



The National Association of Watch and Clock
Collectors

Philadelphia Chapter One

Chartered November 1, 1943

Summer Picnic

July 15, 2017

At

Merritt's Antiques

1860 Weavertown Rd.

Douglassville, Pa. 19518

9:00AM to 1:00 PM

Lunch 1:00PM to 3:00 PM

Come and enjoy: Good Food Great Friends

Lots and Lots and Lots and Lots of Clocks and Watches

Admission is Free YES FREE!!!

**Picnic Lunches are \$10.00 per person for those who are
preregistered. \$15.00 at the door.**

All tables are indoors. All tables are 8 Foot

Rain or Shine Bring the whole family Guests are welcome.

In order to get Lunch or Mart Tables you must register.

Summer Picnic Registration Form:

July 15th, 2017

Name:_____

Name:_____

Name:_____

I/We will be joining the Chapter for Lunch at \$10.00 ea:___ \$_____

I/We will be requiring _____Mart tables at \$25.00 ea.___ - \$_____

Total \$_____

Registration Forms for the Picnic need to be sent to:

Jeff Fox

2 Pebble Drive

Horsham, Pa. 19044

Not Dave Gorrell this time.

You can also pay your dues for the 2017-2018 calendar year that starts in August.
Dues are \$10.

The Speakers at the Picnic will Be:

Al Dodson : his topic will be:

**“Evaluating Vintage Clocks and Watches for Purchase –
A Guide for Beginning Buyers.”**

Terry Addison: his topic will be:

**“Basic Techniques for Enhancing Clock Cases
Focusing on Wood, China, and Metal.”**

On The Lighter Side:



Floral Clocks

One of the horticultural oddities of the last century is the floral clock. Most of us have encountered them from time to time during our travels, often sighted on gentle slopes in manicured public gardens at tourist destinations. Apart from a moment's thought at the sophistication of the technology and the intricate plantings used by the designers, most of these outdoor landscapes are soon forgotten.



As a working gardener I've had a fascination with these quirky garden features throughout much of my working life. Not only are they a reflection of the design and propagation skills of their creators but they also express the civic pride and wealth of the community in which they are located. Floral clocks are found throughout the world but usually within temperate latitudes within societies which can afford the high cost of upkeep. Hotspots for these horologically functional novelties include North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. But floral clocks of one form or another can be found in other areas of the world too—I know of examples in India, China, and Japan, and recently stumbled on one in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh, hardly a city we connect with municipal prosperity.

While mostly associated with twentieth-century landscape design practice, floral clocks have a history that dates back to the eighteenth century (and even earlier if their horological cousin the sundial is included). The celebrated eighteenth-century Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus was, for example, obsessed with the possibilities of creating a botanical clock, known as a Horologe or Watch of Flora, made up of 46 different flowering plants which opened and closed as the day progressed, thus informing the viewer of the time of day.

During the nineteenth century, floral or carpet bedding became increasingly popular and gardeners experimented in constructing intricate designs combining brightly colored plants sourced from around the world. Reflecting the tastes of the time, gardeners tried to make plants look like something else. While many such bedding designs were laid out in private gardens the increasing establishment of public parks saw these skills transferred into a civic setting.

While carpet bedding began to lose popularity in the late nineteenth century there was clearly an interest to use the skills learnt in ‘bedding-out’ in a new modern way. Reflecting the advances in technology it is not surprising that someone would eventually build an outdoor clock decorated with living plants, with the time being articulated by machine (clock hands) rather than by the plants themselves. The earliest known example of a floral clock was the l’horloge fleurie created by a French horticulturist named Debert in the Trocadéro gardens in Paris (1892). Not long after, another was constructed across the Atlantic at Water Works Park, Detroit (1893) and a decade later the still-extant clock at West Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh (1903). Another significant early example was the giant clock created for the 1904 World’s Fair in St Louis, Missouri. Other early floral clocks were also constructed in Le Mans, Interlaken, and Budapest as well as elsewhere in Europe.

After the first wave of interest in floral clocks some of these were abandoned due to the upheavals of the Great War, but during the 1920s and 1930s interest in the concept returned. With the increasing popularity of the motor car many towns constructed floral clocks as tourist attractions and many new floral clocks were constructed in English coastal towns. Floral clocks came on the scene at the same time as the fashion for postcard collecting so it comes as no surprise that these gardens would become a popular subject. Thanks to the popularity of postcard collecting we have a record of nearly all of them, and as plantings changed each year these postcard views offer a revealing record of changing design approaches.

The best-known example of this chronological record is of the Edinburgh floral clock, photographed by postcard sellers most years since 1903. Designs used for this high-profile example have celebrated royal celebrations and civic achievements as well as anniversaries of significant local worthies. As someone who has planted out formal annual beds I am in awe of the skill of the gardeners who plant-out the dials of these clocks. While some modern dials are decorated with mass plantings and colored gravels, the true floral clock is decorated with thousands of tiny individual plants that have been raised from seed prior to planting out.

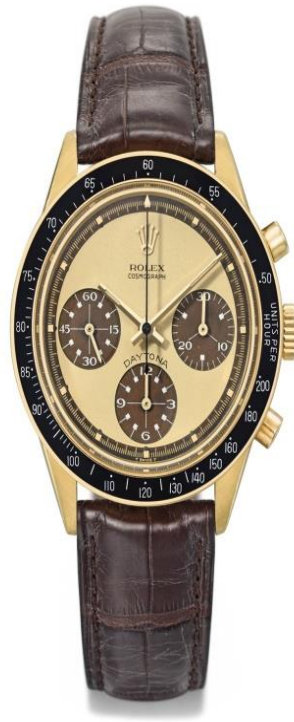
While most landscape themes have been well studied it is slightly surprising that garden historians have written little about these highly distinctive, much viewed landscapes. It is hard to explain such historical neglect as carpet bedding has been well documented and analyzed. But perhaps these quirky landscapes have been perceived in some quarters as a form of horticultural kitsch, reflective of an earlier artistic aesthetic. But like the recent

interest in garden gnomes—now sanctioned by Chelsea Flower Show—there is hope for a revival of interest in these intricate, technologically inspired, floral landscapes.

Some Interesting Watches at Christies Auction:

The "Rare Watches And A Rolex Afternoon" sale at Christie's on May 15th was most notable, to most watch mavens, for the presence of a lot of high value and highly collectable Rolex wristwatches. One lot that just about everyone had their eyes on was number 216, a gold cased Rolex Daytona "Paul Newman" with a tropical dial. The estimate in this case was as so often seems to be the case with Paul Newmans, a bit on the low side; in the catalogue at \$199,073 to \$398,145 (converted from CHF 200,000 to 400,000 at the time of the catalogue's publication) this ref. 2641 went for \$560,803.

The second interesting watch was a musical parrot's head cane watch. The parrot's head is elaborately carved and decorated, with the individual barbs of each feather carefully delineated, and decorated with contrasting *champlevé* enamel (enameling in which a metal surface has hollows carved in it which are then filled with enamel, and fired). The cover over the watch is released by a catch in the handle and is spring loaded so that when it pops open it looks like the parrot has raised its crest. Inside is a wonderful watch movement in an octagonal case, with a miniature music box hidden below it that plays when you open the case.



This is not a precision timekeeper *per se*, obviously; rather, it was intended to be a mechanical distraction and diversion, as well as a conversation piece and would have been a real show-stopper for whomever owned it. The mainspring has the year 1807 scratched on it, and the catalogue notes speculate that a likely date of completion is 1810. The notes also observe: "Almost certainly made in Geneva, it is a testament to the quality of the work of the goldsmith and watchmaker in Switzerland at the beginning of the 19th century. Although the signature on the mainspring of the musical movement cannot be deciphered it must have been made by one of the great workshops in Geneva such as Piguet & Capt or Moulinie, Bautte & Cie." In addition to telling the time and playing a tune, the movement incorporates two animations forming the sort of rustic scene often shown in Rococo period art. The Rococo era only flourished through the mid-18th century and by 1810 its last vestiges would have been wiped out by the French Revolution, but you can still see characteristics of its lightheartedness in some Swiss watchmaking of this period, especially watches incorporated in decorative or useful objects, and those which had animations. Here a blacksmith hammers on his anvil against a backdrop of a fountain; the illusion of flowing water is created by a rotating glass rod. Even the balance wheel has been decorated; its rim glitters with rose cut diamonds. Best of all the watch and music box are fully functional, having been restored by Raúl Pagès, a watchmaker based in Les Brenets, Switzerland



The estimate on this piece was \$29,861 to \$49,768 (converted from CHF 30,000 to 50,000) and eventually it sold for \$95,221. Costly to be sure but a mere fraction of the cost of a Paul Newman Daytona. While lacking the instant recognizability and wider audience of many collectible wristwatches, it makes up for that in its great character and interest – yes, in its time it was an expression of wealth but also a kind of ingenuity and charm that makes such horological objects, at least to a certain niche coterie of collectors, irresistible.

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