



# British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

## News FROM CHAPTER 159

Our next meeting will be during the NAWCC National Convention in Portland Oregon. Specifically, it will take place at 1:30PM on Friday, June 26 in Room A106 in the Convention Centre. The guest speaker will be Clifford Bird from England whose subject will be why his recent book *Norfolk and Norwich Clocks and Clockmaking* took about 40 years to publish.

Don't forget that Tom Spittler wants English/American seagoing artifacts for the Convention display topic of Pacific Rim Timekeeping. Please contact him directly at 937-845-9032 before 9PM eastern time.

Also, this meeting will be our once every three years election meeting. Please see the notice at right asking for nominations. It's not too late to submit them.

For those of you who cannot attend, I'll just mention here that the Chapter has sufficient funds to publish *British Horology Times* for another full year, despite a drop of membership into the 175-180 range, from over 200. We are all continually frustrated with our inability to get current members to remember to send in their dues

— most "drop-outs" that I see don't realize that they failed to renew. Happily, one of our members made sizeable donation to the Chapter, so finances are not currently a problem.

The Cincinnati Chapter meeting in April was well attended with about 60 people being rewarded by an excellent talk from Clyde Brown, a member from Akron, Ohio. Clyde spoke on the development of English marine chronometers, and provided a very interesting display as well. It's great to have such expertise and willingness to share within our group!

-Doug Cowan

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

will take place at the next Annual Meeting of the Chapter in Portland, OR in conjunction with the NAWCC National. Nominees received so far through April 1998 are:

For President, Douglas G. Cowan

For Vice-President, Thomas J. Spittler

For Secretary, Frank A. DelGreco

For Treasurer, Bernard L. Pollack

Please send your further nominations (including self-nominations) to Paul Odendahl, 340 S. Diamond St., New Orleans LA 70130; phone (evenings) 504-288-2479; fax 504-522-8724; e-mail peoden@webtv.net

**S**onya Spittler has been working for British Horology Chapter 159 for over five years. Yet we don't see her or hear about her, except for those of us who attend the Chapter Meetings when we get to see her lovely smile as she greets us at the entrance door and offers her traditional glass of sherry.

Sonya does many things for our chapter. Among them she is custodian of the archives which means that she preserves all of the issues of *British Horology Times* since the beginning. She keeps a scrapbook of photos. She works behind the scenes at meetings taking

the attendance count. I wouldn't be surprised if she is the one who organizes the Chapter display at the Spittler's mart tables.

Now I must be careful not to be over-flattering because, you see, Sonya is not aware that this editorial will appear and the first she will know of it will be at the same time that you see it.

I think it's time for a sincere round of applause for Sonya Spittler. Don't you?

-Paul Odendahl

Editor's  
Corner



SONYA SPITTLER

## ENGLISH POCKET WATCHES

Richard Rooker's Watch number 325 is discussed by Doug Cowan (OH) and Curt Davenport (KY).

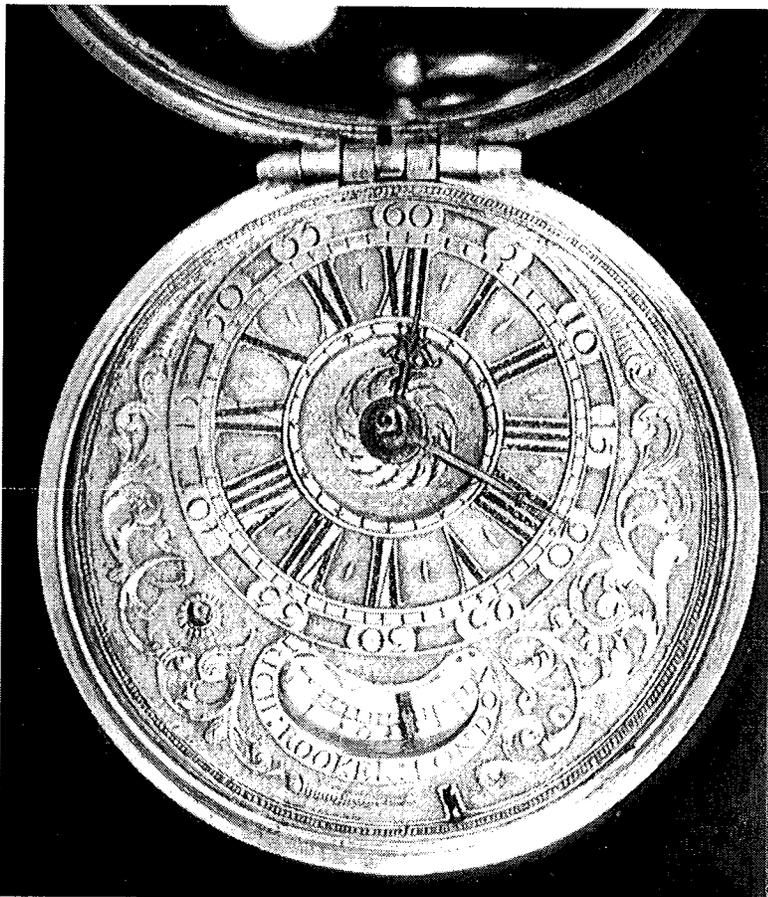
Quoting from Cedric Jagger's book *The Artistry of the English Watch*: "Overlapping the end of the (17<sup>th</sup>) century there were one or two short-lived fashions... Several makers experimented with winding and regulating the watch from the front rather than the back... A similar development is said to have derived from the application of the pendulum to clocks, and the splendid reputation

they acquired as a result.

"Some watchmakers decided to provide a mock pendulum (on the face) of their watches, by transferring the balance from the back to the front of the movement, cutting a dial aperture so that it could be seen, and even fixing a bob to one of the spokes (of the balance) to heighten the illusion. Inevitably...regulation had also to be carried out from the front, which

further cluttered up the appearance."

The watch by Richard Rooker is just such a watch with front regulation through the dial outside of the minute ring at 7:30. The regulation indicator is seen through the glazed aperture below 6, and the indicator arrow is above the : marks separating Rooker from London. It can't be seen because it is obscured by the balance spoke at rest in the photo. The balance is a three spoked one, in which the top of the spokes is oval, and the underside flat. It would not have been easy to place a mock pendulum bob on one of these spokes, and there is no sign that this particular watch ever had one even though that would be expected. Plate 35 of Mr. Jagger's book shows a very similar watch,



DIAL OF THE RICHARD ROOKER WATCH NO. 325

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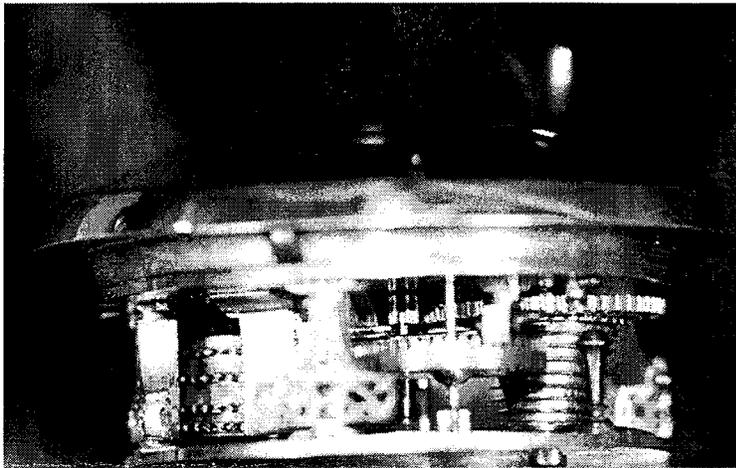
All correspondence, manuscripts and applications for membership should be sent to Doug Cowan, 110 Central Terrace, Cincinnati OH 45215, USA. e-mail: dcclock@juno.com

Opinions expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the writers and are not necessarily endorsed by the Chapter and/or by the newsletter and/or by the National Association.

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END VIEW OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE ROOKER WATCH

and it does have a mock bob on the visible spoke. That watch was made by a French immigrant watchmaker David Lestourgeon, London, who was contemporary

with Rooker. In fact this watch design has a continental feeling to it, especially the engraved top plate, which in this case of course is just a slab of brass, with



ENGRAVED TOP PLATE WITH PROTRUDING WINDING ARBOR, ROOKER NO. 325

the winding arbor protruding. The top plate is 1mm thick.

Richard Rooker is believed to have been freed of his apprenticeship in 1694, and was a member of the Clockmakers' Company until 1735. He was apprenticed to John Clowes, and both he and Clowes were English — so the desire to build this peculiar style of watch probably stems more from the times, ca 1700, during which a lot of watch experimentation was under way, rather than from a continental influence.

The movement top plate is numbered 325, as is the silver inner case, the called the box. The outer case has the squared-off hinge typical of the ca 1700 date of the watch. The "smallish" rounded pendant knob is also typical, and the pendant turns freely in the case. The box shows a B mark — presumably for the box maker, though one would expect a two-initial mark during this period. Neither box nor case is hall-marked, as such markings were uncommon before about 1720. The movement uses "crested tulip" pillars of a style supposedly favored by another contemporary maker: Simon DeCharmes, London. Diameter of the watch in its inner box is 46mm, and the one-piece silver champlève dial is 5mm thick. Hands are the correct style — blued steel beetle and poker.

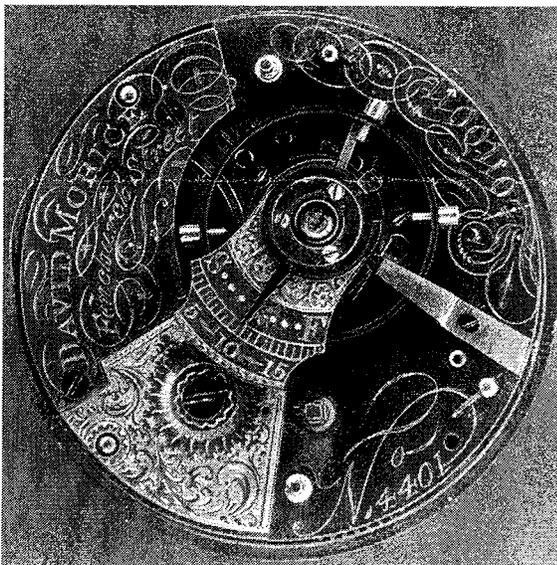
Mr. Jagger clearly thinks that this style of watch is cluttered and unattractive looking, but your authors disagree, finding these ca 1700 variations, including sun/moon or wandering hour dials, to be perhaps the most interesting period of English watchmaking. ☺

## A SHORT HISTORY OF ENGLISH DUPLEX ESCAPEMENTS

Jerzy Ganczarzyk (Canada) details the development of this type of escapement.

The duplex escapement, together with the cylinder and virgule escapements, belongs to the group of so-called "horizontal" escapements, as different from the vertical verge escapement which has also been called "common" escapement. In the early years of the nineteenth century Abraham Rees wrote in his famous *Cyclopaedia* about the duplex escapement:

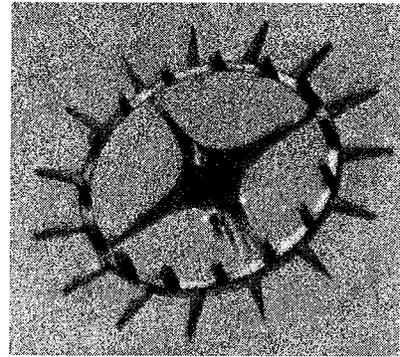
*"We are not informed who was the original contriver of the escapement known by the name of Duplex escapement, a name probably taken from the circumstance of its having a wheel with two sets of teeth necessary for the escaping; neither are we aware of its date; but the esteem in which it is held by those who tried it, entitle it to a place in our collection."*



A RELATIVELY EARLY ENGLISH DUPLEX MOVEMENT BY DAVID MORICE OF FENCHURCH STREET, LONDON (CA 1800). NOTE THE UNUSUAL (FOR THAT PERIOD) BI-METALLIC CUT COMPENSATED BALANCE WITH 4 TIMING SCREWS.

Fortunately, the present information on the subject is more specific. Most likely the original concept of this escapement was first worked out about 1720 by an eminent watch and clock maker, Jean-Baptiste Dutertre (whose name was also spelled DuTertre), probably in connection with his work on a double pendulum clock. Jean-Baptiste Dutertre was born in Rennes in 1684, settled in Paris in 1730, and died in 1734. According to Saunier's *Treaty of Modern Horology* (1861), Pierre Leroy was the first to construct a watch movement with a duplex escapement about 1750. He had, however, abandoned this approach in favour of his attempts to develop a detent escapement. Perhaps this is why the duplex escapement originally did not gain any popularity. However it was

"reinvented" in England over a generation later by Thomas Tyrer of Red Lion Street, Clerkenwell who, in his patent letter No. 1311 of 1782, claimed an invention of "horizontal escapement for a watch to act with two wheels". Unfortunately no specifications were provided about this "invention". Also neither Britten nor Baillie give any more information about this maker.



DUPLEX ESCAPEMENT WHEEL FROM MORICE'S MOVEMENT. THE RELATIVELY HIGH IMPULSE TEETH BECAME MUCH LOWER IN LATER DESIGNS OF THE ESCAPEMENT.

Throughout the nineteenth century, but mostly before the 1860s, the duplex escapement has been fitted in a limited number of high quality English watches. Eminent watchmakers such as David Morice, John Barwise, James Frodsham, James McCabe, Edward Dent and others used this escapement occasionally. Similar practice, but to a lesser extent, had a place in continental Europe. However some early continental duplex escapements were composed of two separate wheels located one over another (e.g. in some watches and small clocks by Breguet).

Although it doesn't appear to be likely it is often stated that about 1830 Charles Edward Jacot invented a double duplex, or crab-claw, escapement made later at Fleurier, Switzerland. It was used mostly in the sweep seconds watches intended for the Chinese market and hence it was called Chinese duplex. A prominent role in this trade with China was played by the firm of William Ilbury & Son of London, Fleurier and Canton. This firm worked in conjunction with the firm of Bovet of Fleurier, Switzerland. Originally the brothers Bovet had a watch factory in London which

## MY FIRST CLOCK

We all remember our introduction to horology, but few will experience it in the aftermath of a war, with an American clock in a foreign land as did John Hardiman (OH).

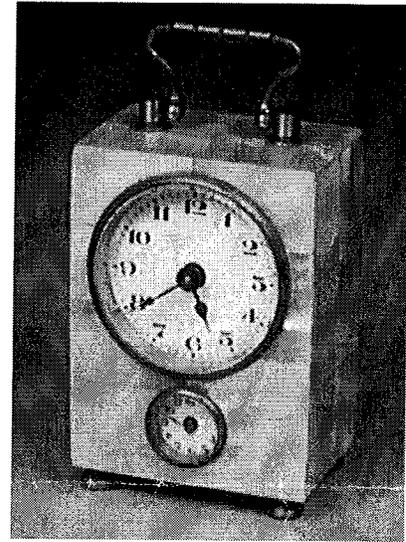
**I**n May 1945 I was in a farmhouse on the outskirts of Zerbst, Germany about 40 miles SW of Berlin. The 83rd Infantry Division was waiting to link up with the Russians. We could have walked to Berlin with no resistance but for political reasons we waited.

The Russians arrived — the European War was ended and the Division took the autobahn to Bavaria to be reorganized and eventually to be sent to Japan for the invasion of that country.

I landed in Vilshofen at the confluence of the Danube and Vils rivers. It was a small town up-

stream about 20 miles from Passau. Before entering the Army I had an interest in photography so I was transferred to the Special Services Division. They set me up with the owner of the local photo shop. My job was to take in film from the troops and Herr Gollar would develop, enlarge and print — “a team effort”. Herr Gollar and his wife were very friendly to me and shared what little food they had many times. I, of course, brought K rations, chocolate, cheese, soap, etc., all of which was much appreciated by them.

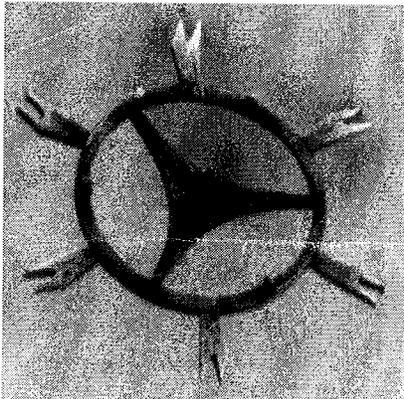
This lasted 5 to 6 months.



THIS IS THE CLOCK THAT BEGAN JOHN HARDIMAN'S HOROLOGICAL LIFE

The war with Japan was over and I got a pass to London and Paris for 2 weeks. Eventually I was transferred out of the 83rd Division and sent to “Camp Lucky Strike” near Le Havre, a port of embarkation for home.

*Continued on page 6*



CHINESE DUPLEX ESCAPEMENT WHEEL FROM A “BOVET” MOVEMENT (CA 1830-1840).

was later moved to Fleurier. Because the trade in watches with China was from British seaports it is also possible that some English watch finishers participated in the final preparation of the Swiss watches for export.

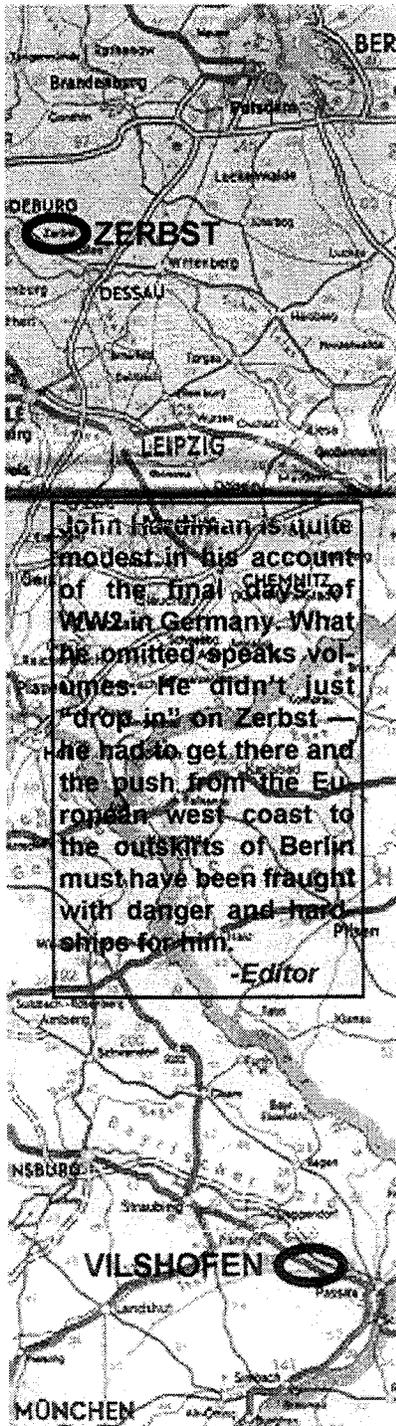
In the last quarter of the nineteenth century duplex watches were mass produced in the United States with inexpensive Waterbury Watch Co. movements, based on the patents of Daniel A.A. Buck (1878). Of course, the quality of these movements was much inferior to previously produced English duplex movements.

Duplex escapement is a single-beat escapement capable of keeping time very well. It is not uncommon to find English duplex watches running for years to within only a few seconds difference per day. However to achieve this the escapement must be of first-rate workmanship throughout. The duplex escapement's principal faults are the

tendency towards setting (locking up), and the rest diverging from the tangential position. The difficulty in making a new balance wheel for duplex movements was the reason why this escapement was often converted into lever during later repairs. ☺

Dr. Jerzy Ganczarzyk is educated as a chemical and environmental engineer. He is a Fellow of Royal Society of Health, and Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering at the University of Toronto. His collecting interests center on English eighteenth century pocket watches. He is presently Vice-president of NAWCC Chapter 33 (Toronto), and is a member of Chapters 159 (British Horology) and 161 (Horological Science).





JOHN HARDIMAN'S STOPS AT END OF WW2

When I left Vilshofen the Gollars presented me with one of their treasures: a 2½ inch, 30-hour American travel clock with alarm that had a lovely mother-of-pearl case. Today it is my treasure.

Little did I or they know that this was to start me on my hunt for clocks. Now, fifty-plus years later I am a horologist and still hunting. ☺

*Editor's Note. In case you are wondering, "What's this doing in a publication devoted to British Horology?", since his first American clock in Germany,*

*John Hardiman has gone on to become a serious collector of British clocks.*

*-Paul Odendahl*

John Hardiman, NAWCC member since 1948, is retired from the decorative arts business. Besides his "first clock" which he still has, John is surrounded by his collection which includes English long case clocks, bracket clocks, skeleton and dial clocks.



John Hardiman is quite modest in his account of the final days of WW2 in Germany. What he omitted speaks volumes. He didn't just "drop in" on Zerbst — he had to get there and the push from the European west coast to the outskirts of Berlin must have been fraught with danger and hardships for him.

*-Editor*

## CLOCKS MAGAZINE EXCHANGE

Many of our members are subscribers to *CLOCKS* magazine from England. Some are looking to complete their collection of *CLOCKS*. I have just finished that effort. Along the way I discovered that there were many other members who needed copies to complete their collections and many of these same individuals had some duplicate or extra copies. I am willing to act as chapter broker for *CLOCKS* magazines. I will not buy and sell the copies, but I will keep track of the copies people need and their extra copies. When I find that someone has extra copies that another needs, I will put them in touch with each other. It is up to individual members to set their own prices, but I suggest \$2.00 each for issues from 1978 to 1983; \$1.50 each from 1984 to 1988; and \$1.00 each after 1988. Any member who wishes to participate should let me know which copies you need and which extras you have.

Tom Spittler, 10925 Sigler Rd., New Carlisle OH 45344.  
Phone 937-845-9032 before 9:00 PM eastern time.

## DON'T FORGET

Next meeting: Portland OR,  
Friday June 26, 1998,  
1:30 PM,  
Convention Center,  
Room A106



SPEAKER: CLIFFORD BIRD FROM ENGLAND

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