

In Memory of . . .

Bram Vader 1937-2010

One of continental Europe's best known and beloved organ owners, Bram Vader of Kolhorn, Holland, passed away on March 25, 2010. He was 73 years old. He is survived by his wife, Marian, two sons, Ruud (Adinda) and Edwin (Louise), and four grandsons. More than 600 people gathered to pay their respects at his services on April 1, 2010. It was a triple special day, for in addition to being April Fools Day and Bram's memorial, it also marked the happy day when Bram and Marian had been married 48 years earlier. The assembly was enlivened by his favorite organ, a Model 33 Ruth, playing the Gustav Bruder potpourri arrangements that he enjoyed.

Born in 1937, Bram was a third generation showman. He was introduced to the fairs by his parents, who traveled their merry-go-round (Wellenflieger) by boat and later by truck. The variety of organs that served with the device introduced a young Bram to their alluring music. There was a little Gasparini and then the *Papegaai*, a 1913 DeVreese organ that's owned by the Vaders today.

Following their marriage, Bram and Marian went out on their own with a Ferris wheel. He advanced with a wheel of his own design and construction that could be dismantled, moved and erected again at another fair in less than twelve hours, then a remarkable achievement. It is still making the rounds of Dutch fairs today. A roller coaster-like device followed, then a penny arcade and Bram later started to organize his own fairs and to hire out portable generator sets.

His success as a showman enabled Bram to acquire his first large organ in 1975. He

favoured the German makes, buying a 76-keyless Gebrüder Richter. Sometimes it was placed beside the Vader wheel. Dutch organ enthusiasts were thrilled when Bram towed the magnificent Model 38 "Swedish" Ruth back from Switzerland in 1999. Son Ruud later acquired his own Model 38, possibly making them the only father-son combination owners of such instruments in history. Bram's favorite organ was his Model 33 Ruth, secured in 2007, which enabled him to relive many old memories. There was also an Arburo for supplying happy dance music.



Bram Vader enjoying his Model 33 Ruth.

Sharing his treasured musical instruments was important to Bram. His fine Model 38 Ruth appeared at several organ festivals and twice was a centerpiece attraction at the international Orgelfest in Waldkirch, Germany, where



The Model 38 Ruth, proudly presented by Bram Vader. Bumbling Bruder members appreciated this organ on two different tours.

it had been built. The first Sunday of each year provided an opportunity for Bram to stage a fair organ day at Winkel, Holland, where hundreds of enthusiasts gathered to mark the New Year in a musical way. In October 2009, Bram took his Model 33 Ruth and son Ruud traveled with his Model 38 Ruth to participate in the Oktoberfest event staged by Paul Kirrage at Mizens Railway, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, England. The smaller organ rode a flat bed truck that towed the larger unit. A devotee of book music, Bram personally punched hundreds of meters of music to build the large libraries that accompanied each of his organs. His vans were always accessible to anyone with an interest to learn more about the organs housed therein, and he freely shared his extensive knowledge of fairground heritage.

Through the years Bram gained considerable knowledge about old trucks, tractors and cars. The first time that I saw Bram he was moving briskly along in an old tractor through a pastoral Waldkirch street. All of a sudden, he disengaged the steering wheel and shaft and handed the apparatus to an astounded friend who was riding with him! There was never any real danger, but it told me right away that here was a man who loved life, somewhat of a larger than life figure and someone who knew how to share his enjoyment.

The Vader family will continue Bram's tradition of furnishing excellent organ music at public events in Europe. His Model 38 is already scheduled to appear at an event in September.

Those who were privileged to meet him, visit with and know Bram Vader, will miss this fine gentleman. Our condolences and sympathies are extended to his family.

Fred Dahlinger