

# Tug@zine

all about tugs

*150 years of  
Waterway ...*

vol. 3 nr. 10  
February - March 2022

## 150 year Rotterdam Waterway

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### Photo frontpage:

*The tug POSEIDON – seen here in June, 2019, was built in 1957 by Zorg en Vlijt (H. de Haas) at Maassluis, as yard number 100, for account of L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst. The red funnel originate from the Internationale Sleepdienst. Dimensions: 21,32 (oa) / 19,00 (bp) x 6,02 x 2,80 m. Draft 2,20 m. Engine output 290 bhp. 17-10-1957 delivered to owner. 4-1972 transferred to Smit International Harbour Towage. 8-1986 sold to Gebr. Heye, Burcht (Belgium), as BIRGIT. 9-2008 to L. Broeckaert-De Koning Bvba, Antwerp. Same name. 2009 to Stichting Zwarte Zwaan, Scharnegoutum. Same name. 2013 to RDM Kampen BV, Kampen, as BIRGIT (for scrap). 2014 sold to mr Jelle Smit, Siddeburen, The Netherlands. Renamed POSEIDON and restoration started. Currently operational*  
*photo: Jasju van Haarlem*

## 150 years – an anniversary

**In 2022, following our 'offshore' issue the current issue covers an anniversary: 150 years of the New Rotterdam Waterway. A stretch of water just about 9 kilometres in length that changed the future of Rotterdam – and a lot more.**

On 9 March, 1872, the first merchant ship left Rotterdam via the Waterway. The Waterway itself triggered a number of other developments that had an impact on the port, shipping companies, tug operators and 'Hoek van Holland' – the village that came from the camps of the workers that were involved in digging the Waterway and constructing the sea entrance to the river.

On 1 April, 2022, it is also 450 years ago that The Netherlands were borne. It was on 1 April, 1572, when the resistance against the Spanish occupiers changed into an organised fight with William of Orange teaming up with the 'Watergeuzen' - a sort of para-military 'navy' under 'admiral' Lumey. It were the latter that took control of the city of Den Briel and initiated the rebellion against the Spanish. On 26 July, 1581, a de-facto declaration of independence was presented and Filips II was kicked out. Finally, in 1588, the Republic of the United Netherlands became a fact.

Back to the Rotterdam Waterway. It was the waterway that brought my grandfather to 'the Hook'. He was working for a dredging company and ended up as Master of one of the early hopper dredgers. My father worked for Rijkswaterstaat Hoek van Holland in a survey team that was responsible for the hydrographic surveys in the Waterway up to Rotterdam. He later was involved with wreck removal and wreck research in the area. I myself worked on the extension of Europoort as a hydrographic surveyor and was involved in developing underwater survey and sonar techniques. So the family has quite a history at Hoek van Holland, almost from the beginning.

This issue is devoted exclusive to 150 years of the Rotterdam Waterway and Hoek van Holland, related to the development of maritime matters and the towage industry. Instead of spreading the article over several issues this year we decided to put it in one (sort of) commemorative issue. Our next issues will be returning to the usual format: towage, past, present and future.

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Cock Peterse (editor)

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A milestone in the development in westerly direction of the port of Rotterdam. On 31 August, 1960, a cutter dredger is making the final cuts to connect the Europoort to the Waterway opposite the Berghaven at Hoek van Holland

photo: Dutch National Archives  
(Anefo - Herbert Behrens)



Construction of Maasvlakte I and the new entrance to Europoort. Breakwaters under construction  
photo: Rijkswaterstaat



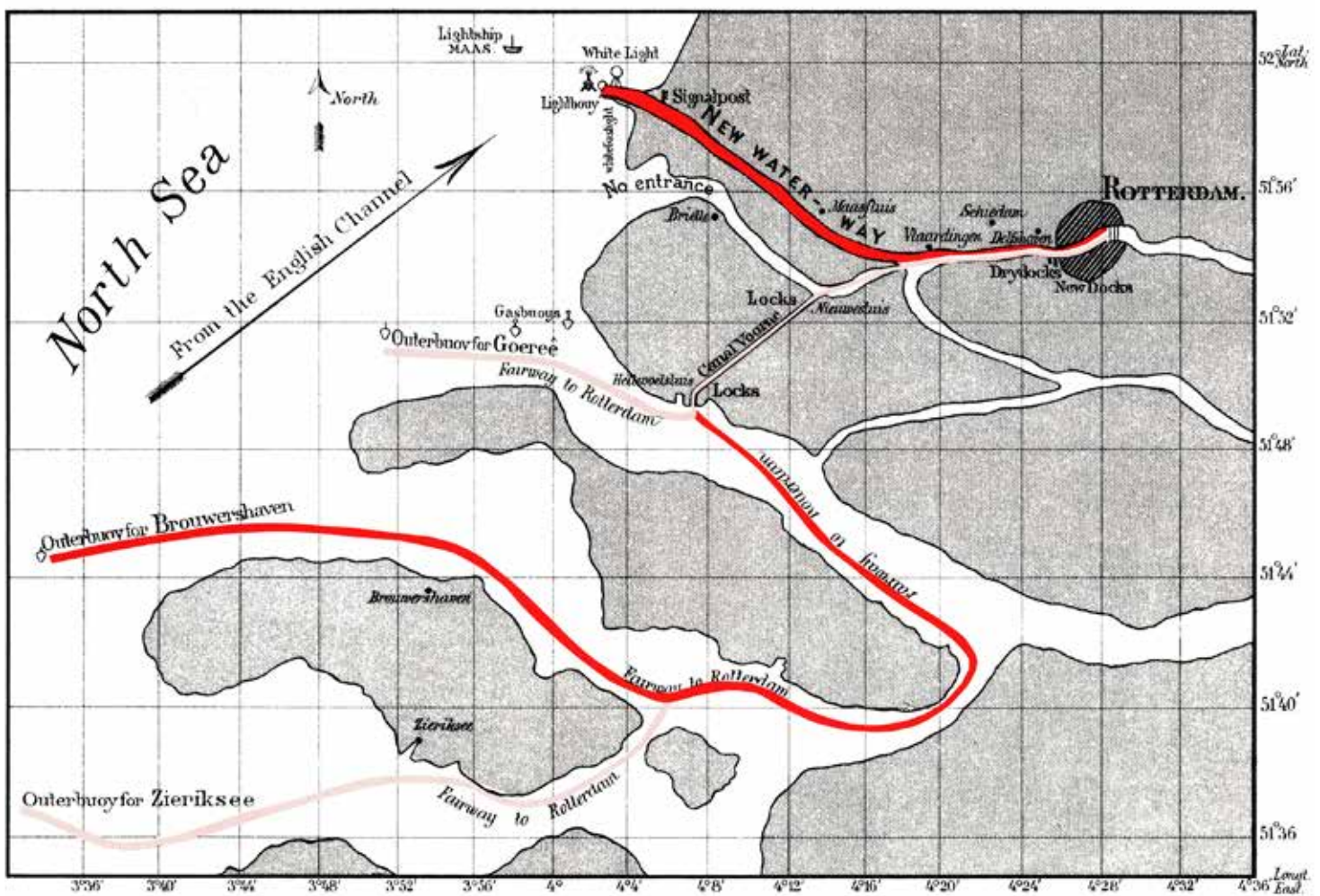
A second milestone was Queen Juliana of The Netherlands officially opening the new entrance to Europoort on 11 June, 1971 on board the 'Zeeland' ferry Koningin Wilhelmina - named after the mother of the Queen

photo: Dutch National Archives (Anefo)



Sunset on the entrance to the Rotterdam Waterway, today quite a bit wider and deeper than back on 9 March, 1872

photo: Job van Eijk



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

map: coll. Job van Eijk

# 150 year Rotterdam Waterway

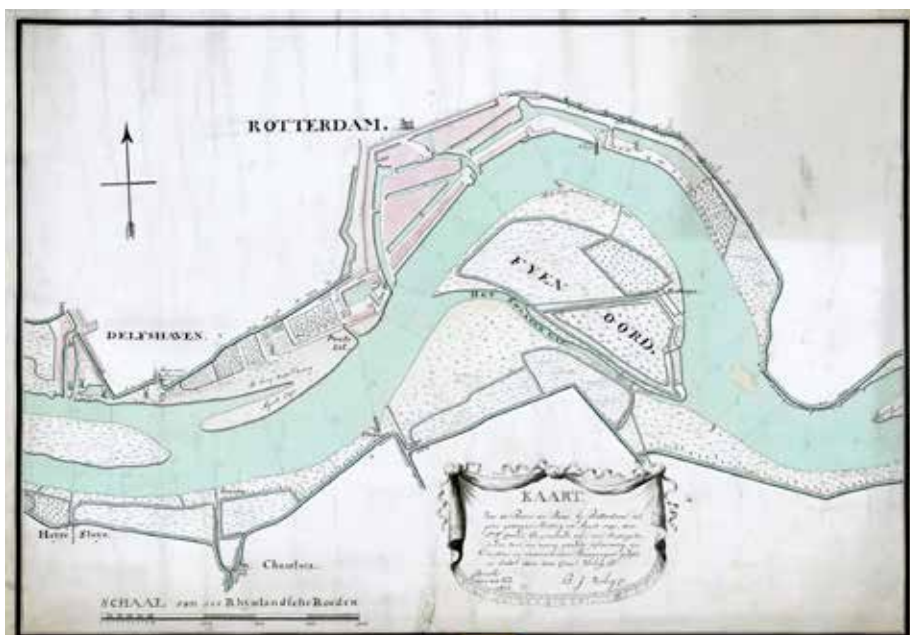
On 9 March, 2022, it was exactly 150 years since on 9 March, 1872, the first merchant ship passed the 'Hoek van Holland' out into the North Sea. It was the start of the growth of the Port of Rotterdam.

by Job van Eijk

The New Rotterdam Waterway allowed for faster and more reliable transit times from sea to Rotterdam and vice-versa. It also triggered the start of the famous Holland-America Lina that in turn stimulated the Smit firm to expand its business into deepsea long distance towing and plant the roots for the worldwide fame of the Dutch towage and salvage services. And it put the village of Hoek van Holland on the map as an international railway station and ferry port. In this article we take a look at some of the developments and the connection to the towage industry.

## The birth of Rotterdam

The estuary of the river Rhine from the east and the tributaries of the river Rotte from the north through the ages formed silted up areas of dry land. The same waters and the tidal conditions of the sea were responsible for the shifting of these land areas. Critical for what was to become the settlement of Rotterdam was the construction of dams to keep the water out of the northerly areas. Around **1270** the dykes connected and only one water outlet remained, the river Rotte. Another dam was built that blocked the river and that in **1296** 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



Map of the Rotterdam port area in 1802

map: Dutch National Archives

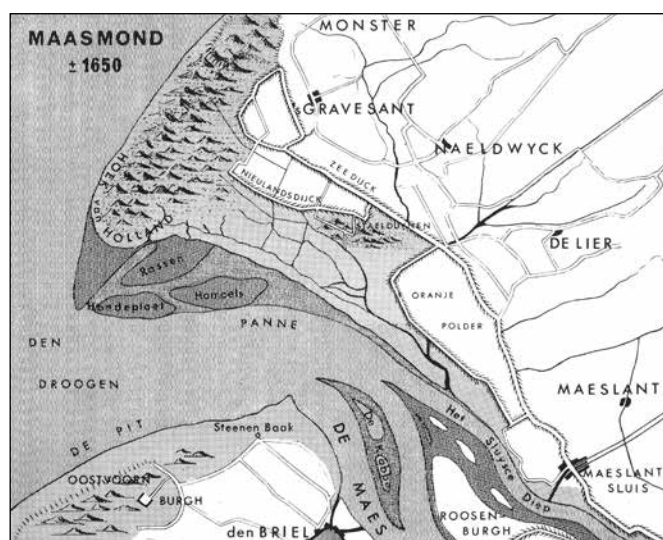
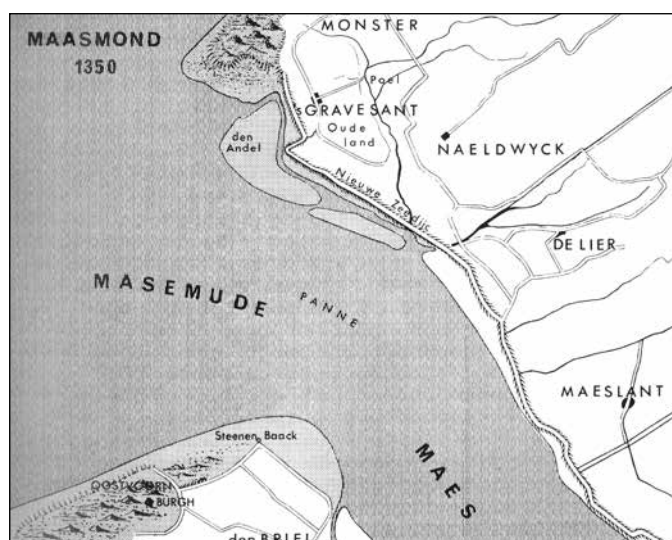
over time seagoing trade developed, especially with the Baltic region.

related support businesses also came to Rotterdam. Industrialisation began.

## Growing up

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

Jumping in time to 10 May, **1816**, Rotterdam saw the arrival of its 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. In **1830** a liner service was started connecting Rotterdam to London which was later to



become the well-known 'Batavier Line' operated by Wm. H. Müller.

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 became 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 today has ended in the construction of the Maasvlakte II area of Europoort.

#### How to get there . . .

Rotterdam as a port had one major problem. To get to the port a long and winding fairway had to be used. Up until about **1740** the fairway to Rotterdam covered some 35 kilometres (19 nm)



Situation in 1867. Fragment of a map published by Hugo Suringar, Leeuwarden. The distance scales are in 'hours walking' as well as in Dutch miles  
map: Dutch National Archives

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 time 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.

#### Towage: the beginning

In 1842 **Fop Smit** – an established shipbuilder and shipowner – was contracted by a group of Rotterdam shipowners and insurers to provide a steam tug at Hellevoetsluis for the specific purpose of assisting vessels entering the fairway to Rotterdam. The wooden tug *Kinderdijk* was completed by Fop Smit's yard in 1843.

To reach Rotterdam from the sea was a major undertaking for the sailing vessels of the day. While towing services had earlier been offered and were offered on a haphazard basis using cargo and other steamers not designed for the job

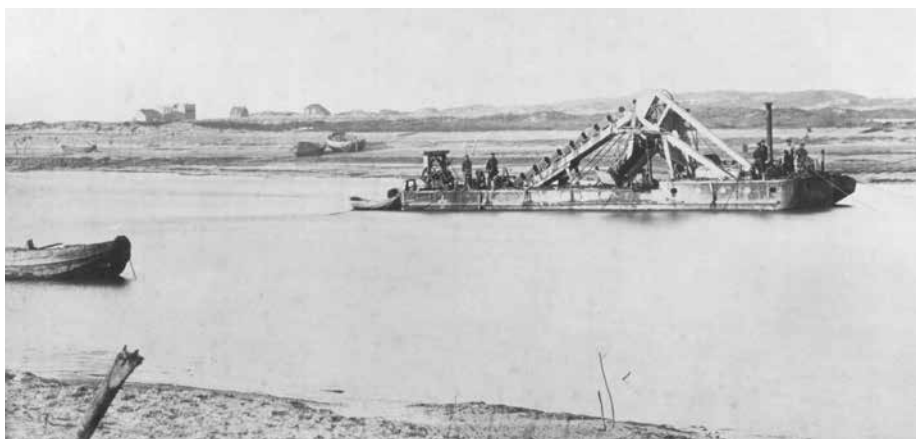


The paddle tug *ZEELAND* - the second of that name - was built in 1868 by L. Smit & Zn, Kinderdijk, for account of Stoomsleepdienst L. Smit & Co., Alblasserdam, later Rotterdam. 33,53 x 12,08 (oa) / 6,65 (hull) x 3,05 m. Draft 2,00 m. Iron hull. 1874 re-engined, 260 ihp. 1908 converted to non-propelled salvage vessel. 1917 sold for scrap  
photo: 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

picture: Dutch National Archives



For the construction of the Waterway apart from (much) manpower use was made of steam-driven bucket dredgers seen here in 1868 in the Waterway

photo: Dutch National Archives (Gemeente Rotterdam)

but capable of pulling the new operation was dedicated to towage only. A novelty also being they worked with fixed tariffs. The new tug greatly reduced the transit times so there was plenty of demand for the service. Up to 1850 Fop Smit added another four tugs to the fleet.

### Pieter Caland's Waterway

In 1853 the Dutch 'Rijkswaterstaat' – the Government body responsible for the water infrastructure and flood protection in The Netherlands – transferred one of its engineers to Den Briel (or Brielle) on the island of Voorne. Caland started researching why the Brielse Maas was constantly silting up when abroad the harbour entrances and rivers remained at a certain depth. In 1856 he was sent to England and France to research this phenomenon. It took two years for the Council of Rijkswaterstaat and Caland to formulate a plan based on Caland's research.

The result was a plan for the connection of the Scheur – an arm of the river Maas – with the North Sea through the

dunes at the Hoek van Holland. The water depth was to be maintained by the current being such that any sediment could not settle on the bottom. For this additional works were needed. Being the estuary of the river Rhine the water was divided over numerous arms thus weakening the flow. Caland's idea 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.

On **24 January, 1863**, the plan was turned into law. 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. The work continued and in 1872, on 9 March, the **Great Eastern Railways'** steamer *Richard Young* – draught 3 metres - was the first merchant ship to use the new waterway leaving Rotterdam for Harwich (England). The distance from the North Sea to Rotterdam now was 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 as powerful as Caland had calculated 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. So in 1875 a drastic step was taken



Construction of the Northern Mole at Hoek van Holland, situation in 1871

photo: Dutch National Archives (Carl Philipp Wallrabe)





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Postcard showing to the left the Rijkswaterstaat office and on the right the Dirkzwager signal station. Poststamp 29-7-1927  
postcard: issued by J. Vermeer, Hoek van Holland - coll. Job van Eijk



Berghaven Hoek van Holland (officially the "Government Port"). Posted 10 January, 1916, at Hoek van Holland  
postcard: issued by A. Voorwinde, Hoek van Holland - coll. Job van Eijk

and ultimately 15 steam driven bucket dredgers were on site tackling the problem. The situation eventually improved but maintenance dredging had become a recurring necessity.

Nevertheless business prospered and in 1912 a milestone was reached with 10.000 merchant ships entering the Waterway.

### Hoek van Holland

The name Hoek van Holland (Hook of Holland) is much older than the village of Hoek van Holland. It all began with the St. Elisabeth Flood which, in 1421, totally changed the estuary in the south of Holland. Following the Flood over a period of many years shallows and sand banks were formed. This created

Rozenburg. Gradually the wide river mouth silted up and the south west corner made a distinct bend. This was indicated as the hoek van Holland (literally: the corner of Holland). The shifting sands over the years slowly created land referred to as 'De Beer'. The land was barren save for a few farmers and the Nieuwlandse Watermolen (water mill) dating from 1584. The Caep was a farm established prior to 1665 while the second home, likewise a farmhouse, dates from 1780.

The creation of a shortcut through this part of Holland also was the start of what was to become the village of Hoek van Holland, the **Gate to Europe**. The first inhabitants were the people from Rijkswaterstaat that were to direct and oversee the graving of the cut and the construction of the necessary dams. The actual work was carried out by labourers originating from the Sliedrecht and Werkendam area. They were housed in wooden barracks and primitive houses. This was the first 'settlement' even though these workers were not officially registered as inhabitants of the village of 's-Gravenzande that actually managed the territory. The ground itself was mostly property of the State.

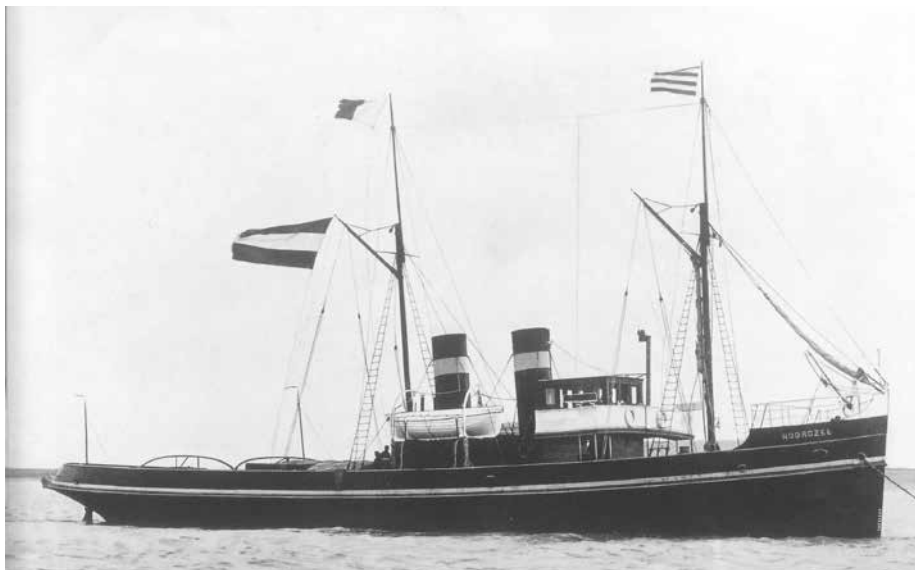
Nevertheless they were the first group of people on location. Perhaps the bar-owner – a first necessity in the camps – really was the first 'permanent' inhabitant of the area even though Rijkswaterstaat also maintained a presence. With the construction of the quay for the Hoek van Holland – Harwich



The ill-fated BERLIN seen here moored at Hoek van Holland. Postcard dated 24 January, 1902

postcard: issued by J.H. Schaefer, Amsterdam - coll. Job van Eijk





The tug NOORDZEE built in 1892 for account of L. Smit at the instigation of the Holland-America Line to be stationed at Hoek van Holland. The first dedicated deepsea tug for Smit and the start of the biggest deepsea towage and salvage company in the world. Built by L. Smit, Kinderdijk. Dimensions: 40,94 x 7,36 x 3,66 m. 750 ihp.  
photo: coll. Job van Eijk

connection, the railway station and the railway itself provided work for many people so more houses were built, mostly by the railways but also housing was found for the Customs Officers and the stevedores, the boatmen, pilots, etc. The connection with England initiated various industries that brought new workers to 'De Hoek'. The lifeboat organisation also built houses at the Berghaven for its personnel.

Per 1 January, 1914, **Rotterdam annexed** the area including the village. At the time 'Hoek van Holland' counted some 2.700 inhabitants that were mostly employed in trade and shipping. The annexation came about after the inhabitants made serious complaints as to the neglect of the village by 's-Gravenzande.

### Railway Steamers

The British railway system is the oldest

in the world. In 1802 Richard Trevithick for the first time ran a steam locomotive pulling loaded railcars. The development of the railway system was quick with many railway companies starting operations. With ports connected to the railway system the various railroads developed cargo and passenger services to the European continent. One of those companies was the **Great Eastern Railway**. This company was formed in 1862 as an amalgamation of several small railways.

In 1854 the railways had reached Harwich but it was not until 1863 that the G.E.R. was granted the operation of steamers from Harwich to the continent. In October, 1863, three chartered steamers started operating a cattle and cargo service from **Harwich to Rotterdam**. Their first passenger steamer was the paddler *Zealous*,

commissioned in 1864. This vessel inaugurated the Harwich-Rotterdam passenger service. *Avalon* was the second passenger / cargo steamer on the route with two other steamers that were exclusively employed in the cattle trade. In 1871 the G.E.R. took delivery of the new paddle steamer *Richard Young*. The new vessel was operated on the Rotterdam route and was to make history when she sailed from Rotterdam via the new Waterway to Harwich. On 9 March, 1872, she was the first merchant ship to do so.

### The Harwich connection

The port of **Harwich** has been in existence for ages. At this sheltered port on England's East Coast on the confluence of the rivers Orwell and Stour the first regular service between Harwich and the continent was established in 1661. The agreement was for the carriage of passengers, mail and freight by so-called 'packet' boats between Harwich and the Dutch port of **Brielle**. This was the age of sail but by 1863 mechanised transport was an established development and the Great Eastern Railway Company started a **Harwich - Rotterdam** service followed a year later by a Harwich - Antwerp service. In 1882 at Harwich a new quay with shore installations - Parkeston Quay - was completed by the Railway.

### 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 1850 that some Dutch entrepreneurs established the Rotterdamsche Amerikaansche Stoomvaart Maatschappij with the aim of starting a steamer route from The Netherlands to America across the Atlantic. They did not succeed, however, in raising enough capital. In 1869 a second try was made with the Nederlandsch-Amerikaanse Stoomvaart Maatschappij. Instrumental in this were Antoine Plate - son of F.J. Plate who was involved in the 1850 attempt, Marten Mees, Lodewijk Pincoffs and Otto Reuchlin. With the partly successful underwriting of the required capital (enough for two but not for four ships) in February 1871 the company **Plate, Reuchlin & Co.** was established. Two 1.500 dwt passenger / cargo steamers were ordered. Already in 1873 it



Arrival of a Holland-America liner at Hoek van Holland mooring with tug assistance. Already on the quay the G.E.R. railway steamer to Harwich  
postcard: issued by L. van Zanten - coll. Job van Eijk



became clear that the company was severely underfunded.

On 18 April, 1873, the **Nederlandsch-Amerikaansche Stoomvaart Maatschappij** was re-established with Plate, Reuchlin and retired captain van der Hoeven as Directors. On 1 May the Plate, Reuchlin company was incorporated into the N.A.S.M. and two (bigger) ships ordered. One of the new ships was named *P. Caland*, honoring the 'designer' of the Rotterdam Waterway. The new ships were designed for this waterway so until the Waterway was sufficiently deepened they faced the added burden of having to take the long route from sea to Rotterdam, including lightering.

In the years to come the unexpected silting of the Waterway had consequences for deep-draught vessels like the passenger liners of what was popularly known as the **Holland-America Line**. To this end the HAL contacted the Smit company to seek solutions guaranteeing the availability of adequate tug assistance whenever one of their ship was to run aground in the still shallow Waterway. This was – at least in part - the trigger for the construction in 1892 of the first powerful seagoing tugs of Smit – *Noordzee* and *Oostzee* (690 ihp). The intention was to have these tugs available at Hoek van Holland on a permanent basis although soon they were to be employed deepsea only.

In about the same period the Dutch dredging companies greatly expanded

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**Hollandsche IJzeren Spoorweg-Maatschappij.**  
**1 JUNI 1893.**  
**OPENING VAN DEN DIENST  
op de lijn Maassluis-Hoek van Holland.**

In verband met de opening van bovengenoemde lijn zullen de **nieuwe**  
stoomschepen van de **GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY** het station  
**Hoek van Holland** aandoen, tot het opnemen en afzetten van reizigers en  
bagage, in aansluiting op snelreizen 1e en 2e klasse en gewone treinen voor alle klassen.

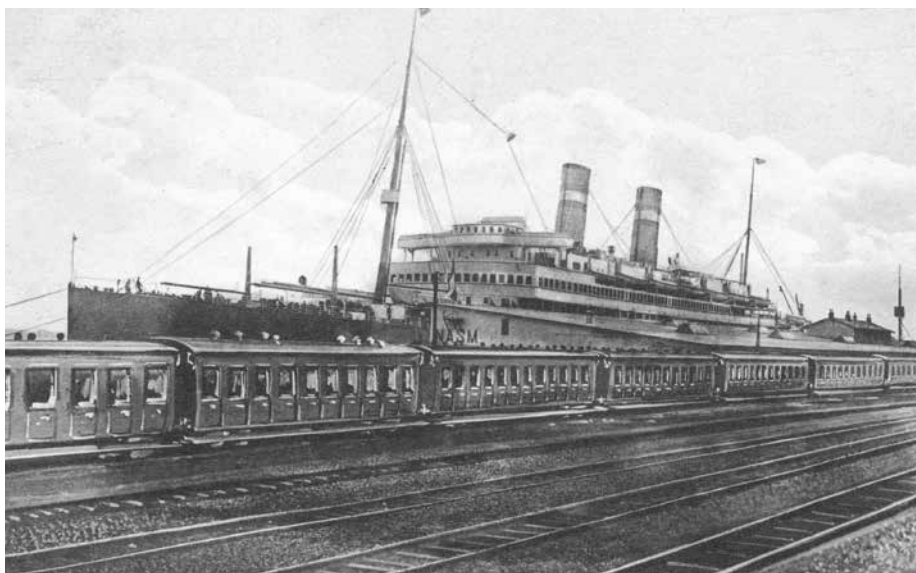
**Regelmatige Dienst (ook des Zondags).**  
**Naar Engeland: per Engelsche Noord Express:**  
Van **OLDEZAAI** 5.15 n.m., **APELDOORN** 6.20 n.m., **AMERSFOORT** 7.25 n.m.,  
**Amsterdam** 8.35 n.m., **Den Haag** 9.55 n.m.  
Aankomst **HOEK VAN HOLLAND** 10.15 n.m.  
to **LONDEN** 8.45 n.m.

**NAAR ENGELAND: per Engelsche Zuid Express:**  
Van **OLDEZAAI** 7.25 n.m., **APELDOORN** 8.35 n.m., **AMERSFOORT** 9.45 n.m.,  
**Amsterdam** 10.55 n.m., **Den Haag** 12.15 n.m., **DORDRECHT** 1.25 n.m.,  
Aankomst **HOEK VAN HOLLAND** 1.45 n.m.  
to **LONDEN** 8.45 n.m.

**NAAR NEDERLAND:**  
Vertrek van **LONDEY** (Liverpool Street Station) 8.00 n.m.  
**per Engelsche Noord Express** Vertrek van **HOEK VAN HOLLAND** 6.45 n.m.  
Aankomst **Den Haag** 7.55 n.m., **Amsterdam** 9.25 n.m., **AMERSFOORT** 10.25 n.m.,  
**APELDOORN** 10.55 n.m., **OLDEZAAI** 11.45 n.m.

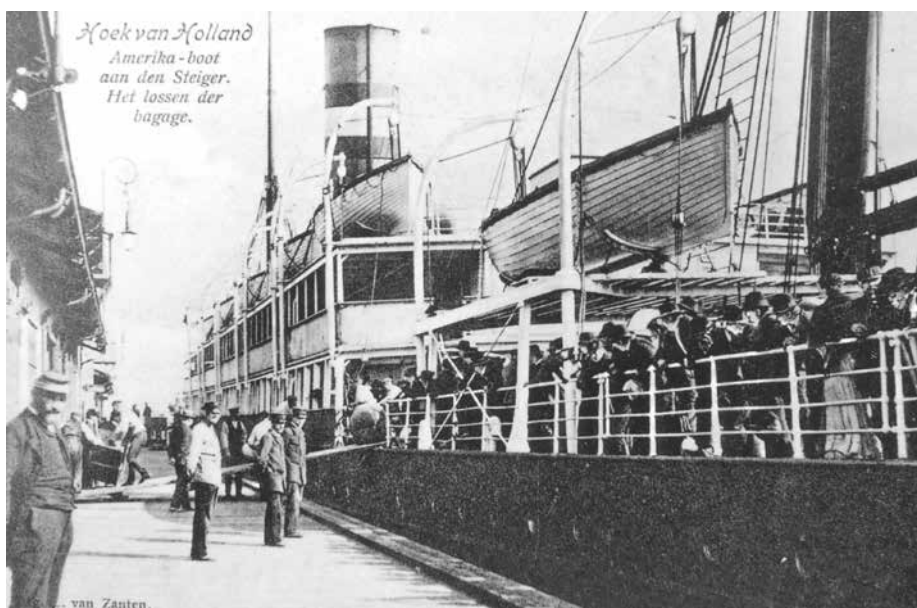
**per Engelsche Zuid Express** Vertrek van **HOEK VAN HOLLAND** 6.55 n.m.  
Aankomst **Rotterdam-Beurs** 7.55 n.m., **DORDRECHT** 8.55 n.m.,  
**NIJMEGEN** 9.55 n.m., **KLEEF** 11.30 n.m. (M. E. Tj.)  
In de nachtreizen doorgaande rijtuigen via Amsterdam naar Löhne (Berlijn)  
en via Nijmegen-Kleef naar Keulen.  
Men raadplege de diensttijden en bijzondere aankondigingen.  
(11853)  
**De Administrateur.**

Advertising the start on 1 June, 1893, of the new 'boat train' connecting to the arrival and sailing times of the mail steamers from Hoek van Holland to Harwich newspaper clipping: coll. Job van Eijk



A Holland-America liner moored at the Hoek van Holland terminal

postcard: issued by Schaefer's Platino, Amsterdam - coll. Job van Eijk



Passengers disembarking from a Holland-America liner at Hoek van Holland, dated 1912

postcard: coll. Job van Eijk

their operations abroad and that increased the demand for deepsea towage so the incentive to acquire more of those tugs was there. It was the beginning of an industry that became famous around the world. The first Smit deepsea tugs were quickly followed by *Oceaan* (1895 – 1.200 ihp), *Zuiderzee* (1897 – 450 ihp), *Lauwerzee* (1897 – 450 ihp), *Roode Zee* (1898 – 1.500 ihp), *Zwarte Zee* (1898 – 1.500 ihp) and *Poolzee* (1900 – 1.000 ihp).

### Hoek van Holland by rail

On 1 June, 1893, the Dutch authorities officially opened a ferry terminal and rail connection at Hoek van Holland. The G.E.R. steamer *Chelmsford* arrived at 05.30 hrs and disembarked the passengers. At 07.08 hrs a train left for Amsterdam followed on 07.16 hrs by a

gültig ab 15. Mai 1930.

# KONTINENT-ENGLAND

TAG- und NACHTDIENST TÄGLICH, AUCH SONNTAGS

HARWICH ROUTE

VIA VLISSENGEN  
HOEK V. HOLLAND-HARWICH

NIEDERLÄNDISCHE EISENBAHNEN  
DAMPFSCHIFFFAHRTS-GESELLSCHAFT „ZEELAND“  
LONDON AND NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

## FAHRPLAN KONTINENT—ENGLAND

ÜBER  
VLISSENGEN—HARWICH  
(TAGESDAMPFER)  
UND ÜBER  
HOEK VAN HOLLAND—HARWICH  
(NACHTDAMPFER)

DRUCKSTELLE: J. VAN NIEKENEN, ROTTERDAM

| BUKAREST, POLEN, OST-DEUTSCHLAND—LONDON.<br>REVAL, RIGA, NORD-OST-DEUTSCHLAND |                   |                      |    |                                    |    |                      |                    |                    |    |   |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----|---|--|
| A                                                                             | B                 | C                    |    |                                    |    |                      |                    | D                  | E  | F |  |
| 7 50 <sup>a</sup>                                                             | 16 30             | 23 30 <sup>a</sup>   | ab | Bucaresti (Bukarest) (O.-E. Z.)    | an | —                    | 15 05              | 18 50 <sup>a</sup> | —  | — |  |
| 17 55 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 4 23              | 12 20                | „  | Cernauti (Czernowitz)              | „  | —                    | 2 43               | 18 26 <sup>a</sup> | —  | — |  |
| 23 15 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 11 00             | 18 35                | „  | Lwow (Lemberg) (M.-E. Z.)          | „  | 12 40                | 18 30              | —                  | 10 | — |  |
| 6 55 <sup>a</sup>                                                             | 17 30             | 0 55                 | „  | Krakow (Krakau)                    | „  | 5 58                 | 12 13              | 17 52              | —  | — |  |
| 10 00 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 19 10             | 4 20 <sup>a</sup>    | „  | Myslowice (Myslowitz)              | „  | 4 37                 | 10 52              | 16 30              | —  | — |  |
| 10 37 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 19 58             | 4 50 <sup>a</sup>    | „  | Katowice (Kattowitz)               | „  | 1 44 <sup>a</sup>    | 10 18              | 16 08              | —  | — |  |
| 12 22 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 21 02             | 5 44 <sup>a</sup>    | „  | Beuthen (Hbf.) (Oberschles.)       | „  | F 0 27 <sup>a</sup>  | 9 10               | 14 56              | —  | — |  |
| 12 24 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 21 07             | F 5 48 <sup>a</sup>  | ab | Bohumin (Oderberg)                 | an | F 0 25 <sup>a</sup>  | 9 10               | 14 55              | —  | — |  |
| 13 24 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 22 04             | F 6 38 <sup>a</sup>  | ab | Kandrzin                           | an | F 23 30 <sup>a</sup> | 8 06               | 14 01              | —  | — |  |
| 13 57 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 22 40             | F 7 09 <sup>a</sup>  | „  | Oppeln                             | „  | F 22 57 <sup>a</sup> | 7 28               | 13 29              | —  | — |  |
| 15 13 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 0 07              | F 8 15 <sup>a</sup>  | „  | Breslau (Hbf.)                     | „  | F 21 48 <sup>a</sup> | 5 49               | 12 19              | —  | — |  |
| 18 49 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 5 38              | F 11 18 <sup>a</sup> | „  | Frankfurt (Oder)                   | „  | F 18 48 <sup>a</sup> | 0 57               | 11 57              | —  | — |  |
| 19 44 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 6 53              | F 12 18 <sup>a</sup> | „  | Berlin (Schles. Bf.)               | ab | F 17 47 <sup>a</sup> | 23 47              | 1 54               | —  | — |  |
| 20 32 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 7 40              | —                    | „  | Charlottenburg                     | „  | —                    | 23 02              | 1 14               | —  | — |  |
| 9 05                                                                          | 17 25             | 22 00                | ab | Warszawa (Warschau) (Hbf.)         | an | 6 38                 | —                  | 18 40              | —  | — |  |
| 14 55                                                                         | 2 45              | 9 25                 | „  | Poznan (Posen)                     | an | 1 15                 | —                  | 13 02              | —  | — |  |
| 19 25                                                                         | 7 47              | 9 21                 | „  | Berlin (Schles. Bf.)               | ab | 18 52                | —                  | 8 30               | —  | — |  |
| 20 10                                                                         | 8 27              | —                    | „  | Charlottenburg                     | „  | —                    | —                  | 7 46               | —  | — |  |
| 8 55 <sup>a</sup>                                                             | 18 40             | —                    | ab | Tallinn (Reval) (O.-E. Z.)         | an | 8 35                 | —                  | 19 08              | —  | — |  |
| 23 54                                                                         | 7 42              | —                    | „  | Riga                               | „  | 20 00                | —                  | 6 56               | —  | — |  |
| 5 33                                                                          | 14 35             | —                    | „  | Kaunas (Kowno) (M.-E. Z.)          | „  | 10 35                | —                  | 23 08              | —  | — |  |
| 7 38 <sup>a</sup>                                                             | 17 40             | 21 30                | „  | Eydtkuhnen                         | „  | 8 00                 | 11 41 <sup>a</sup> | 23 45              | —  | — |  |
| 9 58 <sup>a</sup>                                                             | 20 18             | 23 55                | „  | Königsberg (Pr.) (Hbf.)            | „  | 5 24                 | 8 44 <sup>a</sup>  | 18 17              | —  | — |  |
| 11 46 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 22 29             | 23 50 <sup>a</sup>   | ab | Danzig (Hbf.)                      | an | 5 40 <sup>a</sup>    | 8 06 <sup>a</sup>  | 17 07              | —  | — |  |
| 12 48                                                                         | 23 14             | 2 32                 | ab | Tosow (Dirschau)                   | „  | 2 49                 | —                  | 15 40              | —  | — |  |
| 19 14 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 6 47              | 8 51                 | an | Berlin (Schles. Bf.)               | ab | 19 58                | 23 23 <sup>a</sup> | 1 29               | —  | — |  |
| 19 55 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 7 27              | —                    | „  | Charlottenburg                     | „  | —                    | 23 38 <sup>a</sup> | 1 44               | —  | — |  |
| 19 07                                                                         | 5 05 <sup>a</sup> | 9 58 <sup>a</sup>    | an | Stettin                            | an | 19 58 <sup>a</sup>   | 1 41 <sup>a</sup>  | 10 31 <sup>a</sup> | —  | — |  |
| 21 12 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 7 04 <sup>a</sup> | 11 58 <sup>a</sup>   | ab | Berlin (Stett. Bf.)                | ab | 18 00 <sup>a</sup>   | 23 35 <sup>a</sup> | 8 35 <sup>a</sup>  | —  | — |  |
| 21 55 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 8 25              | F 12 49 <sup>a</sup> | ab | Berlin (Schles. Bf.)               | an | F 17 31 <sup>a</sup> | 22 19              | 7 40               | —  | — |  |
| 22 35 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | 9 02              | —                    | „  | Charlottenburg                     | „  | —                    | 21 37              | 7 00               | —  | — |  |
| 5 20                                                                          | 16 14             | F 19 08 <sup>a</sup> | ab | Bentheim                           | ab | F 11 10 <sup>a</sup> | 14 39              | 0 00               | —  | — |  |
| 5 51                                                                          | 16 25             | F 19 14 <sup>a</sup> | ab | „                                  | an | F 11 09 <sup>a</sup> | 14 19              | 23 32 <sup>a</sup> | —  | — |  |
| 6 31                                                                          | 17 05             | —                    | an | Oldenzaal (A.S.) (A.S.Z.)          | ab | —                    | 14 24              | 23 34 <sup>a</sup> | —  | — |  |
| 8 08 <sup>a</sup>                                                             | 17 32             | —                    | „  | „                                  | ab | —                    | 14 15              | 23 24 <sup>a</sup> | —  | — |  |
| 12 30 <sup>a</sup>                                                            | —                 | —                    | an | Vlissingen                         | ab | —                    | —                  | 18 33 <sup>a</sup> | —  | — |  |
| 13 20                                                                         | —                 | —                    | an | Hoek van Holland                   | ab | —                    | —                  | 18 00              | —  | — |  |
| —                                                                             | 22 14             | 23 32 <sup>a</sup>   | ab | „                                  | an | —                    | —                  | —                  | —  | — |  |
| —                                                                             | 23 45             | —                    | ab | „                                  | ab | —                    | —                  | —                  | —  | — |  |
| 19 10                                                                         | 6 15              | —                    | an | Harwich (Parkstr. Q.) (W.-E. S.Z.) | an | 7 16 <sup>a</sup>    | 9 23 <sup>a</sup>  | —                  | —  | — |  |
| 19 45                                                                         | 6 55              | —                    | an | „                                  | an | —                    | 6 00               | —                  | —  | — |  |
| 21 15                                                                         | 8 38              | —                    | an | London (Liverpool Street Station)  | ab | —                    | 21 42              | 11 45              | —  | — |  |
| —                                                                             | —                 | —                    | an | „                                  | ab | —                    | 20 15              | 10 00              | —  | — |  |

a Vom 1. VII.—15. VIII. Berlin (Stett. Bf.) ab 18 25<sup>a</sup>, Stettin (Hbf.) an 10 21<sup>a</sup>. b Ausserdem Eydtkuhnen ab 9 15<sup>a</sup>, Königsberg (Pr.) (Hbf.) ab 13 43, Danzig (Hbf.) ab 13 35<sup>a</sup>, Berlin (Schles. Bf.) an 22 12, Charlottenburg an 22 48. c Berlin (Schles. Bf.) an 16 14, Charlottenburg an 16 56. d Ausserdem Berlin (Schles. Bf.) ab 12 41, Charlottenburg ab 23 21. e Ausserdem Krakau ab 12 30<sup>a</sup>, Myslowitz ab 14 20<sup>a</sup>, Kattowitz ab 14 52<sup>a</sup>, Beuthen (Hbf.) ab 15 36, Oderberg ab 15 40, Kandrzin ab 16 32, Oppeln ab 17 03, Breslau (Hbf.) ab 18 12, Frankfurt (Oder) ab 21 23, Berlin (Schles. Bf.) an 22 26, Charlottenburg an 23 08. f Für diese Verbindungen ein- bzw. aussteigen im Bhf. Friedrichstrasse (Entfernung Stett. Bhf.—Bhf. Friedrichstrasse 1440 m.).

➡ Für weitere Zeichenerklärung siehe Seite 1.  
➡ Für durchlaufende Wagen siehe Seite 9.

train to Rotterdam. Next two international trains left for Berlin respectively Basle. The G.E.R. had shifted its activities from Rotterdam to this terminal as it shortened the crossing from Harwich. The railroad transported the passengers from the terminal to a variety of destinations in Europe. Hoek van Holland had become the 'gateway to Europe'.

In 1903 a new quay was opened at **Hoek van Holland**, the 'America' quay. This quay was built for use by the transatlantic liners of the Holland-America Line. Their draught had become such that they could no longer reach Rotterdam at every stage of the tide. They used the quay and its accommodation to disembark

passengers and cargo for connection to the international trains. It was only in 1932 the river had been dredged to a depth that accommodated the biggest ships so then the quay was sold to a stevedore and became known as the 'New Fruit Wharf'. From 1933 until 1939 Hoek van Holland was Europe's **largest importer of fruit**. After WW2 the quay

| Durchlaufende Wagen von Seite 8. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A.                               | 1.2. Kl. Bukarest—Berlin; 3. Kl. Sniatyn Zalucze—Berlin; 1.2.3. Kl. Beuthen—Berlin (ab 12 22); 1.2.3. Kl. Beuthen—Berlin (ab 15 36); 1.2.3. Kl. Oderberg—Berlin (ab 12 24); 1.2.3. Kl. Oderberg—Berlin (ab 15 40); 1.2.3. Kl. Warschau—Berlin; 2.3. Kl. Reval—Riga; 1.2.3. Kl. Riga—Berlin; 1.2.3. Kl. Berlin—Oldenzaal (Berlin Schles. Bf. ab 21 55) und 1.2. Kl. Oldenzaal—Vlissingen; Grigore Ghica Voda—Kattowitz, Riga—Berlin und Berlin—Vlissingen (Berlin Schles. Bf. ab 21 55); Bukarest—Lemberg, Beuthen—Berlin (ab 12 22), Kandrzin—Berlin (ab 16 32), Warschau—Posen, Posen—Berlin, Eydtkuhnen—Berlin, Danzig—Dirschau, Stettin—Berlin und Oldenzaal—Vlissingen. |
| B.                               | 1.2.3. Kl. Bukarest—Berlin; 1.2.3. Kl. Oderberg—Berlin; 1.2.3. Kl. Reval—Riga; 1.2.3. Kl. Riga—Berlin; 1.2.3. Kl. Berlin—Rotterdam; Bukarest—Berlin, Reval—Riga und Riga—Berlin; Bukarest—Pascani, Sniatyn-Zalucze—Kattowitz, Reval—Riga, Riga—Wirballen, Eydtkuhnen—Marienburg, Warschau—Posen, Berlin—Hannover und Hannover—Amersfoort (Amsterdam).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| C.                               | 1.2. Kl. Bukarest—Trzebinia; 3. Kl. Czernowitz—Trzebinia; 1.2. Kl. Beuthen—Berlin; 1.2. Kl. Oderberg—Berlin; 1.2.3. Kl. Warschau—Berlin; 2.3. Kl. Eydtkuhnen—Berlin, 1. Kl. Insterburg—Berlin und 1.2. Kl. Berlin—Hoek van Holland; Bukarest—Trzebinia (Sonntags, Dienstags und Donnerstags Bukarest—Czernowitz), Warschau—Berlin und Eydtkuhnen—Berlin; Pascani—Rzeszow, Beuthen—Berlin, Stentsch—Berlin, Schneidemühl—Berlin und Berlin—Hoek van Holland; Salonwagen Berlin—Hoek van Holland.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| D.                               | 1.2. Kl. Hoek van Holland—Berlin; 1.2.3. Kl. Berlin—Riga; 1.2.3. Kl. Riga—Reval; 1.2.3. Kl. Berlin—Warschau; 1.2. Kl. Berlin—Oderberg und 1.2. Kl. Berlin—Beuthen; Berlin                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

A page from the railway guide showing schedules and a listing of which railcars went to what destination. Failing to read properly could have you ending up in Warsaw instead of Vienna

booklet: coll. Job van Eijk

was used by troopships. In 1980 the quay was demolished to make room for an extension of what is today the Stena Line terminal.

In the late 1930s regular steamer services ran from **Harwich** to **Hoek van Holland**, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Zeebrugge – the latter being a rail ferry (all by the G.E.R.), **Esbjerg** (by the Danish United Shipping Co.) and **Vlissingen** (Zeeland S.S. Co.). After WW2 the Zeebrugge, Rotterdam and Antwerp services did not return although the train ferry to Zeebrugge was continued and cargo services continued to be run to Antwerp and Rotterdam. The **Zeeland S.S. Co.** changed their continental port from Vlissingen to Hoek van Holland.

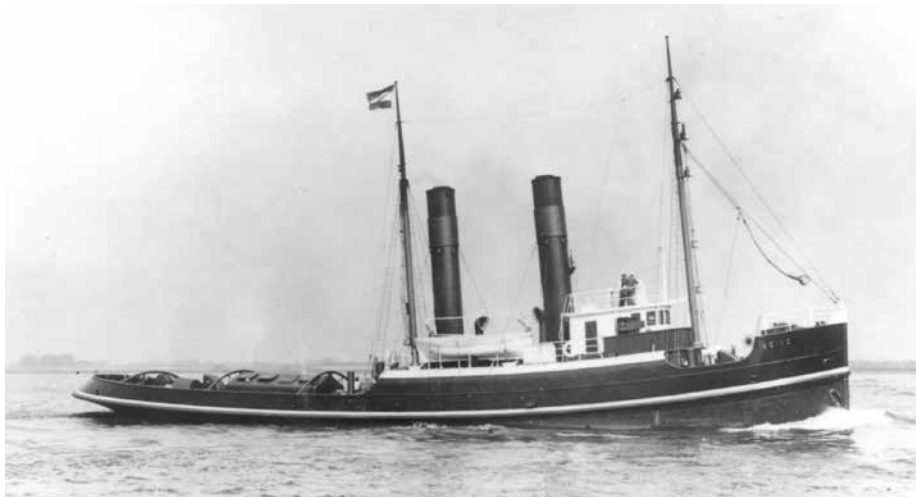
### Towage 1900-1945

Smit moved their head-office from Alblasserdam to Rotterdam in 1901. The success of L. Smit & Co. led to further competitors entering the towage business. In 1897 the **Sleepdienst Hoek van Holland** (Hook of Holland Towage Co) started business and home-ported their vessels at Maassluis. Their main business was assisting the fishing industry but they also gained the pilotage contract for the Rotterdam Waterway which previously was held by Smit. And just prior to the turn of the century the **Van den Tak** salvage company moved part of their business to Maassluis.

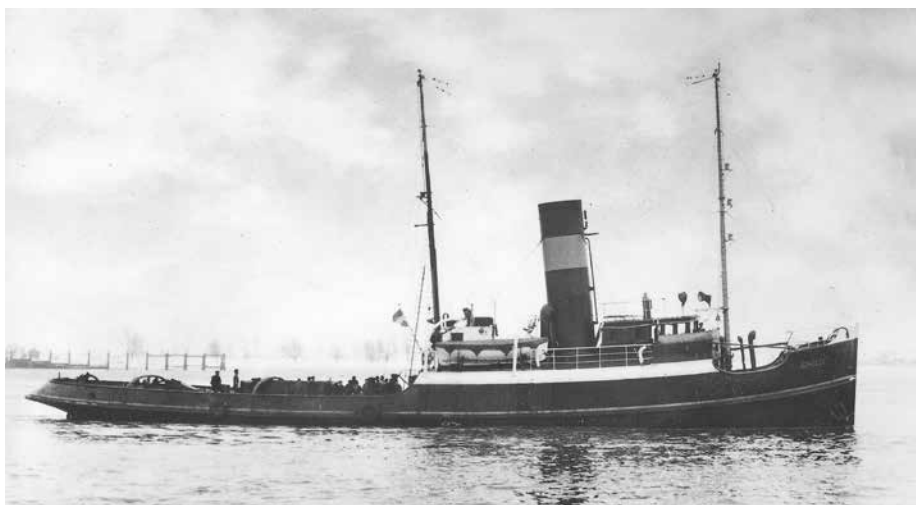
In 1900 a new competitor entered the towage market in the form



*VLAANDEREN was a typical Wijsmuller tug of the day that competed with L. Smit and the Internationale Sleepdienst. Built 1921. 550 ihp. Sold 1933 as QUEENS CROSS, 1948 to N.I.S.H.M., Dutch East Indies, as GOOS. 1953 altered to tank cleaning vessel. 1961 scrapped*  
photo: coll. Job van Eijk



*SEINE of 1908 was a typical long-distance deepsea tug of the Internationale Sleepdienst. Built 1908 by Rotterdamsche Droogdok Maatschappij. Dimensions: 39,67 x 7,42 x 3,76 m. 850 ihp. Scrapped 1946 by Frank Rijdsdijk at Hendrik Ido Ambacht*  
photo: coll. Job van Eijk



*SCHELDE of L. Smit & Co was built in 1926 (1.000 ihp). It was the third tug of that name*  
photo: Teunissen

of **Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij** (International Towage Co.). The I.S.M. had been established in 1900 by mr L.G. Vuyk – a tugboat operator in the Port of Rotterdam since 1893 – and mr A.O. Horstmann. Both men had roots in the American Petroleum Company, Rotterdam.

A rapid expansion of the fleet followed, with 7 tugs owned by Vuyk and 2 tugs of the American Petroleum Co transferred to I.S.M. Another five tugs were acquired from third parties. In 1901 the **Sleepdienst 'Hoek van Holland'** was purchased adding 6 tugs and a coaling lighter to the fleet. The purchase also included a workshop at Maassluis.

The I.S.M. immediately set its eyes on coastal and deepsea towage. Apart from 2<sup>nd</sup> hand acquisitions their first deepsea newbuilds were *Maas* (1905 – 850 ihp), followed by *Schelde* (1906 – 1.000 ihp), *Thames* (1907 – 1.200 ihp), *Seine* (1908

– 850 ihp) and *Donau* (1910 – 500 ihp). The company ran into a fierce and direct competition with L. Smit & Co.

In 1922 further competition arrived in Rotterdam in the form of **Bureau Wijsmuller**. Capt. Wijsmuller had established his ship delivery, towage, salvage and trading company in 1910 at IJmuiden, with a seat at Den Haag (The Hague) as well. Wijsmuller was very active and had become a serious threat to other Dutch deepsea tug operators. This company, however, did not compete in the port of Rotterdam. As I.S.M. also ran deepsea tugs they quickly became a formidable competitor. They too choose Maassluis as a base port.

Around 1920 the first signs had appeared that the booming business developed after WW1 had ended, was not to last. In 1918 Mr Horstmann had passed away and his shares in I.S.M. were purchased by Mr D.G. (Daniel





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*ZWARTE ZEE* was built for L. Smit in 1933. The first motor tug in the fleet and at the time the most powerful in the world (3.200 bhp / 4.000 hp - speed 17 knots). The main engines were Werkspoor from a new untested model designed by ir Lugt. 10 May 1940 escaped to England towing the half-finished destroyer ISAAC SWEERS. 20-8-1940 bombed at Falmouth and partially sunk. Repaired and in service as Rescue Tug W 163. 1951 damaged in collision. 1961 renamed *ZWARTE ZEE III*. 1962 RENAMED *IERSE ZEE*. 1966 sold to Frank Rijdsdijk for scrap

photo: A. Duncan

George) van Beuningen. As one of the directors / owners of the **SHV** (Steenkolen Handels Vereniging – Coal Trading Association) he was well-known with the shipping industry. Based at Rotterdam since 1902 he had – in 1912 – purchased the towage business of **Piet Smit Jr** as well as the associated shipyard. Piet Smit Jr operation was one of the big shiphandling operators in Rotterdam but also operated on inland waters. Somewhat later he secretly purchased the **Volharding** towage company which continued under its own name.

Using his position as majority shareholder in I.S.M. van Beuningen in 1919 opened up negotiations with L. Smit about merging both companies. In his plans also featured a further merger with Wijsmuller but he latter never showed any interest. With a deepening recession on the horizon in 1923 Smit and I.S.M. merged their interests into L. Smit & Co's International Towage Company. A peculiarity was that both companies remained separate as far as administration was concerned.

A further consolidation was carried through in the salvage side of the business as Smit swapped its shipping agency business for Dirkzwager's Nieuwe Bergings Maatschappij. The N.B.M. was integrated in the Smit-associated **Van den Tak** Salvage Company. Next, the shares in Van den Tak were divided 50 / 50 between Smit and Internationale.

The 1930's were the period where Smit started the change-over of the deepsea fleet to motor tugs: *Blankenburg*, *Zwarte Zee* (1933 – 3.100 bhp / 4.200 ihp), *Thames* (1938 – 2.000 bhp / 3.000 ihp), *Roode Zee* (1938 – 1.240 bhp), *Hudson* (1939 – 840 bhp / 1.000 ihp). Four more of the 'Hudson' class were on order when WW2 interfered. *Poolzee* (650 bhp), *Java Zee* (840 bhp), *Witte Zee* (650 bhp) and *Tyne* (840 bhp) despite delaying tactics were all finished during the war and immediately confiscated by the Germans. Apart from *Java Zee* they all survived the war and were returned to the owners. *Blankenburg* was designed with Hoek van Holland in mind to be stationed there to assist ships

in trouble off the Waterway entrance and to assist the ferries at Hoek van Holland.

In 1923 Capt. Wijsmuller passed away at the worst possible moment: a collapsed market, a big fleet and a lot of debt with the banks. This had serious consequences for the company as in due course it was forced to the greater part of its fleet to its competitors and would only be revived after WW2. The historic deepsea pioneer Zurmuhlen had already folded in 1919 by selling its most powerful tugs to I.S.M. and their salvage interests to Wijsmuller.

Smit thus became the dominant deepsea towage and salvage company in The Netherlands and saw very few competitors outside of the Netherlands.

### Maassluis for towage and salvage

It was only in 1869 that the first Smit tug arrived at the port of **Maassluis**. The paddle tug *Zierikzee* was stationed there because the graving of the Rotterdam Waterway had begun. The Waterway considerably shortened the route to Rotterdam. 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. In 1880 Smit established a maintenance base for the tugs at Maassluis.

The new route also brought opportunities caused not only by the growth of the Port of Rotterdam but also by groundings, collisions etc. In 1886 the



The Hoek van Holland lifeboat *PRINS DER NEDERLANDEN* was lost when going to the assistance of *VALKA* aground on the Maasvlakte.

photo: coll. Job van Eijk





In 1930 following the loss of the lifeboat *PRINS DER NEDERLANDEN* the people of Hoek van Holland decided a monument remembering those who perished in the lifeboat service was needed. The design chosen was by Mrs Eliza de Ridder-van Mastrigt who originated from 'de Hoek'. It was paid for by the people of Hoek van Holland. The monument was unveiled on 16 January, 1932. The seaman is looking out over the (then) Maasvlakte - the ship's graveyard and location of the lifeboat loss

postcard: coll. Job van Eijk

Maassluis-based **Bergingsmaatschappij** (Salvage Company, later renamed as Nieuwe Bergings Maatschappij (New Salvage Company) was established. This was an initiative of Mr Gijsbert. Dirkzwager, a ship's agent and operator of Lloyd's Signal Station at Hoek van Holland. He also acted as an agent for the Zuid-Hollandse Redding Maatschappij, the lifeboat service operating from South Holland to the Belgian border. This brought him in contact with organisations with a vested interest in the Waterway. Groundings were regular

and **Dirkzwager** was often contacted to overview a salvage. There was, however, not much salvage gear around such as significant pumping and lifting capability. This threatened closure of the Waterway for a lengthy time if anything more serious than a grounding happened.

An 1883 collision involving two ships that nearly sank triggered a group of Rotterdam shipowners to demand action. Among these were de Monchy, Mees, Ruys, Plate, Burger, Wierdsma, Reuchlin and Bonn - names that

frequently pop up in the history of the Port of Rotterdam and Rotterdam shipping circles.

The company lasted until 1923 when the salvage vessels and equipment were sold to the **Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij**.

#### Lifeboat disasters at 'de Hoek'

On 23 October, **1921**, a full west-north-westerly gale was blowing due to which the French tug *Egas* lost her tow, the coal lighter *Falaise*. The storm pushed the lighter on the Maasvlakte shallows where the tug could not go. The Hoek van Holland lifeboat **President van Heel** was alerted and went to sea. In the very rough and unpredictable seas and with the evening setting in the boat returned to port. Very early the following morning she sailed again. When at sea course was set to the Maasvlakte. Shortly after, however, a massive breaker rolled the boat over. Six of the crewmembers died, one was saved. He, together with the overturned boat ended up on the southern pierhead from where he was rescued.

On 16 January, **1929**, a severe gale was raging over Hoek van Holland. No less than three merchant ships ran into trouble. *El Oso* had run aground but was pulled free by the Smit tug *Ganges*. The Swedish-flag *Ernest Castle* too ran aground but luckily had powerful engines and she managed to free herself. The Latvian steamer *Valka*, however, remained stuck on the Maasvlakte shallows. The lifeboat **Prins der Nederlanden** was manned but within sight of *Valka* something went terribly wrong. The lifeboat capsized and the eight crewmembers drowned. The 23-crew of the freighter were later rescued by the Stellendam lifeboat *Koningin Wilhelmina*.

On 12 January, **1952**, the British-flag *Radmar* ran aground in the Maasvlakte shallows during a force 6 storm. The casualty was in a bad position right where the seas were breaking. The lifeboat **President Jan Lels** took three men on board that wanted to leave the ship. Three Smit tugs - the Hoek van Holland stationed *Blankenburg* and the more powerful *Ganges* and *Witte Zee* mobilised from Maassluis were on the scene. When manoeuvring to hook up *Blankenburg's* propeller was fouled by the tow rope. The





*Lifeboat PRESIDENT JAN LELS*

*postcard: issued by Spanjersberg (photo C. van der Meulen) - coll. Job van Eijk*



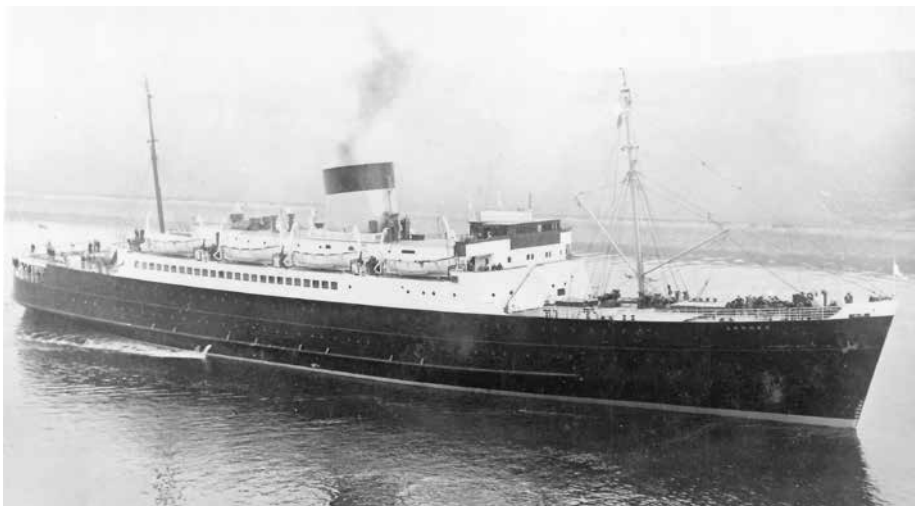
*RADMAR on 19-1-1952 aground on the Maasvlakte with a tug connected to the bow as seen from the lifeboat*

*photo: Dutch National Archives  
(Anefo - van Duinen)*



*WITTE ZEE on 16-1-1952 on the Maasvlakte - the lifeboat picking up a heaving line from the tug*

*photo: Dutch National Archives (Anefo - van Duinen)*



ARNHEM is one of a pair of new turbine-driven ships for the Hook-Harwich route. Built 1947 by John Brown, Clydebank. 110,00 x 16,60 x 8,24 m. 12.480 hp - 21 knots. 321 1st-class berths, 236 2nd-class berths. Maximum passengers 675. 1968 sold for scrap T.W. Ward Ltd, Inverkeithing

postcard: issued by British Rail - coll. Job van Eijk



The first Boat Train after the end of WW2 arriving at Hoek van Holland on 16-11-1945 - official re-opening of the Hook-Harwich route

photo: Dutch National Archives (Anefo - Van 't Hof)

tug immediately anchored but was in a bad position approximately 30 meters from the *Radmar*, in breaking seas.

The lifeboat sailed again and tried to tow the tug to safety. It took several attempts before the tow rope remained in one piece. The lifeboat then pulled the tug out of the shallows until the tug *Maas* was able to connect. On 17 January the crew of *Radmar* gave up and wanted to abandon ship. The lifeboat took 40 of them aboard, only a handful refused to abandon ship. Later that day the storm reached force 8. The Panamanian freighter *Merope* was driven onto the northern pierhead. The Smit tugs *Witte Zee* and *Blankenburg* offered assistance while the lifeboat managed to take five crewmembers that wished to leave off the casualty. This had to be done in the lee of the ship, between the ship and the pierhead. Somewhat later, however, *Merope* was towed free.

On 18 January the storm had developed in a force 11 with very high seas and breaking water. *Witte Zee* and *Ganges* attempted to tow *Radmar* into deeper water. The towrope of *Ganges* fouled the propeller and the tug started to drift. *Witte Zee* tried to hook up to her fleetmate also fouling her propeller. The two tugs anchored but both chains broke. The Hoek van Holland and Stellendam lifeboats were manned. Upon approaching *Witte Zee* the lifeboat found very wild breaking water with cross seas. *President Jan Lels* was hit by several breakers and one of these proved fatal. The boat was thrown over

on its side and the skipper went over the side. A lifebelt was thrown from the tug but to no avail.

The Stellendam lifeboat meanwhile succeeded in the rescue of the crew of *Ganges* in atrocious circumstances - minus the Master and Chief Engineer who wished to stay aboard of *Ganges*. The lifeboat took serious damage but set course to *Witte Zee*. Another twelve people were rescued but the lifeboat had taken even more damage and had to head back to port. Six crewmembers stayed behind. Meanwhile the Breskens lifeboat had also been alerted and the next day managed to rescue the men that had remained aboard. On 8 and 9 January *President Jan Lels* - under a new skipper - managed to rescue the remaining 23 crew of *Radmar*.

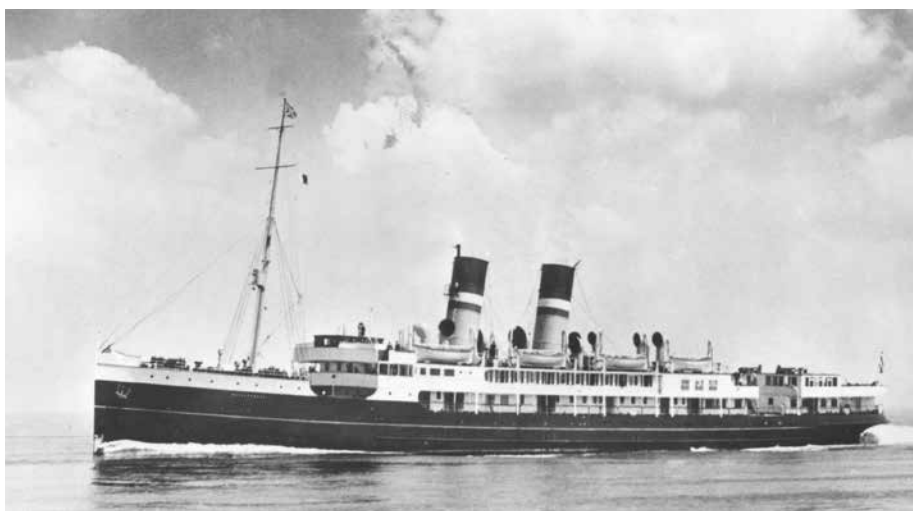


PRAGUE re-opened the Hook-Harwich route after WW2

photo: Dutch National Archives (Anefo - Van 't Hof)

### The 'Hoek' terminal post WW2

On 1 January, 1948, the Labour Government nationalised the big four British railways. The now government-owned company was named '**British Rail**' with the Harwich operated vessels transferred to the subsidiary '**Eastern Region**'.



MECKLENBURG a 'Zeeland' cross-channel steamer. Built in 1922 by Fairfield, Glasgow. Twin screw, 10.000 ihp, speed 22 knots. 110,72 x 13,00 x 7,29 m - draft 4,27 m. 1940 escaped to England. 1943 requisitioned by Royal Navy, rebuilt as a Landing Ship Infantry, took part in the Normandy landings. 1946 returned to owners. 14-6-1947 first voyage on the Hook-Harwich route. 1960 broken up

photo: coll. Job van Eijk





Hoek van Holland railway station - the boat train has arrived for the day service to Harwich. A 'Zeeland' mailboat is awaiting while away from the camera the night boat is at rest  
photo: Nederlandse Spoorwegen



The last day of the railway to Hoek van Holland - 26 March, 2017 - was a nostalgic day with all types of older trains in service. This is a MAT-46 type train, the only one still in existence and maintained by a museum. This type - nicknamed the 'mouse head' - was built from 1946 onwards and phased out after 1975

photo: R. & F. van der Hoek

Furthermore the Zeeland S.S. Co. was using the terminal for its day service to Harwich. Initially on a temporary base due to war damage to the Vlissingen terminal it was later decided the 'Zeeland' was to remain at Hoek van Holland.

In the aftermath of the war the steamer *Prague* was the only G.E.R. vessel able to operate the Hook-Harwich route with other fleetmates still in Government service. Next to make an entry on the

route was *Duke of York*. The 1935-built steamer was on the route from 1948 to 1963. In 1951 she was adapted for oil burning. 6 May, 1953, collided with freighter *Haiti Victory* and lost her bow section but was repaired. Two motor ships were ordered for the Hook - Harwich route. *Arnhem* was delivered in 1947 with *Amsterdam* following in 1950. Both were withdrawn from service in 1968. The 1963-built *Avalon* was the last steamship and the last conventional

vessel built for the route - the roll on / roll of age was about to begin. In 1974 she was withdrawn from the route to be reconstructed as a ro / ro ferry for the route Fishguard - Rosslare.

#### International trains at 'de Hoek'

Apart from the Dutch 'boat trains' the arrival and departure of which was timed to that of the night and later day crossings to and from England international trains ran from Hoek van Holland too. Bremen, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Cologne, Bonn, Mainz, Basle, Munich, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Vienna, Berlin, Moscow and Warsaw were some of the destinations. It was even possible to buy tickets from Hoek van Holland for the connection at Moscow to the Transsiberian Express that ended at Vladivostok on the coast of the Sea of Japan. The train station there even had a destination sign for 'Hoek van Holland'.

The first of the international trains after WW2 was the Holland-Scandinavia Express to Copenhagen in 1947. In 1951-1952 the famed Orient Express started its run in Hoek van Holland. 1951 saw the start of the Rheingold and later the Loreley Express. Those were ended in 1970. In 1952 the NordWest Express was added to the departures. And in 1960 the Hook of Holland - Warszawa - Moscow started its runs.

With other forms of travel becoming faster or cheaper the last international train departed Hoek van Holland in 1960. What remained was the local Hoek van Holland to Schiedam / Rotterdam train and (until 2006) an Intercity train to Amsterdam that connected to the arriving / departing ferries.

The last railway connection was ended in 2017, when construction of a new lightrail / metro was started. Currently the lightrail track has been extended



1950

photo: Nederlandse Spoorwegen



1972

photo: Nederlandse Spoorwegen





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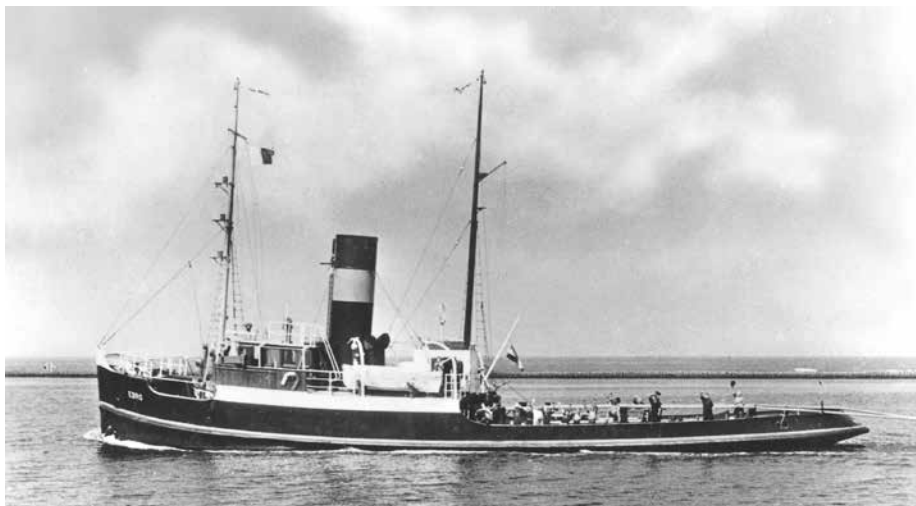
**DAMEN**  
OCEANS OF POSSIBILITIES

from Hoek van Holland Berghaven right up to the beach.

### Post WW2 tugs at 'de Hoek'.

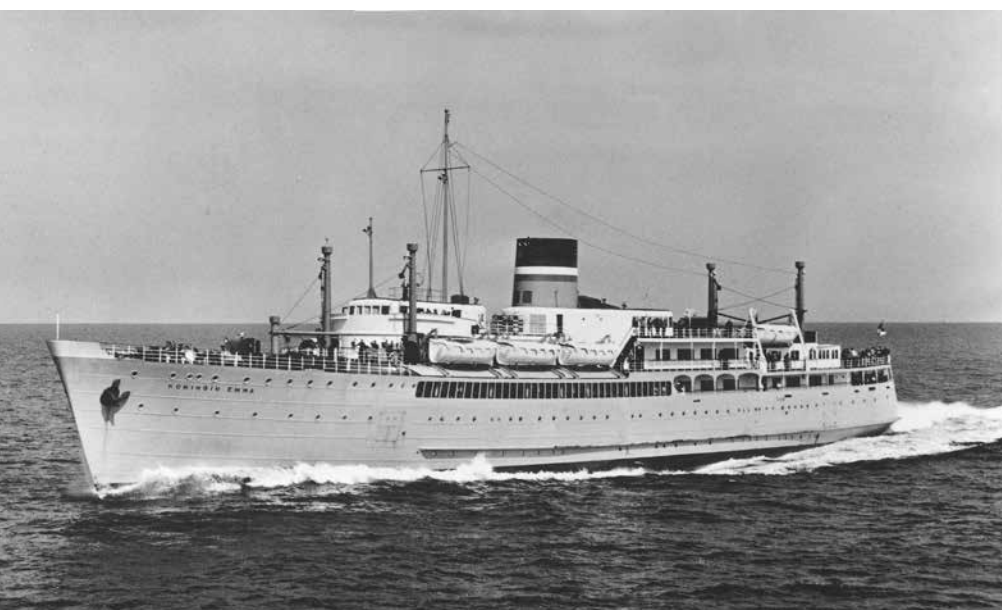
Smit continued stationing tugs at Hoek van Holland. Some tugs were more permanent but others were around for a short time only. This situation lasted until a permanent salvage tug became available for the station.

In the first few years names like *Schelde* (1926 – 650 ihp), *Ganges* (1921 – 1.000 ihp), *Ebro* (1931 – 550 ihp), *Maas*, later *Waterweg* (1931 – 550 ihp) and *Argus* (1921 – 420 ihp) were operating out of Hoek van Holland for longer or shorter



The 800 ihp EBRO (built 1931) was a regular duty tug at Hoek van Holland after WW2

postcard: issued by van Wieren, Maassluis - coll. Job van Eijk



KONINGIN EMMA - the first motorship in the 'Zeeland' fleet and the first motorship on the Hook-Harwich route. Built 1939 by De Schelde, Vlissingen, 115,82 x 14,38 x 7,57 m. Draft 4,40 m. Twin screw - 12.500 hp - speed 23 knots. 1940 escaped to England. Converted to Landing Ship, renamed HMS QUEEN EMMA. Saw world-wide service. 1946 returned to owners and rebuilt. 1.423 passenger in the day service, 203 1st class and 94 2nd class passengers on the night crossings. 5-3-1948 first Hook-Harwich crossing. 1969 scrapped at Antwerp

photo: coll. Job van Eijk



The futuristic looking KONINGIN WILHELMINA was the last conventional ship in the 'Zeeland' fleet. Built in 1959 by De Merwede, Hardinxveld, she ran trials in January, 1960. 120,02 x 17,33 x 9,50 m. Draft 4,89 m. Twin screw - 15.600 hp - 21 knots. 1.600 passengers on the day crossing, 100 at night. 1978 sold to Ventouris, Greece, as CAPTAIN CONSTANTINOS. 1981 renamed PANAGIA TINOS. 1994 used as a day cruiser from Crete as ARTEMIS. 1995 to Minoan Cruises, same service. 2001 sold for scrap to India, delivery name TEMIS photo: Job van Eijk

terms. The motor tug *Blankenburg*, however, became a more permanent guest in the Berghaven, as did for some time the new motor tug *Argus*.

### The 'Zeeland'

It was only after WW2 that the 'Zeeland' altered its route departure from Vlissingen (Flushing) to Hoek van Holland.

It had been the **railway connection to Vlissingen** combined with the successes of the ports of Ostend, Boulogne and Calais – that were all connected to international railways and operated steamer services to England – that drew attention to the possibilities of such a connection to England. Already in the 1820's the packet boat connections with England had increased business at the respective ports. These 'packets' relied, however, on mail contracts with the Government with the passenger and cargo trade being a secondary use.

The lackadaisical attitude in the Netherlands had been slowly changing but it took a Royal interest to get things going. Prince Hendrik stimulated and subsidised the idea for a 'packet' service from **Vlissingen to England**. In 1874 the name of Harwich was first mentioned as the potential port for a line starting at Vlissingen. The Great Eastern Railway, however, opposed to this since they themselves had been considering a service from Harwich to Vlissingen but this was blocked from the Dutch side. As a reaction the G.E.R. started a nightly mail service from Harwich to Rotterdam as competition to the new line from Vlissingen.





STENA BRITANNICA departing Hoek van Holland. Stena is in the process of 'greening' their vessels, a fact that is advertised on the hull

photo: Job van Eijk

On 10 January, 1875, the Stoomvaart Maatschappij Zeeland (**Zeeland Steamship Co.**) was established by the shareholders of the Reederij Stoomvaart Vlissingen-Engeland, the company that had earlier been formed to acquire suitable ships for the route. Partners in the new route were the Royal Netherlands Steamship Co (K.N.S.M.) which was to run the Zeeland SS Co., the Dutch State Railway Co. and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway (L.C.D.R.) which was responsible for the railway connection to London and the arrangements at the English port of Queenborough, later Folkestone.

The international train connections from Hoek van Holland were much better than those from Vlissingen. Pressure on the 'Zeeland' to change port to Hoek van Holland was to no avail. However, when the Great Eastern Railway merged with the Great Northern Railway into the London & North Eastern Railway (L.N.E.R.) the 'Zeeland' shifted its British port from Folkestone to Harwich. 'Zeeland' also negotiated a pooling agreement that financially balanced the passenger revenues between the night and daytime service from 1927 onward. After WW2 resuming the service from Flushing was impossible due to war damage. 'Zeeland' therefore shifted its sailings to Hoek van Holland.

In 1953 the Dutch Government decided that the 'Zeeland' was not to return to Vlissingen but remain at Hoek van Holland. Head office was also shifted to Hoek van Holland. The service was

maintained by the motor ships *Koningin Emma* and *Prinses Beatrix* that first had to be reconstructed from their war role and the steamer *Mecklenburg*. *Oranje Nassau* served on the route as a troopship, interim vessel during the refit of the motor ships and as a relief vessel. The futuristic *Koningin Wilhelmina* was added to the fleet in 1960. It was to be the last passenger-only ship on the route.

With the introduction on the route in 1968 of the new ro / ro ferries *St George* and *Koningin Juliana* 'Zeeland' and (now) British Rail integrated their sailings with the result that 'Zeeland' again operated night sailings.

In 1978 the 'Zeeland' added *Prinses Beatrix* to the fleet which in 1986 was replaced by the much bigger ferry *Koningin Beatrix*.

#### 'Zeeland' sold

The 'Zeeland' was owned 70% by the State, 25% was traded on the stock exchange and 5% was owned by

Internatio-Müller. In 1988 the Dutch Ministry of Transport and Waterways announced the State had decided to sell its shares. Sealink British Ferries, Nedlloyd, Johnson Line and Stena Line were in the race with the latter becoming the winner.

On 1 September, 1989, *Koningin Beatrix* lowered the 'Zeeland' flag for the last time replacing it with the Stena flag before departure to Harwich. **The 114-year history of the Zeeland Steamship Company had come to an end.**

#### The Ro / Ro age of the route

In 1966 the Hook-Harwich service was to be modernised with two roll-on/roll-off passenger / car ferries. The two ships – *St. George* and *Koningin Juliana* - were fitted for day- as well as night-crossings. In 1978 the fleet had grown to four ro / ro ferries with the added *St. Edmund* and *Prinses Beatrix*. By 1986 these four vessel had been replaced by two much bigger ferries – *St. Nicholas* and *Koningin Beatrix*.

In 1984 the British Rail (SeaLink) operations were privatised and sold to Sea Containers Ltd and continued as **Sealink British Ferries**. Just five years later the Swedish-owned Stena Line AB acquired a 9% share in Sea Containers and purchased the 'Zeeland' company effectively closing the 114-year history of the company. In 1990 Sea Containers was acquired.

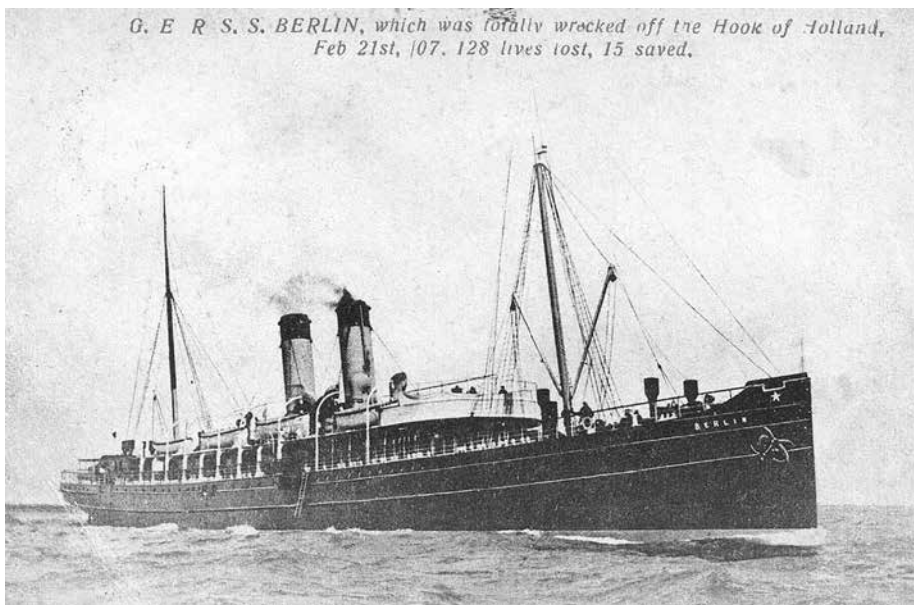
Stena Line in 1990 added a primarily freight-only ro/ro to the route, *Stena Seatrader*. The same year Stena purchased SeaLink from Sea Containers. The Hook-Harwich route was transferred to Dutch management at Hoek van Holland. *St. Nicholas* was renamed *Stena Normandy* and transferred to Stena's Southampton – Cherbourg service. She



Stena terminal Hoek van Holland

photo: Job van Eijk





A postcard showing the steamer *BERLIN*. The card was produced after the disaster as the text on the card testifies. *BERLIN* was built in 1894 by Earle's. 92,21 x 10,98 x 4,93 m. Speed 18 knots postcard: coll. Job van Eijk

was replaced on the Hook-Harwich route by *Stena Britannica*.

In 1997 a revolutionary vessel was introduced on the route. *Stena Discovery* was a high-speed catamaran that reduced the crossing to 3 hours 40 minutes with a speed of 43 knots. Carrying capacity was 1.500 passengers and 350 cars (including trailers). The vessel was intended to compete with the Channel Tunnel and cheap flights. With the high speed four crossings a day could be made – two from the UK and two from The Netherlands.

The 'discovery' lasted just 10 years. The main reason being the steep increase in the oil price. In 10 year the price of fuel increased from USD 120 to USD 700 per tonne. The four main engines totalling 100.000 hp reportedly gobbled up as much fuel as the then seven other *Stena* North Sea ferries together.

Apart from the fuel bill the vessel experienced some press exposure. One item concerned the waves created by the water jets that caused problems on the beaches in the approaches to Harwich. In Hoek van Holland where the ferry was moored a short distance away from houses the stench of the exhaust gasses when the ferry was moored raised protests. Both problems were addressed but required extra investments. In 1998 the vessel ran into a freak wave on the crossing from the UK to The Netherlands. The bow plating partly disappeared on impact. No one

was hurt but the sudden drop in speed caused chaos. There was no danger to the vessel as the car deck was many metres above the water line. On another occasion some trailers had the brakes not properly applied and when past the Hoek van Holland piers the vessel accelerated they rolled aft and one fell overboard having crashed into the stern door. The trailer was later salvaged from the sea bottom.

In 2010 a new *Stena Britannica* and *Stena Hollandica* replaced the earlier vessel on the route. With 62.000 grt these are the biggest passenger / cargo ro-ro ferries in the world. Both are homeported at Hoek van Holland. Since 2012 both vessels are on shore power when moored.

In 2000 *Stena* opened up a new freight-only route with two ships between **Hoek**

**van Holland** and **Killingholme** on the south side of the Humber River close to Hull. In 2007 the two old-timers on the route (resp 38 and 34 years old – were replaced by the new 25.900 tons *Stena Trader* and *Stena Traveller*. The route developed in such a way that in 2011 two 33.500 grt newbuilds - *Stena Transporter* and *Stena Transit* - replaced the smaller vessels. The ships are homeported at Hoek van Holland.

In 1990 *Stena* also purchased Sea Containers thus bringing the entire Hook – Harwich route under their control with headquarters of the route transferred to Hoek van Holland.

### Marine casualties

The new fairway to Rotterdam especially in the early years saw lots of groundings that kept the tugs and the salvors busy. In addition there were the marine casualties off the coast. And there were casualties among the local vessels.

#### "Berlin"

By far the biggest disaster in terms of loss of life was that of the Great Eastern Railway steamer *Berlin* (capt. J. Precious). The month of February 1907 experienced very heavy gales up to hurricane force all over Europe. On 21 February, 1907, during such a heavy gale the *Berlin* was on the approach to Hoek van Holland. Around 06.00 when still in the correct position the steamer was hit by a breaking sea that forced her off course. As she was close to the pierheads where the breaking seas were at its worst she was unable to steer clear and she ran aground on the tip of the pierhead. The seas were such that



The remains of *BERLIN* on the Hoek van Holland pierhead

postcard: issued by Philco Publishing Co, London - coll. Job van Eijk





FAUSTUS near the North Mole at Hoek van Holland. She was built in 1943 by Bartram, Sunderland, for the British Ministry of War Transport as EMPIRE PROSPERO. 127 x 17 m. Triple expansion steam engine. Speed 10 knots. Sold 1947 to W.H. Cockerline & Co, Hull, as CORINTHIC. 1951 to Marine Enterprises, London, as MARINE FLAME. Resold same year to Acapulco Navigation, Panama, as SHAHREZA. 1952 renamed FAUSTUS

postcard: coll. Job van Eijk



The breach in the North Mole seen on 15 November, 1952. Making the best of it, at least one man is fishing where no man has fished before.

photo: Dutch National Archives (Anefo - Harry Pot)

assistance was impossible. Half an hour after she hit the lights went out. Due to the heavy pounding a few hours later the ship broke in two with the forward part slid below the waves to the bottom of the Waterway taking some 100 people with it. It was this part that had held most of the survivors.

The weather was such that all attempts at rescue failed. It was only on midday of the 22<sup>nd</sup> that eight men reached the pier using one of the pilot cutter's boats and succeeded to rescue 10 people but several others had to be left behind. During the night Smit's tug *Wodan* towed a small workboat to pierhead. Providing

a lee to the boat this was manned by four crewmembers of a salvage vessel owned by Van den Tak that happened to be at Hoek van Holland and a seaman from the tug. They succeeded in reaching the pier after which one of them climbed aboard the wreck. The three surviving women were lowered to the pier and taken aboard the tug. 128 people perished, only 15 were saved.

#### "Faustus"

On 5 November, 1952, a Panamanian cargo ship approached Hoek van Holland. She carried a full load of coal. The weather had been fine when she had been in the Channel on the last

leg of the voyage to Rotterdam so the Master had ordered the crew to start opening the hatches to be ready to unload the minute they reached port. But now the weather had turned against him. The weather report was unfavourable with the stiff south-westerly expecting to veer to a north-westerly storm.

Around 03.00 hrs the wind was rapidly increasing in strength. For both pilot cutters on station off Hoek van Holland the sea state was such that it was no longer possible to send pilots over. Navigation lights were seen approaching the northern pilot cutter from the west just when they shut down the service. The approaching vessel then made a turn and settled on a south-easterly course heading for the entrance to the Waterway, but without a pilot. This was a dangerous move. The combined forces of the north-westerly gale and the flood tide setting in pushed the vessel toward the coast. This went unnoticed aboard the vessel later identified as the *Faustus*. At around 04.30 hrs seas were seen breaking over the ship indicating she had grounded. Her position was less than 1 nm off the northern mole. And her holds were open to the sea.

The Master decided against abandoning ship so the lifeboat *President Jan Lels* returned to the Berghaven. But the heavy seas were slowly pushing the casualty towards the pier – despite having dropped both anchors. Around 10.00 in the morning the lifeboat was again present. The ship had moved to a less than 100 metres off the pier but again the crew remained on board. Six hours later a flag signal – the radio of *Faustus* was broken down – indicated a lifeboat was required. This time the crew abandoned ship and the lifeboat took 25 men on board.

The ship continued working its way into the pier and around 21.00 hrs she was finally pushed through, drifted into the Waterway then sank. It was only on 8 November that the position could be fixed using aerial photos. It appeared a fairway of less than a hundred metres in width was left. The New Rotterdam Waterway was now effectively blocked. Soundings revealed that the water depth over the wreck was just 4,00 metres at LLWS (i.e. the lowest low-water spring



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On 6 May, 1953, the British Railway steamer DUKE OF YORK (capt. Adams) was en route Hoek van Holland to Harwich carrying 72 crew and 437 passengers on her regular night crossing. At 05.10 British Time when approximately 40 nm off Harwich she collided with the U.S. freighter HAITI VICTORY. This resulted in severe damage to the bow section of the 'Duke' that at about 06.25 hrs sheared off completely taking 8 people with it. Crew and passengers were ordered to abandon ship and transferred to the American ship. As it were the vessel remained afloat and was towed stern-first to Harwich by the tug EMPIRE RACE

press clipping: Daily Telegraph 6 May, 1953



Coaster HEILOO saving crew of tanker ARTEMIS on fire in the Waterway 7 June, 1958. The tanker was built in 1956 for A/S Athena, Kristiansand (Jorgen Bang). 16.330 dwt. 162,75 (oa) x 20,32 x 11,61 m. Draft 9,02 m. 20 tanks. Single screw, 14 knots. Repaired following the fire. 1969 renamed STOLT ARTEMIS. 1972 sold to Stolt-Nielsen and renamed STOLT ARGO. 1975 grounded in the Ribver Elbe but refloated. 7-10-1976 explosion and fire in engine room off Sagua La Grande, Cuba. Fire spread to fuel tanks, ship abandoned and finally ran aground. 1977 sold for demolition. Refloated and towed to Brownsville, Tx and scrapped

postcard: issued by Spanjersberg - coll. Job van Eijk



ARTEMIS on fire after collision. The Hoek van Holland station tug GARM, Svitzer-owned but on charter to Smit (Danish crew, Dutch Master) alongside midships photo: coll. Job van Eijk



Fighting the fire aboard ARTEMIS from shore and from aboard a Port of Rotterdam vessel

photo: Dutch National Archives

tide). While considering how to remove the object monitoring revealed the wreck was slowly sinking into the sandy bottom. On 5 December, 1952, the suction dredger *Ahoy* began the digging of three deep pits in which the wreck was to be buried. On 20 March the operation was finished. Some blasting was required to remove top hamper but the water depth over the wreck now was LLWS-13,50 m. In 1962 the process was repeated when a greater depth over the wreck was required because of the ever bigger ships that were entering the port of Rotterdam.

The breach in the pier was quickly repaired but when the new section settled it was lower than the other two halves of the pier. This 'dent' remained and at suitable high tides therefore sometimes people had to be rescued as they could no longer make the crossing to the land-side of the 'dent'.

#### "Artemis"

One of the casualties that stands out because of the danger it presented to Hoek van Holland itself was the collision in the Rotterdam Waterway off Hoek van Holland between the outbound Norwegian tanker *Artemis* and the incoming Norwegian freighter *Luksefjell*.

The two ships collided on 7 June, 1958, at 14.04 hrs local time. Just below the Berghaven *Luksefjell* lost steering and veered to the wrong side of the fairway. On board *Artemis* the sudden swing had been noticed and her Master ordered full astern and dropping both anchors. Only one anchor was presented because the

oncoming *Luksefjell* was now about to hit the forecastle of the tanker. As it was she holed the port side forward tank. The collision was a light one but the tank was ripped open and the cargo ignited.

The initial flash spread the fire over the deck and set the midship superstructure on fire. The fire also spread on the water and to the aft accommodation. The local fire brigade had been alerted but on seeing the burning tanker the fire chief realised more equipment was needed. It was 1958 and telephones were still scarce so he had to knock on doors to find one. In the end the local police alerted Rotterdam and help was sent that arrived at 15.28 hrs. Meanwhile capt. Heida of the coaster *Heiloo* - which had been following the tanker - without hesitation put his foreship against the tanker's aft ship taking over the 20 crewmembers assembled there. Several of the crew in the midship section jumped ship and swam to the shore. The Hoek van Holland lifeboat and other government operated vessels that had been moored in the Berghaven came to assist and put some firefighters aboard the tanker. At that stage the nature of the cargo was unclear but Rotterdam reported 'petrol' - but this was a big mistake that came about of the wrong translation of the word 'gasoline' into 'gasolie'. In fact, the tanker carried 15.000 tonnes of high-octane aviation gasoline'!!

The tanker had swung round her anchor on the ebb tide and that facilitated fire-fighting from the shore. From 15.30 hrs the nature of the cargo became clear and

everyone was ordered off the ship. The attention was now changed to cooling the sides and the deck. At the same time the Smit tug *Maas* connected to the stern of the tanker to hold her in place as the flood set in. The two Railway steamers *Amsterdam* and *Empire Parkeston* were put on high alert to be made ready to leave the quay at a moment's notice should the burning oil on the water become a threat due to the flood tide. Also there was the danger of the tanker swinging round on her anchor.

In all it took over 5 hours to douse the fire in the tank. Total fight of the fire lasted over 11 hours. Out of a total of 43 crew 39 survived, 1 died of his injuries and three were drowned when they jumped overboard. Had the tanker exploded many more would have died as a lot of people had assembled to watch a bicycle race close by. They all flocked to the riverside to watch the fire. Had something like that happened today it is not unlikely the village had been evacuated.

#### "Anco State"

On 15 September, 1966, the Norwegian parcel tanker *Anco State* approached Hoek van Holland with a cargo of lube oil as well as 1.500 tons of acrylonitrile, a poisonous chemical which when mixed with water forms hydrocyanic acid gas. This was carried in the centre tanks.

Due to the weather (force 8) the vessel had asked and gained permission to enter without a pilot that would be waiting for the tanker at the Berghaven for the remainder of the voyage upriver.



ANCO STATE on 15 September, 1966, Europort tugs at work. To the right ZWARTE ZEE just visible

photo: Dutch National Archives (Anefo - Jan Voets)





Electric boosters  
**ZF**



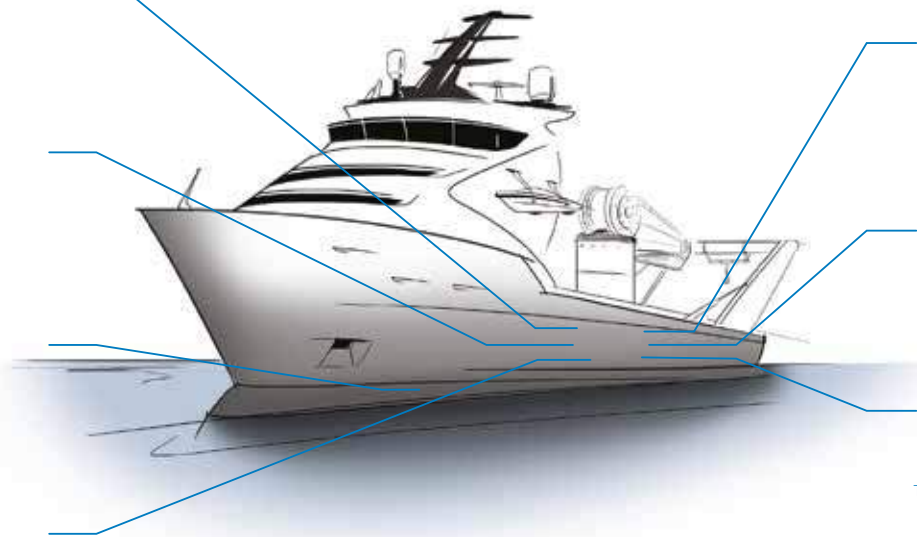
PTI transmissions  
**ZF**



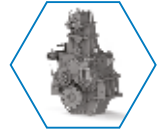
Retractable thrusters  
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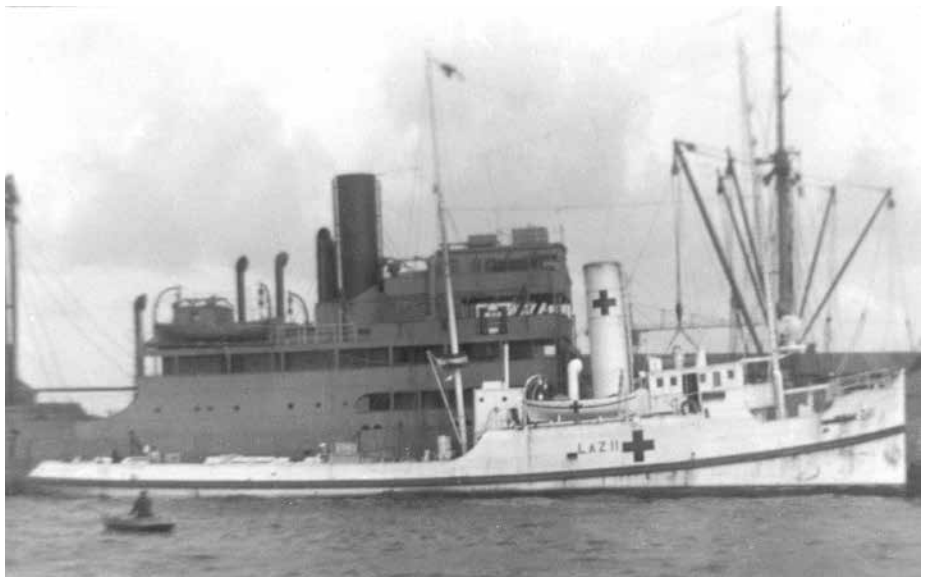
At 04.00 hrs the tanker started the final approach. Unfortunately the vessel lacked a VHF in the wheelhouse, so any directions were received in the radio shack to be relayed to the bridge. From shore it was noticed the tanker was in the wrong position while the Master was convinced he was in the right spot. Afterwards it appeared likely the Master had mistakenly steered for the wrong lights. The tanker was also pushed northward the current for which the Master tried to compensate. The final straw was when a rudder order was misunderstood by the helmsman turning the wheel in the wrong direction. Grounding was now unavoidable and the tanker hit the end of the northern mole where it stuck.

The Europoort tugs were called in to assist. And around 07.30 hrs *Maasbank* and *Vikingbank* started the pull. This was not successful so the waiting was for the afternoon tide. The wind, however, changed direction to the north-west. Due to this the waves had more impact on the tanker that started to grind over the stone and the risk of damage to the tanks increased. The fore peak, the pump room and several double-bottom tanks developed leaks.

As the cargo presented a direct threat to the people in Hoek van Holland – everyone was asked to close windows – heavier equipment was brought in. This took the form of the 9.000 hp *Zwarte Zee* and her sister *Witte Zee* – running trials and not yet taken over from the builders. Extra Europoort tugs were also called in: *Schouwenbank*, *Steenbank* and *Azie*.



Wreck of the *SCHELDE* on the South Mole. *Schelde* was built in 1910 by *Rijkee*, Rotterdam, as *SIMSON* for account of the Amsterdam Tug & Salvage Co (a.k.a. *Zur Mühlen*). Purchased by I.S.M. in 1919. 43,08 x 7,92 x 4,72 m. Triple expansion steam engine, 950 ihp. photo: coll. Job van Eijk



*LAZ 11* - ex *INDUS* in German war service. Built 1920 by *Jonker & Stans* as *BRABANT* for *Wijsmuller*. 1927 bought by *Smit*. 1939 to Royal Dutch Navy as guardship *BV 37*. 1940 captured by German forces, to *Lazarettverband*. 1941 to *Bergungsschiffverband* as *BS 4* photo: coll. Job van Eijk

With the wind increasing *Witte Zee* was the first to try and make the connection to the bow of the tanker. The Voith-Schneider tug *Azie* hooked

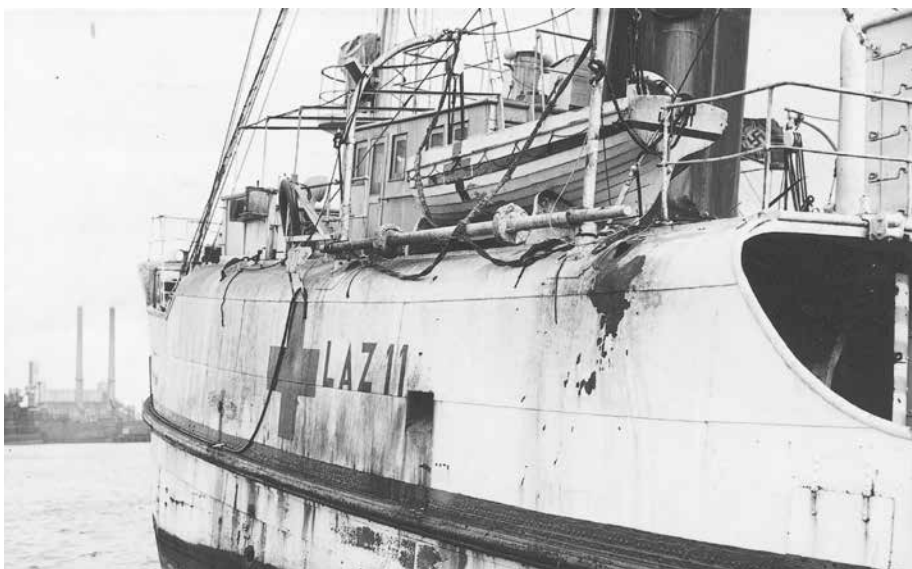
up to the bow of her big sister. *Witte Zee* dropped anchor and in a rough sea started backing down to the tanker. When near enough and with a light line aboard *Anco State* the tanker started heaving the ever heavier lines. They were unable, however, to get the heavy towing wire aboard, so the attempt had to be abandoned.

At 16.30 hrs the combined power of the Europoort tugs was successful – albeit unexpected – and the tanker was towed into deeper water and to the anchorage where she was inspected.

#### Tug casualties

Over the years several tugs at or off Hoek van Holland became a victim of their trade.

L. Smit & Co's paddle tug *Zuid-Holland* (1871 – 250 ihp) was such a victim. On



Damage to *LAZ 11* when fired upon 23 September, 1940

photo: Dutch National Archives



20 November, 1893, the tug went to the assistance of the fishing vessel *SCH 115*. The fishing vessel had run aground but the attempt to tow her off failed and the tug itself was wrecked on the Southern mole at Hoek van Holland.

### “Schelde”

On 8 March, 1925, the Royal Rotterdam Lloyd freighter *Soerakarta* inbound for Rotterdam in a northerly storm had run aground on the northern mole. The tugs *Schelde* (1910 – 950 ihp – acquired in 1919 from Amsterdam Tug & Salvage Co., ex *Simson*) and *Waterweg* (1920 – 375 ihp) were mobilised. When attempting to make the connection *Schelde* unfortunately caught the tow rope in her propeller. Unable to manoeuvre she drifted against the South mole and was pushed over on her side. The aft ship disappeared under water and the crew took to the rigging.

The lifeboat was unable to approach the tug due to the tug’s position and the fact that there was no lee. The other lifeboat had taken a small rowing boat with which they tried to reach the tug via the opening between the south mole and the lower breakwater at this point but the seas were too bad. The next morning they made a second try and reached the wreck. Only 7 could be saved, during the night six had gone overboard and two more had died in the rigging. *Soerakarta* was partly salvaged



The day after: VIKINGBANK and ALKYONE

photo: courtesy National Towing Museum Maassluis

by Smit and van den Tak. *Schelde* was demolished on site although part of the lower hull remained.

### “Indus”

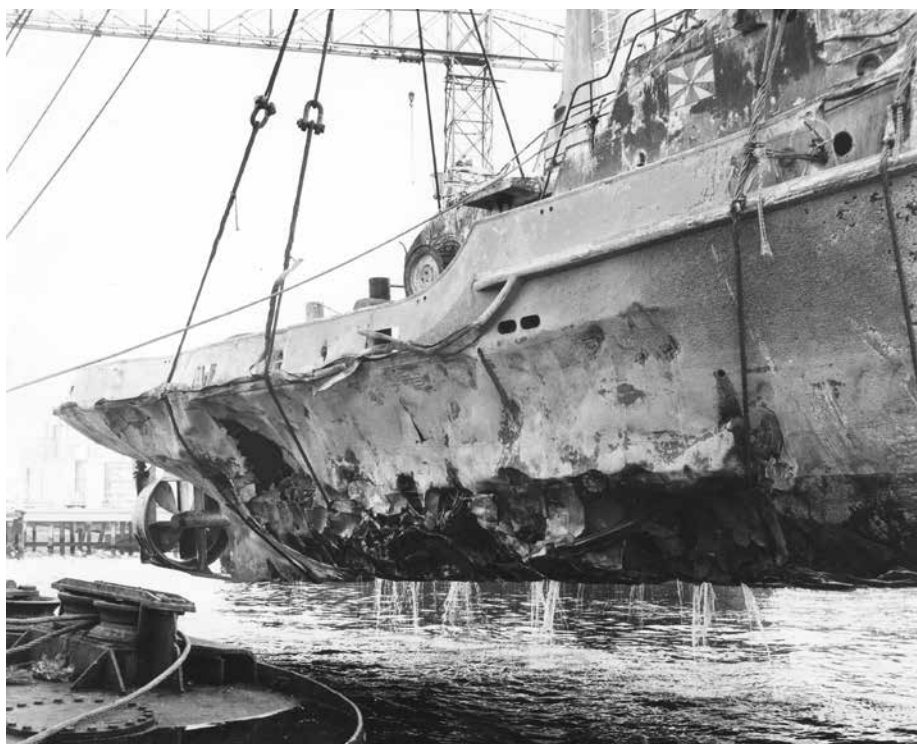
The Smit tug *Indus* was built in 1920 by the Jonker & Stans yard at Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht as Brabant for account of Bureau Wijsmuller, The Hague. The tug measured 48,20 (oa) / 45,81 (bp) x 8,78 m. Engine output was 1.000 ihp. In 1927 sold to L. Smit & Co. International Towing together with *Willem Barendsz* (1921 - 1.000 ihp), *Gelderland* (1921 – 1.000 ihp) and *Jacob van Heemskerck* (1921 – 1.000 ihp).

*Indus* was requisitioned in 1940 by the Dutch Navy to be used as the guard ship *BV 36*. When the Germans invaded The Netherlands they confiscated the vessel. She was put under German control – at first as *LAZ-11*, a rescue vessel (LAZ being short for Lazarett = hospital).

*LAZ 11* (ex *Indus*) was at anchor off the coast of Schouwen-Duiveland when in the night of 22 to 23 September, 1940, she was attacked by an unseen warship. The tug had been stationed in that position to serve as a rescue ship for downed German airplane crews as well as for sailors which had abandoned their ships while under attack. Despite the ‘Red Cross’ signs she was fired upon – the British considered the Lazarett organisation to be a combatant under the guise of the ‘Red Cross’. The attack lasted some 10 minutes. *LAZ 46* came alongside and took *LAZ 11* in tow towards Hoek van Holland and on to Rotterdam where she was repaired.

In January, 1941, the tug was transferred to the Bergungsschiffe Verband as *BS 4*. The BS vessels still were used as rescue vessels for downed pilots but in addition now sailed with the coastal convoys, amongst others the Norway-Rotterdam convoys bringing in the much-needed iron-ore. These convoys were to be obvious targets for British warplanes and warships.

On 20 November, 1942, *BS 4* was off the coast of Hoek van Holland when she was attacked by a group of Beaufighter



VIKINGBANK showing bottom / side plating damage

photo: coll. Job van Eijk



fighter / bombers. Six bombs were dropped two of which hit the tug that sank. The entire crew was saved by German naval vessels and landed at Hoek van Holland.

No attempt was made at salvage. Shortly after the war the higher parts of the tug were cut off with explosives. Maintenance dredgers dumped their cargo in a designated position west of the wreck of Indus. This gradually resulted in a shallow area in the sea which in 1967 was officially named the **'Indus Bank'**.

### "Vikingbank"

On 18 March, 1967, the Greek cargo

vessel *Alkyone* was outbound Rotterdam for Hamburg during a north-westerly gale. When just outside the pierheads at Hoek van Holland the vessel experienced a steering gear failure causing a grounding almost against the southern mole.

Around 18.00 hrs LT the 'Europoort' tug *Vikingbank* (1965 – 1.320 bhp / 1.650 hp – single screw) was the first to arrive. The connection had to be made using the line gun as the water was too shallow in the steep seas running. She was followed by her sister *Maasbank* and the somewhat smaller diesel-electric *Schouwenbank* (1960 – 1.240 bhp – single screw).



FAIRPLAY 22

photo: Job van Eijk



Raising the capsized FAIRPLAY 22 after divers had established no one was aboard

photo: Ruud Zegwaard

The 9.143 grt 1953-built freighter had run aground on the flood tide some two hours prior to high water so the outlook was not unfavourable. The three tugs pulling were, however, not in an ideal spot once the ebb tide set in running against the waves. The steep waves caused severe rolling of the tugs. At 20.40 hrs the *Maasbank* towing wire broke and she returned to Europoort. At 21.05 hrs *Schouwenbank*'s wire also broke. *Vikingbank* remained pulling. At about 21.30 hrs the ebb tide would have been such that the freighter would remain in position. Shortly before this, however, *Vikingbank* was hit by a big breaking wave and pushed over to starboard. The towing wire swung to a right angle and the order was given to release the winch. Before it was possible to execute the order the tug was hit by second breaker and the tug pushed on its side. In this tug the engine air inlets were fitted low in the boat and consequently seawater was sucked in causing the engines to stop. The tug was doomed when the anchor did not hold and she was swept against the pier.

The crew managed to cling to the side of the superstructure with the seas breaking over them. When the boat filled up with water the rolling stopped. As the tug could not be approached by the lifeboat a helicopter was called in. The lifeboat remained on station assisting the helicopter using her searchlight. At 00.15 hrs the last crewmembers were hoisted aboard the helicopter. The entire crew had survived.

The freighter was lightered and on 20 April she was pulled free. On 31 July, 1976, the wreck of the tug was lifted by the Tak sheerlegs *Ir. J.G. Snip* (1963 – 500 tonnes lifting capacity) and taken to dry dock at Rotterdam. On 10 August the wreck was to be placed on a pontoon. During the operation one of the slings broke and the tug plunged into the water and sank taking the tug *Marie 10* with her to the bottom. Raised and sold for scrap.

### "Fairplay 22"

On 11 November, 2010, the weather forecast for Hoek van Holland was South force 9 with gusts up to 95 km (over 50 knots) / hr. The Master of the Hook-Harwich ferry *Stena Britannica* inbound for Hoek van Holland therefore requested two tugs to assist in mooring at the terminal.





ARGUS (1955 - 600 hp) in the 1950 regularly operated from Hoek van Holland. In the background the Hoek van Holland stationed hopper dredger BATAVUS at work

photo: coll. Job van Eijk



BLANKENBURG running trials - the first motor tug for the Hoek van Holland salvage station. After WW2 fitted with raised forecastle

photo: coll. Job van Eijk

Two tugs had been dispatched by Fairplay Towage: *Fairplay 22* (1997 – 4.470 bhp) and *Fairplay III* (2007 – 5.030 bhp), both stern drive tugs. The tugs were waiting just inside the pierheads. 22 was to hook up stern-to-bow to the ferry while *III* was to handle the stern. The speed at which a connection was to be made was agreed between the tug masters and the master of the ferry and put at 7 knots.

Although 22 was to tow from the starboard bow the weather was such that it was considered much safer to receive the heaving line and connect the messenger line in the lee of the ferry, i.e. the port side. On the first approach the messenger line could not be connected. The tug now had to manoeuvre for a second attempt. Hydrodynamic interaction between the two hulls caused the stern of the tug to hit the bulbous bow. The tug was pushed round

the bow and on its side. A few moments later the tug capsized over its port side. At the moment of the accident the speed over the ground was 7,4 knots but the ebb tide added to that so effectively the speed through the water had been around 8,4 knots.

Three crewmembers escaped and were plucked from the water by other vessels on the scene. One escaped from the wheelhouse, one escaped from the superstructure and one was thrown overboard when the tug capsized.

A big rescue operation was mounted for the missing on the assumption they may still be trapped inside surviving in an air bubble. A Kotug tug happened to be in the neighbourhood and took the capsized hull in tow at a very slow speed heading for a protected area in the Rotterdam Waterway. One of Smit's lifting vessels was mobilised from

Rotterdam and when they had secured the tug in the slings a search was carried out to no avail. The Master and the Chief Engineer, had died in the accident. Their bodies washed up ashore on 12 November, resp. 26 November.

### Salvage station Hoek van Holland

With Hoek van Holland being as close to the North Sea as you can get, groundings in the Waterway in the early days and shipping casualties on the coast it was a definite advantage for a tug operator to station a dedicated tug at Hoek van Holland. Over the years several tugs have 'manned' the station. This was either in the Berghaven, at an old quay in the Waterweg or on a mooring buoy opposite the Berghaven.

In addition, for many years one or more salvage vessels were stationed in the Berghaven, which otherwise was home – in the old days – to fishermen, later for dredging support vessels, pilot boats, survey vessels and of course the lifeboats.

The first dedicated salvage tug was **Blankenburg**. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup>-ever motor tug in the Smit fleet and built especially for the Hoek van Holland station. The 28,95 (oa) / 26, 90 (bp) x 6,38 m tug had a draft of 3,16 m. Fitted with two Bolnes diesels on a single shaft. Output 600 bhp (750 ihp). Completed in January, 1938, she was requisitioned in August, 1939, by the Dutch Royal Navy for service as a guard ship – armed with a 5-cm gun. In May, 1940, captured by the Germans. War service until May, 1945, when re-taken by the Dutch Navy at Hoek van Holland. In service as a tug / pilot boat until November 1947 when transferred to Vlissingen. 1 February, 1948, returned to owners L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst. Same year fitted with raised forecastle deck at Shipyard De Haas, Maassluis. 1963 sold to Italy.

In 1954 she was replaced at Hoek van Holland by another dedicated salvage tug built for the station. **Maas** measured 35,69 / 33,48 x 7,54 m with a draft of 3,07 m. Main engines were 2 M.A.N. diesels totalling 800 bhp ( 1.350 ihp). In 1961 lengthened by 3,50 m the reason being that the tugs was to also serve as a training ship. Sold 1970 to Manila, Philippines.



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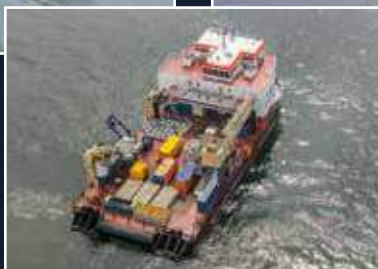
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The third tug built for the station was **Schelde**. With dimensions of 44,63 (oa) / 41,89 (bp) x 9,47 m she was fitted with diesel-electric propulsion (three diesels driving three generators coupled to two electric motors on a single shaft), total output 1.800 bhp (2.500 ihp). In 1967 re-engined as a diesel-only tug, total output now 1.700 bhp. 1970 transferred to Smit Antilles, 1977 to Smit subsidiary Holyhead Towing as *Afon Goch*. 1980 sold for further trading.

**Steenbank** and **Schouwenbank** were the first so-called Europoort tugs. They doubled as shiphandling tugs in the new industrial port with one always operating out of the Berghaven as the station salvage tug. Dimensions 30,38 (oa) / 28,00 (bp) x 7,55 m with a draft of 3,28 m. Diesel-electric, total output on a single screw 1.240 bhp. In 1972 both were transferred to the Rotterdam-based shiphandling fleet of L. Smit (Smit International).

Although initially owned by L. Smit & Co's Internationale Sleepdienst they were transferred to the **Nieuwe Rotterdamse Sleepdienst** (New Rotterdam Towage Co.) upon its formation. The N.R.S. was formed by a number of Rotterdam-based shiphandling tugs owners. Rather than each constructing powerful tugs for use in the Europoort then being developed it was thought wiser to join forces and provide joint capital for the acquisition of a uniform fleet of dedicated tugs.

Prior to the actual formation both L. Smit and the **P. Smit Jr.** (not related) companies individually had two tugs built. P. Smit Jr opted for Voith-Schneider cycloidal propulsion – actually the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> such type of propulsion in a Dutch tug. L. Smit opted for conventional propulsion. This had to do with Smit's interests in towage and salvage in the Waterway area and in Hoek van Holland roads. In the new set-up this was to logically become the operations area of the N.R.S. To avoid this L. Smit and P. Smit swapped areas of interest so they could maintain there respective positions higher up the river and in the roads.

Except for the two - later four - L. Smit tugs the entire N.R.S. fleet consisted of Voith Tractors until 1987 when they

switched to azimuthing drives. In 1988 the N.R.S. was integrated into Smit Harbour Services.

**Vikingbank** and **Maasbank** took over the station job in 1965. The 1.320 bhp (1.650 ihp) were more powerful single-screw diesel-only versions of the first two boats.

In 1968 and 1970 N.R.S. added the two then most powerful Voith Tractors in the world to the fleet. **Indusbank** and **Smithbank** were fitted out as salvage tugs with North Sea capability and basically became the station boat, although no longer from Hoek van Holland but out of the Europoort.

The station tug never returned to Hoek of Holland although for a number of years one of the bigger units in the Smit International Harbour Services fleet operated out of Hoek van Holland.

### Towage post WW2

After WWII had ended an extensive newbuilding program was started with designs being prepared by Smit's Technical Department at Maassluis. These 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*



MAAS on salvage station in the Berghaven, Hoek van Holland

postcard: coll. Job van Eijk



The 1958-built SCHELDE at Hoek van Holland

photo: coll. Job van Eijk



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 to be able to enter the port of Maassluis due to its great 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 abroad. 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.

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 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



*SCHOUWENBANK during hand-over by the building yard*

*postcard: coll. Job van Eijk*

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. The NRV – Nederlandse Rijnvaart Vereniging – was involved in this from the early days. In 1968 the NRV merged with a division of Vulcaan to become EWT – European Waterway Transports which was to exploit bulk liner services between Rotterdam and mainly Germany using pushboats and pushbarges.

### The 1970s

Downsizing of the shiphandling fleet in Rotterdam - except the Europoort area - was required given the bigger ships replacing smaller ones but requiring more powerful tugs. Pipelines were partly replacing tank barges so harbour towage was also coming down.

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 were re-grouped as Smit-Spido BV, a part of Vigilanter Holding, the investment arm of the Van Beuningen group. On 2 January, 1975, P. Smit Jr's subsidiary Vereenigde Onafhankelijke Sleepdienst 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.

In 1976 Smit Internationale re-purchased the shares held by HAL Holding (van der Vorm): 25 % Smit-Lloyd (Smit's offshore support vessels), 11,48% L. Smit & Co and 1% Internationale Sleepdienst Maatschappij. Smit also acquired NSU's 50% in Smit-Lloyd, the offshore supply company set up with the Rotterdam Lloyd (Ruys).

The intention now was to create **Smit Internationale** which was to include Smit-Spido (van Beuningen) as a sub-holding and 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 of Smit Internationale on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange.



*MAASBANK (New Rotterdam Tug Co.) on salvage station in Hoek van Holland*

*photo: coll. Job van Eijk*





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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

A new shiphandling tug was developed by Smit 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 – to replace a number of the first-generation shiphandlers in the fleet.

### The 1980's monopoly drive in towage

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 thus came under one flag, a total of 40 tugs and push boats.

In another move Smit International purchased a number of yard tugs and the two remaining Van Ommeren tugs. The VO-action was to incorporate the last of the shiphandling tugs that had a contractual share in Smit's Rotterdam shiphandling work. The reason for the purchase of the yard tugs was unclear. Yard work was only a very tiny percentage of the shiphandling work and these tugs were typical yard tugs doing yard-related work. The costly crews, however, would also be added to Smit's payroll.

### Competition returns to towage

Due to the near-monopoly the Smit Harbour Towage department 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) it had to have contracts to support the costly operations.

As it was the **Adriaan Kooren** company had lost much work as the major hydraulic engineering works and the Deltaworks neared their completion. This kind of support work was Kooren's specialism. At one time they had some 200 tugs under contract apart from their own – relatively small – fleet. **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 convinced his father and brothers the way forward was by entering into shiphandling in the port of Rotterdam – to begin with.

To start competition they had to have a suitable amount of more powerful tugs than the competition thus needing less tugs per job. Also have less crew

on board and with fewer shifts to cut costs. And a simplified tariff structure further reducing costs to clients. A Smit spokesman later explained Smit used 23 crew per tug against Kotug's 8; a consequence of the shift system used by Smit which had developed due to a lack of competition.

Kooren had found his tugs in the U.S. where **Faustug** had succumbed to industrial action. The Faust tugs were based on a simple hull form fitted with azimuthing thrusters in the tractor

configuration. The engine 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. Faustug had been taken down due to industrial action by competitors with the assist of local governments that were pushing back on crew reduction.

Kooren bought these tugs and brought them over to The Netherlands. The new boats had bollard pulls of 45 and 51 tonnes and through the



*The Voith Tractor INDUSBANK was fully fitted for salvage and rescue operations in the North Sea*

*photo: coll. Job van Eijk*



*Smit ocean tugs in the port of Maassluis in the 1960s. TYNE and OCEAAN moored side-by-side with NOORDZEE partly visible*  
*photo: courtesy National Towage Museum Maassluis*





The Voith Tractor tug KWINTEBANK in February, 1990, leaving the Waterway answering to a Mayday call

photo: C. van Staayeren

use of the Niigata Z-pellers in the tractor configuration were highly manoeuvrable. Kooren therefore won some important contracts from large companies that did not favour the risks arising from a monopoly. The unions in Rotterdam – like the Smit management – 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 unions to force them to work on the same conditions as the Smit crews. This did not succeed.

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% for 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 also had to do with the fact that Kotug also offered coastal towage and a minimum number of tugs had always 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

development of Kotug internationally is outside the scope of this article but further down we'll see the consequences of globalisation. And, as a consequence, the German operator **Fairplay** decided to come to Rotterdam to return the compliments and set up competition.

Smit International was also hit by the downturn in deepsea towing contracts due to increased competition in a market that basically had an oversupply of large tugs to choose from. This was a result of the exploding offshore market in the 1970s and to a lesser extent in the 1980s.

Competition came in the form of Rotterdam-based **Goliath Transport**

Hamburg. Here also protests were heard with newspapers speaking of a tugboat war. Bremerhaven followed in 1999. Here the newly-developed Rotortugs showed their worth. The further



ZP CHANDON was one of the six Faust tugs purchased by Kooren

photo: Jan van der Klooster



RT PIONEER was the first of four 'Rotor Tugs' developed by Kooren

photo: Hans Hoffmann



established in 1979. As an agent for Japanese Fukada Salvage they had access to powerful tugs and large ocean barges. Somewhat later – as **Fairmount Marine** – they also teamed up with Chinese operators. In 2005 they began adding a total of five newbuild 200 tbp deepsea tugs to the fleet. Further competition came from Germany where Harms Bergung und Transport added a range of tugs in the range from 100 to 290 tbp.

### Bigger and bigger

In 2007 Fairmount came in French ownership but in 2014 sold it was sold back to the Dutch dredging and civil engineering contractor Boskalis. Meanwhile, in 2010, some ex Fairmount Marine managers had set up on their own as **ALP Maritime**. At the time they did not own any tugs but operated high-specification tugs chartered from third parties. In 2014 they sold the company to Teekay but remained as a subsidiary. They also ordered four 300 tbp deepsea tugs of a radical new design. And



*FAIRMOUNT EXPEDITION - one of the 200 tbp tugs deepsea tugs that have now become part of the Boskalis fleet as BOKA EXPEDITION*  
photo: Ruud Zegwaard

purchased the six most powerful tugs in the Harms fleet, a move made possible because the Harms tugs were owned by single-ship K.G. companies, therefore owned by a number of individual large and small shareholders while Harms was tasked to run the vessels and make them earn.



*ALP WINGER seen here on 29-10-2021 in the Rotterdam Waterway is one of the units formerly run by Harms*  
photo: Reinier van de Wetering



*ALP DEFENDER one of the four 300 tbp ocean tugs operated by ALP Maritime out of Rotterdam*  
photo: courtesy ALP Maritime

Smit International by this time had abandoned the top segment of the deepsea market. In the 1970's they had built up a serious fleet of high-powered tugs none of which, however, had a real anchor-handling capability effectively keeping them out of the offshore market except for distance towing. And even that was undermined by the increasingly larger semi-submersible heavy-load carriers coming into the market of dry towage. Smit was a very late entrant into that market also. Dry towing anyhow did not require extremely powerful tugs.

Smit for a time tried to consolidate the top end of the market by teaming up with or taking over (other) deepsea operators. But these tugs in general were dated. In 2009 Smit itself was purchased via its shareholders by **Boskalis**. One of the largest shareholders had been SHV (Fentener van Vlissingen), the same that in the early years had teamed up with the Van Beuningen's.

The same sale-and-purchase was going on in the shiphandling side of the business. Smit's near monopoly was broken by Kotug. Fairplay had entered the Rotterdam shiphandling business in reaction to Kotug coming to Hamburg. And in 2014 **Svitzer** entered Rotterdam. A year later they disappeared again but had their contracts subcontracted to Fairplay which in turn brought Terneuzen-based **Multiship** (50% owned by Fairplay Group) to Rotterdam and Europoort. In 2016 Kotug and Boskalis pooled their north-western Europe operations in a 50/50 JV. Even this did not last for long as the Spanish tug operator **Boluda** in 2009 purchased the JV.





Map of the Rotterdam port area in showing the situation 2022

Gradually the Smit shiphandling operations abroad were sold by Boskalis - apart from the terminal operations carried out under the Lamnalco banner. Today, Smit is reduced to a memory being kept alive by **Smit Salvage**, a Boskalis subsidiary. Recently several high-profile salvage jobs were successfully completed. The Smit name still has value in the salvage market.

And yet another competing shiphandling operator has announced itself: **MedTug**, a subsidiary of the container giant MSC. The company operates in various container ports where MSC operates a terminal. The intention was to start business in Europoort somewhere in 2022.

Kotug meanwhile operates shiphandling services in a variety of ports all over the world. The company is a leader in the introduction of 'green'. They also pursue inland waters operations as a 'green' alternative to road transport in densely populated areas.

As a postscript: recently HAL Holding (Van der Vorm) has made an offer for all shares in Boskalis with the intention - if successful - to delist Boskalis from the stock exchange but otherwise leave everything 'as is'. This will bring back the Smit heritage to a group that once held a significant although minority share position in Smit and otherwise

gave them the push to quick-start with deepsea tugs.

#### Maassluis Tugboat Port

Smit tugs have returned to the port of Maassluis, 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 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. 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 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 Europoort and Hoek van Holland roads. A frequent visitor is the former Europoort Voith Tractor tug *Varnebank* that was restored by its buyer in the familiar N.R.S. livery.

#### 150 years of New Waterway

In summary the Waterway has pushed Rotterdam to the top ports in the world, saw the rise and fall of the Holland-America Line now American owned, saw the rise and fall of the Smit company from the biggest towage and salvage company in the world to a subsidiary of the world renowned dredging company Boskalis, saw 150 years of connection to the port of Harwich in the U.K., saw the rise of new deepsea towage operators, saw international rail connections from Hoek van Holland deep into Europe develop and disappear. It also saw tugs return to the (museum) port of Maassluis. And of course the village of Hoek van Holland, still the 'gateway to Europe' from the U.K., but now by road instead of by rail.

#### Suggestions for further reading

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Almost to the hour 150 years prior to this photo on 9 March, 1872, the first merchant ship departed the newly opened Rotterdam Waterway. RICHARD YOUNG was a ferry-avant-la-lettre operating the Rotterdam-Harwich line of the Great Eastern Railway. The photograph shows the current STENA BRITANNICA - a direct descendant of RICHARD YOUNG - departing the Waterway on her way from Hoek van Holland to Harwich on 9 March, 2022

photo: Job van Eijk



Smit's steam tug GANGES (1927 - 1.000 ihp) and the motor tug WITTE ZEE (1946 - 650 bhp - farthest from camera) during the initial attempts to salvage RADMAR (see elsewhere in this issue) on the Maasvlakte shallows off Hoek van Holland, 16 January, 1952. The salvage was to take some six weeks and was plagued by several storms. Part of the cargo was jettisoned. On 26 February the ship was refloated by WITTE ZEE, MAAS (1936 - 550 ihp - ex AFRIKA), BLANKENBURG (1938 - 600 bhp) and ARGUS (1921 - 420 ihp) with Tak Berging's salvage vessels WALRUS, ZEELEUW and BRUINVISCH alongside pumping

photo: Dutch National Archives (photo Anefo - Jan van Duinen)

