



Sign outside guildhouse



Guildhouse

Until 1940 in use as guild house for the carriers guild of Saint Antony. Here the men would come together to dice (smakken=to throw with loud noise) in order to find a fair distribution of the available work, unloading the ships with grain or coal, important for the jenever industry.

The bell in the tower was tolled when a ship was arriving in the harbour. The men who were in time in the guild house, were able to compete for the available work. Year of building: 1725

Fact of interest: There is still a guild of Saint Antony that gives tours in the guild house and does demonstrations.

History

In 1316 there is first mentioning of carriers in Schiedam. Only in 1465 a city clerk writes for the first time that there is a Guild of Saint Antony.

On October 3, 1699 the Carriers Guild buys an old distillery. In 1725 they build a new guild house on the same spot. The bell tower was added in 1834.

In 1931 the municipality of Schiedam, buys the house of the impoverished Guild and restores the exterior.

In 1965, filmmaker Jan Schaper, in collaboration with volunteers and the municipality, tackles the inside of the house.

In 2016 the exterior has been restored and in 2017 the interior has been refurbished and given a more 'museumlike' appearance.



Dice Room

When a ship was ready to be unloaded, the guild secretary would toll the bell in the bell tower. Then he "turned" the hour glass. The guild members had seven minutes to report themselves present in the guildhouse. When the hour glass was empty, there were usually more men present than needed for the job. To distribute the work honestly,

the men would dice ("smakken" - to throw with a loud noise) in the faucet of the dice table ("smakbak"). The men with the highest scores were hired on the job. After all the scores were counted it would become clear who was going to carry the bags, who was going to fill the bags with grain, and who was going to be sent home. The cargo would usually be grain or coal for the jenever industry.

Office of the Guild Secretary

In the small office next to the dice table sits the guild secretary. He counts the bags of grain carried by each guild member and adds them up for the final bill. He also keeps track of who shows up when the bell is tolled and who does not. Men who were "no shows" too many times would be punished.

Photo: Three guild members from the last team diced for work in the year 1938: on the left, A.J.H. Gudde; in the middle, foreman, J.N. van Thienen; and on the right, dicing, H. van de Water. City Archives Schiedam, photographer M. Hijmans.



Waiting Room

Members who lived far away from the guildhouse and could not hear the bell or reach the house in time would wait for work in the waiting room. In the middle of the room was a heater and the men would sit around it on benches. They would keep themselves busy with chatting and playing cards.

Until 1930 there was a rope by which the bell was tolled. The original bell was damaged and replaced in the 1980's. The original bell is still on display on the second floor.

Photo: A team of senior guild members line up in order of their scores after the dicing. The men with the highest scores get the job. From left to right we see: Jan van Thienen, Willem Leenders, Marie Scholten, Jan Scholten, H. Gudde, Willem van Noort and G.J.H. Gudde.

Photographer: M. Hijmans

On the table in the waiting room.



1. Through section of the guildhouse.

1. Dice room and waiting room
2. Guildroom and drying racks
3. Location for repairs on bags and wooden tools
4. Attic and foundation of the bell tower

2. Clothing

The members of the guild are recognized by their clothing. In the 17th and 18th century the men wore a striped light blue shirt, knee length blue or red pants and blue or red knitted woolen socks. From the 19th century the men wear dark suits with a vest, white shirt and a black cap. But the most important item is the white hood, the "kapzak".

Photo: Guildmembers in 1930 in front of windmill "The Noord" on the Noordvest.

3. Kapzak

The "kapzak" (hood) is indispensable while carrying. The hood is tied with ribbons around the waist. It covers the head, neck, shoulders and back. From the beginning of the 19th century there are two different kinds of hoods, one made of linen for grain and one made of white canvas for coal.

To become a member you had to work on a temporary basis for about a year. After this "test year" you were allowed to "buy a bag" meaning that you could buy yourself a membership in the guild and become an official guildmember. New guildmembers replaced the old and retired ones. Upon retirement, a guildmember

received the investment of the kapzak back, with interest. Owning a kapzak meant that you benefitted from the services of the guild.

Photo: A group of guildmembers bringing grain in the malting factory "De Goudsbloem" at the Noordvest. You can see the "kapzak" under their coats.

4. Tools and "busse".

A percentage of the income of the guild is reserved for the "busse" a fund for general purposes. All tools like ladders, barrels, bags and shovels are bought and maintained from the money in the "busse" Guildmembers would get financial support in times of sickness and death from the guild funds. Once a year, during the annual fair, the men would get a ration of beer and cheese from these savings.

5. "Zakkenwasser" (bag washer)

The bags would of course get dirty and needed to be washed in the nearby canal. This was done by the guild members who were too old to do the heavy work. The wet bags were dried on the first floor of the guildhouse.

Today a useless person who screws up his job is still called a "zakkenwasser" although few people know where this word comes from.

Photo: Guildmembers in 1900 working on a ship, with Hendrik Bijl on the far left. Note the cart and the wide shovels used to fill the bags with grain.

6. Nicknames

It was traditional in the guild to give all the members a nickname. This led to colorful names such as: Frambozenneus (Raspberry Nose), Liplap (someone from Indonesia-Dutch origin) and Grote Kluif (Big Bone). On the occasion of officially being accepted as a guildmember one would receive a sometimes not so flattering nickname. Meaning and origin are long forgotten today. We do know however the origin of the name "Ongedoopte" (Unbaptised) which was given to a man who refused to accept a nickname and therefore on his inauguration received the name "Ongedoopte".

Photo: Guild members in 1920 in front of malting factory "Hollandia". Far on the left G.P. Groeneweg (the Trunk) with a bottle, J. Zagwijn, and on the right, J. van Wagtendonk, who just might be the man who's nickname was the Unbaptised.

Since early days the men would receive a measure of beer when they worked for a beerbrewer and from a distiller, of course, jenever. Photographer Peeleman.

7. Oude en Nieuwe Sluis (Old and New Waterlock)

Most probably there were in the 13th century already men who carried the bags from one side of the Dam to the other.

In 1316 we find the first mentioning of workers who carried cargo and in 1465 we find the first description of organized work in the meaning of a guild.

The guildhouse is strategically located at the Oude Sluis near the most important shipping routes. The Oude Sluis was the connection between the tidal river, the Schie, and the harbors in the city. After 1765 this function is taken over by the Nieuwe Sluis. This waterlock is wider and has more parts, so there is more control over the waterlevels. In the 18th century, transport over water was the fastest way to bring grain and coal to the city.

Photo: The Guild House at the Oude Sluis in 1890, with left a deck barge ("dekschuit") and right a Westlander. Next to the guildhouse Cafe Royal.

Photographer J. van Diggelen

8. Colofon

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Guildroom (as it was around the year 1900)

As well as functioning as an office for the foremen, the guildroom is a representation room. Each foreman has his own desk with a locked lid and drawer and each also has a key to the guild chest. All four foremen had to be present in order to open the chest. In this chest the guild kept the guild's money and important documents like the Charter of Rules.

The foremen would discuss with their clients what ships were expected and where the cargo was going to be delivered. The price was determined by the distance between the ship and the destination for the cargo, and also by the number of floors the cargo had to be carried up.

The guildroom is now looking the way it was at the beginning of the 20th century. In the room next to the guildroom, now the restaurant, there were the drying racks where the bags were dried after washing in the canal in front of the guildhouse. The third floor was a workshop for timber repairs. And the fourth floor is the attic with a ladder leading to the small bell tower.

All the ladders are original. A ladder as it was used by the guild had narrow steps that were close together. This was in order to let the men take small steps and not lose their balance while carrying 70 kilogram bags of grain on their shoulders.

Photo: In 1912 the guildmembers unloaded a ship at the Noordves, close to the Spoelingbrug. The man standing in front of the mast is Coenraad Winkelman and all the way to the left is Ms. Richter.



Desk from about 1725

Pine and pitspine, painted to resemble mahogany, brass hinges and locks.

This piece of furniture has four desks and has been in the guildroom since 1725. Each foreman has his own desk with lock and key. Until 1938, all the calculations and bookkeeping were done here.

In the desk: Guild Charter.

Guild Charter and Charter of Rules

The guild Charter, after 1800 renamed Charter of Rules, stipulates all aspects of the work - the training, the financial relationships between the guild, her members, the clients and the city administration. It states what minimum quantities of cargo are mandatory in order to let the guild work and at what prices. The guild recieved a fixed amount of money per bag, depending on distance to destination and number of floors.

In cases of sickness or death, the guild paid the widow or widower from its own funds, called "de busse". These funds were fed by a certain percentage of the income from the work. The rest of the money was divided among the men who had done the job, depending on what task they had. A guild member knew that the costs of his or his wife's burial would be taken care of by the guild. The supporting of the guildmembers began in 1594. The charter also stipulates the social rules among the members. They were not allowed to swear, curse, gossip, smoke on the job or be drunk. In case of violating these rules, there were fines or a member could even be excluded from work for a few days or longer. Finally the charter gave directions on how to deal with conflicts and arguments between the guild members.



Money chest

During the 18th century the guild kept the money in a guild chest with four different locks. Each foreman has his own key. The chest could be opened and locked only when all four men were present.

A chest like this is no luxury. In the "golden days" of the guild there was eight thousand guilders in the chest. For extra security there is the reinforced door and bars on the window above the door.

The present money box is a simpler version of the original, but as an extra security it is securely bolted to the wall.



Wall decoration Guild Room

1. Writing board around 1770

Material: wood

The names of the guild members were written on one side, the number of carried bags were written on the other side.

2. Poem 1808

Maker: Abraham van der Hoeve

Material: paint on wood with oil, behind glass.

Poem about life and death.

3. Mourning board 1800 material: wood with glass

The name of a recently deceased guildmember was written on a piece of paper and displayed behind the glass.

4. Paperholder 1900 material: iron

In this document holder are kept documents. On the holders are the days of the week.

5. Guildhouse 1850

Maker: M. van de Burgh Oilpaint on panel

On the outside of the guildhouse, some kind of map is visible.

On the right, the guild members are addressed by the foreman.

6. Portrait of an unknown man 1885

Photographer unknown

Material: photo (copy) in a wooden frame with glass.

Most likely a portrait of a guild member.

7. Guildhouse 1874 material: Oil on panel.

Maker: M. van de Burgh (signed b.r.)

Guildmembers in front of the guildhouse

8. Small cabinet with mourning shield of the carriers guild.

Small cabinet dates from 1860, Wood, glass and velvet

Shield dates from 1818, copper and silver.

Cabinet for storing and displaying the mourning shield.

Guildmembers were by tradition buried by their guild brothers. During the funeral procession the coffin is covered with a black drapery and the porter carries the shield on his chest.

In the middle of the shield a guild member is unloading a ship. To the right are two houses, on the left stands a woman with a censer, on the right is the Grim Reaper, and on top the coat of arms of Schiedam.

9. Tribute to A. Visser 1877

Maker: M. van de Burgh (signed bottom right)

Material: Paper (copy) in wooden frame with glass.

This is a tribute to commemorate the 25 year anniversary of A. Visser as a commissioner on May 2, 1877, with the names of all the foremen and guildmembers.

10. Banner of the Guild of Saint Antony.

Material: Velvet, cotton, goldthread.

Replica of the original dating from 1900. Original in collection SMS.

Photo: Retired foreman Jan van Thienen in the no longer in use guildroom in 1952.

The bronze statue of Saint Antony



Until about 1650 the guildmembers carried just about everything. Most goods needed for fishing industry - beer, herring, tar, wood, chalk, salt, hemp. Later, goods like grain and peat became needed for the jenever industry. In later days, peat was replaced by coal.

In the guild charter, later named the guild letter, are the standardized prices for carrying each cargo. The guild letter includes the name of the good, the distance and the floor as determining factors for the price. Goods being delivered nearby the ship and on the second floor was cheap. Goods travelling far away and on a high floor was expensive.

Saint Antony is the patron saint of the guild. Until the reformation, the guild had its own chapel in the church of Saint John the Baptist. This was destroyed in the year 1572.