



# Gold for Houkje Gerrits Bouma

*The Women's Skating Competition on the Stadsgracht in Leeuwarden on 21 January 1809, Painted by Nicolaas Baur*

• PIETER ROELOFS •

**A**round four o'clock on Saturday 21 January 1809, Houkje Gerrits Bouma from Veenwouden, the twenty-one-year-old daughter of a bargee, threw her arms in the air on the frozen Stadsgracht, the moat around Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland.<sup>1</sup> By triumphing in the duel with Mayke Meyes Visser from Heeg, four years her junior, she was able to call herself the winner of what later would turn out to be one of the most famous skating races of the nineteenth century – a truly popular festival that had commenced the day before with qualifying heats between sixty-four young, unmarried women.<sup>2</sup> She was awarded an expensive gold cap brooch and her name was recorded in the earliest annals of Dutch skating, but she was also the target of adverse comments. Critics thought it inappropriate that women should expose themselves to the rigours of skating competitions. They emphasized the participants' unbecoming style, shameful clothes and excessive exhaustion.

In the spring of 2013 the Rijksmuseum was able to acquire a scene on the ice by the Frisian painter Nicolaas Baur from Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts in New York. Some time earlier, it had been identified as a record of the memorable race in question (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> The canvas of 1810 is a larger,

*Detail of fig. 1*

more detailed version of a composition that Baur made the year before and which is now in the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> The two works – exceptions in the oeuvre of the Harlingen-born marine painter – are among the earliest pictures of women's sports in Dutch history. The work in the Rijksmuseum is the most monumental example of nineteenth-century paintings of an official skating competition.

The acquisition of this unusual work was made possible by a generous gift from Willem Jan Hacquebord and Houkje Anna Brandsma from Dokkum. The name is no coincidence – Mrs Hacquebord-Brandsma is a direct descendant of the winner Houkje Gerrits Bouma in the fifth generation; she is named after her grandmother, and her aunt and great-grandmother also bore the name.<sup>5</sup>

## **Women at the Start**

The competition in Leeuwarden that Baur chose as the subject of his two paintings was not the only race for women in the winter of 1808-09, nor was it the first. Three skating races for women were organized within one month that season in the provinces of Groningen and Friesland: in Zuidbroek, Groningen and Leeuwarden. These were exceptional events, as we only know of one public short-distance



Fig. 1

NICOLAAS BAUR,  
*The Women's  
 Skating Competition  
 on the Stadsgracht  
 in Leeuwarden,  
 21 January 1809, 1810.*  
 Oil on canvas,  
 59.7 x 74.9 cm.  
 Amsterdam,  
 Rijksmuseum,  
 inv. no. SK-A-5020;  
 gift of Willem  
 Jan Hacquebord  
 and Houkje Anna  
 Brandsma, 2013.







Fig. 2  
NICOLAAS BAUR,  
*View of the Westersingel in Leeuwarden, in the Winter: Speed Skating for Women*, 1809.  
Oil on panel,  
39.7 x 44.2 cm.  
Leeuwarden,  
Fries Museum,  
The Frisian Society  
for History and  
Culture Collection,  
inv. no. S07596.

race for women before then. The first documented race for female skaters was held on Leeuwarden's Stadsgracht on 1 and 2 February 1805 and no fewer than 130 Frisian girls and women, married and unmarried, ranging in age from fourteen to fifty-one took part. Attracting unprecedented public interest – according to reports there were between 10,000 and 12,000 spectators – the race was won by twenty-year-old Trijntje Pieters – later named in full as Trijntje Pieters Westra – a farmer's daughter from Poppingawier who beat sixteen-year-old Janke Wybes from Damwoude. The list of competitors reveals that she had first knocked out a certain Aukje Gerrits, aged twenty,

from Veenwouden in the semi-final. In spite of the incorrect spelling of her name and the discrepancy in her age it is highly likely that the latter was in fact the aforementioned Houkje Gerrits Bouma, already a strong skater at the age of seventeen, who four years later succeeded in getting her revenge as the winner on the same canal.<sup>6</sup>

The race in 1805 left an indelible impression on many people. The very fact that women had sprinted over the frozen canal underscored the time-honoured view that everyone was equal on the ice, and the high-spirited fellowship the event evoked was widely celebrated.



Fig. 3

ALDERT JACOB  
VAN DER POORT,  
*The Women's  
Skating Competition  
on the Stadsgracht  
in Leeuwarden,  
1-2 February 1805,  
1805.*  
Coloured ink wash,  
pen and grey ink,  
322 x 412 mm.  
Leeuwarden, Fries  
Museum Collection,  
inv. no. P1986-014.

The drawing Aldert Jacob van der Poort of Leeuwarden made shortly afterwards is of importance in creating the image of this competition (fig. 3). This sheet was made into a print in the same year by Jacob Ernst Marcus of Amsterdam and published there with a written account by P.H. Meyer & Comp.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays we know of several versions of it: uncoloured, coloured and in black and white (figs. 4-6). The impact of this print, both on the fame of the competition and on the depiction of races for women in the early nineteenth century, was huge.<sup>8</sup> Eighteen years later, on 18 January 1823, the Frisian lawyer Bavius Gijbertus Rinia van Nauta noted

in a poem that he recited at the dinner in the Oude Doelen of the Leeuwarden city militia after a race for mixed couples: 'We thank you Van der Poort! For the fruits of your art still show the entertainment we beheld.'<sup>9</sup>

There was nothing extraordinary about women skating around 1800, particularly in the northern provinces. Skating was second nature, particularly to the wives and daughters of bargemen, farmers and agricultural labourers. In the winter, when the roads were impassable, they usually travelled over the ice on their skates for their everyday tasks.<sup>10</sup> Skating was also regarded as a form of recreation that was accessible to both men and





*Fig. 4*  
JACOB ERNST  
MARCUS AFTER  
A DRAWING BY  
ALDERT JACOB  
VAN DER POORT,  
*Skating Competition for Women in Leeuwarden, 1805, 1805.*  
Etching, 451 x 619 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-OB-67.850.



*Fig. 5*  
JACOB ERNST  
MARCUS AFTER  
A DRAWING BY  
ALDERT JACOB  
VAN DER POORT,  
*The Women's Skating Competition on the Stadsgracht in Leeuwarden, 1-2 February 1805, 1805.*  
Etching, grey wash, 477 x 640 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-OB-67.851.



Fig. 6

JACOB ERNST  
MARCUS AFTER  
A DRAWING BY  
ALBERT JACOB  
VAN DER POORT,  
*The Women's Skating  
Competition on  
the Stadsgracht  
in Leeuwarden,  
1-2 February 1805,  
1805.*

Etching and aquatint,  
394 x 569 mm,  
Leeuwarden, Fries  
Museum Collection,  
inv. no. PTA063C-006.

women. While figure-skating was all the rage in Holland, speed skating was more popular in Friesland and Groningen, and on occasion women also took part in skating races over longer distances in small groups. For example we know of a race to Groningen skated by two women in 1801 in which they covered thirty miles in two hours.<sup>11</sup> It is remarkable that over the course of the eighteenth century the elite, primarily in the west of the country, had increasingly distanced themselves from skating. 'Nowadays our people usually look upon skating as low entertainment for the common man', said the Leiden-born naturalist and writer Johannes Le Francq van Berkhey in 1773.<sup>12</sup> This did not apply to the northern provinces, where skating remained popular with the majority of the population.

### From Innkeeper to Director

Originally it was innkeepers and tavern landlords who seized upon the popularity of skating in the north by staging races, which they advertised widely in advance. The huge number of people at the competitions guaranteed them extra trade in the winter, as did the trotting races and the Frisian handball ('kaatsen') they promoted in spring and summer. It has until now been thought that the first innkeeper to place an advertisement for a race in a newspaper was Nanne Jetzes from the village of Baard.<sup>13</sup> However his announcement, which appeared in the *Leeuwarder Saturday Courant* on 1 January 1780, had been preceded seventeen years earlier by a report about a skating event that had taken place not in Friesland, but in Groningen. The layout that innkeeper Johannes Tomas





Fig. 7  
RIENK JELGERHUIS,  
*A Skating Race*,  
from the series  
*The Winter*, 1765.  
Etching and  
engraving,  
143 x 156 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-1882-A-6035.

from Grijpskerk used in the *Opregte Groninger Courant* on 11 January 1763 – derived from the usual announcements for trotting races at this time, with the name of the event, the date, place and the prizes to be won – became the standard template until well into the nineteenth century: ‘THE HON. JOHANNES TOMAS, Landlord of the Pylaars in Grypskerk is minded, on the coming Wednesday the 12th of January 1763 in the afternoon, to stage a race on skates; the fastest skater will receive a prize of a particularly fine silver knife and fork.’<sup>14</sup> The oldest known picture of a Frisian short-distance race dates from precisely this time. In 1765 the Leeuwarden printmaker Rienk Jelgerhuis made an etching and engraving which showed two speed skaters on a canal amidst a huge crowd (fig. 7). This print was included that year in the second edition of the Leeuwarden-born poet Boelardus Augustinus van Boelens’s *De winter in drie zangen*, an ode to winter in Friesland, which was published for the first time in 1749.<sup>15</sup>

In Friesland, already a province fully committed to skating, the ‘magnificent women’s skating race’ of 1805 obviously

had to be repeated in the years that followed. A new skating culture developed in the region at this time. Prominent Frisians, members of the local bourgeoisie, gradually took over the organization of short-distance racing. They formed a ‘committee’ with ‘commissioners’, who with permission from the town council saw to the thorough preparation and spectacular presentation of the skating events. They had no regular revenues – from membership fees, for instance, – so they covered a large proportion of the expense themselves; the balance was raised from wealthy fellow townspeople by way of a subscription list. We know little about the motivation of these gentlemen, particularly where the organization of special women’s competitions is concerned. There can be no doubt that they were well aware that the sensational short-distance competitions could be employed as a means of keeping the populace happy. By bringing influence to bear on these events they also succeeded in eliminating the lawless atmosphere of drinking and fighting that traditionally accompanied fairs and festivities organized by innkeepers and tavern owners. This would not, though, have been their only motive; they were doubtless also concerned to underline their authority by presenting prestigious prizes, raise the profile of their own community and demonstrate their magnanimity. They most probably enjoyed the spectacle of competitive skating as well.<sup>16</sup>

### The Cold Winter of 1808-09

At the end of 1808 there was a realistic chance of new speed-skating events. After a number of mild winters there was finally a long period of below average temperatures in the Netherlands. The lakes and canals froze over – and so did most of the rivers.<sup>17</sup> While the major rivers in the middle of the country were plagued by drifting ice – which shortly after the turn of the year caused

several dike breaches and one of the most serious flood disasters of the nineteenth century – the main consequence of the freeze in the northern provinces was a desire to skate. By mid-December people were already cautiously venturing on to the ice on ditches and canals, and it was not long before conditions were such that the first competitions could be held. On Boxing Day, 26 December, the village of Zuidbroek on the Winschoterdiep to the southeast of Groningen set the ball rolling by organizing a women's competition.<sup>18</sup> Fifteen girls had put their names down at the house of innkeeper Hendrik Koops and stood on the ice ready for the contest. Thousands of onlookers from far and wide had gathered to see them skate. But contrary to what the skating literature suggests, the intended fun on the ice got completely out of hand. 'People had promised themselves the greatest result from this innocent and indeed *National People's Festival*', reported the *Ommelander Courant* of 30 December. 'Everything was perfect and properly prepared. The weather was absolutely beautiful.'<sup>19</sup> But despite orders and warnings given in advance by the local council, the two skating tracks were 'so occupied by people that the competitors could not move forward *unhindered*'. Several attempts were made to start. 'All kinds of efforts, from calm, friendly persuasion to serious threats were employed', but the spectators crowded back on to the track. When the ice began to break in some places and water came to the surface, it would have been irresponsible to allow the races to go ahead and with that the spectacle was cancelled.<sup>20</sup>

Eleven days after the debacle in Zuidbroek, on 6 January, Groningen became the first place to stage a contest that season. Thirty-six women lined up on the track outside the A gate of the fortified city.<sup>21</sup> The victor was eighteen-year-old Trijntje Scholtens from Winschoten, who challenged nineteen-

year-old Rienje Johannes from Grijpskerk and, according to the *Ommelander Courant* of 13 January, 'was the first skater to cross the line to the loud cheers of the assembled crowd'.<sup>22</sup> In skating-mad Friesland the news of this competition must have been received with a gnashing of teeth. There they had to wait another twelve days before the ice was thick enough for a skating competition. The competitions planned for men in Sneek on 11 January<sup>23</sup> and for women in Leeuwarden on 13 January had to be postponed because of the sudden strong thaw.<sup>24</sup> The men were eventually able to race in Sneek on 18 and 19 January,<sup>25</sup> while sixty-four women from all corners of Friesland took to the ice on Leeuwarden's Stadsgracht on 20 January. 'With the required consent, at one o'clock in the afternoon today there will be a competition on skates for unmarried women between sixteen and thirty-six on a track built for this purpose on the Leeuwarden Stadsgracht: a very fine gold cap brooch will be given to the fastest, and the second fastest will be awarded a necklace of jet beads set in gold with a gold crown on it', reported the *Vriesche Courant* that morning under the headline 'Ys-vermaak' (Entertainment on the Ice).<sup>26</sup>

### The Westerstadsgracht

With a great sense of topography, in both of his scenes on the ice Nicolaas Baur depicted that part of the Stadsgracht in Leeuwarden, surrounded by snow, where the clashes of January 1809 and other major skating competitions were held in the early nineteenth century. It was a spot on the Westerstadsgracht at the Westersingel, on the south-west edge of the city, today somewhere between the city's De Harmonie theatre and the leaning tower of the sixteenth-century Oldehove church (fig. 8).<sup>27</sup> Whereas Van der Poort was looking



Fig. 8  
Viewpoint of Nicolaas Baur, indicated on the street map of Leeuwarden, map 49, in Frederick de Witt, *Stedenboek. Theatrum ichnographicum omnium urbium. Perfecte afbeeldingen der steden van de xvii Nederlandschen provincien in plattegronden*, Amsterdam c. 1698. The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands, sign. 1046 B 16.

in a southerly direction in the drawing of 1805 – with De Hoop mill on the Verlaatsdwinger and the Verlaats-herberg in the distance – Baur took the view to the north (see figs. 1, 2, 3).<sup>28</sup> From the outer side of the canal, diagonally opposite the entrance to the Schavernek, where in those days the Lievevrouwenwaterpoort and the Kruithuis stood, he looked towards the Vrouwepoort with the two slender spires, which was about a hundred metres further on. The ravelin, the fortified island with the seventeenth-century outer gate, can be seen on the left. Behind it Baur depicted De Arend tower mill and Oldehove. To the right, on the Vrouwepoortsdwinger, the parapets of the city walls had been removed less than twenty years earlier,

in 1791, creating space for a wide avenue in the shadow of a long row of trees from which large numbers of spectators could easily watch the spectacle.<sup>29</sup> Today little remains of the buildings featured in Baur's view of the city. Most of them disappeared in the nineteenth century, in part in connection with the dismantlement of the city and the construction of the Westerplantage. The Vrouwebuitenpoort had already been pulled down in 1820, followed in 1837 by the Vrouwebinnenpoort. Three years later, in 1840, the Kruithuis was also demolished and Lievevrouwenwaterpoort suffered the same fate in 1859.<sup>30</sup>

It is debatable whether Baur was present at the skating competition he depicted. Born in Friesland, he was familiar with speed-skating competitions and how they worked; there was a race for men in his home town of Harlingen that same week, on 25 January.<sup>31</sup> It is clear that his rendition of the scene with the combination of the specific narrative motifs is indebted to the template that Van der Poort had developed four years before. He may also have based the setting in his paintings on an existing topographical illustration. There are significant similarities, for example, between the layout of his composition and a mid-seventeenth-century painting of the western city canal with the bulwark by an unknown artist, which now hangs in the Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden (fig. 9).<sup>32</sup> One nice detail is that this picture also features trees used as a repoussoir similar to those in both of Baur's works. Whereas the painter depicted these trees on his panel in the Fries Museum with broken trunks and branches, a year later he had them growing through to the top edge of his canvas. There are also noticeable differences to be seen in the atmosphere in the two works. The painting in Leeuwarden is menaced by a dramatically threatening dull grey sky with massing clouds,



whereas the painting in the Rijksmuseum, with the exception of the upper right corner, predominantly shows a sky in shades of blue and pink.

Baur used the painted surroundings as a topographically reliable and attractive stage on which he gave his many figures individual roles. Looking at this staffage it is striking that different motifs in almost identical poses and clothing appear in both works: the stooped older woman on skates on the left, the young woman in the left foreground, the figure wearing the same dress as the skaters on the track, and the track sweeper at the finish. It is likely that he based these figures on motif drawings that he was able to use repeatedly whenever he liked. The picturesque qualities of a narrative skating scene of this calibre had already been recognized in the early nineteenth century. On 9 February 1805, for example, with reference to the women's skating competition held a week before, the *Bataafsche Leeuwarder Courant* reported that the speed skating took place 'in the presence of thousands of spectators from all walks of life,

which provided a magnificent and picturesque sight, and that it can be depicted no better than by the pen in the hand of an artist'.<sup>33</sup>

#### Friday 20 and Saturday 21 January

The 1809 competition commenced at one o'clock on Friday afternoon 20 January when the first two women, Antje Gatses from Oldeboorn and Janke Wiebes from the Valom, took to the ice for their race.<sup>34</sup> Houkje Gerrits Bouma began her tournament some time later against sixteen-year-old Willemke Jans Krol from Hardegarijp.<sup>35</sup> On arriving in Leeuwarden between nine and eleven o'clock, the girls, who would have skated there from their villages, put their names down for the speed skating at the Stads Schuttersdoelen, accompanied by sixty other Frisian female skating fans.<sup>36</sup> From midday, following the example of Johannes Seydel, a bookseller near the Vismarkt in Leeuwarden, who had published a starting list as well as a supplement with a list of the pairs and heats for the women's speed skating in 1805,<sup>37</sup> Van Altena, the owner of a

Fig. 9  
ANONYMOUS,  
*View of the Westerly  
City Canal in  
Leeuwarden*, c. 1650.  
Oil on canvas,  
63 x 76 cm.  
Leeuwarden,  
Historisch Centrum  
Leeuwarden  
Collection, inv. no.  
THA. D.283.



# L I J S T D E R S C H A A T S R I J D S T E R S ,

Op de uitgelooftde PRIJSEN, te Leeuwarden, den 20 Januarij 1809.

No.	Naamen.	Woonpl.	Oud Jaaren.	No.	Naamen.	Woonpl.	Oud Jaaren.
1.	Antje Gatfes,	<i>Oldboorn</i>	16	33.	Rinske Heres,	<i>Terfool</i>	16
2.	Janke Wiebes,	<i>Valen</i>	20	34.	Lijsbert Rinfes,	<i>Terfool</i>	13
3.	Minke Reinders,	<i>Warga</i>	20	35.	Schout Jacobs,	<i>Poppingawit</i>	13
4.	Eelke Jans de Lange,	<i>Hardegarijp</i>	19	36.	Marijke Lourens,	<i>Dronrijp</i>	16
5.	Antje Bouwes,	<i>Akervoude</i>	20	37.	Grietje Gerrits,	<i>Bergum</i>	20
6.	Minke Siemons,	<i>Uinwilligerge</i>	19	38.	Doetje Wijbes,	<i>Marsum</i>	13
7.	Rigtje Freerks,	<i>Nes</i>	17	39.	Aaltje Pieters,	<i>Terfool</i>	20
8.	Jeltje Wiebes,	<i>Valen</i>	17	40.	Wijtske Hendriks,	<i>Hardegarijp</i>	22
9.	Saakjen Hendriks,	<i>Veenwouden</i>	23	41.	Trijntje Sijbrens,	<i>Nes</i>	23
10.	Maïke Gerrits,	<i>Tjebichum</i>	20	42.	Beke Laverman,	<i>Leeuwarden</i>	19
11.	Antje Willems,	<i>Morra</i>	13	43.	Hiske Fokkes,	<i>Westerend</i>	24
12.	Hotske Faber,	<i>Wirdum</i>	19	44.	Rinske Cornelis,	<i>Oldboorn</i>	22
13.	Wikjen Ales,	<i>Suumoude</i>	20	45.	Lijsbert Jelles,	<i>Nes</i>	19
14.	Getje Nannes,	<i>Wartena</i>	16	46.	Tjeste Annes,	<i>Osterkerk</i>	27
15.	Vrouwken Aukes,	<i>Hardegarijp</i>	21	47.	Fockje Hendriks,	<i>Oldboorn</i>	21
16.	Antjen Nannes,	<i>Wartena</i>	13	48.	Haukje Gatfes,	<i>Giekerk</i>	20
17.	Cornelia Antonia Siccama,	<i>Nieuwezijl</i>	21	49.	Sijbrig Wiebes,	<i>Terfool</i>	17
18.	Aakje Jelmers,	<i>Leeuwarden</i>	17	50.	Grietje Abes,	<i>Scharnegoutum</i>	16
19.	Berber Teckes,	<i>Giekerk</i>	21	51.	Terje Tjallings,	<i>Leeuwarden</i>	17
20.	Grietje Fokkes,	<i>Oudwoude</i>	22	52.	Maïke Mejes,	<i>Heeg</i>	19
21.	Marijke Tammenga,	<i>Leeuwarden</i>	19	53.	Aaltje Boek,	<i>Leeuwarden</i>	23
22.	Berber Hend. Siccama,	<i>Oudwoude</i>	16	54.	Jantje Wiltics,	<i>Deersum</i>	22
23.	Sjoukje Antoni Siccama,	<i>Nieuwezijl</i>	19	55.	Jeltje Gerrits,	<i>Deersum</i>	13
24.	Wijtske Teijes,	<i>Giekerk</i>	16	56.	Tietje Oeges,	<i>Deersum</i>	21
25.	Willemke Jans Krol,	<i>Hardegarijp</i>	16	57.	Haukje Pieters,	<i>Wirdum</i>	19
26.	Sjoukje Gerrits,	<i>Veenwouden</i>	21	58.	Joltje Hendriks,	<i>Wijk</i>	17
27.	Jitske Willems,	<i>Ackrum</i>	22	59.	Antje Martens,	<i>Wirdum</i>	20
28.	Lijsbert Tabes,	<i>Rijfferkerk</i>	16	60.	Sijtske Sjoerds,	<i>Oostermear</i>	21
29.	Marijke Lieuwes,	<i>Workum</i>	22	61.	Grietje Hottes,	<i>Veenwouden</i>	20
30.	Grietje Teunis,	<i>Begum</i>	22	62.	Reimau Gerrits,	<i>Siems</i>	23
31.	Sijbrig Beintz,	<i>Rien</i>	21	63.	Aukje Sijtes,	<i>Rinsumaguet</i>	22
32.	Akke Gerrits,	<i>Tjebotega</i>	20	64.	Ytje Siebouts,	<i>Leeuwarden</i>	23

Te Leeuwarden, ter Drukkerij van C. L. v. ALTENA, Boekverkoper op de Vleeschmarkt.

Bij de uitgever dezes, zal oomt saude Maandag en volgende dagen worden uitgegeven, een Tweede Lijst, of een Bijvoegfel tot deze Lijst, waltende voorzjen zijje van de Naamen van haar, welke de PRIJSEN gewonnen hebben, als mede de Nummers welke de Reiken gewonnen en verloren hebben.

Fig. 10

C.L. VAN ALTENA,  
List of Women  
Skaters and the  
Prizes Offered in  
Leeuwarden, 20  
January 1809, 1809.  
Leeuwarden,  
Fries Museum  
Collection, inv. no.  
PTA0638-002.

bookshop and a small printing house in the Vleesmarkt, began to distribute the list of competitors' names for the price of five cents (fig. 10).<sup>38</sup> The list, in two columns, gave the skaters' names, start numbers, ages and where they came from. Number 26 is 'Sjoukje [*sic*] Gerrits, Veenwouden 21', the later winner Houkje Gerrits Bouma. Number 52 is 'Maike Mejes, Heeg 19', the losing finalist Mayke Meyes Visser. Although the competition was open to unmarried women between sixteen and thirty-six, when registration had finished it appeared that Tjetske Annes from Oenkerk was the oldest entrant at the age of twenty-seven.<sup>39</sup> The restriction in age and marital state – young girls, married women and older women were excluded from taking part – had been introduced to limit the number of competitors; a lesson learned from the enormous popularity of the event in 1805.<sup>40</sup> The effect was clearly visible. The list of starters was around half as long as that of four years before.

That Friday the skaters went right through the list. The *famkes* – Frisian for young, unmarried women – were given a number in accordance with the starting list, which had to be worn visibly and determined when they raced.<sup>41</sup> Number one raced against number two, number three against number four and so on. Each heat consisted of several races. The skater who lost two races was eliminated.<sup>42</sup> Of the sixty-four women who had entered, thirty-two were left after the first heats and went through to the second. When darkness fell, between half past four and five o'clock that afternoon, the competition was adjourned. Half of the second list – sixteen pairs in total – had by then competed against the winners of the first heat, which meant that at that moment there were still twenty-four women in the race. Houkje Gerrits Bouma also managed to defeat the winner of the first heat between

twenty-two-year-old Jitske Willems from Akkrum and sixteen-year-old Lijbert Tabes from Rijperkerk.<sup>43</sup> A drum or trumpet on the ice announced that the competition would be continued the next day at noon. Anyone who failed to turn up would be excluded from further participation.<sup>44</sup>

The continuation of the second heat began on Saturday around midday, when the women in the right hand column of the list of starters got their chance. In the fifth race Mayke Meyes Visser came up against the winner of the first heat between twenty-two-year-old Jantje Wilties from Deersum and twenty-three-year-old Aaltje Beek, who was skating on her home ice.<sup>45</sup> This extra effort meant that she was at something of a disadvantage when she came to race Houkje Gerrits Bouma, who was able to start fresh that afternoon for her third heat – although it should be noted that many skaters would have skated extra distances on Friday evening to go home, only to return to Leeuwarden on Saturday morning.<sup>46</sup> Both skaters – Bouma and Visser – managed to win their third and fourth heats. In heat five – the semi-final – Houkje Gerrits Bouma started against seventeen-year-old Rigdje Freerks Boonstra from Nes, whom she defeated with some difficulty after several races.<sup>47</sup> Mayke Meyes Visser also outdid her opponent and as a result between half past four and five o'clock she was able to take to the ice to compete for the gold cap brooch against Bouma, who was two years her senior.

After a tournament of two days, using a system of elimination of six heats and a total distance travelled of around 2,000 to 2,500 metres, Houkje Gerrits Bouma became champion of the speed skating track on Leeuwarden's Stadsgracht.<sup>48</sup> 'Prize' ('prijis') was written in brown ink after her name by the owner of the list of competitors, which is now in the Fries Museum (see fig. 10). He also added 'bonus prize' ('premie') to Mayke Meyes Visser's entry.<sup>49</sup>





Fig. 11  
Detail of the track  
sweeper (fig. 1).

### The Speed-Skating Track

As they had done in 1805, the Commissioners had a fine, mirror-smooth track made in January 1809, marked by three lane dividers carefully built out of snow. In both of Baur's paintings a track sweeper stands to the left of the finish line with a broom in his hand; he was responsible for preparing the ice and keeping it clean (fig. 11). Thanks to a rather long-winded description in the supplement to the 1805 list of starters, we know the track's exact length, expressed in old measurements: 'The Track, on the City Canal, on which the speed skating takes place, measured 40 King's rods; but Two rods of which have been removed, thus the Track had a length of 38 King's rods, 25 of which are almost equal to 26 Rhenish rods; therefore the Track had a length of 39 ½ Rhenish rods.<sup>50</sup> If the King's rod, which had been the standard in Friesland since the sixteenth century, is converted into the current metric system it gives a length of around 149 metres.<sup>51</sup> In those days this distance was not standard in short-distance competitions.

It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century, after the appearance of skating clubs, that the length of a skating track was fixed at 160 metres for men and 140 metres for women. These distances are still used today.<sup>52</sup>

We know of no accurate descriptions of the conditions that a speed-skating track had to satisfy at the time that date from the first decades of the nineteenth century. There is only one occasion when the qualities of a track were mentioned in general terms in newspapers of the time: in the *Vriesche Courant* of 25 January 1809, which reported on the men's competition in Sneek that weekend, 'the track was entirely free and unobstructed for the skaters'. The detailed account by the Leiden-born lawyer Johan van Buttingha Wichers in his book *Schaatsenrijden* of 1888 says it all.<sup>53</sup> This skating expert maintained that the exits from the track had to be at least thirty metres long and the individual lanes each had to be a minimum of three metres wide. The piste as depicted by Baur appears to follow these measurements in broad terms. Van Buttingha Wichers argued that the best way of separating the lanes from one another was by means of a sturdy, white-painted rope or – as we can also see in the paintings under consideration – a partition with a narrow snow barrier, which had to be watered (see fig. 1).<sup>54</sup> The start of the track was marked by colourful streamers on long poles, similar to the double Dutch flag on the left in the background of the Rijksmuseum painting. A flag was also often placed at the finish, although it is doubtful whether it was such an impressive example as Baur suggests in the painting in the Fries Museum (see fig. 2), where a huge Dutch tricolour flutters proudly. In 1870 it was replaced at speed-skating competitions in Friesland by the Frisian flag with its distinctive *pompeblèden* (water-lily) motif.<sup>55</sup>

Side tracks were constructed around the double track for the competitors

to warm up. Baur painted one in the foreground on the left, partially free of snow and full of skaters and a few dignitaries (see figs. 1, 2). Aside from the competitors, the judges and those in charge, the promoters of the entertainment – the ‘subscribers’ – were also allowed on the ice, each of them with two ladies.<sup>56</sup> Baur portrayed representatives from this group formally dressed in the fashion of the time on the left in the foreground and on the opposite side of the canal at the side of the track (see figs. 1, 12). The rest of the spectators had to stand on the bank. Writing about the men’s competition in Sneek on 18 and 19 January 1809, the *Vriesche Courant* stressed that ‘to prevent accidents no one will be allowed on the track during the race’.<sup>57</sup>

### Ceremony and Ritual

Shortly after 1800 speed-skating races, without exception, were organized on

the same principle: full of rituals and ceremonial ostentation.<sup>58</sup> However we know little about the precise organization of the early competitions. It was not until 1847 that a ‘Notulenboek van de Hardrijderij op Schaatzen’ was kept by a committee of dignitaries which took on the organization of competitions like these in Leeuwarden.<sup>59</sup> Nineteenth-century descriptions by Ter Gouw, Hijlkema and Van Buttingha Wichers also give us an idea of how the competitions were organized.<sup>60</sup> According to an old custom, a drummer or trumpeter took up his station at the end of the track once the organizers had arrived.<sup>61</sup> Admittedly, Baur’s paintings do not feature such a figure, but it can be assumed that he also played an important role in the festivities in Leeuwarden. It was his job to give the signal to get ready – in the case of the drummer to literally drum up the skaters.<sup>62</sup> The committee and the officials took their places in the ‘directors’ tents’ at the end of the track or half way along it, as can be seen in the centre background of the painting in the Rijksmuseum (see fig. 1). Changing rooms were usually also placed at the end of the track, a motif to which the little wooden hut on the left at the back near the flag may refer (see fig. 1).

An enormous crowd thronged the city walls and banks on both sides of the frozen canal and the bridge in the distance. In the Amsterdam painting there is even a cheering boy, waving from a branch of the tree in the left foreground (see fig. 1). The enthusiastic crowd watches the race. Speed-skating competitions provided an exciting spectacle, not least because of the high speeds that the skaters achieved. In the relatively dull winter period, when active life came to a virtual standstill, the competitive element of speed-skating races undertaken by both men as well as women satisfied the general public’s need for entertainment.<sup>63</sup> Or, as Jan ter Gouw so beautifully put it in his *Volksvermaken* in 1871, ‘When there

Fig. 12  
Detail of ‘subscribers’,  
the promoters of the  
race (fig. 1).



is skating to be seen, people do not feel the cold; biting wind does not make them shiver, and no blizzard drives them away.<sup>64</sup> As can be seen here, the number of spectators increased – particularly during the second half of the tournament – as the number of competitors decreased. ‘The ladies forsake their stoves for a skating competition, and the old women abandon their foot warmers,’ wrote Van Buttingha Wichers in his account of this typically northern popular festival in 1888, ‘and the mothers go there with their small children in their arms, because they also have to see it. A packed and colourful crowd forms on the canal banks, the shadow of a living painting, as it were. And wherever people direct their gaze – around the track, on the ice and on the land, on the fences and the culverts, on the timbers and on the trees, on the walls and the mills –

everywhere a tightly packed crowd’.<sup>65</sup>

A crowd of such magnitude needed close supervision. Some weeks before, in the Groningen village of Zuidbroek, it had become only too clear just how difficult it could be to restrain the crowd. The organizers would have been keen to prevent such scenes in Leeuwarden. In the provincial capital they had the advantage of being able to call on the soldiers garrisoned in the city, who supervised the event, kept the crowd in check, chased young tearaways off the ice and guaranteed the competitors’ safety.<sup>66</sup> It was specifically pointed out that it had even been possible to deploy the cavalry on the ice for the event in 1805,<sup>67</sup> so this effective resource was used again in 1809. Baur refers to this exclusive aspect by showing two cavalymen on the ice on the left, keeping the spectators at a distance; the nearer trooper

Fig. 13  
DIRK PIEBES  
SJOLLEMA,  
*Racing on Skates*  
at Heerenveen,  
9 January 1811, 1811.  
Watercolour,  
324 x 449 mm.  
Leeuwarden,  
Fries Museum  
Collection, inv. no.  
PTA498-022.







Fig. 14  
Detail of the finish  
with skaters and  
inspectors (fig. 1).

on a rearing horse (see fig. 1). In the panel in Leeuwarden the painter even has one of the officers drawing his sabre (see fig. 2). Within a couple of moments he would also have called to order the unruly boys in the left foreground near the women with their refreshment stall. Several troopers also appear to the right of the track.

In the left foreground a skater who has recently completed the course pulls on her coat, while a second woman is being helped to put her top clothes on (see figs. 1, 2). Following the example of the men, who skated in their baize underwear, the women checked in at the start in woollen vests and petticoats.<sup>68</sup> The close-fitting bodice and the short sleeves ensured that the wind had less effect on the women, while the cap and scarf covered their hair and helped against the cold. There was no starter as we see today at skating competitions, but a 'prompter' or *fuortsizzer* in Frisian.<sup>69</sup> One such official can be seen between the two skaters in a drawing by Dirk Piebes Sjollema in the Fries Museum, which shows the men's speed-skating race in Heerenveen on 9 January 1811

(fig. 13).<sup>70</sup> He gave a verbal signal to the skaters, possibly supported by the wave of a flag. It was to be more than a century before the starting pistol was introduced at races.<sup>71</sup> This also meant that in those days the start was still relatively uncontrolled. It was the skaters themselves who determined their departure, making use of feints and distracting manoeuvres. The starter's only task was to react to their movements, to shout 'forward' ('voort') in the case of a simultaneous start or to urge them back in the case of a false start.<sup>72</sup>

At the finish the first across the line was also determined by eye. In the painting in the Rijksmuseum two inspectors chosen from the members of the organizing committee stand at the finishing line, one either side, each holding a Dutch flag (fig. 14). The man on the right indicates the winner by holding up a stick with a pennant, while the stick remains down on the runner-up's side. A third figure, on the extreme right edge of the painting, holds a list of starters on which the name of the winner will be recorded later. In victory the triumphant girl has

raised her arms in the air, while she looks over her right shoulder at her opponent. Strikingly, Baur showed both women on traditional Frisian skates: with short toe rakes, straight blades, a high neck and bindings around the shoes.<sup>73</sup> On the track behind the skaters we can see two other women (fig. 15). They follow the two competitors to the finish, carrying their outer garments so that the women can get dressed immediately. The fact that the well-being of the competitors had a high priority is also obvious from the caption on the print after Van der Poort of 1805, 'All possible care [was] taken of them, by putting on furs, scarves and coats etc., as well as through the moderate administration of harmless hot drinks, which certainly helped ensure that none of the women became cold or unwell.'<sup>74</sup> Even though measuring or counting – characteristics of the modern sport – played virtually no role in the early nineteenth century, the *Vriesche Courant* of 27 January took pains to report that

many of the competitors had covered the track in twelve seconds.<sup>75</sup> A similar surprise caused by the women's speeds is evident from the description on the print of 1805. 'This distance was covered in 13 seconds by one woman, with a side wind, which equates to a speed of 36 ½ feet in one second, and matches the speed of the best trotting-horses.'<sup>76</sup> This comparison with racehorses was obvious. At that time, after all, travelling on horseback was by far the fastest option. It was only when it froze that this was reversed. In areas abundant in water people could travel longer distances on skates each day than were possible on horses.<sup>77</sup> Prior to the introduction of the steam train they could only be outstripped by ice boats. The fascination with speed, at a time when life proceeded at an entirely different pace from today, is also evident from the comparison of the speed of the winner with that of a walker. 'And if the normal speed of a pedestrian is calculated at 4 ½ feet in one second, then said woman, moving forward with the same speed of 36 ½ feet in each second can cover an hour's walk in seven minutes and almost 24 seconds.'<sup>78</sup> Converted into today's terms that meant a speed of more than 41 kilometres per hour. In spite of the rather rough and ready timekeeping, Houkje Gerrits Bouma turned out to be relatively faster in 1809 than Trijntje Pieters Westra had been four years earlier. As we have seen, she covered the distance in 12 seconds, which qualified her for inclusion on a list of the fastest skaters of the first half of the nineteenth century in the *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant* in 1848.<sup>79</sup> When one looks at the fastest times achieved by women skaters in 2014 it becomes clear that Houkje's time must have been extremely optimistic. When Lee Sang-hwa from South Korea improved her own five-hundred-metre world record time to an astonishing 36.36 seconds in Salt Lake City on 16 November 2013,

Fig. 15  
Detail of a woman with the skaters' outer garments in the background and a competitor putting on her warm pelisse in the foreground (fig. 1).





Fig. 16

The changing designs of Frisian cap brooches from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century (from left to right, from bottom to top). In the early nineteenth century the cap brooch enjoyed a spectacular flowering in Friesland, evolving into what was essentially a gold helmet. Leeuwarden, Fries Museum Collection.

she skated the first hundred metres in 10.09 seconds.<sup>80</sup> For a distance of 149 metres this would give a time of approximately 15.03 seconds – and that on the mirror-smooth artificial ice of a covered high altitude track, with clap skates and in an aerodynamic skating suit.

### Prize-Giving

In accordance with the tradition, at the end of the competition Houkje Gerrits Bouma and Mayke Meyes Visser would have been accompanied in a procession from the Stadsgracht to the large hall of the Stads Schutterijdoelen. Processions like these followed a set pattern: the civic guard, which in 1797 in Leeuwarden was transformed into an ‘armed militia’, led the way, followed by the committee and the winners and behind them an enthusiastic crowd of loudly cheering fans.<sup>81</sup> It is safe to assume that this procession was also accompanied by cheerful music. The 1809 women’s skating competition was typical of the events for which the militia band was brought in during this period: from parades and ceremonies to welcoming returning troops and official visits.<sup>82</sup>

In the great hall of the militia headquarters the young women were in the presence of an ‘illustrious and numerous company of gentlemen and ladies’, who feted them at length all late afternoon and evening.<sup>83</sup> One of the committee members presented the prizes.<sup>84</sup> Houkje Gerrits Bouma received the coveted gold cap brooch, an ornamental clasp worn by women to keep their lace caps in place, while Mayke Meyes Visser was presented with the string of jet beads with the gold crown (fig. 16). The *Vriesche Courant* of 27 January also reveals that Rigjtje Freerks Boonstra, ‘who had tied with the aforementioned Houkje [sic] Gerrits several times’, was ‘honoured’ with a string of jet beads set in gold as a runner-up prize.<sup>85</sup> No account of the panegyric to the finalists has survived, but there can be no doubt that it contained an uplifting message. Two weeks earlier, following the women’s skating competition in Groningen, this solemn moment of presentation was seized upon to encourage the winners, as the *Ommelander Courant* reported on 13 January, ‘to excel not only in this graceful art, but also in other female perfections and social virtues’.<sup>86</sup>



The prizes they won would have delighted the champions. As the daughters of bargees and farmers, they were used to making ends meet during harsh winters. Gold and silver objects were very alluring.<sup>87</sup> The earlier skating literature records that it was customary for winners to treasure durable objects and sometimes even hand them down in the family for generations.<sup>88</sup> Most of the skaters, however, were not in that fortunate position. A gold cap brooch was worth anything from 100 to 125 guilders.<sup>89</sup> This was a huge sum for the daughter of a bargeman, farmer or agricultural worker who earned less than a guilder for a long, hard day's work. They seized the opportunity to sell the precious item and turn it into hard cash, sometimes even on the day of the competition itself.<sup>90</sup> It is likely that Houkje Gerrits Bouma likewise parted with her gold brooch quite quickly. It is clear from the detailed inventory of her property made in December 1820 – less than twelve years after her glorious victory – that the item of jewellery was no longer in her possession.<sup>91</sup> A silver pocket watch, a pair of gold shirt buttons and a pair of silver shoe buckles with steel tongues, valued together at thirty-nine guilders, were the most expensive trinkets she then had in her house. At that time the 980 pounds of bacon in the chimney, which was valued at 160 guilders, was worth considerably more.<sup>92</sup>

### Cheered and Jeered

The second great skating competition for women in Leeuwarden proved extremely successful. Thousands of enthusiastic fans had enjoyed the spectacle. At the end there was no repeat in Leeuwarden that evening of the disturbances that had followed in Groningen two weeks previously, when policemen, soldiers and night watchmen had had their hands full calming the overexcited crowd which fought, threw snowballs and stones and even fired shots.<sup>93</sup> On 27 January



the *Vriesche Courant* gave a positive review of the ‘pleasant entertainment on the ice’ that had taken place ‘as four years ago’ and concluded ‘everything went off in perfect order’.<sup>94</sup>

On 23 January the Leeuwarden bookseller Van Altena started selling two different lists relating to the competition; one listing the races and one with the results.<sup>95</sup> Some days later he published a six-verse poem for four stivers, written in the Frisian rural dialect by Johannes Rienks of Hallum, which was circulated widely by several booksellers in Friesland (fig. 17).<sup>96</sup>

Fig. 17

JOHANNES RIENKS,  
*En ves in het*  
BOEREVRYS, *op het*  
REEDRYDEN *van*  
LXIV FAMMEN,  
Leeuwarden 1809  
(title page).  
Leeuwarden,  
Tresoar, Provinciale  
Bibliotheek van  
Friesland, 3206 TLbis  
1809.

In overblown terms, with not a little exaggeration, Rienks praised women's skating to the skies in ninety lines, 'I estimate that a hundred thousand watched it' and 'Everyone who saw it was amazed at/ How the girls flew over the ice'.<sup>97</sup> Rienks was not just taken with the women's skating prowess, however. Their 'natural qualities' also made an impression on the family man – so much so that he even became sexually aroused.<sup>98</sup>

Baur makes their attire an important theme in his painting by portraying the skaters in their undergarments and with bare arms, while a discarded coat lies by the finish line, the women following them with the clothes they took off at the start, and other competitors, by contrast, putting on their warm pelisses (see figs. 1, 2, 15). It is tempting to assume that the painter was aware of the controversy that had flared up soon after the competition in which the shocking aspect of the girls in their revealing clothing played a major role. As early as 7 January the *Groninger Courant* had somewhat played down the disturbances in the town that followed the end of the race by reporting that 'people should not forget the dubious familiarity and flirtatiousness of our country girls, whose countenance and beauty delighted lecherous townies at the race'.<sup>99</sup> Later that spring two readers of the literary periodical the *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* crossed swords – a discussion that has been treated at length in the skating literature and contributed greatly to the fame of the women's skating competitions of 1805 and 1809. Under the pseudonym 'Philantrope' a letter writer set out his critical opinion in a long moralizing argument. 'Shame forbids that our bourgeois country girls should discard all their outer garments, in public, in front of thousands of ogling onlookers of both sexes, in order to start a race, which moreover can seriously injure their health, and

reveal all the charms of their bodies most unfavourably.'<sup>100</sup> The correspondent was not against women's skating in general, but was particularly concerned that this time, unlike in Leeuwarden in 1805, only unmarried women were allowed to compete, 'Who calculates the moral disorder and wretched misfortunes that can arise out of this?'<sup>101</sup>

By no means everyone agreed with Philantrope's attitude. In a later edition of the periodical, a certain A.F.A. demurred. 'I not only term skating a necessity in our northern regions as an exercise – a permissible amusement, but also a fine and graceful physical art. ... to see a beautiful, attractive girl, with amazing skill, gliding and whirling in different directions along the track – this, without doubt, provides an enchanting spectacle.'<sup>102</sup> He was diametrically opposed to his opponent, who did not have a good word to say about the movement of the skater with her back bent like a half a hoop, her displeasing swinging and pumping arms and her rasping and clawing progression along the ice. Not to mention about the dripping sweat, the quickened pulse and the gasping breath in the middle of the winter's cold. 'Philantrope' argued that it was barbaric that 'poor girls from the peasant class allow themselves to be tempted by an attractive prize to become objects of popular public entertainment'. 'But', A.F.A. countered, 'what is more natural than giving some gift to the best skaters and promising and distributing lesser prizes to others, who also excel, if those gifts, that go to needy maid-servants, create a pleasant feeling for the givers? ... No one thinks there is anything contemptuous, humiliating or improper about it.'<sup>103</sup> But 'Philantrope' thought differently. If the short-distance races for women were not stopped, he felt forced to call upon the might of the 'Hooge Lands-

bestuurders' (higher statesmen) or of the king in order to ban the women's competitions.<sup>104</sup>

It is unlikely that Houkje Gerrits Bouma followed this argument. Discussions like these would have been wasted on her. In 1820 she declared that she could not even write.<sup>105</sup> Her daily reality was the care of her father and the family. Seven months earlier, in June 1808, her mother had died at the age of forty-three, leaving at least five children.<sup>106</sup> As usual in large families in those days, Houkje, as the oldest daughter living at home, would have played an important role in the upbringing of her younger brother and sisters.<sup>107</sup> At that time the competition in Leeuwarden and the valuable prize must have come like manna from heaven.

### The Discussion Continues

Houkje Gerrits Bouma probably never competed again after her victory in 1809. The mild winters in the period between then and 1823 meant that she would not have had the opportunity to take part in competitions staged specially for women. Even though there was no general ban imposed, speed-skating competitions for women remained a rarity after January 1809. There is a reference to a race in Leeuwarden in 1812 in the literature, but this date is confused with the date of a watercolour by Eelke Jelles Eelkema in the Fries Museum, which is based on Baur's painting (fig. 18).<sup>108</sup> The first opportunity presented itself twelve years later in IJlst, where a women's skating competition was announced for 4 January 1823. Two days before the race, however, it was banned by order of Idsert Aebinga van Humalda, the provincial governor of Friesland.<sup>109</sup> A few days later, though, the women were allowed to compete in the first race on Leeuwarden's Stadsgracht since 1809.<sup>110</sup> By having men and girls compete as pairs, these races caused fewer objections to seeing skaters in their undergarments.<sup>111</sup>

At that moment people realized just how unusual speed-skating was for women, as appears from the poem that Rinia van Nauta recited at the dinner following this mixed competition: 'Thus call up remembrance of the past/ How twice in this town,/ Women, too, skated for the Prize,/ Of which the neighbours themselves had previously no notion'.<sup>112</sup>

Thanks to the short-distance races for couples, which became popular in the 1820s and 1830s, Trijntje Johannes Reidenga, a farmer's daughter from Goëngahuizen, succeeded in becoming the first woman to build up an impressive record of achievements.<sup>113</sup> In 1838 in Heerenveen, Tjitske Mentjes van der Velde from Terband won the first competition to be specially organized for women since 1809, but like Houkje Gerrits Bouma she only appears to have been allowed to enjoy the fame once.<sup>114</sup> It was not until around 1870 that Anke Beenen from Langezwaag became the first female Frisian skater who was actually able to make a name for herself by winning countless prizes in individual women's competitions.<sup>115</sup>

Even at that time, though, short-distance skating for women was still a matter for debate. In 1870 the burgo-master in Akkrum refused permission for a women's race, and in 1890 his counterpart in Kampen proclaimed a ban on a skating race for women.<sup>116</sup> In 1895, two generations after the discussion about the competition in Leeuwarden, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* reported 'that no one will be able to claim that ice sport has benefited since these competitions for women have become more popular. ... it is true, there are no society ladies who fly over the ice in a costume, which does not always strike the right balance between suitability and propriety, yet is it wise to further emancipate the often mannish characters, who compete for victory, by competitions like this?'<sup>117</sup>



### Our Women Should Not Work Like Horses

Let us return once more to 1809 and the debate about women's skating that immediately followed the competition won by Houkje Gerrits Bouma. 'The fact is that people are content to let our Frisian and Groningen horses trot for a prize,' 'Philantropé' ended his argument in the *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, 'but do not demand the work of horses of our women, and to that end from now on do not demand it of our amiable country girls or fast skaters!'<sup>118</sup> 'Precisely, Sir!' replied A.F.A. 'Because we do not ask our women to do the work of horses and our horses to do the work of women, we allow our women to race on skates and not trot, and our horses to trot and not race on skates.'<sup>119</sup> But 'Philantropé' had a point here. The short-distance races for women

skaters were in essence linked with the traditional trotting races and immediately evoked this association in contemporaries.<sup>120</sup> It was not only the system of elimination, it was the speed and the great spectacle that had obvious parallels to horse-racing.

When one looks at the earliest documented short-distance skating competitions in the eighteenth century, it becomes clear that the organizing tavern owners and innkeepers staged the speed-skating competitions in the winter as counterparts to the trotting races in the summer.<sup>121</sup> This was continued shortly after 1800 when dignitaries and local councils took on the organisation of horse races themselves. There was even repeated reference to the performances of the skaters by comparison to racehorses in the debate about the women's skating competitions of 1805 and 1809. Among

Fig. 18  
EELKE JELLES  
EELKEMA, *The  
Women's Skating  
Competition on  
the Stadsgracht  
in Leeuwarden,  
21 January 1809, 1812.*  
Watercolour,  
383 x 512 mm.  
Leeuwarden,  
Fries Museum,  
inv. no. P1939-117;  
on loan from the  
Ottema-Kingma  
Stichting.



other things this is evident from the caption to the print after Van der Poort of 1805, which states that the speed of the winner ‘compares with the speeds of the best trotters’.<sup>122</sup> But Baur himself also made this connection in the painting in the Rijksmuseum by depicting a garrison rider on horseback on the extreme right following the skaters at a canter (fig. 19). The presence of this motif not only emphasizes the girls’ exceptionally high speed, which so fired the imagination, it also shows the obvious link between skaters and trotters. In the summer of 1808 the Amsterdam publisher P.H. Meyer & Comp. took shrewd advantage of this theme with a print of the prestigious trotting race of 2 September of that year, in which eighteen horses and riders took part (fig. 20). No less a personage than Louis Bonaparte had provided the prizes for this event: an expensive gold box with his monogram in diamonds

and set with precious stones for the champion and a pair of heavy, elegantly-tooled gold spurs for the losing finalist.<sup>123</sup> An advertisement in the *Leeuwarder Courant* of 14 September announces the opportunity to subscribe to ‘the depiction of the trotting race in Leeuwarden held on 2 September 1808, drawn from life by the artist D. A. Langendyk, who expressly attended this race from Amsterdam in order to sketch the same accurately and truthfully’. This illustration shows the finish of the trotting race on the Marsummerdijk in Leeuwarden – a stone’s throw from the Stadsgracht – with the Oldehove in the background, flying the flag.

The last sentence of the advertisement is of interest in this context, ‘The drawing is the same size as that of the skaters so that it can serve as a pendant or counterpart’.<sup>124</sup> Evidently the size of the print was matched to that of the example that Meyer published three years earlier after the drawing by Van der Poort, so that buyers of the two scenes could have a summer and a winter scene with obvious links – exciting qualifying races, sensational speeds, valuable prizes and heroes of the day (see fig. 3). We do not know if Nicolaas Baur’s painted ice scene also had a pendant of a trotting race,<sup>125</sup> nor do we yet know who the first buyers were.<sup>126</sup> It would certainly not have been Houkje Gerrits Bouma. In 1820 she only had ‘five paintings and a little drawing’ to the value of two guilders in total.<sup>127</sup> Baur’s paintings were probably bought by well-off skating fans in Friesland who had been closely involved with the women’s skating competition of 1809. Around 1810 the painter’s work had achieved a certain reputation – now, in his early forties, he was experiencing the high point of his career. In 1807 King Louis Bonaparte had bought two of his marine paintings, which shortly afterwards were hung in the Royal Museum in the Palace on the Dam.<sup>128</sup> The following

Fig. 19  
Detail of the winner in the foreground and a garrison rider on horseback in the background (fig. 1).





Fig. 20

JAN ANTHONIE  
LANGENDIJK DZN,  
*Skating Competition  
in Leeuwarden,*

2 September 1808,  
1808.

Etching, aquatint  
and colour washes,  
459 x 612 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-OB-67.814.

year Baur won a cash prize of three thousand guilders at the Exhibition of Living Artists staged there.<sup>129</sup>

And what of Houkje? Houkje Gerrits Bouma got married in Veenwouden on 28 January 1810, a year after her victory procession in Leeuwarden, to Teunis Ybeles Feenstra, a farm hand from the same village.<sup>130</sup> Around seven months later, on 3 September, she gave birth to a son, IJble.<sup>131</sup> The good fortune she enjoyed on the skating track was not reflected in her family life. In July 1812 she was widowed for the first time at the age of twenty-four.<sup>132</sup> Three years later she married again. Her second husband, Johannes Cornelis van der Schans, was a farmer in Tietjerksteradeel.<sup>133</sup> But he too died prematurely, in November 1820, leaving Houkje with two sons and a daughter.<sup>134</sup> Her third marriage, which she entered into at the age of thirty-four in November 1822, to a farmer, Popke Binnes Vriesema,

lasted thirty years until his death in August 1853.<sup>135</sup> The 1829 census registers of the village of Bergum list the make-up of Houkje's mixed family – she lived with her husband and six children from three marriages.<sup>136</sup> Assisted by a girl and a farm hand, they had a small farm in Bergumerveen under Bergum with some cows, horses, sheep and a large area of farmland.<sup>137</sup> Houkje Gerrits Bouma, almost half a century before the heroine of the *Westerstadsgracht* in Leeuwarden, died there on 8 August 1857 at the age of sixty-nine.<sup>138</sup>

It was late in the twentieth century before public opinion treated women's skating as on a par with skating for men. The first world skating championships were staged in early January 1889 in Amsterdam's Museumplein, behind the recently built Rijksmuseum, forty years or so after Houkje Gerrits Bouma's death (fig. 21).<sup>139</sup> The first



European championships took place in Hamburg two years later, but there was still no place for women there. They had their first unofficial World Championship in 1933, but they had to wait until 1970 for a European Championship.<sup>140</sup> Whereas men's skating had been on the programme in 1924 at the first Winter Olympics in Chamonix, the women only took to the ice in 1960 in Squaw Valley in the United States. Women's skating, like its male version, is one of the most popular sports in the Netherlands. Ireen Wüst, with four Olympic gold medals, three silvers and one bronze, the most successful female Dutch skater of all time, is mentioned in the same breath as her male colleague Ard Schenk, who won three gold medals and one silver.<sup>141</sup> Atje Keulen-Deelstra, 'mother, farmer's wife and skater', is a household name for Dutch sports fans,<sup>142</sup> while the names of gold medal winners Ans Schut, Stien Kaiser, Carry Geijssen, Annie Borckink, Yvonne van Gennip,

Marianne Timmer and Jorien ter Mors are uttered with respect.<sup>143</sup> With the acquisition of the painting by Nicolaas Baur the Rijksmuseum now has a richly detailed testimony to the early years of women's skating in the Netherlands in general and to Houkje Gerrits Bouma's finest hour in particular.

*Fig. 21  
The Rijksmuseum  
as the backdrop to  
the World Skating  
Championships,  
8 January 1889:  
in the foreground  
Klaas Pander.  
Hindeloopen,  
Schaatsmuseum.*

## NOTES

- 1 Houkje Gerrits Bouma was born on 12 January 1788 in Akkerwoude, the daughter of Gerrit Mients Bouma (1763-1821) and Geeske Ringers (1765-1808). She was baptized as 'Houwkjen' in Akkerwoude on 3 February 1788 (Hervormde Gemeente Akkerwoude en Murmerwoude, baptisms 1706-1812, inv. no. DTB 157, 1788). For her father's occupation see Burgerlijke stand Tietjerksteradeel, marie Bergum, marital appendices 1815, deed 22.
- 2 Mayke Meyes Visser was born on 4 November 1789 in Gaastmeer, the daughter of Meye Haitzes Visser (1754-1826) and Gerbrig Sybolts (1756-1826). She was baptized as 'Maijke' in Gaastmeer on 17 January 1790 (Hervormde Gemeente Gaastmeer en Nijhuizum, baptisms 1772-1812, inv. no. 987, 1790). She married in Wymbritseradeel at the age of forty on 1 February 1831 Jouke Joukes Buitenrust (1786-1835), workman (Wymbritseradeel, marriage register 1831, deed 4). On her death on 12 April 1856 in IJlst she was called Maaïke Visser (IJlst, death register 1856, deed 10). She had one son, Jouke Buitenrust, born in 1832 in Woudsend (Wymbritseradeel, birth register 1832, deed A184). It is interesting to note that her husband Jouke Joukes Buitenrust also took part in skating competitions. On 18 February 1809 he appeared at the start of a race in Sneek (written notification by Ron Couwenhoven, 16 December 2013).
- 3 The identification of *The Women's Skating Competition on the Stadsgracht in Leeuwarden, 21 January 1809* was proposed on 27 September 2010 by the writer of this article by letter to the then owners, the Hascoe family in Greenwich (CT). See sale New York (Sotheby's), 9 June 2011, no. 70. For the old interpretation see sale Vienna (Christie's), 29-30 October 1996, no. 583 (as *The Ice-Skating Competition/Der Eislaufwettbewerb*); P.C. Sutton, *Old Master Paintings from the Hascoe Collection*, exh. cat. Greenwich, CT (Bruce Museum) 2005, pp. 62-63, no. 27, fig. (as *Skating Scene on a Frozen Waterway before a City*).
- 4 The canvas in the Rijksmuseum is signed and dated upper right: *N. Baur 1810*. The panel in the Fries Museum bears the signature and date lower left: *N. Baur 1809*. A. van den Berge-Dijkstra and H.P. ter Avest (eds.), *Woelend water. Leven en werk van de zeeschilder Nicolaas Baur (1767-1820)*, exh. cat. Harlingen (Gemeentemuseum Het Hannemahuis) 1993, pp. 44-45, cat. no. 9, ill.
- 5 Houkje Anna Brandsma (1935) was named after Houkje Gerrits Bouma by way of her aunt Houkje van der Wal (1886-1957) and her great-grandmother Houkje IJbeles van der Veen (1834-1906). Her name has also been passed on to her granddaughter Houkje Maltha (1989).
- 6 Aukje Gerrits, aged 20, from Veenwouden (start number 62) was in any event not a sister of Houkje. Her sister Aukje Gerrits Bouma was born around 1801-02, married Fokke Hendriks Roosma on 7 May 1825 at the age of 23 in Tietjerksteradeel (Tietjerksteradeel, marriage register 1825, deed 11) and died on 31 December 1835 in Veenwouden, at the age of 34 (Tietjerksteradeel, death register 1834, p. B25). For the identification with Houkje Gerrits Bouma see R. van den Berg, *Nieuwsblad van Noord-Oost Friesland*, 19 January 2009. With thanks to Hedman Bijlsma. It would not be the only time that competitors' names would be misspelled or ages incorrectly given on registration during those early years. The Houkje Gerrits, aged 28, from Wijns, who appears on the list, is not the same as Houkje Gerrits Bouma. For the 1805 winner see A.M. Mreijen, 'Pieters Westra, Trijntje', in E. Kloek (ed.), *1001 Vrouwen uit de Nederlandse geschiedenis*, Nijmegen 2013, pp. 892-93, no. 630 and *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, via <http://www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/dvns/lemmata/data/TrijntjePieters> (consulted 9 December 2013). Trijntje Pieters Westra is incorrectly named 'Trijntje Pieters van Poppingawier' here.
- 7 The full inscription on this print reads, *LUISTERRYKE VROUWEN SCHAATSCHEN RYDPARTY| Gehouden te LEEUWARDEN op den 1sten en 2den February des Jaars 1805| Opgedragen aan de In en Opgezetenen van Vriesland*. See W. Eekhoff, *De stedelijke kunstverzameling van Leeuwarden*, Leeuwarden 1875, p. 88; J. van Buttingha Wichers, *Schaatsenrijden*, The Hague 1888, after p. 175. The Fries Museum in Leeuwarden also has an ink and watercolour drawing on paper, 220 x 332 mm, by Jan Anthonie Langendijk (inv. no. PTA-063C-017) after the print. It is noticeable that in his drawing there are countless figures on the right of the mill on the rampsarts that are absent from Van der Poort's drawing but do feature in the print.
- 8 It was possible to subscribe to the print at P.H. Meyer's looking-glass stall ('spiegelkraam'), which he took to Leeuwarden in



- July 1805. For this see the *Leeuwarder Courant*, 13 July and 17 July 1805. A reduced version of the print was included in the popular books by E. Maaskamp, *Merkwaardige Gezigten, Gebouwen, Monumenten en Standbeelden in de Noordelijke Provinciën van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, Amsterdam 1816; E. Maaskamp, *Afbeeldingen van de kleedingen, zeden en gewoonten in de noordelijke provincien van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, met den aanvang der negentiende eeuw*, Amsterdam 1829. With thanks to Marlies Stoter, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden.
- 9 'En dank ô van der Poort! nog toonen/ De vruchten uwer kunst, 't vermaak door ons aanschouwt.' R.v.N. [Mr. Bavius Gijsbertus Rinia van Nauta], *Dichtregelen, ter gelegenheid der hardrijderij op schaatsen te Leeuwarden, den 18 januarij 1823, voorgedragen op de maaltijd die dezelve is opgevolgd*, Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden, coll. 1-1225, Schaatsdrukwerk.
- 10 N. van Schuppen, 'Van Vrouwenvermaak tot Damesrecreatie. Een overzicht van de Nederlandse ontwikkeling van sportbeoefening door vrouwen in de negentiende eeuw', *Jaarboek voor vrouwen geschiedenis* 1 (1980), pp. 16-17.
- 11 G.A.E. Bogeng, *Geschiede der Sport aller Völker und Zeiten*, Leipzig 1926, pp. 539-40.
- 12 'Onze lieden van aanzien houden het Schaatsryden tegenwoordig veelal voor een laag vermaak van den gemeenen Man', J. Le Francq van Berkhey, *Natuurlyke historie van Holland*, vol. 3, Amsterdam 1773, p. 1872.
- 13 H. Bijlsma, *Ien, twa, trije: fuort! Het kortebaanschaatsen in Friesland*, Heerenveen 1985, p. 4; H. Bijlsma, *Yn streken. Tachtig jaar Bond van Ijsclubs in twee eeuwen Friese schaatsport*, Franeker 1999, p. 16. After the conclusion of this article Mr Hedman Bijlsma published his article, 'Men vindt dit geen Friesche rijderij. Waarom kreeg de langebaan zo laat voet aan de grond in Friesland?', *Sportwereld* 68 (autumn/winter 2013). In it he refers to two advertisements for a race 'op Schaatzen' (on skates) and 'met Schaatzen' (with skates), respectively in Menaldum and Baard on 3 February 1776 in the *Leeuwarder Saturday Courant*.
- 14 'De E. JOHANNES TOMAS Castelein in de Pylaars tot Grypskerk is gesint, op aanstaande woensdag den 12 januari 1763 's midd: op Schaatsen te laten Verryden een extra fraaye Silveren Mes en Vork, zullende de snelste Ryder die Praemie genieten.' *Opregte Groninger Courant*, 11 January 1763.
- 15 B. Bornius Alvaarsma (pseudonym of Boelardus Augustinus van Boelens), *De winter in drie zangen*, Leeuwarden 1749 (reprinted in 1765).
- 16 For this development and the role and meaning of skating in Dutch culture and society, see J. ter Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, Haarlem 1871, esp. pp. 592-93; D.M. van der Woude, *Vrouwen in de hardrijdersbaan*, Assen 1944, esp. p. 7; Van Schuppen, op. cit. (note 10), pp. 16-18; E. Venbrux, 'Op het ijs kent men 's lands wijs. Over de betekenis van het schaatsen', in H. de Jonge (ed.), *Ons soort mensen. Levensstijlen in Nederland*, Nijmegen 1997, pp. 273-311, esp. p. 292 for the accent on healthy exercise; J. Steendijk-Kuypers, *Vrouwen-beweging. Medische en culturele aspecten van vrouwen in de sport, gezien in het kader van de sporthistorie (1880-1928)*, Rotterdam 1999, pp. 117-28; J.H. Furnée, 'The Thrill of Frozen Water: Class, Gender and Ice-Skating in The Netherlands, 1600-1900', in S.C. Anderson and Bruce H. Tabb, *Water, Leisure and Culture: European Historical Perspectives*, Oxford/New York 2002, pp. 53-70, esp. p. 58. With regard to Leeuwarden see C. Kruisinga and P. de Groot, *Ijsvermaak in Leeuwarden. Geschiedenis van Koninklijke Vereeniging 'De Ijsclub' 1850-2000*, Leeuwarden 1999, pp. 7-8. With regard to Groningen see B. Hofman and K. Otten, *Schaatsen in Groningen*, Assen 2012.
- 17 J. Buisman, *Extreem weer! Een canon van weergaloze winters & zinderende zomers, hage & hozen, stormen & watersnoden*, Franeker 2011, p. 245.
- 18 *Ommelander Courant*, 23 December 1808.
- 19 'Men had zich van dit onschuldige en inderdaad Nationaal Volks-Feest de heerlijkste uitwerking beloofd'. 'Alles was uitmuntend en behoorlyk vóórbereid. Het weder was by uitstek schoon.' *Ommelander Courant*, 30 December 1808.
- 20 'zoodanig met menschen bezet, dat de wedloopsters niet ongehinderd konden voortryden.' 'Allerhande pogingen, zoo van vriendelyke en bedaarde overreding, als van ernstige bedreiging, werden aangewend'. Ibid.
- 21 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 178, speaks of thirty-seven competitors. The *Ommelander Courant*, 13 January 1809, and the *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, 14 January 1809, emphasized the unusual nature of this competition, 'eene vermakelykheid, waar van men zich niet herinnert tot dus ver in deze Stad een voorbeeld gezien te hebben'.
- 22 'onder de luide toejuichingen der saamgevloede menigte het eerst over den loopbaan terug kwam'. *Ommelander Courant*,

- 13 January 1809; *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, 14 January 1809. For this competition see also *De Navorscher* 5 (1855), p. 222, question cxxxiii, and 6 (1856), pp. 141-42.
- 23 *Vriesche Courant*, 6 January 1809.
- 24 For the weather conditions at the time see Buisman, op. cit. (note 17), p. 245.
- 25 *Vriesche Courant*, 25 January 1809. This race, with a hundred competitors, was won by Atze Geerts Atsma from Terzool with Sybren Hyltjes from Deerzum in second place.
- 26 'Met vereischt consent, zal men heden nademiddag ten één uur, op de Stads Gragt te Leeuwarden, op een daartoe vervaardigde Baan, door *Ongehuwde Vrouwen* boven de Zestien en beneden de Zes-en-dertig Jaaren oud, laten Verryden op Schaatsen: een zwaar fraay gouden oor-zyer, benevens een streng gitten in 't goud met een gouden kroon daaraan; zullende het eerste aan den als dan hardst rydenden, en het tweede aan den daaraan volgende hardst rydenden worden vereerd.' *Vriesche Courant*, 20 January 1809. It is interesting to note that the competitions for women in those days were advertised as 'wedloop op schaatsen' (races on skates) or 'ysvermaak' (entertainment on the ice), whereas the more forceful terms 'hardrydery' or 'verhardryden' (speed skating) were used for the men's races.
- 27 J. de Groot and L. Ooijman, *Stadswandeling Leeuwarden. Sporen van vermaarde vrouwen*, Leeuwarden (Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden) 2011, p. 59. Later the competitions were moved to the northern city canal at the Prinsentuin. See L. Plaisier and T. Sandijck, *Leeuwarden. Stadswandeling en monumenten. De museumhaven en sporen van historisch vaarwater*, Leeuwarden 2013, p. 30.
- 28 Eekhoff, op. cit. (note 7), p. 88, mentions the 'Verlaatsbaan' with the 'Prinsen-weitmolen' on the left and the 'Harlinger stal en de singer' on the right.
- 29 W. Eekhoff, *Geschiedkundige beschrijving van Leeuwarden, de hoofdstad van Friesland*, Leeuwarden 1846, p. 181.
- 30 M. Schroor, *De Leeuwarder stadspoorten*, [http://www.gemeentearchief.nl/text/1083/De\\_Leeuwarder\\_stadspoorten](http://www.gemeentearchief.nl/text/1083/De_Leeuwarder_stadspoorten) (consulted 9 December 2013).
- 31 *Vriesche Courant*, 25 January 1809.
- 32 Old inv. no. S1974-347.
- 33 'in het byzyn van duizenden Aanschouwers, uit alle Oorden te zamen gekomen, het welk een heerlyk en schilderagtig gezicht opleverde, en dat dan niet dan door den Tekenpen, in de hand eens Konstenaars, naar waarde kan afgemaald worden'. *Bataafsche Leeuwarder Courant*, 9 February 1805.
- 34 C.L. van Altena, *Lijst der schaatsrijdsters, op de uitgeloofde prijzen, te Leeuwarden, den 20 Januarij 1809* (Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, inv. no. PTA063B-002). Start numbers 1 and 2.
- 35 See note 34. Start numbers 25 and 26.
- 36 *Vriesche Courant*, 20 January 1809.
- 37 J. Seydel, *Naamlyst der vrouwspersonen, welke den 1 Februarij 1805, te Leeuwarden zijn ingetekend, om op Schaatsen te rijden op twee prijzen, de Eerste een Gouden Oorijzer, en de Tweede een streng gitten met een gouden kroontje* (Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, inv. no. PTA063B-1805). He advertised the supplement in the *Bataafsche Leeuwarder Courant* on 9 February 1805.
- 38 See note 34. The availability of this list was reported in the *Vriesche Courant* on 20 January 1809.
- 39 See note 34. The *Vriesche Courant* of 27 January 1809 also reports that all competitors were aged between sixteen and twenty-seven.
- 40 The number of registrations in 1805 could have been even larger. The list was closed on account of the approaching start. Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 7.
- 41 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 176. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that numbers were hung up at the end of the track, so that the public and the skaters could see who had to start. A competition in Grou in 1848 was probably the first occasion. See Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 17.
- 42 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 302-04. If both skaters had won a race, a third followed. This could happen in the event of a *kamprit*, when both skaters finished at the same time. This was a regular occurrence in those days as the winner was judged by eye alone.
- 43 See note 34. Start numbers 57 and 58.
- 44 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 176; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 8. *Ommelander Courant*, 13 January 1809; *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, 14 January 1809.
- 45 See note 34. Start numbers 53 and 54.
- 46 In the past the wildest stories have been quoted about this business of skating to and fro between Leeuwarden and the skaters' homes. The tale of Trijntje Uiltjes (c. 1754-1825) from Terhorne is particularly remarkable. According to Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 176-77, at the end of the first day of the 1805 competition this oldest competitor skated for seven hours to get back home, only to return to Leeuwarden the next morning. This story is repeated in literature countless times. However the list

- of competitors shows that she had already been knocked out on the first day. See Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 18. However, in view of the early loss of light, it is possible that the skaters who had secured a place for the second day remained in Leeuwarden. See Steendijk-Kuypers, op. cit. (note 16), p. 121.
- 47 *Vriesche Courant*, 27 January 1809. See note 34. Start number 7. Rigdje Freerks Boonstra was born in Nes in November 1791, the daughter of the farmer Freerk Clazes Boonstra and his wife Minke Oenes. She married Symon Kerstens on 16 May 1812 in Akkrum (Akkrum, Utingeradeel, marriage register, deed A1). They had six children. She died on 24 January 1870 (Opsterland, death register 1870, deed A10).
- 48 The total distance covered by the finalists was a minimum of 1,800 metres (six heats of two races of 149 metres) and a maximum of 2,700 metres (six heats of three races). Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 179, writes about the finalists of the women's' competition in Groningen on 6 January 1809: 'Ieder dezer meisjes moet, wanneer men de afstanden van al de door hen gedane ritten bij elkander neemt, meer dan 10 mijlen hebben afgelegd.' ('Each of these girls must have covered more than ten miles if the distances of all of races they have taken part in are added up.') Given that there were thirty-six entrants this seems grossly exaggerated.
- 49 See note 34.
- 50 'De Baan, op de Stads Gragt, waarop het Hard-rijden is geschied, was, afgemeeten 40 Konings roeden; doch waarvan afgemenen zijn Twee roeden, dus de waare lengte 38 Konings roeden, waarvan 25 zeer na bij gelijk zijn aan 26 Rijnlandsche roeden; dus had de Baan eene lengte van 39 ½ Rijnlandsche roede.' *Beschrijving van het hardrijden, door vrouwen, op bijgaande Plaat voorgesteld*, 1805 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-OB-67.851A). The length of the race in 1805 was also mentioned in the *Bataafsche Leeuwarder Courant* of 9 February 1805. The fact that it was also estimated to be about 38 King's rods in 1809 comes from the *Vriesche Courant* of 27 January 1809.
- 51 In 1813 the length of a King's rod was officially fixed at 3,91278 metres. The Rhenish rod, from 1808 the standard measure in the Netherlands, was 3,767358 metres. For the Rhenish rod see Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 178 (3,7673 metres). For general information about measurements in the early nineteenth century see J.H. van Swinden, *Vergelijkings-tafels tusschen de Hollandsche lengte-maten en den mètre. Met het nodige onderrigt voor dezelve maten*, Amsterdam 1812.
- 52 Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 17.
- 53 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 297-98. The author assumes that 'a normal skating track' is 160 metres long; in the second half of the nineteenth century this referred to a track for men.
- 54 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 297-98. He considered slats or lumps of ice less suitable as they 'have the characteristics of never wanting to follow the right course, and also ... become detached at the least touch of a skate and lie diagonally across the track'.
- 55 Kruisinga and De Groot, op. cit. (note 16), p. 24.
- 56 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 176.
- 57 'dat niemand, ter voorkoming van ongelukken, gedurende de Harddryery, op de Baan zal worden toegelaten'. *Vriesche Courant*, 6 January 1809, in regard to the competition on 13 January, which was ultimately postponed for a number of days.
- 58 For this see Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), pp. 288-89.
- 59 Leeuwarden, Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden, *Notulenboek van de Hardrijderij op Schaatzen*; Kruisinga and De Groot, op. cit. (note 16), p. 7.
- 60 Ter Gouw, op. cit. (note 16), pp. 592-93; S.H. Hijlkema, *Nederlandsch handboek voor Ijs-sport*, Amsterdam 1887; Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 216-24. Account should be taken of the fact that these books were published sixty and seventy years respectively after the 1809 competition.
- 61 For a drummer at a skating event see Ter Gouw, op. cit. (note 16), p. 10, fig.
- 62 Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), p. 290. See also note 44.
- 63 Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), p. 290.
- 64 'Als er schaatsenrijden te zien is, voelen menschen geen kou; geen sneerpende wind doet hen rillen, en geen sneeuwbuï jaagt hen weg.' Ter Gouw, op. cit. (note 16), p. 593; Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), p. 290.
- 65 'De dames verlaten voor een hardrijderij haar kachels, en de besjes haar warme stoof en de moeders gaan er heen met haar kleine kinderen, die 't ook al zien moeten, op den arm. Op de grachtwallen vormt een dicht opeengehoopte bonte menigte als het ware de schaduw der levende schildering. En waarheen men de oogen richt – buiten om de baan, op het ijs en op het land, op de hekken

- en de heulen, op de balken en de boomen, op de muren en de molens – overall een dicht samengepakte menigte.’ Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 219-21.
- 66 Kruisinga and De Groot, op. cit. (note 16), p. 9.
- 67 *Beschrijving van het hard-rijden, door vrouwen, op bijgaande Plaat voorgesteld*, 1805 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-OB-67.851A). See note 50.
- 68 Men still skated in knitted long johns and a baize shirt until the First World War. See A.M. Meijerman, *Hollandse winters*, Hilversum 1967, p. 14.
- 69 Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 222, incorrectly uses the term *foartsizzer*. With thanks to Hedman Bijlsma.
- 70 A second sheet with the same composition in pen and coloured ink with colour washes, 330 x 460 mm, signed and dated lower left, *D. Sjollema| Te Heerenveen den 9 januarij 1811*, was discovered in private hands in Leeuwarden in 1998. Sjollema also drew the finish of this race: pen and coloured ink with colour washes, 257 x 381 mm (Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, inv. no. PTA-498-23); S. ten Hoeve and M.J. Seffinga, ‘Dirk Piebes Sjollema (1760-1840), Fries Schepenschilder’, *Jaarverslag 1997, Fries Scheepvaart Museum en Oudheidkamer*, Sneek 1998, nos. 45-47.
- 71 D. Rewijk, ‘Hurdridders & schaatsenrijders. Onbegrip op het ijs (1880-1890)’, in G. Jensma and P. Breuker (eds.), *Friese sport: tussen traditie en professie*, Bornmeer 2009, p. 71 (early twentieth century); Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), p. 290 (in 1929).
- 72 Rewijk, op. cit. (note 71), p. 72.
- 73 J. van Geuns, *Volledig leerstelsel van kunstmatige lichaams oefening*, Leiden 1812, pp. 209, 235; A.C. Broere, *Schaatsen en schaatsenmakers in de 19e en 20e eeuw*, Franeker 1988, pp. 15-17.
- 74 ‘Alle mogelijke zorg [werd] voor haar gedragen, zoo door het aantrekken van Pelsen, Soubises en Jassen, &c. als door het matig toedienen van onschadelijk warm drinken, het welk zeeker mede gewerkt heeft, dat gene Haarer verkoud of ongesteld is geworden.’ See note 67.
- 75 For this see Rewijk, op. cit. (note 71), p. 98. Clocks or tape measures were not used much at that time.
- 76 ‘Deeze lengte is door eene Vrouw, met zijde Wind, in 13 Secunden afgereden, het welk eene snelheid van 36½ voeten in één Secunde uitleverd, en overeenkomt met de snelheid van de beste Hard-drawers.’ See note 67.
- 77 Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), p. 280.
- 78 ‘En wanneer men de gewone tred van een Voetganger op 4½ Voeten in één Secunde rekend, dan had gemeld Vrouwspersoon, met dezelfde snelheid van 36½ Voeten in ieder Secunde voort rijdende; één uur gaans in Zeven minuten en bijna 24 Secunden kunnen afleggen.’ Ibid. This way of indicating the time was maintained until the second half of the century. See for example Eekhoff, op. cit. (note 7), p. 88, ‘She covered the track, 38 king’s rods long, in 13 seconds: an hour’s walk in 7 or 8 minutes.’ (‘De baan van 38 koningsroeden lengte werd door haar in 13 sekonden afgereden: een snelheid van 7 à 8 minuten in een uur gaans.’)
- 79 *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant*, 18 January 1848: ‘1809, 20 Jan. Door Haukje (sic) Gerrits, van Veenwouden, is de baan, lang 148 Ned. Ellen, afgereden in 12 sec.’ See also Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 312.
- 80 With thanks to Nol Terwindt, Koninklijke Nederlandsche Schaatsenrijders Bond (KNSB), written communication 25 January 2014.
- 81 On 19 January 1809 in Sneek the winners were ‘accompanied in triumph from the ice through a part of the town and followed by the armed citizens to an inn called the Witte Arend’ (‘van het Ys, door een gedeelte der Stad en gevolgd van de gewapende Burgers, tot aan de Herberg de Witte Arend, in triumph begeleid’); *Vriesche Courant*, 25 January 1809. The winners of the competition in Groningen on 6 January were accompanied by ‘a delegation of the directors of the race’ (‘eene commissie uit de directeuren der wedloop’); *Ommelander Courant*, 13 January 1809. See Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 223-24, for a description of processions like these in the second half of the nineteenth century.
- 82 T.P.A. Lambooy, *Leeuwarden musicceert. Anderhalve eeuw muziekleven in de Friese hoofdstad 1780-1940*, Leeuwarden 1974, p. 34. The militia, a ‘Civiele garde’ during the French annexation, was reformed in 1808 after the men had first been obliged to hand in their weapons and uniforms.
- 83 ‘luisterryk en talryk Gezelschap Heeren en Dames’. *Vriesche Courant*, 27 January 1809. For a lively description of gatherings like this later in the century, see Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 224-25. With regard to the 1805 race, see Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 177-78.
- 84 *Vriesche Courant*, 27 January 1809. On 6 January 1809 in Groningen the prizes were presented by the president of the committee. See *Ommelander Courant*, 13 January 1809; *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, 14 January 1809.



- 85 'welke verscheidene malen kamp gereden had met voorn[oemde] Haukje [sic] Gerrits'. *Vriesche Courant*, 27 January 1809.
- 86 'zich deze eereprijzen ten spoorslag te doen strekken, om niet alleen in deze bevallige kunst, maar ook in andere vrouwelijke volmaaktheden en maatschappelijke deugden uit te munten.' *Ommelander Courant*, 13 January 1809; *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, 14 January 1809.
- 87 Women were usually given a gold cap brooch; men a silver watch, a silver tobacco box, gold shoe-buckles or a silver knife hilt.
- 88 Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 6.
- 89 For the gold cap brooch awarded to the winner of the women's race in Leeuwarden in 1805, see Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 175; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 8; Van Schuppen, op. cit. (note 10), p. 14 (fl. 105); Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 18; Steendijk-Kuypers, op. cit. (note 16), p. 120 (fl. 125). The string of jet beads is unequivocally valued at fl 31.
- 90 Information relayed in conversation by Willem Jan Hacquebord, 8 November 2013. From around 1820 the organizers of skating competitions responded to this by putting up 'Gouden Willems', the nickname for ducats at that time, or cash prizes of fifty to a hundred and fifty guilders.
- 91 Inventory of Houkje Gerrits Bouma, widow of Johannes Cornelis van der Schans. Bergum, Tietjerksteradeel, notary Gerrit Wilhelmij, 28 December 1820, Leeuwarden, Tresoar, access no. 26, inv. no. 12013, repertory no. 252.
- 92 See note 91.
- 93 Groningen, Groninger Archieven, Archief Gewestelijke Besturen; taken from Hofman and Otten, op. cit. (note 16), p. 11.
- 94 'aangenaam Ysvermaak', 'gelyk voor vier jaaren', 'Alles liep in de beste orde af'. It is clear from newspaper reports that it was usual to mention the orderliness of the public, often under the supervision of the police. See Furnée, op. cit. (note 16), p. 60. Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 9, refers to an article in the *Leeuwarder Courant* of 21 January 1809. However this entry cannot be found.
- 95 *Vriesche Courant*, 27 January 1809. As far as we know no copies of these lists have survived. With thanks to the Eerste Friese Schaatsmuseum, Hindeloopen, and Ron Couwenhoven, Zaandam.
- 96 *En ves in het BOEREVRY, op het REEDRYDEN van LXIV FAMMEN, allegerre uitlaesene Hudrydsters, op twaa Prysens, ien GOUDEN IER-YSER en en ien Streng GITTENE KRAALEN mei ien GOUDEN KROON, op de 20 en* 21 January 1809, te Liouwert op de Greft, de Hoofdsted van het Departement Vrieslan, Leeuwarden, Tresoar, Provinciale Bibliotheek van Friesland, 3206 TLbis 1809; Leeuwarden, Tresoar, dok. Rienks, Johannes, 074.317.2.4. This poem was mentioned in the *Vriesche Courant* of 27 January 1809. Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 179: 'A Frisian poet composed a poem in the vernacular that was printed in red letters in the Frisian Dubbeltjes Almanak and this generated unusually large sales.' ('Een Friesche rijme-laar maakte er een vers op in de landtaal dat gedrukt werd met roode letters in den Frieschen Dubbeltjes Almanak en deze een buitengewoon groot debiet bezorgde.')
- 97 'k Ried Hondert toesen di't oonschouden' and 'Elk stie verwondert van di't zaegen/ Hoe dat de Fammen 't Yys laans vlaeggen.' For this poem, see also G.A. Wumkes, *Bodders yn de Fryske Striid*, Bolsward 1926, p. 238; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 9; Meijerman, op. cit. (note 68), p. 166, fig.; Bijlsma 1985, op. cit. (note 13), p. 19, fig.; Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 18.
- 98 So much that they did 'shock' ('shokken') his 'Vreijr Roede' ('vrijersroede'). Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 18.
- 99 'Men vergete niet de bedenkelijke gemeenzaamheid en verkeering onze hupsche Landmeisjes, wier gelaat en schoonheid deze of geenen wulpschen Stedeling bij den wedloop behaagde.' *Groninger Courant*, 7 January 1809; Hofman and Otten, op. cit. (note 16), p. 11.
- 100 'Schaamte verbiedt, dat onze burgerlijke Landdochters, in het openbaar, ten aanzien van duizenden starogende toeschouwers uit beide seksen, alle de bovenkleederen afleggen, om eene wedloop aan te vangen, waarbij hare gezondheid bovendien gevaar kan lijden, en alle bevalligheid van haar ligchaam zich gansch ongunstig zal vertoonen.' *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, Amsterdam 1809, p. 89; Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 179-80; Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 19; Hofman and Otten, op. cit. (note 16), p. 15. The critic took his name from the author of the book *De Philantropie of Menschenvriend*, Amsterdam 1757.
- 101 'Wie berekent de zedelijke wanordes en deerlijke onheilen, die van daar voor derzelve ontstaan kunnen?' *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, Amsterdam 1809, p. 90.
- 102 'Ik noem het schaatsenrijden niet slechts een nuttige, in onze gewesten noodzakelijke, oefening – een geoorloofd vermaak, maar tevens een schoone en bevallige lichamelijke

- kunst. ... een schoon, bekoorlijk meisje, met verwonderlijke vaardigheid, in onderscheidene rigtingen en wendingen langs de baan zien zweven en zwieren – dit levert, zonder twijfel, een betooverend schouwspel op.' *Ibid.*, p. 211; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 11.
- 103 'Wat natuurlijker, dan dat men aan de beste rijdsters eenig geschenk, aan andere, die mede uitmunten, minder prijzen belooft en uitdeelt, hetwelk almede, vooral wanneer die geschenken ten deele vallen aan behoeftige dienstmaagden, een aangenaam gevoel bij de gevers veroorzaakt? ... Niemand vindt daarin iets verachtelijks, iets vernederends, iets onzedelijks.' *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, Amsterdam 1809, p. 214; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 12.
- 104 *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, Amsterdam 1809, p. 91; Van Buttingha Wichers, op. cit. (note 7), p. 180.
- 105 See note 91.
- 106 Geeske Ringers died on 17 June 1808 in Veenwouden (Tietjerksteradeel, marie Bergum, Huwelijks bijlagen, 1815, no. 22).
- 107 Her eldest sister Tietje Gerrits Bouma (1786-1864) married Hendrik Jans van der Laan on 18 May 1806 in Veenwouden (Hervormde gemeente Akkerwoude-Murmerwoude, DTB 160, 1806).
- 108 M. Koolhaas, *Schaatsenrijden. Een cultuurgeschiedenis*, Amsterdam 2010, p. 68. Eelkema based this drawing on one by his teacher Joannes Nicolaas Schoonbeek, which also harks back to Baur's work. Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, inv. no. 63c-12.
- 109 R. Couwenhoven, *Ijspret. De strengste winters, de mooiste avonturen*, The Hague 1999, p. 36. See the report regarding this ban in the *Leeuwarder Courant* van 2 January 1823; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 13.
- 110 Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 16.
- 111 *Ibid.*, p. 14; Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), p. 286.
- 112 'Zoo meldt d'erinnering van 't voorleden/ Hoe tweemaal in deez' stad./ Ook Vrouwen naar den Eerprijs reden./ Waarvan de nabuur zelf voorheen geen denkbeeld had'. See note 9.
- 113 Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), pp. 16-19; Kloek op. cit. (note 6), pp. 929-30, no. 661. She skated with Atze Geerts Atsma from Terzool, still one of the best-known skaters of the nineteenth century. For him see also note 25.
- 114 Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 19.
- 115 Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 22. Anke Beenen (1853-1886) from Langezwaag.
- 116 Bijlsma 1999, op. cit. (note 13), p. 19 (Akkrum); Venbrux, op. cit. (note 16), p. 286 (Kampen).
- 117 'dat niemand zal kunnen beweren, dat de ijs-sport er aan gewonnen heeft, sedert die hardrijderijen voor vrouwen meer in zwang komen. ... 't is waar, het zijn geen salondamettes, die daar over de baan vliegen in een costume, dat niet altijd het juiste midden houdt tusschen doelmatigheid en welvoegelijkheid, doch is het raadzaam de dikwijls manachtige naturen, die elkander de zege betwisten, door een dergelijken wedstrijd in die richting verder [te] emanciperen?' *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, February 1895; quoted from Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 15.
- 118 'Dat men zich dan vergenooge met onze Vriesche en Groninger Paarden om eenen prijs te laten harddraven maar geen paarde-werk verge van onze Vrouwen, of daartoe voortaan niet weder onze beminlijke Landmeisjes of vlugge Schaatsrijdsters verlage!' *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, Amsterdam 1809, p. 89; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 11.
- 119 'Juist daarom, Mijn Heer!', 'Omdat wij onze Vrouwen geen paardenwerk en onze Paarden geen vrouwenwerk willen vergen, laten wij onze Vrouwen op schaatsen rijden en niet hard draven, en onze Paarden hard draven en niet op schaatsen rijden.' *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, Amsterdam 1809, p. 221; Van der Woude, op. cit. (note 16), p. 12.
- 120 Ter Gouw, op. cit. (note 16), p. 597, suggested that short-distance racing may have been derived from trotting races with sleighs behind horses.
- 121 For example the first advertised speed-skating race of 11 January 1763, organized by the innkeeper Johannes Tomas in Grijskerk (see note 14), followed a trotting race that he initiated on 26 July 1762. He provided a silver crop for the winner. See *Opregte Groninger Courant*, 16 July 1762.
- 122 See note 67.
- 123 Eekhoff, op. cit. (note 7), p. 89. The owner of the winning horse was Dirk Jeens from Bergum.
- 124 'De Tekenning is op dezelfde grootte als die der Schaats Rydsters, om te kunnen dienen tot een Pendant of tegenhanger'. *Leeuwarder Courant*, 14 September 1808.
- 125 We know of no paintings of this subject by Baur.
- 126 For the provenance of the painting in the Rijksmuseum see *Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts: Portraits and Recent Acquisitions*, New York 2013, cat. no. 12. I would like to thank Mara Lagerweij and Roosmarie Staats for their additional provenance research, which unfortunately did not reveal any further information.

- 127 See note 91.
- 128 *The Frigate 'Rotterdam' on the Maas off Rotterdam*, 1807, oil on canvas, 80 x 106 cm (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-1004, see <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.5943>); *The Warship 'Amsterdam' on the IJ off Amsterdam*, 1807, oil on canvas, 82 x 103 cm (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-1005, see <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.5941>).
- 129 Van den Berge-Dijkstra and Ter Avest, op. cit. (note 4), p. 11.
- 130 Hervormde gemeente Akkerwoude en Murmerwoude, Veenwouden marriage register 1755-1811, inv. no. DTB 160, 1810.
- 131 Hervormde gemeente Akkerwoude en Murmerwoude, Veenwouden birth register 1755-1811, inv. no. DTB 159, 1811.
- 132 Teunis Ybeles Veenstra died on 6 July 1812 in Veenwouden, aged 24; Dantumadeel, death register 1812, p. B4; Tietjerksteradeel, Bergum, marital appendices 1815, deed 22.
- 133 11 November 1815 Bergum; Tietjerksteradeel, Bergum, marriage register 1815, deed 22.
- 134 Johannes Cornelis van der Schans died on 20 November 1820 in Bergum, aged 26; Tietjerksteradeel, death register 1820, p. B22.
- 135 9 November 1822 Tietjerksteradeel; Tietjerksteradeel, marriage register 1820, deed A47. Popke Binnes Vriesema died on 21 August 1853, aged 71; Tietjerksteradeel, death register 1853, p. B42.
- 136 Tietjerksteradeel census, 1829, Leeuwarden, Tresoar, CBG 27 fiche. Bergumerveen, house number 10. Her children were IJble Teunis van der Veen (19), Jantje (13) and Cornelis Johannes (11) van der Schans, Binne (6), Geeske (4) and Geeltje Popkes Vriesema (1). For the family in 1839 see Tietjerksteradeel census, 1839, Leeuwarden, Tresoar, CBG 31 fiche. Geeske was already dead by then.
- 137 See note 91.
- 138 Tietjerksteradeel, death register 1857, p. B47. Her house, property, garden and farmland were sold in her son Binne Popkes Vriezema's inn on 31 October 1857; *Leeuwarder Courant*, 23 October 1857.
- 139 The first open Dutch Championship for men took place in Slikkerveer in 1887, followed in 1901 by the official Dutch Championship under the auspices of the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Schaatsenrijders Bond, whereas the women had to wait until 1955. The Dutch Championship sprint for men started in 1969, followed by the women's in 1983. The Houkje Gerrits sporting event was staged on 24 September 1988 in the Frieslandhal in Leeuwarden as part of the Year of Women in Sport to address the inequality of men and women in the sport. For this see *De Waarheid*, 22 September 1988; *Leeuwarder Courant*, 26 September 1988.
- 140 The first unofficial world championships for women took place in Oslo in 1933, followed by the first official championships in Stockholm in 1936. After the first all-round European Championship for men in Hamburg in 1891, there would be sixty-seven more before women were allowed, in Heerenveen in 1970.
- 141 In 2006 Ireen Wüst won gold in the 3000 m and bronze in the 1500 m in Turin, in 2010 gold in the 1500 m in Vancouver and in 2014 in Sochi gold in the 3000 m and in the team pursuit, and silver in the 1000 m, 1500 m and 5000 m. Ard Schenk won silver in the 1500 m in 1968 in Grenoble and three gold medals in the 1500 m, 5000 m and 10,000 m in Sapporo in 1972.
- 142 *De Volkskrant*, 23 February 2013.
- 143 1968 Ans Schut (3000 m), 1968 Carry Geijssen (1000 m), 1972 Stien Kaiser (3000 m), 1980 Annie Borckink (1500 m), 1988 Yvonne van Gennip (1500 m, 3000 m, 5000 m), 1998 and 2006 Marianne Timmer (1000 m, 1500 m) and 2014 Jorien ter Mors (1500 m, team pursuit), Marrit Leenstra (team pursuit) and Lotte van Beek (team pursuit).

