

# The Veron 30<sup>th</sup> Dutch National Rally

## March 2005 Rally Report

By John Ray G8DZH

To start the Rally season off with a foreign trip seemed a good way to get rid of the winter blues, and look forward to warmer weather and more daylight. Previous jaunts have taken the 'touring party' of myself, Colchester (CRA) club members Brian G0GGM and Colin G0LIN as well as Andy G6ULX from Coventry off to various EU countries over recent years. Look at the back issues of the newsletter for reports from France, Italy, and Germany. Now it was the VERON 30<sup>th</sup> Dutch National Rally at The Autotron, Rosmalen, Netherlands and held on March 19<sup>th</sup> this year.

Andy G6ULX had visited the Rally the previous year, and took on the role of Organiser and Party Leader. A very early morning flight, only 40 minutes in the air, from London Stansted to Eindhoven on 18<sup>th</sup> March had us standing outside of the airport at 08:45 local time (07:45 UK). Then a local bus to the station, and a train to 's-Hertogenbosch (15 minutes). Andy had booked us in at the Hotel Terminus, only a two-minute walk from the station.



The hotel was designated as a 'folk pub' famed for its range of beers, over 150 different Belgian ones alone, and 300 Malt whiskies. The bar was full of railway memorabilia. We found the rooms a bit small but mine was OK. Colin G0LIN fared less well – he didn't have hot water – but it was clean and the bed was comfortable. Getting to the rooms was interesting the stairs were steep! No oxygen at the third landing but it kept you fit (my concern was negotiating the stairs after a session of Belgian Beer tasting – but I managed without mishap)

The remainder of the day was spent in bars, drinking coffee and having a look at the town. Also, sampling Dutch cuisine and more Belgian draft beers.

Saturday morning – rally day – and after an acceptable breakfast (cold buffet but plenty of choice of breads, ham and cheese) we set off for Rosmalen and the rally.

The Dutch have "Treintaxi" – a pre-paid ticket that entitles you to book a taxi at your destination for a distance of up to 3km radius of the station. Thus we could buy a return ticket to Rosmalen combined with a taxi trip to the show for €11.20 (about £8) return all in.



On arriving at the Autotron at about 10.30 – a transport museum, we paid the €6 admission fee to the rally, got a free pen, and took time to grasp the sheer size of the event. A cup of coffee upstairs helped us to acclimatise.



We later learnt, from show organiser Eric PA2ELS, that there were over 330 stallholders were present, and there was a waiting list. Over 4,500 people were expected for the single day event. Certainly over 3,000 pens were given out to commemorate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The large ground floor, all neatly laid out with rows of stands, was overlooked by a broad first floor balcony on all four sides also with stalls. The VERON and DARC Societies had stands; there was a strong German presence, which was to be expected with the border only 25km and easily accessible via the N50 and A50 motorways. The traders I talked to understood English, the Dutch amateurs themselves switching straight into German where appropriate. The UK was represented with Taurus Electronics selling all sorts of goodies.

I was impressed by the variety and quality of the radio bits. Not the heaped stalls of obsolete PC's we often see at UK rallies! In fact, hardly any complete PC's were to be seen although a wide choice of peripherals. Plenty of PMR and ex-military gear as well.





Also lots of test gear and 'scopes aplenty, a few seen working for only €35 each. You could set up a complete test lab if you had the vehicle to take everything away. Similarly, a wide range of components and tools were on sale.



I bought two unlocked GSM phones from a German dealer – one to replace my aging Nokia 7110E and another cheap one (€19 or £13) dedicated to my Czech SIM card for my OK business trips. I tested the phones with a couple of SMS's to Dave G3VGR.

We left at closing time – 4pm tired but happy – it was one of the best Rallies I have been to for some time. That evening Andy did a great job of getting us to sample as many different Belgian beers as possible. Most were the double or triple strength ones as well. I think my favourite has to be the Westmalle Triple (9.8%) but highly recommended also Brugge Triple & Straffe Hendrick.

On Sunday, the return flight was in the evening. We took our time and looked around Eindhoven for a few hours, including lunch.



### **Where did I leave my bike?!**

Soon it was time to head for the airport and the flight home. We landed at Stansted before 7pm, by 8pm I was in the Robin Hood sampling English Ale again – my first reaction was of drinking something very weak and watery. Belgian beer does that to you.

All in all, a good Rally and friendly company. I would certainly consider a re-visit another year.

73

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