

New traffic arrangements at the market square



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Blick in die Südstraße, 1934

"Anyone wanting to drive across the market square must look up. Then all dangers sort themselves out beautifully" - with these cheerful opening lines of the poem "Green and Red", the Bocholt-based local poet Alois Johannes Jacobs sought to rally the public behind the new road traffic regulations in the summer of 1934.

The background to this appeal was the installation and commissioning of two traffic lights in front of the newly redesigned market square on 14 September 1934.

New traffic regulations

The reason for installing these suspended traffic lights was the heavy volume of traffic at the junctions near the market, namely at the crossings of Osterstraße and Ravardistraße, Königstraße and Kirchstraße, and Nordstraße and Neustraße. They were also intended to replace the traffic police officers who were permanently stationed there.

The photograph shows the two traffic signal systems between the Gewerbebank and Kaiser's coffee shop (in the foreground) and on the street corner in front of Feldmann's chemist's (in the background). The viewer is standing in Nordstraße and looking south into Neustraße. On the left is the advertising column with a clock mounted on top, which stood in front of the Georgius Pharmacy until early 1936. The posts in front of it, which were red and white and linked by chains, were part of the structural improvements to the

market square (then known as Horst-Wessel-Platz). The two electric traffic lights each weighed 80 kg and were suspended 4.80 m above the road, with the control panel located behind the Kaiser's coffee shop.

For the local population, this innovation was a sensation, as in the first few days after it came into operation, the market square was teeming with people who wanted to familiarise themselves with the changes to the traffic system on the spot. Even the renovation work on the market square proved to be quite extensive and warranted a detailed report in the press. This included explanations of how the new traffic lights worked and a description of the resulting traffic rules.

Residents had to adapt

However, residents initially found these changes quite difficult to cope with. Humorous Low German rhymes and illustrative examples of the mistakes pedestrians, cyclists and motorists were still making were intended to help. Incidentally, the verses by the writer Jacobs mentioned at the start, which were published in the press, ended with the recommendation : *"O 'My friend, lift your gaze with confidence when traffic swirls wildly around you; remember, your path, your fate, is now guided only from above."*

The photo of the month is presented once a month by the Bocholt City Archive.

Photos and text information come from the holdings of the city archives. The contributions to the picture are written by the following employees of the city archives.

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The picture series was launched at the Bocholt Culture Day 2006 and showed the first photo with the "*Meckermannin Langenbergpark*" in October 2006.

All contributions are collected and printed in the *Unser Bocholt issues* no. 2/2015, 3/2015, 2/2020 and 2-3/2025.