

Bensdorp & Blooker

Article by Fred Horn

Bensdorp History

The chocolate firm Bensdorp was founded in Amsterdam in 1840 by Gerardus Bernardus Bensdorp. He first began work in his father's bakery concentrating on chocolate and sugar products but then he started his own company.

He wed in August 1843 and had two sons François Theodore (b. 1847) and Louis François (b. 1852) who later worked for the company.

In 1849 Gerardus erected a new factory at the Amstel in Amsterdam which he passed over to his eldest son François in 1870; a facility that was now named: Stoomfabriek van en Handel in Chocolaad en Suikerwerken (Steam Factory and Trade in Chocolate and Sugar Products).

Gerardus died on October 5, 1882. In 1871 his youngest son Louis joined the firm and upon meeting G. C. van Veen, owner of some land in Bussum, the two brothers elected to purchase the site. In 1884 they began construction of a facility there:



Bussum, Chocoladefabriek „Bensdorp“

In 1899 the name of the company changed to NV "Hollandse Cacao en Chocoladefabriek v/h Bensdorp & Co.," which in 1933 again changed to Bensdorp N.V.. In 1897 and 1906 the factory in Bussum was enlarged and in 1926 the firm closed its facility in Amsterdam. In 1901 and 1907 Bensdorp expanded over the Dutch border by opening mills in Kleve, Germany; Vienna, Austria; CapeTown (1949); Genoa; and selling-offices in Boston (1949) and London (1957).

In 1973 Unilever bought Bensdorp and later sold it in 1985 to the Swiss/Belgian Barry Callabout which in 2000 moved the production to France, after closing the factory in Bussum.

In 1974 Louis Bensdorp Jr., the 5th generation left, ending the involvement of the family with the company.

The expansion of the firm was also due to the shops they owned in Holland. About



103 of these were spread all over the country. At left is an example of how they advertised these shops on the outside of the stores.

At the end of the 1950s the firm employed some 800 workers, more than 300 in Bussum, 300 in Vienna, 125 in Kleve, and 50 in CapeTown.

In 1962 they took over the firm Blooker, closed their factory in

Amsterdam and moved the production over to the Bussum plant.

The Games

During my whole life of collecting games I have only found one Bensdorp game, "EEN SPANNENDE BOKSWEDSTRIJD" (An exciting boxing game). From other collectors and from the internet I did find a few more, so here I can present pictures of

these games. Two series of 6 games were published, probably in the late 1950s to early 1960s under the name: "Slecht Weer" Spelletjes (Bad Weather Games). Presented below are the numbers 4, 5, and 6 from Series 1 and a picture of number 12 of the second Series 2. The rules for number 6 are lost, so we do not know how to play that game. Also a series of 6 children's games for "Safe Traffic" (Veilig Verkeer) were published—I could find one of these 6 with the text:

This series consists of 6 different useful Safe Traffic items.

Dated in 1950 by 'Zwiggelaar Auctions' another amusement for children was sold: Schilderijtjes Maken—not a game but made up of nice components.

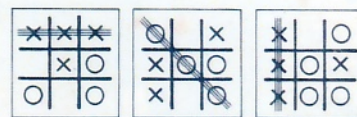
It seems a good idea to also include the only Blooker game we know of, because that firm was taken over by Bensdorp in 1962!



Boter, kaas en eieren.....

Knip het speelbord, en alle rondjes en kruisjes apart uit.

Speler 1 mag nu een rondje in een van de vakjes leggen, speler 2 daarna een kruisje in een ander vakje, en zo voorts. Wie nu het eerst een rijtje heeft volgemaakt, heeft gewonnen. Kijk maar even naar het voorbeeldje.



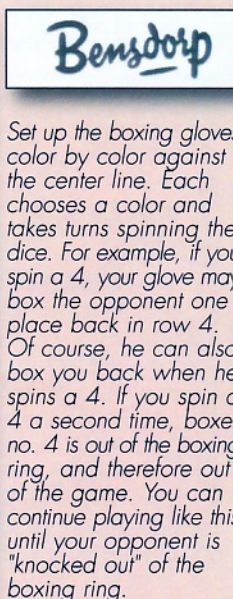
This is the 'normal' Tic-Tac-Toe game for 2 players.



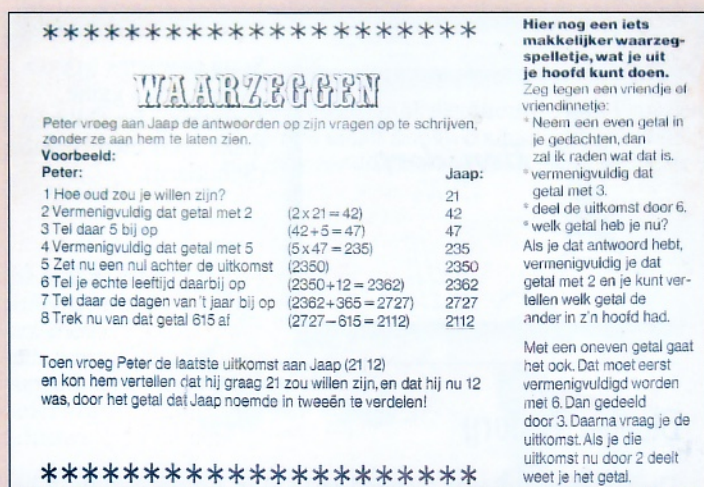
One can assume the mouse starts on the indicated spot and the three cats begin at the other side. The cats' goal is to surround the mouse so it cannot move. The mouse must break through.



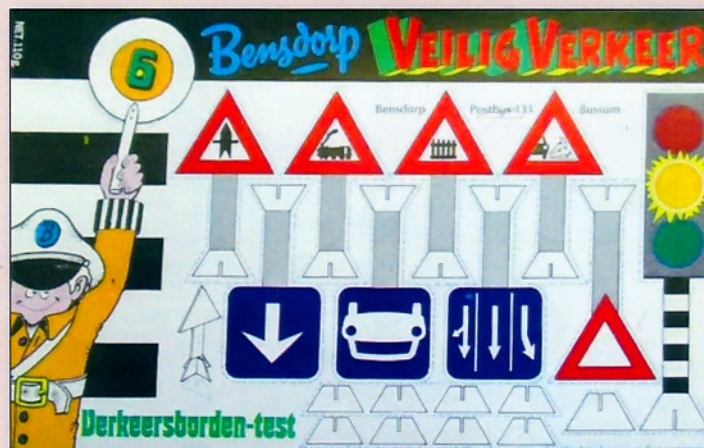
Twirling the spinner top will result in its resting on a number. The player moves his glove forward, pushing his opponent's glove backwards. When all your gloves are pushed off the boxing ring you lose the game.



Bensdorp "Bad Weather Game": WAARZEGGEN (Fortune Telling)
A game for the little magician. Reveal your audience's secret number!



Say to a friend: Think of an even number in your mind, and I'll guess what that is. Multiply that number by 3. Divide the result by 6. What number do you have now? When you have that answer, multiply that number by 2 and you can tell which number the other person had in his head. It also works with an odd number. That must first be multiplied by 6. Then divided by 3. Then you ask for the outcome. If you divide that result by 2, you know the selected number.



VEILIG VERKEER is a children's game from a series of 6, as said before. Nothing more could be found about the others or the purpose (instructing children?) of these cards. >>

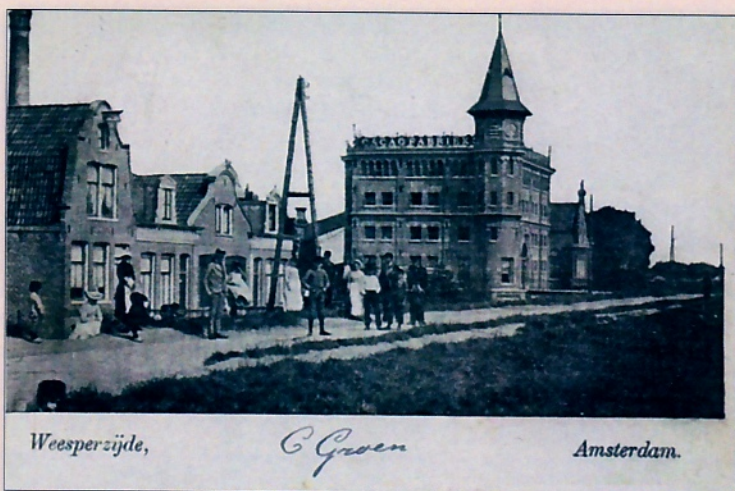


SCHILDERIJTJES MAKEN.—
though not a game,
something for children to
make their own “paintings”
(Schilderij).



Blooker History

The Blooker firm was founded in 1824 in Amsterdam by Johannes (died 1858) and Cornelis (died 1836) Blooker. They began their chocolate operation in 1813, first based on the snuff-tobacco factory of their father Jurriaan. Changing over to chocolate, the Blooker brothers started their “Stoom-Chocolaadfabriek” (Steam-Chocolate factory) in 1813 making it a concern in 1824. After a big fire in 1886 the company moved to a location at the Omval/Weesperzijde 194 in Amsterdam:



Weesperzijde,

C. Groen

Amsterdam.

Weesperzijde, Amsterdam postcard

Already in 1905 the production had been, for the largest part, mechanized like the cocoa production of the two concurrent firms, Ringers and van Houten.

During its existence the company used several names like: Zeeuwse chocolade-fabriek and in a later period for 43 years the name Internationale Cacao-Fabrieken, and in the end Blooker's Cacao en Chocolade Fabrieken.

As said before in 1962 Bensdorp closed the firm and moved the production over to Bussum.

Advertising

These flags had been printed as Blooker advertisements on the GROOT EIFFELTOREN SPEL published by J. Vlieger. (AGPI Quarterly, Winter 2022, Vol. 6 No. 4, p. 18).

This was, with the 1935 published game, the only involvement with games from this firm.



A lot of other Blooker advertisements exist, published during their long life as a firm; like this one from World War I.



Half elf Blookertijd (Half past ten Blooker time) was the slogan used in later years after World War I.

Here is the only game Blooker ever published. It is a kind of a "SNAKES & LADDERS" game using Trappen (Stairs) and Valkokers (traps-falling cylinders) as snakes and ladders.



The game was presented in this envelope. What exactly the term "Daalders" means, I do not know. Nowhere in my research this term popped up. It may be a price, because a 'Daalder' in Dutch means 1,5 Guilder.

Editor: Google translator shows 'Daalders' to mean 'dollars.'

Taken from the Frisian language—

a closely related group of West Germanic languages, spoken by about 400,000 Frisian people, who live on the southern fringes of the North Sea in the Netherlands and Germany.



In the collection of the late Eric van Waarden these two small books could also be found: *Het Blooker-Boekje* and *Half Elf is Blookert'jd*



There stands the robber chief,
After emptying his first cup
And says - his hand on the hilt -
"Sir commander, that tasted good!"

"Well, we have robbed a lot,
But every man of us promises
Never to rob again, but from now on
To go fishing on the sea!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" everyone shouts...
They stayed together all night
And partied on, yes even until
The hour, that one could go Blook'ren!

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THE RINGERS GAMES

Article by Fred Horn

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, a chocolate firm out of Holland published a considerable amount of "playthings for children" that were offered together within boxes of luxury chocolate and bonbons. This firm, Ringers, made these luxurious chocolate products for the 'well-to-do' and their marketing in those days focused on these additions as a real extra in the selling of their products.

Awhile back, the Dutch collector Werner den Hartigh posted two images of leaflets on the former website HONGS, now part of the *spellenlab.be* website, but unfortunately they were put online in very low resolution. So not all the names on the boxes can be read properly!



On this (colored) leaflet below, in the middle, one says: *DE SCHATKAMERS ZIJN GEOPEND* (The treasure rooms are open) and with the following announcement: "That is how the children feel in these magic December days. Here you see a marvelous collection of children's games out of our treasure rooms. Why would you not surprise your sweetheart with one of our games? What a diversity they offer, how original distinguished in their funny outlook. And then the ideal combination of game and sweets and both from Ringers."



As far as we can determine as well as some guessing of the names, the following "playthings" are pictured from left to right and from top to bottom.

Upper (first) row of the colored leaflet:
DIEREN-KIENSPEL (Animal lotto game); Ringers WERPSPEL (Tossing game); *Unknown?* under it LEGKAART (Puzzle); OH! DOL! MET WOOL! (Oh! Cool! with wool!) under *Unknown?*; DAMSPEL; ROODKAPJE (Little Red Riding Hood); KLEURPOTLODEN (Color pencils); *Unknown?*; POPPENSPEL (Puppet game)

Second row:

WIE PLAKT ER MEE? (Who's Sticking With Me?); AQUARIUM CHOCOLADE VISSSEN (Chocolate fishes); DOMINO (maybe originally a letter game due to dwarfs with the alphabet); *little brown box for ...?*; Next three *Unknown?*; under last one? CHOCO-CLOWN?; next? maybe a puzzle?; OP EN NEER-SPEL (Up and Down game)

Third row:

Unknown?; LEGSPEL (Puzzle); *Unknown?*; Two small panoramas; TWAALF RAKKERS AUTOMAAT (12 rascals automatic); KLEURENDOMINO (Color Dominoes); *Unknown?*

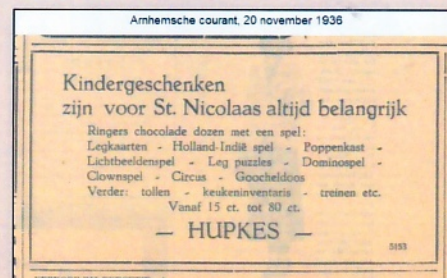
Fourth row:

IK KAN GOOCHELEN (I can do magic); ABC DAAR LEER JE LEZEN MEE (ABC That's how you learn to read); *Unknown?* (On lid a classroom picture); OPZETSPEL (Setup/Raise game)

Fifth row:

MOZAIK-LEGSPEL (Mosaic puzzle); Letter puzzle; maybe a Puppet Theater?; *Unknown?*; Clock; BLOKKENDOOS (Box with blocks); TRANSPARANTEN (Transparencies); ONS DORPSPLEIN (Our Town Square); CIRCUS CHOCALINA

Only one advertisement was found by Rob van Linden about the Ringers games and it was published:

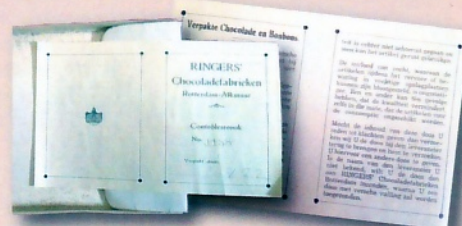


Children's gifts are always important for Santa Claus

Ringers chocolate boxes with a game: Puzzles - Holland-Indië game - Puppet théâtre Light image game - Lay down puzzles - Domino Clown game - Circus - Magic tricks box

All of these games are also pictured in the leaflets shown.

In the Ringers KLEUREN-DOMINO box the following small papers were found. The first one with No. J 188 gives the control ticket, the other, on the reverse side, gives information about how to handle chocolate in warm and moist conditions.



Only in one box (for the Ringers' DIEREN KIENSPEL) a sheet with the rules for that particular game was found:



Ringers' DIEREN-KIENSPEL rules: see opposite page

HISTORY OF THE FIRM RINGERS

In 1905 Hendrik Ringers founded a company for fabrication of chocolate. He had learned his trade in Switzerland and with help of his family he was able to start in Alkmaar (his hometown) a small factory at the Virnebeek, which was built by his father (who owned a construction firm).



In 1911 this location became too small and the firm moved to Rotterdam at Baan 60 buying the factory of the chocolate operation PAX of 3000 m2.



In the meantime Hendriks' brother Theo had become manager and both brothers can be seen in a photo in 1911:



On another leaflet, written in the middle, EEN KEURCOLLECTIE (A marvelous collection) translates the following announcement:

"For the children there is choice of 60 beautiful children's games. Games and sweets together! And what kind of sweets . . . they love it."

Again, as far as we can understand by looking at the pictures the following "playthings" and games are pictured from top to bottom and from left to right.

First column:

DIEREN-KLEURSPEL (Animal coloring game); OP EN NEER-SPEL (Up and Down game); SCHAAKSPEL (Chess game); WIE PLAKT ER MEE? (Who's Sticking With Me?); IK KAN GOOCHELEN (I can do magic)

Second column:

Unknown?: DETECTIVESPEL (Detective game); Unknown?: BOEKENLEGGERS (Bookmarks); DOMINO (Dominoes); POPPENKAST (Puppet theatre) -left- ; BLOKKENDOOS (Block box)

Third column:

IN DE ROOS (In the bull's eye); Unknown?: -both left-; KLEIN DUIMPJE (Tom Thumb) and next to it a windmill; Unknown?: Unknown?: -at the right- ABC DAAR LEER JE LEZEN VAN (ABC That's how you learn to read); HET AVONTUUR VAN DICKY KRULSTAART (The Adventure of Dicky Curly Tail)

Fourth column:

KLEURKRIJTJES (Color crayons); FIREBRIGADE CAR; Train: DAMSPSEL (European Checkers)

Fifth column:

Unknown?: Kegelspel (Skittles game); Unknown?: Unknown?: REKENSPEL (Math game); LEGPUZZLE (Jigsaw puzzle)

Sixth column:

Unknown?: MOZAIËK PLAKSPSEL (Mosaic paste/glue game); KLEUREN-DOMINO (Color dominoes); Unknown?: Unknown?: TRANSPARANTEN (Transparencies) -left- ; HOLLAND-INDIE -right-

Seventh column:

POPPENSPEL (Puppet game); Ringers WERPSPSEL (Tossing game); ROODKAPJE (Little Red Riding Hood); Unknown?: OPZETSPSEL (Set up game)

Game Rules for Ringers' DIEREN-KIENSPEL (Animal Lotto game)

The game can be played with 2, 3, or 4 persons. The cards are shuffled and dealt out to the participants. When there are 3 players one player gets 2 cards. One of the players gets the task to announce the small cards, which have also been well shuffled. The small cards are called by the pictured animals or the number. The player on who's card the called number exists gets this small card and covers the same picture on his card. Whoever completes their card first is the winner and gets a chocolate prize. Are all prizes distributed and consumed? ...then in every good chocolate shop there is still a large assortment.

Ringers' Chocolate Games for Children Available

The Ringers operation became one of the foremost firms in Europe. Also, next to chocolate and bonbons, they produced cocoa butter and cocoa powder, and fashioned things out of sugar. And for the large Jewish community in Holland they provided 'kosher' chocolate.

Because of the fact that no further expansion was possible in Rotterdam Hendriks' father bought a meadow near the Noord-Hollands-Kanaal in Alkmaar and started building an annex for his sons' factory. Between 1920 and 1938 this complex expanded employing about 800 workers. Unfortunately in May 1940 the building in Rotterdam was bombed by the Germans and never rebuilt.

In the 1950s and 1960s business was booming at the factory but at the end of that period cheaper offerings from other chocolate firms took over, and when the market for expensive chocolate collapsed in the 1970s the firm shut down in 1972.

Afterwards, the building in Alkmaar was repurposed into a large store and was destined for demolition in the early 2000. But in Alkmaar after years of "letting it go" it was placed on the list of historical buildings and is at present a housing complex with multiple shops and cafés on the groundfloor. The building itself is now part of the Historical Industrial Heritage.



Converted factory building. Now a housing complex with shops.

In 2022 a few Ringers family members started up a small business to revive the name, and to make again, in small amounts, chocolate products.



Ringers family members in front of the factory building in Alkmaar.

Remarks:

It is very difficult to find information about the games Ringers produced in the 1930s. All that is written down centers around the history of the firm or about the books they (like the firm Verkade) published before World War II.

I am very happy that a collector (Werner den Hartigh, now deceased) had posted both leaflets with pictures of the published games on the former HONGS website (now available on spellenlab.be), otherwise we would not have had any idea at all about these games.

I think the reason that so few examples remain is because the games originally came in boxes for chocolate which, when the bonbons were consumed, were just thrown away. Also a lot of these were designed for children to cut things out of.

I found only two games for my collection (HEEN EN WEER – OP EN NEER – SPEL (Back and Forth, Up and Down game) and HOLLAND-INDIË, a goose game). As you can see below a few others are also in the hands of collectors and Rob van Linden found some on auction sites.

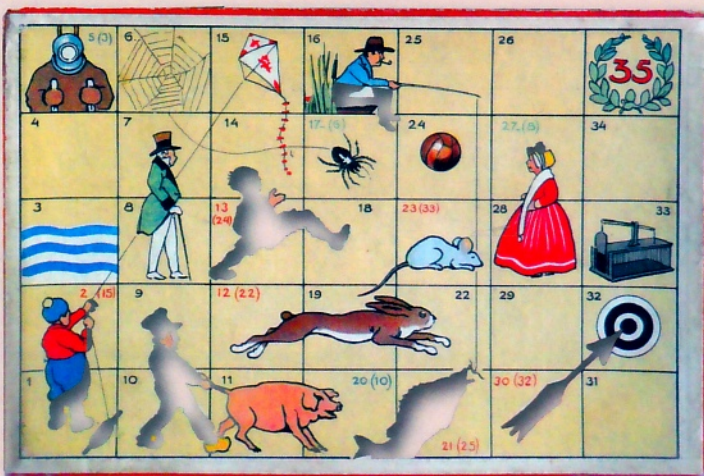
Published games by the SpellenLab from Bruges on their website:



HEEN EN WEER-OP EN NEER-SPEL (Back and Forth-Up and Down Game)

HEEN EN WEER-OP EN NEER-SPEL

The number, visible on the lower right edge of the lid, is S. 1182. The game ends with the number 35 inside a laurel wreath, which suggests a jubilee. Maybe this was the firm's 35th anniversary celebration in 1940. Also the wonderful box and its better execution than the other games bring up this idea.



I found this one when visiting a collectors' fair in the late 1980s. In a booth I spotted some images of dice atop a small box, so that was of interest. The lady behind all the glitter of cheap rings and bracelets, etc. answered my question if I could buy that box by simply saying: "No." When I asked her why, she responded "Where then should I put all the rings, etc. that came out of this box?"

But luckily after some reshuffling I was presented the box and tucked it in my bag. At home I discovered a wonderful board on the reverse side. It is obviously a SNAKES AND LADDERS variant but no rules accompanied the game. Also the two dice on the lid were misleading because the game starts at '1' and the die with the '6' is not properly drawn because the '1' should not be visible (*opposite the 6 on a die is the number 1—the sum of opposite numbers is always 7*). Also it was a little strange that the drawing on the lid wasn't exactly like the drawing on the board (fisherman, sea, flyer, lady's hat, etc. are different and there is no spider or footballer seen on the lid!).

The other one out of my collection is the HOLLAND-INDIË door de lucht, (HOLLAND-INDIË through the air) a goose game variant. This is the only game from Ringers that is not rare. You can find it in a lot of collections in Holland. The game is printed by the firm Senfelder from Amsterdam.



HOLLAND-INDIË door de lucht, (HOLLAND-INDIË through the air)

RINGERS DOMINO

On the bottom of the box of the first item one finds the number J326.

What it means is unknown. Possibly a number for the game. On the first image the name Rotterdam appears on the banner and on the other Chocolate. Also all the dwarfs have letters suggesting a letter type game but in the box, as seen, normal dominos are packed.



RINGERS DOMINO



On the Rotterdam lid no letters appear on the sides, but on the other version, many are shown.

RINGERS' KLEUREN-DOMINO (Color Domino)



RINGERS' KLEUREN-DOMINO CHOCOLADE

Inside this game box the small papers (*mentioned earlier in the Introduction*) were found. Possibly this box was filled with small chocolate rectangles wrapped in paper with domino images, or it was filled with the small boxes as used in the next game.

RINGERS DOMINO'S



RINGERS DOMINO'S



Another box with a domino game was also published. The dominos were small boxes filled with sweets, probably chocolate, seen here at left.



The number for this game is not visible anymore due to the lid's edge being damaged. The image (at left) probably indicates the initials—V S or S V—of the artist who made the drawing.

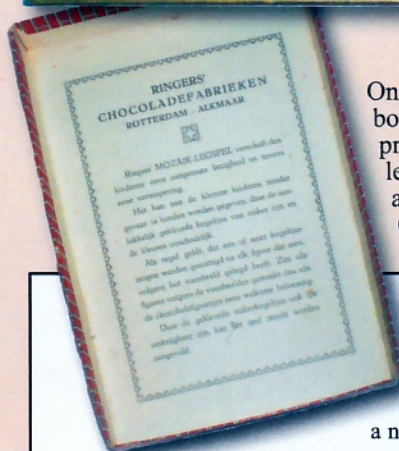
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RINGERS MOZAIK-LEGSPEL (Mosaic Puzzle game)



RINGERS MOZAIK-LEGSPEL

On the bottom right corner of the box's lid the number No 935 is printed, as well as on the lower left edge the same initials appear as the one of the former game. On the inside of the lid is written:



Ringers' Chocoladefabrieken Rotterdam - Alkmaar

RINGERS' MOSAIC-PUZZLE GAME gives the children a nice activity and also a snack.

It can be given to the smallest child without danger because the attractive colored balls are made of sugar and the colors harmless.

As a rule one or more balls may be consumed after each figure is laid down according to the example. When all figures are made to conform to these examples the chocolate figures are then a welcome reward.

Because of the fact the sugar balls can be separately bought the game can always be replenished.

RINGERS' CHOCOLADE KEGELSPEL



No further information, only these pictures of the lid and one of the sides. The "Alle Negen!" printed at the top right refers to the 9 skittles used in the game.



RINGERS LEG PUZZLE



RINGERS LEG PUZZLE

Unfortunately the image was posted online at a low resolution making it difficult to read the text on the lower left edge of the box. The puzzle itself presents, when cut into rectangles and positioned correctly, a picture of the cheese market in Alkmaar.

The images are taken from 'Zwiggelaar Auctions' which also provided the images for the game ROODKAPJE (opposite page).



Completing this 40 piece puzzle reveals a local cheese market in Alkmaar.

RINGERS' DIEREN-KIENSPEL (Animal Lotto game)



RINGERS DIEREN-KIENSPEL

In the Introduction the rules for this game were given. In the box photo below it's also nice to see on the back side of the small cards pictures of all kinds of bonbons which were offered to the customers of these Ringers products. Maybe these animals (at right) were offered in this box.



RINGERS WERPSPEL (Tossing game)



This is the first of the surviving Ringers games that did not come in a box—but displayed more of a map. Probably these maps were also sold separately, or in different boxes with all sorts of sweets.



RINGERS WERPSPEL—Ring toss type game!

RINGERS ROODKAPJE (Little Red Riding Hood)

All parts can be assembled to stand upright by making a triangle with the white flap. Maybe these sections could be used to make a "see-through box." I made these in my youth. We took a shoebox, cut a large rectangle out of the lid and covered it with a kind of transparent paper. Then we cut out all kind of images and glued them onto the floor of the box.



You produced a nice picture for the background, and after making three holes—two for the eyes and one for the nose—with the small size of the box you got to go around to show it all for 10 cents.

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RINGERS POPPENSPEL (Puppet Theater)



In this area (where the red arrow is pointing) there is a slot in which the tabs of the puppets can be inserted and handled from the back.

As can be seen at right, Jan Klaassen and Katrijn have longer tabs for handling them. The other three figures do not have these longer strips, so it is unclear how one would use them in the play.

N.B.

I am greatly indebted to Werner den Hartigh, Rob van Linden, and all of the other collectors for the images used in this article.

— Fred Horn



This looks similar to the packaging used for the LEG PUZZLE (see page 24). The number on the box is S. 1220 and underneath is written: The puppets Jan Klaassen and Katrijn. In the Netherlands Jan Klaassen and Katrijn are well-known figures for this kind of theater for children's play!

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Katrijn and Jan Klaasdsen

The Major

The Barrister

The Monkey

MORE RINGERS GAMES!

On the preceding pages I had thought that all had been mentioned, but that was inaccurate. a new extension for searching in their database,

known Ringers games in collection. Certain individuals in Bruges made and three new items popped up.

RINGERS POPPENSPEL (Puppet Theater)



This Puppet game gives children the opportunity to make all kinds of puppets with all the different faces, clothes, hats, etc. These Ringers offerings, like the CIRCUS CHOCOLINA (page 28), ROODKAPJE, POPPENSPEL, and TRANSPARANTEN (below) are more 'playthings' than games. But the pictures are wonderful and they do give the reader an idea of all that was published by Ringers in the 1930s.



POPPENSPEL Entertaining and Surprising Ringers



TRANSPARANTEN (Transparencies)

Only this TRANSPARANTEN box survived. The product number is located on the box in the lower right hand corner: S. 1180.



All of these three games were/are part of the collection of Werner den Hartigh, and were at the time posted on the HONGS website by Rob van Linden.

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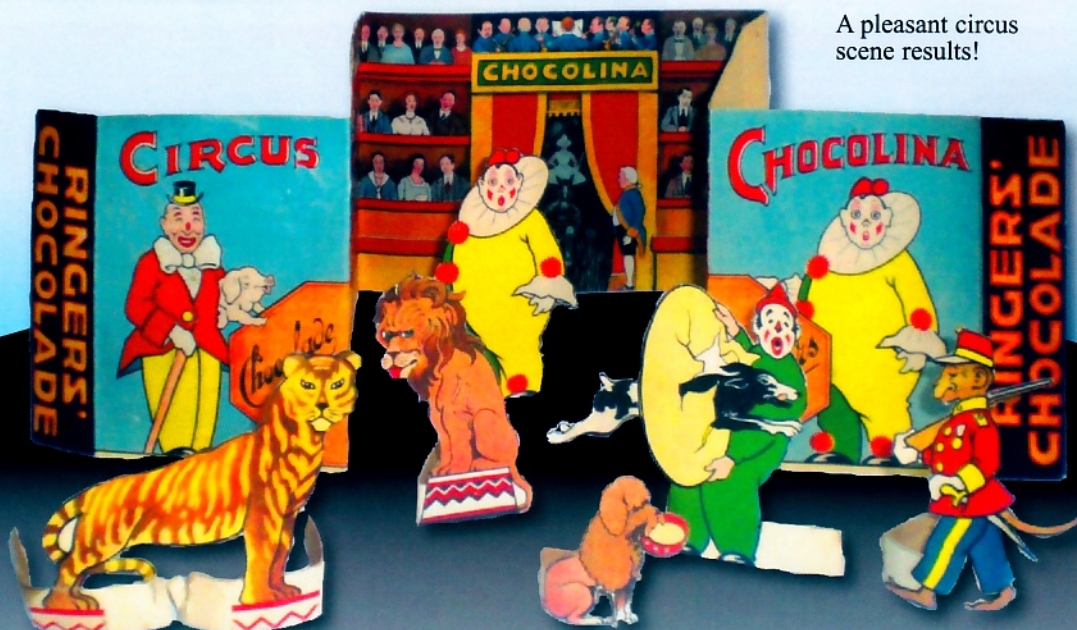
Two sides of the TRANSPARANTEN box



CIRCUS CHCOLINA

CIRCUS CHCOLINA is similar to RINGERS ROODKAPJE—sections are provided to be folded and stood upright. Children then can create a nice circus scene placing their upright circus characters in front of the sections.

A pleasant circus scene results!



The circus figures can be made to stand upright by folding the strip below each character to provide support.

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A couple folds and you have a beautiful circus backdrop!

The “Van Houten” Games

Article by Fred Horn

History

Casparus van Houten was born and raised in the Jordaan, the part of Amsterdam where the working class lived. He had opened a shop for coffee and tea, and later this relocated in 1815 to Leliegracht 22.

His wife, Arnoldina Koster, who had learned to handle chocolate beans for consumption from a lady friend of Groningen, started to burn and grind cacao beans after her husband got permission for the process. The method was the same as the one used by the Aztecs and brought to Europe by the Spanish. Because half of the beans are comprised of fat, by only adding sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla, blocks could be formed from it. The ‘drink’ resulting from these blocks was a “heavy” drink, but nourishing and a natural tonic known in Holland as ‘theobrona’ called after the drug theobromine.

‘Dutching’ the cocoa bean

In the story of the van Houten family it wasn’t Casparus who was credited with the patent (in

Holland *octrooi*) on April 4, 1828, but his son Coenraad Johannes (Coen) who invented the way to separate the powder from the fat—which procedure in the Anglo-Saxon world still is known as ‘dutching the cocoa bean.’ In 1837, Coen was registered in the address book of Amsterdam as: *geoctroieerd fabrikant van poederchocolade* (patented factory-owner of chocolate powder). As boss he purchased a mill in 1840 at the Kostverlorenkade, but in 1842 moved the factory to Leiden. But when the opportunity arose to take over a building with a steam engine in Weesp, east of Amsterdam, the factory relocated there to the end.

At the end of that century, around 1890, van Houten became a global known mark for chocolate. But also the byproduct—cocoa butter—did extremely well and in fact made the van Houten’s rich. But around 1910 others had learned how to make these cocoa products and van Houten’s leading position was gone, though they were still a firm in good standing.

Here is a picture on a postcard of the complex in Weesp:



In 1828, at 58 years old, Casparus van Houten patented a way to separate the fat and the powder from the cocoa bean.

Coen had only one grandchild, Hermine, who married Geert van Mesdag in 1890. They owned 51% of the shares coming from their aunts Anne and Jet. The other part was inherited by the Groningen part of the family. The van Mesdag’s later bought out Douwinus Johannes van Houten’s position and become sole owners.

Up to 1971 the family led the factory in Weesp, but sales of their chocolate started to wane. The public shifted and wanted a Mars or a Bounty chocolate bar. Van Houten’s Americo failed to gain any traction in the market, and the firm lost a lot of money introducing their product into other countries. As a result the family sold all of the company.



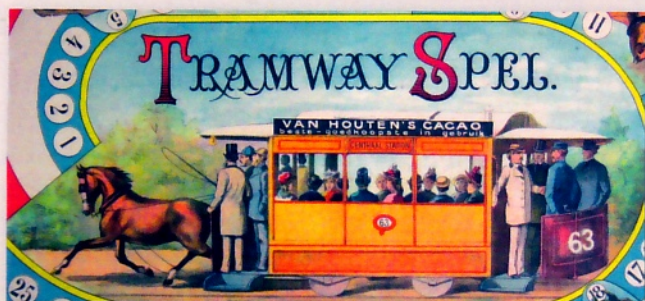
A “Van Houten” publicity sticker and the unwanted firm’s milk bit and Americo bars



The Games

One of the most famous games related to van Houten was “TRAMWAY SPEL.” This game was not published by the company but by the publisher Vlieger out of Amsterdam in the year 1885. In nearly all books on games, in Holland as well as abroad, a picture of this game is in it or at least this game is mentioned. >>

Van Houten was really advertising on the actual horse-drawn streetcars so probably this was the reason for putting it on the picture of the game TRAMWAY SPEL. The game itself was not originally from Vlieger because an earlier version (without the advertisement and another picture) was in 1882 published by Koster. The last number, 63, in the game, shows the tram with the advertisement:



TRAMWAY SPEL ending space number 63 with van Houten's ad.

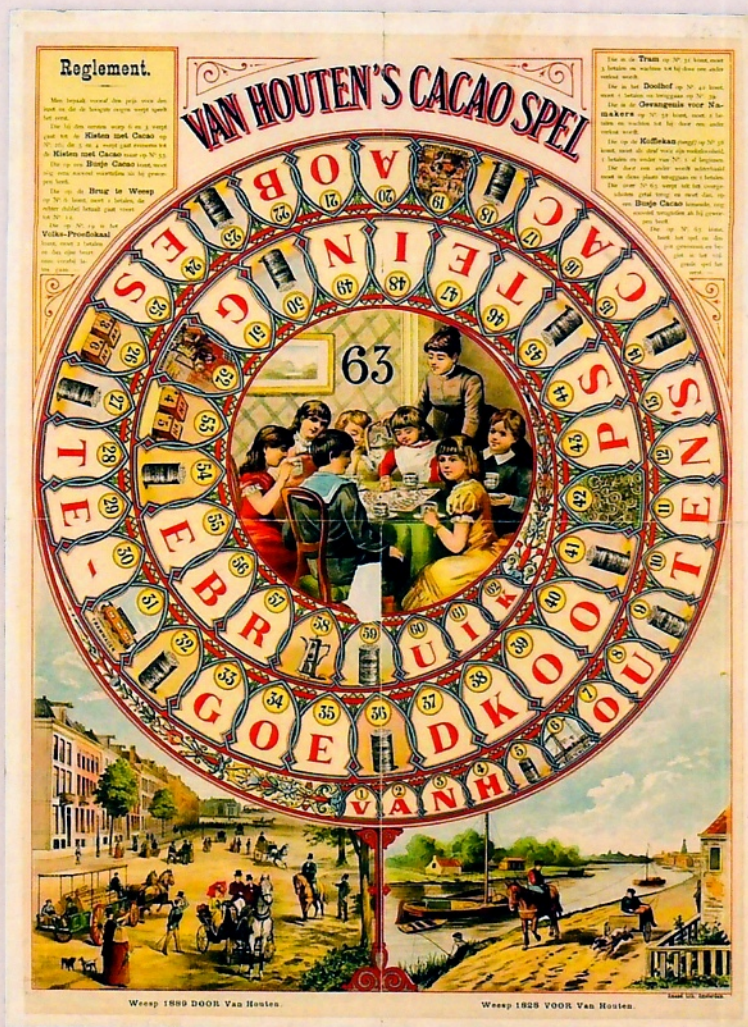


1882 version (different graphic) and without van Houten's ad.

In 1889 van Houten published its own game. This really beautiful printed game (at right) was published amongst the other items the firm produced as gifts for children. One can see the use of the "Droste-effect" here by picturing the game again on the table in the center at number 63.

At the right bottom of the game the lithograph mentions the firm Armand Lith Amsterdam. The printing of VAN HOUTEN'S CACAO SPEL must have been, for sure, done by its own print department of the van Houten company, which was also housed in the complex in Weesp.

Van Houten Cacao Spel



Ik geef Cadeau
bij 1 K^e v. H.-Cacao, na ontv.
postv. /3.00, 1 v. H.-Cacaospel
en 1 Kop en Schotel fr. thuis.
J. v. d. BERG, Alkmaar.

The shop J.v.d. BERG from Alkmaar sold the games in an advertisement on December 5, 1891.

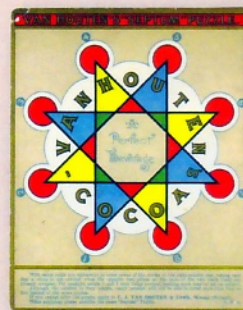
Photo credit:
Reclame
Arsenaal



Van Houten's Septumspel

In 1890 van Houten published another game, but now it was a kind of puzzle printed on cardboard. On the front the probable lithographer: M S Vas Dias & Zn Te Adam. On the backside of the game some information about their cocoa product is mentioned. Also, an English version of the game is known, again with the rules on the front side and advertising on the back.

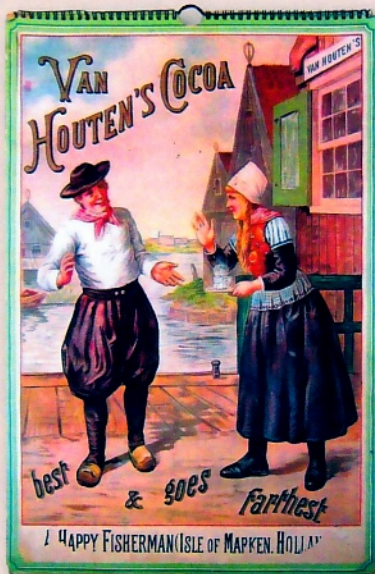
Rules: With seven coins you endeavor to cover seven of the circles of the eight-pointed star, taking care that a circle is not covered when the opposite two points (at the ends of the two black lines) are already occupied. (For example, points 5 and 7 both being covered, nothing more may be set on point 2.) Although the solution is very simple, many persons will not be able to cover more than four or five instead of the seven circles. If you cannot solve the puzzle, apply to C. J. Van Houten & Zoon, Weesp (Holland). When applying, please mention the name "Septum" Puzzle.



Van Houten Patroon Puzzle

In the 1950s van Houten published some puzzles. I once found two of the cardboard envelopes (shown at right) in which the puzzles were stored. However, nothing more could be found about these puzzles and we do not even know if there had been more.

When van Houten celebrated its 150 years of existence in 1978 the office in Aachen (Germany) published a calendar which was also brought out in English:



Each month something from the past was shown, like for April's calendar, "joys for the young":



Three milk hazelnut bars; Pattern puzzle



Three whole milk bars; Pattern puzzle

And for the calendar picture in December VAN HOUTEN'S CACAO SPEL was shown:



Along with some product ads and marketing messages, van Houten's December calendar featured an image of their CACAO SPEL offering.

So we end with the beginning of this small amount of games published by van Houten. [AGPI](#)

HELM • BOON • FOSCO

Article by Fred Horn

The N.V. Nederlandsche Cacaofabriek was founded on February 6, 1895 in the town of Helmond. They started producing chocolate under the tradename Helm. Starting with just 16 employees, the company grew to more than 100 workers after 10 years.

The largest number of people employed at the company was 289, in 1929. After that year a fast decline brought the firm to bankruptcy in 1932. The resulting empty factory was sold with all its machinery in 1936. But in the heydays there was also a factory in Kelsenkirchen (in Germany) and the half-ownership of a operation in Wien (Austria).

The added (Royal) company Koninklijke" to the name in 1903, but five years later the firm went bankrupt—there is no record of the cause—and was taken over by the English firm Turner, who continued the production under the name: "N.V. Helm Cacao-en Chocoladefabrieken."

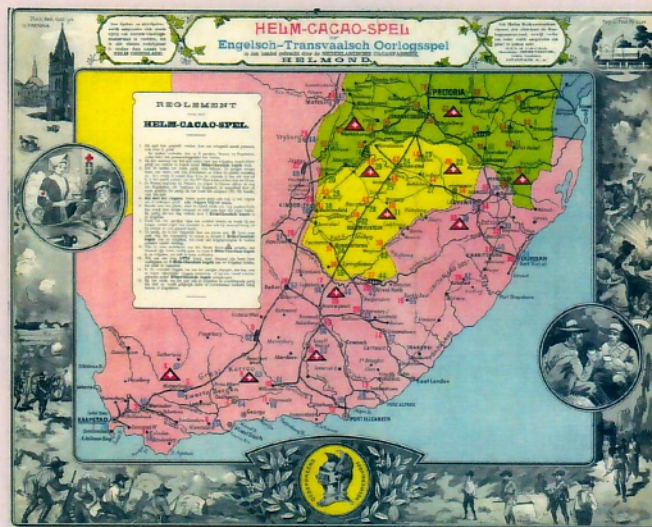


Helm's Cacao chocolate label

HELM CACAO



Helm's Cacao factory building, 1901



HELM-CACAO-SPEL

Boon



W. J. Boon label

The firm was founded by Jacob Willem Boon (died 1863) in 1813 in the mill "De Boonakker." The factory burned down in 1860, and it was also where Jacob sold spices and paint materials which were milled there. His son Willem Jacob Boon took over and started a partnership with Pieter Ruyter Dz. in 1867. When Willem died in 1871 the name changed to "W. J. Boon & Comp." with the trademark: De Ruiter, named after the owner. In 1877 Pieter's son-in-law Cornelis Jan Laan started in the company after which, until the end in 1992, family members of the van der Laan's ran the business.

When BOON entered into a partnership in 1936 with the Russian Caramel business "Promena," it also took over the firm Pette in 1937. The production was concentrated in Wormerveer in the Pette factory where it stayed until the end of 1992.



Wormerveer. Cacaofabriek "De Ruiter"

Boon Cacao factory "De Ruiter."

I only mention these few historical facts about this chocolate company but there are many more stories on record. Only one important thing to note: in Holland one of their best selling chocolate products was the "Koetjes Reep" (Cowbar).



Only one offering (a Domino game) was known to be published by this firm:



From the collection of Eric van Waarden, now in Spellenlab Brugge

FOSCO CHOCOLADE DRANK

This drink was very popular in Holland during the first part of the 20th century. It was made by F. Korff & Co., a chocolate firm based in Amsterdam.

F. Korff & Co was founded by Frederic Korff, a trader in spices. In 1811 he started a shop with a "Zeeuwse Chocolaad" factory in the heart of Amsterdam. After some time he bought a place outside the walls at the Spaarndammerstraat where the Stoom Chocolate Fabriek (Steam Chocolate Fabric) was built under the name: "F. Korff & Co.". In 1905 the firm built a second operation in Wien, Austria. Later the firm changed the place of the business and office to Treublaan 7 in the Amsterdam Watergraafsmeer.

In 1978 Korff lost its singular status and became part of the American "General Cocoa Company Holland" which itself was in 1986 taken over by Cargill.



F. Korff & Co. — Stoom-Cacao & Chocolate factory building

A paper instruction sheet was included. No more information is available; even the problem number 10 (cut off at right) will stay a mystery!

This very rare example is out of the collection of Joop Plasmeijer. [AGPI](#)



Also, as far as we know, only one game was published by this firm. Around this time puzzles with small matchsticks under the name Mopjes met Stokjes (Jokes with Sticks) were produced.

