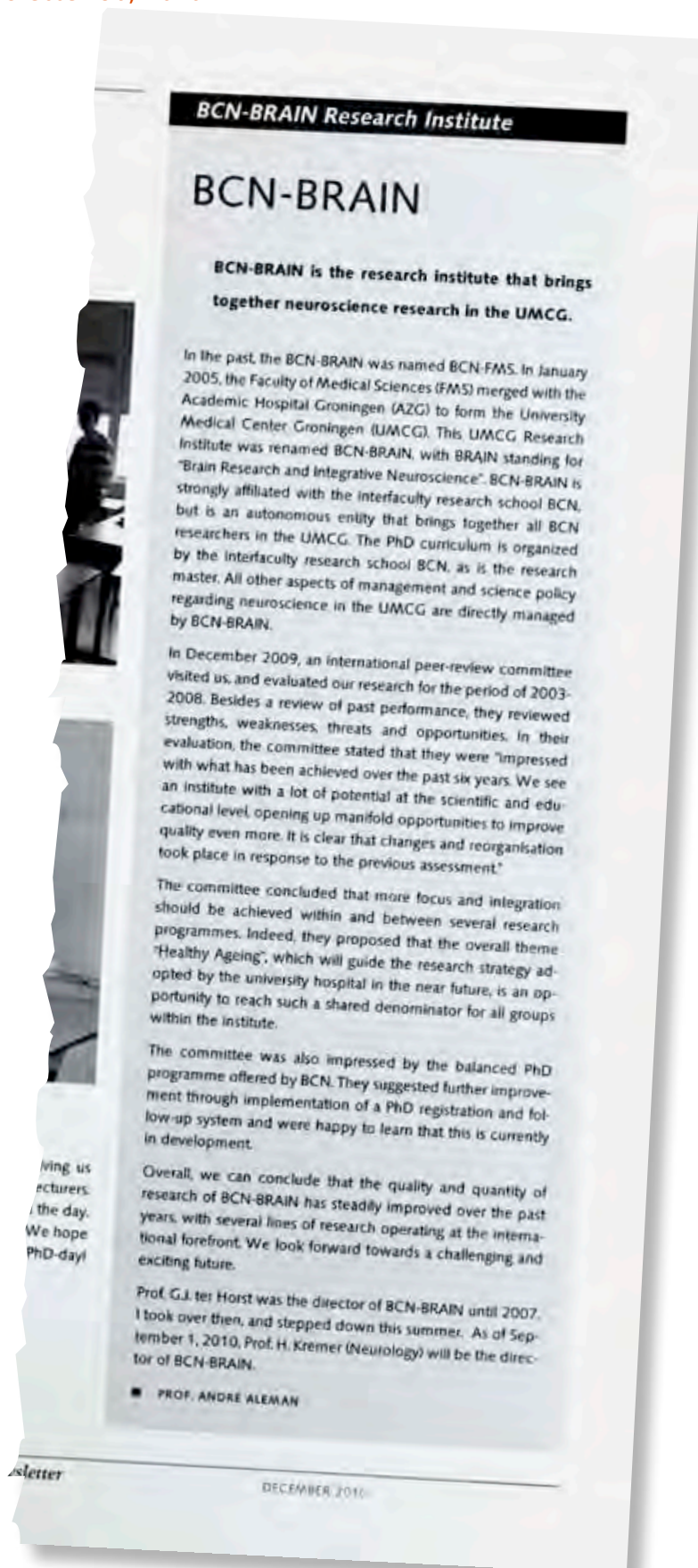
Michael ten Caat – Multichannel EEG visualization
Valeria Gazzola – Action in the brain
 Eiko de Jong – CXCR3 signalling in the brain

The topic of the winner's thesis is provocative and triggers the imagination. The results in this thesis not only provide a better understanding of social cognition from a neuroscience perspective, but have direct practical implications for society as well. Together, this puts the thesis right in the heart of BCN. The methods that were used are innovative and results have been published in high-impact and influential journals in the field. One of the papers in the thesis has already been cited 44 times. There is a lot of interest in the work from the general public as well, as indicated by several newspaper articles. The thesis is written in a pleasant style, which makes it very readable, even for outsiders. Furthermore, the thesis reads as a book on the subject, the chapters are in a logical order and nicely mutually connected. Finally, the conclusion clearly shows that the winner developed an independent view on the topic.

> BCN Newsletter 64, 2005



> BCN Newsletter 80, 2010



The image shows a close-up of a white, textured paper label with a curved top edge. The label is set against a light blue background. On the label, there is a logo consisting of a solid orange semi-circle positioned above the letters 'bcn'. The letters are in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The 'b' is lowercase, while the 'c' and 'n' are uppercase. The label is held in place by a light-colored, possibly pinkish, surface at the bottom.

bcn

The pillars of BCN

A farewell to Mark Kas

> BCN Newsletter 28, 1998

On February 13, 1998, Mark Kas left BCN –and the University of Groningen– and accepted a position at NWO. He had been running the BCN office since 1994. At that time, his part time position marked the beginning of a long lasting connection with BCN. As policy advisor he played an important role in the practical organization of many BCN activities and proposals. A quote from a previous editor of the BCN newsletter, Ron Zonneveld sums up his ability: "Mark wrote all policy plans himself, and Diek Duifhuis always signed them unread". This certainly presents the relevance of Mark's role within BCN. One of the proposals written by Mark is the NWO-GROOT proposal in the Medicine section, which applied for a high sensitivity, high resolution PET-camera. The amount requested for the camera and a five-year maintenance contract added up to 7.8 Mf.



Dr. Mark Kas en Prof. Diek Duifhuis.

Anton Scheurink

> BCN Newsletter 8, 1994



Ron van Zonneveld

> BCN Newsletter 13

VAN ZONNEVELD: EEN KLEINE SYNTAXIS VAN HET NEDERLANDS

Op verzoek van de redactie heeft een viertal taalkundigen, Jack Hoeksema (JH), Sietze Looyenga (SL), Ton van der Wouden (TW) en Frans Zwarts (FZ) een gesprek gehad met BCN-Nieuwsbrieffredacteur en taalkundecollega Ron van Zonneveld (RZ). De aanleiding is het verschijnen van diens *Kleine Syntaxis van het Nederlands*, een boek dat door studenten Nederlands bestudeerd moet worden bij wijze van inleiding in de Chomskyaanse syntaxis, ook wel Universele Grammatica geheten.



Paul Luiten

> BCN Newsletter 14

ORATIE PROF. PAUL LUITEN

Dinsdag 21 maart hield prof.dr. Paul G.M. Luiten zijn oratie in de aula van het Academiegebouw. Veel belangstellenden van de afdeling Biologie, uit kringen van het BCN en vakgenoten uit Nederland hadden zich daar verzameld. Paul Luiten is aangesteld als bijzonder hoogleraar vanwege de Stichting Onderzoek Neuropeptiden, zowel aan de faculteit Wiskunde en Natuurwetenschappen als aan de faculteit Geneeskunde. De opdracht bij de leerstoel is "Cellulaire neurobiologie, i.h.b. met betrekking tot neuropeptiden".



Eddy van der Zee

> BCN Newsletter 19, 1996

Dr. Eddy van der Zee krijgt Nederlandse Zoölogieprijs 1996

Dr. Eddy van der Zee ontving op 15 maart j.l. de jaarlijkse prijs van de Nederlandse Dierkundige Vereniging. De prijsuitreiking vormde het hoogtepunt van de jaarvergadering van de NDV, die geheel gewijd was aan *Learning and Memory: Role of Transmitters, Second Messenger Systems and Stress Physiology*, het onderzoeksgebied waarop Van der Zee in 1993 promoveerde. Hij verrichtte zijn onderzoek in de vakgroep Dierfysiologie, onder leiding van prof.dr. Paul Luiten (zie kader). Ter gelegenheid hiervan was Van der Zee, die momenteel als post-doc in Chicago werkt, enkele dagen in Nederland.



Gieta van der Pompe en Monique Lorist

> BCN Newsletter 24, 1997

Gieta en Monique: 'jonge honden' bij Experimentele en Arbeidspsychologie

De laatste maanden zijn er aan de koffietafel van de sectie E&A nieuwe en vrolijke geluiden te horen. Zou dat misschien iets te maken hebben met de komst van Monique Lorist en Gieta van der Pompe naar Groningen? Zij zijn sinds 1 september j.l. als postdoc aangesteld bij de sectie. Beide doen ze onderzoek naar mentale vermoeidheid, onderzoek dat plaatsvindt binnen een recentelijk toegekend prioriteitsprogramma van NWO. Hun interview stond al een tijdje op de agenda, maar na Gieta's promotie op 12 maart j.l. moest het er maar eens van komen.



Some directors...

> BCN Newsletter 28, 1998



Prof. Frans Zwarts,
Prof. Erik Boddeke en
Prof. Diek Duifhuis.

Frans Maes

> BCN Newsletter 32, 1999



Frans Maes

Even voor half elf loop ik, nieuwbakken redactieid van de BCN-Nieuwsbrief, door de gangen van het Biologisch Centrum op weg naar Frans Maes. Zo'n zes jaar geleden zette hij de Nieuwsbrief op poten; na het verschijnen van het jubileum-nummer (nr. 25) trad hij af als hoofdredacteur. Wat lacherig zitten wij tegenover elkaar, wij kenden elkaar tot voor kort hoofdzakelijk als begeleider en AIO.

Hans Vos

> BCN Newsletter 35, 1999

Nadagen

De foto hieronder is nog van voor de zomer – 25 juni –, genomen bij het afscheid van Hans Vos (rode wijn) en Frans Maes (jus d'orange). Ik vond het wel aardig om hem hier af te drukken, omdat er van alles bij te denken valt, zoals, zo zie je er dus uit als je een tijdje hoofdredacteur van deze Nieuwsbrief bent geweest, of, die functie moet er een zijn voor mannen in hun nadagen. Knip- en plakwerk voor iemand die de tijd van onderzoek doen en publiceren achter zich heeft gelaten en toch wat om handen moet hebben om zijn salaris waar te maken.



Erik Boddeke

> BCN Newsletter 36, 1999



Erik Boddeke

Hoogleraar vegetatieve fysiologie, of cellulaire en moleculaire neurofysiologie

Rond half 10 betreden wij (RJB en CS) het universiteitsgebouw aan de Bloemsingel 10 en halverwege komen wij Erik Boddeke (hoogleraar vegetatieve fysiologie) tegen die onmiddellijk op zoek gaat naar twee kopjes voor de broodnodige koffie.

Rob Visser

> BCN Newsletter 41, 2000

Zoals de vorige Nieuwsbrief meldde, is de vertrokken beleidsmedewerker Robbert Jan Bron opgevolgd door Rob Visser. Wie is Rob Visser? Om die vraag voor u alvast van een eerste antwoord te voorzien heb ik Rob halverwege november uitgenodigd op mijn werkkamer, 4e etage Harmoniegebouw, waar Rob kind aan huis is, omdat hij er enkele jaren als opleidingscoördinator heeft gewerkt. Ik heb ooit eens van Rob's diensten gebruik gemaakt toen ik mijn huis aan het schilderen was. Rob weet alles van verfsoorten. Maar daar blijft zijn kennis niet toe beperkt. Als u een klusje in huis heeft, en een deskundig advies nodig acht, dan weet u nu bij wie u terecht kunt.



Frans Zwarts

> BCN Newsletter 49, 2002



Het is net of BCN alleen maar uit gelukkige, super-enthousiaste mensen bestaat. Vorige keer een arts die zijn geluk gevonden had in de fysiologie van de stembanden bij operazangers, ditmaal een interview met een dol-enthousiaste BCN-er waar de lol voor het besturen van af straalt. Wellicht de meest bekende BCN-er van dit moment: afzwaaiend BCN-directeur en aankomend rector magnificus Frans Zwarts.

John Nerbonne

> BCN Newsletter 54, 2003

Aan het eind van dit elektronische interview zegt John Nerbonne, hoogleraar Informatiekunde aan de letterenfaculteit, dat hij, hoewel hij net als iedereen wel eens wat moppert, het hier naar zijn zin heeft, dat hij dus niet denkt aan vertrekken, ook al omdat je als 52-jarige een te korte MTBB hebt. Die kende ik niet: mean time between breakdowns. Nou, dat heb ik mijn hele leven al. Waarom een elektronisch interview? Om tijd te besparen. Waarom met John Nerbonne? Omdat hij al vele jaren – in het gesprek wordt verwezen naar een BCN-interview van tien jaar geleden – een centrale figuur is in het taalkundeonderzoek van de letterenfaculteit, en in het bijzonder dat binnen het BCN. Daarom is het aardig om hem te vragen hoe hij terugkijkt op de afgelopen jaren, en vooral, hoe hij de nabije toekomst ziet. Let wel op, er zit af en toe een onnederlandse wending in de tekst. Die heb ik er met opzet in laten zitten, bij wijze van karakteristiek, en ook omdat ik soms zo gauw niet wist wat ik er anders van kon maken.



Theo Kuipers

> BCN Newsletter 63, 2005



Prof T. Kuipers

Reint Geuze

> BCN Newsletter 63, 2005



Dr. R. Geuze

Diana Koopmans

> BCN Newsletter 40, 2000



Diana Koopmans

Jaap Korf

> BCN Newsletter 70, 2007

On February 23rd Jaap Korf celebrated his retirement with a symposium entitled "Mesmerized by time". Jaap worked as a biochemist within BCN at the section of Biological Psychiatry. At the beginning of his long career Jaap was a researcher for a year at the famous Yale University in New Haven, USA. There he worked with famous people like George Aghajanian, Malcom Bowers and Robert Roth. These people were among the founders of the biological psychiatry, which wasn't fully developed yet in those days. In that line it was a logical step to continue his work with Herman van Praag in Groningen. Van Praag became his promotor for his thesis called "Amine metabolism in the human brain: evaluation of the probenecid test".

Jaap retires and leaves us with an inheritance of an impressive list of international publications: about 450 scientific articles. The subjects of these publications show his wide interest. Many PhD students took advantage of this wide interest and his knowledge and experience. Jaap is an enthusiastic supervisor of PhD students.



Natasha Maurits

> BCN Newsletter 71, 2007



Prof. Natasha Maurits

Deniz Başkent

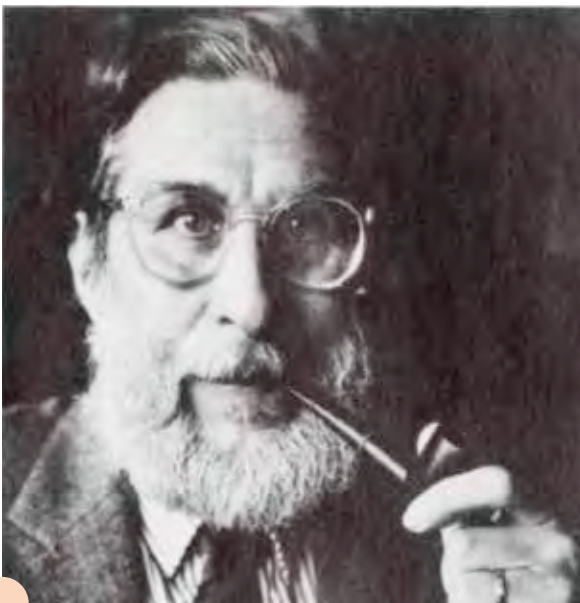
> BCN Newsletter 81, 2011



Prof. Deniz Başkent

Heinz Prechtl

Professor doctor Heinz (H.F.L.) Prechtl, emeritus professor in developmental neurology at the RUG (1992) and BCN-supporter from the beginning, received a honoris causa doctorate from the Karl-Franzes University in Graz, Austria on July 7, 1993.



Prof. Heinz (H.F.L.) Prechtl

From 1945–1951 Prechtl studied zoology, anthropology and medicine in Vienna, the city where he was born in 1927. His career in Groningen started in 1955 when he accepted a position at the Zoology Laboratory with professor Baerends in Haren. In 1956 he started neuro-ethological research with infants at the Obstetrics Clinic of the Academic Hospital (AZG). He was renowned for a number of break-through discoveries in the field of the neurology of the developing child. Through the introduction of a real-time ultra-sound scan he initiated the field of fetal developmental neurology. His work is persistently motivated by the conviction that already during development an important role is played by the neural system in its interaction with the environment, and in its adjustment to environmental conditions.

After his retirement, professor Prechtl spent most of his time in Austria, but he remained a regular visitor of Groningen. He was appointed Guest-Professor in Graz (Medical University), and then Honorary Professor (1997-2006).

Professorship Albert Gramsbergen

> BCN Newsletter 22, 1996

In 1996, Dr. A.A. Gramsbergen was appointed as professor of neurodevelopment in the Department of Medical Physiology at the Academic Hospital Groningen (published in BCN newsletter no 22). Up to that time, Albert Gramsbergen had been a

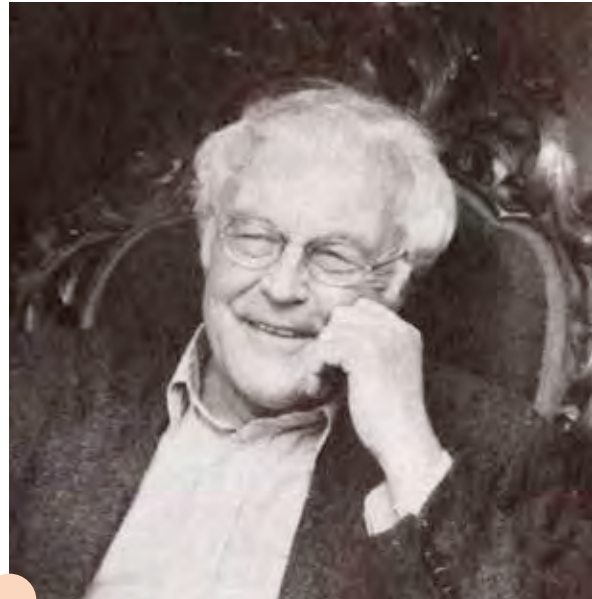


Cartoon of Prof. A.A. Gramsbergen running a marathon (published in BCN Newsletter 22, 1996)

part-time professor in the Department of Movement Sciences at the Free University of Amsterdam. The research career of Albert Gramsbergen developed in close collaboration with that of Prof. H.F.L. Prechtl, who was the head of the Department of Developmental Neuroscience. Initially, Gramsbergen investigated the development of the nervous system in relation to malnutrition. Subsequently, he moved to the investigation of neuroregenerative processes after the removal of cerebellar tissue. Later, his research focused on neuro-repair and the reinnervation of muscle tissue. Albert Gramsbergen is a remarkable person both at the professional and personal level. He has been treasurer of the European Brain and Behaviour Society for many years. During his chairmanship of the Faculty of Medicine he was very skeptical about the merge with the Groningen Academic Hospital, and performed extensive negotiations about the warrants for the Medical Faculty. Furthermore, Albert Gramsbergen very actively supported the problem-based learning modules of the Medical Curriculum 'C2000'. In his free time Albert plays the church organ, constructs harpsichords, and repairs old cars. Albert Gramsbergen was a beloved colleague and a highly esteemed BCN member. He retired in 2006.

In memoriam Rudi van den Hoofdakker, one of BCN's founding fathers

A jolly bunch they were, Rudi and his friends. Ineke van den Hoofdakker tells how they sometimes seemed a secret boys club. They met in her kitchen in Glimmen, the countryside south of Groningen. Stout plans they made, distributing as yet imaginary funds of a research school in the making. The goal was breaking down barriers. Interdisciplinary collaboration was the magic word, miracles to be expected. It worked. Such enthusiasm and charisma they emanated – and such new vistas they painted – that many hurried to join. Rudi himself, the poet, publicist, cabaret performer, psychiatrist, whose Ph.D. had dealt with cat neurology, moved easily



Prof. Rudi van den Hoofdakker

between faculties anyway. With his clear argumentation and stubborn insistence, he convinced the boards. So Rudi became the first chairman of BCN, backed up by Diek Duifhuis as the director. Rudi's academic chair was in Biological Psychiatry. It was at a time that insight seemed to emerge on brain mishaps underlying disorders of the psyche. The idea was fed by chemicals that did something both to brain and mind. In most cases we don't know why and how, but the effects encouraged psychiatrists that affective disorders can be healed. Their confidence was enhanced by the pharmaceutical industry, which was itself even more confident. Rudi's research and empathy were directed at patients with depressive illness. He gave them lithium to ease their suffering – it worked, though nobody understood why. But he found a different kind of biology was needed to understand affective disorders. He sought help from ethology and appointed Netty Bouhuys, and from EEG signal analysis for which biophysicist Domien Beersma joined the unit. In this way his group itself became an interdisciplinary enterprise. He was a strange bird in the flock of psychiatry. A professor who treats his own patients; who receives the P.C.Hoofdt prize, the highest national distinction

for literature; who attends meetings on biological rhythms next to Poetry International; who helps founding the European Society of Sleep Research; who, after a Ph.D. ceremony, takes the piano stool in Café de Sleutel and honours the young doctor with a tear-jerking personal ballad, and on and on. But in the flock of BCN he liked to fly. Things were happening there. He inspired many, with his wit, his sharp insight, his warm personal interest and empathy. He was the soul of the young BCN.

At Rudi's retirement in 1995 there was a splendid international symposium in his honour. At the dinner he and BCN's Lex Kalverboer once more carried the audience away with their Neuropsychiatric Eurocabaret "Nederland Vooruit". The end of a unique episode. Biological Psychiatry was rapidly and totally changed. Domien Beersma moved to Zoology, Jaap Korf retired. Many others also left. Drug research returned. Several reorganisations have meanwhile reshaped psychiatry. Rudi's legacy is hard to recognize. But BCN itself is part of this legacy, along with the national treasure of his poems. Rudi died July 11, 2012. He was mourned by many.

In memoriam Bela Bohus

Originally from Pecs, Hungary, Bela Bohus became Professor of Neuroscience and Neuroendocrinology at the University of Groningen in 1982. With his family, Bela was able to escape the communist regime in 1977, and until 1982 worked in the Rudolph Magnus Institute in Utrecht with the late David de Wied. Bela Bohus had medical training but did not practice medicine, instead dedicating his career to neuroscience research with a particular interest in behavioral neuroscience. His medical background, combined with biological expertise, was a fruitful ground for his contacts with Rudi van den Hoofdakker. Both Rudi and Bela were MDs with strong biological interests. Soon after his arrival in Groningen, Bela set up regular meetings with van den Hoofdakker, and later also with Bert Mulder from Experimental Psychology (at that time housed in the Biological Center in Haren) and Diek Duifhuis

from Biophysics. In those early 1980's days, the first ideas about establishing an interfaculty research school were born with great enthusiasm. In this way BCN was created and later extended with the participation of the Faculties of Arts and Philosophy. Obviously Bela Bohus and Rudi van den Hoofdakker were longstanding members of the BCN board, and together with the other board members and director Diek Duifhuis defined the direction the BCN was going. It might be hard to imagine after 25 years of BCN, but in those years such a strong interdisciplinary organization was unique.

In addition to his contribution to BCN, Bela Bohus was strongly involved in the organization of the educational training program on Medical Biology.



Prof. Bela Bohus

Nowadays this curriculum has evolved into the very successful Bachelor and Master program of Biomedical Sciences of the Faculties of Science and Medicine.

BCN owes Bela Bohus a lot as a scientist and as an organizer. The number of behavioral neuroscientists in Bela's circle was impressive due to his warm Hungarian personality and genuine human interest. Most impressive was his phenomenal memory for scientific and unscientific data. Bela could easily reproduce graphs from meetings that he attended 20 years before, and he was never short of words or anecdotes. Unfortunately his strong social skills and eagerness for meeting people came with a price. His frequent journeys to meetings and representations became a burden to his health. For many years Bela suffered from a heart condition which became fatal shortly before his 65th birthday in September 2000. We lost a most sympathetic colleague and one of the founding fathers of the BCN.

In memoriam Willem Vaalburg

Willem Vaalburg, born 12 February 1940 in Castricum, studied chemistry at the Free University of Amsterdam. After his studies (1966) he applied for a position at the Isotope Laboratory of the academic hospital in Groningen. He was appointed to a position to perform research on the chemistry of tritium and carbon-14 compounds. After the establishment of the Philips cyclotron at the Kernfysisch Versneller Instituut (KVI), Wim was given the assignment to evaluate the possible use of a cyclotron for nuclear medicine. Wim established a small research group and produced the first medical PET images in 1977. The subsequent work of Wim's group yielded a large grant from the ministry of education that financed the building of a new radiation-unit and B-lab. Based on his reputation, Wim became one of the Founding Fathers of the Society of Radiopharmaceutical Chemistry. In 1986 the board of directors of the academic hospital in Groningen decided to build a PET centre. Wim Vaalburg and Anne Paans

were assigned to design the centre, and the construction started on May 1st 1988. In 1987 Wim was appointed as professor of Medical Radiochemistry. On January 1st 1991 the construction of the PET centre was finished and the large group of nuclear medicine could continue its work and has performed since then numerous clinical and preclinical studies. In September 2004, close to his retirement, a symposium was organized in honour of Wim. As a token of the appreciation for his achievements, Wim was appointed Officer in the Order of Oranje Nassau in 2005. In 2006 Wim was appointed as a honorary member of the Dutch Society for Nuclear Medicine. Also the University of Groningen rewarded him with a medal of honour. Wim passed away on 21 August 2008 at his home in Leek. We remember him as a generous and valuable colleague and member of BCN.



Prof. Wim Vaalburg



Prof. Jaap P. Kruijt

In memoriam Jaap Kruijt

Professor dr. Jaap P. Kruijt retired in 1993 from the University. He chaired the Department of Behavioural Biology. He started his academic career at the zoology lab in Haren under the supervision of Professor Bearends in January 1954. The focus of his research was on the possible difference between learned and inherited behavior and he concluded: not all behaviour is inherited.

Kruijt was one of the authors of the 1988 BCN document "Beleidsoverwegingen". In other words, he was one of the founding fathers of BCN. Nevertheless, he also warned against too much interest in funding, and too little interest in scientific content: "Nowadays allocation of grants is restricted to multidisciplinary projects embedded in large structures like BCN. This will generate cooperation for money instead of for real common interest. That will never work."

Jakob Pieter Kruijt, Professor of Zoology at the University of Groningen from 1974 to 1993, died peacefully after a long illness on 13 December 2002.

In memoriam Bert Mulder

Gijsbertus (Bert) Mulder was born in Kampen in 1938. He died of cancer at the age of 51 in 1999. At the time he was professor of Occupational Psychology in the faculty of Social Sciences (PPSW). He was one of the attendees of the inaugural BCN meeting in 1987, and the only participant that was not affiliated with the faculties of medicine or sciences. At the time, his project group was situated in Haren, one floor above the animal physiology department of Bohus. Bert Mulder was interested in experimental psychology. He had a long lasting experience with EEG; in the early 90's, he set up an advanced EEG lab. He was also interested in the application of other imaging techniques to obtain data about stimulated brain activity. He is also considered one of the major forces behind the establishment of the NIC. He became a member in the BCN board (1992-1998) after the departure of J. A. Michon to Leiden.



Prof. Bert Mulder



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BCN JUBILEE SYMPOSIUM

25 years BCN
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Epilogue

What about the future?

In the late 80's, when psychologists, linguists, and philosophers joined biologists, biophysicists, neurologists, and psychiatrists to form BCN, many thought that the school was too broad to become a coherent entity. Admittedly, it was not an easy task to create a platform that would enable groups with different scientific vocabularies to communicate with each other. The distance between underlying molecular processes and overt manifestations of behaviour is enormous. Yet, if we are to understand how the brain works, we must find ways to bridge the gap between the molecular substrate and human behaviour. This is what BCN set out to accomplish, and although we might not have been successful in every respect, we managed to stay together and initiate research projects that would not have been possible without this common platform. We established a solid graduate school that we can be proud of and created a successful Master's Program in Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience.

During one of his visits to Groningen, Semir Zeki, a famous neurobiologist from University College London, who made important contributions to our understanding of the visual cortex, told me that we need every tool we can get hold of to unravel the tremendous complexity of the brain. He himself had started to work on what he called neuro-esthetics, an attempt to understand what human emotions and feelings are, esthetic or otherwise. With our current knowledge of cerebral mechanisms, we still have a long way to go to reach a level of understanding that might allow us to explain what we observe. We have invented the concept of a mirror neuron, but we all know that this is in essence a descriptive notion, not an explanatory one.

Zeki was right. To pave the way for a higher level of understanding, we need many more experiments, methods, models, and theories, biological, neurological, mathematical, linguistic, or otherwise. To move from observational and descriptive adequacy to the level of explanatory adequacy, we need a platform that unites scientists from different disciplines. BCN created such a platform 25 years ago and will continue to provide this common platform for the next 25 years.

Frans Zwarts,
former academic director



Colophon

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Printing

Koninklijke Van Gorcum, Assen

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Published

2 November 2012

