



## The 29<sup>th</sup> ICCY Rally, Rotterdam 19-23 July, the Netherlands

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This rally was organized by the Nederlandse Vereniging van Toerzeilers-NVVT (Netherlands Association of Cruising Yachtsmen), one of the founding members of the ICCY 29 years ago.

The rally venue was the old Veerhaven harbour situated in downtown Rotterdam, near the Erasmus bridge (the 'Swan') across the river Nieuwe Maas (the 'Maas'), the principal tributary of the river Rhine that flows through the city and into the North Sea. The Veerhaven is directly accessible from the Maas and entrance into the river is either directly via Hook of Holland or via the inland (Mast-up) route from Amsterdam or Haarlem.



Some 34 yachts with crews and another 4 families elsewhere accommodated - some 100 persons in all - joined the rally. The participants came from Finland, Sweden, France, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands.

The rally started with the traditional flag ceremony, duly performed with the able assistance of the Rotterdam Sea Scout group Stella Maris. A welcome address was delivered by the hosts, the ICCY General Secretary and on behalf of the city of Rotterdam by Mr Gerard Wuisman of the Veerhaven Supervisory Board. An informal open air walking dinner party in a nearby restaurant overlooking the Veerhaven closed the day. From the terrace of the restaurant there was a clear overview of the jigsaw of yachts rafted up in groups according to size as the Veerhaven is a relatively small marina with a limited number of pontoons, but the venue was picked for its pleasant atmosphere and ideal location in the nautical heart of Rotterdam.

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The NVvT had assigned a special committee under the chairmanship of NVvT-veteran Jan van Doorn to organize and facilitate the rally and the thorough preparations paid off.



The second day started with a short bus ride to the Rotterdam Town Hall, one of the few city centre buildings that escaped the WW-II May 1940 devastation. The company was received by one of the city's Aldermen and the city's Marketing Director, both addressing the audience and making clear that they were pleased by the fact that Rotterdam was chosen as the venue for the ICCY rally. Prior to an informal lunch a video was shown that provided a more in depth overview of one of the biggest commercial ports of the world while at the same time painting the picture of a transforming city that moves it's shipping industry westwards onto new areas of reclaimed land (Maasvlakte I and II) while rebuilding and transforming the city heart and Maas embankment into a residential and recreational area, attracting young people looking a for pleasant urban living environment.

As we had some time left before the scheduled arrival at our next destination we visited the 17<sup>th</sup> century and still operational 8-windmill cascade at Kinderdijk, one of the best preserved living monuments of civil engineering and water management in the country. The Dutch managed already in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to reclaim land by means of wind power and once reclaimed to keep the ground water level under control since. The Kinderdijk mills are not only a living proof of that but also offer a very pleasant view of the rural countryside that appears to be a natural setting for these beautiful windmills with their characteristic shape.

The next destination was the City of Dordrecht, one of the oldest settlements in the Netherlands that received town rights in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A multilingual guided city walk through the heart of Dordrecht was arranged in small groups. Dordrecht being a one time crossroads of river traffic and clever tax management by authorities at the time the Netherlands broke free from Spanish rule in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century still shows much of this past alongside the canals that cut through the city heart.



At the same time it is also one of the few if not the only city in Holland where the swift late 16<sup>th</sup> century change from the Roman Catholic to the Protestant faith happened without bloodshed, explaining the rich interior of the most of the time more austere Protestant churches. The city tour was concluded in a café with coffee, cake, drinks and some savory treats. The return trip to Rotterdam was made with the fast ferry, a 20 knot water jet catamaran that connects several townships around Rotterdam with a reliable and traffic jam free commuter service. As it happened the Rotterdam ferry terminal was a 5 minute walk from the Veerhaven.

The evening was spent in the Veerhaven with a special Dutch treat and accompanying music. Participants were asked to get together in groups (with couples from different countries) on a number of yachts and were served with herring and old Dutch gin ('korenwijn'). The idea was to foster the habit of eating raw (freshly pickled) herring in the traditional way (herring tail in hand when lowering the fish in your mouth).



At the same time the famous Rotterdam Shanty Choir was performing in full strength on the pontoons, adding to the nautical atmosphere while inducing joining in singing international shanty evergreens. The evening ended for some crews in 'the small hours' as their hosts dugged in their wine and snackfood cellars once the herring plates were emptied. Clearly the formula of bringing people from different nationalities together in groups onboard yachts of their hosts is a successful one and in line with the ICCY spirit.

Wednesday was part of the optional program and started with a coach transfer of around 70 persons to the heart of Amsterdam near the Central Railway Station. As the day couldn't start without traditional Coffee & Cake the nearby restaurant Dorrius was visited to this end. Once this business was satisfactorily settled a canal boat was boarded for a special tour through the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century heart of Amsterdam – the canal system – ending near the restaurant 'Haesje Claes' where a pleasant lunch was waiting for the company. The canal trip highlighted the development of Amsterdam from a small fortified township in the 15<sup>th</sup> century into the immensely wealthy and fast expanding commercial city it became in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The afternoon was left to the individual participants who were provided with a well documented choice of outings like a walk through the 'Jordaan' an interesting area built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, several museums etc. The return to Rotterdam was again by coach leaving from the drop-off point.



Thursday was a day off but of course an optional program was offered. In particular a number of participants used the opportunity to visit the brand new nearby Port Control centre, where they were welcomed by the professional staff and informed about key port control operations and the related technical infrastructure.

The afternoon was dedicated to the ICCY Council meeting and during this meeting the General Secretaryship passed from Helmut Gudjons to Hannu Laine. Helmut Gudjons of the German Cruising Association (Deutschen Touren Verein) held this post – the only permanent position within ICCY – for 19 years. Hannu Laine is well prepared for this position as he was professionally related in a similar role to the Finnish Boating Association.

Also next year's ICCY rally program (Poland, details forthcoming) was presented by Council Member Prof. Mazurkowiecz .

Thursday evening the official ICCY rally dinner was held in the clubhouse of the Koninklijke Roei & Zeilvereniging de Maas ('Royal Maas'). This clubhouse is conveniently located at the entrance of the Veerhaven and the terrace overlooks the river. The nice weather allowed the company to have their drinks outside and enjoy the river view from this unique location.



The dinner was in true ICCY spirit - next to good food, wine and music - a platform for speeches and presentations by the various country/club representatives. The longest distance trophy was presented to Kees Bos, who sailed singlehanded all the way from Finland.

The hosts were presented with some nice gifts that memorized the occasion. Also this occasion was used to express appreciation and gratitude for Helmut Gudjons' services as General Secretary of the ICCY and to wish Hannu Laine the best of success in this position.



The next morning a farewell brunch was arranged in the nearby restaurant where the first evening was passed and following that the official closing ceremony was held on the quay near the harbor office. Again the Stella Maris Sea Scouts assisted in the flag ceremony and the ICCY flag was handed to next year's host.



In conclusion the organizing committee, all participants and the harbor staff were heart fully thanked for their hard work, enthusiastic participation and friendly services. Best wishes for a safe home voyage closed the official part and following that the usual melee of lively individual farewells concluded the rally.

Photo's : Gerrit Broertjes