

The How-Do-You-Do? Club began in 1967 or 1968, thanks to an American woman called Margaret van Mourik. She started what would become the IWCE by inviting international ladies to her home for a coffee and piano concerts. Thus, 14 ladies decided to create a group to support newcomers to the Eindhoven area. At that period, meetings were held at members' homes, and everyone brought an item to share. Once overhearing a gathering of women addressing one another with "How do you do?" Margaret's children began to refer to this group as the How-Do-You-Do? Club, which became the Club's first name.

"In August of 1969," wrote Margaret van Mourik in 2008, "we had just moved into our new house, and I had an American girl helping me. When I happened—at the hairdressers'—to be sitting between an American girl on one side and an English girl on the other. I thought it would be nice to invite them for coffee so that I could get to know them and they could meet another American. I then also called up my friend Georgie Oudemans, an American, and she came and brought some other non-Dutch people she had met. Everyone was so glad to meet someone else who had the same problems and experiences and who spoke the same language, that we decided to do it again."

Five to six years later, in 1973, the first Special Interest Group (SIG) was created: ladies met to help each other find the correct ingredients for their home country's traditional dishes. Additionally, the Cooking Exchange allowed its members a chance to network. Soon it became the Gourmet Club, and Deliaan Grimm published a cookbook called "Gourmet Handshakes" in 1979.

The meetings were held on Thursdays, and the annual Christmas celebration was held at LidyWijn's home, a Belgian, who later became president. Members of every nationality performed music, poetry, or other talents pertaining to Christmas in their home country.

A few of the original 14 members were Elfriede Grünsteidl (Austria), Dolly Hellekamp (Netherlands), and Jokine Jense (Spain).

Other early members of the Club were Deliaan Grimm, (Netherlands), Loes Haas (Netherlands), Françoise Deckers (Belgium), Gudrun Barham (Austria), Sheila Attwood (UK), Herta Schob (Austria), Ann Offerfeldt (Netherlands), Lidy Wijn (Belgium), Ingrid Oudkerk (Sweden), Norah Kersten (UK), Helga Larsen (Denmark), Hilda Cuijpers (Belgium), Monique Lentz (France), Nanue van de Sanden (France), Georgie\_ Oudemans (USA), and Inge van Marinlli (Austria).

The first president was a Dutch woman, Mimi Blankenberg. She held the office for several years, as there was no term definition yet. Then Helga Larsen (Denmark) took over in December 1977 (50 members and a hand-written newsletter). By 1978, the membership was 147. Monique Lentz became president in 1979. At this time, the SIGs were the Gourmet Club, Craft, and Mahjong. That same year, the Club celebrated its 10th anniversary at the Esplanade in Eindhoven.

By 1981, Françoise Decker was IWCE President, and the membership reached approximately 100. From that moment on, the committee decided to have a presidency term of two years. The committee was not an executive one, but our Club's name had finally changed into the International Women's Club Eindhoven. With the new Club name, came recognition among similar, established clubs, of which there were many, especially in the The Hague area.

Brigitte Proeme (Germany) became the president in 1983 when meetings were still held at members' homes, with an average attendance of 50-60 for the monthly coffee gathering.

In 1985, Lidy took over the presidency; at this time, the annual holiday party was still held at her home. Two years later, a Dutch member, Nelly Otten, became president, and the Club celebrated its 20th anniversary at the Eindhoven Golf Club. By that time, the newsletter was computerized, and two members from the Committee, Jill Miller Henderson and Lynne Reynolds, had written the first By-laws for the Club. In those days, the IWCE included a Drama Group that performed at the Vestzak Theater in Son.

The first meeting held in a venue occurred in March 1988, when the committee decided that they needed a bigger space to host their large international women's gatherings. The first venue was the Herberg 't Hout in Geldrop. In January of that same year, the IWCE had 159 members.

With the presidency of Helen Mashour (New Zealand) in 1989, the monthly meetings were held at Den Gevel in Veldhoven; a membership list dated November 1989 discloses 176 IWCE members. Then the Club grew again, so that in June 1991 there were 203 members, and the venue in Veldhoven was too small. That same year, Jenny Bertenshaw (UK) became president, and the new chosen venue was Boschhoeve in Nuenen. She also introduced the President's Letter to the monthly newsletter.

After one year of term, Jenny's plans changed and she turned the presidency over to Judith Champness (UK) in 1992. By that time, there were approximately 15 Special Interest Groups and a few different venues (Animali in Eindhoven, Jagerhorst in Leende, Motel Eindhoven).

From 1994-1996, Lindy van Ekeren (USA) presided as president. The IWCE counted between 156 and 177 members. Under her presidency, the Board updated the 1987 version of the Bylaws. Some of the Club venues were Motel Eindhoven, Hoeve Bijbeek, Mandarin Garden, Collse Hoeve in Geldrop, and the Golf Club in Best.

In 1996, when Margaret Nagelkerke was elected president, there were 11 SIGs, and the Club—in its 28th year—considered registering at the Chamber of Commerce (Kamer van Koophandel) of Eindhoven, as a means of “protection from the treasury for committee members who handle sums of money, mainly our treasurer. Another reason is to recognize our club as an association,” suggested Margaret.

During the 1996 Winter Market there was a Cake Bake (whose income was €350), where members brought cakes, and during the Christmas Lunch every member was asked to bring along a small gift (a value of approximately €3,50) and a dessert. There were 11 Special Interest Groups (Badminton, Book Club, Bridge, Choir, English Conversation, Dutch Conversation, Fitness, French Conversation, Lunch Out, and Spanish Conversation). In those days, the venue for the monthly meeting changed every month.

In January 1998, the IWCE announced it would host a party to celebrate the Club's 30th Anniversary. The party was held nearly two years later on 13 November 1999. Partners and friends were invited to the party held at de Kasteelboerderij Hooizolder in Heeze. The May 1999 Newsletter announced the Club's new president—or chairperson—Kathy Pine (USA). In June 1998, the Board asked members to evaluate the Club's newsletter with a 10-question survey.

While guests paid a symbolic €2,30 to attend IWCE meetings in 1999, a member's fee was approximately €35. In that same year, Rachel Bird and Marianne Maathuis joined the Club.

At the beginning of the 2000 club year, Piroska Mihalka (Canada, of Latvian origin) became president, but she resigned in November as she was moving to Belgium. Her vice president, Goli Hendriks, who joined in 1990, also stepped down. After being the spokesperson for a month, Rosalind Martin (UK) passed the baton to Judy Deverill (UK). In 2000, two new ladies became members: Greta Josso-Beinke and Jeanne Witsema.

In 2001, when Uschi Drude—who, years later, would become president—joined, there were 19 SIGs, club fees were €35 per year, €20 for half year, and €6,80 for guests. And Philips Lighting sponsored some issues of the newsletter.

In 2001, the IWCE had 18 SIGs, and the group leaders of some of these were Bernadette Baars (Dutch), Margaret Thornhill (English), Anita Hendriks (Angle), Judith Champness (Italian and

Tennis), Betsy Tels-Cunix (Book Club), and Jeanne Witsema (Gourmet). A soon-to-be very active member, Fiona Schellekens, joined the IWCE in October 2002.

In 2003, Ruxandra Darie (Romania)—IWCE President from 2013-2015—joined the Club. Under the presidency of Elly de Haast (NL), the newsletters changed a little bit: there were more recipes, ideas, quotes from famous women, member contributions, and a members' corner. In April 2004, members were informed that the Club had been registered at the Kamer van Koophandel, meetings began to be held at the Thermae Son, and yearly dues were €25. In the June 2004 newsletter, Elly wrote: "Then, finally we are, after 36 years, a legal club!" At that time, there were 109 ladies in the International Women's Club Eindhoven.

In June 1997, former IWCE President Judith Champness was chosen as the Open Door Coordinator, a position she still holds. Twice per year, the IWCE held a "Getting to Know You" meeting, to give members the possibility of making new friends. In November 1997, Andrea van de Vijver and Maureen van der Heyden joined the club. One month later, Bernadette Baars also joined.

In January 2005, we unveiled our new IWCE Website and logo—both designed by Ruxandra, who was the Webmaster at the time. In that same year, fees were €40 and we had 22 SIGs. Some of our new members were Diana Pitt, Jennifer Matanis, Lydia van Dooren, Dorte van Kaam, and Jeanine van Merode. When the former president, Zané Jandon (Canada) left the country, Andrea van de Vijver stepped in as the chairperson from January-June 2006. Then, for two terms, Tonnie

Wintermans (NL) resided over the Club as the president. In that same year Marja Schuppert, Stephanie Burnet, Tineke Bouman-Dijk, and Silke Georgi joined the Club. This was also the year that members were asked if they wanted to receive the newsletter via email. In June 2006, the news-letter format changed.

Over the years, there have been many different SIGs, but one was particularly funny: Fiona led UFO, or Unfinished Objects, with pride. Basically, this group occupied themselves with good conversation in the company of like-minded IWCE members while completing tedious hand-sewing tasks.

On 8 March 2008, the IWCE celebrated its 40th Anniversary by holding a ball at Kasteel Maurick. The ball included a dinner, dance, and a raffle. Approximately 76 people attended the ball, and every IWCE member received an umbrella with our logo on it.

In 2009, members accepted the new English translation of the original IWCE Constitution written in Dutch. Many of the women who joined that year became active in the Club: Martine Revis, Olivia van den Broek-Neri, Ana Maria Alvarez-Perales, Kathy Fetterman, Corine van Tuyll, Patrice Smith-Neelen, and Jitka Procopicova. In 2010, Jitka re-designed the layout of the newsletter and the Website. And Olivia introduced colour to the handbook.

When Uschi Drude (Germany) became president in June 2010, there were 20 SIGs. Events, announcements, SIG information, and a member spotlight were added to the Website. Mariana

Brill, Megan van Eijk, Deepa Nadkarni, Liliane Aggio, and Emmy van Otterdijk all joined the IWCE in 2010, all of whom were heavily involved in the Club—serving on the Board, as a SIG leader, or as an Area Representative.

In 2011, when Aniela Marschner-Sturm (Austria) joined, the IWCE had 132 members from 34 countries!

When, in September 2013, Ruxandra Darie (Romania) was elected president, the IWCE introduced a major change: the digital newsletter. This new medium for communicating Club information saved costs and increased the possibilities for information, events, announcements, and pictures. After an initial shock, members began to enjoy reading their news-letters digitally and are now accustomed to it. Additionally, Aniela resurrected the long dormant Book Club in 2013.

In 2015, current IWCE President, Aniela was elected. Under her leadership, the Club boasts 150 members from 44 countries as well as 19 SIGs. 2015 is also the year that Aniela along with Misha Benschop founded the Explore Eindhoven & Beyond Group.

Now that we know where we've been, we can see where we're going!

—Arianna Luciani-Patti

IWCE member since 2012

