



British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

News

FROM CHAPTER 159

My warm "Thanks!" to those of you who paid your 1996 dues early. We once again have enough funds to see us through the next year. To those of you who haven't sent them in, **they are due now**, unless you joined in 1995. I won't have time to "chase" this time so if this is the last newsletter you receive, you'll know why! If in doubt send the \$5 anyway. I'll credit any overpayment to 1997 dues.

Our next chapter meeting will be at the Orlando regional. Probably during the afternoon of Friday, February 16, but check your program when you arrive just to be sure. Also let's make a big effort to bring a watch or clock for the "Show and Tell".

The following members received Fellow awards at the 1995 National Convention:


Bernard Bowman (OH)	Robert Murray (CA)
Lawrence Fanshaw (FL)	Philip Priestley (UK)
Douglas Farley (AL)	David Warner (MO)

In addition a Silver Star Certificate was awarded to:
Robert Evans (VA)

Congratulations to you all! More than 10% of our membership are Fellows of the NAWCC. ☺



We are going to make a more concerted effort to publish interesting mail from the membership. This issue contains such from Walter Rick, as well as questions from members in Tennessee and Alabama. BUT! I need more letters and articles concerning watches. If we must resort to my writing them, you'll be sorry!

In BHT6 I speculated upon the reason why English clock imports during 1866 showed none from Germany when we all know that there had to be some. I think that a  bulb has lit in my memory. Specifically I now recall that German clocks were shipped to the UK via the Dutch port of Rotterdam. That would explain the large importation numbers from Holland. They came from there but were probably German, shipped via the Rhine river to avoid the more costly overland route through France. ☺

TUBULAR BELL HALL CLOCKS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN J. J. ELLIOTT AND THE AMERICAN HALL CLOCK INDUSTRY

By Tom Spittler, (OH)

My efforts over the past two years concerning tubular bell hall clocks will conclude with an upcoming *Bulletin* article. This article is quite long and will not be published until early 1996 so I have prepared a short summary of the article for this publication:

Tubular bell hall clocks date from 1884. In October of that year John Harrington of Coventry, England obtained a British patent on the concept of a clock striking on tubular bells. Over the next 20 years this patent would be challenged in courts with attempts made by others to show that this was not a new concept. These attempts all failed. No evidence could be found that any clocks striking on tubular bells existed before 1884.

John Harrington controlled the manufacture of tubular bells in Britain. He also took out patents in Europe and America and assigned his American patent rights to Walter Durfee of Providence, R.I. This occurred in November 1887. No tubular bells for hall clocks were made in the USA until after that date. Durfee went on to have two more patents assigned to him with the dates of 1888 and 1892. Both of these U.S. patents were for John Harrington's inventions made in England. There was a fourth U.S. patent that Durfee used. This was for the invention by the American James E. Treat that was granted in 1896 and assigned to the United States Tubular Bell Co. of Methuen, Massachusetts (not Walter Durfee). It would seem that Durfee had a connection with the United States Tubular Bell Co. and they were probably making the tubes for him. American hall clocks have tubes with Durfee's name on them along with one patent date (1887).

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TUBULAR BELLS, from page 1

two patent dates (1887 and 1888), three patent dates (1887, 1888 and 1892), or finally all four dates (1887, 1888, 1892 and 1896) on them. I personally have never seen the combination of three dates.

The purpose of all this is to help the reader date these early tubular bell hall clocks:

No clocks before 1884.

English clocks only 1884 to 1887.

Durfee controlled the rights to the manufacture of American tubular bells after November 1887.

Tubes stamped with Durfee's name and patent date(s) can be no earlier than the last date on the tube.

While this article concentrates mostly on the tubes I do have a little to say about the cases and J.J. Elliott. The Elliott family moved from Ayrshire, Scotland in the early 1800's to Newbury in Berkshire, south of London. They had been shipbuilders in Scotland and were cabinetmakers in Newbury in the 1880's. Very likely the family cabinetmakers were the source of the very early Elliott clock cases.

I am getting slightly ahead of myself here. In 1886 James Jones Elliott formed the firm J.J. Elliott (possibly J.J. Elliott & Co.) to begin manufacture of the massive hall clocks for John Harrington's tubular bells. Elliott was not the only British clockmaker to do this but he was able to gain control of the American market through Walter Durfee. Elliott began shipping tubular bell clocks to Durfee in America in 1887 and they were a huge success. These were complete clocks — cases, movements, tubes and possibly even weights. Durfee quickly realized

that shipping costs could be reduced and by 1888 was making his own tubes and probably weights. In a few years it would seem as if Durfee may have been having his cases made in America or possibly assembled in America from pieces made in England. Durfee continued to use Elliott movements.

In about 1895 Frank Hershede of Cincinnati, Ohio became an agent of Durfee's, selling tubular bell hall clocks with Elliott movements. He printed a catalog of these clocks. It is not known who made the cases shown in this catalog — possibly it was Hershede.

As to the styles of the cases, the very early (1884-1887) British made tubular bell clocks are often of the highly carved Louis XIV style and no clocks with this case

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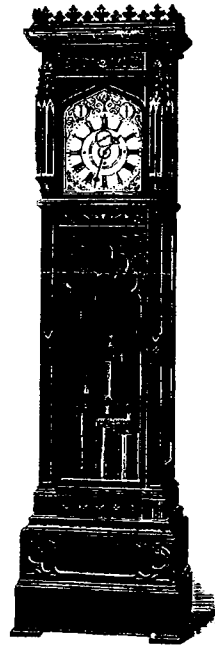
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RESEARCH REQUESTS

Please send answers to the Editor, Doug Cowan, 110 Central Terrace, Cincinnati OH 45215

The Caledonian Registered.

I have recently acquired an English-American wall clock, 36 inches high, featuring the distinctive pattern of inlay and double scroll base as pictured in Brian Loomes' *Concise Guide to British Clocks*. The only maker's identification is on the 8 day brass movement. It has scrolled plates stamped "The Caledonian Registered".

The NAWCC Bulletin dated December 1991, Vol. 33/6, No. 275 concerning English-American clocks, as well as Loomes' book referenced above still leave me unclear as to when, where and by whom the Caledonian Registered movements were manufactured.

-Hal Oakley (TN)

Frodsham Pocket Chronometer.

I recently purchased a Chas Frodsham AD Fmsz movement pocket chronometer, open face, seconds bit at 3 o'clock, serial number 03670, detent escapement, with 84 Strand, London, address. Now that we have the facts, here are the questions:

Going barrel — on a pocket chronometer? Never heard of such. Has anyone out there? The gentleman who cased the movement for me, cleaned the piece and got it running: 20 hours maximum at a winding. Could this originally have been a 12 hour deck watch? Or, as I suspect, has someone clipped the mainspring? Who amongst our valiant members is good with regulating and nursing Frodshams? One sees a lot of

Answer by Tom Spittler (OH):

I don't have the "answer" but I have been aware of the movement for over 20 years and I do have a couple of theories. I will present them and their pros and cons.

Before we do that we need to establish a few facts, or maybe we should say trends, as we don't have true facts at this time.

Trend 1. The Caledonia Registered movement has only been observed in Anglo American clocks. These are a family of clocks marketed in Britain in the period 1865-1890. They are referred to as Anglo American clocks because they have American movements and English cases usually with a great deal of

inlay.

Trend 2. The Caledonia Registered movement seems at a glance to be a Seth Thomas movement, but upon examination it is significantly different from any American movement. It is also different from any British movement.

Trend 3. The entire family of Anglo American clocks was very successful and they are still found in great numbers throughout Britain. Possibly buyers felt they were getting a British product and not a foreign clock.

The following theories about the origin of the Caledonian Registered movement are presented:

See CALEDONIAN, page 6

photos, etc. about Frodshams but not much "hard" information that I am aware of. Does anyone have a clue as to date and whether or not this is a "carry" piece or something that should have been in a box? I understand that Chas did some unusual things late in his career, but a going barrel, detent escapement really has me puzzled.

-Ralph Shuey, (AL)

Answer by David Penney (UK):

I can tell you that the combination of a going-barrel with a detent escapement, although unusual, is not that rare in English watches of the second half of the 19th century.

The Frodsham numbering sequence (see Mercer, The Frodshams) dates your movement to

circa 1866, but I would expect most such going-barrel detent watches to date from around the 1880's. This may (?) point to an anomaly in Frodsham numbering as I have records of three other Frodsham items that do not fit the known sequence. These are:

03644, dated 1889, Mercer page 246

03688, dated 1886, Mercer page 246

03754, dated 1890, Antiquorum, 25-5-1992.

Also, I sold a very nice example of a going-barrel detent in the recent Charles Allix & Associates postal auction catalog No. 2. Signed Bennett and numbered 17284, the case was hallmarked 1880.

See FRODSHAM, page 6

PERHAPS — IT'S PINCHBECK!

By Walter Rick (CT)

Some years ago when I was very actively engaged in the repair and restoration of all varieties of clocks in New York City, I had the occasion to repair a clock which struck me as most unusual. It was quite different in certain respects from most other 18th century tall case clocks with which I was familiar.

When I first saw the clock standing at the end of a rather dark hall, I was immediately struck by the unusual color of its dial. The patina was different in that it did not have the characteristics of polished and lacquered brass, or mercury gilded, or a flat cold silvered finish, but rather it glowed in what I would have described as pure gold. The ornamental frets, chapter ring, and particularly the moon-works were elaborate and the engraving and matting were handsomely executed. At the bottom of the dial it was simply signed *C. Pinchbeck, London*.

Of course I had heard about and had seen some objects made of Pinchbeck, and I became more interested. Pinchbeck metal is almost forgotten by the present generation, who think in terms of aluminum, chrome and stainless steel. Yet this very same Christopher Pinchbeck, Master Clockmaker and the senior of three generations of fine clockmakers, was considered by many to be an alchemist with the power of transmutation. A contemporary writer said of him, "Mr. Xtopher Pinchbeck has a curious secret of a



Christopher Pinchbeck, 1670-1732

new-invented metal which so naturally resembled gold as not to be distinguished by the most experienced eye, in color, smell and ductability. Ye secret is communicated to his son."

The son referred to was his second son, Edward (1713-1766). Edward succeeded to his father's business and made capital of selling his father's metal, first in Fleet Street, London, and later at the head of Canongate in Edinburgh around 1745. This Pinchbeck alloy was for many years the answer to the alchemists' dreams, the chief aims of whom were to change the baser metals into gold, the elusive dream of chemists, adventurers and charlatans. The famous metal has been analyzed and found to be an alloy of zinc and copper. It was a jealously

guarded secret.

Edward wrote in the London Daily Post of July 9th, 1733 a warning to imitators of the precious and apparently still secret alloy: "To prevent for the future the gross imposition that is daily put upon the publick by a great number of shopkeepers, hawkers and pedlars, in and about this Towne, notice is hereby given that the ingenious Mr Edward Pinchbeck at the Musical Clock in Fleet Street does not dispose of one grain of his curious metal which so nearly resembles gold in colour, smell and ductability nor are the toys made of said metal sold by any one person in England except himself." This modest son was indeed a chip off the old block.

See **PINCHBECK**, page 5

WANTED. English skeleton clocks. Also glass domes. Please send details and price to **D. Trahan**, 3464 Dorothea, Troy MI 48084 or phone 810-637-2535.

WANTED. Unusual gallery clocks. Please send picture with dimensions and price to

Scott Van Sant, 1305 Stratford Ave., S.

Pasadena CA 91030.

WANTED. A musical longcase clock, playing at least two tunes and with movement original to the case. I'll travel to examine.

Doug Cowan, phone 513- 821-7569.

FOR SALE. Two London striking bracket clocks in clean, excellent condition, with original escapements:

a) ca 1790 verge escapement by Wm. Stacey, in ebonized bell top case, with pull repeat. \$2800.

b) ca 1830 small mahogany balloon clock by Leroux.

\$2450. **Doug Cowan**, 513-821-7569.

MART

DEVOTED TO UK OR ANGLO AMERICAN CLOCKS

FOR SALE:
Victorian

longcase, ca 1850's. Needs restoration. Not too big or too wide. 13 inch arched dial and movement, both good. High quality mahogany veneers, but base needs veneer work. Lacks pulleys. \$1250. **Tom Spittler**, phone 513-845-9032.

For Mart SERVICES please turn to page 6

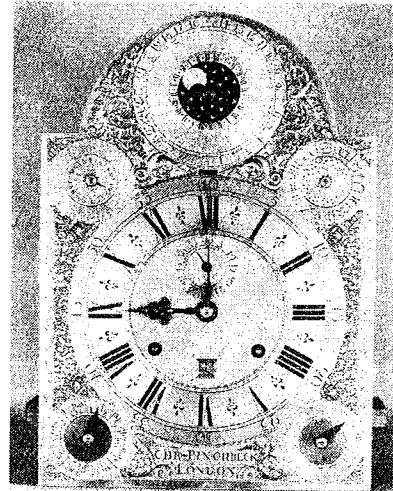
TUBULAR BELLS, from page 2

style seem to have been sold new in America. Other case styles such as the Elliott model No. 1 (the Angel clock) were made in England and sold in England and in the USA. A third category, those clocks shown in the Hershede 1895 catalog and the 1900 catalog of the Toby Furniture Co. of Chicago, seem to have been sold only in America. All of the clocks have Elliott movements and Durfee tubes.

In October 1902 Durfee lost a court case with Francis Bawo of Bawo & Dotter in New York city and no longer had sole rights to manufacture tubular bells in the USA. Almost immediately (50 days in Frank Hershede's case)

manufacturers throughout the USA began making tubular bells. Many new hall clock companies came into existence. Less expensive (by half) German movements began to be used and Durfee lost control of the market. Elliott movements continued to be used in the top of the line hall clocks for the next 20 years, but not to the extent that they had been before 1902.

In my *Bulletin* article I go on to cover the period from 1902 to 1920 and the many American and British firms making hall clocks. Here I hope that I have given the reader a snapshot of the early days of the hall clock industry from 1884 to 1902. ☺



PINCHBECK, from page 4

Christopher himself was a great showman. An account of his stall at the Bartholomew Fair in August 1729 tells of how he presented his musical clocks and "astro-mico" musical timepieces and toys, together with a performance by a juggler, much to the delight of the Prince and Princess of Wales. The "toys" referred to were intricate and extremely expensive watches with automata, musical watches and repeater chiming watches.

The name Pinchbeck is probably derived, as so many English names are, from a place — in this instance from Pinchbeck in Lincolnshire. It was an unusual name, and it heightened Christopher's reputation, particularly in those days when the best advertising was done by word of mouth. Christopher was born in 1670 and died in 1732. He is known as a celebrated maker of astronomical and musical clocks. There is an astronomical clock in the Buckingham Palace collection — another in the Dennison collection. You may never find one of his clocks at a flea market or even an exclusive antique shop but you can find, if you are observing and knowledgeable and, of course, lucky, some trinket or piece of jewelry which is coveted Pinchbeck! ☺

(This article was written by Walter Fick and published 30 years ago in The Lakeville Journal on July 15, 1965)

I have seen 18th century watch pair cases made from Pinchbeck metal and they are amazingly like gold in appearance. -Editor

CALEDONIAN, from page 3

Theory 1. It is American. Made without any marks to identify its American origin and stamped with a British sounding name, "Caledonian Registered", in an attempt to make the buyer believe he or she was buying a complete British clock and not a British case with an American movement. While on the surface this seems plausible, no American firm needed to do this, as the other Anglo American clocks were very successful with their American marked movements. Also no American firm would go to the trouble of making a completely new movement when they could take a movement in production and simply stamp it "The Caledonian Registered".

Theory 2. It is British. Made by a firm that, for some reason, wanted to keep its identity hidden. This theory holds up. Possibly the movements were made by an established British firm that wanted a piece of the Anglo American action but didn't want their fine name tarnished by the fact that they were lowering themselves to making stamped American-like movements. Another possibility is that a British firm wanted to sell their movements to the centers making the Anglo American cases and they wanted the case makers to believe the Caledonia movements were American. Sort of a double double cross.

Theory 3. The movement is German. The Germans had a long established history of providing less expensive clocks to the British. The cheap American clocks hurt the Germans. In an attempt to compete, they produced an American style movement to sell for use in Anglo American clocks. This is the first time I know of this theory being suggested. The Germans were in fact hurt by the cheap American clocks available in Britain. They

FRODSHAM, from page 3

Regarding whether it was a deck watch, it is impossible to say. The same quality of movement could either be housed in gold for the domestic market or in silver for Government use, though I would tend to think that it was the former, past hard times presumably bringing about the unfortunate but by no means rare divorce.

As for its going time, the present mainspring is most definitely not as originally supplied. ☹

Clockmaking/repair courses with Laurie Penman.

Laurie is offering informal 5 day courses at his workshop in Devon. Any skill level from beginner to advanced is welcome. Correspondence courses are also offered. Laurie is a Chapter 159 member and a noted author and restorer. Write to him at 61 High St., Totnes, Devon TQ9 5PB, England. (Air mail to England is 60¢ for the first ½ ounce. -Ed.)

fought back by making many copies of American clocks such as the OG and others. These copies have labels printed in English with names such as the E Pluribus Unum Clock Company. They are made with an attempt to make the buyers think they were buying an American clock.

Well, Hal, take your pick or come up with a theory of your own. I suggest that our membership might like to comment on the subject, adding facts, trends or new theories. ☹

I have seen at least one similar movement, unsigned, housed in an Anglo-American case labelled "Dominion Clock Company" (no address). - Editor

RECOIL

D.H. Lathrop writes: (with respect to Gledhill Brook time recorders) don't ever use the winding key to let down a spring, especially one of these monsters! The wrist can only turn through about 180 degrees and it requires a great deal of coordination to turn with one hand and release a click with the other. Always use a let-down key.

Editor's note: The consequences of failure in this can include broken parts and broken fingers!

S E R V I C E S**UK Horological Tour.**

Philip Priestley is organizing his second horological trip to England, on behalf of New York Chapter 13. This will occur May 12-27, 1996. A few vacancies exist, and interested parties may contact Philip by phone at 01144 1494 873521. (Remember that in England it will be 5 hours later than EST is here in the US.) Cost: about \$2100 plus air-fare. The itinerary will be almost identical to that reported in the Lone Star Chapter report, page 700 of the October 1995 Bulletin. A trip to the city of York has been added.

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