



The Community Newspaper International Readers' Service Dec 2005

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New Year's Reception community centre 't Klokhuis

Sunday 15 January 2006
between 15.00-17.00

During the reception the chairman of the Archipel/Willemspark Residents Association will present the *Ereprijs* for 2004 to a resident whose work in the neighbourhood serves as an inspiration to others. The prize of honour was introduced by the Residents Association and is being awarded for the fifth time. This award - a decorative pin made of silver was designed by local volunteer Eva Drijver. The fact that glasses can still be raised to usher in 2006 in a community centre rescued from closure is thanks to the unstinting commitment shown by Klokhuis volunteers and members of the Residents Association. Welcome!

Board of the Klokhuis Foundation

&

Board of the Archipel/Willemspark Residents Association



New Year's Reception Vredeskapel Malakkastraat

Saturday 7 January 20.00

Everyone from the neighbourhood is very welcome!

Our special guest will be the local choir: Archicapella
as well as

- a lottery (tickets at the bar)
- snacks and drinks
- music and conviviality

For more information contact the *Vrienden Voor Het Leven Foundation*,
the Lohman family, tel: 070 346 41 39



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Take a 'December photo' with your mobile and win a book



Take a stunning 'December photo' with your mobile telephone, send it to peter@archipelbuurt.nl and win a useful book about making digital photos. Your photo must meet three conditions: it has to be taken in Archipel or Willemspark (preferably

somewhere recognizable); it has to have a December theme (e.g. snow, St. Nicholas, Christmas, ice, the kiddies shoes in the AH window): and of course it has to be taken with your mobile (we can check this). The person who submits the best photo, chosen by our jury, will win a copy of the brand-new book *Digitaal fotograferen zonder handleiding* (Digital Photography without a Manual) by local resident Peter de Ruiter. The book is about taking better photographs in general and in particular with your mobile! Photos can be submitted until 15 January 2006 and the most interesting ones will be posted immediately on this site (the number of pixels is immaterial).



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Bankastraat has it's say

For those arriving in the Archipel from the direction of Scheveningen, the Bankastraat forms a majestic entry into the neighbourhood. It takes its name from the island of Bangka, north-east of South Sumatra, which marks the transition between the South China Sea and the Java Sea. In other words, it serves as a kind of gateway to Indonesia. The island became famous when Sukarno was interned there in 1948, during Indonesia's struggle for independence from Dutch colonial rule.

The (literal) high point of the Bankastraat (spelled without the 'g') used to be the Beau Séjour hotel, built in 1882. To avoid spoiling the view towards the city centre, the back of the hotel was taken as the building line for the houses further up. They were among the most expensive in The Hague and were always the preserve of a wealthy élite. In 1910, their rental value was as much as 1000 guilders a year....

Some people think that the Archipel used to be an all-Dutch neighbourhood and that expats are a new phenomenon, but in fact the Bankastraat has always been extremely international. In 1895, only 16% of the population was Hague-born - a smaller proportion than those from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). A big difference was that three-quarters of the families in the neighbourhood then had live-in staff. Most of the working population were in class 1 occupations: a category that included senior civil servants, bankers, lawyers, company directors, missionaries and - strangely enough - magnetisers (the forerunners of today's alternative therapists and medical practitioners).

These days, the Bankstraat is the heart of the Archipel: the place to go for a sociable drink or a quiet dinner, or to do your shopping on a Saturday, in the certain knowledge that you'll bump into a host of local friends and acquaintances while you're at it.

Total makeover?

Not entirely, but the neighbourhood will hardly recognise the

Bankastraat's familiar office-on-stilts once the current conversion is completed.

Dennis Hofman (of Architectencombinatie BRW) has used the existing structure as the basis for his design for an up-to-the-minute apartment block accommodating 8 flats and 1 penthouse. Local residents contemplating a move will feel completely at home in them. The old-fashioned dimensions of the offices offer space for the kind of large, 3m-high rooms we're all used to, as well as a balcony with loggia and an extra bathroom for guests. And they're right here in our own area!

Fortunately, there are also plans to do something about those 'ugly stilts': on the Bankstraat side they will disappear behind a sloping grassy bank incorporating the existing trees, while in the Delistraat higher walls will be built to hide them. The result will be, as it were, to create a continuation of the line of garden vegetation on both sides.

The Archipel will be pleased!

When is the completion date?

The building will be ready for occupation around the end of 2006. There is no lack of interest from potential buyers: the penthouse and almost all the flats have already been sold.

Interested? Call at Statenlaan 128 between 9.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., or tel. 350 14 00.

'A playboy and a drunkard'

In the 1920s, one of the distinguished gentlemen residents of the "upper" Bankastraat used to receive regular visits from a close friend: Prince Hendrik, consort of Queen Wilhelmina and grandfather of the present queen. Prince Hendrik is described in Wikipedia as 'a playboy and a drunkard'.

Apparently, the house in the Bankastraat was one of the places to which he used to escape for a good time behind closed doors. According to local legend, another part of the Bankastraat was also the scene of numerous escapades on the part of this royal boozier. Look carefully at the side wall of Café Banka and you may still be able to make out the shape of a door which allowed him to slip away unseen when threatened with discovery during one of his drinking sessions.

**Down with uniformity!
Long live specialist shops!**

Most people are in two minds about the benefits of large supermarkets. We all know they're very convenient but the range of small shops in streets like the Bankastraat is part of the charm of many urban neighbourhoods.

Alex Philipse has lived in the Bankastraat since 1981 and has strong views on the subject: "It used to be like a village high street, with all the little food shops. The arrival of Albert Heijn has changed all that. Especially now it's expanded so much. You hear some people say it's so wonderful to have a big supermarket like that in the street, but that's surely not why they came to live in the Archipel."

Seven days a week

Annet Polderman lives above her picture-framing business in the broad, bottom section of the Bankastraat. She's delighted that the expansion of the supermarket is attracting more shoppers to the street, though that may just as well be due to the current slight upturn in the economy. But she's not so pleased with the changes in the supermarket otherwise. As a shopper she doesn't think much of the layout and as a local shopkeeper she doesn't like the way the store is now selling cards, for example, even

though there are already three shops in the street already competing in that area. And then there's the Sunday opening issue. "Handy that you can do your shopping seven days a week, but it just *has* to be at the expense of the little specialist shops that make the Bankastraat so attractive."

Working together

It's the same old story: Albert Heijn as the great leveller. It's up to the specialist shops to fight their corner. Alex Philipse: "It wouldn't be a bad idea if they made more of a communal effort. There are plans in that direction but they're not really getting off the ground. Everyone's got their own little vested interests. I really think that with a powerful retailers' association Albert Heijn would never have got away with what it's done." Annet Polderman: "That long stretch of blank window on the Bankastraat is really dull, don't you think?"

Arthur Philipse warns that the vivacity and diversity of the Bankastraat faces another threat: the neighbourhood's very prestige. The Archipel is one of the most popular residential areas in The Hague. Who wouldn't want to live here? Estate agents and other service providers are keen to grab any retail property that falls vacant: another task for the retailers' association, if it ever gets its act together!

We're also spoilt for choice when it comes to treating ourselves to a well-earned snack or drink...

Café Banka

Well-known for its inviting pavement tables on the corner opposite Albert Heijn, this café is probably as old as the Bankastraat itself (i.e. late 19th century). It was once connected to a lodging house (now the next-door antique shop). The café's present 'gents' is still in that building, under the stairway visible from the street. And if you look on the Sumatrastraat side, you can still see the doorway where measures of Dutch gin were once sold for home consumption.

The broad, bottom section of the Bankastraat where the café stands once had tram rails running down the centre of the road. When they were removed in the 1960s, the pavement was widened to make room for the present French-style pavement terrace. The glassed-in area came later, in 2002. These days the café is run by Patrick and Peter, with the help of extra staff to serve outside in good weather. The two leased the café eight years ago from its owner, Cock Letch (I kid you not!), whose distinctive moustache can still frequently be spotted on the premises. Between them, they've made the place what it is: a relaxed and unfailingly friendly neighbourhood café used by people of every age and occupation, locals and visitors alike.

Limoncello

Limoncello is a complete contrast to the greasy-spoon snack bar previously on the premises. Rosa, who runs it, is a Colombian lady of Italian descent. She is clearly a woman of taste. The light, open interior complements the invariably fresh and healthy, generally Mediterranean-inspired, dishes she serves. Despite the name of the place (which refers to a lemon liqueur), alcoholic beverages are not available but this is an ideal place for lunch - inside or out.

Grillroom Ophir

Coby and her Egyptian husband Fad have been running this grillroom for the last fifteen years. They named it Ophir - after a legendary region of Egypt renowned for its gold and precious stones - in homage to Coby's father, who was fascinated by the country but never got to go there. The menu offers a wide choice of exotic dishes made with organic ingredients, all highly affordable. 'High quality at a low price' is Coby's motto, and she makes everyone feel welcome. Coby is a true native of The Hague, born

in the Zeestraat, and with a heart of gold towards the grillroom's many regulars.

Bankastreet characters

The Bankastreet has always had its 'characters'. Longer-term residents will remember Cor Rog, who used to sell herring from a bucket in the back of his van outside the supermarket. More recently, Arie the accordion-player could still be seen (and heard) on the bench outside Café Banka. Both are now enjoying a well-earned retirement.



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Manager for 't Klokhuis

As of 1 December 2005, 't Klokhuis has a new manager: Mr Peter Jautze. Mr Jautze has worked in the welfare sector for more than 30 years in all sorts of functions. Until recently, he was supervisor of the well-run and busy community centre De Burcht in Schilderswijk in The Hague.



Peter Jautze is now in the process of settling in and assessing the possibilities for an efficiently run Klokhuis. Volunteers and visitors can meet him daily in 't Klokhuis.

