



Above: Advertising-liveried 3021 enters a pedestrian area at Wijnhaven in central Den Haag.

Below: HTM's Scheveningen depot is close to the centre of the resort.



Above: Grote Markt is one of two stations in the tram tunnel opened in 2004.

Left: *GTL8-II* 3128 at Scheveningen Strandweg terminus during the coastal defence rebuilding works.



– Gouda railway interchange. HTM has two rail vehicle types, red and cream *GTL8* trams (some carry advertising) and Alstom *Regio Citadis* tram-trains in RandstadRail white, blue and grey. The latter handle routes 3 and 4; more may be added, both with through-running between the tramway, where clearances had to be increased, and the light rail infrastructure. 'K' (for Kort) with a route number indicates shorter coverage.

Like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, Den Haag faces budget restrictions, leading to a forecast one-fifth HTM staff reduction, service cuts and ensuing strikes. Reflecting the many nationalities in the area, from 2011 HTM is increasing the level of service information in English. **TAUT**

area's intensive settlement. Between the two, Delft is on a southerly HTM tramway branch, currently cut back by rebuilding of the main line station area. The second most populous city after Den Haag in Haaglanden metropolitan area, Zoetermeer has RandstadRail services provided by HTM. The two HTM rail operations are integrated by elaborate infrastructure between a junction at Laan van NOI station, a main line interchange, and Brouwersgracht stop.

Above ground is the 400m space-frame (*Netkoos* 'net stocking') viaduct opened in late 2006 incorporating Beatrixkwartier station. Now being rebuilt, Den Haag Centraal station concourse is crossed at right angles by the light rail tracks (here also carrying tram lines 2 and 6) beyond which is the 1.25km (0.8-mile) tram tunnel in use from October 2004. Contrary to some later thinking on traffic control, the eight-year Souterrain Project included the addition of city parking space. Also with busy surface lines, Spui is one of two in-tunnel stations, both featuring wooden platforms.

The name Randstad applies to the Netherlands' intensively developed western edge; the RandstadRail area is much smaller. The start of services in 2006 was overshadowed and delayed by a series of derailments. Devised to underpin increasing urbanisation, RandstadRail incorporates HTM's Zoetermeer - Den Haag coverage (lines 3 and 4) and RET's Rotterdam line E (previously *Erasmuslijn*) that terminates at ground-level Centraal platforms. HTM and RET RandstadRail vehicles share infrastructure between Laan van NOI station and a junction just south of Leidschenveen. Their different boarding levels are accommodated by two-level platforms.

RandstadRail replaced national railway NS's short-lived suburban service for Zoetermeer 12km (eight miles) east of Den Haag. To serve this very modern settlement, a pretzel configuration is used for line 3. Line 4 is now being extended beyond Javalaan for a second NS Den Haag

DEN HAAG: ESSENTIAL FACTS

How do I get there?

By rail: From London St Pancras journeys take about five hours with a change at Brussels Midi. Arrival may be at Den Haag Centraal or the elegantly-styled Hollands Spoor (HS), both with good tramway connections.

By air: Using Rotterdam The Hague Airport, shuttle bus 50 to RandstadRail RET Line E Meijersplein station. More distant but not necessarily longer in travel time, Amsterdam Schiphol has more flights and destinations: direct trains to Den Haag CS or HS take about 35 minutes.

Local travel: National OV-chipkaart in use. A HTM dagkaart (day ticket) costs EUR7 – check for initial validation requirement. Otherwise very useful, the HTM map (EUR0.50) gives tram and bus stop locations but not their names, except for RandstadRail stations.

What is there to see?

The picturesque and compact centres of Delft and Den Haag meet tourist expectations of a Dutch cityscape. For the famed model city Madurodam, now with miniature *Regio Citadis* in the fleet, take full-sized tram 9 or 8K from Centraal. There is a public transport museum with historic tram fleet at the former Frans Halsstraat depot: www.hovm.nl