On September 27 and 28, 1997, some 25 International Oak Society members and guests attended the Third Annual Oak Open Day held this time in the Netherlands and Belgium.

These two fascinating days started with a meeting at Arboretum Trompenburg, Rotterdam, where the three organizers, J.R.P. van Hoey Smith, Jo Bömer, and Geerts Fortgens, welcomed the guests with tea and coffee. Members came from England, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and, of course, from the Netherlands. This was the right time to get in touch with old friends and make new ones.

Dick van Hoey Smith led the tour through Arboretum contd. on pg. 6
Trompenburg, which was fascinating. Dick served as President for the International Dendrology Society until spring 1997, and we already knew about his immense knowledge of trees and their stories. We had the opportunity to see not only this splendid collection in the arboretum, but also the collection of the nearby gardens. Around 200 different oaks are growing here, some of them planted by Dick back in 1939! It is always astonishing to see some “known-to-be-tender” oaks here in the Netherlands. Besides Quercus coccifera, there are several others like Q. semecarpifolia, Q. glauca and Q. rysophylla which do well here, but are a rare sight elsewhere in central Europe. (For more information about Arboretum Trompenburg see Journal #1: 4-10.)

During a break with coffee and cakes, a meeting was held to discuss problems with oak cultivars. Piers Trehane is preparing a checklist with all valid oak cultivar names. He pointed out that there will be problems with these names if there is no written record in botanical or horticultural journals, or if they are not mentioned in catalogues with descriptions.

The tour of the Arboretum took several hours, but if one thinks the “Quercologists” had enough, one would have been mistaken. In the evening there was a superb dinner at Hotel Tivoli in Oudenbosch, a small town some 50 km south of Rotterdam. However, before dinner, the Oudenbosch Park had to be inspected. The city council planted an arboretum with different sections, includ-
ing a fine oak section. And finally, nearly
in the dark, we were able to find a real
treasure: a variegated *Quercus glandulifera*!

The next day started with a tour around
M.M. Bömer Nurseries in Zundert, near
the Belgian border. Thick mist was re­
placed by bright sunshine and after a wel­
come coffee, Jo, Maarten, Chantel and
David led us through the nursery. All of
us were deeply impressed by the huge
collection of oaks and other fine trees.
Besides *Quercus* species, a huge assort­
ment of *Fagus, Castanea* and *Aesculus*
are being propagated. We couldn’t see
all the oaks here, but did get an impres­
sion of what these oak-loving nurserymen
had created.

You will need at least two days to see
the entire nursery. New oak cultivars, such
as the deeply lobed *Quercus robur* ‘Irtha’,
and some dwarf forms of *Quercus robur, Quercus palustris* and *Quercus rubra*
were particularly interesting. Tender oaks
are cultivated inside the greenhouse. We
visited the propagation house as well, where the Bömers have already started
to graft oaks. Especially beautiful is
*Quercus dentata* ‘Pinnatifida’, which
eye have in large quantities.

From Zindert we continued to
Hemelrijk, the country house and park of
the De Belder family. Hemelrijk (which
means “Kingdom of Heaven”) is located
in Belgium, and some of the members
didn’t even notice that we crossed the
boundary of the two countries. We were
welcomed by the De Belder family at this
beautiful setting with home-cooked
quiche and wine, whose special flavor
came from added Calamintha leaves. Af­
ter lunch we toured the beautiful estate.
A good collection of oaks is planted here.
The oaks are of special interest because
they germinated from seed collected in the
wild by the De Belders, and also from the
original trees of several oak cultivars, such
as *Quercus dentata* ‘Carl Ferris Miller’
and ‘Sir Harold Hillier’. Both have bright
autumn color and good hardiness and
were collected in South Korea in 1976.

Again, this afternoon was brilliant.
When the members came together to say
goodbye, sitting in the afternoon sun in
front of the old barn at Hemelrijk, it was
a pity to have to leave the party that early.
Thanks to the organizers of this Third Oak
Open Day, Jo Bömer, Dick van Hoey
Smith, and Geert Fortgens, and to the De
Belder family for their warm welcome.

The Fourth Annual Oak Open Day will
be held in Germany on September 26-27,
1998. Plans are to visit Kassel with the
famous parks, “Karlsaue” and
“Wilhelmshöhe,” where many of the old
cultivars of *Quercus robur* and *Quercus petraea* have been growing together for
more than one hundred years, and to visit
the nursery of D. Doring, which has an
assortment of more than 130 different
oaks, including his own selections.
European members received invitations from
Eike Jablonski, but all International Oak
Society members are welcome. If you live
outside Europe and would like to attend
the meeting, please contact Mr. E.
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L-9234 Diekirch, Luxembourg or e-mail
to: eike.jablonski@ci.educ.lu