

Bocholt in festive Christmas dress

Advent magic in the city centre



When looking at this photograph, the viewer is transported back to the Advent season of the early 1960s. He is standing directly in front of Bocholt's town hall on the market square and looking eastwards into the city centre at night. The evening hours will have already progressed and there are only a few passers-by in Osterstraße, which is not yet pedestrianised.

However, the sales rooms in the shops on the left and in the Kaiser's Kaffee shop under the arches and the St Georgius pharmacy on the right are still fully illuminated. The streets and house fronts are decorated for Christmas.

From 1 Advent to Epiphany

Since the early 1950s, the district association of Bocholt's retail trade has organised an illuminated advertising campaign in the run-up to Christmas as a joint effort by the companies belonging to the retail association. Together with the decoration of the numerous business premises, this sea of lights gave the hopeful and mysterious Advent and Christmas season an atmospheric character.

The illuminated campaign began on 1 Advent and lasted until Epiphany at the beginning of the following year. Sixty years ago, the houses were literally linked together by curved fir garlands so that the strands of cable for the countless light bulbs were barely recognisable.

Individual chains get stuck

In the middle, an oversized star adorned the lighting structure, with a bell in the centre. The window sills on the upper floors, which were mostly occupied by flats, were decorated with uniform fairy lights, which added to the festive atmosphere - especially during the "white Christmas" in 1963. Occasionally, the organisers also found it difficult to advertise the lights because roadworks proved to be an obstacle or a storm with continuous rain and gale force eight winds hit the country in 1964, often tearing down the garlands of lights.

In mid-January 1963 - the Christmas light advertising campaign should have been over long ago - a few strings of lights were still visible here and there in the city centre streets. After some prompting from the press, these were finally dismantled immediately and the retailers then prepared for the winter sales.

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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