

Ende jr, not only for his hospitality when he and his mother invited us to their home to see the collection, but also for his advice during the planning stage, as well as for providing what I gather was an excellent walking tour of Amsterdam in a downpour. I should also like to show my appreciation to Carel Hofland and Bert Degeenaar who extended a warm welcome to us for our visits to Zaandam and Oud-Zuylen and again for their advice and support prior to departure.

Looking forward to 2014, I am planning that we shall visit Italy, particularly Padua and the surrounding area, where there are items of horological interest to be visited.

I propose that departure will be around the second week of September once again. I hope to be able to confirm this soon, as well as to making a suitable hotel reservation to suit the itinerary. As usual, the tour duration will be proposed as seven nights/eight days on a half board basis. Members are urged to check the website, and also to contact me if they wish to be sent details directly.

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AHS Study Tour to the Netherlands

9–16 September 2013

Monday

Our journey started in Tonbridge Kent where we boarded our coach. First stop Dover to catch the ferry to Calais (very smooth crossing), then on through France and Belgium into Holland to our Hotel 'NH Den Haag' in The Hague. It rained all the way! However it didn't spoil what again was a most enjoyable and varied tour. In the evening we were met by some of our Dutch colleagues who extended a very warm welcome. Hans van den Ende jr and Michiel van Hees deserve a very big thank you for organizing and planning our daily itinerary.

Tuesday

A full day in Amsterdam. First to the extremely grand looking Rijksmuseum which had only reopened in April after ten years of restoration.



Salomon Coster watch in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Photo Jan Wright.



An enameled watch in the Rijksmuseum.

Our guides were Michiel and Florianne van Hees. It includes a world-renowned art collection, such as Dutch masters Vermeer and Rembrandt. You can see Delft blue porcelain, sculptures, beautiful furniture, large tables covered in tortoiseshell with silver and mother of pearl inlay, and of course clocks – longcase and bracket. A superb display of pocket watches, mainly 17th and 18th century all in mint condition, 17th century enamels, a very large silver Puritan timepiece watch by Salomon Coster circa 1659. Until late into the



Salomon Coster pendulum clock, dated c. 1659, in the Rijksmuseum. On loan from the Museum van het Nederlands Uurwerk (Museum of the Dutch Clock), which acquired it in 2005. Photo courtesy Museum van het Nederlands Uurwerk.

18th century the Netherlands had its own watch production, initially considered to be amongst the best in Europe. The best item was kept till last. We were privileged to see one of the earliest known pendulum clocks made by Salomon Coster circa 1659. We only had 2½ hours in the museum so we only saw a fraction of what was available.

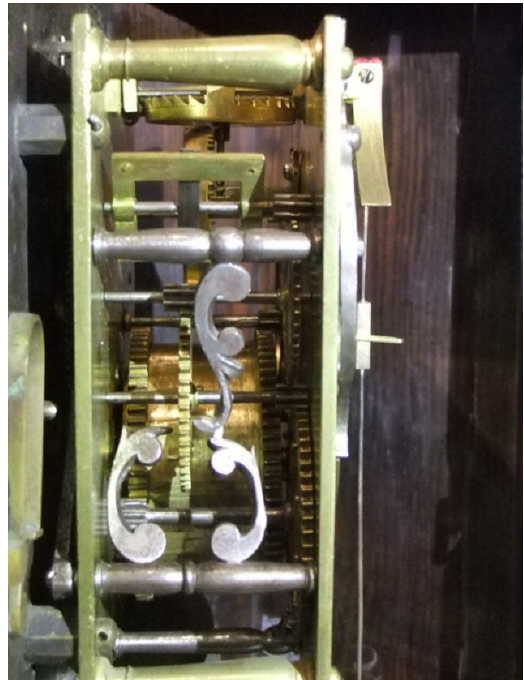
For lunch, we were spoiled for choice, there were cafes and restaurants everywhere especially along the sides of the canals.

After lunch we were met by Hans van den Ende jr for a walking tour of Amsterdam city. Unfortunately it rained again which spoilt what could have been an interesting tour.

Wednesday

Visit to Edam (of cheese fame) and to Zaandam. We split into two groups. Our half first visited Hans van den Ende jr's house in Edam to see his father's outstanding collection of some 350 clocks, while the other went to the Museum of the Dutch Clock; we changed over after lunch.

The Van den Ende collection included early



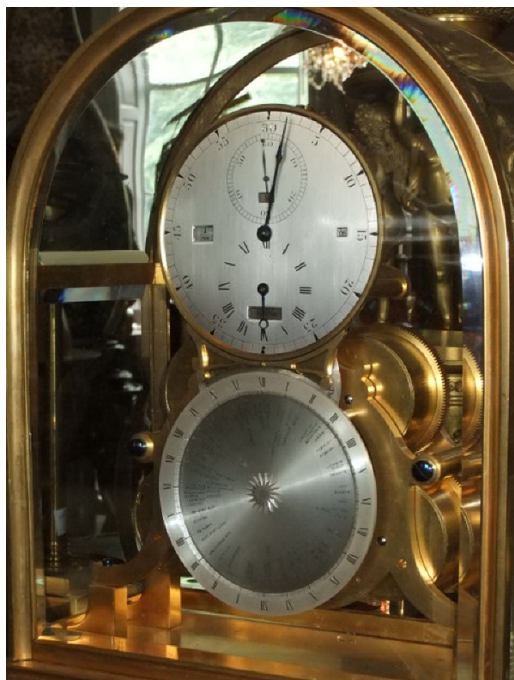
The movement of the Salomon Coster clock.

Haagse pendulum clocks, some with interesting layouts. The Haagse clocks, like small bracket clocks, have very slim cases and normally have rectangular plates; but there was one by Claude Pascal with square plates, which are turned 45° into diamond shape to allow bells (grand sonnerie) to be fitted. Interesting. There were various other clocks including a very good selection of lanterns – balance wheel to pendulum – English and European. All the clocks were in amazing condition. After a cup of tea and cake in the garden we thanked our host for allowing us to see such a wonderful collection.

For lunch we all met in Zaandam at the special pancake restaurant (fillings of every description.) Then our half of the group visited the Museum of the Dutch Clock at Zaandam, housed since 1976 in a very picturesque 18th century house. It is the only museum in the Netherlands which provides an overview of Dutch timekeeping. The collection covers Dutch clocks from a 1500 turret clock with foliot up to 1850 longcase clocks and watches. We also saw a clockmaker's workshop complete with tools. They have the oldest known Dutch longcase clock circa 1670 which shows hours, minutes, seconds, phases and date of the moon. There was also a pendulum clock



Unusual bracket clock, signed Daye Barker London, in Bert Degenaar's collection.



Year going skeleton clock with chronometer escapement in Bert Degenaar's collection.



Part of the planetarium in Bert Degenaar's house, based on Eise Eisinga's Planetarium.

attributed to Salomon Coster, dated c. 1657, which was previously in the collection of the Time Museum, Rockford, Illinois, USA.

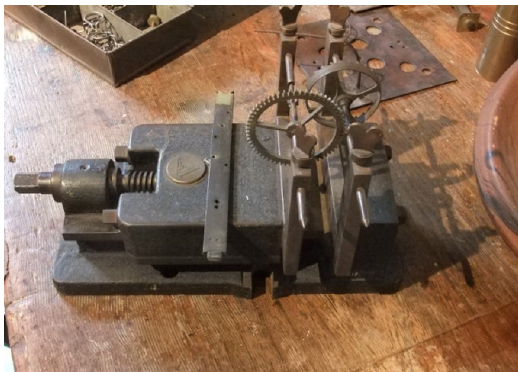
After tea and more cake we said our goodbyes and returned to the hotel to discuss the day's events.

Thursday

Today's visit was to the small village of Oud-Zuylen near Utrecht to Bert Degenaar's house of wonder. It was like walking into Aladdin's cave, there were clocks, watches, orreries and scientific instruments of every description in each room. But pride of place goes to Bert's planetarium, based on the famous Eise Eisinga planetarium in Franeker of 1780 which we were to visit the next day, and is only the second of its kind in the Netherlands. It was hand-made and took three years to build, it was completed in 2009. It covers the ceiling and walls of an upstairs room and is driven by a small turret clock. This was truly an amazing instrument.

We also visited the stunning 13th century moated castle next door, which has been turned into a museum. It has been decorated throughout in 18th century style.

Time for lunch before looking at more clocks and even vintage cars and motorcycles (all English). Another memorable day.



Depthening tool in the Joure Museum



Wheel cutting tool in the Joure Museum



Punches for forming repoussé patterns in the Joure Museum.

Friday

A longer journey today from The Hague to Franeker via the 32 kilometers long Afsluitdijk which connects the province of north Holland with Friesland. This amazing piece of engineering was constructed between 1927 and 1933. A short stop was made for viewing. Then on to Franeker to see the original Eise Eisinga Planetarium of 1780. (To read the full story of this see *Antiquarian Horology*, volume 7, pages 141-48.) A short walk took us to the Museum Martena, which is located in a house constructed in 1506. Here we saw, among others, an early Dutch Friese stoelklok, early porcelain and a collection of small automata figures and fairground rides.

A light lunch before setting off for the Joure Museum of local trades. First was a splendid collection of Frisian clocks including new ones being made – interesting to see an old treadle pole lathe being used to turn the cast brass pillars. An area showed a whole range of clock castings. Another area had a collection

of Linotype printing machines – this is where we lost one of our members, Lynette, who having begun her typesetting apprenticeship on similar ‘vintage’ machinery, was in seventh heaven to be transported back to the days of her early career – memories! There was a silver workshop complete with hundreds of fancy punches for forming repoussé patterns. Another area covered the machines and history of Douwe Egberts, the famous Dutch coffee roaster. A very interesting and varied day.

Saturday

Visit to Utrecht, a university town founded by the Romans. Much of the old town is still intact. Here we visited the Museum Speelklok, a museum of mechanical music. Our hosts started the tour by playing the largest fairground organ I have seen – the sound travels well as the whole museum is built into a large church. We saw a very nice organ clock by Pyke, musical longcase clocks, some with carillons, a very rare pianola that had violins built in, musical dancing automata, many different forms of music box, singing bird boxes, musical watches – the list is endless. There is also an educational area where younger members can operate a variety of organs and carillons.

We broke for a light lunch and time to wander around the town’s cobbled streets. It was market day and some of our members came back loaded with local cheeses.

This afternoon we visited the museum workshop where we saw organs being restored and also new ones being made. Fascinating. You could also see some of the old Roman walls through the glass workshop floor. As a finale to



The group on the AHS Study Tour to the Netherlands, photographed in Leiden. Photo Lynette Hughes.

our visit our hosts had arranged a table in the central isle on which was the rolling automaton from the large table galleon – the bow cannon had been loaded and it fired as it moved forward – it made quite a few people jump! You could say our day went with a bang!

Sunday

Visit to Leiden and the Museum Boerhaave. Opened in 1931, this is the Dutch national museum of the history of science and medicine, including physics and astronomy. All the items were beautifully displayed (some quite gruesome). We found a collection of longcase regulators in glass cases – easy to view, difficult to photograph. Some of the layouts, escapements and pendulums were most unusual.

A light lunch, then a walk through the town to view the reserve collection of clocks and instruments in a purpose-built multi-storey building. There were thousands of items which, like in our museums, may never see the light of day again. But what is different here is that in the basement they are building a full workshop with up-to-date machines, personnel fully trained in the art of conservation and restoration who will be able to train the next generation – great.

Monday

All cases packed and on the coach. This was a day of shall we or shan't we. In view of the distance back to the ferry it was doubtful that we could manage our last visit, however decision was made, we had a 5.30 am call and we were off to what was one of the best visits of the week. How does the old saying go – It's the bells! – It's the bells! Well, bells we had in abundance. The new Klok & Peel Museum at Asten (formerly National Carillon Museum), opened in April 2012, had everything, from tiny hand bells to the 8½ ton copy of the Notre Dame Cathedral bell. Extremely ornate bells from the Far East to the modern carillons. A very good collection of turret clocks, some very large with carillons from the 17th century to fairly modern flat beds, some with very unusual escapements. Pride of place though goes to the modern astronomical carillon clock, based on a much earlier clock.

Time, they say, waits for no man, we could have stayed much longer but the ferry was calling. Our thanks go to Susan and all who helped to organize what was another very successful tour.

Text and photos (except where otherwise indicated) Mike Wilson