

Tug@zine

all about tugs

*Rotterdam,
Grey,
Time...*



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May 2023

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This issue of TugeZine coincides with TugTechnology 2023. Well, it is not a coincidence at all as you may have assumed already. The problem for an editor is how to deal with such an event. As our magazine deals with tugs and towage past, present and future we decided to dive into the history of tugs and towage based in Rotterdam. The reason for this being we assume most of you are unfamiliar with this.

In very brief terms it is as follows:

Initial disinterested city officials – slow running river current – initiatives by tradesmen and insurers – the steam tug – the Rotterdam Waterway - dredging companies – sea towage – murderous competition – two powerful companies on the rise – two world wars – eat or be eaten – and the end result being that shiphandling at Rotterdam today is a business orchestrated by Spanish and German operators. Anyhow, it's all here as a long-read so we advise to turn to the first chapter – which is actually the last one - to know what's going on today.

On a different front, our opening page this time shows some Ukrainian tugs as a reminder of what is really important. Other important subjects like alternative fuel, alternative propulsion and alternative crew are items we this time leave to the speakers at TugTechnology.

Anyway, I hope to meet you in person during two busy days.

*Subscribers to TugeZine: **don't forget the book-discount offers** – they have been extended until TugTechnology '23.*

See you all in Rotterdam!

Job van Eijk (editor)



GREY is a newbuilding delivered by the Chilean shipyard ASENAV. Read all about this inside photo: ASENAV

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STIVIDOR was built in 1973 by Brodogradiliste Tito. 35,4 x 9,3 x 3,2 m. Main engines 2x B&W total output 2.300 bhp - speed 13,6 knots



VYKTORY ex SVEASUND - built 1969 Elsflether Werft - 26,1 x 7,6 x 3,6 m. Main engine Deutz, output 1.320 bhp



NIBULON 11 - built 019. Owner Agricultural LLC Nibulon Ltd – Mykolaiev



KENTAVR - built 1988 at Brodogradiliste Tito - Main engines 2x MAN total output 816 hp. Owner listed as Odessa Commercial Port



MARIUS was built for Adriaan Kooren specific for work in the dredging and construction industry. It was also their first coastal tug and in the early stages of Kotug also employed in shiphandling photo: Job van Eijk



FAIRPLAY III is one of a series of four tugs built in Spain and developed especially for shiphandling. Like sisters FAIRPLAY X, FAIRPLAY I and FAIRPLAY XIV Tthe engine output is 5.030 hp resulting in 70 ttp. Dimensions are 25,00 (oa) x 11,20 (oa) m with a draft max of 5,35 m. Built by Astilleros Armon in 2007 photo: coll Job van Eijk



ROTTERDAM was the last tug ordered for the Kotug Smit JV. Seen here in Boluda livery 23 July, 2021

photo: Nico Giltay

Rotterdam Tug Times 1985-2023

To tell the story of the beginning we have to start at the end. Lack of competition, influence of stockholders, deep pockets, daring moves, thinking out-of-the-box, all played their part.

by Job van Eijk



Sleepdienst Jan Kooren's ALBATROS, a former Bugsier tug

photo: coll. Job van Eijk

1988 – competition

The year started with the next reorganisation of Smit Internationale. The divisions now were **Smit Tak BV** (ocean towing, salvage and transport), **Smit-Lloyd BV** (anchorhandling and offshore supply services), **Smit Offshore Contractors BV** (offshore installation, maintenance and inspection) and **Smit Havensleepdiensten BV** (harbour towage in the Rotterdam Waterway area and the Scheldt area including near-coastal work). The Scheldt operations are outside the scope of this article but it is worthwhile to mention the **Nieuwe Vlissinge Sleepdienst** (New Flushing Towage) which was set up on the 1971 as a continuation of the Flushing-based towage activities of the Steenkolen Handels Vereniging (Coal Trading Association – a Van Beuningen / Fentener van Vlissingen enterprise).

The only other shiphandler left in the port was **Sleepdienst Jan Kooren**, which was active in general port towage and in shiphandling, albeit in a small way, until 1999.

Enter the other Kooren

The **Adriaan Kooren Sleepdienst** had been established in 1934. They were active in general port towage and became one of the largest suppliers of tugs to dredging and hydraulic

engineering companies. Their tugs were in part specially designed for this work often operating in open waters nearshore. Adriaan Kooren was the main contractor of tugs for the Delta Works, especially the extensive Oosterschelde works. But with the ending of the big construction works the company was looking for new employment. It was said that they had dropped from 200 employed tugs – mostly charters - to 25. Enter **Ton Kooren**, one of Adriaan's sons, who had struck out on his own outside of The Netherlands but had returned to the family fold. Ton Kooren convinced

his father and brothers that to survive the way forward was by entering into shiphandling in the port of Rotterdam – to begin with. At that time the Smit Harbour Towage department due to its 98%-monopoly had become a bit slack on the possibility of competition. Any new entrant would have a) to bring in a significant number of tugs to have real meaning while b) had to have contracts to support the costly operations. So they thought they were safe.

Kooren's answer was to use less costly crews on state-of-the-art highly manoeuvrable and very powerful tugs – compared to the then Rotterdam shiphandling tugs – and with a simple tariff structure. (A Smit spokesman explained Smit used 23 crew per tug against Kotug's 8; a consequence of the shift system used by Smit which may have been able to develop due to a lack of competition). Kooren found this tugs in the U.S. where **Faustug** had succumbed to industrial action. Faustug had been set up by Thomas Faust, a former Foss man with a vision of modernizing the U.S. towage industry. His design was based on a simple hull form fitted with azimuthing thrusters in the tractor configuration. The engine



ZP CHANDON was one of the series of six purchased in the U.S. Upon arrival they were the most powerful shiphandling tugs in Rotterdam. These six were instrumental in breaking the near monopoly at Rotterdam and Hamburg
photo: Job van Eijk





In February 1994 a strike by Smit Harbour crews rallying against the sacking of 120 personnel led to the tugs blockading the entrance to the Rotterdam Waterway and Europort photo: Job van Eijk



Ton Kooren's Rotortug design - seen here the first, RT MAGIC - is currently to be seen in ports all over the world photo: coll. Job van Eijk

room was fully automated and towing winches were standard. The tugs could be run by a three-man crew, enlarged to five for offshore work. (The Faust story is a wild one but outside the scope of this article). As mentioned his operation was brought down due to industrial action of competitor's personnel with the assist of local governments. Kooren bought these tugs and brought them over to The Netherlands.

Advertising the use of less tugs per assistance - the new boats had bollard pulls of 45 and 51 tonnes and through the use of the Niigata Z-pellers in the tractor configuration were highly manoeuvrable gained Kooren several important contracts which shocked the Smit organisation. The unions asked

for port, city and national government intervention their basic aim being to force Kooren to apply the same labour agreements as Smit had agreed to. The Kooren tugs, however, could be handled by 3 man while most of the Smit tugs used 4. Also, Kooren used less shifts as the crew was to live aboard for a number of days while the Smit boats were in general used as day-boats using more daily shifts. Kooren was then targeted by the Trade Union to force them to work on the same conditions as the Smit crews. To overcome this problem Kooren personnel set up its own union which lawfully could make agreements with the management and could not be forced to be bound to the Smit agreement as was confirmed in the Court of Law.

Anyway, Kooren had arrived in the port and was there to stay. The first breakthrough came in January, 1988, when container giant **Sea-Land** offered to split its contract-renewal 50 / 50 Smit / Kooren. Smit refused and Sea-Land went 100% to Kooren. Others followed but it was a difficult build-up since contracts were renewed only once in so many months or even years. This obviously did not apply to random users of the port but they were not the stable base Kooren (or **Kotug** as the shiphandling division was now called) was looking for.

To cut a long story short: Kooren slowly built up its client base and fairly soon had to charter additional tugs. This had to do with the fact that Kotug also offered coastal towage and a minimum number of tugs had to be in port since the competition flatly refused assistance. Severe competition followed, complete with periodical clashes with tug blockades by Smit crews. More tugs were purchased and in 1996 the jump abroad was made when Kotug went to **Hamburg**. Protests followed with newspapers speaking of a tugboat war. **Bremerhaven** followed in 1999. Here the newly-developed **Rotortugs** showed their worth. The ongoing development of Kotug internationally is outside the scope of this article but further down we'll see the consequences of globalisation. And in answer to the Dutch competitor on their home turf the German operator **Fairplay** decided to come to Rotterdam to set up competition.

Deepsea Towage

Ocean towage had reached its zenith in the 1970's with numerous high-powered oceangoing tugs joining the market. This in general in the wake of offshore developments. The average requested bollard-pull rose dramatically. Smit although quick to join the trend for higher bollard pull had remained conservative in its approach. The 1963-build **Zwarte Zee** made the jump from 4.500 hp to 9.000 hp (7.000 bhp). The output had been limited despite proposals for a 12.000 hp tug which were rejected on the assumption that it could scare potential customers - more powerful is more costly. She was followed by a sister in 1966. In the 1970's three further tugs followed each with 11.000



hp. With its competitors' bollard pulls jumping Smit then built two 23.000 hp tugs to service the top end of the market. A third followed some years later. To fill the gap between 11.000 hp and 23.000 hp a smaller version was ordered: two 16.000 hp tugs. None of these tugs were suitable for anchor-handling so they were not attractive to the offshore market except for distance towing.

When the requirement dropped for the high-end tugs – partly replaced in the market by high-powered tug / supply vessels owned by offshore operators - Smit tried to consolidate its market position by teaming up with **Wijmuller** who brought two high-end anchor-handling tugs into the alliance. Smit then purchased **Pentow Marine** which brought the two large South-African tugs into the fold. These were 26.000 hp single-screw high-speed salvage tugs one of which was always stationed on the South African coast. To hold the competition at bay, further deals were made with Chinese operators to join the alliance.

Competition meanwhile had started from another Rotterdam-based operator. **Goliath Transport & Shipping** was set up by Henk van den Berg in **1979**. The company started as European agent for the Japanese **Fukada Salvage Co.** – a contract that in 1981 was amended to represent Fukada in North and South America as well. This gave Goliath access to oceangoing tugs as well as semi-submersible barges. Although Goliath at one time operated its own oceangoing-tug fleet consisting of four tugs the company otherwise worked with long- and short-term chartered vessels. They also entered the market of dry tows with the semi-submersible *Ferncarrier* and two Lauritzen semi-submersible heavy load carriers.

Goliath was later dissolved with its operations continued as **Fairmount Marine**. This company had also been set up in 1979 and had actually been the parent company of Goliath. Basically operating in the same way as Goliath, Fairmount extended its reach by also using some of the big Chinese tugs.

Next the company ordered five of the most powerful tugs in the world, at 200 tbp each, the first of which entered service in **2005**. Fairmount for some

time teamed up with Singaporean **Semco** under the **One Allianz** banner but this was a short-lived venture. Fairmount did, however, maintain the good connections with Chinese operators that wanted to employ their high-end tugs in the open market.

With its new fleet Fairmount captured a substantial market share. Its tugs were high-tech modern vessels compared to the older units in the **Global Towing Alliance**. Smit never invested in new high-end tugs and in the end gave up altogether with the three remaining big tugs sold to **Svitzer**.

Then, in a surprise move, Henk van den Berg in **2007** sold Fairmount to the French company of **Louis Dreyfus**

although the company remained under the Dutch flag. Fairmount at the time had been contemplating ordering **two 300-tbp tugs** but this did not materialise. Although Louis Dreyfus was a long-time shipping company the fleet of lately was consisting of specialised vessels for a variety of purposes but the company had no previous experience in the deepsea towage market. As an afterthought it may have been the upcoming replacement of the French ETV tugs *Abeille Flandre* and *Abeille Languedoc* that triggered Louis Dreyfus to purchase Fairmount as it was unlikely the French Government would ever allow a foreign operator to run the show.

Another European operator meanwhile had entered the high-end towage



FAIRPLAY-21 was Fairplay's answer to Kotug coming to Hamburg. Six of this type have appeared in Rotterdam shiphandling
photo: Hans Hoffmann



Smit International Harbour Towing's KWINTEBANK in February 1990 leaving the Waterway answering a may-day call
photo: C. van Staayeren



market. **Harms Bergung** had quickly built up a fleet of 100, 200 and even two 300 tpb tugs. These tugs were built for so-called KG-companies therefore owned by a number of individual shareholders while Harms was tasked to run the vessels and make them earn.

In 2010, Arjen de Geus, Leo Leusink and Paul Mulder left Fairmount to start their own business, **ALP Maritime** based at Rotterdam. The company was not a tug owner, but operated chartered tugs in the high-end towage market and acted as towage consultants. Some of the tugs used were Harms Bergung's big tugs.

An unexpected twist in the Rotterdam-based deepsea towage business came when **BosKalis**, the Smit parent, in 2014 purchased **Fairmount** from Louis Dreyfus bringing the tugs back to Rotterdam. The company remained as a BosKalis subsidiary and the tugs were not otherwise integrated in the fleet. This acquisition was probably intended to complement the dry transport services by BosKalis subsidiary **Dockwise**. BosKalis now owned a substantial fleet of deepsea tugs as Smit had previously acquired two of the British ETV's that had become surplus to requirements when the UK Government withdrew the Government-funded ETV



FAIRMOUNT EXPEDITION, on of five 200-tbp ocean tugs built for Henk v/d Berg's Fairmount, then were sold to Louis Dreyfus only to return a few years later to The Netherlands for Boskalis

photo: Ruud Zegwaard

service. Since the Belgian company **U.R.S.** had been purchased by Smit their biggest tugs also were in the combined BosKalis fleet.

The next move again was for **ALP Maritime**. They sold their company to **Teekay Offshore Partners** and ordered the four most powerful distance towing tugs in the world built to a radical new design. This was quickly followed by the purchase of most of the **Harms-managed** big tugs. These had come on the market when the shareholders in the respective KG companies had become

dissatisfied with the results and wanted to get out. ALP Maritime's offer for six of the KG companies was accepted and the tugs were brought under the Dutch flag. ALP Maritime thus became market leader in deepsea towage, something previously achieved by Fairmount after Smit decided not to join the race to the top. Today ALP is a 100% subsidiary of **Altera Infrastructure**.

Globalisation in shiphandling

As mentioned earlier, **Kotug** expanded its business abroad and German operator **Fairplay** responded by



On 16 June, 1916, Smit and Kotug 'kissed and made up' in the Kotug Smit joint-venture with SMIT HUDSON and SD REBEL doing the kissing

photo: R. & F. van der Hoek





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SMITWIJS TEMPEST ex Wijsmuller's TEMPEST. SmitWij's Towage was the ultimate attempt to maintain a position at the top end of the market
photo: coll. Job van Eijk



ALP CENTRE (297 tpb) is one of six powerful tugs that were purchased by ALP Maritime from K.G. companies that were managed by Harms Bergung
photo: Hans Hoffmann



MULTRATUG 31 seen 27 August, 2016, when operating in Europoort
photo: Job van Eijk



ALP DEFENDER (309 tpb) is one of four revolutionary deepsea tugs with which ALP reached the top-end of the market
photo: ALP Maritime

setting up in Rotterdam. To be able to effectively compete, Fairplay had ordered four powerful harbour / coastal shiphandling tugs from Spain. The 52 tpb *Fairplay 21 to 24* entered Rotterdam in **1998** supported by some smaller units brought over from Germany. Incidentally, in **2001** two of these tugs were long-term chartered to Smit for service in Rotterdam but retained their company colours.

The port now had **Kotug, Smit and Fairplay** as shiphandlers, the first two being the dominant players. After some time the dust settled and the tug operators again used their competitor's tugs if the need arose. The operators worked from a central dispatch office which was also used by the pilots and other port service organisations. This set-up was offered by the Rotterdam Port Authority that wanted to improve effectiveness of the port services.

Some years later, in **2008**, dredging company Boskalis set its eye on Smit's terminal tugs to integrate these with

Lamnalco, a Boskalis / Rezayat 50/50 JV. Smit refused, but Boskalis equally refused to let down and in the end in **2009** Boskalis had acquired enough Smit shares and assurances by other Smit shareholders to buy all of Smit. Interestingly it was mentioned that one of the larger shareholders which gave early approval had been **SHV** (the Fentener Van Vlissingens – the same who in the past had teamed up with the Van Beuningens in SHV. The Van Beuningen family as we have seen elsewhere in this issue having been involved with Smit and the Internationale since the early 1900's).

Although Boskalis in an earlier stage had mentioned to possibly sell-off unwanted bits – an understatement as when they set out to do this all they wanted was the Smit terminal division – this did not happen. Upon the take-over of Smit they integrated the big tugs and the workboats in their own workboat fleet but kept the shiphandling business separate as a going concern. As Smit had built up extensive interests world-wide, Bos-Kalis re-grouped the shiphandling

business in geographical areas. **Keppel-Smit**, an existing Smit operation, covered the Far East, followed by **SAAM-Smit** covering the American continent. Part of the fleet was transferred to **Lamnalco**. This concerned the tugs engaged on terminal contracts, Lamnalco's core business. The European fleet remained a problem as both **Svitzer** and to a lesser extent **Boluda** had penetrated this market. Both were towing giants in their own way looking for expansion.

Svitzer then decided to enter Rotterdam to serve the ships of their parent **A.P. Moller / Maersk**. On 30 May, 2014, five tugs arrived in the port to start work. This initial fleet was not a dedicated one but assembled from different ports and included two chartered **Iskes** tugs. The business was aimed at the expansion of Europoort with the new Maasvlakte 2 terminals and with a view to the expected new container alliances. At the time, Fairplay had some 15% **market share** in Rotterdam, Svitzer had 10% and Kotug and Smit the remaining 75%. After just a year, however, Svitzer pulled its tugs out, although they subcontracted their contracts to competitor Fairplay. No reason was given for this but it might have had to do with the expected container alliance being thwarted by regulators, the delayed start-up of the new terminals at Europoort, the forbidden mutual assistance at peak periods which was being interpreted by Europe as a monopoly situation, or even the rumoured talks of a JV by Kotug and Smit.

Anyway Fairplay thus gained much work albeit as a subcontractor, but they needed more tugs. Svitzer had left one **Iskes** tug behind, which was now going to be run under the Fairplay subcontract.



Svitzer tugs on 30 May, 2014, entering Rotterdam in a show of force to start shiphandling

photo: Job van Eijk



Fairplay then contacted their partner company **Multraship** – Fairplay has a 50% interest in the Muller holding company - to provide the additional bollard pull.

Next, BosKalis and Kotug reached an agreement to pool their North-Western Europe operations in a 50 / 50 Joint Venture. **Kotug-Smit** started operations on 1 January, **2016**, pooling Kotug's German, Netherlands and UK operations with Smit's Belgium, Netherlands and UK operations. A total of 11 ports were to be served by a fleet of 65 tugs. **On 15 June, 2016, at 19.00 hours** this was officially conformed when Kotug's *SD Rebel* and Smit's *Smit Hudson* 'kissed and made' up and thus formally consumed an association that had been 173 years in the making on the Smit side and 105 years on the Kooren side.

As Ard-Jan Kooren remarked to his father Ton: "who would have believed this back in 1987?"

Globalisation hits

The Kotug-Smit joint-venture was not destined for a long life. The Spanish operator **Boluda** had set its eyes on a global operation comparable to that of Svitzer. Boluda had - apart from taking over operators in other parts of the world - subsequently purchased operators in north-western Europe working its way up from Spain via France - the purchase in **2007** of **Les Abeilles** from Groupe **Bourbon**. That company had overstretched itself in its quest to become a dominant offshore support player.

Next was Germany where **Unterweser Reederei** – in 2001 it had lost its parent VTG-Lehnkering – had been sold to **Linhoff Schiffahrt**. Linhoff's business was not into towing so in **2017** they did not mind selling URAG to Boluda. Also in **2019** the sale of **Kotug Smit** to Boluda was announced. And in February, 2019, **Boskalis** signed an agreement with **SAAM** whereby SAAM was to purchase the Boskalis stake in **SAAM-Smit Towage**.

Netherlands-based **Iskes Towage & Salvage** was the next on Boluda's shopping list. Iskes operated in IJmuiden / Amsterdam in a jv with Svitzer, at Eemshaven and several other small European ports in Germany and Portugal



MED ALTAIR seen 13 December, 2022 was part of the MedTug fleet in Rotterdam but saw little service
photo: Leen van der Meijden



VB KRACHT is the former RT ADRIAAN, the first hybrid tug in the Port of Rotterdam
photo: R.& F. van der Hoek

next to their offshore and distance towing. On 16 February, **2021** the definitive purchase agreement was signed. Iskes was to remain a separate entity within the Group. The same year, in December **2021**, Boluda acquired **Caledonian Towage**, operating from Invergordon.

Competition in Rotterdam arrived in the form of **MedTug**, a subsidiary of the shipping giant MSC – Mediterranean Shipping Company owned by the Aponte family. In 2020 MSC started with the set-up of its own towage service. The tugs were stationed in ports where MSC owned or operated container terminals. The build-up in Europe was slow and scattered – some were new tugs others second-hand. Anyway, in **2022** MedTug made an appearance in Rotterdam. But this was short-lived and MedTug largely

disappeared from Rotterdam faster than they came. But this was followed by the unexpected news that **MSC** had purchased a significant minority shareholding in Boluda and the tugs were handed over to **Boluda**.

In June **2022** Boskalis and its co-shareholder KS Investments Pte. Ltd. (Keppel) announced they had completed the sale of their equity stakes in their harbour towage activities in Singapore and Malaysia (**Keppel Smit Towage Pte Ltd** and **Maju Maritime Pte Ltd**) to Rimorchiatori Mediterranei SpA. Boskalis received EUR 92 million in cash for its 49% equity stake in the joint ventures. **Rimorchiatori Mediterranei** is a subsidiary of **Rimorchiatori Riuniti Group**, a maritime service provider headquartered in Genoa, Italy,





MED CAPELLA already in Boluda colours, seen 7 February, 2023

photo: Ruud Zegwaard

established in 1922. Rimorchiatori at the time operated a fleet of more than 100 modern vessels in more than 20 major ports.

In February 2023 **Boluda** Corporacion announced it was to acquire – subject to regulatory approvals – **Smit Lamnalco** from the 50 / 50 owners Boskalis and Rezayat Group. The Lamnalco connection of both partners dates from 1964. Smit Lamnalco owns 111 vessels mainly employed in terminal towage, maintenance and operations. With the

acquisition of Smit Lamnalco Boluda Towage becomes the world's leading company in the sector, with a fleet of 600 tugboats and an intervention capacity in 50 countries and 148 ports around the world. This acquisition confirms the expansion of Boluda Corporación Marítima worldwide, reaching strategic markets where Smit Lamnalco has a strong presence such as Australia, the Middle East, and West Africa.

And thus after 181 years the globalisation – at least in Rotterdam –

erased the name of Smit in the towage and shiphandling business while in 2022 Boskalis had disposed of the unwanted former Smit shiphandling operations as it had always intended to do. The new reality in the Port of Rotterdam is **Boluda** (with shareholder MedTug) and **Fairplay** (with associate Multratug and a stack of Svitzer contracts).

In 2023 history went full circle when HAL purchased Boskalis including their subsidiary Smit Salvage - about all that is left of what was started in 1842.

Editor's note

A ship's log notes the days happenings in brief facts for later perusal. Turning back the pages the curtain of time is rolled back and the reader will be reliving the clean sometimes harsh, sometimes satisfying, facts of the moment. There is an old saying that

'He who does not know of the past will not be able to understand the future'.

The famous salvage master Captain Sir John Williams (1896 – 1989) in his memoirs wrote of his days in sailing ships about the habit of the Chief Mate to write at the bottom of each page of the log:

**So ends this day,
All well fore and aft**

The log for the Rotterdam tug & towage business may be closed for today but we eagerly await tomorrow.

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"Grey" on-spec

The well-known Chilean shipyard ASENAV – officially Astilleros y Servicios Navales – at Valdivia recently delivered its first built-on-spec tug to buyers Ultratug, a long-standing client of the yard.

by TDI Tugboat Publications
all photos courtesy ASENAV

Yard number 189 was built to an ASENAV design and is a reverse tractor tug, i.e. a stern drive tug with the only winch at the bow. This is the sixth of this design to have been built by ASENAV. The vessel is classed LR +100 A1, Tug, Fire-fighting ship 1 (2.400 m³/hr) with water spray, *IWS, +LMC, UMS.

The hull

is divided into five watertight compartments. From forward to aft these are the fore peak, accommodation, engine room, thruster room and aft peak. Reinforced frame spacing is 1100 mm. A skeg runs along the centre line from frame 4 to frame 17 forward. Bilge keels were fitted to reduce rolling. The main deck forward has a semi-raised forecastle deck that houses the combined towing / anchor winch. Dimensions are 25,80 m oa incl fenders / 24,70 m (hull) x 11,00 m (mld) x 4,60 m. Maximum draught on the baseline is 3,80 m and 5,70 m on the skeg.

The hull is protected by fenders all round. Forward, the bow is protected by a double layer of rubber fenders. The top consists of tubular sections with a diameter of 800 mm. Below that block



GREY being launched at the ASENAV yard in Valdivia

fenders have been used of the W fender type with dimensions of 500 x 330. The stern is protected by a single layer of tubular fenders, diameter 600 mm. In the sides DO-type fendering was used with dimensions 300 mm.

Main Deck

The main deck forward from frame 12 is stepped up to form a semi-raised forecastle deck. The superstructure runs from frame 7 to frame 15. Aft of the

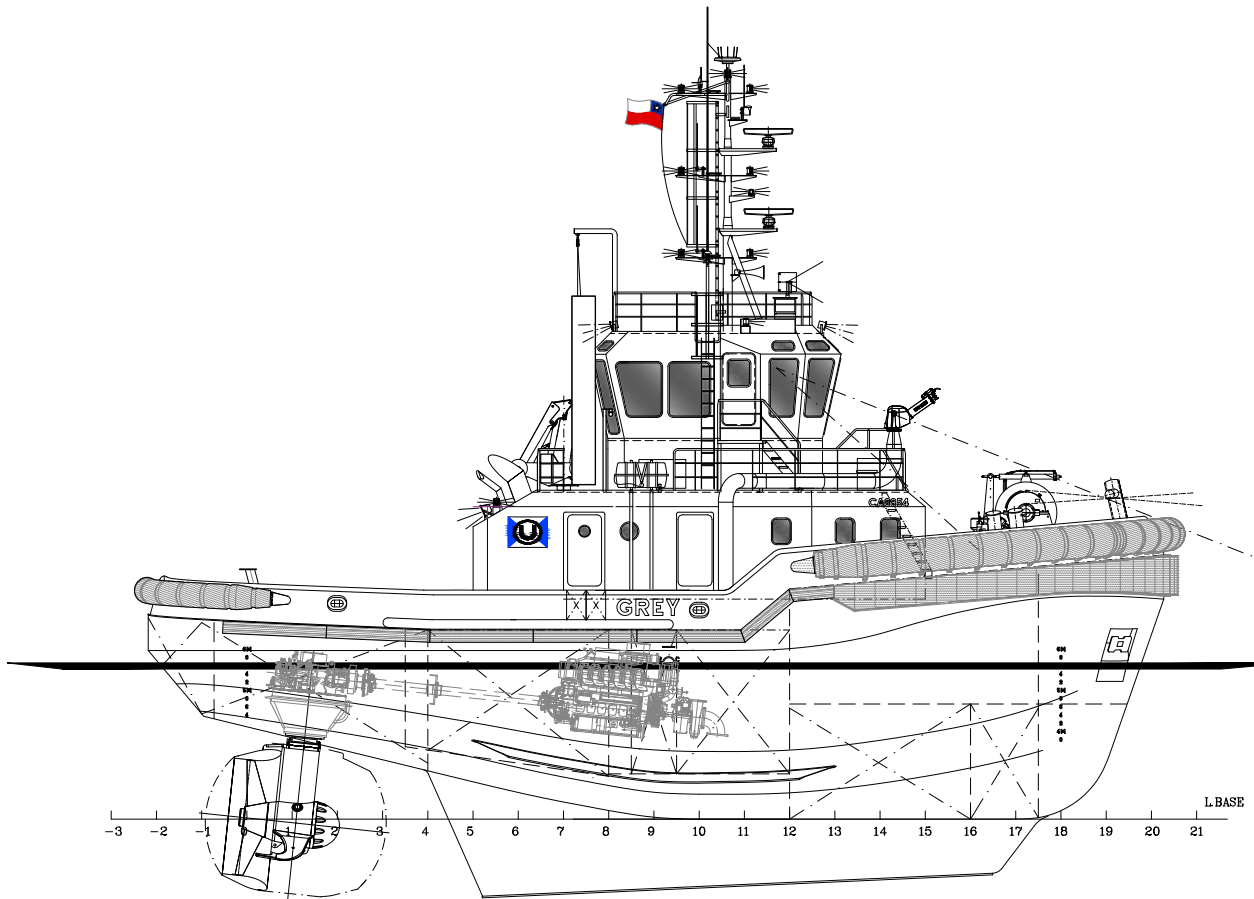
superstructure are the funnels, a paint store and a general store and the engine room fans. Capacity of the fans is 27.100 m³/hr air each. The towing gear on the aft deck consists of a tow hook and (to starboard) a **Kongsberg** capstan with a capacity of 4,5 tonnes at 30 m/min. To port and starboard a wire-catcher was fitted limiting the travel of the towline over the bulwarks to 70 degrees. The aft deck can accommodate two 20-foot containers.

The semi-raised forecastle deck is the home of the Kongsberg combined towing / anchor winch. Pull is 37,0 tonnes at a speed of 19 m / min first layer low speed and 10 tonnes at 51 m / min first layer high speed. Drum capacity is 220 m towing line diameter 40 mm. Brake 130 tonnes. The split-drum winch is fitted with warp heads on each side. In front of the winch is a double towing bollard.

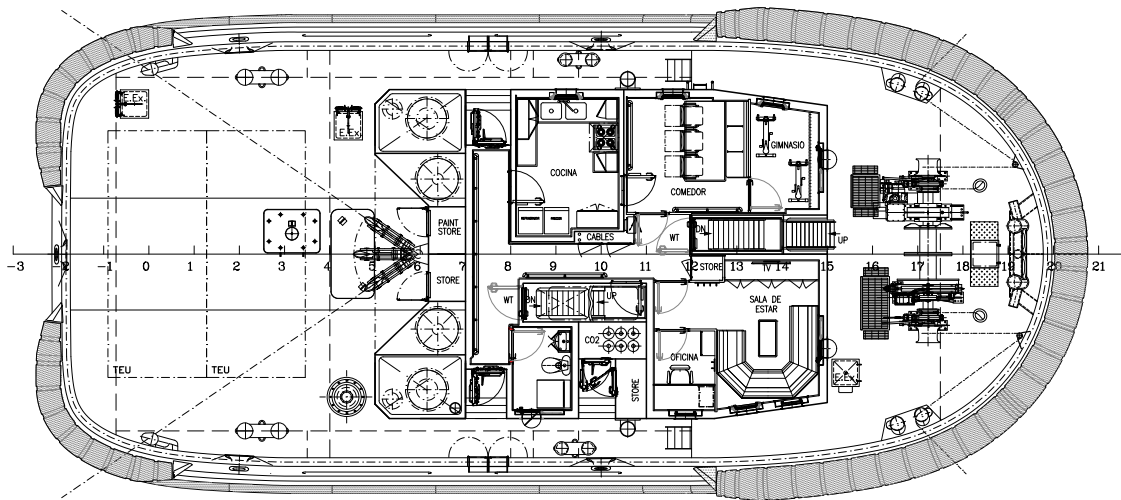
Accommodation Deck

All cabins are fitted for two persons. Each has two berths, a desk, seats and lockers. Non have private facilities. For that reason there are two washrooms with shower, toilet and wash basin. The Master's cabin is to port with the Engineer's cabin to starboard.

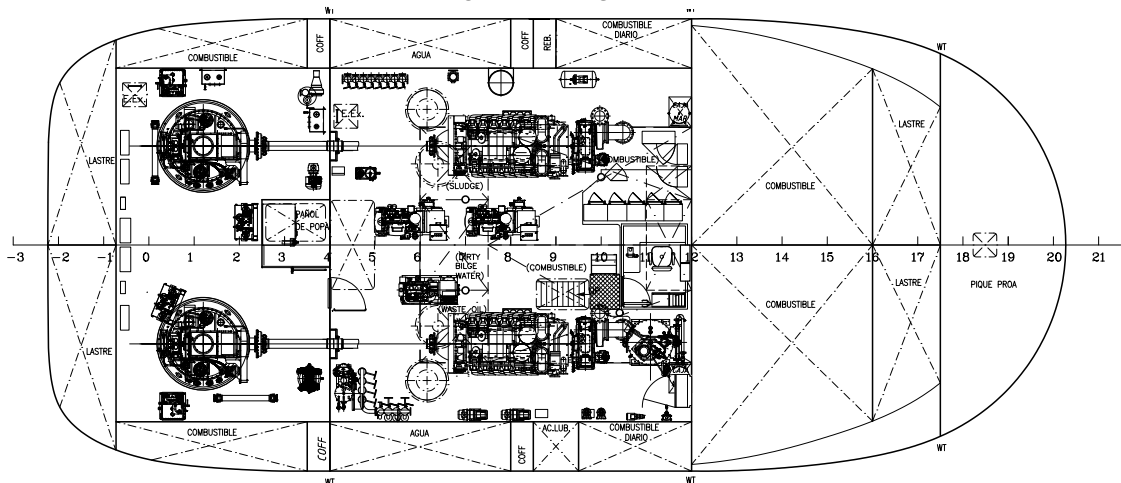




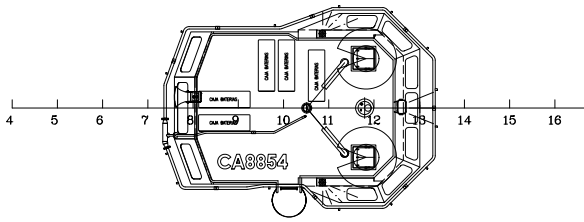
MAIN DECK



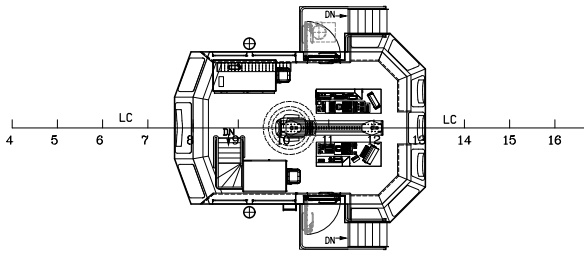
BELOW MAIN DECK



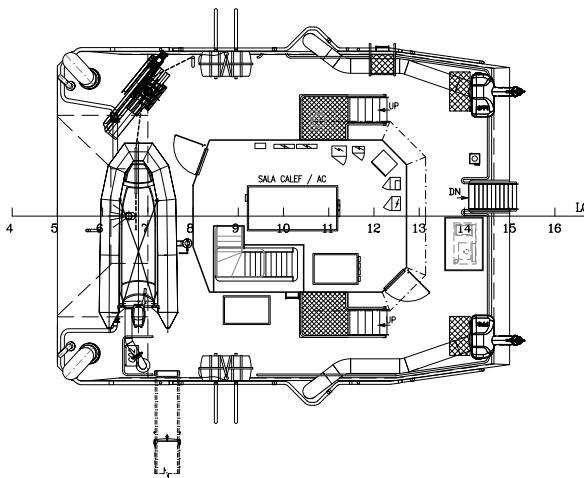
TOP DECK



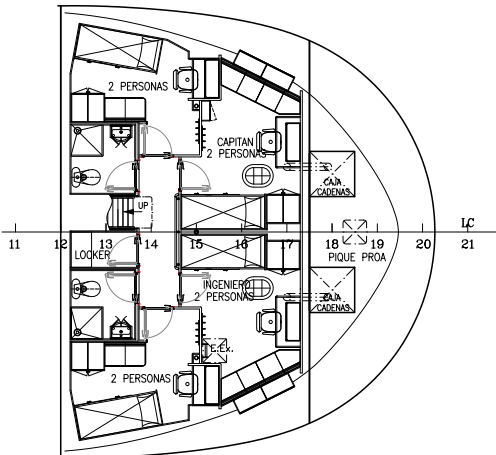
WHEELHOUSE



BOAT DECK



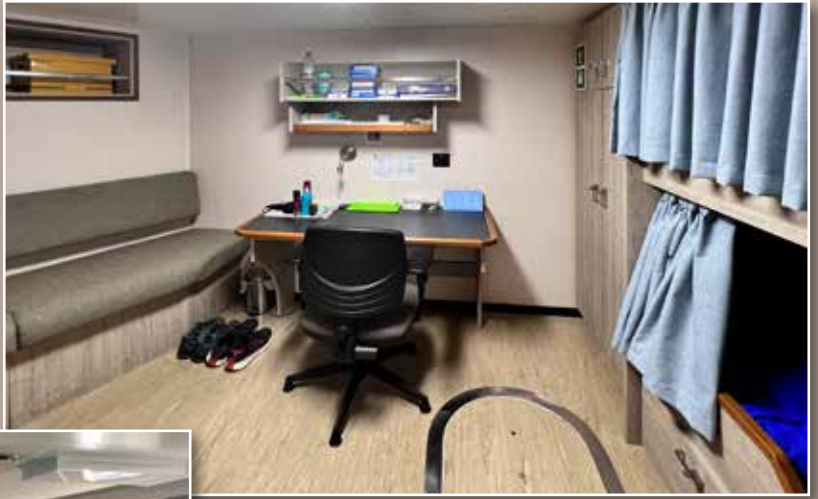
ACCOMMODATION DECK



Superstructure



Bow view



Master's cabin



Day / recreation room



Messroom



Bow fendering

Superstructure

Forward starboard is the day / recreation room with suitable seating and flatscreen TV. Incorporated in the room is the ship's office room. Aft of the dayroom are the deck store and the CO2 room both of which can be accessed from deck only. Also on this side is a sanitary space with shower, toilet and wash basin accessible from within the superstructure.

Forward to port is a fitness room – an unusual item on tugs this compact. Aft of the gym is the messroom seating six persons with the galley further aft. The superstructure can be entered from the deck port or starboard. The staircase going down to the accommodation deck is fitted with a watertight door.

Boat Deck

Forward on the boat deck are the two **FFS** water / foam fifi monitors, each with a capacity of 2.400 m³ / hr of water. Height 51 m / reach 100 m. As may be expected the boat deck is where you find the boats. In this case an inflatable life raft to port and starboard. At the aft end the **Survitec** Zodiac RIBO 450 m.o.b. / workboat is sitting in its cradle. The **Amco Veba** hydraulic knuckle-boom launch crane sits at the port side. Capacity is 750 kg at a reach of 9,70 m.

Also at this level is the **airco / electra** room. On top of this sits the **wheelhouse**. This can be reached from inside the superstructure as well as from the boat deck. The controls are arranged in two longitudinal desks with further equipment built into overhead cabinets. Visibility from the wheelhouse is all



GREY - note side fendering



Towing / anchor winch

round with extra windows in the tumble-home of the wheelhouse roof forward and aft. The window wiper are from **Hepworth Marine**.

The **top deck** with the navcom mast also features a number of battery boxes for emergency and communication power.

Two **Seematz** searchlights of 1.000 Watt each are fitted at the forward end of the top deck to port and starboard.

Below main deck

The compartment aft of the collision bulkhead contains two ballast tanks at the forward end and two of the fuel tanks. On top of these sits the accommodation. In the **engine room** the various tanks in the bottom and in the sides create a sort of double hull. Fitted in the sides are the two fuel day tanks, two water tanks and a lube oil tank (to sb). The bottom tanks are two fuel tanks, a sludge tank, a dirty bilgewater tank and a waste-oil tank.

The two main engines are two **MAN** 12-cylinder 175D-MM IMO Tier II diesels driving the thrusters via a carbon-fibre shaft. Output is 2.040 kW (2.774 bhp) each at 1.800 rpm (5.548 bhp total). Bollard pull is 76,3 tonnes measured during trials at 100% mcr. The layout of the engine room is such that a



Aft deck - note position of crane and m.o.b. workboat





Engine room looking forward with gen sets (left) and harbour set sitting between the main engines



Looking forward from boat deck



Wheelhouse looking aft

later upgrade to IMO Tier III remains possible. This would involve retrofitting an exhaust aftertreatment system to remove nitrogen oxides from the gases. Speed is 13,2 knots

Also installed are two **Volvo** PHD5A TA / UCM274D auxiliary generators and a **Sole** Diesel 50 GT harbour generator. The thruster room houses the two **Kongsberg** type US 205 FP azimuth thrusters, each equipped with FP propellers in nozzles and HD slipping clutches.

The tug has **FiFi-1** LR class notation with water spray. The main engines also drive the two FiFi pumps supplied by the Norwegian provider **FFS** via the front PTO. Each pump is capable of supplying 1.200 m³ / hr to the two monitors and the self-protection spray system.

Tank capacity:

The **aft peak** tanks are fitted as water ballast tanks. Other capacities are:

Fuel oil	170,0 m ³
Fresh water	28,0 m ³
Ballast water	46,0 m ³

Lube oil	4,3 m ³
Sewage	4,5 m ³
Dirty oil	2,5 m ³
Sludge	2,5 m ³
Oily water	3,5 m ³

This is the sixth tug of this design. The

other five tugs delivered earlier were *Caburgua* (yn 174 – delivered 2015), *Calafquen* (yn 175 – delivered 2015), *Neltume* (yn 176 – delivered 2015), *Rinihue* (yn 177 – delivered 2015) and *Panguipulli* (yn 179 – delivered 2017).



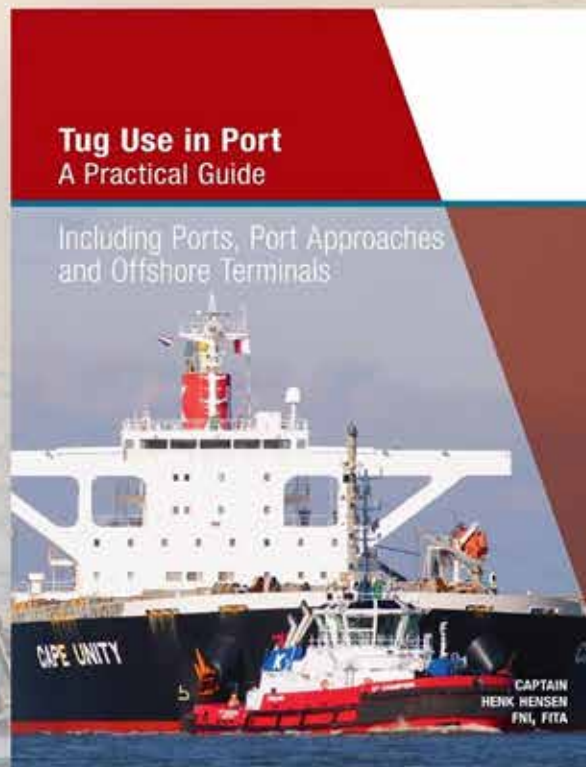
Testing fire monitors





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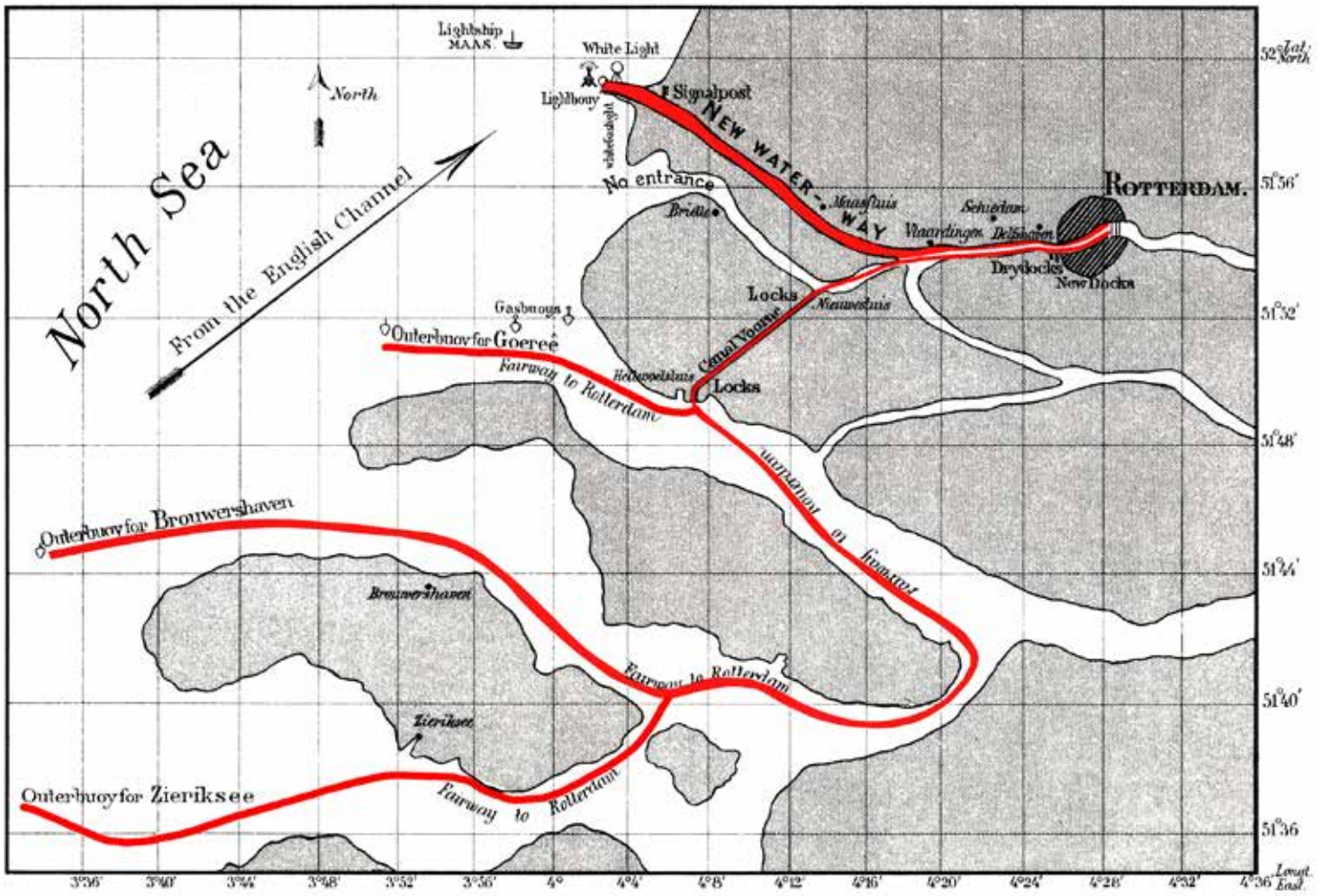
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Map showing the different fairways to Rotterdam over the years as published in the Dirkzwager Guide for 1892

map: coll. Job van Eijk



Situation in 1972. On the left the New Rotterdam Waterway, centre the Europoort with on the right the Maasvlakte under construction. The Caland Canal runs parallel to the Waterway with the harbours and the industry on the right. The Beer Canal connects the ports area to the far right with the entrance to Europoort. At the top of the photo is the temporary entrance

photo: photo Bart Hofmeester for Rijkswaterstaat - photo coll. Job van Eijk

Rotterdam Tug Times

When researching the history of the towage business in Rotterdam, one thing becomes clear. Today's operations are the outcome of a process started in the port's early years and arranged through the influence of less than a handful of businessmen.

by Job van Eijk

Harbour towage, or craft towage, was carried out by a variety of operators, some of which were offshoots or subsidiaries of the shiphandlers. In addition Rotterdam was a base for inland-waters and Rhine towage operators. In the wake of shiphandling ocean towing developed.

Before diving into the history of towage it is necessary to provide a background that explains how this all came to be.

The birth of Rotterdam

The birthplace of Rotterdam was where the estuary of the river Rhine from the east and the tributaries to the river Rotte from the north had formed silted up areas of dry land. People constructed dams at certain places in order to keep suitable land areas from flooding. It was in **1296** that a dam was finished blocking the only remaining water outlet, the river Rotte. This was the start of a proper settlement. On the land side trade with other settlements, villages and cities developed. On the water side fishermen found a berth and over time seagoing trade developed, especially with the Baltic region. On 7 June, **1340**, Count William IV of Henegouwen granted city-rights to Rotterdam. Rotterdam considers that year as the start of the city. Even so, even the fore runner of the 'city' Rotterdam was 'established' at a fairly late date in

history, with Dordrecht founded in 1015 and Vlaardingen even earlier.

An important occurrence happened in **1421**. The so-named **St. Elisabeth Flood** drastically diverted the run of the rivers in the area toward the southerly regions. The river current that had maintained the water depth at Rotterdam lost 75% of its energy. The consequence was siltation. Sand banks formed and gradually shipping had to take more southerly routes to reach Rotterdam.

When in **1585** the Duke of Parma conquered Antwerp many of the Antwerp-based traders fled and continued their work out of Rotterdam. This gave the by now second-largest city in the country an enormous boost in trade. At the time Rotterdam began an enormous expansion with several new harbours being constructed and new shipyards established. Shipping and fishing related support businesses also came to Rotterdam. Industrialisation began.

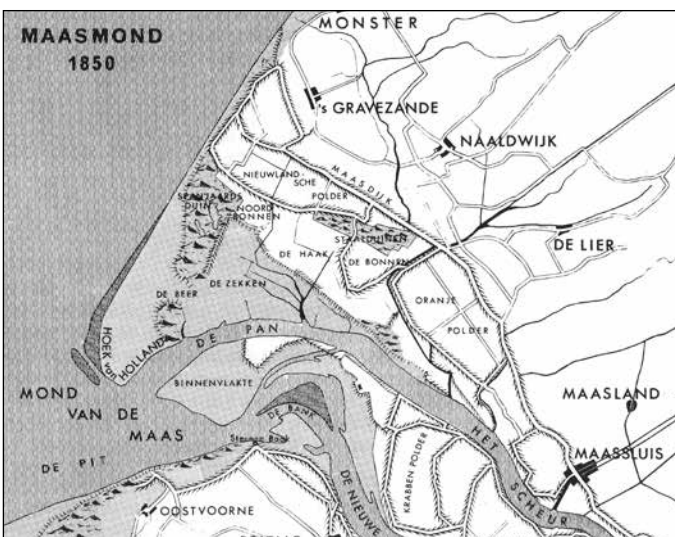
Jumping in time to 10 May, **1816**, Rotterdam saw the arrival of the first steamer, *Defiant*. The Rotterdam Chamber of Commerce didn't think much of this development although they saw possibilities for towage services up the river Rhine. Entrepreneurs nevertheless

continued to develop steam in shipping and started (inland) liner services.

King Willem I took a great interest in trade and stimulated and subsidised all kinds of developments in water infrastructure, steam, shipbuilding, etc. Rotterdam, however, took a back seat in these developments, even blocking things like a railroad. The water depth at several quays had become too shallow but they didn't really care. In **1843**, however, the City Council woke up when the railroad Antwerp – Cologne was inaugurated with connections to France and to the ferry port of Ostend. In **1852** England removed political barriers on international trade and trade routes – in fact a monopoly – that saw shipping to and from Rotterdam jump. Of the 2.040 ships arriving that year from abroad no less than 1.342 arrived from England. Of these, some 800 were steamers and that opened Rotterdam eyes. In the late 1800s the port of Rotterdam jumped across the river to the southern part of the city. That was the start of a development westward that for the time being today has ended in the Maasvlakte II area of Europoort.

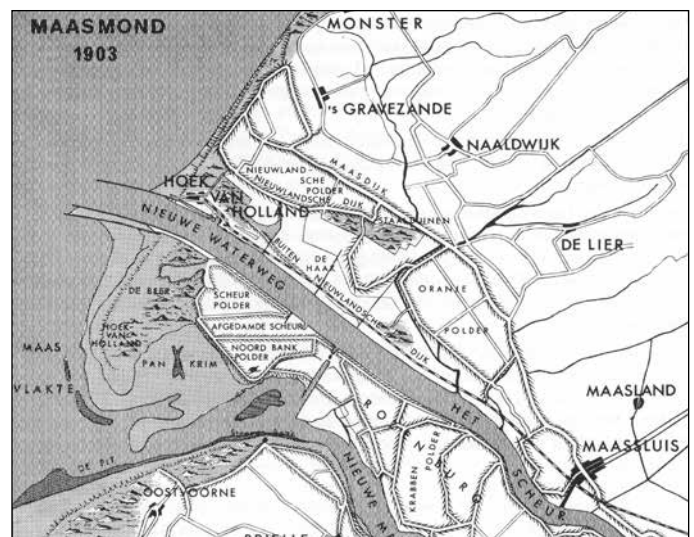
From Sea to Port

Rotterdam as a port had one major problem that hampered its development. To get to the port a long and winding



Entrance to the river Maas in 1850

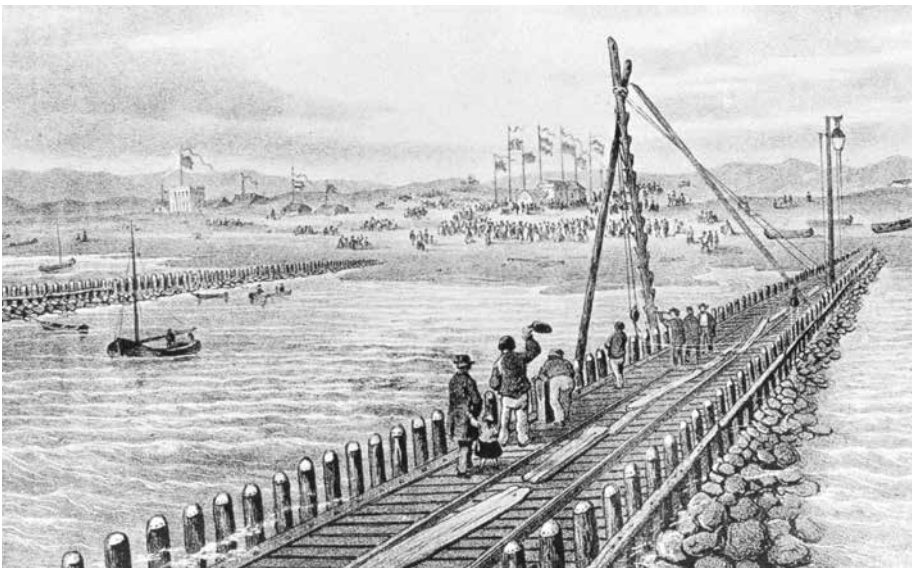
map: coll. Job van Eijk



Entrance to the Maas river in 1903

map: coll. Job van Eijk





First spade ceremony for the graving of the Waterway, 31 October, 1866, by the Prince of Orange. For technical reasons the Waterway was dug from the seaside. This had to do with the construction of the two moles (or pierheads) that had to guide the current as well as protect the entrance map: Dutch National Archives

fairway had to be used. Up until about **1740** the fairway to Rotterdam had covered some 35 kilometres (**19 nm**) but it was a shallow and ever shifting channel. The bigger sailing ships of the day had to use a longer route via Goeree Roads, Haringvliet, Hollands Diep, Dordtse Kil and Oude Maas – a 95 kilometre (**52 nm**) route. In 1830 the Voornse Canal was opened linking Haringvliet and Brielse Maas. This shortened the route from 95 to 40 kilometres (nearly **22 nm**) but the canal was narrow. It solved the problem only for a short while since the size of steam-powered vessels continued to grow. The only way left for these big ships was via the Brouwershavense Gat or the Easter Scheldt, a distance of no less than 115 kilometres (**62 nm**). Even so the shifting sands sometimes lowered the available water depth in such a way that ships had to be lightered in Brouwershaven Roads.

The shortcut to sea

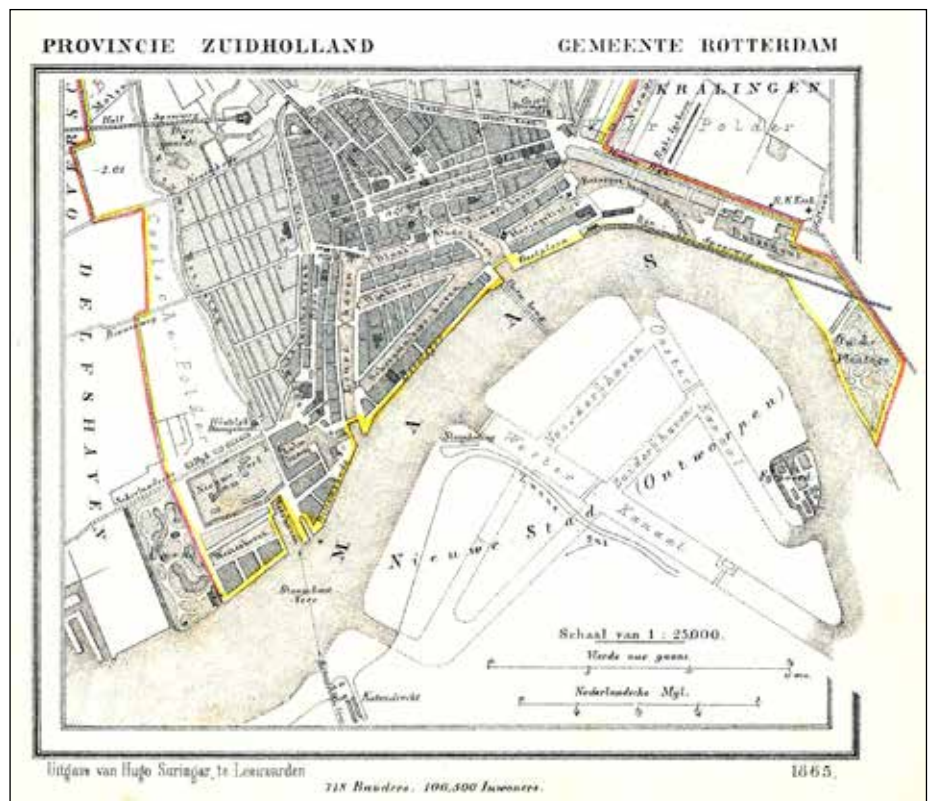
By the 1850's it had dawned on the powers that be that if Rotterdam was to be attractive as a port it needed a shortcut to the sea that was always navigable and kept at a suitable depth. Enter **Pieter Caland**. In **1853** Mr Caland – an engineer employed by the Dutch 'Rijkswaterstaat' – the Government body responsible for the water infrastructure and flood protection in The Netherlands – was transferred to Den Briel (a.k.a. Brielle) on the island of Voorne. Nothing special, but the inquisitive Caland started researching why the Brielse Maas was

constantly silting up when abroad the harbour entrances and rivers remained at a given depth. On the basis of his findings he was sent to England and France to research this phenomenon. The result was a proposal for the connection of the Scheur – an arm of the river Maas – with the North Sea by cutting through the dunes at the 'Hoek van Holland' (translated literally as 'the corner of Holland'). Additional works were to ensure the current in the river remained

powerful enough to scour the bottom and remove sediment thus keeping the waterway at depth. Caland's idea also involved the closure of the Scheur west of Rozenburg in addition to using the Oude Maas to add its water to that of the Maas to create enough flow downriver.

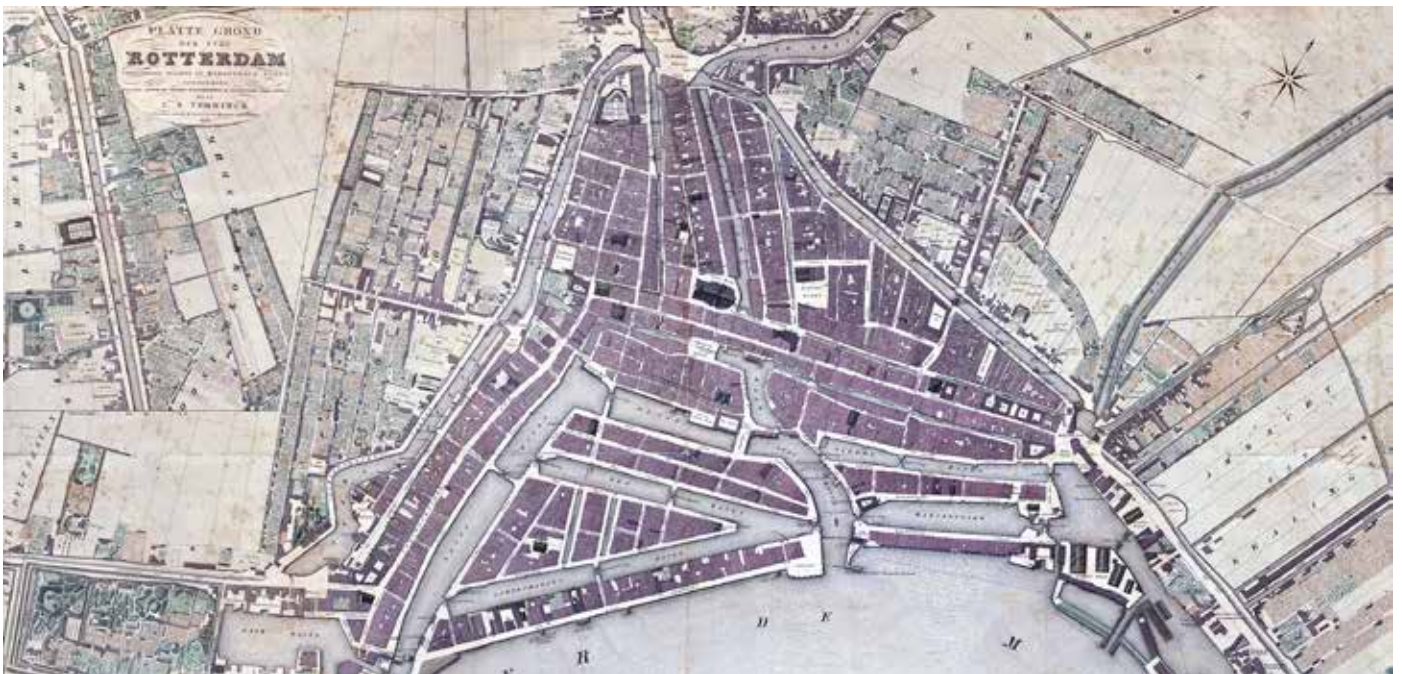
The works were started on 23 March, **1864**. Five years later - in September **1869** - a narrow fairway was opened for small ships like fishing vessels. Meanwhile the work continued and in **1872**, on 9 March, the South Eastern Railways' steamer *Richard Young* – draught 3 metres - was **the first merchant ship** to use the New Rotterdam Waterway leaving Rotterdam for Harwich (England). The distance from the North Sea to Rotterdam had been reduced to a mere 30 kilometres (**16 nm**). By the end of 1872 no less than 530 ships (steam and sail) had used the new entrance to the port of Rotterdam.

Unfortunately, the current generated was not powerful enough so the sediment formed sandbanks and a bar between and just outside the pierheads. This caused delays up to several days under certain circumstances. Additional work had to be carried out to tackle this problem. The situation eventually improved but maintenance dredging was a recurring necessity and has been so until today.



Map of the Rotterdam port areas in 1865. On the left bank the old inner-city harbours, On the South Bank the planned new harbours map: Rotterdam City Archives





Map from 1839 showing the old inner-city harbours like with names like Shipmakers Harbour, Salmon Harbour and Wine Harbour, to name but a few

An important event that boosted Rotterdam's position as a transit port was the 1868 **Mannheim Act**. This act upheld both the principle of the absence of tolls levied for navigation on the **Rhine** and the possibility for those States that were members of the Central Commission to adopt common regulations (subject to a veto by any State). It was the absence of the tolls that allowed the transport of coal and iron ore to become a booming business between Rotterdam and the German Ruhr area with its coal mines and steel plants. By **1910** Rotterdam handled 82% of the goods transported upriver – approx. 75% iron ore and grain – while downriver the coal dominated.

The First World War and the economic depression of the 1930s showed that

Rotterdam was too dependent on the transit cargo to and from Germany. The decision was made to broaden the base with port-related heavy industry. These plans were thwarted by the Second World War, but revived at war's end. From 1947 the jump was made across the Oude Maas with the **Botlek** area, a predominantly tanker port with chemical industry.

With the size of tankers exploding it became apparent the route from sea to the Oude Maas and the Botlek was not and would never be deep enough. The threat by some oil majors to shift their ships to Wilhelshaven and construct a pipeline to the Ruhr activated the Port of Rotterdam to develop the Europort area between Rozenburg and the sea – initially for 65.000 dwt ships with a draft

of 12,5 m and later 100.000 dwt and a 14 m draft. In the 1960's the port expanded even further west when the Maasvlakte shallows were transformed into a port. The new port was to accommodate 160.000 dwt vessels with a draft of 17,4 m (57 feet). In 1966 it was decided to deepen the port area and harbour entrance to accommodate 250.000 dwt ships on a water depth of 18,9 m (62 feet). In 1979 this was increased to 19,8 m (65 feet). In 2006 the decision was made for the extension of Maasvlakte with Maasvlakte 2, an area of the port designated for container traffic and distribution centres. Of lately an offshore wind turbine construction site is also part of the portfolio. Access to the Maasvlakte for deep-draught ships is via the Maasgeul and Eurogeul fairways.



The map of the Rotterdam port area in showing the situation 2022

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Rotterdam Tug Times 1842-1914

Obviously tugs were active in Rotterdam prior to 1842, but this is the year in which – with hindsight - the shaping of the (towage) future began. The early 1900's were the crucial years until WW1 intervened. Post war, significant changes were made.

by Job van Eijk



The Founding Father of the Smit towage business is Fop Smit

photo: courtesy Dutch National Towage Museum

When researching the history of the towage business in Rotterdam, one thing becomes clear. Today's operations are the outcome of a process started in the port's early years and arranged through the influence of less than a handful of businessmen. It began with mr **Fop Smit** who started the towage business that developed into a straight line to today's Smit International. The second influence came from mr **Piet Smit Jr.**, a relative



Pieter (Piet) Smit Jr. concentrated on shiphandling and inland waters towage

photo: courtesy Dutch National Towage Museum

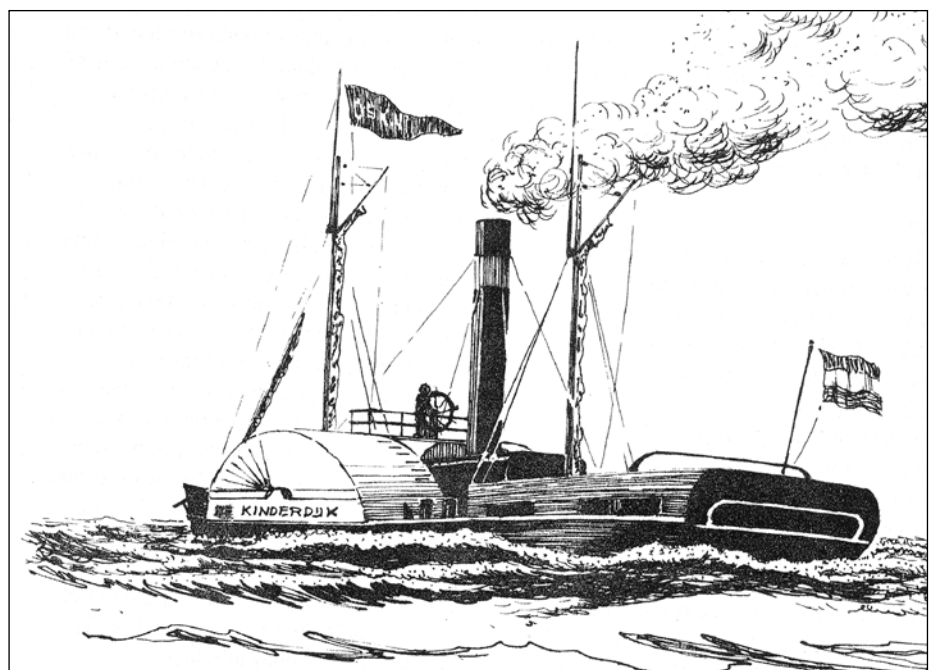
of Fop Smit. Both had their family roots in the shipbuilding industry. The third man was **Antonie Kooren** who started out as a captain / owner of a single tug. His timeline leads straight to Kotug. The fourth and probably binding factor was **D.G. (George) van Beuningen**, a director of SHV. Others names that pop up in the story are, amongst others, Vuyk, Horstmann, Burger, Kers, Hoogslag, van Kessel and van der Vorm. Influencers – as they would be called today – were Holland-America Line, Zurmuhlen, Wijsmuller, Dirkwager, Schuchmann, Wm. Watkins and Bugsier Reederei. One other factor played a role – the forming prior to WW II of a centralised tug dispatch office (known as the Sleepvaart Centrale).

Fop Smit

In 1843 the shipyard owner Fop Smit constructed a 140 ihp tug named *Kinderdijk*. The tug was built for account of Fop Smit to the order of a consortium of Rotterdam-based shipping companies and insurance companies. The tug was to be stationed at Hellevoetsluis to assist vessels to and from Brouwershaven and Dordrecht. Financing the operation were the said consortium and an

annual subsidy by the Provincial States of South Holland. Fop Smit financed the construction of the vessel he thus owned. The towage concession dates from December, **1842**, which can thus be considered as the starting date of the history of the Smit towage business that eventually led to Smit International. In addition the above service more work was generated by the necessity to lighten the bigger vessels bound for Rotterdam. Additional tugs were required and in 1847 or thereabout a 100 hp paddle tug was purchased in Germany, followed within a few years by an additional three paddle tugs built in the Fop Smit yard.

Over the years the company experienced competition but Fop Smit was in the habit of concluding non-competition agreements thus avoiding cut-throat price wars. The Voornse Canal operation, for instance, was thus handed over to the Gallas firm which then was bound to operate only within Canal limits. On 25 August, **1866**, Fop Smit passed away. The fleet at the time consisted of nine paddle tugs and this fleet and the company was taken over by his sons Jan and Leendert, his



Paddle tug KINDERDIJK - start of the saga

artwork: coll. Job van Eijk





L. Smit & Co.'s paddle tug ZIERIKZEE ex ROTTERDAM I (owner Gallas). Built 1958 by Paul van Vlissingen en Dudok van Heel, Amsterdam. 29,00 (oa) x 11,00 x 2,25 m. Draught 1,90 m. Acquired 1868. 1894 sold for scrap
photo: coll. Job van Eijk



NOORDZEE built in 1892 by L.Smit & Zn Shipyard, Kinderdijk, was the first of two tugs ordered for deepsea work. 39,00 / 37,80 x 7,37 x 3,66 m. Triple expansion steam engine, output 690 ihp. 1909 lengthened to 44,980 m. Second funnel removed. 26 April, 1916, mined near Galloper LV and sunk
photo: L. Smit & Zn. Shipyard

nephew Jan and Murk Lels. The latter was married to nephew-Jan's sister. The company name was altered to **Stoomsleepdienst** (Steam Towage Service) **L. Smit & Co.** The purpose of the company was widened to include sea towage and 'any service that was within the vessels capability'. L. Smit anticipated the probable success of the Waterway for in **1869** it stationed the paddle tug *Zierikzee* at **Maassluis**. The official opening of the Waterway was on 10 July, 1871, when *Zierikzee*

towed a string of fishing vessels from Maassluis to the North Sea but it would take another 9 years for Smit to establish a maintenance base for its tugs at Maassluis. In **1901** Smit moved its headquarters from Alblasterdam to Rotterdam but the Maassluis offices and workshops remained to serve the deepsea tugs and salvage vessels.

Depression

In **1874** the **French-German War** was ended but as a consequence The

Netherlands ran into an economic depression. Competitors in the towage industry in the area like Noordendorp, Vrijhof, van Disselwerf, Gallas and the Sliedrechtse Sleepdienst went under. Piet Smit Jr. and Leen Smit both survived and with the loss of competition were in a stronger position than before. L. Smit also turned its attention to deepsea towage.

Piet Smit Jr

Another Smit, Pieter Smit Jr, worked on his uncle Jan Smit Fopzn's shipyard at Slikkerveer. He learned the shipbuilding trade and in **1871** (or 72) Piet purchased the shipyard of Joost Pot – an uncle of his - at Slikkerveer. For his own account he then built a number of tugs, the first being *Wacht am Rhein* in 1871. In **1877** he founded the **Slikkerveersche Sleepdienst** with five tugs. The initial work area was Rotterdam and the Waterway but this was soon extended with Dordrecht and into Zeeland as well as to Antwerp. The Rotterdamsche Handelsvereniging (Rotterdam Trade Society) provided an unexpected boost to Piet Smit's operation. In 1879 the Trade Society was the centre of a big fraud case by one of its directors, Mr Pincoffs. The Society, amongst others, ran a tugboat operation and five tugs could be purchased by Piet Smit effectively doubling its local fleet putting it on par with competitor L. Smit. In another development Piet Smit went into the coaling business not only for the transport but also for bunkering purposes. In this respect Piet Smit's organisation took a wider view than its competitors by betting on several horses. By **1899** the fleet consisted of 39 tugs. The oldest was *Mosquito* (built 1876) and the youngest *Kneuter* (40 ihp) from 1899.

Piet Smit later set up a new shipyard in Rotterdam which also facilitated its tug fleet. Nevertheless the tug fleet remained a subsidiary of the yard even though it had expanded considerably. It is of interest that the agent of Slikkerveersche Sleepdienst, mr Verhey, had built up such a name that the company was listed in the phone book under the name of Verhey!. In **1906** the Slikkerveersche Sleepdienst was changed into **NV Nederlandsche Stoomsleepdienst van Piet Smit Jr** (Netherlands Steam Towage Co of Piet



Smit Jr.). From the name it is clear that Rotterdam was not the sole operational area – Piet Smit's tugs were seen throughout the Netherlands especially in the middle and southern part of the country. Then, in 1912, Piet Smit, who had no successors, sold his yard and the towage service to **D.G. van Beuningen**,

Rhine towage: Willem van Driel

In 1888 mr Willem van Driel Sr. – owner of two tugs - settled in Rotterdam. With his tugs and with captain / owners for whom he acted as an agent – the fleet was employed on the river Rhine. By 1900 van Driel owned 10 tugs employed exclusively in the Rhine trade. His *Fiat Voluntas VII* was delivered in 1897 and at that time the most powerful screw tug on the Rhine.

Enter Holland-America Line

The first ship to cross the Atlantic entirely under steam was the Dutch paddle steamer *Curacao*. This was in 1827. But it was only in 1869 that the **Nederlandsch-Amerikaanse Stoomvaart Maatschappij** (a.k.a. Holland-America Line or H.A.L.) was established for the express purpose of starting a liner service from Rotterdam to America. On 1 May, **1873**, they ordered two passenger liners designed with the Waterway in mind. The ongoing siltation, however, caused difficulties in that often the liners could not enter or leave the Waterway unless the tide was suitable. Even then groundings were a more than occasional occurrence.

So in **1891** the N.A.S.M. approached L. Smit & Co. questioning whether they were willing to have more powerful tugs available in the Rotterdam Waterway area, with a view to assist vessels running aground. L.Smit & Co. was triggered by this - at least in part - to have two 690 ihp steam tugs built – *Noordzee* and *Oostzee* – that were to be stationed at **Hoek van Holland**.

Despite this in **1903** the Holland-America Line opened a new quay at Hoek van Holland, the '**America**' Quay built for use by the newer transatlantic liners of the Holland-America Line to discharge passengers that were in a hurry to continue their travel using the international trains running from Hook of Holland. And to unload cargo to minimise the draft of the new ships

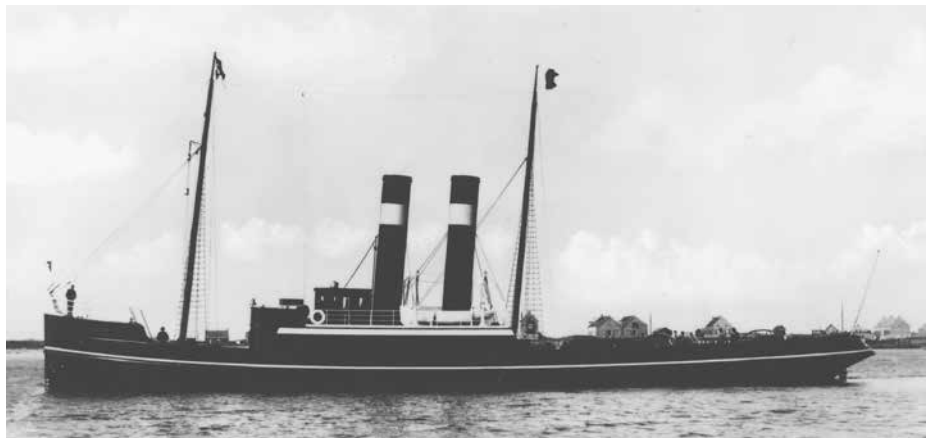
to allow them to reach Rotterdam independent of the prevailing tide. To be certain the availability of a suitable tug remained a necessity.

L. Smit & Co. goes deepsea

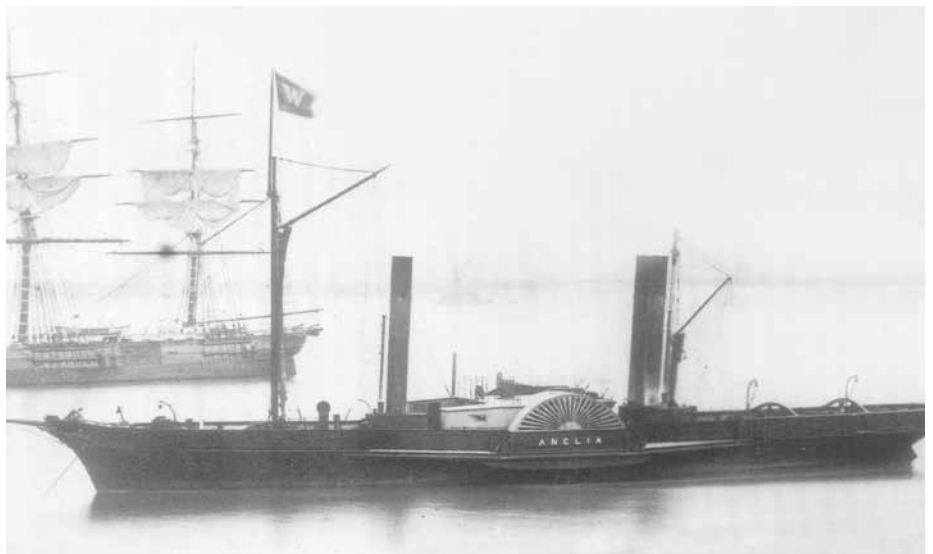
Around the same time that the two big tugs were ordered the Dutch dredging companies had greatly expanded their operations abroad. This had led to an increased demand for deepsea towage – initially carried out by the likes of the Wm. Watkins company which was the first to be hired to tow the Dutch dredging equipment over longer distances. So the incentive for Smit to acquire deepsea tugs was there. The two big tugs were soon put to work on distance towing. At the same time Smit had ordered a string of powerful seagoing tugs so the service to H.A.L. was more or less assured. In 1895

Ocean (lbp 45,47 m -1.500 ihp) joined the fleet, followed by *Zuiderzee* and sister *Lauwerzee* (1897 – 33,48 m – 450 ihp), *Roode Zee* and *Zwarte Zee* (1898 – 50,48 m – 1.500 ihp), *Poolzee* (1900 – 40,97 m – 1.000 ihp), *Oostzee* (2) (1903 – 34,67 m – 500 ihp), *Zwarte Zee* (2) (1906 – lbp 50,14 m – 1.250 ihp), *Gouwzee* (lbp 32,36 m – 500 ihp), *Rozenburg* (1906 – 27,84 m – 500 ihp) and *Roode Zee* (2) (1908 – 52,43 m – 1.250 ihp). While head office remained in Rotterdam, Maassluis was chosen as the operational base of the company. In 1896 L. Smit established at Maassluis an office building, a stores / workshop and several houses.

Even though a powerful starter Smit was somewhat late. The London-based **William Watkins** 1866-built paddle tug *Anglia* (700 ihp) was an early distance towing tug and in 1875 towed the liner



OCEAN was completed by L. Smit & Zn in 1895. 49,23 / 45, 47 x 8,97 x 5,29 m. Draught 4,09 m. Triple expansion steam engine, output 1.200 ihp. 1915 sold to J.S. Watkins, London, as *RACIA*. Via a variety of owners in 1943 reconstructed as a tanker, 1946 motorised. 1983 at La Spezia for scrapping
photo: coll. Job van Eijk



Wm. Watkins' paddle tug *ANGLIA* was built in 1866 as a 'seeking' tug which meant she was sent to sea 'on spec' to try and pick up a sailing vessel seeking a tow for the crossing through the - even then - congested waterways
photo: coll. National Maritime Museum - coll. Job van Eijk



Syria from St. Helena to Southampton. Other distance towing tugs were the 1874-built paddlers *Hibernia* (1) and *Scotia*. The screw tug *Hibernia* (2) (825 ihp) was built in 1884 specially for distance towing, as were *Oceana* and *Guiana* (1887 - 1.000 ihp). L. Smit & Co. thus could be termed a late but otherwise powerful starter in deepsea towing. The **Amsterdam Tug & Salvage Co.** (Zurmuhlen) had received its first deepsea distance towing tug *Titan* (44,83 m – 1.000 ihp) in 1894, followed in 1898 by *Cyclop* (500 ihp), in 1907 by *Atlas* (1.200 ihp) and in 1910 by *Simson* (850 ihp).

By the end of the century, in **1899**, the L. Smit fleet numbered 26 tugs of which 10 were seagoing of which 6 deepsea. The oldest tug in the fleet was *Schiedam* (275 ihp) which dated from 1865, the youngest was *Wachter* (180 ihp) dating from 1895. Of the seagoing fleet the oldest was the paddle steamer *Zeeland* (260 ihp) from 1868, the youngest *Zwarte Zee* (1.500 ihp) dating from 1898.

The first statistic recording the number of seagoing vessels entering the port of Rotterdam was published in 1882. In that year 3.929 ships entered measuring an average of 734 grt. In 1899 the figure had risen to 6.890 seagoing ships with an average of 1.420 grt.

A booming business

The years from 1900 to 1925 can be considered the formative years of Rotterdam-based towage. These were the boom years. Many individual captains became tug owners themselves stimulated by things like the on-spec building of tugs which could be acquired at attractive prices and financing. To overcome the difficulty of finding and contracting work for the tugs the now captain / owners usually appointed an agent to handle the administrative side and to find work for the tugs. An agent with a number of these boats managed them like a company even if the participants were dependent on the agent. The advantage being that they could easily change agents. In another format several tug owners established a company and hired someone to run it administratively and find work. In that case the owners held the shares of the company but it was more difficult to step back from such a company.



Port of Rotterdam somewhere between 1909 and 1914: the tugboat station at the Boompjes with Volharding tugs in the foreground photo: coll. Job van Eijk

One such operation was the **Stoomsleepdienst Volharding**. Established in **1906** by six tugowners that hired **J. Burger Sr** as their agent. Burger previously for seventeen years had been employed by P. Smit Jr. as an assistant to their Mr Verhey. When Verhey passed away Burger – who was married to Verhey's daughter – assumed he was to become the new director of P. Smit Jr. Piet Smit, however, thought otherwise so Mr Burger left the company. In 1908 his assistant arrived in the form of Mr **Hoogslag Sr**. who had previously been employed by L.G. Vuyk. Hoogslag was another name that would play an interesting part in the development of Rotterdam's port towage services. At the time of him joining the company consisted of 19 tugs up from the 12 when the business was started. The Volharding as such had a difficult management structure which led to its initial destruction. That is to say, in **1912** the owners / shareholders had become

annoyed by the high overhead costs. Mr Burger then quit and established the **Stoomsleepdienst Maas**, in which some of his former owners / shareholders participated. Mr Hoogslag continued with Volharding but considered there was no future in the set-up so he opened discussions over the sale of the business. In 1916 some of the owners of Volharding became financially troubled – probably due to the consequences of World War1 on the port - and needed to sell their business. Volharding as a shareholding company was taken over and became a **secret subsidiary** of P. Smit Jr. with Mr Hoogslag as director.

Mr Burger's Stoomsleepdienst Maas was set up as a shareholding company with two shares for the director and the other shares held by the participating tug owners. Shares could not be re-sold outside of the company. Several other tug owners joined contracting Burger as their agent. This brought another 8 tugs



Holland-America liner arriving Hoek van Holland from New York. Smit tug at the bow assisting mooring at the 'America' Quay postcard: issued by L. van Zanten - coll. Job van Eijk





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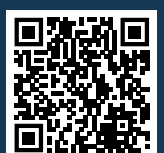
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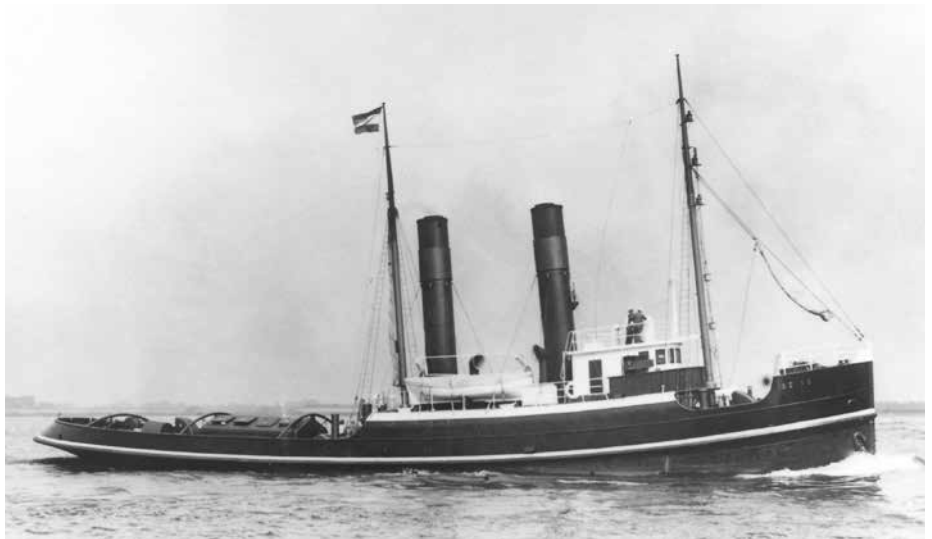
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on board. With the tug owners having the majority votes being a director of the company was not an easy task. Despite the difficult shareholding structure the Burger's - mr Burger was succeeded as director by his son – kept the business alive for some 60 years.

Another agent was **Van Eijk**. He ran the company of that name, which consisted of several captain-owned tugs. Since establishing the firm in **1907** his right hand been mr Van Kessel. In **1911** **Van Kessel** left the company to start on his own with the **Rotterdamsche Sleepdienst** – an operation that ran for some 40 years. Incidentally, one of the captain / owners that sailed with Van Kessel was one **Antonie Kooren** who had worked for Sleepdienst Maas and the Rotterdamsche Sleepdienst. In **1911** he started his own company under the



The 1908-built SEINE (Internationale Sleepdienst) lasted until 1946 surviving two World Wars. Dimensions 39,67 x 7,42 x 3,76 m. 850 ihp. photo: coll. Job van Eijk

name of **Rederij A. Kooren**. His work was not limited to the port of Rotterdam but instead he also frequently chartered

out to dredging operators. His son, Adiaan, in **1933** established **Sleepdienst Adriaan Kooren**. Working in general port towage Antonie also frequently chartered out to the dredging industry. It was this company that was to become the last survivor under original ownership of the Rotterdam towage industry since its beginnings – more of that later. For the time being, however, Capt. Kooren was just one of many. The Kooren time came much later, but the foundation had been laid.



The steam tug HIBERNIA was built in 1911 by the Gusto Shipyard for account of the SHV. 22,50 x 6,00 x 3,00 m. 400 ihp. Sold 1916 to the Corinth Canal Company, Piraeus, as ELLIE

photo: coll. Job van Eijk



ZWARTE ZEE was completed in 1906 by J.& K. Smit, Kinderdijk for account of L. Smit & Co. 51,70 / 50.14 x 9,15 x 5,29 m. Draught 4,60 m. 1.250 ihp. 1914-1918 Royal Dutch Navy as inspection vessel. 1933 sold to Bugsier as ALBATROSS. Reconstructed with single funnel. 1939-1944 Kriegsmarine. Twice sunk and raised. 1945 French Government, renamed TAUREAU. 1946 scrapped. Photo dates from WW-1 - see neutrality markings

photo: coll. Job van Eijk

Another newcomer was the **Eerland** company which had been founded in **1911** and initially specialised in services to construction companies but later expanded into general port towage. The **Maatschappij Binnenvaart** (MaBi) was established in **1917** by **Jan Roelofs** and specialised in the towage of lighters that carried cargo direct from the seagoing vessels to its destination in The Netherlands. Later this company was gradually taken over by **Van Ommeren**, a large Rotterdam-based shipping company, although a Roelofs remained in charge. The **sGravenhaagsche Sleepdienst** established in **1923** provided a liner service between The Hague and Rotterdam. In addition they carried out lighterage-connected towage though in connection with the liner service. Their specialisation also meant their end when the motorisation of inland waters barges really took off. Several others also set up operations but these did not last long in the crisis years.

New competition in the port appeared in the form of **Sleepdienst Hoek van**



Holland, founded by W. de Ridder, B. de Jongh and A.G. Kröller. The latter was closely connected to the shipping firm of W.H. Müller. Another competitor since 1894 was **L.G. Vuyk**, previously employed by the American Petroleum Company.

Deepsea Towage

In **1900** the Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij (International Towage Co) had been established by Messrs **Vuyk** and **Horstmann**. Both gentlemen previously worked for American Petroleum Co. and it is not unlikely that their previous employers gave the new venture their blessing. Another well-known figure in Rotterdam, mr **Willem van der Vorm**, director of the Scheepvaart & Steenkolen Maatschappij (Shipping and Coal Company better known as SSM) was a member of ISM's Supervisory Board and as such played an important role in the development of the company. ISM expanded exponentially and this would have required substantial investment. The company soon after its inception began to acquire – apart from its port tugs – coastal and deepsea tugs. The Vuyk fleet was the basis for this, but soon new construction was added to the fleet and in 1901 they acquired the above mentioned Sleepdienst Hoek van Holland.

Thus a considerable competitor for L. Smit was formed. The Internationale employed 19 tugs with an output between 60 and 500 ihp. After some years Vuyk disassociated himself from Horstmann and ISM in a dispute over strategy. He immediately formed Sleepdienst L.G. Vuyk and went into competition with the other Rotterdam-based tug operators.

The 'Internationale' meanwhile under the directorship of Willem van der Vorm (who later was involved in a.o. Holland-America Line) and Victor Los continued its expansion also entering deepsea towage. In 1911 Horstmann – by that time again sole director of de 'Internationale' and Vuyk again teamed up and the fleet of the latter was integrated in the 'Internationale'. Van der Vorm stepped back from the company in 1912, while mr Horstmann was to pass away later, in 1918. By 1920 George van Beuningen had acquired a substantial amount of ISM shares and took up a seat on the Supervisory Board.



D.G. (Daniel George) van Beuningen who was to become a binding factor in the Rotterdam towage business photo: via Wikipedia

George van Beuningen

came to Rotterdam in 1900. His job was to set up a Rotterdam Branch of the SHV, the **Steenkolen Handels-Vereniging** (Coal Trading Association). SHV had been set up by a number of people with interests in the coal industry. By making their businesses part of the newly formed SHV they effectively formed a monopoly in the coal trade with Germany. The Van Beuningen family was one of the biggest shareholders. Another big shareholder were the Fentener-Van Vlissingens that also had become related to the Van Beuningens. The SHV had its seat in Utrecht, but a branch in Rotterdam as a port seemed a wise move.

George van Beuningen, born in 1877, quickly immersed himself in the business

of setting up the SHV branch and looking for opportunities to sell bunker coal. Having made inroads in the Rotterdam shipping business he also turned to private investments although these sometimes also served the SHV interests.

SHV established coaling stations at the port and along the river. To supply these stations transport of coal over water was the best option. For this barges and tugs were necessary. The SHV also invested in floating bunkering machines that also needed tug attendance. Coal also had to be imported from Germany and this also required shipping capacity which initially was carried out by German companies.

P. Smit Jr.

in **1909** was renamed **Nederlandsche Stoomsleepdienst van P. Smit Jr** (Netherlands Steam Towage Co owned by P. Smit Jr). The name change reflected the extension of the towage services – Piet Smit's tugs were spotted all over The Netherlands although shiphandling was restricted to the Rotterdam area. In another development Piet Smit went into the coaling business not only for the transport but also for bunkering purposes. In these respects Piet Smit's organisation took a wider view than its competitors by betting on several horses.

In **1912**, Piet Smit, who had no successors, sold his company and retired. The sale included the Machinefabriek & Scheepswerf P. Smit Jr. he had started in Rotterdam and the towage business consisting of 37 tugs,



RERIR was completed in 1895 by the Van Duijvendijk shipyard at Papendrecht as AEGIR. Later WESTDEUTSCHER LLOYD 14. Purchased by SHV for service in their NRW fleet. The typical Rhine towage tug of the era was finally scrapped in 1956

photo: Rotterdam City Archives (Andor von Barsy)



3 lighters, a dry dock, the tugboat office and a tract of land on the banks of the Nieuwe Maas.

Piet Smit passed away in 1913 at the age of 64, but his company lived on until 1975 albeit as owned by the Van Beuningen Group.

Buyer was D.G. van Beuningen. As mentioned earlier Piet Smit's towage operations included coal transports which probably was the initial link with Van Beuningen. The deal – a private investment by van Beuningen - was completed on 23 December, 1912. He then split the P. Smit Jr. business into two independent firms: Machinefabriek en Scheepswerf P. Smit Jr. and NV Stoomsleepdienst v/h P. Smit Jr. Shares in the two companies were offered to family members and friends but George van Beuningen retained the majority shareholding in both.

The purchase was completed on 23 December, 1912. The company was then split into two independent firms, Machinefabriek en Scheepswerf P. Smit Jr. and **NV Stoomsleepdienst v/h P. Smit Jr.** Shares in the two companies were offered to family members and friends with George van Beuningen retaining the majority shareholding in both. Van Beuningen immediately set to enlarging and modernising the shipyard so it would be able to handle all the SHV vessels regardless of size. In 1913 he ordered four new tugs for the towage operations in his own yard. Although a private purchase by George van Beuningen the acquisition of the Piet Smit business served SHV well: they now had access to an SHV-friendly shipyard for the maintenance of their fleet of floating craft, as well as access to towage capability other than their own. The main aim of SHV obviously being to

reduce costs and increase profit margins was adequately served as were George's private interests which were centred on harbour-related activities. By **1917** the fleet of P. Smit Jr. tugs numbered no less than 76 units.

SHV

in **1911** had formed the **NV Transport Maatschappij** (TM for short) – headquartered at Rotterdam - for the purpose of setting up SHV's own towage operation on the river Rhine. Director of that company was mr J.W. van Beuningen. In 1915 they also acquired the German Karl Schroers Reederei but these vessels were initially kept under their own flag. Between 1916 and 1921 twenty-six tugs acquired in the market while another were bought while another sixteen were internal transfers from the SHV Group.

In 1920 the v.o.f. **Nederlandsche Rijnvaart Vereniging** (NRV) - freely translated as the Netherlands Rhine Shipping Association – was established by the TM, Schroers, Willem van Driel's Stoomboot- en Transportondernemingen NV and the NV Stoombootdienst Keulsche Vaart. The latter two at the time had a close relationship to the SHV. Directors of the TM were J.W. van Beuningen, W. van Driel and K. Oppenheimer. The Supervisory Board consisted of F.H. Fentener van Vlissingen, D.G. van Beuningen and A. van Driel. Another 14 tugs were purchased. NRV, however, did not own the tugs but was charged with exploitation of the vessels.

NV Willem van Driel's

Stoomboot- en Transportonderneming after the turn of the century widened its portfolio with transport. For this they acquired a number of non-propelled

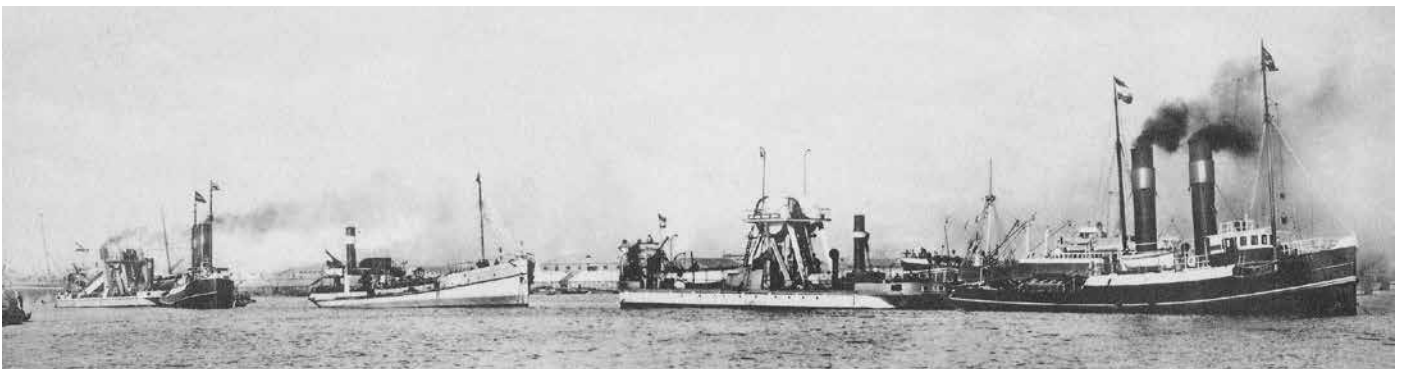


Willem van Driel Sr. concentrated its towage on the river Rhine photo: Rotterdam City Archives

barges while at the same time new tugs were ordered for the towing branch of the company. In 1912 *Fiat Voluntas XIV* and *Fiat Voluntas XV* (the name meaning 'Uw wil geschiede' ('Your wish is my Command')) had the distinction of being Van Driel's first twin screw tugs. The 42,48 x 7,58 m vessels were fitted with two steam engines each producing 375 ihp.

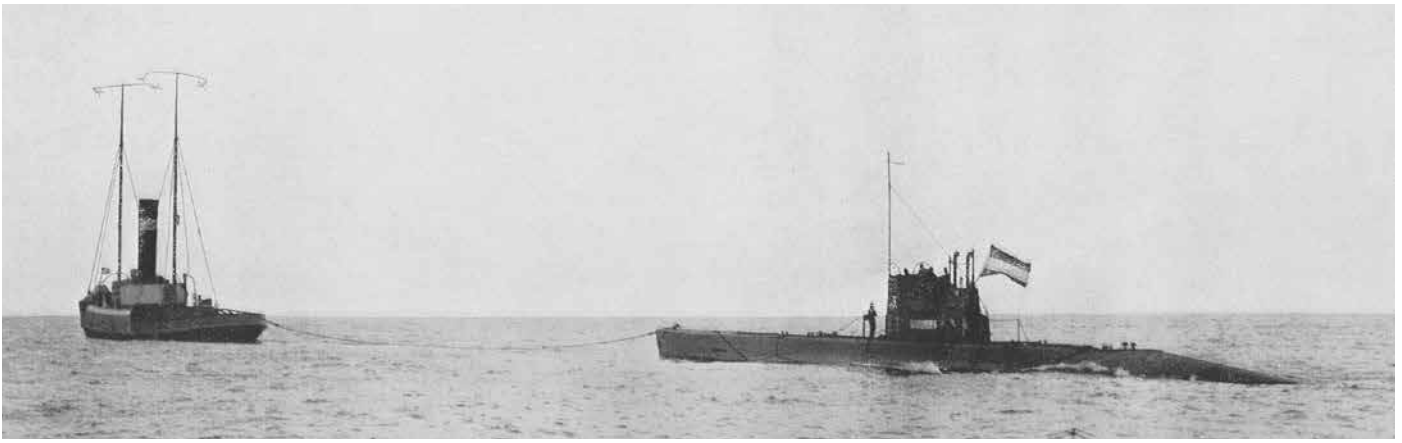
An interesting business practice reported - probably not unique to Van Driel - was that of the enclosed wheelhouse. Those early tugs were in general fitted with an open bridge. When the Masters asked for an enclosed wheelhouse the company provided the required wood and glass but the Masters themselves had to pay for the carpenter. Their bill was advanced by the company and recovered by deducting a small sum from their wage packet until the costs had been met.

In 1913 the fleet consisted of 41 non-propelled cargo barges and 17 tugs. Around that time the company eyed deepsea shipping and in 1915 the first



The 'Internationale' (ISM) tugs TITAN and SCHELDE towing the dredgers COLONIA and RHENANIA arriving at Shanghai from Emden after record-breaking tow of 10.748 nm photo: brochure Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij





WITTE ZEE (L. Smit) towing Dutch submarine K 1 from Den Helder (Netherlands) to Sabang during World War 1

photo: brochure L. Smit & Co.

cargo steamer *Willem van Driel Sr.* (4.300 dwt) entered the fleet. At war's end in 1919 the fleet had increased to 8 deepsea cargo vessels with two more on the stocks, 60 Rhine barges, 20 Rhine tugs as well as a general harbour tug operating in Rotterdam. In the crisis years the company went under but was saved in 1939 by a take-over by one of its biggest clients. At the time the fleet numbered 19 tugs and 57.000 ton of barge capacity.

Smit in 1901 moved its seat to Rotterdam and obtained premises in the port of Maassluis which was to serve as a tugboat maintenance station. By that time Cornelis Jan Lels had joined the board of directors and Piet Lels had succeeded Murk Lels upon his death.

As an aside, in 1908 Van Beuningen had acquired the shipbreakers **Frank Rijdsdijk** at Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht. He successfully stimulated internationalisation and many ships, especially obsolete warships were purchased from around the globe to be towed to the yard. Many of those tows were contracted to L. Smit & Co. In 1916, however, Van Beuningen sold the operation back to Frank Rijdsdijk due mainly to continued differences of opinion between him and Rijdsdijk. Nevertheless, the business had been profitable with an approximate return of 8,75 times on the investment.

World War 1

had intervened in the development of Rotterdam as a port even though The Netherlands remained neutral. The war nevertheless created winners as well as losers. In 1913, 10.527 oceangoing vessels entered the port. In 1918 this was down to 1.341. Not only the requirement for tugs dropped, it also became difficult to obtain coal etc. Next, the quality of the available coal dropped significantly and a fair number of tugboat men were summoned to join the Dutch Army. To keep the tugs at work port tugs now changed to inland waters work. An increase in inland water transport was a luck but otherwise the towing tariffs dropped sharply forcing many out of business, especially private captain / owners with little capital reserve.

This presented opportunities for companies to acquire tugs in ownership – something that played into the hands of the Volharding. Since being acquired by P. Smit Jr in 1916 the company had aimed at a larger number of fully-owned tugs. Various tugs were bought from the captain / owners. Another source of second-hand tugs were the Rotterdam-based shipowners that employed their own tug(s). With traffic coming to a standstill their tugs became an unwanted burden and they sold out with a number of these tugs going to

Volharding, P. Smit Jr., Internationale Sleepdienst, the Steenkolen Handels Vereniging (**SHV**) and its subsidiary Nederlandse Rijnvaartvereniging (Netherlands Rhine Shipping Association – better known as **NRV**).

The SHV had an almost monopoly on coal trading and transport in Rotterdam even to the point that whenever vessels were chartered for the transport of coal, it was stipulated that NRV tugs must be used. NRV in its turn called in the assistance of P. Smit Jr. keeping the money in the family so to speak.

The end of the War did not bring much improvement to the port of Rotterdam. With the Versailles Treaty Germany was forced to pay a huge amount of war reparation. With the German economy in ruins their earning power lay mainly in the Ruhr area with its giant mining and steel industry.

To enforce the war reparations, however, French troops occupied the Ruhr area from 1923 -1925. With an amended war reparations plan the occupation was lifted and the Ruhr area again started contributing to Rotterdam's development.

Business models changed. The time had come for **George van Beuningen** to alter the future of Rotterdam's towage business.

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The preserved historic tug CERVIA is under threat

photo: Steam Tug Cervia Preservation Trust

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Environment Award for ASENAV

Recently the German Chamber of Commerce - AHK Chile – awarded ASENAV shipyard with the 'AHK Chile 2023 Environment Award' in the Big Companies category. The award recognizes the design and construction of Magellan Explorer, a luxury ship that, in addition to reducing gas emissions, processing water and solid waste, is energy efficient.

Magellan Explorer is a luxury cruise operated by Antarctica21, a company specializing in activities on the White Continent. It has a navigation autonomy of 60 days, capacity for 100 passengers and space for 60 crew members.



MAGELLAN EXPLORER, the Pole exploration vessel built by ASENAV photo: courtesy ASENAV



The Environment Award 2023 was presented to Hans Kossmann, President of the Board of the Chilean shipyard Astilleros y Servicios Navales - better known as ASENAV - (centre) by the German Ambassador in Chile (left) and a representative of the German Chamber of Commerce

photo: courtesy ASENAV

She is 91 meters long -almost reaching a professional soccer field- and 16 meters wide. To operate in the Arctic and Antarctic, she is certified 'Polar Code 6' by Lloyd's Register of London, one of the highest requirements for vessels exploring both poles of the world.

President of ASENAV, Hans Kossmann: "This recognition is a very important

milestone since it makes visible how Chilean engineering is setting the standard worldwide. That relieves us as a company, but also the country.

We are proud that a Chilean shipyard develops technology of this caliber, which allows the shipowner to operate in a place as particular as Antarctica, without having an impact on it"

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Bob Lane, chairman of the Steam Tug Cervia Preservation Trust

Future of “Cervia” threatened

The future of the historic Thames steam tug *Cervia* suffered a blow, when the group trying to rescue her were told that their grant application had been turned down by the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF).

Cervia has spent the last 40 years at Ramsgate Harbour after retiring from active operations. The hull is in poor condition, and in June last year the current owner announced that unless an alternative solution was put forward, he would commence deconstruction of the vessel. Since the announcement, **The Steam Tug Cervia Preservation Trust** has been working hard on a plan to rescue the vessel, carry out the repairs, and to relocate her to Gravesend where she was based for the first 25 years of her working life on the River Thames and the Port of London.

Bob Lane, Chairman of the Trust said “We have made considerable progress over the past 11 months, obtaining Gravesham Borough Council’s agreement in principle to moor *Cervia* at St Andrews Quay, registering as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, fully costing out the project including the hull repairs and the cost of berth preparation, producing a comprehensive

business plan, and entering into a memorandum of understanding to acquire the vessel. Since February this year, we have been in close contact with the NHMF to secure funding.”

“However, despite being encouraged by the NHMF to submit a full application following their Panel’s decision to support our formal Expression Of Interest earlier this year, we are informed that our application was not supported by the Board at their meeting last week (early May – ed)” said Bob. “In short, they felt that there was a risk of increased repair costs and future maintenance costs, and that stronger support from Gravesend Council would be needed to ensure the plan was sustainable in the longer term. Not only was this very disappointing, it was quite a surprise in view of their previous support and encouragement, which even went as far as increasing the amount of funding we applied for, to provide us with a contingency.”

Fellow Trustee Dave Walton, who manages the website and Facebook channel, is not disheartened. “Whilst this is a disappointment,” said Dave, “we continue to explore other possibilities, and are actively in contact with a number of potential supporters to see if they can help with raising the necessary funds or finding a suitable alternative solution. We also have over 400 supporters on our “Friends of Cervia” social media channel. But we are under no illusion that this could mean the end for this historic tug, with important links to Gravesend and Ramsgate. Just to repair the hull could cost £200,000, without doing anything else.”

“We are continuing with our planning application, which Gravesham Borough Council insists is necessary, and we hope to have a way forward within the next few weeks,” said Dave. “But if anyone has any serious proposals to help with the significant sums needed,

or innovative alternative solutions to rescuing the vessel, please get in touch via our website at <https://steamtugcervia.co.uk>.”

Kotug Canada

and Sc’ianew First Nation have signed a Mutual Benefits Agreement (MBA) outlining details of the partnership that supports Kotug Canada’s long-term agreement with **Trans Mountain** for the Trans Mountain Expansion Project. The agreement encompasses the provision and operation of a **spill response vessel** and **two escort tugs** to support the TMEP in close coordination with the Sc’ianew. Training & Career Development of Community Members. The MBA shows KOTUG Canada’s commitment to respecting Sc’ianew culture, traditions, and historical connection within the Nation’s territorial waters. The agreement includes the related training and development of Sc’ianew community members to ensure they gain the necessary experience and knowledge in the field of advanced safe tug operations and marine response.



Kotug Canada signing the Mutual Benefits Agreement on the relation with Sc’ianew First Nation. Standing left to right: Steve Widmeyer, Director of Kotug Canada, Sharon Jay (Director Board Chair MMLP (M’inu’w’illum Marina Ltd. Partnership), Bernice Millette (Sc’ianew (Beecher Bay), Laurens Korporaal, Kotug Canada. Sitting: Chief Russ Chipps, Sc’ianew (Beecher Bay)

photo: Kotug Canada





K.J. GARDNER receiving its new hull coating
photo: Kotug Canada

Importantly, the partnership between Kotug Canada and the Sc'ianew First Nation provides vessel crews opportunities to learn from traditional knowledge and operate with respect and appreciation of the unique natural habitat of British Columbia's coastal environment. In preparation for the upcoming Trans Mountain Expansion Project, Kotug Canada has worked closely with the **Beecher Bay** community to create new career opportunities and train Sc'ianew marine cadets on Kotug Canada and parent company vessels. This provides indigenous cadets with mandatory experience and knowledge in advanced safe tug operations and marine response. The cadets trained on

Horizon Arctic and the oil-spill-response-vessel in the North Sea and will return home to BC and join the crew of the *K.J. Gardner*, a 187 tpb anchor-handling tug supply vessel, suitably equipped for enhanced spill response duties as well as emergency towage and support duties.

Another important element that the Mutual Benefits Agreement outlines is installing and operating a new **floating docking facility** in Cheanuh Marina in Beecher Bay, British Columbia. This floating docking facility consists of an existing barge that will be refitted and transformed to act as a breakwater and a berthing facility for Kotug Canada's three vessels. Signing the MBA represents a major milestone in Kotug Canada's partnership with the Sc'ianew First Nation, located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, strategically located along the Trans Mountain Shipping lanes. Using Beecher Bay as Kotug Canada's home base for its operations allows for fast response times in case of emergencies. Additionally, the barge supports further enhancement of the Cheanuh Marina commercial activities in Beecher Bay within Sc'ianew Territory.

To protect the environment and delicate marine life in our oceans, all Kotug Canada vessels will be coated with a revolutionary non-toxic vessel hull coating developed in Canada by Graphite Innovation & Technologies that reduces underwater radiated noise. Further, Kotug Canada has strict policies in place to reduce any impact on the environment. This partnership creates career and development opportunities for Indigenous Peoples that extend beyond Canada's borders and across the world's oceans.



also in the nozzles *photo: Kotug Canada*

Noise reduction coating

Kotug Canada Inc - a partnership between Kotug International and Horizon Maritime Services Ltd - is committed to reducing impact of operations on the environment. It has recently applied revolutionary non-toxic noise reduction coatings to the hull of one of their vessels, the *K.J. Gardner*.

Kotug Canada has worked extensively with Graphite Innovation and Technologies (GIT), an industry leader focused on manufacturing **graphene-based sustainable marine coatings** to meet these goals. GIT's XGIT-URN coating was applied to help reduce underwater radiated noise emitted from the ship's hull and the vibrations that disturb marine life. Aquatic life, such as mammals and the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale reside within the area of employment for Kotug Canada's vessels. These mammals rely on underwater noise to communicate, navigate, and find food.

The *K.J. Gardner* is the first of three vessels using the GIT applications in

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Multraship naming MULTRATUG 5 and MULTRATUG 6 - the last Damen ASD 2810 to have been built

photo: Damen Shipyards

support of Kotug Canada's mission to reduce the environmental impact, specifically related to the reduction of noise that potentially disturbs aquatic life in the Salish Sea and adjacent waters. Steve Widmeyer - Director with Kotug Canada - reports: "This is a major step forward to strengthen our focus to be a sustainable company. We have set a high standard to meet these goals by using GIT's XGIT-URN coating, which significantly impacts meeting those targets." Further applied to the *K.J. Gardner* were GIT's XGIT-FUEL and XGIT-PROP coatings. These coatings will enhance the reduced impact with the additional benefits of considerably improving fuel efficiency and decarbonization. It is expected that over the next five years, this vessel will significantly reduce CO2 emissions.

Mo AlGermozi - Chief Executive Officer at GIT - stated: "Our team is excited to

work with Kotug Canada in meeting their sustainability goals. Our XGIT-URN, along with our other two marine coatings, will support their desire to maintain healthy and vibrant oceans while still supporting the needs of their clients. Our shared goal of reducing the environmental impact on the world's oceans is of paramount importance. GIT is on a mission to contribute to the movement of green shipping activities in the world's oceans."

The *K.J. Gardner* is planning to continue working in Northwestern Europe over the next few months. She will then venture to the Western Coast of Canada, specifically the Salish Sea, host to a vibrant marine ecosystem. The other vessels receiving such coating applications will arrive in Canada later this year and early 2024.

Two namings for Multraship

On Thursday 11 May, 2023, Multraship

Towage & Salvage named two Damen-built tugs at a ceremony held at Multraship's home port of Terneuzen, the Netherlands.

Multratug 5, a **Damen Stan Tug 1205** and *Multratug 6*, a **Damen ASD Tug 2810**, were immediately entered into service upon delivery to Multraship and are currently in operation in the River Scheldt area. The speed with which the tugs were delivered was thanks to Damen's practice of building in series and for stock.

Although based on proven, standard designs, Damen is able to tailor its vessels to the requirements of its clients. In the case of *Multratug 6*, this included a winterisation package, FiFi-1 class notation and installation of an aft winch, amongst many other additional features. *Multratug 6* also has the distinction of being the last Damen ASD Tug 2810 ever to be built. Following the sale of over 200 vessels, the ASD Tug 2810 is Damen's most successful design to date and can be found operating in harbours all around the world.

Captain Leendert Muller, Managing Director, Multraship, commented at the ceremony: "We work hard to ensure that our fleet reflects the needs and requirements of our customers and that we are best equipped to provide rapid, reliable and safe towage and salvage services at any time. For this, we need to have high-quality tugs with a range of operational capabilities. We know we can rely on Damen to meet our specifications and deliver high-spec vessels and we are very pleased to formally welcome *Multratug 5* and *Multratug 6* to our fleet."



BELLA was named by Herman Sr. (van Dodewaard). The van Dodewaard family have maintained a relationship with Damen Shipyards for 75 years

photo: R. & F. van der Hoek





SVITZER MARKEN is once again at work in Europoort photo: Ruud Zegwaard



ALMA KAPPA - ex FORTH HUNTER seen 13 April, 2023, at Harlingen, The Netherlands photo: Albert Braad



GRETTIR STERKI seen here 27 April, 2021, has become an ETV of sorts for the ferry BALDUR at Iceland photo: Capt. Hilmar Snorrason



Impression of the new eco-friendly tug for Bukser og Berging artwork: Sanmar Shipyards



Mr Maes -Damen Sales manager Benelux - said, "It's a pleasure to be here to witness this special occasion. The event is made even more poignant with *Multratug 6* being the last ASD Tug 2810 to be delivered. The design of the tug, like all vessels in our portfolio, has been developed with lots of valuable input from our clients. Multtraship, as a long-standing customer of many years, has provided with us many useful insights that have been incorporated into the evolution of our tugs. We're grateful to enjoy this relationship of mutual benefit and look forward to continuing our collaboration in the years ahead."

The vessels were delivered to Multtraship during a period of wider fleet expansion, with the company also adding two ERTVs, *Multtraship Commander* and *Multtraship Protector*, as well as the *Multrasalvor 6*, a Damen Multi Cat and salvage support vessel along with another Damen harbour tug, *Multratug 9*, over the past year.

"Bella" named

In a ceremony held at **Damen Shipyards Hardinxveld**, the second of the new **Multi Cat (MuC) 3313 SD** class was handed over – after being properly named by Ms Rolien Besançon - to workboat operator Herman Sr. BV in front of hundreds of guests. Named *Bella* the exceptionally versatile 33-metre vessel has a draught of less than two metres, enabling her to operate in very shallow waters.

The MuC 3313 SD is one of the largest types in Damen's Multi Cat range and so its extensive deck area enables it to be equipped with a wide range of equipment. *Bella* has two powerful deck cranes and a bollard of over 30 tonnes which, together with an anchor winch and towing pins, makes her ideal for dredging, anchor handling and construction projects.

The van Dodewaard family, the owners of **Herman Sr BV**, has been a client of Damen since 1947 and this latest acquisition takes the number of vessels that they have purchased to nineteen – a mix of Multi Cats and Shoalbusters. In 2021, the second generation in the form of Erwin and Chris van Dodewaard took the helm on the retirement of managing director Jack van Dodewaard.

"We are very pleased to add yet another ultra shallow vessel to our existing fleet of vessels build by Damen," said Erwin van Dodewaard. "*Bella* is a unique Multi Cat with extremely powerful cranes for her draft which is unique in the workboat sector. With this new vessel we can serve our clients even better in the years to come."

"It was a great pleasure to hand over this new and highly capable Multi Cat to the van Dodewaard family," says Jeroen van Woerkum, commercial manager of Damen Shipyards Hardinxveld. "Each new vessel renews what is a very special relationship for us and we wish them every success with her."

The handover ceremony was a celebration of the longstanding relationship. The *Bella* will initially operate in north-west European waters, particularly in the shallow waters of the North Sea. Following the naming she has joined a dredging project in Dutch / UK waters.

Stand-by for ferry

In April it was announced that the ferry *Baldur* which served the routes in Breioafjordur, Iceland, was taken out of service due to bi-annual maintenance. Recently it was announced that a replacement for *Baldur* has been selected. The reason being that she is a single screw vessel and has had some engine problems in recent years so she was tagged as an unreliable vessel. After her latest engine problems a decision was made that the Icelandic State would find replacement for her in the form of a twin screw ferry. From the vessels offered the Norwegian ferry *Røst* was selected. She is expected to enter service later this year.

To make the ferry service safer until the replacement arrives the tug *Grettir Sterki* has been relocated to Stykkishólmur, the base port of *Baldur*, to be available in case of emergency. Her service has so far not been needed. While *Baldur* has been in the slipway in Reykjavík the tug was assigned to free the stranded vessel *Wilson Skaw* aground in Húnaflói and tow her to Akureyri for dry docking.

Regarding the problems with the ferry, on 29 June, 2020, *Baldur* had problems with her engine but managed to get into the port of the island Flatey. She was towed to Stykkishólmur where repair where effected on her engine. She re-entered service 10 days later. On 11 March, 2021, she again experienced engine problems when 10 nm from Stykkishólmur. She dropped anchor but later for reasons of safety was towed away from the coast by the research vessel *Arni Fridriksson*. The following morning the Coast Guard vessel *Thor* arrived on the scene as well as the shiphandling tug *Phoenix*. *Thor* towed her towards Stykkishólmur where Phoenix took over to berth the vessel. *Baldur* was back into service on the 18th of March. The patrol vessel *Thor* is the flagship of the Iceland Coast Guard and is one of the most advanced vessels of its type. With the arrival of the vessel in 2011



marine safety in, and the surveillance of Icelandic waters took a boost. The vessel is active in resource protection, fisheries monitoring, law enforcement, search or rescue. In addition, the vessel can provide support response and defence against the threat of terrorism for which she cooperates with police special forces and customs. The vessel is also equipped with powerful pollution prevention equipment and has significant towing capabilities.

(HM)

Eco-friendly tug for BuBe

Sanmar Shipyards has signed a new contract with long-term client **Buksér og Berging AS** to build a new generation environmentally-friendly tugboat. It will be the 9th tug that the leading Turkish tugboat builder has delivered to the Norway-headquartered operator. **Sanmar** is already in the process of constructing its 8th tug for BuBe at its yards in Turkey – a game-changing emissions-free electric powered ElectRA 2200-SX 'Tug of the Future'.

The latest contract is for a tug measuring 24,40 (oa) x 12,00 m (mld) and a navigational draught of 5,45 m. Main engines will be two Caterpillar 3512-E's each with an output of 1.901 kW at 1.800 rpm driving Kongsberg US-205S-P20-CP thrusters. The tug will be capable of a speed ahead of 12,5 knots and a bollard pull of 60 tonnes. The tug will have escort notation. Deck equipment will include a Palfinger PK-11001-MA deck crane, Karmoy aft and forward winches and a Triplex tow pin. The tug will differ from a standard RAMPARTS 2400SX MKII by being the first with a tow pin and stern roller. Other non-standard features will be a hydraulic operated capstan, boiler, sewage treatment unit and an oily water separator.

Ruchan Civgin, Commercial Director of Sanmar Shipyards, said: "It is pleasing when operators that demand the highest environmental standards choose us to build the new generation of cleaner, greener tugboats to meet their low and no-emission targets. Minimising negative impact on the environment is at the heart of how we build tugboats at Sanmar, and we are proud to be leading the way to a sustainable tug and towing industry through innovation and technological advance with our

latest tugs. This latest much cleaner and greener, yet still powerful, version of our exclusive RAMPARTS 2400-SXMKII is a prime example of the progress being made in this direction."

Vetle J. Sverdrup, MD of Buksér og Berging AS, says: "We are continuously renewing our fleet with the aim to reduce emissions and provide effective towage services in Scandinavian waters. These two new buildings represent a big step forward and underline our continued tradition with Sanmar of creating innovative tugs for future towage service. We look forward to taking delivery and start operations with competent Norwegian maritime personnel onboard."

Tugs seized by Russia

Sakhalin Energy, a new Russian

legal entity overseeing oil and LNG production on the island, has had four Svitzer tugs seized in a court ruling dated 24 April. This in response to a 17 April request by Svitzer to move the tugs out of Russian waters and reflag. A May 18 deadline had been set for Sakhalin Energy to file a lawsuit challenging the contract suspension.

Maersk - the parent of Svitzer - said the company decided to exit Russia completely in March 2022 and it has had an ongoing divestment process of its towage activities, such as four tugs owned by Svitzer operating on a long-term contract in Sakhalin. "We have now taken steps to terminate the agreement where an entity of Svitzer in the EU has bare-boat chartered the tugboats to the Russian entity of Svitzer, meaning that Svitzer's entity in Russia no longer will



SVIZER ANNIVA was seized by court order

photo: Robert Allan Ltd



SVITZER BUSSE

photo: Robert Allan Ltd



be able to provide services," it said in comments. This was communicated to the customer and local authorities on April 17, it added. According to Maersk, after the court ruling, all Svitzer's employees in Russia have resigned and Svitzer was no longer operating the four tugs.

The tugs were one of Maersk's final assets in Russia. In 2020, the company took a more than \$700 million write-down on its Russian assets. It sold its interest in a terminal operator and its cold storage warehouse in Saint Petersburg and inland terminal in Novorossiysk. They had indicated that they were also looking to sell the four tugboats. "On April 25 we were informed a local court has ordered the tugboats cannot leave Russia and also transferred custody of the tugboats to a third party," Maersk said in a statement.

Svitzer built four Robert Allan designed heavy-duty ice-class tugs in 2007 which were operating under charter to a Russian subsidiary Svitzer Sakhalin which in turn had an agreement with the operators of the oil and gas project to provide marine services. The contract was extended in early 2020 going into effect in November 2020 and running for an additional 10 years. At the time, Svitzer said it supported the mooring of more than 1.800 gas carriers with the four tugs and two mooring boats. Svitzer said it had 58 Russian crewmembers and nine onshore staff.

Svitzer Sakhalin and *Svitzer Aniva*, were built by ASL Shipyard of Singapore, while *Svitzer Busse* and *Svitzer Korsakov* were built by Admiralty Shipyard in St. Petersburg, Russia. Diesel powered they demonstrated during trials a bollard pull of 73 tonnes and a free running speed

in excess of 13,5 knots. "The unique hull form incorporates an aggressive icebreaking 'spoon' bow, with shallow buttock angles in the ice contact zone, optimized for icebreaking performance," Allan said. The tender called for tugs having the capability to break 85 cm of level ice at a minimum of 3 knots, perform harbour ice management, and when operating in pairs break a channel wide enough for the tankers calling at the terminal.

ASENAV to build Robert Allan

On 28 February, 2023, at the ASENAV shipyards in Valdivia **the first steel was cut** for the construction of a **RAstar 3200-W Escort Tug** of 32 metres in length and 80 ttp. This RAstar 3200-W is a design by Robert Allan Naval Architects. It is the first time for ASENAV to work with Robert Allan. Given this, Heinz Pearce, general manager of the shipyard, commented "We are extremely happy to take this new step in the construction of tugboats, as it is to start working with Robert Allan office, who have a well-deserved prestige worldwide. In addition, this project gives the shipyard a great opportunity to expand its presence in other international markets."

This is the second time ASENAV is constructing a tug on speculation. This one, however, will be bigger in size. "This time we chose this larger and more powerful design, where its manoeuvrability, speed and strength stand out, since we observe that the market needs these ships to operate around the world" comments Germán Schacht, Business Development Manager of ASENAV. "Also, we see as a great advantage building under the design of Robert Allan since it is a well-known office in the tugboat industry worldwide, and added to the high quality of our constructions, we are confident that it will be a project with great acceptance [in the market]".

The new tug will be fitted with a constant-tensioning winch as well as be equipped to FiFi-1 standard." Ricardo Contreras, New Projects Manager added: "The ship must be built with great precision and quality. Today the ship is in the stage of the steel plate cut and blocks assembly. It expected to be ready for delivery in April 2024.



The ASENAV rebuilding Rastar 3200-W is built 'on spec'

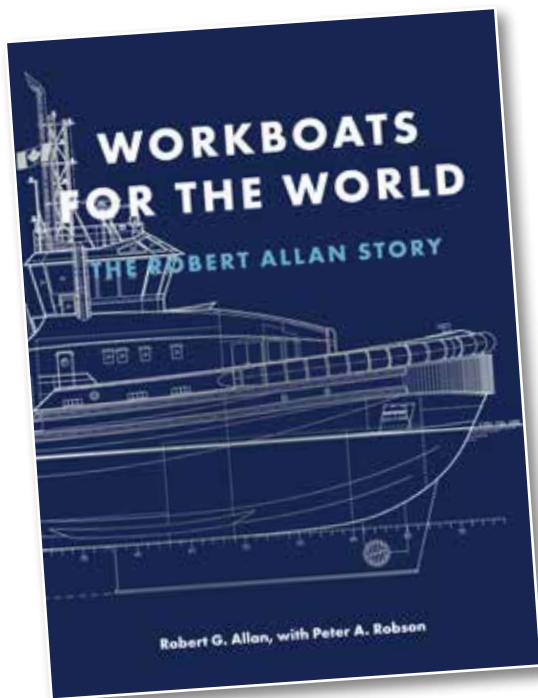
artwork: ASENAV



Cutting first steel for the construction of the RASTar tug

photo: ASENAV





Workboats for the World

is subtitled 'The Robert Allan Story'. In this weighty volume the reader is introduced to the Allan family of Naval Architects and their accomplishments over nearly 100 years in business. It all started in 1928 with Robert Allan. Designing local workboats, fishing vessels, small ferries and yachts. His son Robert F. (Bob) Allan began when steel replaced wood in tugboat design. The company also produced innovative designs like the self-loading / self-dumping log barges. Based in Vancouver on the Canadian West Coast the forestry industry was never far away. With his son – and the author of this book – Robert G. Allan new tug designs were pioneered. The company spread its wings across the globe to become a leading designer of tugs.

In 2008 Robert began a transfer of ownership to core employees so he could take a step back from the day-to-day running of the business. This gave him the time – especially during the Covid years – to work his way through the old designs and catalogue them. During his research many unknown

or forgotten designs and information about the lives these vessels had led were unearthed. This book is the result of much of that work. For the book itself Rob Allan teamed up with Peter A. Robson. Robson had been around in the media world for over twenty-five years carrying out about every task necessary to end-produce books and magazines. A bonus he brought with him is familiarity with subjects like commercial fishing and forestry.

The book is an enjoyable read and packed with ship plans and photographs all reproduced to a very high quality. As a fan of good quality design drawings especially the older ones with their hand-written text and comments they made my day!

The book roughly follows the historic time-line but at the same time in the chapters it clusters designs of vessel types, like fishing vessels, coastal mission vessels, ferries, fireboats, etc.

In the various chapters – there are several on tugboats - I found info on the first tug designed by Robert Allan that was to be built abroad, albeit for a Canadian operator. This was the oceangoing 1.850 bhp *Ocean Master* for Great-West Towing & Salvage Ltd. I was aware, of course, of her existence and the fact she was built in the Netherlands but never knew about the Robert Allan connection. These facts keep popping up everywhere so those of you interested in tug or design histories can spend a good few hours browsing the book. The photographic reproduction by the way is excellent. Also much effort has gone in the reproduction and restoration of the older drawings.

Interspersed with the text are comments and memoirs of RAL personnel about projects they have been on. These comments provide even more insight in business of ship design. All the way through the book I found snippets of information that filled gaps

in the puzzle of ships histories. Over 1.000 have been constructed to Robert Allan designs and I for one are looking forward to – in time – see the complete list published. Perhaps a continuation of the process that led to this must-have book for everyone interested in ship design.

The book is published by Harbour Publishing - a publishing house that also has previously published a good selection of books on tugs and towage. This book counts no less than 590 pages. Best way to order at least from abroad is to contact Harbour Publishing direct via their website or try Amazon.com.

JvE

Workboats for the World – The Robert Allan Story. Author: Robert G. Allan with Peter A. Robson. Published: 2023. Publisher: Harbour Publishing, P.O. Box 219, Madeira Park, BC, VoN 2Ho, Canada. Size hxb: 313 mm x 240 mm. English language. Hardback cover with dustjacket. 590 pages. Nearly 600 illustrations (plans, drawings and photographs in b&w and colour). Indexed. ISBN 978-1550-179-873. Catalogue price \$ 99,95 excluding post and packing and import duties where applicable. Publisher website: <http://www.harbourpublishing.com>.

Bergen Slep en op Zee

subtitled 'Lotgevallen van een sleepbootkapitein' it tells a number of stories from the career of Capt. Kees Pronk. Kees Pronk first went to sea at the age of 14 on board the fishing vessel *SCH 46 – Frank*. Later he changed to freighters and coasters. In 1965 he started in the towage and salvage business on board the Wijmsmuller tug *Titan*. In 1971 he changed to Smit International where he started as a 'runner' onboard the tows. A few years later he started in the ocean tugs and after studies in 1976 made his first trip as 2nd Mate. Eight year later he was Chief Mate aboard the brand-new *Smit Singapore* promoted to Master in 1984. He retired in 2016 after 55 years at sea.

Several of his more memorable voyages and salvage operations are described in this book. The stories are easy to read and factual. They are illustrated with





Dutch language only and for non-native Dutch speakers as the text requires a good understanding of the Dutch language. This book will give you a good few hours of pleasant reading at a very reasonable price.

JvE

Bergen Slepen op Zee – Lotgevallen van een sleepbootkapitein. Author: Kees Pronk. Published: 2023. Publisher: Kees Pronk. 210 pages, fully illustrated. Available as Hardback or Softback. Hardback ISBN-13: 979-8364076595; Softback ISBN-13: 979-8391785026. Costs are Euro 30,00 for the hardback, Euro 20,00 for the softback. Both excluding postage and packing. To order, send an e-mail to: voorloper@outlook.com, specifying hard or softback and mentioning name, postal address, postal code and residence.

TugeZine discounts

Readers are reminded of the possibility to acquire selected books with a discount. See the adverts of **Whittles Publishing** and **Polestar**.

a lot of photographs, weather charts, navigational charts, etc. Some of the more intricate problems are explained in detail. The book is published in the

Books that should be on board every shiphandling tug is **Tug Use in Port** by Capt. Henk Hensen. This is one of the

books on the subject of Tugs and Towing offered by Polestar. See their full page advert and use the QR code to get a sneak preview of the book.





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Rotterdam Tug Times 1914-1939

World War-1 passed by neutral Holland This created winners as well as losers. The SHV saw chances to grow. Smaller operators quit. Business models changed.

by Job van Eijk

Although The Netherlands had remained a neutral during WW-1 this war certainly influenced the towage industry in Rotterdam. In 1913, 10.527 oceangoing vessels entered the port. In 1918 this was down to 1.341. Not only the requirement for tugs dropped, it also became difficult to obtain coal etc. Next, the quality of the available coal dropped significantly. A significant number of tugboat men was summoned to join the Dutch Army. To keep the tugs at work port tugs now changed to inland waters work. An increase in inland water transport was a luck but otherwise the towing tariffs dropped sharply forcing many out of business, especially private captain / owners with little capital reserve.

This presented opportunities for companies to acquire tugs in ownership – something that played into the hands of the **Volharding**. When the companies individual shareholding owners sold out the company remained as a holding and were acquired by P. Smit Jr in 1916 although this had been kept silent. The company now aimed at a larger number of fully-owned tugs. Various tugs were bought from the captain / owners.



The Wijsmuller tug VLAANDEREN was built in 1922. The Wijsmuller expansion was one of the reason for Smit and International to join forces. The 550 ihp tug was sold in 1933 as QUEENS CROSS to England. In 1948 sold to the Netherlands for service in the Dutch East Indies as GOOS

photo: coll. Job van Eijk



The 420 ihp ARGUS and sisters ATLAS and ACHILLES are seagoing shiphandling tug built 1920-21 by P. Smit Jr. for account of Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij. Sank 1954

photo: coll. Job van Eijk

Another source of second-hand tugs were the Rotterdam-based merchant shipping companies that employed their own tug(s). With traffic coming to a standstill their tugs became an unwanted burden and they sold, again a number of these going to Volharding, but also to their secret parent, P. Smit Jr. Others, including Internationale Sleepdienst (where George van Beuningen had become a substantial shareholder), the Steenkolen Handels Vereniging (SHV) and its subsidiary Nederlandse Rijnvaartvereniging (Netherlands Rhine Shipping Association – better known as NRV). The SHV (Van Beuningen / Fentener van Vlissingen) had an almost monopoly on coal trading and transport in Rotterdam even to the point that whenever vessels were chartered for the transport of coal, it was stipulated that NRV tugs must be used. NRV in its turn called in the assistance of P. Smit Jr. (van Beuningen) keeping the money in the family so to speak.

Spido

In 1919 D.G. van Beuningen established Spido. The opportunity arose when at the end of WW1 the **Eendracht Boatmen Association** due to lack of funds was forced to sell its NV Maatschappij Motorboot Eendracht, a

sort of water taxi service. Van Beuningen grabbed the opportunity to build a water transport service especially for passengers in the form of port workers, seaman, shipyard workers and a sort of delivery service for small goods. Apart from the five passenger vessels acquired Van Beuningen added five of tugs of the P. Smit Jr. fleet to the Spido fleet. These tugs were altered from steam to motor and fitted for the carrying of passengers. The ISM likewise contributed five motor boats. Spido remained with the Van Beuningen Group until integrated in the Smit International Group in 1975. Over the years the company shed the water taxi activities and continued with excursion vessels and party boats with which Spido became a synonym with the port of Rotterdam.

Overtures to a merger

Post-WW1 an abundance of capital gained during the war became available for those who wished to invest. One of those people was **Johs. F. Wijsmuller**. In **1906** he had started his business in ship delivery but soon expanded into the trade in ships, more especially tugs which were built 'on spec'. These tugs joined the Wijsmuller fleet until a customer came alongside. In **1913** he had ordered his first oceangoing





The Scheepvaart en Steenkolen (SSM) site in the Waalhaven. Cargo vessels discharging in resp loading from barges with the use of floating cranes and elevators

postcard: Rotterdam City Archives (K.L.M. photo)



P. Smit Jr.'s EUROPA was built as BANKA in 1916 by the P. Smit shipyard. 25,03 / 23,37 x 6,10 x 2,82 m. Draught 2,60 m. 375 ihp. 1924 renamed EUROPA. Lost seagoing certificate in 1935. Sold for scrap in 1957

photo: coll. Job van Eijk

tug, the 500 ihp *Holland* followed in 1915 by *Friesland*. Capt. Wijsmuller was based at Baarn, but later offices were opened Den Helder and IJmuiden while The Hague became the company's headquarters.

When WW1 had intervened he had orders out for a number of tugs. Somewhat later he added orders for a number of cargo vessels (The Netherlands during WW1 was neutral). Many of these were sold upon completion. After the war Capt. Wijsmuller initiated a large newbuilding program with no less than 10 oceangoing tugs and a cargo vessel.

In 1921 Capt. Wijsmuller purchased the Nimmerrust Shipyard at Lekkerkerk,

near Rotterdam. The purchase was made for the exact same reason George van Beuningen purchased Piet Smit Jr – to have a shipyard available for repair and maintenance. By that time Wijsmuller's fleet had grown enormously. At the same time – due to the build-for-sale policy it was also a young fleet. Through Captain Wijsmuller's connections he had made serious inroads into the ocean towage scene with a fleet that matched those of L. Smit and the Internationale.

Both **Smit** and the **ISM** had followed Capt. Wijsmuller's moves with increasing concern. They became even more alarmed when Wijsmuller in 1922 moved his head office to Rotterdam.

Reportedly **D.G. van Beuningen** had – since 1919 – held talks with Smit and also Wijsmuller on the subject of co-operation and even merger. Wijsmuller never showed any real interest but at the same time the market for deepsea tugs had collapsed and his newbuildings were difficult to sell. Newbuilds had been financed on the back of expected returns from earlier vessels and these now evaporated.

In 1919 the ISM – perhaps as defence - purchased the three most powerful tugs of **Zurmühlen** when that company went out of business due to lack of successors. The remaining two tugs as well as the salvage business and a salvage vessel were purchased by Wijsmuller.

The rise of Bureau Wijsmuller was not the only concern for Smit and ISM. Upcoming foreign competition was another. The construction of powerful and fast motor salvage tugs by the German competitors **Schuchmann** and **Bugsier Reederei** gave them a significant advantage over the Smit and ISM steam tugs. These motor tugs had an increased range due to a larger bunker capacity while the engines took up less space. In addition the speed was a good few more knots faster compared to the steam tugs.

It probably was a combination of Wijsmuller moving to Rotterdam and the upcoming competition that drove L. Smit and the Internationale closer – a move probably initiated by Van Beuningen. The alternative was continuation of fierce competition with the real possibility of driving each other into the ground. On **1 May, 1923**, Smit and the Internationale combined their businesses under the name **L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij** (L. Smit & Co's International Towage Co). The Smit-Internationale combination also strengthened its grip on maritime affairs in the Rotterdam area by each acquiring 50% of **Tak's Berging** (Tak Salvage) – a company that had arrived around the turn of the century at Maassluis and had a good relationship with Smit. At the same time Smit and Internationale purchased the competition in the form of the **Nieuwe Bergingsmaatschappij** (New Salvage Co) run by Dirkzwager.



But was it a merger?

On 1 May, 1923, Smit and the Internationale combined their businesses under the name **L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij** (L. Smit & Co's International Towing Co). This was not a merger – the shares were held separately and both companies maintained their own administration – a policy ended only in 1972. But the directors always came from the **Smit / Lels** group and from the **Van Beuningen** group in equal portions with the chairmanship changing every year. A policy that - with hindsight – sometimes held the company back. The company name also did not reflect the equal partnership as 'International' could be interpreted as L. Smit operating international. A Smit brochure dated 1924 described it as follows: LSI and ISM "agreed to

amalgamate their interests in the running of their tugs and the operations of their salvage plants for joint account."

Henceforth the ocean tugs could be recognised by Smit's funnel mark: a blue band on a black funnel. The port tugs likewise received the red band on a black funnel signifying the ISM. This manifested itself also in the tug's names. Smit-owned ocean tugs were named after seas, while ISM's were named after rivers. The combined fleet consisted of 59 tugs of which 16 ocean tugs and some 25 salvage vessels and sheerlegs.

Meanwhile in a twist of fate on 25 February, 1923, Capt. Wijsmuller had passed away at the age of 46. At that time his fleet consisted of 12 ocean tugs, 7 port tugs and a salvage vessel. There was no successor – his sons were too young – so

the banks had in fact lost their security and stepped in to recover their loans. As a competitor Wijsmuller meant less and less and in 1928 the Smit-Internationale combination purchased four of Wijsmuller's most powerful tugs, a sale instigated by Wijsmuller's bankers. The reason for the buy was that Smit had received an order from the British Admiralty for the tow to Singapore of a large drydock. The two sections each needed four big ocean tugs and the tow thus would – for some time – cripple the ocean towing capability of Smit. After that sale the Wijsmuller company was gradually dismantled only to rise from its ashes after WW2.

Inland waters

Immediately after the War SHV purchased additional tugs and barges for their Transport Maatschappij. No less than 36 tugs were purchased from its competitors. In 1920 the company name was changed to **Nederlandsche Rijnvaart Vereniging**. Two of the participants were SHV companies, the other two, Willem van Driel and Keulsche Vaart - a company based at Utrecht - had compatible interests. One of the directors was J.W. van Beuningen, while two of the three Supervisory Board members were George van Beuningen and F.H. Fentener van Vlissingen. Shortly after the new company purchased another 14 tugs. In 1931 Van Driel and Keulsche Vaart left the NRV association. It was only during the war – in 1944 – that the shareholders decided to merge the TM (now NTM) and the NRV. The new NRV owned **and** operated the vessels. During the steam period they had operated no less than 70 Rhine tugs although not everyone was owned. Their first motor tug was the 600 bhp *Menhir*. The vessel was delivered in 1931 by the P. Smit Jr. Shipyard (van Beuningen). In 1939 the fleet consisted of 50 tugs and 245 towed barges.

During WW2 Van Driel lost the greater part of its fleet. In 1945 4 tugs and 32.000 tons of barge capacity was left. Although several new motor barges and motor tugs were added to the fleet the closure of the Dutch coal mines in Limburg was a severe blow further reducing the transport fleet.

Antonie Kooren

was born in 1874 as the son of the owner / skipper of a small inland



Tugs belonging to Sleepdienst Maas seen in 1927 handling the Dutch warship EVERTSEN at Rotterdam
photo: Rotterdam City Archives



RUSLAND - Piet Smit Jr. - built 1921 by own yard - 200 ihp - 22,48 / 21,00 x 5,27 x 2,50 m - drught 2,20 m seen here towing a barge in the Port of Rotterdam. 1931-1939 on charter to Anglo-Algerian Coaling Co, Oran. 1941-1945 confiscated by German Luftwaffe - 1957 sold for scrap. The liner in the background is BALOERAN (1929 - 16.981 grt - Rotterdam Lloyd - 1941 confiscated by Kriegsmarine - 1943 torpedoed and sank)
photo: Rotterdam City Archives (Andor von Barsy)





*Antonie Kooren - who was responsible for the birth of what was to become the other surviving Rotterdam tugboat operator
photo: courtesy Dutch National Towage Museum*

waters sailing vessel. In 1911 Antonie had his first tug built – the 60 ihp *Mathilda*. Antonie Kooren and his tug worked for Sleepdienst Maas and the Rotterdamsche Sleepdienst but in **1919** he set up as **Rederij A. Kooren**. He purchased a second tug – *Corrie* – and adopted the well-known black funnel with the white 'K'. Although residing in Rotterdam his work was not limited to the port of Rotterdam but instead he also frequently chartered out to dredging operators and found clients in the gravel and sand traders.

The operator of the sGravenhaagsche Sleepdienst (The Hague Towage Services) - a liner-towage service between Rotterdam-Delfshaven and The Hague - ran into a competition with P. Smit Jr (van Beuningen) and lost 50% of the business to them. Piet Smit then extended the barge-towing liner service from The Hague to Limburg which was **Kooren** territory. Antonie went into a fierce competition on the same line. It was a tariff war as well as a 'turf' war with Antonie's sons acting as his contract makers that approached vessels offering a price for the tow on the route at a time they were still far from their point of entry. In 1934 his competitors bought Antonie Kooren out of the liner trade. Son **Adriaan Kooren** in **1933** had established himself at Rotterdam as **Sleepdienst Adriaan Kooren** - a towage broker in which capacity he also arranged work for his brothers and father.

Things went reasonably well and with two tugs added to the fleet another two newbuilds were ordered shortly before the outbreak of World War 2. While the German forces occupied The Netherlands the Kooren's managed to load the steel for their new tugs in a barge which they then sank out-of-the-way to await the liberation. They also made the two diesel engines for the tugs disappear.

It was the Kooren business that was to become the last survivor in the Rotterdam towage industry since its beginnings under original ownership - more of that later. Another newcomer was the **Eerland** company which had been in 1911 and initially specialised in services to construction companies but later expanded into general port towage.

The **Maatschappij Binnenvaart (MaBi)** was established in 1917 by Jan **Roelofs** and specialised in the towage of lighters that carried cargo direct from the seagoing vessels to its destination in The Netherlands. Later the company was gradually taken over by Van Ommeren, a large Rotterdam-based shipping company, although a Roelofs remained in charge. The **sGravenhaagsche Sleepdienst** established in 1923 provided a liner service between The Hague and Rotterdam. In addition they carried out lighterage towage though in connection with the liner service. Their specialising also meant their end when the motorisation of inland waters barges really took off. Several others also set up operations but they did not last long in the crisis years.



*P. Smit's JAVA ex MAAS ex BEATRIX was built in 1918 for Van der Schuyt. 1918 to Internationale Sleepdienst as MAAS. 1936 purchased by P. Smit Jr. Confiscated by Germany during WW 2. 1945 returned. Sold 1952 to Conakry as SAINT ENGRACE. 452 ihp. 30,10 / 28,29 x 6,45 x 3,05 m. Draught 2,85 m
photo: coll. Job van Eijk*



*VALK (nearest camera) and HECTOR. L. Smit & Co's Internationale Towagge Co. - Built 1930 resp 1927 by Piet Smit Jr Shipyard. 150 ihp resp 430 ihp. Both sold 1958 to Genoa, Italy
photo: Foto Teunissen*



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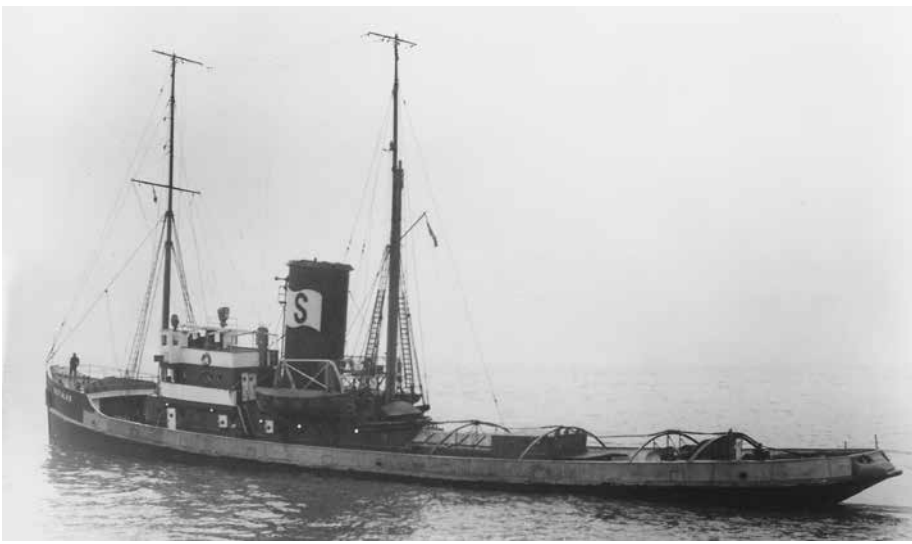
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Schuchmann's SEEFALKE the fast and powerful salvage tug that made Smit think about motorisation for their new big salvage tug photo: coll. Job van Eijk



ZWARTE ZEE - built 1933 by L. Smit & Zn - Smit's first oceangoing motor tug and the most powerful in the world - photo: A. Duncan

The 1929 financial crisis

hit trade hard. Consequently the ports suffered and Rotterdam was no exception. For Rotterdam's port towage the influence of the crisis lasted from 1929 – 1936. For that period the incoming ships count went down from 12.739 to 10.072 in 1932 to rise again to 12.623 in 1936. But it was not only the number but also the size of ships that dropped. Over the same period further consolidation and fleet renewal took place – as far as the big companies were concerned anyway. Many of the smaller 'agent'-run companies with their captain / owners did not survive simply because they lacked the financial reserves needed for prolonged competition or to cover for slack times. A number of these tugs were then acquired by the bigger companies.

It was during the crisis that Smit Internationale initiated the change-

over of the deepsea fleet from **steam to motor** tugs: *Zwarte Zee* (1933), *Blankenburg* (1938 - 600 bhp, advertised as 750 ihp – built specifically for the Hoek van Holland station), *Thames* (1938 – 2.000 bhp, advertised as 3.250 ihp), *Roode Zee* (1938 – 1.240 bhp) and *Hudson* (1939 – 840 bhp, advertised as 1.000 ihp) entered service prior to WW2. Four more motor tugs had been ordered but WW2 intervened. *Poolzee* (650 bhp, advertised as 1.000 ihp), *Java Zee* (840 bhp), *Witte Zee* (650 bhp, advertised as 1.000 ihp) and *Tyne* (840 bhp, advertised as 1.350 ihp) were completed under the German occupation with deliveries very much delayed by the builders. All four were confiscated for service in the Kriegsmarine although *Witte Zee* was not completed by the end of WW2. *Ortelsburg* (ex *Java Zee*) was lost during the war during a salvage operation.

The first motor tug of the Smit **shiphandling** fleet was the former steam tug *Wesp* which was motorised in 1928. The first newbuilding was the diesel-electric *Pernis*. This tug with dimensions 23,00 (bp) x 6,50 m was a product J.& K. Smit's Scheepswerven delivered in 1940 just prior to the outbreak of the war. Output was listed as 540 ihp when delivered.

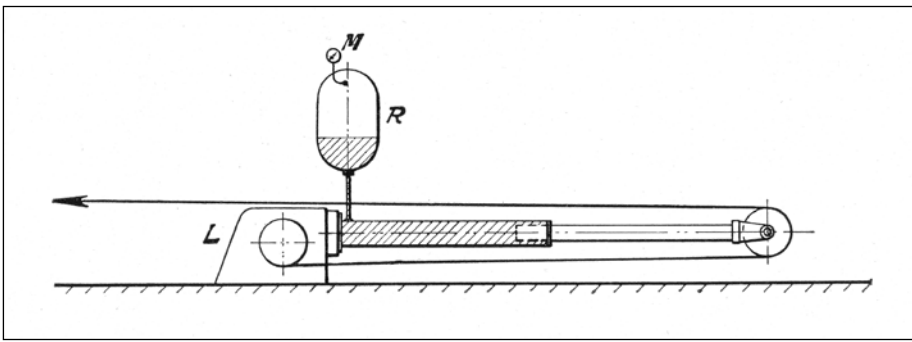
Diesel or Steam for Smit

The directors of L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst had by now realised that they lagged behind on the competition so they wanted new competitive deepsea tugs to protect their business. The new flagship *Zwarte Zee* – the company flagship had always been a *Zwarte Zee* - was, in fact, the first deepsea motor tug to be built for the company. And the most powerful in the world at 3.100 bhp (advertised as 4.200 ihp to allow for comparison to the steam tugs).

The final decision was made after much deliberation since Smit faced the same obstacles that **Schuchmann** faced when ordering *Seefalke*. Both these tugs were to be operated as salvage tugs so speed and power were essential conditions to be met. The trouble was that the steam propulsion plant required to deliver approximately 2.000 hp simply made the tug too big. On the other hand at the time diesel propulsion in ships was not common, the first diesel-driven ship having been commissioned only in **1911** – a Werkspoor engine in the Dutch tanker *Vulcanus*. The existing engines needed for the higher output for the tugs were simply too big especially in height. Schuchmann in the end settled for two 900 bhp engines but was forced to use a twin-screw configuration for their *Seefalke*. In overload these engines could produce – for a short time – 1.200 bhp each. Smit was not keen on twin-screw as they wanted to have the propeller as deep as possible in the water to avoid props striking air in steep seas as well as to minimise the chance of the towing wire fouling a prop.

In **1927** a first design for the new **salvage tug** showed a 1.350 ihp steam tug but this was quickly rejected as the speed was considered too slow. Also despite a length of 52,50 m (bp) a decent sized salvage hold was missing. In the early 1930s the steam propulsion idea





Principle of the towline shock absorber designed for ZWARTE ZEE drawing: L. Smit & Zn Shipyard

was finally abandoned by Smit in favour of diesel engines. In total 14 designs with 31 propulsion configurations (engines, couplings, etc.) were on the table. Two of the designs incorporated diesel-electric propulsion.

After weighing the pro's and con's – such as price, length, weight, single / twin engines, cylinder output, piston type, etc – a daring choice was made: two 4-stroke supercharged **Werkspoor-Lugt** crosshead diesels with Vulcan fluid couplings via the gearbox driving a single shaft. The advantage of these engines was the ultra-short piston rod reducing the engine height as well as construction weight. The disadvantage: no engines of this type had been in operation as yet.

Somewhat less of a challenge was the use of the **Vulcan** coupling. This was an invention of Hermann Föttinger, chief designer at the AG Vulcan Works in Stettin. The 1905 patent for his fluid couplings had been perfected by Vulcan's Dr Gustav Bauer and in 1927 the Föttinger coupling was successfully integrated with a gearbox thus enabling two diesel engines to be coupled to a single propeller shaft. In 1930 the first Dutch merchant ship – the liner *Kota Agoeng* – was fitted with such a coupling allowing the two main engines to drive a single shaft.

Furthermore the new tug was fitted with an automatic **shock absorber** on the towing winch – an invention by the builder's yard, L. Smit & Zn. A fore runner of today's render / recovery winch. It consisted of a hydraulic ram aft of the towing winch with a roller on one end. The towing wire ran over the roller. The ram allowed the wire to veer or haul a total of 12 metres thus absorbing shocks while the winch remained on the brake.

Zwarte Zee entered service in **1933** under the command of Capt. Teun Vet. He was to remain with the tug until his death in 1957. The choice for Capt. Vet over older Masters had to do with the adaption to the new techniques which the Smit Board decided a younger Master was more likely to quickly adapt to. The tug over the years was to gain world-wide fame. In 1961 she was renamed to free the name for her successor but it was only in 1966 the tug was finally broken up by Frank Rijdsijk at 'the Ambacht' (Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht).

Holland-America Line

The Holland-America Line pops up in the Rotterdam towage business with some regularity. **Willem van der Vorm** – mentioned earlier as a member of the Supervisory Board of the Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij and director of the Scheepvaart & Steenkolen Maatschappij - showed up as Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Holland-America Line from 1933 to 1957. This

came about because Van der Vorm had been instrumental in saving the H.A.L. from bankruptcy in the crisis years by drumming up the help of Rotterdam business men. Other members of the Van der Vorm family also served on the (Supervisory) Board or as a Director until the end of the Holland-America Line. The Line ceased operating as a Dutch line in 1989, when it was purchased by Carnival Corporation. The proceeds were put into an investment company (**HAL Investments**), the majority of which is owned by the **van der Vorm** family.

Mr. **D.G. van Beuningen** (SHV, L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst, P. Smit Jr. etc) also was a member of the Supervisory Board from 1926-1955. As an aside: in 1968 mr. **Ary Lels** switched from his position at L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst to that of Board Member of the Holland-America Line. He left the H.A.L. in 1978 when the head-office was moved to the U.S.A.

The 'Centrale'

In the period between the two World Wars further consolidation and fleet renewal took place – as far as the big companies were concerned anyway. Many of the smaller 'agent'-run companies with their captain / owners did not survive simply because they lacked the financial reserves needed for prolonged competition or to cover for slack times. Some of these tugs were then acquired by the bigger companies.



HUDSON - built 1939 by Piet Smit Jr Shipyard. For account of L. Smit & Co International Towage Co. 600 bhp diesel. 1963 sold for use as an ice factory. 1989 acquired for preservation, currently museumship at Maassluis. photo: Foto Teunissen



An interesting development to bring an end to cut-throat competition as well as the more efficient use of available towing capacity was the establishing of a **Tugboat Operations Centre** or Central Dispatch Office – the ‘**Sleepvaart-Centrale**’ - in 1931. The thought behind this was to avoid maintaining costly reserve capacity in everyone’s fleet. Through the Centre tugs would be allocated to jobs on the basis of an agreed percentage of total work. Initiator was L. Smit & Co’s International Tugboat Co which opened up discussions with P. Smit Jr. For those not connected to either P.Smit Jr or L. Smit / Internationale this required a lot of good faith since Van Beuningen owned P. Smit Jr. and was a shareholder in the L. Smit / Internationale combination. Other players in shiphandling were Volharding and Maas. The division of work was established on the basis of the 1930-value of the contracted services in combination with the heated surface of the boilers of the tugs that were to operate under this agreement. The latter parameter caused a breach with the Director of the Volharding, Mr Hoogslag. The Volharding operated relatively small tugs but brought large and valuable contracts into the agreement. Volharding, being a secret P. Smit Jr subsidiary, in previous years had been denied access to bigger tugs by its parent which was of the opinion that work for the bigger tugs better be handed over to P. Smit Jr instead. Mr Hoogslag then left the company.

Onafhankelijke Sleepdienst

Mr Hoogslag immediately started a new company which was to go into direct competition with the ‘Centrale’. This was possible due to his extended network in the shipping industry. The Onafhankelijke Sleepdienst (Independent Towage Co) opened up for business a few months prior to the Centrale opening up. The Independent fleet numbered 12 tugs some of which were in the 500 ihp class, at the time more or less the largest class operating in the port of Rotterdam.

Cut-throat competition ensued with P. Smit / Volharding and even the Steenkolen Handels Vereniging became mixed up in the battle. Discounts of up to 50 % on tariff were offered to those walking away from

the Independent. The Centrale even invited the Rotterdamsche Sleepdienst (mr Van Kessel) to join the fold even if that company did not do shiphandling at all. It did not go all as planned and several of the big companies remained loyal to Hoogslag and the Independent. In 1933 the battle was ended after a chance meeting between mr Hoogslag and mr Van Beuningen. Volharding and Independent merged into the VOS – **Vereenigde Onafhankelijke Sleepdienst** (United Independent Towage Co) with Hoogslag as sole director. The workshare was re-divided to fully reflect the new entrant’s value.

The Centrale, however, wished to control the majority if not all of the shiphandling operations in Rotterdam. There were plenty of other tugs around especially with the Rotterdam-based shipowners, like **van Ommeren** (which also served Shell Tankers), **Hudig**

& Veder (which also was the agent for the KNSM), etc. Hudig & Veder joined in 1931. With Van Ommeren an arrangement was made whereby the VO tugs were enlisted in the Centrale while **Van Ommeren** itself did not join. The shipyard tugs remained outside the Centrale as were the tugs operated by the freight forwarders.

Then, in 1936, messrs **R. (Roel) Kers**, tugowner P. van Lith (towage agent) and H.R.E. Huyens (bookkeeper) established the **Stoomsleepdienst Mars**. At the time mr Kers’ tug was working for **Sleepdienst Maas** (J.Burger). Due to the crisis and lack of sufficient work the Maas tugs were only allowed to sail every other day to evenly distribute income. Mr. Kers then decided to cut his losses and start his own agency. The first two tugs were *Mars I* and *Mars II* while as was usual at the time Mars was joined by several captain / owners for



SCHELDE was acquired in 1919 - ex SIMSON. 950 ihp. 8 March, 1925, lost when during refloating attempt of the freighter SOERAKARTA aground on th North Mole at Hoek van Holland. Towing rope broke and fouled the prop. Tug aground on the South Mole and partially sank. Six crewmembers rescued, 8 perished during the night
photo: coll. Job van Eijk



INDUS (built 1920 as BRABANT for Wijsmuller. Acquired by Smit in 1927. 1.000 ihp. 1939 BV 36 Dutch Navy. 1940 seized at Vlissingen by the invasion forces renamed LAZ 11, later BS 4. 1942 sunk by British fighter planes when off Hoek van Holland
photo: coll. Job van Eijk





ANTIC ex ANT (launch name). Built 1942 for British Government as armed rescue tug of the 'Assurance' class. 1.350 ihp. Handed over to Dutch Government (photo) and managed by L. Smit & Co / Internationale - manned by Dutch sailors with British gunners. 1946 returned to Ministry of Transport. 1948 to Royal Navy. 1969 sold for scrap photo: coll. Job van Eijk

which he was the agent. Even though it were the crisis years Mars succeeded in contracting some shiphandling work apart from their other towing work. The Centrale acted again and in 1937 the two Smit companies each took a 50% share in Mars while Mars also obtained a proportionate share of the work. The Mars company name remained until 1984 when the company was integrated in Smit International Harbour Towing. The Mars name finally was erased in 1991 when the push/tug *Mars VI* (1971 – 720 bhp) was transferred within the Smit Group to Interriver and renamed *Linge*.

The 'Centrale' post-WW2 would again play a significant role this time in connection with the Europoort harbours.

Immediately prior to WW II the factual situation in Rotterdam shiphandling was that most of the business was controlled by the two Smit's: L. Smit & Co International Towing which operated in the port as well as deepsea and in salvage, while P. Smit Jr. operated in shiphandling as well as river towing. Both Smit's had stakes in other participants in the 'Centrale'. The Van Beuningen family owned P. Smit Jr and had shares in L. Smit / Internationale to the extent that they had the right to supply one of the two directors. At the time P.E.E. Kleyn van Willigen, a nephew of Murk Lels the Smit half) and W.F.P.C. Viëtor (connected to the Van Beuningen family) held these positions. Van

Beuningen through SHV also had a large stake in inland river transport.

The foundations had been laid for what could effectively become a monopoly in Rotterdam shiphandling. The **Big Buy-Out was on the horizon**. However . . .

World War 2

On 10 May, 1940, Germany invaded The Netherlands. As a consequence of the war the number of ships visiting Rotterdam dropped very considerably. In 1939 12.026 commercial ships entered the port. In 1940 this dropped to 1.400. In 1944, the last full year of the German occupation, the number was down to 159.

At the time some 200 tugs operated in and around Rotterdam. The Germans, however, either confiscated many of the tugs or otherwise put them under German command spreading them over the country on war business. Some were even sent abroad. With few ships entering port many of the shiphandling tugs had become surplus to requirements. Some of these tugs were hidden in remote areas of the country, some became war losses. Near the end of the war the Rotterdam port towing fleet had dwindled to only a few tugs in full operational condition. The most modern of the fleet - Smit's *Pernis* – had been sabotaged early in the war and was inoperable for the remainder of the war.

When in 1939 the war clouds had started to loom on the horizon the Dutch Government requisitioned a number of seagoing tugs for use off the Dutch coast as **guard ships**. L.

Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst – at the time with 21 seagoing tugs the biggest ocean towage operator in the world – saw 11 of its tugs being taken up for this operation. *Zwarte Zee* was fitted with mine-sweeping gear to escort Dutch merchant ships from Hoek van Holland to The Channel vice-versa. On 10 May, 1940, at the start of the invasion in The Netherlands five tugs were outside Dutch territorial waters: *Thames* was alongside in the River Tyne, *Donau* was at Freetown, *Roode Zee* was on salvage station in Bermuda, *Seine* was at Bordeaux and *Hudson* was en route Dakar with a tow. That same day *Zwarte Zee* was instructed to sail from Vlissingen bound for England towing the incomplete newbuild destroyer *Isaac Sweers*. *Schelde* escorted two nearly-finished submarines from the yard to the Downs. *Witte Zee* left Nieuwediep on 12 May also bound for the Downs escorting a further two submarines. *Noordzee* on 14 May was mined with the loss of the entire crew but one. *Ebro* escaped Vlissingen on 17 May and also sailed for the Downs. The final escape was made by *Lauwerzee* via Ostend and Dunkirk. During the war – in 1943 - the British 'Assurance class' tugs *Antic* and *Dexterous* were brought under the Dutch flag manned with Smit crews.

The tugs that escaped were chartered by the British Ministry of Shipping or the Admiralty Rescue Tug Section to carry out towing, salvage and rescue work. War losses were – apart from *Noordzee* mentioned earlier – *Lauwerzee* (mined on 3 October, 1940), *Witte Zee* (ran aground 12 November, 1940) and *Roode Zee* (torpedoed 24 April, 1944).

The remaining seagoing tugs came under German command and were put on various war-connected duties. The four tugs still under construction were also taken over for use by the Kriegsmarine. War losses were *BS 4* (ex *Indus*) bombed 20 November 1942), *Oostzee* (mined 27 March, 1944), and *Ortelsburg* (ex *Java Zee*) stranded during a salvage operation 25 November 1944 and *Humber* (bombed 2 April, 1945).



Tug Times Inheritance

To be sure the Rotterdam Tug Times have left their marks left and right. Some are more easily recognised than others.

by Job van Eijk

A clear number one is the **Nationaal Sleepvaart Museum** (National Towage Museum) – the only such museum in the world.

In the late 1970s a group of people with an interest in tugs and towage - professionals as well as people with just an interest in the subject – began a lobby for a museum that would preserve the history of (Dutch) towage and salvage. The only suitable location for such a museum could be Maassluis, the port from which many ocean tugs left for yet another voyage with an unwieldy object or in search of a casualty floating around somewhere.

As it was the neighbourhood of Hoek van Holland with its entrance to the Rotterdam Waterway and the Maasvlakte Shallows within spitting distance provided regular work for the tugs as well as the salvors.

The initiative by this group, amongst which Smit International, Wijsmuller, and the Lekko Society (in which some 1.000 people with an interest in tugs and towing were united) as well as some influential citizens convinced the Municipality of their case. As luck would have it the City Council supported the initiative and came with the suggestion to use the old – dating from 1676 – city hall. This has seen a thorough restoration from 1971 to 1973 but the city had outgrown the city hall.

On 18 April, 1979, the Museum was officially opened. Within a year the 15.000th visitor was welcomed. By 1989 the museum had outgrown the old Town Hall. Another lucky one was that the house next door came on the market, which was acquired. On 26 August, 1987, the Museum was re-opened by Mrs Smit-Kroes, the minister of Transport and Waterways.

Over the years the Museum has unearthed much material on the early days of towage. Digitalisation

is extensive, all done by volunteers. Various publications have seen the light and a variety of other events are now linked to the museum.

One such event is in combination with the historic tug *Furie* (ex *Holmvik*). This tug – now over a 100 year old – was built by Bodewes Shipyard 'on spec' eventually sold to Sweden where she was employed towing log rafts for the paper mills. When AVRO television wanted to serialise the book 'Hollands Glory' (Dutch Glory) – a novel about tugs and towing from deckhand to commodore

of the fleet written during WW2 by Jan de Hartog (1967: 37th print) – a suitable tug was needed. Lekko, the International Tug Enthusiasts Society was asked for help. Their network discovered *Holmvik* which was purchased for the lead role in the series. Filming completed she was purchased by a steam fan and later sold to a group of historical-minded steam enthusiast headed by Henk de Haas of the shipyard De Haas at Maassluis. She was completely overhauled and restored in working order. Currently she is moored behind the National Towage Museum and is regularly in steam.



Maassluis outer harbour around 1900. Tugs *BIJ* in front of Smit office and paddler *WODAN*

photo: postcard coll Job van Eijk



Hotel Maassluis today

photo: Job van Eijk



A whole event - the 'Furiade' is held annually at Maassluis.

Another event is the 'Dag van de Zeesleepvaart' (Ocean Towage Day) organised around the outer harbour of Maassluis. Apart from various festivities there is the 'Parade of Tugs' in which tugs large and small present themselves to the public. Even big ocean tugs that happen to be in Rotterdam at the time of the event are invited to participate - many do so.

An inheritance of a different nature is the 'Indusbank' - an offshore shallows

off Hoek van Holland. The area is used to dump dredged material but the name comes from the Smit tug *Indus* that was lost here during WW2, shot up and bombed by British fighter planes. For many years the grave of the tug was marked by the so-called 'Indus' buoy and marked on the navigation charts.

As an aside - this was likewise the case in Zeeland where the 'Ebro' buoy marked the position where in the 1950s the Smit steam tug *Indus* was lost on the shallows when attempting to reach a stranded freighter. In 1986 the hull of the tug was discovered by a sports diver. The



FURIE

photo: Job van Eijk



Ship's bel of ZWARTE ZEE 1898 at the National Towage Museum photo: Job van Eijk



HUDSON at Maassluis. The white building in the back is the Towage Museum photo: Job van Eijk

currents along the coast had changed due to the Easter Scheldt Delta works and she was now sitting on the sand instead of buried in it. The Master of the lifting vessel Taklift 4 offered a weekend of free work to lift the hull and bring it ashore. The Smit board supported the action and the hull was positioned ashore on the grounds of shipyard De Schelde at Vlissingen. While several items on the tug were restored the hull in the end was not sound enough and finally had to be scrapped. The propeller, however, that had been totally deformed when she hit bottom was completely restored by the original makers as a matter of professional pride and on display at Maassluis.

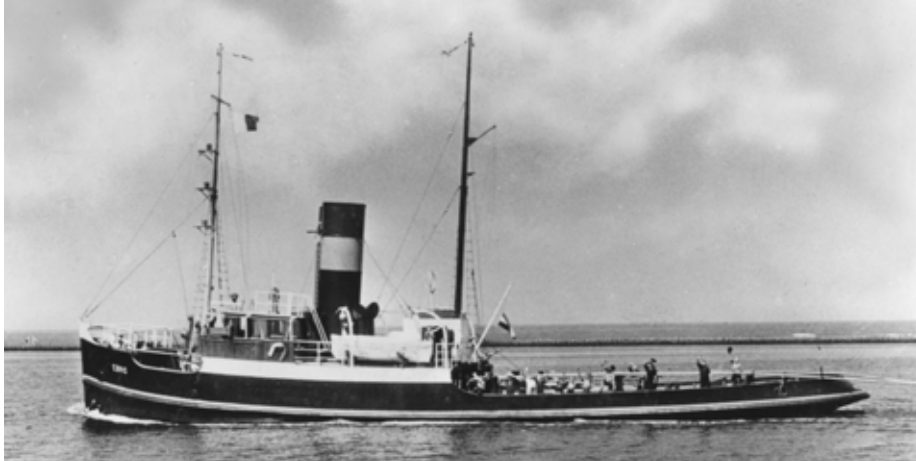


The Hotel Maassluis

In October, 2018, Hotel Maassluis was officially opened. The hotel is the former office building occupied by Sanofi, a medical wholesaler. The building actually consists of two separate buildings which were connected when Sanofi occupied the office. Oldest of the two buildings was that owned by the Dutch Pilotage Service which dated from 1887, while the Smit office next to it was built a few years later. In 2016 the building(s) - which stood empty since 2004 - were acquired by local entrepreneur G. Malipaard who transformed them into a hotel with additional restaurant and conference rooms. The hotel is decorated with reminders of the time when Maassluis was the tugboat port of the world.

Maassluis Tugboat Port

Once again Smit tugs are moored in port, albeit as preserved ships. *Hudson* is now a museum ship, restored to her original look while the ship also tells the story of shipping in World War II - a war in which the tug actively participated. The second tug is *Elbe* which after 10 years of reconstruction once again sails. She is restored to her original appearance



EBRO

photo: coll. Job van Eijk

except for adaptations required by today's law and the omission of the towing winch. *Elbe* - available for charter trips and events - is moored in the outer port almost on the doorstep of Hotel Maassluis. The 1954-built harbour tug *Krimpen* - now privately owned - once was part of Smit's Rotterdam shiphandling fleet. She is operational and was usually moored in the inner port with other preserved vessels. Meanwhile she has been sold to a new owner and left the port. Also preserved and operational are the Tak's Berging salvage vessel *Bruinvisch* - built 1937 - and Tak's salvage tug *Tonijn* (1958). The small

harbour tug *Maassluis* is also preserved and fully restored. This is the only harbour tug ever to have been a unit of Smit's Ocean Towage fleet with the black and blue funnel. She was built by the Maassluis-based Shipyard De Haas which until the present day is still active. Latest addition is the tug *Steenbank* (1960) which was one of two Smit tugs designed especially for operations in Europort and Hoek van Holland roads. Later they were incorporated in the New Rotterdam Towage Co, a subsidiary of Smit and a number of Rotterdam harbour towage operators. In 1988 this subsidiary became a 100% Smit operation.

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Bouwen voor het buitenland

Sleepboten en offshorevaartuigen gebouwd op Nederlandse werven voor buitenlandse opdrachtgevers



Nationaal Sleepvaart Museum

Hoogstraat 1-3, Maassluis

Vanaf 25 februari t/m 27 augustus 2023

Openingstijden:

zie www.nationaalsleepvaartmuseum.nl



Rotterdam Tug Times 1939-1984

Pre-WW II the foundations had been laid for what could effectively become a monopoly in Rotterdam shiphandling. The Big Buy-Out was again on the horizon. However . . .

by Job van Eijk

Immediately prior to WW II factual situation in Rotterdam shiphandling was that most of the business was controlled by the two Smit's: L. Smit & Co International Towage which operated in the port as well as deepsea and in salvage, while P. Smit Jr. operated in shiphandling as well as river towage. Both Smit's had stakes in other participants in the 'Centrale'. The Van Beuningen family owned P. Smit Jr and had shares in L. Smit / Internationale to the extent that they had the right to supply one of the two directors. At the time P.E.E. Kleyn van Willigen, a nephew of Murk Lels the Smit half) and W.F.P.C. Viëtor (connected to the Van Beuningen family) held these positions. Van Beuningen through SHV also had a large stake in inland river transport.

World War II

On 10 May, 1940, Germany invaded The Netherlands. As a consequence of the war the number of ships visiting Rotterdam dropped very considerably. Other work was found for a limited number of tugs but near the end of the war the Rotterdam port towage fleet had



On 4 May, 1946, the entire P. Smit Jr. fleet assembled in the Leuvehaven and at the Boompjes to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the company
photo: Rotterdam City Archives

dwindled from approximately 200 tugs to only a few in full operational condition.

Post War reconstruction

At war's end it was found that a large part of the tug fleet had been dispersed through Europe, either voluntarily by charter or by force. Many were damaged or completely worn out. New construction was out of the question

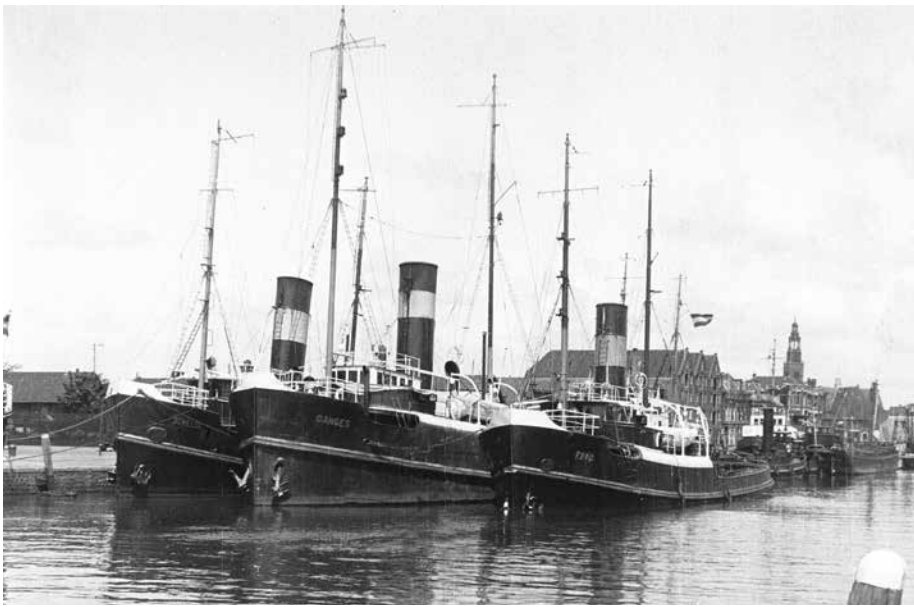
due to lack of materials and yards that were left in ruins by the retreating Germans. Apart from the tugs being repaired some operators had succeeded in hiding materials for new construction from the enemy. Adriaan Kooren, for instance, had successfully buried the steel for its new tugs and hidden the engines. Other incomplete vessels had been hidden for instance in the vast amount of creeks in the Biesbosch area.



ALBLASSERDAM is the former PERNIS, completed in 1939 by J.& K. Smit for account of L. Smit Internationale. 24,72 / 23,00 x 6,50 x 3,30 m, Draught 2,46 m. Diesel-electric, output 540 ihp. Renamed ALBLASSERDAM in 1955. Prototype for a generation of L. Smit Internationale shiphandling tugs. 1976 reconstructed. 1985 sold as DIKKY to Koehoorn, Harlingen photo: coll. Job van Eijk

Reconstruction of the port was taken in hand but it took until 1952 before the 1938 figures - the last prior to the war - were once again reached. A setback of 14 years. It must be said, however, that from that point onwards the port never looked back until traffic stalled with the Oil Crisis. Replacements for the towage fleet were badly needed not in the least because a) steam propulsion was on its last legs due to the availability of suitable diesel engines developed during the war and b) the leaps forward in ship sizes compared to the pre-war years. Furthermore, extra tugs became a necessity due to the expansion of the port areas. By 1952 the economic situation had returned to more or less normal and an ambitious fleet renewal program was started by the various port towage operators. L. Smit & Co's





L. Smit Internationale's last three steam-driven ocean tugs at Maassluis around 1952. From left to right SCHELDE (1926 P.Smit Jr. - 650 ihp triple expansion - 1940-1945 in Allied service - 1954 sold for scrap) - GANGES (ex WILLEM BARENDZ (Wijsmuller - 1921 Jonker & Stans - bought 1927 - 1.000 ihp triple expansion - 1940-1945 confiscated Kriegsmarine - 1954 sold for scrap) - EBRO (1931 P. Smit Jr. - 550 ihp triple expansion - 1940-1945 in Allied service - 1958 wrecked - 1986 raised and put ashore for possible restoration - 1989 scrapped photo: coll. Job van Eijk

Internationale Sleepdienst started a massive newbuilding program as did P. Smit Jr.

1946-1969

When WWII ended the **L. Smit Internationale** combination embarked on an extensive newbuilding program for their ocean towage as well as their shiphandling fleet with designs being prepared by Smit's Technical Department at Maassluis. The oceangoing designs were based on the pre-war *Roode Zee*. The first post-war tug, *Humber*, was the last one with a riveted hull. Of special interest were *Maas* and later *Schelde*, both designed for the Hoek van Holland salvage station. A break-away occurred with the design of *Clyde* and *Elbe* (both 4.500 ihp) which were to be the most powerful tugs in the world albeit for a short time only and again with *Zwarte Zee* of 1963 (9.000 ihp). The latter became the first Smit tug not able to enter the port of Maassluis due to its deep draught.

In 1969 Smit at Maassluis closed its office and a part of the workshops and storage. The biggest tugs in the fleet could no longer enter the port of Maassluis while repair and maintenance could just as easily be done elsewhere. Apart from occasional visits by the smaller tugs in the fleet the only Smit presence left in the port were the

salvage vessels of Smit-Tak, in 1992 re-branded as **Takmarine**.

New players

In 1947 the first new entrant into Rotterdam port towage was established. Antonie Kooren had split his company. Johannes (Jan) Kooren took over the original company as **Sleepdienst Jan Kooren**. The second new player was in fact an old one. Established in 1910 as a lighterage business the company in 1945 came under control of H. Zwaak Jr. He changed the company so as to phase out the lighterage business and

with increased attention for towage. NV **Reederij H. Zwaak & Zonen** was formally established on 1 April, 1957 but did not enter the shiphandling business.

Management Changes

On 1 January, 1946, messrs Kleyn van Willigen and Viëtor were named as CEO's of **L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst**. Murk Lels remained until 1962 when he reached pensionable age. He then stayed on the Board until 1967 at the age of 70 – the limit set by law for that position. In 1956 Ary Lels, a nephew of Murk Lels, joined the company. He stayed on until 1968 when he left to become a Director of Holland-America Line.

Also in 1946 another company changing management was **Sleepdienst Maas** where J. Burger Sr stepped down in 1946 to be succeeded by his son J. **Burger Jr**. With **P. Smit Jr** mr P.J.A. Voorwinde remained as sole Director when in 1949 mr List Graswinkel withdrew from the company due to health reasons. In 1952 he was joined as Director by J.D. Wilton and in 1953 by J. Roelofs – the latter again a well-known name from within the towage industry.

In 1950, R. Kers passed away to be succeeded by his son **A. Kers** as Director of **Sleepdienst Mars**.

George van Beuningen passed away in 1955. His membership of the board of **P.Smit Jr.** and of **L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst** was taken over by his son, **D.G. van Beuningen Jr**, Director of the Maatschappij Vrachtvaart



INDEPENDENT VII -Vereenigde Onafhankelijke Sleepdienst - built 1965 Jonker & Stans - 480 bhp - 25,88 x 6,65 x 3,02 m - 1975 to Smit-VOS photo: coll. Job van Eijk



- a tramp shipping company. The **VOS** also changed management – in 1950 - with **C. Hoogslag** succeeding his father A. Hoogslag who led the company since its beginnings. Hoogslag Sr, however, continued the management of the 'Independent' tug companies of which he was sole shareholder. This continued until his death in 1959 when his son also took over the management – and shares – of these single-ship companies.

NRV 1946 - 1968

Post war between 1948 and 1957 thirteen powerful motor tugs were newly built. And in **1957** the first dedicated large **push tug** was introduced on the Rhine: *Wasserbüffel*. This was a project initiated by NRV, Vulcaan – another Rotterdam-based operator although owned by the Thyssen-Bornemisza Group in Germany, Fendel Schiffahrt and Raab Karcher (both German operators). Concept proven the NRV in 1959 and 1960 had the 1.500 bhp *Olivier van Noort* and *Jacob van Heemskerck* built.



J. Burger, a director of Sleepdienst Maas from 1953 to 1966

photo: Rotterdam City Archives (Ary Voets)



HAVIK - Sleepdienst Maas (actual owner P. Boudewijns). Built 1954 by Bijlsma at Wartena. 19,80 x 5,24 x 2,15 m. Bolnes diesel 250 bhp. 1969together with Sleepdienst Maas bought by Smit / Internationale, 1974 sold to Italy as SANT ELIA.

photo: Rotterdam City Archives



INO in the colours of Hudig & Veder. Built 1952 D.& Joh. Boot - 22,32 x 6,32 x 2,40 m. Industrie diesel 450 bhp - 1986 to Smit International - 1987 sold. This is an example of the smaller type of harbour tug immediately after WW2.

photo: coll. Job van Eijk

Sleepdienst Maas exit

In the 1950s the **Sleepdienst Maas** had run into trouble. The shares had become widely spread and the necessary fleet renewal became a constant subject of discussion. Only three newbuilds joined the fleet after WW2 – the 250 hp *Havik*, the 376 hp *Buizerd* and the 180 hp *Grutto*. In the early 1960s mr Burger developed a plan for the survival of the company and its shareholders. This meant for the shareholders to sell their tugs to the company in return for a proportionate number of shares. This failed due to disagreement between shareholders so in 1966 mr Burger resigned and took on a job at P. Smit Jr. A new director was found but in 1967 the original company was liquidated. The shares and tugs were purchased equally by **L. Smit, Internationale** and **Piet Smit**. In a new set-up Sleepdienst Maas remained

operating as a subsidiary until 1974 when all tugs had finally been sold.

The 1960's

Trade in the 1960's was in overdrive. This led to a search to reduce costs or alternatively more efficient forms of transport. Rapidly increasing size in dry bulk and crude oil carriers necessitated extension of the Rotterdam port facilities. This growth in size was further pushed by the blockades of the Suez Canal initiated by the Egyptians and the Cape route became a must. To accommodate these ship sizes – as well as the accompanying industrial development - Europort was constructed. And then the container was invented effectively blowing mid-river transshipment out of the water. The general purpose harbour tug became superfluous. Container transport became an accepted form of transport requiring different cargo-handling techniques. LASH-traffic was introduced as an alternative mode of onward-(river)transport for bulk as well as piece goods. Pushboats started replacing the less efficient towed barge trains. In 1968 **NRV** merged with the dry bulk division of **Vulcaan**. The new name of the combined operation was **Europese Waterweg Transporten BV** (EWT for short).which was to exploit bulk liner services between Rotterdam and mainly Germany using pushboats and pushbarges. The NRV during its existence has owned 281 non-propelled barges, 64 steam tugs, 14 motor tugs, 30 inland waters cargo vessels, 2 line push boats, 2 harbour push boats, 24





A post-WW2 first-generation 610 bhp shiphandling tug built 1952 for P. Smit Jr photo: coll. Job van Eijk



SMIT IERLAND - a second generation Rotterdam shiphandling tug - 1.800 bhp photo: coll. Job van Eijk



Third generation Rotterdam shiphandling tug: reverse tractor tug designed by Damen Shipyards: SMIT MERSEY built 1999. 4.908 bhp - 61,3 ttp. 2009 renamed SMIT NIDA operating in Lithuania. 2013 to Smit Lamnalco as SL NIDA. 2019 sold to Canada as DALTON WARRIOR. Delivery trip was under the name of IDA 1

photo: coll. Job van Eijk



SMIT CHEETAH seen here 20-9-2019 in Boluda colours (7.370 bhp - 95 ttp)

photo: R. & F. van der Hoek

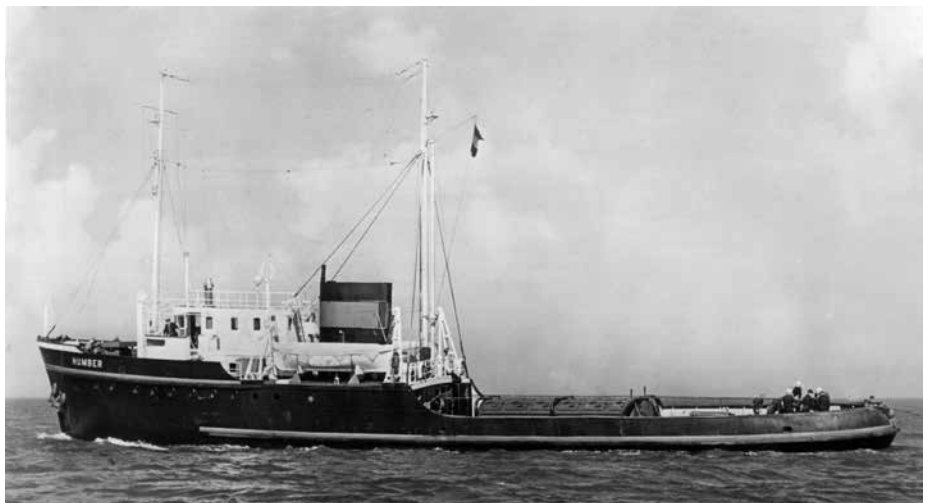
push barges and a number of smaller supporting vessels.

The Europort situation

The new port area was designed for very large ships in the bulk trade. More powerful tugs would be needed. The partners in the 'Centrale' decided to set up a new company which was to develop its own fleet rather than use tugs of the contributing operators. The **Nieuwe Rotterdamse Sleepdienst** (New Rotterdam Towage Co) was established in **1961**. In this company the domination of the two Smit companies became visible in its management structure. Directors were messrs B.M. de Court Onderwater of L. Smit Internationale and J.D. Wilton of P. Smit Jr. The Supervisory Board consisted of messrs Viëtor, Kleyn van Willigen and A.M. Lels (all L. Smit Internationale), Voorwinde and Roelofs on behalf of P. Smit Jr and C. Hoogslag for VOS and Independent.

P. Smit Jr. initiated research into new solutions which led them to order two **Voith-Schneider** Tractor tugs for Europort. The choice for this propulsion system basically was a safety matter. The big tankers at the time had to enter Europort from the Rotterdam Waterway – a separate opening for Europort was completed only in 1971 – so tankers had to maintain a fairly high speed of 6-7 knots to keep steerage right until the final moment they had to turn to make the entrance. At the time this propulsion system was not widely accepted in tugboats, with the new *Azië* and *Europa* being no 32 and 59 delivered after WW II. They were the 2nd and 3rd Voith Tractor in The Netherlands.

Partner L. **Smit Internationale** took a different approach and made the choice for conventional single-screw. This had to do with L. Smit also being the primary salvor in the Waterway area. The 1960-built *Schouwenbank* and *Steenbank* had a diesel-electric propulsion with an output of 1.240 bhp and were suitable for operations at sea. One of these tugs always operated from Hoek van Holland which was central to the Waterway, the North Sea and Europort. In 1965 Smit repeated this with the 1.320 bhp diesel-only *Vikingbank* and *Maasbank*. After 1965 only Voith Tractors were added to the fleet until 1987 when the new 5.200 bhp *Vikingbank* and *Maasbank* joined the



HUMBER - built 1948 by K. Smit & Zn. Dimensions 43,28 / 40,19 x 8,26 x 4,55 m. Draught 4,19 m. B&W diesel 840 bhp (1.000 hp according to brochures). 1968 sold to Straits Engineers, Singapore, as *EXPERT*. 1983 sold for scrap at Jurong
photo: coll. Job van Eijk

fleet. This were the first (and the last) stern drive tugs in the fleet.

Pipelines

A decision with great consequences for the inland water transport was the construction of **pipelines** for the transport of fluids like oil from Rotterdam to Germany and Antwerp, effectively making Rotterdam an oil hub for Western Europe. Oil transport on the inland waters was slashed by large volumes putting a lot of tugs out of business. On the upside was, of course, an increase in tanker movements to Rotterdam

increasing the workload for shiphandling tugs. The downside was that the quickly increasing size in tankers meant less tugs would be needed in the future.

The downsizing of the tug fleets as triggered by the aforementioned developments was started when L. Smit / Internationale in 1968 integrated the **Gerrit J. Eerland** firm in its fleet to strengthen their inland waters and general port towage and salvage operations. The Eerland fleet – which was to retain its identity – consisted of 9 tugs with an output between 120 and 275



SCHELDE was built by J.& K. Smit in 1959 for Smit's salvage station at Hoek van Holland. 44,63 / 41,89 x 9,47 x 4,09 m. Draught 3,08 m. Diesel-electric 1.800 bhp. 1967 re-engined with 3x Kromhout, total output 2.250 bhp. 1970 transferred to Smit Antilles. 1976 sold or transferred to Holyhead Towig as *AFON GOCH*. 1980 *GOLDEN VENTURE*, 1983 *CORWIN*, 1986 *NOBLE VENTURER*, 1987 *TX TX STAR*. 1990 burned at Houston, total loss
photo: coll. Job van Eijk





Salvage action at Hoek van Holland - the NRS Voith Tractor AZIE holding the bow (no bowthrusters then) of the brand-new WITTE ZEE (9.000 ihp) - still flying the shipyard flag - as she is backing down to connect to the bow of the laden chemical tanker ANCO STATE stranded on the North Mole at Hoek van Holland in seriously bad weather. Sister ZWARTE ZEE was also on the spot. The tanker, however, was unable to get the heavy towing wire on board. Later refloated by a fleet of NRS tugs. The reason for the use of the muscle was that a spill of the tanker's cargo could have had serious consequences for the people of Hoek van Holland, just 3 kilometres away
photo: Rotterdam City Archives



RODE ZEE - 3rd generation Smit ocean tug after WW-2. Built 1968 Arnhemsche Scheepsbouw - single screw 7.000 bhp (11.000 hp) - 68,50 / 65,08 x 12,60 x 6,40 m. Draught 5,65 m. 1987 sold Triple S Marine - 1988 scrapped
photo: Skyfotos / Fotoflite

bhp and 29 pontoons and barges. Smit immediately transferred some additional tugs to the Eerland fleet. Amongst these were the 1955-built 225 bhp *Snoek* (vd Tak Salvage), the 320 bhp 1955-built *Pluto* (from the harbour towage department) and the 1949-built 150 bhp *Maassluis* (ocean towage department)

Next, L. Smit / Internationale and P. Smit Jr. in 1969 acquired – on a 50 / 50 basis – **Stoomsleepdienst Maas**. This brought 13 tugs with an output between 140 and 350 bhp under their wings. The company was liquidated in 1973. The only survivors albeit for a short time were the 1954-built 250 bhp *Havik* and

the 1961-built 180 bhp *Grutto*. They were both sold in 1974.

By the end of the 1960s / early 1970s towage operations for the offshore industry significantly increased. This required more powerful tugs and Smit responded by ordering three 11.000 hp (7.000 bhp) tugs of the 'Rode Zee' class. To determine the limits of this size of tug a practice test was run in cooperation with Shell. *Rode Zee* managed to obtain a towing speed of 7 knots in force 5 Bf with the fully laden 200.000 tons tanker *Metula*. At the same time Smit began to flex its muscles by establishing international joint-ventures. Another way

was to buy itself into another company to gain a foothold in some geographical areas. Purchases were made / operations started in or with, amongst others: Smit-Cory (international harbour towing), Curacao (harbour towing and salvage services), Canada (Eastern Canada Towing), Germany (Ulrich Harms salvage), Spain (Sayremar salvage), U.K (Risdon Beazly – cargo recovery and salvage), Singapore (Smit International South East Asia -salvage, towage, offshore support), to name but a few.

Towards a single operator

The 1970's started with a study about the possible integration of Smit / Internationale, P.Smit Jr., VOS, Mars and Mabi into Smit United Harbour Towing. The outcome was positive but in 1971 the process was discontinued. This decision did not alter the fact that a downsizing of the shiphandling fleet in Rotterdam - except for the Europort area - was required. Shiphandling operators scaled down the fleets by selling or breaking up older units. Tugs with an output below 300 bhp disappeared. In 1972 the Maatschappij Binnenvaart (**Mabi**) folded due to the severe drop in tank-barge towage, caused by the pipelines to Antwerp and Germany.

Restructuring took place with the larger companies. On 1 March, 1972, L. Smit & Co and the Internationale Sleepdienst finally merged their financial structures



into a now proper **L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst.**

The Van Beuningen interests in the towage sector at the time were scattered so these were re-grouped as **Smit-Spido BV**, a part of **Vigilanter Holding**, the investment arm of the Van Beuningen group. This was not the end, however. On 2 January, 1975, P. Smit Jr's subsidiary **Vereenigde Onafhankelijke Sleepdienst** in which the Hoogslag family through their 'Independent' tugs had a significant interest, was merged with Piet Smit Jr into **Smit-VOS BV**. One month later Smit-VOS purchased the Zwaak company which brought a fleet of barge-handling push tugs under their control. The towage operations were now split into two divisions with shiphandling carried out by Smit-VOS while the barge-work and general harbour towage was brought under the division Smit-VOS-Zwaak River and Push Towage.

In **1976** Smit Internationale purchased the shares in the company still held by **HAL Holding** (van der Vorm): 25 % Smit-Lloyd, 11,48% L. Smit & Co and 1% Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij.

The next step in the integration process was made by L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst. Smit operated oceangoing tugs, shiphandling tugs, salvage vessels and a fleet of offshore support vessels, mainly tug / supply vessels. The latter were run by Smit-Lloyd BV. Smit-Lloyd and L. Smit / Internationale initially clashed over towing work to the extent that on launchings it was advertised that *"this (Smit-Lloyd vessel) is NOT a tug"*. This was one of the reasons for a further integration and divisioning of the Smit / Internationale group of companies. The intention now was to create **Smit Internationale** which was to include **Smit-Spido** (van Beuningen) as a sub-holding and **Smit-Lloyd**. To this end Smit / Internationale first bought out Holland America Line (the Van der Vorm family) which at the time had built up a shareholding in Smit-Lloyd of 25%. Furthermore Smit Internationale purchased the 50% shareholding in Smit-



SMIT LONDON - 4th generation Smit ocean tug - seen here already under the SmitWijs banner (since 1991) as **SMITWIJS LONDON Bahamas**. Later to Svitzer as **LONDON** and finally scrapped as **GLOBAL CHANGE**. Built 1975 by De Merwede, Hardinxveld. 74,83 / 66,90 x 15,78 x 7,60 m. Draught 6,80 m. 2x 9-cyl Sork Werkspoor total output 13.500 bhp (marketed as 22.000 hp) photo: Job van Eijk

Lloyd build up by **NSU** – Netherlands Shipping Union, an amalgamation of several large Dutch liner companies, amongst which the Royal Rotterdam Lloyd, one of the founding fathers of Smit-Lloyd. In addition Smit Internationale purchased the 100% shares of **Smit-Spido** from Vigilanter Holding. This transaction was paid for by shares in the new **Smit Internationale Group** to the amount of **40% NSU** and **40% Vigilanter**. The remaining 20% of the shares was scattered to the public with the introduction in **1977** of Smit Internationale on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange.

Meanwhile the increasing size of vessels entering the port also had consequences for the **'city' fleet**. More powerful tugs were needed to relieve NRS of the pressure to time and again mobilise tugs from Europoort to the city to assist. A new shiphandling tug was developed and in **1978** eight twin-c/p screw in fixed nozzles 1.820 bhp tugs were ordered – four each by Smit-VOS and Smit Internationale Harbour. In the 1980s Smit also busied itself with an attempt to become the major player inland waters salvage in The Netherlands. Van den Akker (Vlissingen) had been acquired back in 1965 but with the addition of Van der Graaf (Rotterdam), Kauffeld (Roermond),

Mammoet Goedkoop (Amsterdam), and Scheffer (Urk / IJsselmeer) more or less covered the entire Netherlands.

A monopoly - almost

On 1 January, **1984**, the harbour towage activities were bundled in **Smit Internationale Havensleepdiensten BV** (Smit International Harbour Towage). The fleets of Smit, Smit-VOS and Zwaak came under one flag, a total of 40 tugs and push boats.

A further action was the purchase of the harbour towage activities of **Phs van Ommeren** (the last remaining partner of the 'Sleepvaart Centrale'). An unusual move was the purchase of the towage activities of the **Verolme** and the **Wilton-Feyenoord** shipyards. These tugs were typical yard tugs doing yard-related work which at any rate was a very, very, tiny fraction of total shiphandling work. Their crews would be a costly addition to the Smit payroll. The two Verolme tugs were sold immediately while the five Wilton tugs were taken up in the Rotterdam shiphandling fleet, but only for a short time.

A monopoly had almost been achieved. But now **Kooren's** time had come.

For the Grand Finale see page 49 !

On 24 July, 1915, the excursion steamer EASTLAND sank in the Chicago River. The ship rolled over onto its side while tied to a dock in the Chicago River. In total, 844 out of a total 2,572 passengers and crew were killed. It was established that this vessel had severe stability problems caused by gradual draft reduction and weight adding. She had, in fact, become top-heavy. EASTLAND was salvaged by Great Lakes Towing Co. using, amongst others, their big salvage steamer FAVORITE, the third of that name (pictured right). FAVORITE was delivered by Buffalo Dry Dock Co in 1907. The 1,223 grt 58 x 13 meter vessel had an accommodation for no less than 90 people and was fitted with an array of salvage equipment. She was also fitted with a towing winch with 550 metre of 2" towing cable. In 1917 she was purchased by the U.S. Navy becoming USS FAVORITE. From 1931-1940 she served at the Panama Canal. In 1948 she was sold by the Navy to Peru renamed BAP GUARDIAN RIOS which in 1954 was shortened to RIOS. In 1958 she was struck from the Navy list and disappeared from view

photo: newspaper clipping from the Chicago Daily News of 3 April, 1961

