

# Twenty years of UCU

by Meike Eijsberg

A mere two weeks ago our small bubble reached the ripe old age of 20. To celebrate, a Lustrum was organized by a six-person committee. All the various events highlighted different aspects of our college: the campus during open monument day, the history through the medium of a documentary and exhibition, its interdisciplinary program by means of a symposium, its close community by allowing all of campus to read and discuss the same book, and its diverse student population during the Scholarship dinner. Everything was wrapped up with a festival on Saturday the 15th. In order to commemorate these festivities the proper way, I attended all events and set out to interview a few key figures who made these celebrations possible.

The one-week-long anniversary commenced on Saturday the 8th of September: the same date as National Open Monument Day. On the crisp autumn morning, many students might have blinked twice when they spotted the military vehicles and soldiers on the quad whilst biking past for their weekly groceries. It was strange indeed: our campus has not hosted military staff and equipment for a long time but it does have an extensive history of doing so. Remains of that history can still be found in every corner. In fact, almost 2000 people visited our campus that day, as estimated by the Kromhout Kazerne staff.

I asked Bettina Nelemans, one of the committee members, about the organization process. "It was a big challenge," she said. "It's all on top of what we normally do, so we had to squeeze things into our regular working week."

This definitely proved to be true. Mary Bouquet's exhibition, a project that would usually take a year to set up, was put together in only two months. "It involved exploring, and actually co-constructing, people's memories - which take a remarkable variety of forms," Mary explains. "It brings together the efforts of many different people who get caught up in the process, and who 'remember forwards' in the present." When the exhibition premiered on Sunday, along with the UCU documentary, it certainly received the praise it deserved.

The celebrations were not just limited to the weekend. Tuesday afternoon was dedicated to a symposium where intriguing individuals were invited to speak and represent their discipline on a panel dedicated to interdisciplinarity. But that was not all. After concluding its weekly book club meetings, the One Book, One Campus team organized a final get-together, along with the author Maxim Februari. Agnes Andeweg, head organizer, explains the idea of the event: "It's to enjoy reading together, to stimulate conversations on current social issues, and to enhance

the social and intellectual community at UCU."

On the evening of Friday the 14th, a closed dinner was organized with the goal of raising money for the UCU Scholarship fund. A variety of products and activities was available for bidding, including, but not limited to: a 10-bottle wine set, a private sailing lesson, and even a week in a luxury ski cabin. At the end of the evening, a grand total of €2820,- was raised by all attendees. The importance of such an event is not to be mistaken because a scholarship can determine whether or not a motivated student can attend this college. Mariia Wäre, a third year student, was invited to attend and give a speech about what her scholarship meant for her. "Every one of us just wants to succeed. Scholarships provide us that opportunity - it is a gift that keeps on giving," she stated proudly.

All in all, the hard work was worth it. A celebration like

this only takes place every five years and it is important for an institution like ours. "A Lustrum enables you to celebrate who you are as an organization," Bettina said, "It shows the outside world who you are and what you can do." Her favourite event? "I liked all of them... Maybe the most special one was open monument day, not only since it attracted so many people from outside, but also because of the collaboration with our neighbours, the army, whom we normally don't really get to see very often... We had meetings with them, sometimes over there. It meant we had to go to the main entrance, bring our passport and show them who we were."

When asked what the committee might change or do differently, Bettina laughed

and replied: "Perhaps next time we keep it a bit shorter. There are things we would really love to do again however, such as One Book, One Campus. Hopefully next year; we already have a name, but we would like to keep it a secret."

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