

**In Memoriam Freek van Veen,
co-founder and 1st chairman of PGK**

by Tom J.A. Reijers (tjareijers@hetnet.nl)

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*Ik wilde niet in een wereld zonder kathedralen leven.
Ik had hun schoonheid en verhevenheid nodig.
Ik wilde het bruisende geluid van het orgel horen,
die stortvloed van bovenaardse klanken.*

Pascal Mercier

Na een lang leven in verwondering
is mijn allerliefste, mijn man, mijn alles,

Frederik Reginus van Veen

Freek

(veld)geoloog, hoogleraar, vrijmetselaar en
lid van de Leidse Geologische Vereniging
overleden.

Den Haag
17 april 1931

Uithuizen
29 maart 2021

Echtgenoot van
Frank van Veen - Bockting

Vader van
Peter en Mubina van Veen - Isovich
Ingrid en Ron Tebeest - van Veen
Olivia en Karel Lankhorst - van Veen

(Over)grootvader van
Edwin en Stefania, Leila,
Emina en Jacob, Eliza,
Stefan, Emily en Bas, Marcel,
Lina en Maarten, Bram

Voormalig echtgenoot van
Olivia Kfenek

✱ Asha †, ✱ Erwin

De begrafenis heeft in besloten kring plaats-
gevonden op de begraafplaats in Saaxumhuizen.

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Frederik Reginus van Veen (*The Hague, April 17th 1931 - †Saaxumhuizen, March 29th 2021) studied geology in Leiden under Professors van de Vlerk (Paleontology) and Florschütz (Palynology). He joined BPM (Shell International) and lived with wife and children successively in Brunei, Bolivia, Argentina, Canada, United Kingdom and Nigeria. Three years before retirement he became head production geology in The Hague. After retirement he accepted a position as professor Technical Earth Sciences at TU Delft, setting up 'Reservoir Characterisation'. As a hobby he pursued his interest in the history of geology, publishing e.g., on Gustaaf Molengraaff (1860-1942) and Willem Waterschoot van de Gracht (1873-1943). As a member the Technical Commission Earth Movements, a governmental advisory committee, he got acquainted with the quiet and peaceful, seismically moving Groningen countryside hamlet Saaxumhuizen with some 40 inhabitants including him and his partner. There, close to the northernmost dikes protecting the Groningen 'Hoge land' from Waddenzee invasion, isolated from main stream activities, he

very much appreciated PGK's invitation to him and me December 2008 to explain, at a special meeting, PGK's origin as follows. We first met in the years 1970-1980 in the UK where life was hectic. Coal mines operating since the Industrial Revolution were closed, one after the other. Daily life was dominated by strikes and announcements of new oil and gas discoveries in the North Sea. New fossil energy replaced the old brand and caused a whirlwind of activities with plenty of work for many geologists, British and expatriate, offshore and in offices in London and Aberdeen. November 1974 Freek presented at the 1st Bloomsbury conference on North Sea Oil and Gas a reservoir a geological reservoir model of Auk Oil Field* on which I then worked as a wellsite geologist. Later on, based on exploration well information acquired while I worked at the early wells of Brent, he designed the initial reservoir model of the Brent Field that stood the test of time. The reservoir architecture designed by him had not changed significantly with new information from over 130 wells as shown in his presentation on the AAPG-PGK conference in the Hague, 1993**. Brent had become exemplary for integrating sedimentology and reservoir geology into field development projects, work that he pursued as professor in Delft.

Brennand, T.P. and van Veen, F.R. (1975) The Auk Oil-Field. In: A.W. Woodland (ed), Petroleum and the Continental Shelf of North-West Europe, Vol. 1, p. 275-281. Applied Science Publishers Ltd.

** van Veen, F.R. (1993) Brent Revisited. AAPG Search and Discovery Article #90990. AAPG International Conference and Exhibition, The Hague, The Netherlands, October 17-20, 1993.

The foundation of PGK

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My first overseas assignment as an exploration well-site geologist was for Shell Expro on contractor rig Neptune-7 on the Auk oil field, and on Shell-Expro Staflo rig on the newly discovered giant Brent oil field. Work in two-week offshore-onshore shifts was carried out alternating with a philosophically oriented Austrian colleague. Because strikes affected British Airways Flights, my Austrian colleague once was forced to travel by train to Aberdeen before transfer by helicopter to Staflo. The long train journey London-Aberdeen was made pleasant through a stimulation conversation on his offshore work with an interested, attractive girl that shared his compartment. While offshore he was two weeks incommunicado. After returning to his London office, he was received in icy silence. His boss opened a copy of Daily Mail and showed an article headlined with: 'It is possible to drill through oil-bearing layers without recognising them'. The attractive young lady turned out to be an oil news scouting journalist reporting on North Sea developments. She was not beyond adding naughty comments such as his reply to her question how he, as an

expatriate, felt about living in Great Britain. He answered that, as an Austrian from Vienna, he had in Britain the same feeling as at home: 'living amongst the ruins of a lost empire'. His subsequent career development was shaky.

Not only the journalist was scouting. Geologists from various companies regularly met in office meetings to exchange information. Additionally, they met in more relaxed circumstances over drinks before the monthly meeting of the Petroleum Exploration Society of Great Britain (PESGB) in Burlington House, residence of the London Geological Society. Always interesting, often with news on latest developments and a choice opportunity for scouting. An experience that remained with Freek and me. We took it back to the Netherlands. Being the first to return I started to investigate interest amongst Dutch and expatriate geologists at KSEPL research laboratory (Rijswijk) to form a similar organisation in the Netherlands. This 'task force' soon became known as: 'Uncle Tom's club'. Freek, also back in The Netherlands, immediately joined. Together we formalised matters and February 10th 1978 we started the 'Petroleum Geologische Kring'(PGK) as a subsidiary of the Royal Netherlands Geological and Mining Society (KNGMG). The first board members were: Freek van Veen (chairman), Hans van Hoeflaken (vice chairman; soon afterwards killed by the Taliban in Afghanistan), Tom Reijers (secretary) and, Frederique Goester (treasurer); three board members working at Shell and Hans at Placid. PGK members were mainly working in or retired from the petroleum industry and academia. They soon formed a tight network, sharing knowledge and stimulating collaboration. Perhaps now, after 43 years, in the midst of an energy transition, the moment has come to consider renovating PGK to be ready for the future. For instance, by including members from Energy-Transition industries but maintaining a focus on geological subsurface activities. Freek, having stood at the beginning of PGK, certainly would have agreed. I am ready to contribute to such a change.