

BATH - ALKMAAR LINKS ORIGINS: KEY DATE TIMELINE

Date	Event
1940	
May 10 1940	Holland is invaded by Nazi Germany
May 14 1940	<p>Rotterdam bombed. Eli Prins travels to Lowestoft by jumping on a small fishing boat, initially with 6 on board, by the end of the voyage with 60, having picked up refugees from smaller, struggling boats: it's a 24 hour journey, with no charts, dodging the Luftwaffe and British minefields.</p> <p>Joining his sister who has moved to Bath, Eli Prins joins the Bath ARP wardens (Air Raid Precautions), becoming friends with Bathonian Jimmie Wills, who is also secretary of the Bath Rotary Club. Eli gives several talks to the Club about the situation in Holland, and his home town of Alkmaar.</p>
1942	
April 1942	<p>Undefended Bath Bombed by 80 Luftwaffe planes, over several nights, in Hitler's so-called "Baedeker" revenge raids. Extensive damage caused, and hundreds killed and injured.</p> <p><i>"The first raid struck just before 11 pm on the Saturday night and lasted until 1 am. The German aircraft then returned to France, refuelled, rearmed and returned at 4.35 am. Bath was still on fire from the first raid, making it easier for the German bombers to pick out their targets. The third raid, which only lasted two hours but caused extensive damage, commenced in the early hours of Monday morning. The bombers flew low to drop their high explosives and incendiaries and then returned to rake the streets with machine-gun fire."</i> Wikipedia</p>
1944	
October 1944	Allied forces begin slow liberation of southern Netherlands, as they advance on Germany.
Winter 1944/45	Dutch famine, as Nazi High Command retaliates for efforts of Dutch resistance to help the advancing Allies: the "Hunger Winter". 20,000 civilians die directly as a result.
1945	
?March?	<i>(Speculative): Eli Prins makes trip to liberated Southern and Eastern Netherlands to try and connect with family (but Alkmaar is still occupied. Shocked by what he finds, he reports back to his friends in Bath, who are moved by what they hear.</i>
March 26 1945	Bath-Alkmaar Adoption Committee formed at special meeting of the City of Bath Rotary Club, with Mayor in attendance: money-raising, plus food and clothes collection, begins
April 1945	Total weekly ration in Alkmaar reduced to 400 gms bread, 1 kilo potatoes – nothing else.
April 29th	'Operation Manna': RAF drops food parcels in and around Amsterdam and Alkmaar, with agreement of occupying German forces.

May 4 1945	Germans occupying Alkmaar and North-West Netherlands surrender.
May 8 1945	Formal end of War in Europe.
July 23- 28 1945	First ever 'Alkmaar Week' held in Bath.
July 26 1945	First physical contact with Alkmaar: Burgomaster van Kinschot makes surprise appearance fund-raising dinner held at the Red House at 37, Newbridge Road, Bath.
August 30 1945	First official visit from Bath to Alkmaar by 3 Rotarians, including Jimmie Wills.
August 31st	Bath official guests at parade in Alkmaar to celebrate Queen Wilhelmina's birthday: Bathonians shocked by state of children in particular
October 1945	Committee announces that £5,732 has been raised so far (some £250,000 in 2016 value), 250 cases of food and garments sent. Barrel organ collected £1,000 (£40,000 in 2016 value) 150 Bathonians offer homes for Alkmaar children if required. Very end of month: 50 Alkmaar children leave and travel to a special isolation camp in Tonbridge Walls (Wrens Warren Camp), where they are given specialist medical care, and monitored, for 6 weeks. 5,000 tulip bulbs sent by Burgomaster van Kinschot to Bath
December 10 1945	48 of the children (2 still too ill to travel immediately) arrive in Bath for first time, to recuperate further, and spend Christmas with Bath families. A large tea and fancy dress party is held for the Dutch and several hundred local Bath children in the Pump Room, with games and an orchestra.
1946	
May 1946	First official civic visit to Bath from Alkmaar.
August 24 1946	Bath children arrive in Alkmaar for first time.
August 26 1946	Large party held in Alkmaar for the children and others from Bath (including Rotarians and Inner Wheel)