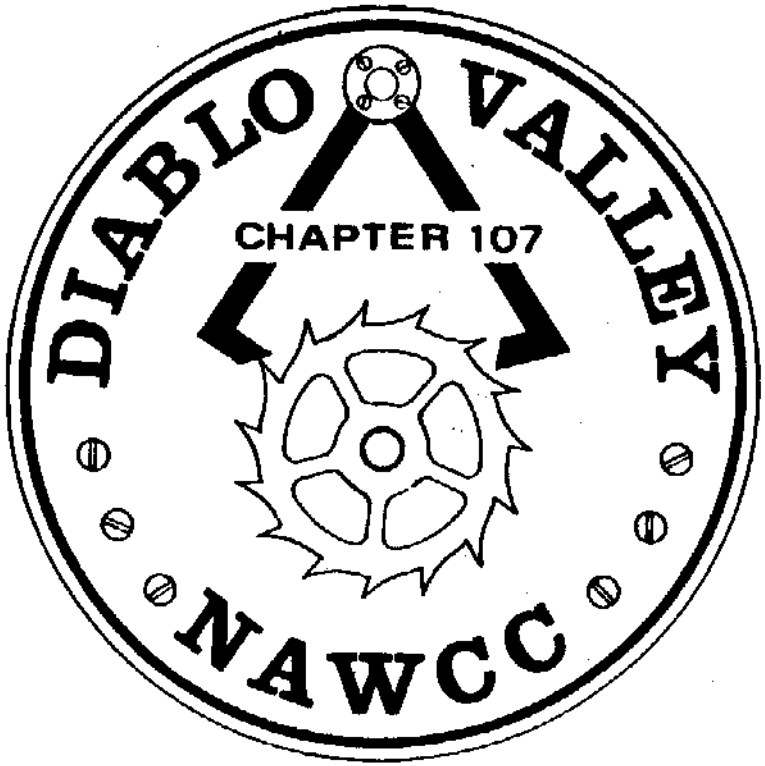
BULLETIN



April 2006
Volume 164

DIABLO VALLEY

Chapter 107
National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors
Chapter Established March 5, 1978

"Accent on Education"

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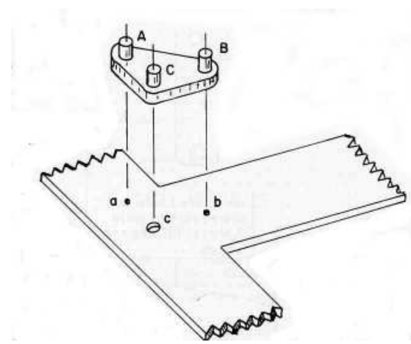
Meeting Notice

April 9, 2006

Mart 11:30, Meeting 12:30

Room B-8
Acalanes Adult Center

MAKING A SIMPLE CLOCK TOOL: THE "PREACHER"



BY

CLARANCE KOBEL

FINAL RENEWAL REMINDER

Dues, spouse included, are $15. You may pay at the next meeting or mail a check to Roy Holman, 4300 Everett Ave., Oakland, CA 94602. Please make checks payable to Diablo Valley Chapter 107. Badges can be picked up at any meeting after your payment is received. <u>Those not renewing before the first of June will be dropped from the mailing list.</u>

President's Message

This month's program is a talk by Clarence Kobel on the "Making of a Small Clock Tool". As of this writing I don't know what the tool is, or does. That, by itself, intrigues me. Clarence, a graduate of the NAWCC School of Horology will share this part of his studies. Come to the meeting and learn what it is and how to make it.

Secondly, a reminder that our August picnic also includes a White Elephant Auction. Survey your collection, including that shelf in the back closet, for suitable elephants.

Price asked me to lead off the new series of articles on favorite clocks and watches. This was a bit more difficult than I thought. I narrowed it down to two. One was the Japanese school clock I purchased so I could participate in the second session of the Acalanes Adult Education clock course. I learned the rudiments of clock repair on it and it has been running on our wall for 30 years.

But I decided my real favorite is a John Ellicott (1706 - 1772) tall case, 8 day T&S. Part of my preference is how we got it. In October 1979 my wife and I made our first trip to England, with several days in London. We were on our own, making it up as we went along. One day we were walking down the street in London and passed Sotheby's. A notice said there would be a clock auction the next day. Sharp right into Sotheby's, bought the catalog and started looking. It was filled with (to our eyes) fine clocks. On a tall clock I recognized the name "John Ellicott, London", one of the early greats in English clockmaking (Fromenteel, East, Clement, Tompion, Graham, Ellicott). It appeared the top crown on the hood had been removed- but we still liked it.

Continued on page 10

Editor's Section

This issue contains the first "Favorite Clocks and Watches" report. I thank Jack Coulter for getting the ball rolling. I hope others will follow his lead. Do not be surprised if you are called upon.

At the last meeting, Lee Thomas mentioned the use of false-plates in tallcase clocks. He graciously agreed to provide an article on this subject (page 6). Thanks Lee. Contributions like these greatly enhance the interest and educational level of our *Bulletin*.

Last issue I promised to compile a listing of our library holdings. We now have all the data. Earl Watrous is helping me get it into publishable form. As soon as our schedules allow, we will do this. I want to express my personal thanks to Sandy Cuthill for her many years of service as our Chapter Librarian.

I also promised an additional article on the four-sided clock from the Bargello and the symbols for the hours of the day. For reasons of space, this has been put off until the next issue.

Usually I report on some horological or tool making project. Recently my activities have been restricted to converting a bed room into a work room. It will be nice to have a dedicated space for horological projects.

After listening to Clarance's presentation, those interested in finding out more about "preachers" may want to consult *NAWCC Bulletin* #155 and #270. I hope Clarance can tell us why this useful tool is called the "preacher".

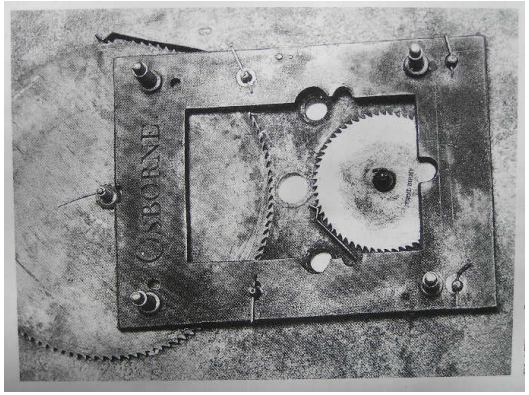
Lastly, a very generous member recently gave me a specialize lathe tailstock for cutting jewel holes in watch plates. I do not want to embarrass him by mentioning his name, but I want to acknowledge this very special gift. This is the type of action that makes Chapter 107 special.

Price

TALLCASE CLOCKS WITH FACEPLATES

Prior to about 1770 all British clocks had dials made of brass. These dials were connected directly to the movement and were fitted to accommodate the particular mechanics of that movement. It is safe to say that each clock was custom made.

Japanning or painting dials was introduced to the clock trade as an effort to provide the clockmaker with additional options. A japanned dial was basically an iron sheet with its face treated with a base paint and then decorated with black for the numbers and colors for the trims and designs.



The dial manufacturer marked his name on the back of the dial, but sometimes on a plate behind the dial. The plate called a falseplate or backplate, allowed the dial feet, which were riveted to the dial before decorating, to be secured to the falseplate and eliminate any possibility of interfering with the operation of the movement. The falseplate feet would then fit onto a movement free from the areas that involved arbors or other mechanical parts. An additional advantage was that a customer could order a dial from a maker's stock and have it fit almost any movement that would suit the customer.

A falseplate is a cast iron rectangle approximately 3/8" thick with a rectangle relief opening in the middle to accommodate winding posts and the center arbor to fit through the dial. A calendar disc and/or a moon phase disc were attached to the back of the dial and operated by the movement of the center arbor. Generally falseplates appear only on eight-day clocks.

Continued on page 7

Osborne and Wilson of Birmingham manufactured White Clock Dials with falseplates beginning September 28, 1772. The fact that they cast their name into the cast iron falseplates and onto the back of calendar discs allows us to accurately date the beginning of the use of falseplates.

The use of falseplates had the added advantage that the shorter dial feet involved were less prone to flexing and straining and therefore less likely to cause chipping on the japanned surface of the dial feet ends — a regular problem with long dial feet.

Osborne and Wilson were together from 1772 to 1777 when Wilson began manufacturing dials under his name. James Wilson died in 1809. The Osborne name continued on dials through family members until 1813. These dates allow dating of clocks depending on whose name appears on the falseplate and dial. Generally, the clockmaker had his name painted on the dial below the calendar disc.

With the use of falseplates, clockmakers could continue to manufacture their movements as they had for many years and still have the advantage of fitting their movements to any of the different styles of dials that were available. The falseplate feet would easily accommodate the movement. Mass produced movements were in their infancy at this time.
In summary, the falseplate was sold attached to the dial to accept more readily the movement frontplate.

Source: "Painted Dial Clocks" by Brian Loomes 1994

Lee Thomas

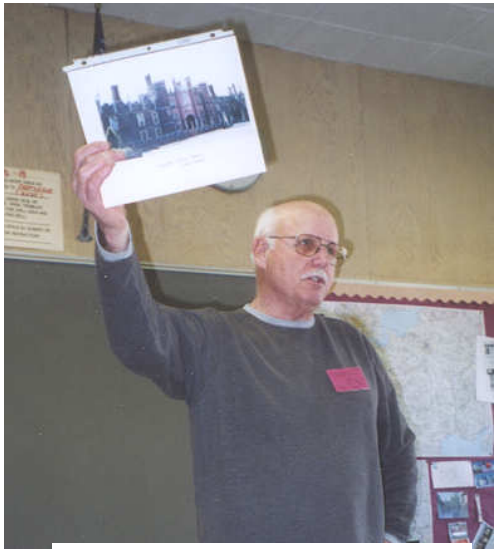
LOOKING AHEAD—EASTER 2007

How to calculate when Easter will occur has been discussed previous issues. From time to time both Western and Orthodox Easter occur on the same day. Next year will be one of those occasions. More importantly for us, it will be the second Sunday of April; ie, on our usual meeting day.

February 2006 Meeting

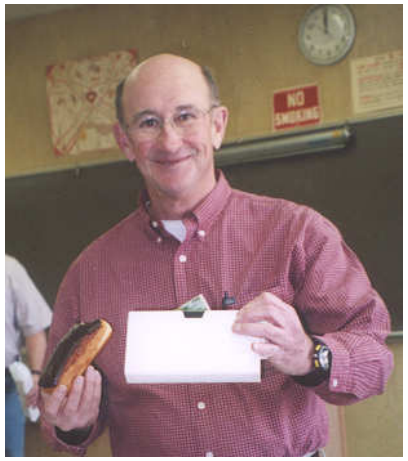
Photos by Sophia Gardner

Linda Towers



Lee Taylor (speaker)

Jim McElroy



Ross Smith

Jack Coulter

John Stohr, Walt Hubrig, and Sandy Cuthill

Nile Godfrey, Dean Thomas, and Clarance Kobel

FAVORITE CLOCKS AND WATCHES

Continued from page 4

So, the next morning we were at the auction. I would guess there were about 150 in attendance. We heard that Sotheby's hadn't had a horological auction in a long time so there were dealers from all over the British Isles plus Western Europe. Intimidating, but not enough to make us leave. After an hour or so they got to the Ellicott clock- the auctioneer was fast and the audience quick and decisive. There were several bidders but, we got the clock at a little less than our pre-set limit! The dealers have to keep to their "wholesale limit" in order to realize a profit. The amateur can go up to the "retail value." At the time the pound was worth about $2 U.S. so bidding in pounds made the numbers seem less.

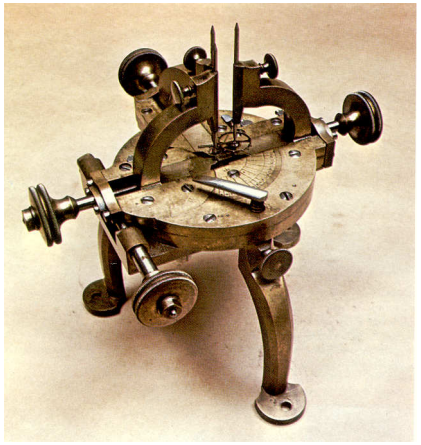
There we were in London, kind of in shock, and with a tall case clock. Sotheby's took care of that. They made a crate to fit and shipped it air freight to San Francisco. We picked it up at the airport, put crate part-way in the car's luggage compartment and brought it home. It survived the trip without a scratch..

So, it is my favorite clock because it is a "name" clock and because o the memories of how I acquired it.

Jack

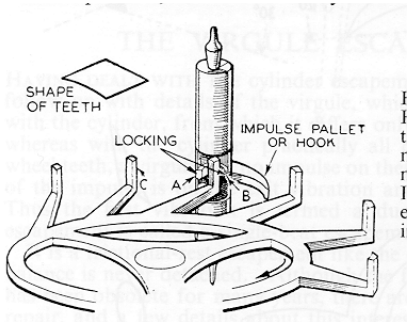
Wait. Don't Tell Me!

The clock at the right is an elegant tallcase specimen selected for illustration just because of its beauty. It really does not have anything to do with the following question. A pendulum clock with a one-second period is often referred to as a "meter-pendulum" clock. Is this true and why is the meter not defined in terms of the pendulum length having a one-second period?



What is the tool on the left and how does it relate to the "Preacher" that Clarance Kobel will discuss at the upcoming meeting?

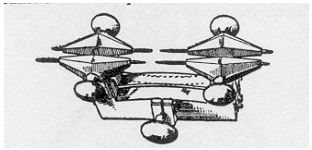
A virgule escapement is shown on the right. It is similar to the cylinder escapement. Who invented it? What advantages does it offer?



OK, Now Tell Me.

In 1790 the French Academy of Sciences took up the question of defining the length of the meter in terms of a "natural" standard. Two methods were proposed. One was to set the meter equal to the length of a pendulum with a one second period. The other was one ten-millionth of the distance from the pole to the equator. The latter won in spite of the difficulties of making the measurement because the period of a pendulum depends on gravity which varies over the surface of the earth. On average the period of a meter pendulum is 1.003 seconds.

The tool is a Swiss escapement depthing tool described by Crom in *Horological Tools* as the "most superior and elaborate of all depthing tools". The "Preacher" is a simple but highly useful version of such a tool. A more conventional depthing tool is shown on the right. These tools are used to locate holes in watch and clock plates - either for original construction or repair. Careful inspection of the one shown on the previous page shows that it has three vertical runners rather than two in the one above. The use of three runners makes it possible to "depth" an escape wheel, pallet fork, and balance wheel.



The virgule escapement was invented by Jean-André Lepaute in 1753. It is similar to the cylinder escapement except for the use of a long comma-like hook on the outside of the cylinder that provides the impulse. Clutton and Daniels (*Watches*) have the following to say about this escapement. "Since the virgule offers no advantages over the cylinder escapement it is difficult to see why it should have been made at all. It is quite incapable of retaining any oil at its working surfaces and sets if not oiled frequently." In spite of being difficult to construct and never performing as well as cylinder escapements, it was popular in Europe for about 20 years at the end of the 18th century. In short it offers no advantage over other escapements.

INTERESTING GADGETS

Just when you thought you had everything, F. B. Fogg of Muncie, IN has created a line of creature clocks constructed from handmade paper. (Technically the case is paper. The clocks are battery powered movements.) They are available in a wide variety of shapes from dogs and cats to insects. Fruits and other objects are also available. You can even have your favorite pet (or whatever) immortalized through a custom made clock. The golden retriever at the left is an example. Yes, the tongue moves in the manner of a pendulum. Your editor spied them at Kati Koos in San Francisco where they sell for $240.

CHAPTER LIBRARIES

BOOK: The Chapter book library is located at **Classical Clocks and Antiques**, 1086 E. Stanley Blvd., Livermore. Contact **Nile Godfrey** (925-449-2127) for more information.

VIDEO: Chapters 107 and 5 share a video library. Contact **Price Russ** (925-937-9231) for information.

TOOL: Contact **Walt Hubrig** (925-685-0260) or **Price Russ** (925-937-9231) for information on the tools and parts available for use by Chapter members.

There is no cost to borrow items from these collections.

NOTICES FROM MEMBERS

(The Bulletin accepts notices from Chapter members for all items/subjects horological - wanted, for sale, giveaway, services, and so forth. There is no charge. All you have to do is supply copy to the editor.)

CHAPTER #107 MEETINGS

Days and Times

Mart	Second Sunday	11:30AM	Even numbered months
Chapter	Second Sunday	12:30PM	Even numbered months
Board	Second Sunday	after the Chapter Meeting	
Evening	First Friday	7:30PM	Odd numbered months

Future Meeting Dates

FRIDAY	SUNDAY & BOARD
May 5, 2006	June 11, 2006
July 2006 - None	August 13, 2006
September 2006 - None	October 8, 2006
November 3, 2006	December 10, 2006
January 5, 2007	February 11, 2007
March 2, 2007	April 8, 2007 (?)

We want to keep our members coming to the chapter meetings on a regular basis. If you have problems with transportation to and from meetings, let a director or officer know so we can help you find a carpool.

Other NAWCC Chapter Meetings in Northern California		
Chapter	**Meeting Address**	**Meetings**
De Anza #94	Odd Fellows Lodge 20589 Homestead Rd Cupertino, CA	2nd Sunday even months (except April)
Monterey Bay #70	Live Oak Grange Hall 1900 17th Ave Santa Cruz, CA	3rd Sunday odd months
Sacramento #71	Sacramento Garden Center 3330 McKinley Blvd. Sacramento, CA	4th Sunday odd months
San Francisco #5	Boys and Girls Club 401 Marina Blvd. San Leandro, CA	2nd Sunday odd months (1st Sunday in May)

DIRECTIONS TO CHAPTER MEETINGS

Sunday Meetings

(except August and December)

From Oakland - Highway 24 going East

Take Pleasant Hill Road South exit.
At light, turn right onto Pleasant Hill Rd.
At end, turn left on Olympic Blvd. Go 0.9 miles.
At light, turn right onto Tice Valley Blvd. Go 0.6 miles.
Turn right into Acalanes Adult Center (1963 Tice Valley Blvd.).

From San Ramon - Highway 680 going North

Take Olympic Blvd. exit.
Left on Olympic Blvd. Go 0.9 mile.
At light, turn left onto Tice Valley Blvd. Go 0.6 miles.
Turn right into Acalanes Adult Center (1963 Tice Valley Blvd.).

From Benicia - Highway 680 going South

Take Olympic Blvd. exit.
Right on Olympic Blvd. Go 0.8 mile.
At light, turn left onto Tice Valley Blvd. Go 0.6 miles.
Turn right into Acalanes Adult Center (1963 Tice Valley Blvd.).

Only NAWCC members can participate (buy or sell) in our Mart. Be prepared to show your current membership card.

Closing Thought

Time only seems to matter when it's running out.

Peter Strup