

Rendezvous Batavia, Batavia 1928 Information and air views

Dirk Teeuwen MSc



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of Java seen from the air; Batavia
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H. M. QUEEN WILHELMINA, OF THE NETHERLANDS,
PRINCESS OF ORANGE NASSAU, DUCHESS OF
MECKLENBURG ETC. ETC.

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BATAVIA, CAPITAL OF NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

SITUATION AND POPULATION. Batavia, the capital of the Netherlands East Indies, is situated in the Western part of Java, in 6° 8' Longitude South and 106° 48' Longitude East. The population of the city with the new town Weltevreden, which forms with Batavia proper one municipality, and the adjacent township of Meester-Cornelis, is 305.691, of which 29.580 are Europeans.

It is the intellectual and political centre of the colony, the most important educational institutions as well as the "Volksraad" (People's Council) being located here.

It is the town where most tourists begin their tour through Java, and is distanced some 532 nautical miles from Singapore. This distance is traversed by steamers in some forty hours, the route from Singapore leading past the Rhio Archipelago and through the Straits of Bangka, which divides the Islands of Banka and Billiton, both well known for their extensive tin mining. During the voyage one crosses the equator.

THE HARBOUR. Steamers for Batavia arrive at the harbour called Tandjong Priok, situated at a distance of some 6 miles from the town. This harbour was opened in 1886 after nine years work and originally consisted of an outer basin and an inner basin. At present it has three inner basins.

The entrance to the outer basin from the sea is formed by two long breakwaters, each about 6000' long. The basin itself has a depth of some 35'. The inner basins are about 35000' long and 560' wide and have each two quays, along which sheds, warehouses and some offices of shipping companies are located. The harbourworks are provided with the most modern equipment, including electric cranes, a railway system along the quays and other up-to-date material.

The first inner basin is mostly used by steamers of the Royal Packet Navigation Company, the Burns Philp Line and smaller steamers of foreign nationality. The second inner basin is at present in use for the Netherlands Royal Mail liners and larger steamers of foreign nationality. As most tourists coming to Java travel via Singapore, they land in the first inner basin.

The station at Tandjong-Priok is situated to the East of the harbour basins, and since 1925 electric trains are run to Weltevreden and Mr. Cornelis. Motor cars are also always in evidence on the arrival of ships. The post and telegraph office is located near the entrance to the first inner basin, and the harbour master's office (where the money paid for landing permits is refunded) on the quay of the 2nd inner basin. A public telephone stand is on the platform of the railway station.

OLD BATAVIA. The town of Batavia was founded by Jan Pietersz. Coen in 1619, on the banks of the river Tjiliwung near the seashore. In the beginning the town extended to the South of the banks of the Tjiliwung and it was only during the latter years of the 19th century and the first half of the last century that Europeans settled in the quarters which are at present known by the name of Weltevreden. This was for a good deal on account of the old town being rather swampy and as result, unhealthy, and at present no Europeans live in the old town. To-day only the offices, banks, warehouses and various mercantile houses are located in Old Batavia and the population consists chiefly of Chinese and Natives. The Benedenstad or "down-town" as it is usually called, was built on a site near the sea in old Dutch style intersected by canals and with narrow streets. Most of the buildings of olden times have gone, but a few like the Town Hall, the Portuguese Church, and the house occupied by the Government Archives still show the style of building then in use. Old Batavia contains very few relics of the early days, but it is quaint and delightfully picturesque town, its canals adding much to its charm to the stranger.

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RELICS OF THE DUTCH EAST INDIAN COMPANY. Of those relics must be mentioned the old Town Hall, which is situated on a square, a substantial looking building dating from 1710. It is now in use as the offices of the Governor of West Java and others. Entering the building a fine old teak staircase and some old paintings may be seen. A little further, on an open square named Kasteelplein, one sees the Penang Gate a rather unimposing piece of architecture, dating from 1671. It formed once part of the walls of the city, but these have long since disappeared. Passing through this arch, one passes, just to the left, half buried in the ground, an old cannon, the Si-Jagur or Mariam Besar, as it is called by the natives. Its history is not known and it bears no date but the end is fashioned as a closed fist and it has an inscription in Latin which reads

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VIEW OF TANDJONG PRIOK, THE HARBOUR OF BATAVIA.
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KALI BESAR, THE CENTRE OF THE BUSINESS QUARTER IN BATAVIA, SHOWING THE PREMISES OF
VARIOUS BANKS AND BUSINESS HOUSES.

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"Exme ipsa renata sum" (out of myself reborn), which is doubtless a reference to its recasting from some other gun. The natives believe that this cannon has the power of fertility and one may always find natives there in the act of offering or burning incense. According to a native superstition, this old gun will some day be joined by its mate, which is most probably the old gun found in Bantam, and on that day the rule of the Hollanders in Java will end.

Going on and passing two bridges one comes to Pasar Ikan (the Fish Market) and the fishing harbour. This is probably the most picturesque spot of Batavia. A mosque and holy grave are located in the vicinity and also the recently opened aquarium which is well worth a visit. It is open every morning from 9—12. Returning to the Town Hall and from there turning to the left, one sees at the Eastern side of the square the Court of Justice; continuing in the direction of the upper town until the railway track is crossed, and then turning to the left over a bridge, one comes to the so called Portuguese Church, which was built in 1693. In the churchyard is the tomb of Zwaerdecroon, who was Governor-General from 1718—1725. Its upper part is made of cast iron and it is quite a good specimen of the tomb stones made in those times. In the church itself is a rather fine pulpit and on the walls hang a number of escutcheons, one of these bearing a reference to the founding of the church.

Going on from the church a few yards up Jacatra road, one's attention is drawn to a section of an old wall which is surmounted by a white washed human skull, transfixed by a spear head. A tablet below the skull bears an explanation in Dutch and Javanese, stating that in detested memory of the traitor Peter Erberfeld, building or planting in this spot is forbidden for now and all time.

However with the exception of these few remains of early days, i.e. the Town Hall, Penang Gate, sacred cannon, church and skull, there are hardly any places of historical interest left. The numerous old mansions, once the houses of the rich merchants, have been transformed into banking, shipping and other commercial offices, although, some times in an altogether unexpected corner one may find traces of former splendour in carved balustrades and stairways, fine doors and wonderful old knockers.

Driving through the present Chinese quarters of old Batavia, a most picturesque part of the town, looking with all its canals like a Chinese Venice, and on to Kali Besar, the river, with on both sides the European mercantile houses and offices, one reaches at the end of this street an old Dutch drawbridge and on entering the street to which the bridge gives access finds at the end of it again the Penang Gate already mentioned. About halfway between Batavia and Weltevreden one passes the building occupied by the Government Archives and which was once the house of the Governor-General van Riebeeck (1708). It is well worth while to have a look inside this building, and especially the entrance hall with its old tiles depicting different built far back stories from the bible, is worth seeing.

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THE RESIDENTIAL QUARTER, WELTEVREDEN, or the "upper town", is the modern part of Batavia. It is the district where most European residents live and the government and municipal offices, hotels, clubs and shops are located. It may aptly be called a garden city with its broad roads, large squares, abundance of shade trees, large public buildings and hundreds of delightful houses and bungalows, from the roads and surrounded by spacious gardens and lawns.

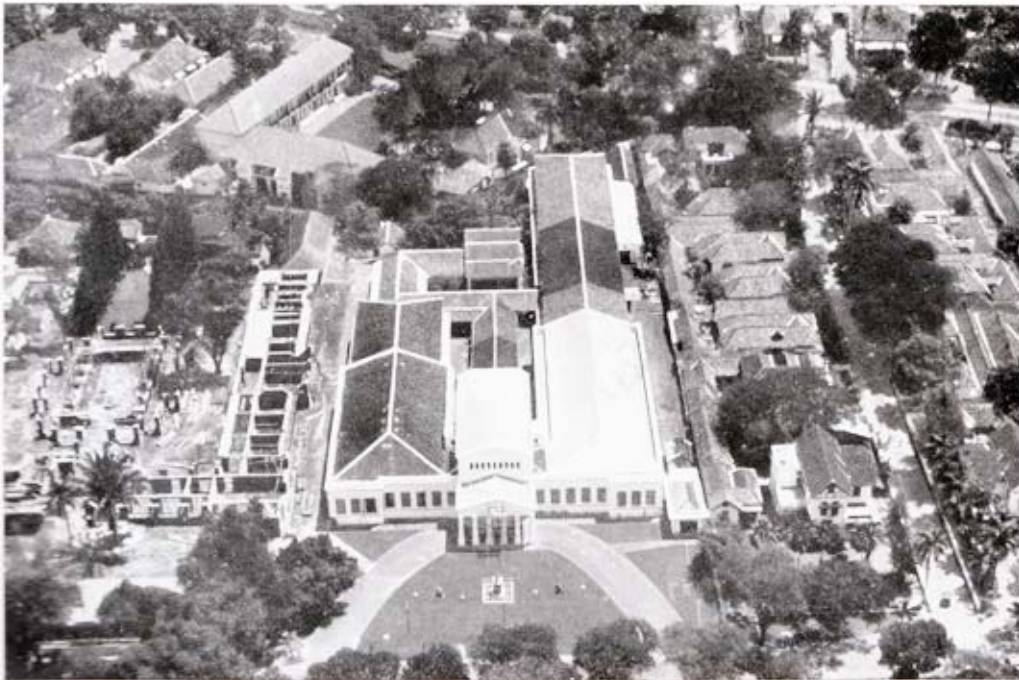
The name Weltevreden means well-content and the town is altogether different from the towns found in other parts of the Far East. Sightseeing in the town is best done either in the morning or in the late afternoon as during the midday hours the heat is rather trying. The principal streets in the shopping district are Rijswijk and Noordwijk, on either side of the river Tjiluwung. Another place of interest in the Koningsplein (a large square to the South of Rijswijk and connected with that street by two main roads called Gang Pool and Gang Secretarie). On the North side of this square one sees the Palace of the Governor-General, which however is only occasionally occupied, as the greater part of the year H. E. lives in his palace at Buitenzorg in the famous Botanical Gardens.

Amongst the principal streets or rather roads in Weltevreden are: Willemslaan, Kramat, the main street leading to the suburb Meester-Cornelis and on to Buitenzorg, and Tanah Abang, which is a continuation of Rijswijk Street. At the end of a side street of Tanah Abang lies the European cemetery, and at the entrance one sees a few old grave stones, decorated with armorial bearings, calling one back to the times of the East

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PALACE OF H.E. THE GOVERNOR GENERAL ON THE KING'S SQUARE, WELTEVREDEN.
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THE MUSEUM, KONINGSPLEIN (KING'S SQUARE), WELTEVREDEN.

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India Company. This cemetery contains the grave of Lady Raffles, the wife of Sir Stamford Raffles, the British Governor-General during the period of the English occupation (1810). There is furthermore Kebon Siri, which connects Tanah Abang with Menteng, and Pasar Baroe, the beazaar district of Weltevreden, which is well worth a visit on account of its many shops. At the end of it is a covered fruit market.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES. The principal government offices at Batavia and Weltevreden are the Department of the Civil Service, the Department of Education and Public Worship, that of Finance, the Naval Department and the Department of Public Works. Furthermore the Statistical Office, the office of the Public Health Service, the Central Post Office, the office of the Opium Monopoly (the opium factory also being located at Weltevreden), the Head Office of the Pawnshop Service, etc. In addition to a large number of primary and secondary schools for various races there are a few higher educational institutions like the Law College, the Medical College, training schools for schoolteachers, etc.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION. An electric and a steam tram maintain communication between Meester Cornelis and Weltevreden and Batavia, only the steam tram running to Meester Cornelis. In addition to these, three lines of Railways connect Weltevreden at different points with Batavia and Tandjong Priok. An electric train service (every 15 minutes) connects Tandjong Priok with Meester Cornelis via Kemajoran, Pasar Senen and Kramat. The continuation of this line to Weltevreden station and Batavia has also been electrified.

Finally motor cars and carriages are used for transport on a large scale.

Of all the places of interest to be visited in Batavia, the museum takes the first place. It has wonderful collection of images from Buddhistic and Hindu times, a large ethnographical collection of objects relative to the religious and family life in all parts of the Netherlands East Indies, wonderful gold and silver work from Bali and other Islands, and beautiful weapons, in fact a visit to the museum gives one a most instructive and complete idea of what is to be found in the East Indian Archipelago. For those interested in native life a visit on a Sunday morning can be recommended as then the museum is full of native visitors of all classes. But to view the objects one should of course choose a weekday.

The newer parts of Weltevreden, called New Gondangdia and New Menteng are situated to the South of Koningsplein and West of Tjikini Road, which is the prolongation of Koningsplein East and Parapattan—Menteng. It is a well laid out suburb with beautiful bungalows and a drive through that part of the town is well worth while.

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SCIENTIFIC AND ARTISTIC INSTITUTIONS. The leading scientific institutions and associations are also located in the capital. They include the Observatory, the Batavia Association of Arts and Sciences, the Municipal Theatre, the Art Association (Kunstkring), the Royal Geographical Society and various professional associations.

TRIPS. From Batavia many interesting trips may be made both in the immediate vicinity and up-country. One which can be highly recommended is that to Buitenzorg, a small town situated at about 36 miles from the capital, which is famous for its wonderful Botanical Gardens, Zoological Museum etc. The palace of the Governor General is also situated here. Soekaboemi, still further up-country, can also be easily reached from Batavia and offers many interesting sights. In the immediate vicinity of Batavia there is the village of Karet which is the centre of the Batik industry in this district. The many antiquities of Bantam, such as old forts, and other relics of bygone days are also within easy reach of the capital so that it will be seen that the visitor to Batavia is not forced to confine his attentions to the attractions of the town itself.

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OLD BATAVIA, THE CENTRE OF THE BUSINESS QUARTER.
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VIEW OF MEESTER CORNELIS, A SUBURB OF BATAVIA.

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ROYAL JAVA MOTOR CLUB

DE KONINKLIJKE VEREENIGING JAVA MOTOR CLUB



When considering the prosperity of a country generally and of remote districts particularly it will be seen that it is greatly influenced by the existence or non-existence of good road communications and therefore the beautiful roads we find all over the principal islands of the Dutch East Indian Archipelago have certainly contributed in a large scale towards the

prosperity of this island empire.

At the beginning of 1928 the road mileage of Java and Madura amounted to 21.560 K.M. of which 7540 K.M. is main road and 13.460 K.M. secondary roads. Of the main roads no less than 1830 K.M. are asphalted excluding the streets in the towns. Taking all the roads in the Archipelago we come to a round figure of 40.000 K.M.

At the beginning of 1928 there were 77.078 motor vehicles running on these roads, of which 54.889 were automobiles, 8.040 trucks, 11.106 motor cycles and 3.043 motor buses, whilst these numbers are still steadily increasing.

The interests of these thousands of motorists and motor cyclists in the Dutch East Indies are looked after by the Royal Java Motor Club which was established in 1906 and which in the course of years has grown into a powerful and influential organization. International warning signs and sign posts are erected by the Club to warn the driver of dangerous spots and to guide him on his way. No less than 17.000 signs are in use and recently they have been provided with reflectors which are illuminated by the head lights of the automobile at night time.

Various publications have been issued by the Club such as road maps of Java, Madura and Bali, estate maps of Java and Madura containing a supplement showing the products grown on the estates, handbooks containing information on hotels, resthouses, ancient monuments, points of interest, springs and bathing places and distance tables for Java, Madura, Sumatra and Bali. A complete road map of Java is in course of preparation and will probably be published in 1928. The Head Office of the club is situated in Samarang, branch offices are established in Sourabaya and Batavia and the opening of an office in Sumatra is being considered. The Club has further 120 representatives known as "consuls" at all interesting places in these islands, who render assistance to automobilists. All members have the insignia of the Club on their cars to distinguish them from other vehicles.

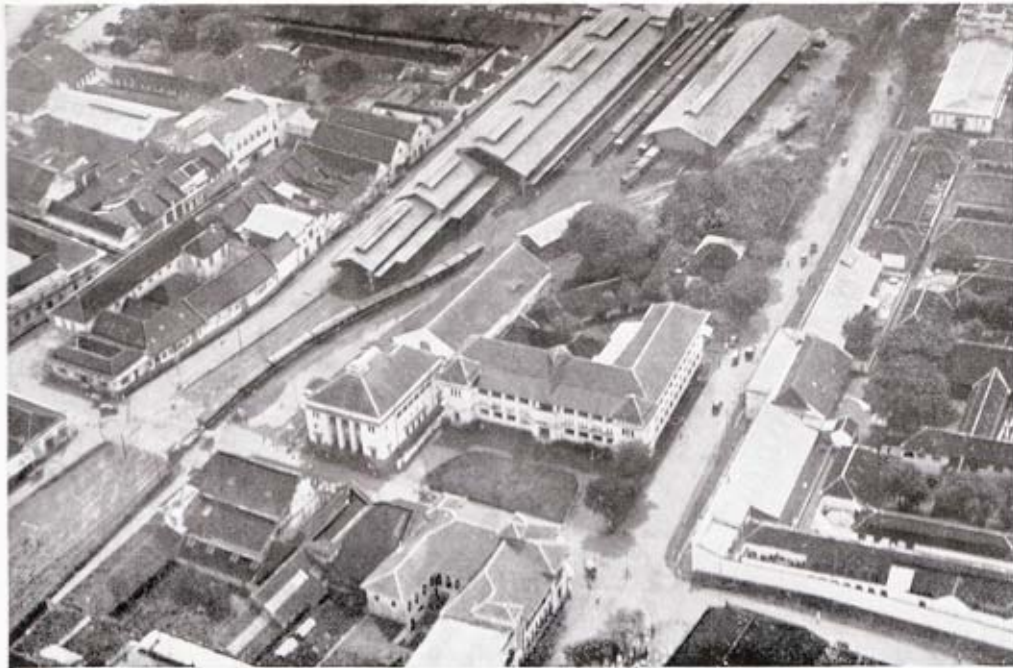
The Club publishes its own organ weekly, known as "Het Sportblad" and this is distributed to the members free. In this way they are kept informed of all things of interest in the automobile world. Members are also entitled to further privileges such as 10% reduction on the insurance premium, free garage accomodation and reduced rates in the Club hotels.

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The Club also acts in an advisory capacity towards the various authorities and makes suggestions regarding the repair and construction of bridges, roads etc., some of which works are subsidized by it. It also urges the passing of bye-laws and regulations in the interest of motor travel and the removal of those which hinder it.

The contribution for automobilists is f. 40.— and for motor cyclists f. 30.— per year, whilst the entrance fee is f. 10.—. Visitors to the Dutch East Indies can become temporary members of the Java Motor Club upon payment of f. 35.—. They receive a certificate which entitles them to apply for information and assistance to the offices of the Club or its representatives; road maps and distance tables are supplied free of charge and free garage accomodation is obtainable in the Club hotels.

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HEAD OFFICE AND SECRETARIAT OF THE ROYAL JAVA MOTOR CLUB, SAMARANG.

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MOUNTAIN MOTOR ROAD IN THE PREANGER REGENCIES SHOWING THE SPLENDOUR OF THE SCENERY.

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"The Dutch Flag"

"We must recognise the undeniable great and beneficial influence which has been and is exercised by Holland as Ruler, Leader and as Guardian of this extensive island-empire and its various races of divergent grades of civilisation.

It is Holland that brings peace, order and development to the country, and which was able to carry out this work as it found here races that were amenable to these influences.

It is Holland which leads here, a leadership which, for the time being, cannot be missed without risk to the unity of the archipelago, to the great mutual interests of East and West and to those of an international character."

*A. Neytzell de Wilde, LL.D.,
President of the Volksraad.*



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