

PROFILE



PHOTO MARCO SWEERING

other parts of the world. “We are unique in the global ING organization, as almost no one else actively works with historic material,” Elferink explains. “Material often lies around in cupboards and boxes, and nothing is done with it. That’s a terrible shame. We’re aiming to build up a single historic picture of all ING units worldwide.”

ARCHIVES AND COLLECTION

The archive includes deeds of incorporation, minutes, annual reports, correspondence, circulars, leaflets, forms and documentation on buildings. The oldest item, a building insurance policy of the Nederlandsche Assurantie Compagnie, dates from 1798.

Elferink gives some examples of the gems to be found, “We have the minutes of the Supervisory Board meetings dating back to 1845. The RVS archive with a dossier on holiday centers for staff set up in 1917 that includes photos and descriptions of the holiday homes. Another interesting item is a 1908 letter from an employee of the Postcheque and Girodienst in which she complains about unequal treatment and pay for women employees.”

Our collective memory

ING Corporate History Archive in Amsterdam: there is no other department quite like it in the whole of ING. Five archivists and curators record and preserve the corporate history of ING Group so that it can be saved for posterity.

“We have a wonderful collection, but we still throw away far too many things that have historical value,” Ingrid Elferink, Manager of the ING Corporate History Archive, sighs. “Many people don’t even know that we exist, so when departments move or people retire, a great deal of historical material is lost. We are interested in everything to do with ING’s activities. So call us before you throw things away! Then we can decide whether it can add to our collection.”

In historical terms, the department is still fairly young—around 15 years old—but a growing interest in historical material means it has already proved its worth. The number of internal and external requests for information grows every year and the department is asked for everything from photographs, audiovisual materials and historical reviews to manuals, minutes and artefacts.

The department was originally Dutch, but is building up a growing stock of items from business units in

COLLECTION

The ING Corporate History Archive includes:

- 1,000 meters of archives
- 6,000 leaflets and printed documents
- 1,500 posters
- 10,000 museum artefacts
- 100 machines
- 25,000 pieces of photographic miscellanea, including photographs, photo albums, negatives and slides



The museum collection includes machines, furniture, business gifts, office requisites, posters, photographs and videos. There is information on events from the very earliest ING predecessor, Kooger Doodenbos, up to the merger of Nationale-Nederlanden and the NMB Postbank Group that led to

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the formation of ING in 1991. Traces of that long history are to be found in material relating to people, buildings, products, services and mergers.

“We contact business units ourselves to ask for material for our archives,” Elferink explains. “And we receive a great deal of old material from staff. Interesting and unique historical material often emerges during an office move or when someone retires. We also receive current advertising and

marketing material direct from the relevant departments or the printers.”

ACCESSIBLE

In principle, the collection is accessible to everyone, though ING's business interests have to be considered. The users are primarily management secretariats, communication and personnel departments, and individual employees. The information is used for lectures, speeches, various staff magazines, ING publications, calendars and the like. Regular requests are made for photographs when staff retire.

The collection is also open to external researchers, though archives and artefacts are in principle not loaned out, except for exhibitions. “In the autumn, for instance, there will be an exhibition in the Netherlands Poster Museum in Hoorn of historical posters of ING and its predecessors.”

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

At the end of 2006 a start was made on research into the banking history

of ING in the Netherlands and the researchers are making grateful use of the archives. The study will cover the history of Postbank and Nederlandsche Middenstandsbank (NMB), and their merger, and continue up to the merger with Nationale-Nederlanden. The focus will be on the period 1970 to 1990, with just a brief description of the earlier history.

THINK TWICE

The archive and Collection require the co-operation of all ING staff. So please think twice next time before clearing out your cupboards. If you think you have material that might be interesting for ING's historical records, please contact Ingrid Elferink, Manager ING Corporate History Archive. <

INTRANET

For more information, see www.history.intranet (Dutch and English)

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