

en The sea takes



Willem Johannes Schütz, Storm near the Roelershoofd in Vlissingen (detail), 1875-1893 (oil on canvas), Collection Zeeland Society, Photo Ivo Wennekes.

Deluge

On Saturday 5 November, Zeeland is struck by a heavy storm. Large parts of Zeeland's islands are under water: Sint-Philipsland, Noord-Beveland and Zuid-Beveland, and the Land van Borsele. Dykes have broken on other islands and in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, resulting in flooding. However, the central and eastern parts of Zeeland are the most heavily affected. Saturday 5 November 1530 goes down in history as Saint Felix's Evil Saturday.

At the beginning of the 16th century, Zeeland is a prosperous region. It conducts trade with flourishing cities such as Antwerp and Brussels, which are easily accessible by water. But the same water also poses a threat. The harvesting of peat for salt production and poor maintenance of the dykes means that many polders are insufficiently protected. Land reclamation also means that the water has less room. In a storm, the surging seawater seeks a channel, resulting in breaching of the dykes and flooding.

Several flooded areas are eventually reclaimed from the sea at the end of the 16th century or in the course of the 17th century. The eastern part of Zuid-Beveland, the so-called 'Drowned Land of Zuid-Beveland', is changed forever. Only two years after the Saint Felix Flood of 1530, on 2 November 1532, the island is again deluged by a heavy storm surge, which completely destroys the repairs that have been undertaken.

The Drowned Land of Zuid-Beveland continues to intrigue. In the 20th century, the remains of various flooded places have been visited at low tide. Interesting objects have been found, mostly by treasure hunters. In Nieuwlande, for example, large numbers of pilgrim's badges have been found with metal detectors. Today it is forbidden to visit these sites in the Drowned Land of Zuid-Beveland.



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Bommenee
Bommenede 1682, abandoned 1684 | 40 Monster 1530/1532 | 80 'Oud'-Othene Noten 1586 |
| 2 Claeskynderkerke
Klaaskinderkerke 1570 | 41 Westkerke Raaskerke 1530/1532 | 81 Triniteit 1584/1585 |
| 3 Westenschouwen 16th century | 42 Wolfertsdorp 1530 | 82 Beoostenbly 1488 |
| 4 Clauskinderen
Claeskerke, Oostkerke 1511 | 43 Coudorpe | 83 Peerboom mil. inund. 1488, 1493 storm disaster |
| 5 Coudekerke
Koudekerke 1550-1600 left outside the dike | 44 Oud-Everinge second half 15th century | 84 Sint-Janscapelle |
| 6 Zuidkerke 1542 left outside the dike | 45 Nieuw-Everinge 1530 | 85 Moerkerke end 15th, beginning 16th century |
| 7 Brieskerke 1542 left outside the dike | 46 Stuivezand beginning 17th century | 86 Niekerke 1393, 1488 |
| 8 Westkerke before 1500 | 47 Bakendorp 1530-1570 | 87 Steelant 1488 |
| 9 Oudekerke probably before 1500 | 48 Vinninghen
Vinningen shortly after the neighboring village Oostende partly left outside the dike | 88 Hugherluis 1492 |
| 10 Sint-Jacobskerke before 1500 | 49 Oostende 1520/1521 left outside the dike | 89 Hertinghe 1488 |
| 11 Rengerskerke 1662 | 50 Kouwerve 1530/1532 | 90 Koudekerke 1375 |
| 12 Simonskerke 1534 | 51 Duvenee 1530/1532 | 91 Willemskerke storm tide and mil. inund. 1488, 1586 |
| 13 Borrendamme 1642 | 52 Lodijke 1530/1532 | 92 Vreemdijke
Vroondijk storm and inund. 1488, storm 1601 |
| 14 Sinte-Philipsland 1532 | 53 Reimerswaal 1631 | 93 Pakinghe Sint-Laureinskerke 1214/end 14th century |
| 15 Moggershil 1570 | 54 Nieuwkerke 1530/1532 | 94 Wevelswaele 1375/1376, 1404 |
| 16 Stevenesse 'Oud'-Stavenisse 1509 | 55 Assemansbroek
Broecke 1530 | 95 De Piet Ter Piete, Pieta, Pieten 1375 |
| 17 Welle 1530 | 56 Kreke 1530/1532 | 96 Boterzande 1375/1376 |
| 18 Soecke Hoeke, Houcke, Dijkhoeke, 's-Gravenhoecke 1530 | 57 Steelvliet Steenvliet 1530/1532 | 97 Hughevliet 1404 |
| 19 Weele 1530 | 58 Hinkelenoord 1552 | 98 Gaternesse 1570 |
| 20 Campen 1530/1532 | 59 Agger 1552 | 99 'Oud'-IJzendijke 1437 |
| 21 Soelekerke
Soetelinkskerke 1530/1532 | 60 Ouderdinge 1530/1532 | 100 Elmare 1375 |
| 22 'Oud'-Wissenkerke before 1352 | 61 Everswaard 1530 | 101 Sint-Nicolaas in Varne 1377 |
| 23 'Oud'-Wissenkerke 1530/1532 | 62 Schoudee 1530/1532 | 102 Oostmanskerke 1404 |
| 24 'Oud'-Geersdijk 1530/1532 | 63 Mare 1530 | 103 Schoondijke 1583/1585 |
| 25 'Oud'-Kortgene 1530/1532 | 64 Nieuwlande 1530/1532 | 104 Nieuwerkerke 1570 and mil. inund. 1584 |
| 26 Nieuw-Hamerstede
Edekinge? 1530 | 65 'Oud'-Krabbendijke 1530 | 105 Sint-Catharina Sint-Cathelijne 1375/1376 and 1583 |
| 27 Emelisse 1530/1532 | 66 Tolsende 1530/1532 | 106 Coxie Coxide 1477, 1583 |
| 28 'Oud'-Kats
Subburchdijc 1530 | 67 Nieuwkapelle 17th century | 107 Hannekenswerve storm and mil. inund., before 1660 |
| 29 Oud-Hamerstede 1304 | 68 Valkenisse 1682 left outside the dike | 108 Nieuwvliet 16th century |
| 30 Offliet Ghruetersdijc? after 1460 | 69 'Oud'-Riiland 1530 | 109 Oostende before 1516 |
| 31 Hongersdijk 1334, 1551 | 70 'Oud'-Bath 1552 | 110 Westende before 1516 |
| 32 Oostkerke 1334 | 71 Saeftinghe
Saeftinge, Saaftinge flood 1175, mil. inund. 1584 | 111 Reimersdorpe
Remboudsdorpe before 1516 |
| 33 Westkerke 1377 | 72 Stampaert 1584 | 112 Waterdunen before 1516 |
| 34 'Oud'-Arnemuiden 1440 and circa 1460 | 73 Casuele 1584 | 113 Avenkerke before 1516 |
| 35 Welzinge | 74 Weele Saint Mary | 114 Schoneveld 1375 |
| 36 'Oud'-Westkapelle 1509, 1511 | 75 Namen 1715/1717 | 115 Sint-Lambert-Wulpen 1516 |
| 37 Tewijk 1530/1532 | 76 Sint-Laureijns after 1580 | 116 Schoonboom 14217 |
| 38 Sint-Katherijnekerke 1530/1532 | 77 'Oud'-Hontenisse 1508, 1509, 1511 | 117 Dekenscapelle
Noordwelle 1463 |
| 39 Oostkerke 1530/1532 | 78 Aendijcke 1584 | |
| | 79 Sint-Katherijnekerke 1530/1532 | |

○ Villages lost because of natural disasters □ Villages lost because of military inundations ■ Villages lost because of a combination of military inundations and natural disasters
Source: *Verdrongen dorpen in Zeeland*, Zeeuws Erfgoed, 2009

Reimerswaal

In addition to swallowing up many villages, the Saint Felix Flood also heralds the end of the city of Reimerswaal. Zeeland's third largest city manages to survive for another century but without the prosperity of former times. Following several more floods and fires, Reimerswaal is abandoned definitively in 1631. The States of Zeeland sells the remnants of the remaining houses and city walls as building materials.

Reimerswaal

One, which itself no longer owns,
is gifted to the mist.
Bells too are drowned
and chime the fact
unendingly.
But no one knows or sees
the place, where all lies sunken

Gerrit Achterberg (1905-1962),
from the collection 'Limiet' (Limit, 1945)



Marinus van Reymerswale

One of Zeeland's most famous painters comes from Reimerswaal. Today Marinus van Reymerswale's paintings can be found in museums in Madrid, London, Paris and New Orleans. Most of his approximately thirty known paintings depict money counters and tax collectors. Remarkably, his paintings include documents that can be traced back to purchases and legal cases conducted in Reimerswaal.

The Calling of Matthew,
1530—1540



Marinus van Reymerswale (attributed), The Calling of Matthew, 1530-1540 (oil on panel). Collection Zeeuws Museum. Photo: Adri Verburg.

after



before



Jan Luyken, Reimerswaal in present and earlier times, 1694-1696 (etching on paper). Collection Rijksmuseum.



Workshop of Marinus van Reymerswale, Two tax collectors, c. 1540 (oil on panel). © Collection National Gallery, London; inv.nr. NGS944.

This is also true of *The Calling of Matthew*. In this biblical scene, Matthew is shown in his office, where he collects taxes for the Romans. Jesus asks him to abandon this profession and follow him.

Reimerswaal lies on the Scheldt on the shipping route to Antwerp, a flourishing centre of trade and finance. At various points along the Scheldt there are toll offices, where skippers must pay customs duties for the goods they import and export. These financial transactions are not always carried out strictly according to the rules. Perhaps Marinus van Reymerswale has used the biblical story of The Calling of Matthew to ridicule these abuses.



Marinus van Reymerswale, The Lawyer's Office, 1545 (oil on wood). Collection The New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans. Purchase through the Ella West Freeman Foundation Matching Fund.

This badly damaged panel is attributed to Marinus van Reymerswale. Like the city, it has suffered a great deal. It is gifted to the Zeeuws Museum in 2014 by Adri Mackor, who has undertaken years of research into the painter. He has compared the texts in Marinus' paintings with archival documents that can be traced back to the flooded city.