

## AMSTERDAM 18. - 19. MAY 2011

This was the start on a round trip, which we had planned to various capitals in Europe. We flew with [Norwegian](#) from [Gardermoen](#) 08.30 o'clock and arrived 10.20 o'clock at Schiphol.



[Schiphol Airport](#) is the main airport in the Netherlands, and is the 4<sup>th</sup> biggest in Europe. It is situated 18 km south west of Amsterdam. Schiphol is the world's lowest lying commercial airport, with three meter under sea level. The control tower at the airport, with 101 meter, was the world's tallest when it was finished in 1991.



The Netherlands position in Europe



The flag of the Netherlands



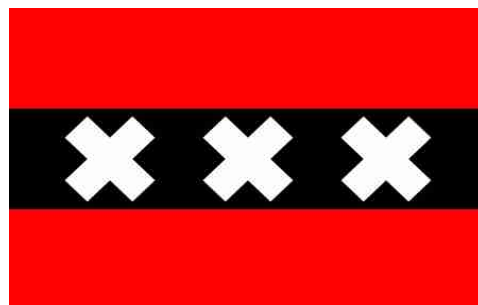
The coat of arms of the Netherlands

[The Netherlands](#) is one of the most densely populated countries in the world and the county with the lowest height over sea level. It is known for its dikes, wind mills, tulips, clogs and the social tolerance.

The Netherlands has had a varied history. It has been a part of The Holy Roman Empire, Spain and France. It has been independent since 1815.



Amsterdam's position in Nederland



Amsterdam's flag



Amsterdam's coat of arms

[Amsterdam](#) is the capital in the Netherlands. It is the biggest city and lies in the province Noord-Holland. In despite of that it is the capital, it is Haag that is the residential city for the king and the government.

Amsterdam has city hub with a lot of canals, and it was founded around a dam in the river [Amstel](#), which has given its name to the city (Amstelredam: the dam in the river Amstel). The city has about 90 islands and 400 bridges.

Many parts of the city and surrounding areas lie on polders and may be acknowledged by its suffix *-meer*, which means «sea», e.g. Aalsmeer, Bijlmermeer, Haarlemmermeer and Watergraafsmeer.

Amsterdam's earliest history can be traced back to about 1200, when there was a small fisherman's community at the river Amstel's shores. In 1204 Giesebrecht II, lord of Amstel land, constructed the castle "t'Aemstel", and later his son built a dam, which closed the river at the IJ fjord, to make a harbor at Amstel's outlet.





We took the train from Schiphol to Amsterdam. The travel time was only 18 minutes.

The train goes from the station, which lies right under the airport terminal, to the main railway station in Amsterdam.

The station building lies on 3 man made islands. It is deeply rooted with 8,687 long timber piles, which are driven down into the mud.

The station was opened in 1889.

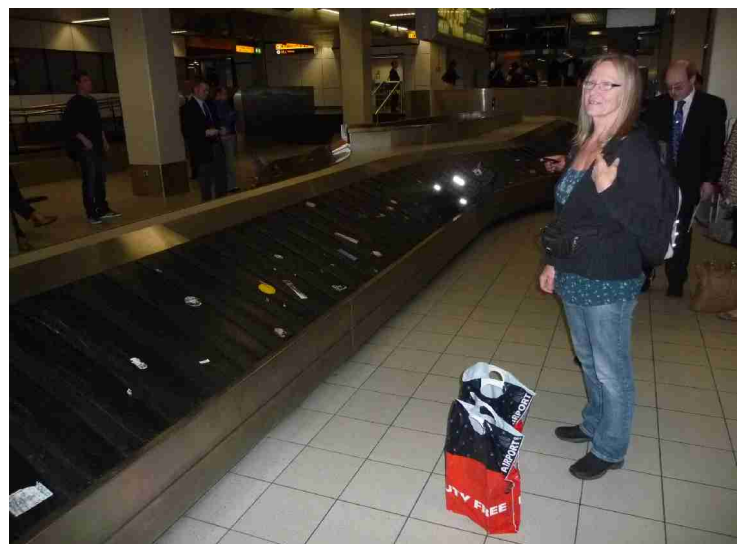


We stayed at [Hotel Prins Henrik](#).

When arriving, we walked past the hotel. We asked for the road, but then we were directed still further on, but we found it eventually.

The hotel room was big and well equipped with a writing desk, chest of drawers, wardrobe and a coffee table with chairs.

There were a good breakfast buffet at the hotel, plenty to choose from and good coffee and cocoa.

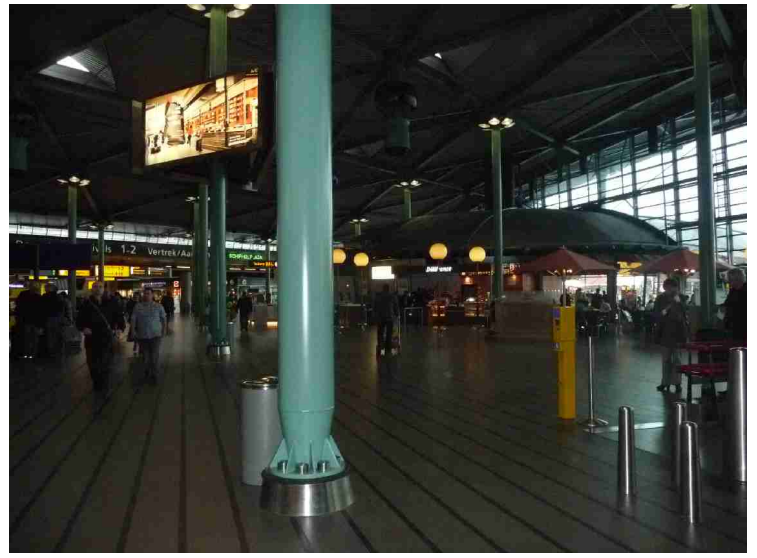


Here we have arrived at Schiphol and are waiting for the luggage.





We bought train tickets on one of the automates.



The departure hall at the train station.



This is in the direction of the platforms.



On our way to Amsterdam. Some places the line was covered by glass tunnels.

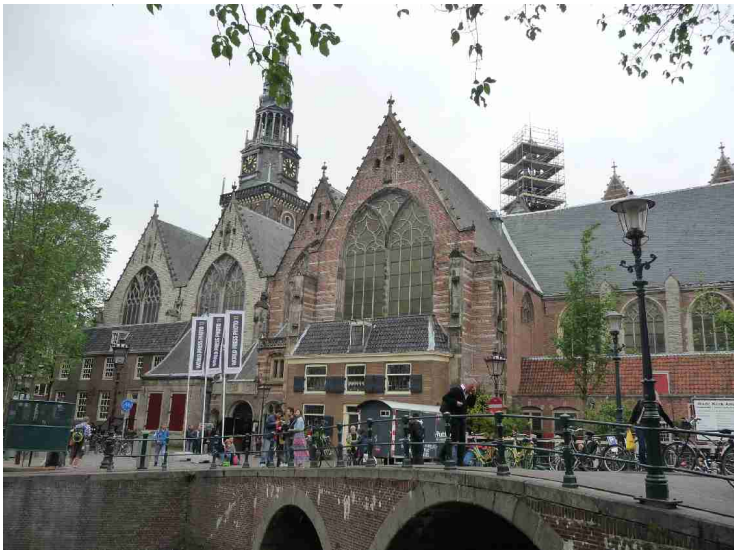


We found the hotel at last. When we had checked in, we went for a sightseeing round.



Not from far where we stayed lies the oldest church in Amsterdam, [Oude Kerk](#). It was built in the 1300s and lies on the same place as an older church. In the bell tower is a chime with 47 bells.





Here the church seen from the other side. It lies in the «Red Light District», which is regarded as one of Amsterdam's sights.



This canal goes past the church.



The view in the other direction. [Sint Nicolaaskerk](#) can be seen in the background.



This is the [Dam square](#) with the national monument, which is erected in memory of those who lost their lives during WWII. The monument was unveiled in 1956. It is 22 m tall.

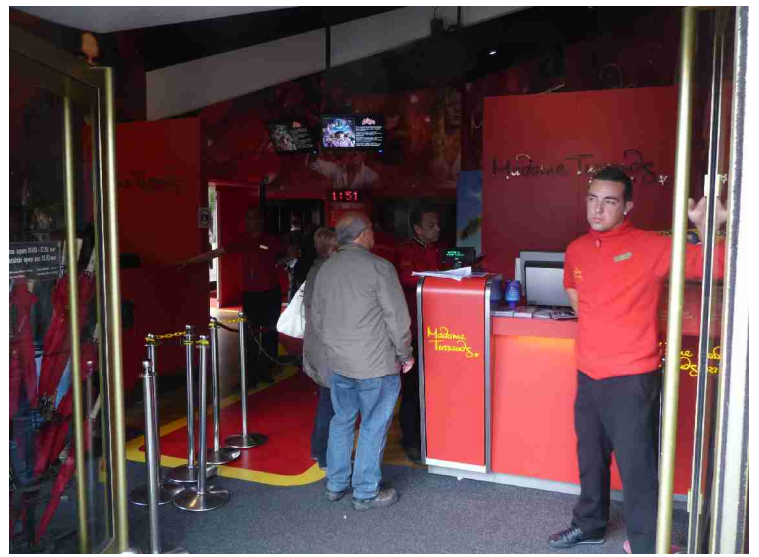


In the background we see Koninklijk Paleis. It was commenced in 1648 as Stadhuis (town hall). Most of the fitting is from 1808 when Louis Napoleon choose it as his royal palace.





In the outskirts of Dam lies a department of the well known Madam Tussaud Waxworks. The main department lies in London.



Here we are peeping through the entrance.



Koninklijk Paleis.



A lot of cycles on a bridge over one of the canals. They are old and useless and locked to the railing.

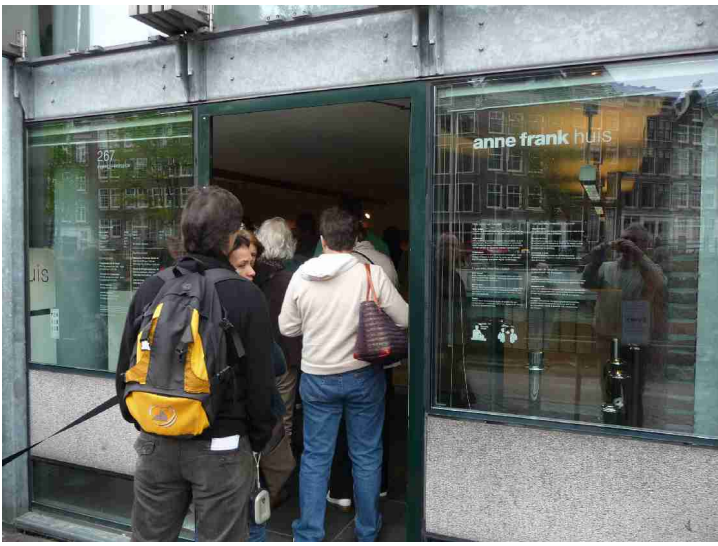


Street picture from Raadhuisstraat. We can see Westerkerk in the background.



Westerkerk. The church has a bell tower, which is 85m tall. It is thereby the highest tower in the city. It has also the largest middle aisle of all Dutch churches. The famous Dutch painter Rembrandt is buried here.





Anne Frank Huis where the famous Anne Frank lived before the family was informed against and came was sent to a German concentration camp where they died.



Anne Berit outside the house.



A house boat on the canal outside Anne Frank Huis.



Eduard Douwes Dekker was a Dutch writer. He was known under writer-pseudonym Multatuli.



Nice houses at this square.





More nice houses.



Street picture.



We needed some food, so we entered an Indonesian restaurant.



They had good food.



Another street picture.



This street is called [Damrak](#). The building is [Beurs van Berlage](#). It was built as a commodity market, but is now mostly used for conferences.





Silver man.



Clog shop.



Bicycle taxis.



A duck family in the canal.



Many canal boat trips depart from here.

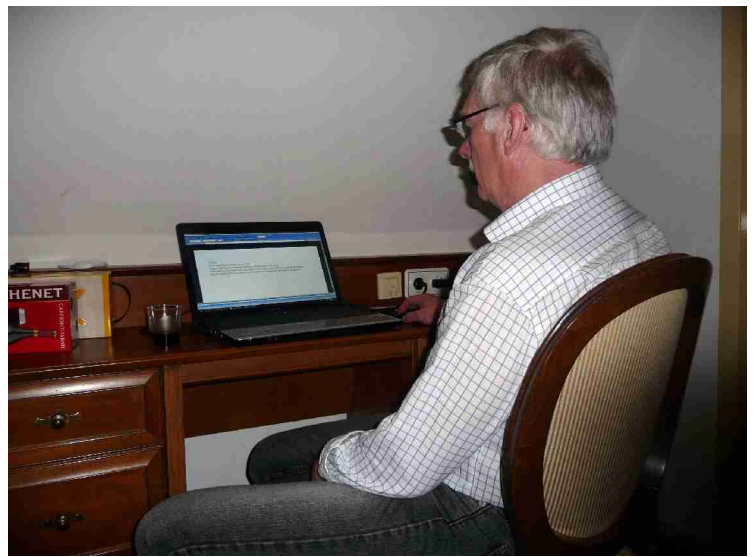


In the evening we went out and bought baguettes, which we ate in the hotel room.





This is our dining alcove.



This is our office.



The next day we wanted a canal trip. We looked at various companies, also this one.



We chose this one, because it was ready to leave.

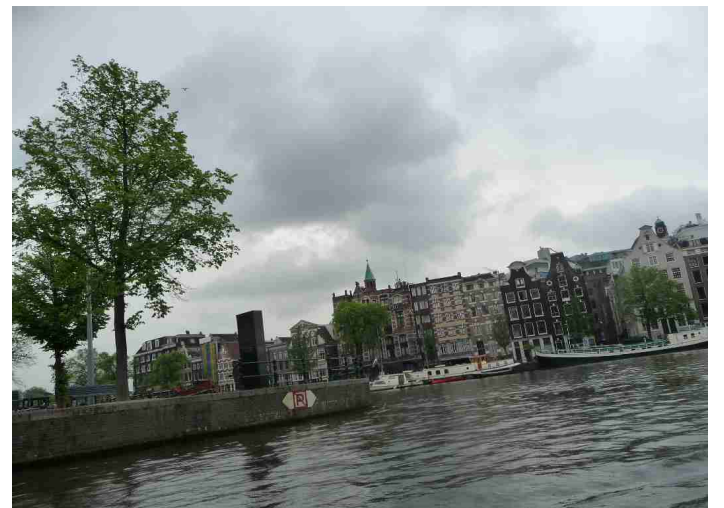


The ticket.



In the boat.









There is installed a low rail such that the cars can not roll into the canal. That was a problem before the rail was set up



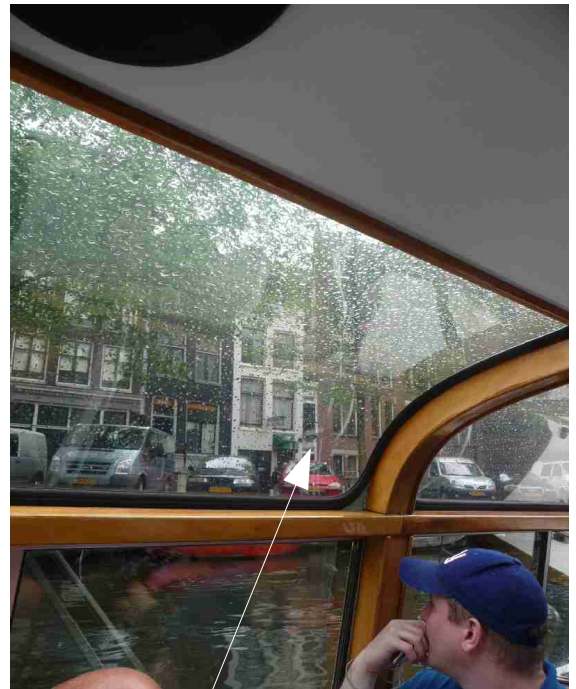


One of the most narrow houses in Amsterdam.



A house boat for homeless cats.



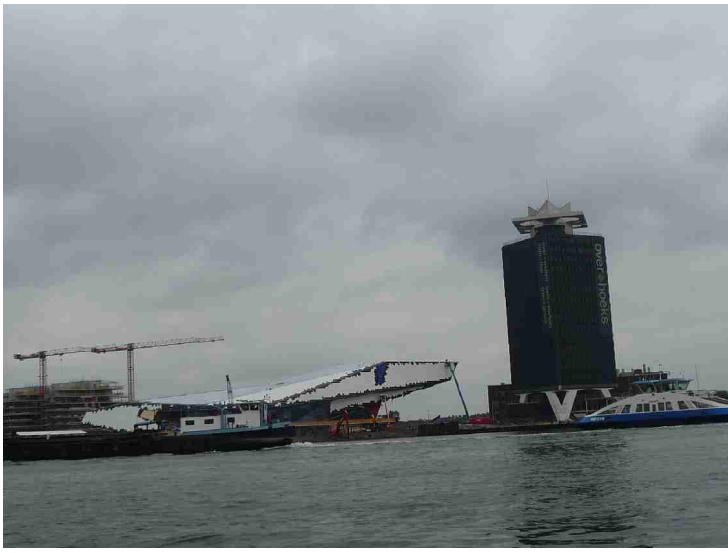


This is the most narrow house in Amsterdam.



Here we are out on [Ij](#), a bay in the [IJsselmeer](#). In the west end of Ij goes a ships canal out to the North Sea.

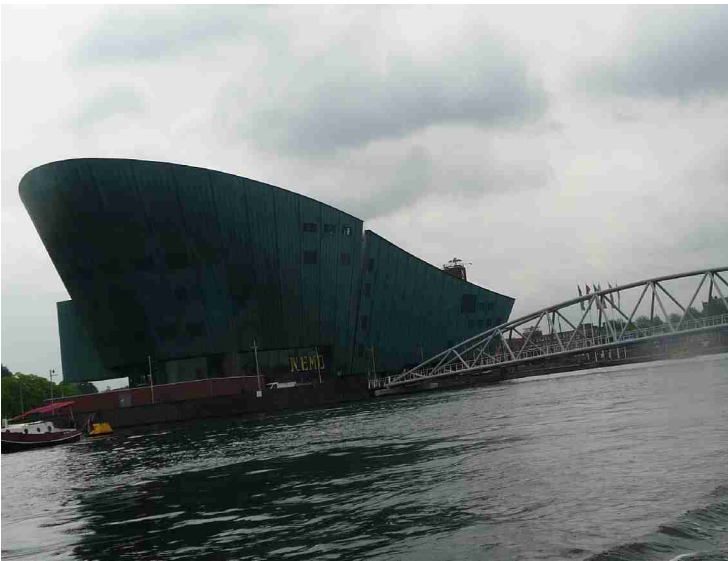




Industry.



This passenger terminal for cruise ships was put to use in 2000.



In 1997 [NEMO](#) moved the technology museum into this building. In the summer there is a beach on the roof.



We are now in a large canal called Ooster-dok.



The Chinese floating restaurant «[Sea Palace](#)» is the first floating Chinese restaurant in Europe. It was raining when we went past, so the the pictures are quite poor.

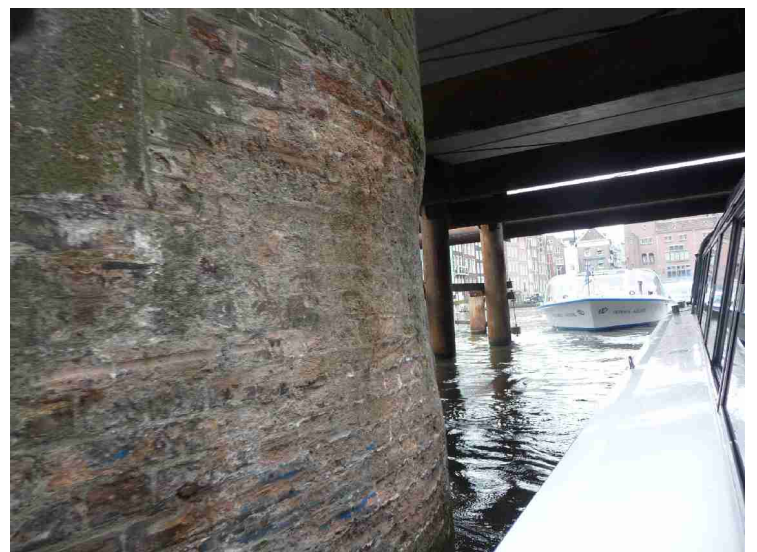




Now we are almost back where we started. We look at «[Sint Nicolaaskerk](#)» that was built in 1887. «Sint Nicolaas» was the saint of the seafarers and therefore an important image of a saint in Amsterdam. The church is lying near our hotel.

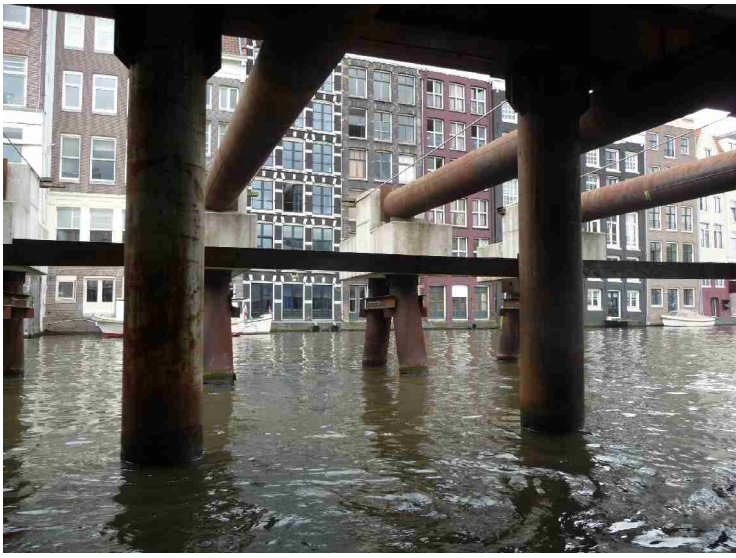


They were working with construction tasks along the canal, and there were put up tarpaulins to cover it. On the outside there was painted a gigantic picture of sail ships.



Under this bridge was too narrow for two boats to pass each other. We went through first.





Under the bridge.



The other boat is waiting until we are through.



We thought there were a lot of nice houses along the canals, so there were a lot of house pictures.

Here we are back where we started the canal boat trip.

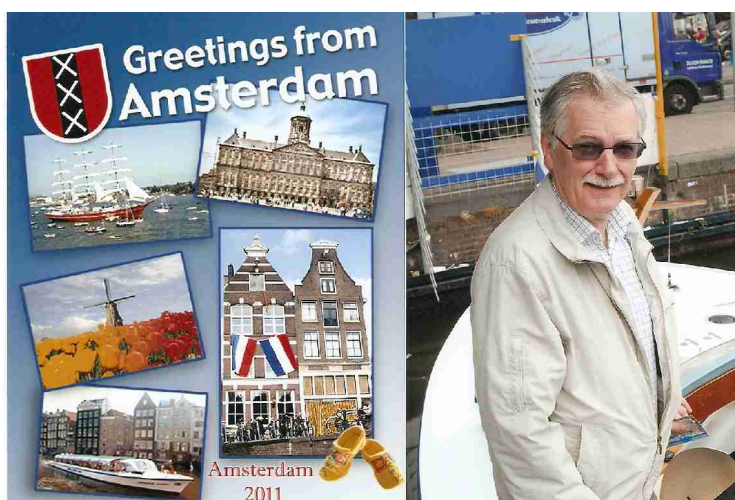




The boat driver in white shirt.



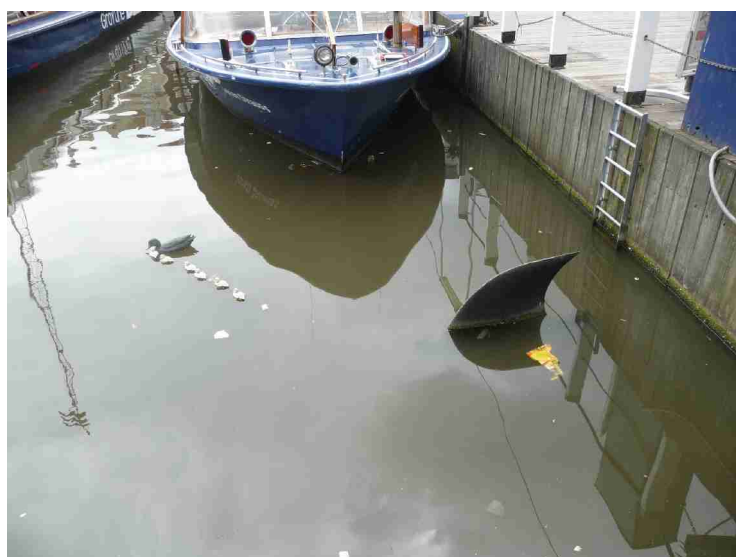
This guy was standing on the quay side.



As usual there were taken pictures of everybody when they entered the boat. The pictures were ready when we were back to the quay.



The duck family still lies at the same place.



Here is a shark, lurking for the duck family.

PS  
They were all made of plastic.

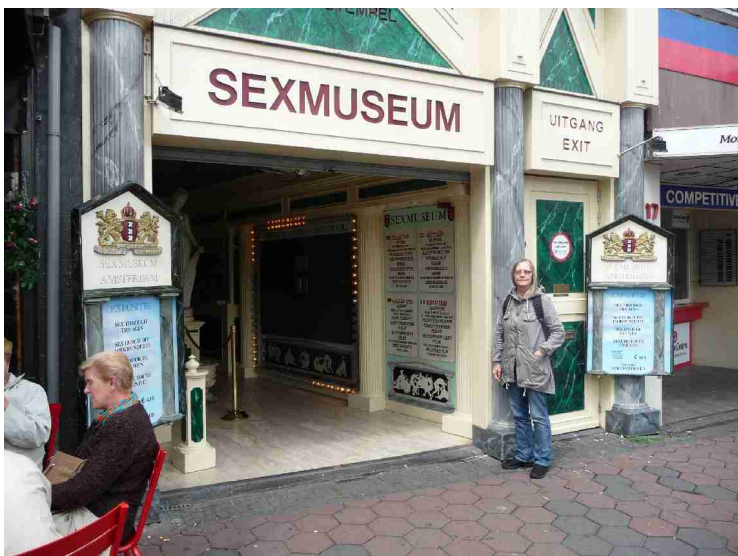




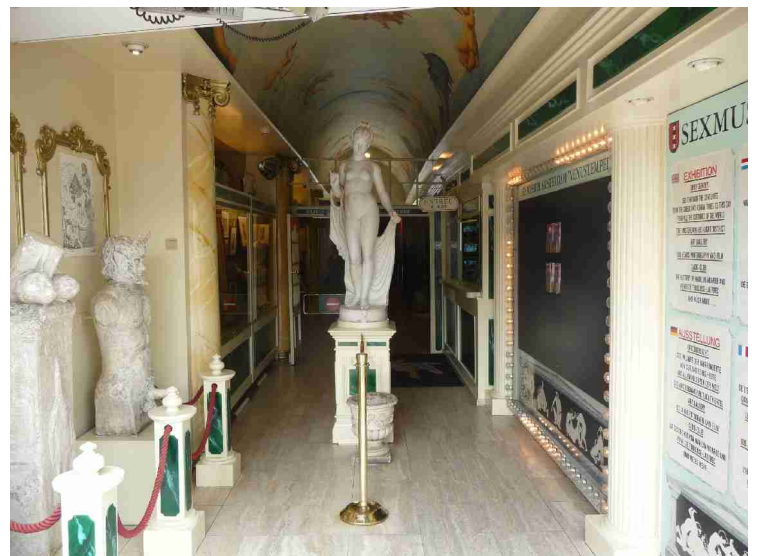
Bicycle taxi.



After this long trip, we needed a beer.



Right besides where we were sitting was a sex museum.



We peeped through the doorway.



It has to be tricky to play an accordion upside down. She got an Euro for the trick.



Now it was time for food again. Here we are at a Chinese restaurant.





Looking inwards the restaurant.



This is our food. Very good. After the meal we got eucalyptus sweets and Anne Berit got a rose.



Parking forbidden for bicycles outside the window.



The restaurant seen from outside.



Street pictures on the way back to the hotel.



Especially on the picture to the right, it is possible to see how lopsided some of the houses are.





Outside the hotel. Anne Berit with the rose.



We had a [Sambuca](#) each while sitting there.



A lot of bicycles are parked right outside.



Here are many who are going to park the bicycles. Quite a job to lock all of them. In Amsterdam are a lot of cyclists. There are a lot of cycle lanes and it almost seemed as they had priority everywhere. We heard the cars, but not the cyclists, so we had to take care, so we didn't get run over.



The "[Schreierstoren](#)" was originally a defense tower in the old city wall from the Middle Ages. The name originates originally from the sharp corner of the tower where the walls went out on both sides, not from the popularized meaning that it was here the wives stood wailing when their husbands went to sea.



Another canal.





Another bridge.



Still another canal.



Here we bought water.



We saw these pizzas in another shop. We bought a couple of hot pieces to eat at the hotel room.

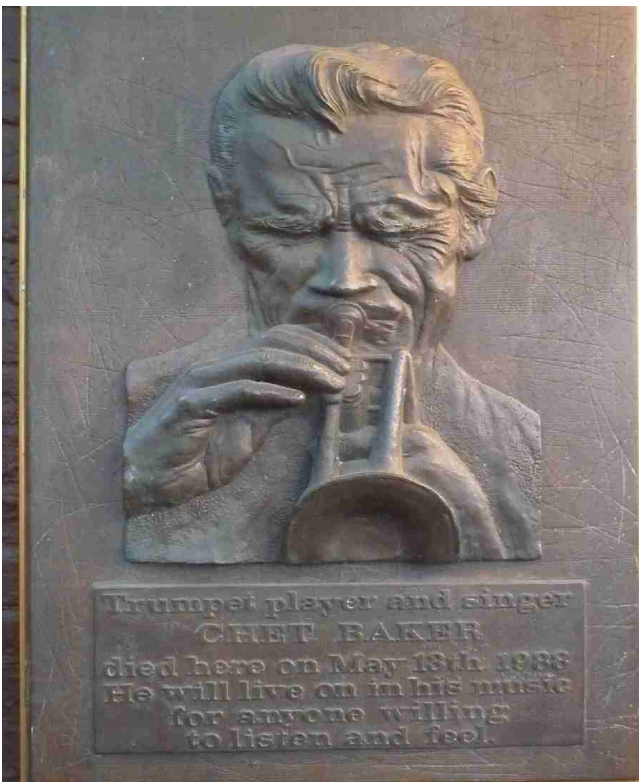


Here is the shop where we bought the pizza slices.

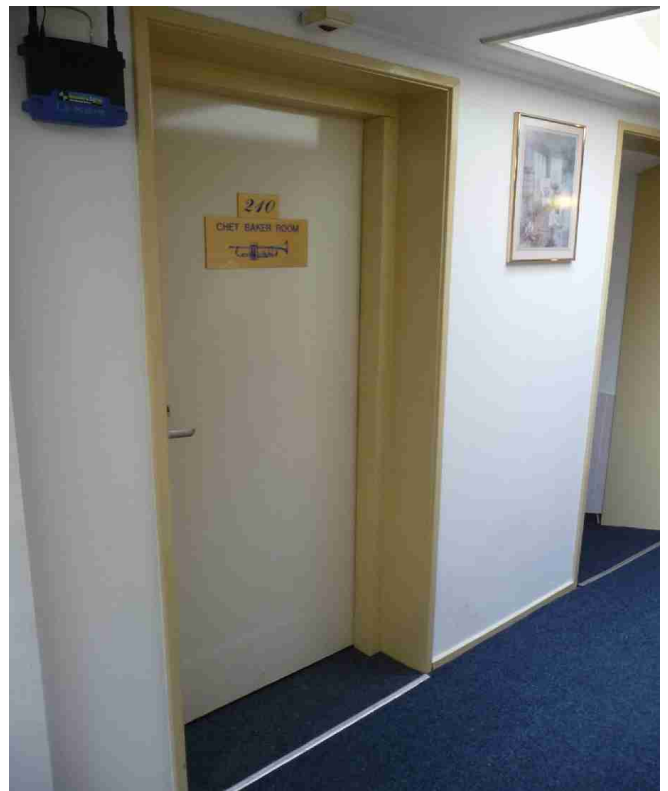


The pizza was not good, so we threw it away and went back to the shop where we the bought the baguettes the previous afternoon. Now we bought more of the same kind.





This picture was on the wall at the entrance to the hotel where we stayed.



The door just across the hallway.



[Chet Baker](#), originally Chesney Henry Baker Jr. (born 23. December 1929 in Yale (Payne County), Oklahoma, of Norwegian descendants, died 13. May 1988 in Amsterdam), was a jazz musician (trumpeter, flugelhorn player, singer and composer).

Chet Baker grew up in a musician family in Oklahoma, his grandmother was the Norwegian Randi Toseth from Rennebu.

The 13<sup>th</sup> of May, Chet Baker fell out of the window in Hotel Prins Hendrik in Amsterdam and died momentarily. There were found remains of heroin and cocaine in his blood.

*Now we are finished with Amsterdam. The next city on this round is Luxembourg.*