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## Recreational mathematics

# The Dutch Cubist Club



ber 14 on, it is English. Recently CFF 50 appeared, a special issue in 6 parts.

### Kubusdag

Each year the 'Kubusdag' (Cube Day) is held, usually in October. The location varies. Here members meet, lectures on various (puzzle)subjects are given, and there is the possibility to exchange and buy puzzles. The club also has an extensive library of puzzle books

For some people, mathematics is a profession. For others, mathematics is a hobby. In a series of articles the Nieuw Archief will pay attention to Dutch activities which focus on the recreational aspects of mathematics. In this article Frits Göbel introduces the Dutch 'Kubus Klub'. Among the members of this club are Donald Knuth and Erno Rubik.

The Dutch Cubist Club was founded in 1981 by Anneke Treep and Just van Rossum under the name 'Nederlandse Kubus Club'. It started as a club of enthusiastic solvers of Rubik's Cube. In those years, the number of members surpassed 100. All over the world, clubs of this type were formed. When the cube-craze was over, most of these clubs ceased to exist. The NKC, too, lost many members. At some point it was a club of 13 people only. Later, the scope of the NKC was extended to mechanical puzzles in general. This step had an enormous impact. At present the club has about 400 members in 35 countries.

### CFF

The club issues a magazine, Cubism For Fun, which appears three times a year. In the first few issues the language is Dutch; from num-



and magazines, which can be borrowed by the members.

Most of the members are *collectors* of puzzles. Certain others are better described as *inventors*, *designers*, or *puzzle-makers*. And there are a few (semi-)professionals who are interested in *selling* puzzles. Needless to say, many members combine several of the above activities.

### Mathematics

Since quite a few members have a mathematical background, it will not come as a surprise that some articles in CFF have a mathematical flavour. In general, such articles give an analysis of a certain type of puzzle. Examples of puzzles that lend themselves to mathematical analysis are Rubik's Cube (and other rotational puzzles, like the Teufelstonne and the Hungarian Rings), Chinese Rings (and other binary puzzles like Spin Out and the wonderful Hexadecimal Puzzle), mazes, sliding block puzzles, and packing problems. Most of these puzzles have been treated so far in issues of CFF.

Occasionally, a mathematical problem is formulated in CFF that has no relation to a mechanical puzzle. As an example we mention the problem of the opaque cube: within a unit cube, define surfaces of minimum total area such that each line that passes through the cube will cut at least one of these surfaces.

### Further information

Further information on the NKC may be obtained from the Secretary: Geert Helling, Schepenenlaan 36, 6114 MS Susteren, Netherlands. Telephone: 0(031)46-4495688. ☎

