



BOMBARDEMENT BEZUIDENHOUT '45

DISCOVER THE GRANDNESS OF THIS DISTRICT OF THE HAGUE

We will take you on a route through the district of the Hague 'to the south of the woods': the Bezuidenhout. A district with 19th-century grandness, which was largely lost after the devastating accidental bombardment of 3 March 1945.

With photos and stories we will show you a picture of the street scene before as well as after the devastating bombing. For children there is a special Kids Tour. For each sign, the website www.bb45.nl offers additional information about the location with films, photos and articles. The route is 5,5 km long. Along the way you can enjoy one of the many catering establishments or play areas that the district has to offer.

WE WISH YOU ENJOYABLE WALKING!

Stichting 3 maart '45 and residents of the district

INFORMATION SIGNS IN BEZUIDENHOUT

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 A BEACON IN BEZUIDENHOUT | 10 THE WILHELMINAKERK |
| 2 BEZUIDENHOUT REMEMBERS | 11 A RAVAGED SQUARE |
| 3 A HYPER-MODERN SWIMMING POOL | 12 STATELY BEZUIDENHOUT |
| 4 THE V2-OFFENSIVE | 13 FROM HOMES TO SHOPS |
| 5 THE ATLANTIC WALL | OTHER SIGNS |
| 6 SHOPPING BY RATION CARD | A Monument 'Human error' and V2 rocket |
| 7 CROSSROADS REDUCED TO RUBBLE | B Koningin Sophiepark (Queen Sophie Park) |
| 8 FOOTBALL, CHURCH & OFFICES | C Bezuidenhout-West streets |
| 9 THE SCHOOL KEPT GOING | D Bezuidenhout-West history |
| | E Bezuidenhout-West characteristics |

LEGEND

- Walking route
- Information Signs BB45
- Additional information, see rear side
- Other district signs
- Bombed area
- Library Haagse Hout & Historical Information Point
- NS train station
- Tram stop
- Play area
- Catering
- Tram route

EXTRA INFORMATION FOR UNDER WAY

1 BIRTH OF THE DISTRICT

In the 13th century, cold feet and the need for a succulent piece of meat gave reason to the Counts of Holland to exploit the peatlands to the south of the 'Haagse Bos'. In order to transport the fuel and the cattle the noblemen constructed a road, the 'Grafe-lijk Karrenpad' or present-day Bezuidenhoutseweg.



The Grafe-lijke Karrenpad (Illustration by Carel Wiemers, in: 'Duel op de bloed-heuvel', 2012).

After Princess Amalia van Solms, who had her summerhouse built in 1645 – the present-day Huis Ten Bosch –, wealthy residents of The Hague built country estates. Under the denominator of 'Grandness' the Hague subsequently extended its built area alongside this road, with stately homes for principal residents, like Bellevue (1750) belonging to the jurist Lyonnet (later transformed into a hotel), Huis Ter Noot (on the former site of the Ministry of Agriculture) and Zandvliet belonging to Professor Schwencke (1854). In 1878 the Station Staatsspoor (State Railway Station) was created, and around 1885 the Koningin Emmapark. In 1888 Sociëteit De Witte (a Private members Club-house) opened 'Tent in het Bosch', a country retreat for music and entertainment on the Walther

Boerweide in the Haagse Bos. After that things progressed quickly in Bezuidenhout. The colossal buildings made way for 'simpler' middle-class housing. After 1915 extensive house-building continued towards the east in accordance with the Berlage expansion plan.*

* Illustrated on a table in Library/HIP.

2 SHADES OF ROYALTY

Many street names in Bezuidenhout indicate close ties with the House of Orange (Dutch Royal Family). For example, the Adelheid-, Emma-, Wilhelmina- and Theresiastraat are named in honour of Queen Emma (1858–1934) and the Louise Henriëttestraat is named after the oldest daughter of Frederik Hendrik of Orange and Amalia van Solms. Other street names date back to the VOC (Dutch East India Company) period, like the Van Imhoffstraat, named after Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff (Governor General of the VOC between 1743 and 1750)*.

* For more explanation of street names, see www.bezuidenhout.nl.

3 HAAGSE BOS, V2 AND BOMBARDMENT

The Haagse Bos is a centuries-old woodland. We owe the fact that the woods still exist today largely to the 'Deed of Redemption' of 1576, drawn up by the Counts of Holland. This deed stipulated that the woods should never be sold or cut down. The woods were protected by this for a long time. During the Second World War the occupying Germans decided otherwise: 85% of the woods and the Sociëteit's 'Tent' were bulldozed

for V2 launch sites, bunkers and anti-tank trenches for the Atlantic Wall. These very V2 launch sites were to have great consequences for Bezuidenhout. Many V2 rockets were launched at London. In order to counter the danger this represented to its own population, the British government wished to put an end to the launching of V2s, through a major bombardment of the Haagse Bos.



Mitchell bomber (photo: Instituut voor Maritieme Historie, Den Haag).

The bombardment was carried out on 3 March 1945 by three squadrons of bombers based in England and Belgium, in total 56 aircraft. The residential district of Bezuidenhout, and not the Haagse Bos, was hit in its heart. Many people have looked into how this could happen. One section of the bombers received the wrong coordinates. Another section dropped its bombs on the right coordinates, but strong winds 'blew' the bombs into the district. The bombardment's force was enormous. Hundreds of people were buried under the rubble and were killed instantly or severely wounded. Many fled, taking with them whatever they thought of at that moment, and ran under the railway viaduct to Voorburg. Help came from far beyond the region, even the fire service from Zaandam. Due to a lack of fire engines, petrol and water the fire had already had a long time to take hold, destroying thousands of buildings.

Not only Bezuidenhout was hit. Bombs also fell in the city centre.

On the Korte Voorhout, among others, the Prinsesse Schouwburg, the Hotel Paulez and the Palace of Justice went up in flames.

4 RECONSTRUCTION

After the war the city of Den Haag was penniless. The city council faced an enormous task of reconstruction. Not only Bezuidenhout was destroyed, the city was also experiencing an enormous housing shortage because no houses had been built for years and the number of residents was growing quickly. Furthermore there was a lack of materials, transportation, skilled labour and money. In these circumstances the decision was made to build as many houses as possible with as few resources as possible. No large houses, no big rooms, and not more than four stories. This gave rise to the duplex dwelling, like in the Amalia van Solmsstraat. Two homes with one front door, which later could easily be converted into one single home.



Bezuidenhout became a town of offices. Photo taken from the Central Station (photo: Stichting 3 maart '45).

Reconstruction began slowly in Bezuidenhout. In 1951 the Bezuidenhout reconstruction plan was accepted, including the construction of a sunken Utrechtsebaan, the extension of the railway and the building of government offices. This meant that the area next to the station was enclosed, creating the urban island 'Bezuidenhout C' (the present-day Bezuidenhout-West). It became a mix of 1930s apartment

buildings, 1970s social housing and as an urban beacon, the Witte Anna tower block (1987). The first new (government) offices came into the district such as the Ministry of Agriculture (1950) and the Koninklijk Conservatorium (1980). The centre of the district remained empty for a long time and was the perfect play area for children. The reconstruction work lasted approximately 60 years.

5 THE DISTRICT IN THE 21ST-CENTURY

The grandness of the former Bezuidenhout has returned to the district at the start of this century, but then with a more modern look. Many buildings from the reconstruction period were demolished in favour of high-rise with offices and accommodation. In 1995 Nationale Nederlanden opened its 'de Haagse Poort' office spanning the Utrechtsebaan, which is regarded as a modern gateway of The Hague. On the green area by the Schenkkade offices appeared including those of Siemens and the former Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Behind the Ministry stands the 'Monument to Human Error', unveiled in 1995 in remembrance of the bombardment of 3 March 1945.



Beatrixkwartier with 'de Netkous' (nicknamed fishnet stocking) (photo: Studio Zipper).

A new business centre arose

around the Utrechtsebaan, 'the Beatrixkwartier'. A striking element in this area is the Netkous (fishnet stocking) tram viaduct of Randstad Rail (2004), in the middle of modern buildings like Centre Court (2003), the Prinsenhof (2006), the Haagsche Zwaan (2010) and the Monarch (2011). Examples of modern homes constructed in an old-fashioned style are the townhouses on the Amalia van Solmsstraat.

TIPS IN THE AREA:

- Walking in Bezuidenhout: www.bezuidenhout.nl
- Walking in The Hague with a guide: www.gildedehaag.nl
- Walking in Haagse Bos with a guide: www.staatsbosbeheer.nl
- The Hague Historical museum: www.haagshistorischmuseum.nl
- Atlantic Wall (bunkers): www.atlantikwallmuseum.nl

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BEZUIDENHOUT:

- Haagse Hout Library & Historical Information Point: Theresiastraat 195, Den Haag T: 070-353 75 50
- District website and Bezuidenhout App: www.bezuidenhout.nl

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE LOCATIONS:

WWW.BB45.NL

PUBLISHED BY:

Stichting 3 maart '45 & Bewonersgroep Sophiepark
3maart45@bezuidenhout.nl
www.bezuidenhout.nl

© 2015, Stichting 3 maart '45 together with Municipality of the Hague, The Hague Municipal Archive and Staatsbosbeheer (National Forestry Authority)

Design: www.studiozipper.com
Printing: SER en VNO-NCW