

# Travel the Benelux Culture and history on the River Spaarne

by Keith Houin

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Between Amsterdam and the North Sea, seven miles from the coast along the River Spaarne, sits the Dutch town of Haarlem. Once the seat of the Counts of Holland, today it is known for its historic buildings, churches, museums, architecture and cobble stone streets.

In the heart of the main city square sits 'Grote Kerk' or 'St. Bavokerk.' This Late Gothic cruciform church is the city's most striking building. Inside you will find furnishings dating from before the Reformation, 15th and 16th century paintings and other art, but the most impressive item is the Müller organ, dating from 1738 and considered one of the greatest instruments of its type in the world.

Just a four-minute walk away from St. Bavokerk is the Teylers Museum. Teylers Museum is the only museum in the Netherlands that has been

open to the public continuously since 1784. Its authentic interior, containing the original objects, has remained the same since then. In addition to the impressive collection of drawings and prints by artists including Rembrandt and Michelangelo, two special displays are currently open – Real Winters and Pantheon.

In the Real Winters exhibition, for the first time, winter landscapes and skating scenes are combined in an overview that spans from approximately 1780 to 1915. Pantheon explores the use of the depiction of Greek and Roman gods on coins and medals throughout history.

Another must see is the Corrie ten Boom Museum which is dedicated to The Hiding Place, the subject of a book by Corrie ten Boom. The ten Boom family ran a watch shop, but during the Nazi occupation in World

War II they provided safe harbor for Jews and other underground refugees in a hiding place they built upstairs. On February 28, 1944 the family was betrayed and arrested.

Corrie's father Casper died less than two weeks later at the Scheveningen prison, and her sister Betsie died December 16 in Ravensbrück concentration camp. Corrie's nephew, Christiaan had been sent to Bergen Belsen for his work in the underground. He did not return. Her brother Willem contracted spinal tuberculosis while in prison and died shortly after the war.

Other sites to visit include the Frans Hals Museum, the old city hall, Proveniershuis (a collection of buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries founded by the city council to house elderly men) and De Adriaan en De Eenhoorn windmills.

Outside the gate



(clockwise from above) Müller organ of St. Bavokerk (photo by Memorino)  
• De Adriaan windmill (photo by Michiel Verbeek) • St. Bavokerk.