

The sea takes



Willem Johannes Schütz, Storm near the Roelershoofd in Vlissingen (detail), 1875-1933 (oil on canvas). Collection Zeeland Society. Photo Ivo Wennekes.

This is Zeeland

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.



- 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: *Verdronken dorpen in Zeeland, Zeeuws Erfgoed*, 2009

- 1 Bommenee Bommenee 1682, abandoned 1684
- 2 Claeskynderkerke Klaaskinderkerke 1530/1532
- 3 Westenschouwen 16th century
- 4 Clauskinderen Claeskerke, Oostkerke 1511
- 5 Coudekerke Koudekerke 1550-1900 left outside the dike
- 6 Zuidkerke 1542 left outside the dike
- 7 Brieskerke 1542 left outside the dike
- 8 Westkerke before 1500
- 9 Oudekerke probably before 1500
- 10 Sint-Jacobskerke before 1500
- 11 Rengerskerke 1662
- 12 Simonskerke 1534
- 13 Borredamme 1642
- 14 Sinte-Philipsland 1532
- 15 Moggershil 1570
- 16 Stevensesse 'Oud'-Stavenisse 1509
- 17 Welle 1530
- 18 Soecke Hoeke, Houcke, Dijkhoeke, 's-Gravenhoecke 1530
- 19 Weele 1530
- 20 Campen 1530/1532
- 21 Soelekerke Soetelinkskerke 1530/1532
- 22 'Oud'-Wissenkerke before 1352
- 23 'Oud'-Wissenkerke 1530/1532
- 24 'Oud'-Geersdijk 1530/1532
- 25 'Oud'-Kortgene 1530/1532
- 26 Nieuw-Hamerstede Edekinge? 1530
- 27 Emelisse 1530/1532
- 28 'Oud'-Kats Subburchdijc 1530
- 29 Oud-Hamerstede 1304
- 30 Offliet Ghrutersdijc? after 1460
- 31 Hongersdijk 1334, 1551
- 32 Oostkerke 1334
- 33 Westkerke 1377
- 34 'Oud'-Arnemuiden 1440 and circa 1460
- 35 Welzinge
- 36 'Oud'-Westkapelle
- 37 Tewijk 1530/1532
- 38 Sint-Kathrijnekerke 1530/1532
- 39 Oostkerke 1530/1532
- 40 Monster 1530/1532
- 41 Westkerke Raaskerke 1530/1532
- 42 Wolfertsdorp 1530
- 43 Coudorpe
- 44 Oud-Everinge second half 15th century
- 45 Nieuw-Everinge 1530
- 46 Stuivezand beginning 17th century
- 47 Bakendorp 1530-1570
- 48 Vinninghen Vinningen shortly after the neighboring village Oostende partly left outside the dike
- 49 Koustede 1520/1521 left outside the dike
- 50 Koustede 1530/1532
- 51 Duvenee 1530/1532
- 52 Lodijke 1530/1532
- 53 Reimerswaal 1631
- 54 Nieuwkerke 1530/1532
- 55 Assemansbroek Broecke 1530
- 56 Kreke 1530/1532
- 57 Steelvliet Steenvliet 1530/1532
- 58 Hinkelenoord 1552
- 59 Agger 1552
- 60 Ouderdinge 1530/1532
- 61 Everswaard 1530
- 62 Schoudee 1530/1532
- 63 Mare 1530
- 64 Nieuwlande 1530/1532
- 65 'Oud'-Krabbendijke 1530
- 66 Tolsende 1530/1532
- 67 Nieuwkapelle 17th century
- 68 Valkenisse 1682 left outside the dike
- 69 'Oud'-Rilland 1530
- 70 'Oud'-Bath 1552
- 71 Saeftinghe Saeftinge, Saaftinge flood 1175, mil. inund. 1584
- 72 Stampoert 1584
- 73 Casuele 1584
- 74 Weele Saint Mary
- 75 Namen 1715/1717
- 76 Sint-Laureijs after 1580
- 77 'Oud'-Hontenisse 1508, 1509, 1511
- 78 Aendijkje 1584
- 79 Saemslach/Genderdijk Zaamslag 1584
- 80 'Oud'-Othene Noten 1586
- 81 Triniteit 1584/1585
- 82 Beerstonyl
- 83 Peerboom mil. inund. 1488, 1493 storm disaster
- 84 Sint-Janscapelle
- 85 Moerkerke end 15th, beginning 16th century
- 86 Niekerke 1393, 1488
- 87 Steelant 1488
- 88 Hegersluis 1492
- 89 Hertinghe 1488
- 90 Koudkerke 1375
- 91 Willemskerke storm tide and mil. inund. 1488, inund. 1568
- 92 Vreemdijke Vroondijk storm and mil. inund. 1488, storm 1601
- 93 Praekinghe Sint-Laureinskerke 1214/end 14th century
- 94 Wevelswaale 1375/1376, 1404
- 95 De Piet Ter Piette, Pieti, Pieten 1375
- 96 Boterzand 1375/1376
- 97 Hugesvliet 1404
- 98 Gaternesse 1570
- 99 'Oud'-IJzendijke 1437
- 100 Elmare 1375
- 101 Sint-Nicolaas in Varne 1377
- 102 Oostmanskerke 1404
- 103 Schoondijke 1583/1585
- 104 Nieuwkerke 1570 and mil. inund. 1584
- 105 Sint-Catharina Sint-Cathelijne 1375/1376 and 1583
- 106 Coxie Coxyde 1477, 1583
- 107 Hannekenswerve storm and mil. inund., before 1660
- 108 Nieuwvliet 16th century
- 109 Oostende before 1516
- 110 Westende before 1516
- 111 Reimersdorpe Remboudsdorpe before 1516
- 112 Waterdunen before 1516
- 113 Avenkerke before 1516
- 114 Schoneveld 1375
- 115 Sint-Lambert-Wulpen 1516
- 116 Schoonboom 14217
- 117 Dekenscapelle Noordwelle 1463



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

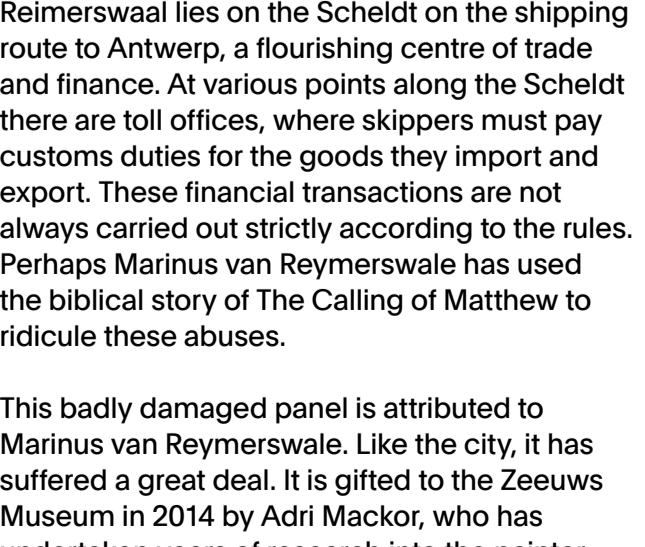
Reimerswaal

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.

Workshop of Marinus van Reymerswale, Two tax collectors, c. 1540 (oil on panel). © Collection National Gallery, London; inv.nr. NG944.

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.

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.

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.

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.

WIN MEER, BELEEF MEER