



# Toc H Anders

## April 2020

Dear Toc H friends,

How are you?

These are challenging times. The corona virus challenges us to stay at home, to 'distance socially' - or rather - 'physically'. Some of us are still at work, either at home or – with the necessary adaptations - at our usual workplace. Others are temporarily out of work. In any case, we are being challenged: to adjust, to be flexible, to re-invent ourselves. And even though we feel lonely sometimes, whether we are by ourselves all day or not, we all share that sparkle of hope and hang on to the thought that this too will pass.

To brighten up your days, we bring you this newsletter, which will help you to stay in touch with us and with all matters Toc H and Talbot House!

### Activities calendar

Due to the current circumstances, we have been forced to make some alterations to our planned activities. Here's a short overview:

#### Branch meeting 25/04

A branch meeting was scheduled on Saturday 25 April to discuss the change of board and the future of Toc H Belgium. A 'physical' meeting will now not be possible, but we are planning something else instead.

On Saturday 25 April, we plan a **Toc H tea/coffee time video chat**. This will give us a chance to see each other, have a chat, catch up with each other and check out how we all are... Each from the safety of our own homes, but still together, and with a cup of coffee, tea (or a beer – if you like :))

You are welcome to join us on 25 April 2020 from 3.30 pm onwards, via [www.zoom.be](http://www.zoom.be). Further instructions on how to get connected will be posted on the [Toc H Belgium members page](#) soon.

## Toc H day trip 06/06

On Saturday 6 June 2020 we had planned our yearly Toc H day trip. It is still unclear what will be possible at that time, as we of course will depend on the then current government measures. If it is possible to come together by then, our suggestion would be to have a Toc H meet-up at Talbot House, as we think this is the ideal location to see each other again after this long period of isolation. Further plans for this are on hold for now, but as soon as we can tell you more, we will be back with an update. Ideas or suggestions are very welcome. We'd love to hear from you!

## Special General Meeting 28/06

We are postponing this Special General Meeting during which the future of Toc H Belgium was to be decided; a new date will be confirmed. We do not think it is right to take such an important decision in the present extraordinary circumstances: there are other matters that take precedence at the moment. We also don't want to decide anything without the opportunity to thoroughly prepare this and discuss it with each other in advance.

In the meantime, we want to continue to do with Toc H what Toc H does best: provide help and friendship in difficult times. Especially now that togetherness and solidarity are so important, we absolutely want to make our Toc H voice heard and do our bit (see below).

This does not mean however that our search for new board members is over. We are still looking for enthusiastic volunteers who want to join us to build the future of Toc H Belgium as a member of the board. The quest continues. Because we want Toc H to continue! During this crisis, more than ever, but also beyond it, we need people who help each other, who are there for each other, regardless of religion, age, colour or social background. That's what we stand for as Toc H!

## A small act of kindness

If everything has gone according to plan, you should recently have found a package from Toc H in your post box. In the beginning of April we started our "message" campaign. Our aim first of all is to support you, our Toc H friends, during these strange times. With this campaign, we also aim to spread our Toc H message of hope and fellowship as widely as possible. We sent you a post card with our wishes, together with some extra cards.



We encourage you to pass on these extra cards, or other – maybe even homemade - cards with your and our wishes to family, friends, neighbours, the postman, a nearby care home or a hospital, .... Details about this campaign can be found [here](#) in this Facebook Event. Feel free to share the message as widely as you can. The campaign is open to anyone who wants to participate. The more the merrier... albeit of course from the safety of our own homes. Help us spread a little light, a message of hope and love around the world. Despite the 'social' – correction - 'physical distancing' we were never so close.

Packages of cards can be requested via [tochbelgium@live.be](mailto:tochbelgium@live.be). Send us your address and we will deliver them to you as soon as possible (and free of charge). Unfortunately, due to the current crisis, our Belgian postal services are unable to send post or packages outside (the continent) of Europe for the time being. This has no impact on shipments to the United Kingdom, which can still be sent without any problems (although there might be some delay).

## Update Talbot House

You might have read it in the Talbotousian newsletter or seen it on their Facebook page: Talbot House is in need of financial support. We're in touch with Simon, manager of Talbot House, and hereby want to give you some more info (see also letter of the Talbot House Association enclosed).

As you know, the permanent exhibition of Talbot House was recently renewed. The grand opening was planned last weekend (17/04). But the current global corona crisis has also had a huge impact on the House. Like all tourist venues, museums and hotels in Belgium, it has been forced to temporarily close. This has resulted in a huge loss of income for the foreseeable future. The British wardens were sent home, the majority of the staff has been placed on temporary unemployment. However, Talbot House's cost counter continues to run: maintenance and repairs of the 250-year-old house, payment of loans for both the renewed exhibition and an emergency loan to bridge this first period of closure. Talbot House is already losing half of its annual revenue as a result of the closure. There is a real fear that without proper action the House cannot survive beyond this year. Therefore a [fundraising campaign](#) has been set up to help safeguard the future of our precious Talbot House, during and after this corona crisis.



## How can we help Talbot House?

First of all we'd be very grateful if you could share the [GoFundMe page](#) of Talbot House as much as possible with friends and family. Every donation makes a difference. Talbot House also accepts donations [via PayPal or just bank transfer in Sterling](#). Please help us spread the message and story of Talbot House worldwide.

Talbot House also launches the following request:

### ***Update for our wardens:***

*Sadly due to the global crisis, the Belgian borders remain closed for the time being. Hence we are unsure when we will be able to welcome you as volunteers again at the House. We will keep you informed of course. If you are interested to become a warden at the House as well, please [get in touch with our manager](#).*



Are you looking for a small gift for a beloved one? Take a look on the [online shop](#) of Talbot House and see what you can find.

### **Toc H International**

Toc H members all over the world try the help others as much as possible, from a safe distance. Owen Nichols, the National Director of Toc H Australia has posted a beautiful message of hope on the websites of Toc H Australia:

<http://www.tochnorthernregion.org/> and <https://www.toch.org.au/> .

We would like to share his words with you, please find it enclosed to this email.

### **Courage and hope**

We'd like to end this newsletter with another positive note.

You may not always  
have a comfortable  
life and you will not  
always be able to  
solve all of the  
worlds problems at  
once, but don't ever  
underestimate the  
importance you can  
have because history  
has shown us that  
courage can be  
contagious and hope  
can take on a life of  
its own.

- Michelle Obama



Hang on in there, take care of yourself and of each other... and we will see you soon!

Warm greetings,

Martine, Katrien & Tilde