

The beemster polder (Windmills)

There is a good reason for the fact that the Beemster Polder is listed on the Unesco World Heritage Register. The draining of this lake in 1612 is a shining example of how the Dutch “created” large areas of their country in the north, west and south-west of the Netherlands. In 1607 a group of Amsterdam merchants and town administrators decided to drain the Beemster which at the time was a large lake. It promised to be a financially lucrative project that moreover would contribute to providing food for the fast-growing town of Amsterdam. In 1612, the lake was dry and the polder could be laid out. Roads were laid, channels and locks were dug and farms were built. The design was well-ordered in a tight geometric pattern. The Beemster Polder’s fame is due to this allotment and design.



The allotment plan for the Beemster after 1612. The five squares have been gradually put into use, and one of the squares has grown into the main village Middenbeemster. Copperplate engraving (engraver: Daniel van Riebeeck, 1658). Source: North-Holland Public Records Office

