

SPEECH at the Celebration of Life of CLE JELTES, July 8th, 2010 by Jeroen Jeltjes.
Cle is my uncle, the older brother of my father Rob (t '94)
Welcome to all and thank you for coming to say goodbye to Cle.

This seems to be an appropriate time to look back together on the eventful life of this unique man.

Oom Cle was born in The Hague on March 11, 1924 as the eldest of four children of Cle Jeltjes and Agnes Verbunt. He had two brothers, Frank, Rob and one sister, Ineke. His father was a mechanical engineer, a rather stiff man, and his mother a warm caring woman with a Catholic upbringing from Brabant. Cle's grandfather made his fortune in sugar plantations in the former Dutch East Indies, and his grandmother came from the Amsterdam family Van Beuningen-Van Helsdingen.

Cle grew up in comfort at the villa Kraaijenbosch near Crailo, with servants, a chauffeur, gardener, tailor etc. However, due to expensive hobby's (cars), some unfortunate moves in the market, and the onset of WWII, capital was lost and the family was forced to move to a smaller home on the Wagnerlaan in Hilversum.

Here Cle attended high school, but had to hide during the war in a hut in the Biesbosch marshlands. Before and after the war the sailboat of choice was the Sharpie, sailed on the Loosdrechtse Plassen out of Cle's beloved club the 'Vereeniging'. It was here that Cle's love for sailing and all things maritime grew. After school Cle, went to Glasgow to study Naval architecture, afterwards he worked for KNSM. It was around this time in 1952 that that he helped Coen Gulcher develop the Flying Dutchman Class: that played such a prominent role in his life.

Around 1955 Cle started up his own business: Belship. In his duffel bag one could find Henderson pumps, Lewmar fittings, and Proctor masts fastened to his MG. First he worked out of his garage at the home on the Wagneriaan, later he moved to a shed on the Loosdrechtse Dijk.

When visiting Opa and Oma, we, his nieces and nephews, found great excitement in snooping around his workplace: it smelled of glue, fresh woodchips, oil and varnish. He owned a lot of strange and interesting tools which he used to build little boats on planks. In the garage the hull of a boat was tied to the ceiling, and underneath it two antique cars were stored. Indoors, one could hardly enter his bedroom, as all sorts papers, magazines, boat and auto parts were perpetually piled up. It smelled of tobacco. We were not to touch anything, in case he wouldn't be able to find it later ... Amidst the apparent chaos, he found time to build a Piraat dinghy for us, in which we all learned to sail.

In 1978, Cle moved to his house on a beautiful spot in Ankeveen.

Many sailors have spent a period working for Cle at Belship to assemble pumps, ship items, build masts or man the booth at the Hiswa. Cle put advertisements in a nautical magazine with slogans like "Belship: the pepper and salt of your soup" and "Who is that man with pipe between the hardware? " Also, one day during the Hiswa show, he suddenly had an idea: he immediately needed two goldfish. He positioned two large tanks filled with water in the aisle. In between them he installed a Henderson pump. Then he proceeded to pump the goldfish from one tank to the other. The fish survived, and the stunt provided him with plenty pUblicity.

Cle managed his Belship business out of love for boats and sailing, but also for the pleasure of providing service to his clients. A satisfied customer was his main goal. That there had to be an economic advantage in order to run the business was less important. I also was lucky and had the pleasure of working for Cle, and a few times Cle would take me along in the Bedford truck to England to bring back items from Seasure or Proctor. Later, when my brother Rob and I took Belship on from Cle, our approach of doing business colided at times with his, but we had fun nevertheless. I can remember well how

this difficult customer, Mr Damen, arrived once a week in sportsgear on his bike to complain about the rigging of his son's boat, a Schakel. I was the mastbuilder in those days, so he always asked for me. One day I saw him coming and I said to Cle: " I am not in, you hear" and I dove under a desk. Mr Damen entered and asked: "Is Jeroen not here? At which Cle replied: 'Oh certainly, there he is, under the desk.'

After 25 years people still come to meet us at the Hiswa booth to declare not without pride that once they worked for Cle.

Besides his Belship business, Cle has worked with extraordinary dedication for the development of the Flying Dutchman class. He has participated during 35 years in about every major FD class championship all over the world in the capacity of the international official measurer of the FD Class, including attendance at 7 consecutive Olympics. From these Olympic he still has hanging in his closet 7 blazers in 7 different colours. The orange coloured one he pulled out once a year to wear on the old from all over the world, many in the FD community.

Travelling from or to a Championship he would easily add a few days and drive hundreds of kilometres to visit with a friend. His car would be covered in peanut shells and chocolate wrappers, the diet of choice to stay awake. Wherever he went he was always a welcome and much loved guest. He'd bring a small gift, sometimes nuts from the trees in his garden.

In addition Cle worked for years from his home to put the FD Bulletin together and manage the membership, until he finally became too frail to handle it any longer.

Famous is the wet paint still on the half-model that traditionally would be handed out to the first-prize winner at the Easter Races at the K WVL. It was clear that Cle had worked through the night to finish it.

In 2002 Cle received the Ridder in the Order of Oranje-Nassau award from the Queen, in recognition of his work and dedication to yachting in general, and the FD class in particular.)

Although Cle was not a materialistic person, he was a man with a point to tradition and style. Therefore you could spot him on any given day wearing his grey trousers, his blue blazer and club tie, stepping out of his orange-coloured, dented car, of which the hood was held down from opening spontaneously by a piece of rope.

He was not one to spend money on business lunches or extravagant things. He kept his half-size loaf of bread on his windowsill for days, and the fact that mould started to grow was no reason not to finish it.

Oom Cle, your last years were a bit hard. The body couldn't keep up any more, and you spent most of your days bound to wheelchair and bed. Because of this it became increasingly difficult to keep in touch with all your friends. But you never complained about your situation, you accepted the way things went, and you enjoyed the smaller things.

Cle, I am very grateful and proud that you are Oom Cle, and always will be.

I would like to thank all of you, on behalf of Cle and his family, who have kept Cle in their hearts, and those who have paid him an occasional visit or send him a note.

There is one person who I want to thank in particular and that is my wife Jeanette, you have touched me with your show of care and affection for Cle during his last years. You took him out for walks, you talked and laughed with him, you went out and bought him new socks, a warm sweater, a new pillow. Candies and cookies. And you were there beside him so he wouldn't go alone. Jeanette, we are very grateful to you.

(English version)

The following message we received from Mick.ey, who emigrated to Canada 25 years ago. She is married to

former Flying Dutchman sailor Terry McLaughlin. They have three sons: Dirk, Evert and Lucas.

Dear Oom Cle,

Once you mentioned how much you enjoy the fact that we still call you 'uncle', although we are all adults

now. You were not a typical uncle, for sure; a little eccentric, definitely, that was what we enjoyed about

you.

After my departure to Canada I didn't see you so often anymore, of course, but the visits to your home in

Ankeveen were always rewarded with a cup of coffee and a Dutch cookie, although it sure was not always

easy to find a bit of room on the table or a place to sit down: first the typewriter needed to go on the floor as

well as piles of FD class correspondence be pushed aside .. We were happy to see each other again; we

chatted and we laughed about past and present and the visits were always too short.

I am not only grateful to you for having invited me to Palamos in '82 where I met Terry, but also for inviting Marijke and I to assist you in measuring FD's at the '72 World Championships in

Medemblik,

because this, and befriending another Flying Dutchman sailor Prince Louis von Bayern and spending time

at his castle near Munich, still count as highlights of my youth that I always associate with you.

You were a

beloved member of the Flying Dutchman community. Later, whenever anywhere in the world your name

was dropped, I would proudly pronounce: "That's my uncle!"

You travelled a lot: I remember when you brought back a toy seal puppy for me from Canada, and once a

tin box for us with a sweet substance in it from Brasil, which we had never tasted before.

Luckily your travels also brought you to Canada, and you visited us in 1990: dear memories. You were

proud of Evert, your godson, and you sent him books on, what else, boats and knots.

In your annual letters to your friends titled: Merry Christmas and .. ." you gave detailed accounts of your

many adventures showing your great interest in exploring different cultures, meeting people, and your

admiration for nature. You preferred the rough roads and avoided the tourist traps.

An always recurring new years resolution was to finally tackle the pending jobs around the house, and to

get rid of the backlog of building half-models.

Perhaps you have the opportunity now, Cle!

That I have kept all those letters (and your toy seal puppy) says more than just the fact that I may have a

recognizable bit of collector's streak in me.

You were an ageless uncle. Always looking younger and fitter than your peers. So when you decided

around your 76th birthday to celebrate your 75th with a big party for your friends, you seemed not a

day

older than sixty.

My dear Oom Cle, you are also timeless. You will always be with us. I'm gonna miss you.

Mickey

also on behalf of Terry,

and nephews Dirk Evert and Lucas.

Toronto, Canada.