

Antoni van Leeuwenhoek, The Man Who Discovered Microorganisms.

In 1674, Antoni van Leeuwenhoek visited the Berkelsemeer, a lake south of Delft, and took a water sample because the water was unusually cloudy. When he examined the sample with his simple microscope the next day, he got the surprise of his life, and the biological world would never be the same. The water was full of “little animals” invisible to the naked eye!

This talk will take a look at Antoni van Leeuwenhoek and his work, using his original drawings and modern digital photographs and film clips taken through exact replicas of his microscopes.

Dr Lesley Robertson FRSB worked at Delft University of Technology for 40 years in several positions, the most important being Industrial Wastewater Treatment and then Head of Biological Safety for the University. She has always had an interest in the history of microbiology (Delft's first three biological Professors are all regarded as founding fathers of modern biotechnology, and much of Lesley's free time in Delft has gone on organising their Archives and Museum). Retirement (and the advent of digital cameras) has now provided the time to expand her research into Van Leeuwenhoek's work. Repeating his experiments to test several centuries of speculation about how he did things is enormous fun.

Lesley is one of the co-authors of the newest Van Leeuwenhoek biography “*Antoni Van Leeuwenhoek: Master of the Miniscule*”, also available in Dutch as “*Antoni van Leeuwenhoek: Groots in het Kleine*”.