

British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

News FROM CHAPTER 159

Our annual meeting in July featured a great presentation on period bracket clocks by Dennis Raddage. He showed and discussed dozens of bracket clocks in his electronic slide presentation. The surprise was that most of the clocks were his. Thanks, Dennis, for a great show.

Our next meeting will be during the Florida Mid-Winter Regional in Orlando. The date will be sometime between February 13 and 16, 2003.

Our chapter is in good financial shape, meaning that we can continue to provide high-quality news letters. However we have run out of articles to print. Please consider writing an article to share with your chapter members. No experience is necessary - we can provide assistance in fine tuning the article for you. Please send you articles either to Paul Odendahl at 975 Topaz St., New Orleans LA 70124 (pcode@webtv.net) or to me, Frank Del Greco at 13730 Braeburn Ln., Novelty OH 44072 (fdelgreco@aol.com).

Vice President Lee Yelvington is always looking for speakers for our three yearly meetings. If you'd like to conduct a presentation or workshop please phone Lee at 919-851-3073 or email him at: itsabouttime@mindspring.com

Our newsletter also features a Mart section listing for sale and wanted items, but it is not heavily used. Here is a FREE method to sell your clocks, watches or other items, or to find that special one you've been looking for.

Over the next year you will be seeing more and more information in the national Bulletin about the merger of NAWCC and the National Watch and Clock Museum. Many members don't know that these are two separate entities. It has been tough to manage them as separates and we plant merge the two if the members agree. It is a long drawn out process culminating in a vote at the annual meeting next year in Charlotte NC. Please plan to attend.

-Frank Del Greco

EDITOR'S CORNER

Erudite. I don't get to use a word like that very often. But I have seen enough of the members of Chapter 159 and I have seen enough of what they can produce for the chapter and for horology that I am enormously impressed. There is a storehouse of information and energy packed into the approximately 170 members and some of that information and energy has been tapped but there is still much more waiting to emerge.

Think on the past. With this issue of British Horology Times we have published 28 newsletters over a period of almost nine years. Those 28 newsletters have each contained at least one article and most of the time several articles written by members about subjects aimed to teach, help or just plain entertain our members. The tone was set in issue No. 1, page 2 of which is re-printed in this issue.

It's not hard to understand why our members can impart interesting information. If you collect clocks and watches you are driven to look inside of them, to inquire about their past, to learn something about their makers or their owners and the search often yields such unexpected facts that it becomes addictive to press on. Soon you are fairly bursting with information and photos that you want to share. It's like a treasure hunt and you have uncovered some long lost information and brought it to light. Now you want others to know.

Some of the articles originally published in BHT have been re-published with our permission in the national NAWCC Bulletin. The editors of the Bulletin are sent a copy of our BHT as each issue appears and those editors have been so impressed in the past that they have selected articles for re-publication by Stuart Kelley, Doug Cowan, Tom Spittler, Frank Del Greco and others plus an article soon to be pub- See *Editor's Corner*, page 8

HENRY - Part 6

Abridged from *The First Henry*, copyright © by The Royal Archivists. Used with permission.

Paul Odendahl LA continues with the story of Henry, who after completing his apprenticeship with Edward East, finds himself in 1684 confronting the threat of the London plague. Under the sponsorship of his benefactor Major Buffington Henry teams up with Thomas Tompion and leaves London for the continent.

Paris!

At midday on 1 January 1665 Henry and Tom rode into Paris on the back of a fishmonger's wagon from Calais. Facing them were the chores of finding lodging, exchanging money, getting used to the shock of the cultural change and understanding the language. Henry, now age 33, was used to travel and its hardships but he was concerned about how the rigors would affect Tom, now 26. He could have saved his worry. Tom enjoyed the change, even the rough ride across the Channel, and he plunged right into the language problem. He was not fluent but he had been exposed to hearing French spoken by his grandmother. Henry was limited to what he had picked up from that library dictionary.

Their intentions were to get busy and find the Paris equivalent of Lothbury. They didn't find it because it didn't exist but Lady Luck smiled on them as she is wont to do. However it took her six months to get around to it. Early one Monday morning in June of 1665 Henry was trying to buy fruit at an outdoor market struggling with the language and the prices when a voice next to him said,

"Are you English?"

Henry looked around. There stood a man who for all the world reminded him of Mr East, except not as elegant. In fact he was dressed rather scruffily.

"Why, yes", answered Henry.
"So am I". How long have you been here?

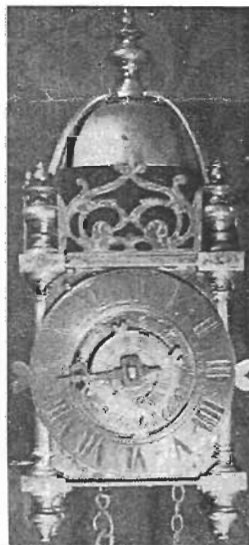
"About six months."
"Well, I've been here for many years. Came to visit, married a French girl and can't leave." (Why "can't"? thought Henry.)

The man continued: "What are you doing here?"

"I'm a clockmaker and I'm here to pursue my trade".

"How?"
"I want to work for a French horologist and I also want to study the works of French masters".

"By George!" exclaimed the Englishman. "My name is Joseph Jackson and I was free of the Clockmakers' Company in 1646. So



A brass clock by Joseph Jackson, made in Paris, 1650.

you see, I too am a clockmaker."

"Fancy that," said Henry, stating his name. "We meet all the way over here. I was freed in 1663."

"This calls for a drink." said Joseph Jackson. "Come."

He led the way to a nearby cafe, ordered a bottle of wine and poured. A bit early for Henry but he went along with a sip from his cup now and then.

"I'm older than you, Henry, so I will volunteer permission for you to address me as Joseph. We "anglais" have to stick together, don't we?"

Henry nodded and asked, "Where do you work?"

"Mostly at the shops of various clockmakers. When I'm finished with my day's work many of them allow me to stay for a while longer and file up some things of my own. Then I have the ability to do some work at home, modest though it is. Now

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Editor: PAUL ODENDAHL

All correspondence, manuscripts and applications for membership should be sent to Frank DelGreco 13730 Braeburn Lane, Novelty OH 44072-9566, USA. e-mail: fdelgreco@jaof.com

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Henry, I know you said that you want to 'work for' a French clockmaker. I must tell you that they are not very hospitable to us Englishmen. First of all they are suspicious of us and then, if there is a sore need for the type of work that you can do, they will hire you but not pay a true journeyman's wage. Nothing is set. It's all negotiable and sometimes it's barter. And if there is even a hint that you expect to settle and practice here, watch out! It's even more restrictive than the Clockmakers' Company."

At that point Henry saw that the wine bottle was empty for Joseph had pushed it toward Henry's side of the table.

"The next bottle is on you," said Joseph, beckoning to a waiter.



Henry was on the spot. No job. Not much money. But he nodded his head. He saw some light. He had a plan.

(Why was Henry always making a plan?)

"Joseph," Henry began, "you can be of help to me. These French clockmakers you do work for, would you tell me their names and how to find them? Perhaps I can seek some work from them. It doesn't have to pay much as long as I can learn. Mind you, I will not interfere with

any work they have for you."

"Certainly. I will do better than that." The second bottle was fast approaching the half-empty mark and Henry was still sipping from his first cupfull. "I will take you along with me as I go and introduce you. Let's see, there's Nicolas Gribolin. He does good work and seems always to be busy. Then there are the brothers Martinot: Balthazar and Gilles. Balthazar has a well equipped shop and always is short handed but he uses that to extract extra effort from his workers. He is well respected but very fussy and I will not work for him unless I'm in a pinch. Louis Soret is here too. You might like him. Meet me here tomorrow morning at 7. I'm going to Soret's shop and you can come along to meet him. Mind you, I cannot promise anything".

The second bottle was now empty and they both stood up.

"Thank you," said Henry. "Goodbye."

"Au revoir."

When Henry entered the pension and found Tom still there, the fruit he was carrying seemed inconsequential.

"We're on the path!" exclaimed Henry and explained the morning and Joseph. "Why don't you come along tomorrow morning, Tom?"

"Can't. I'm going to visit the Louvre. But certainly another day...? It seems that the King is spending most of his time at Fontainebleau, and when he is away it is possible to get in to some parts of the palace."



The next morning Henry and Tom went their separate ways.

Louis Soret's shop was a modest one. He impressed Henry as easy-going and he didn't seem bothered with the difficulties in communication. But he had no need

for an additional worker. Joseph stayed a short time and carried away with him some parts that he was to finish at home.

On the street Joseph said, "There is another man — he is a younger man than you — that you should meet. He is André-Charles Boulle. He's not a clockmaker. He's a furniture maker. He makes clock cases too. Let's go there right now. He knows me because I tarry there to admire his work when I'm not working."

In the Boulle shop Henry was overwhelmed. He had never seen anything like the delicate work that Boulle was turning out. He marvelled at the knives, saws, machines, donkeys and all manner of drawings. He put them into his memory. Here was something he would come back to later.

Joseph had to get back to his work for Soret so they parted, agreeing to meet again the next morning at the fruit market. But the next morning Joseph didn't show up. Henry went back again the following morning but no Joseph.

"Should have asked where he lives," thought Henry.

On the third morning there was Joseph at the orange stand, looking haggard and sheepish and sucking an orange.

"Sorry," was all he said.

"This morning," said Henry, "let's visit Gribelin and the Martinots if you have time."

"First I must go to Soret again. Then I will take you to Gribelin and Gilles Martinot but not to Balthazar. I will show you where Balthazar is, but you are on your own."

They set off. Gribelin and Gilles Martinot were well ordered workshops but neither were able to offer work. At the Balthazar Martinot shop Henry found an imperious man behind the front

counter. At first Henry thought he was a clerk but quickly learned that he was Balthazar himself. When he found that Henry was not there to buy anything, Balthazar ignored him and busied himself with bookkeeping.

"Mr Martinot, I'm a clockmaker and I hope to find work to educate myself about your fine French techniques."

Silence. Balthazar didn't even look up.

"May I ask permission to have a look at your workshop?"

That elicited a glance up from the books and a flick of the thumb toward the shop door.

"He understands English!" said Henry to himself.

Henry was impressed with the shop. There were three workers. The benches and tools were all neatly organized and there was no talking. Lots of brass work being done. Back to the front counter.

(In English): "It's a very orderly shop Mr Martinot. I would like to work here."

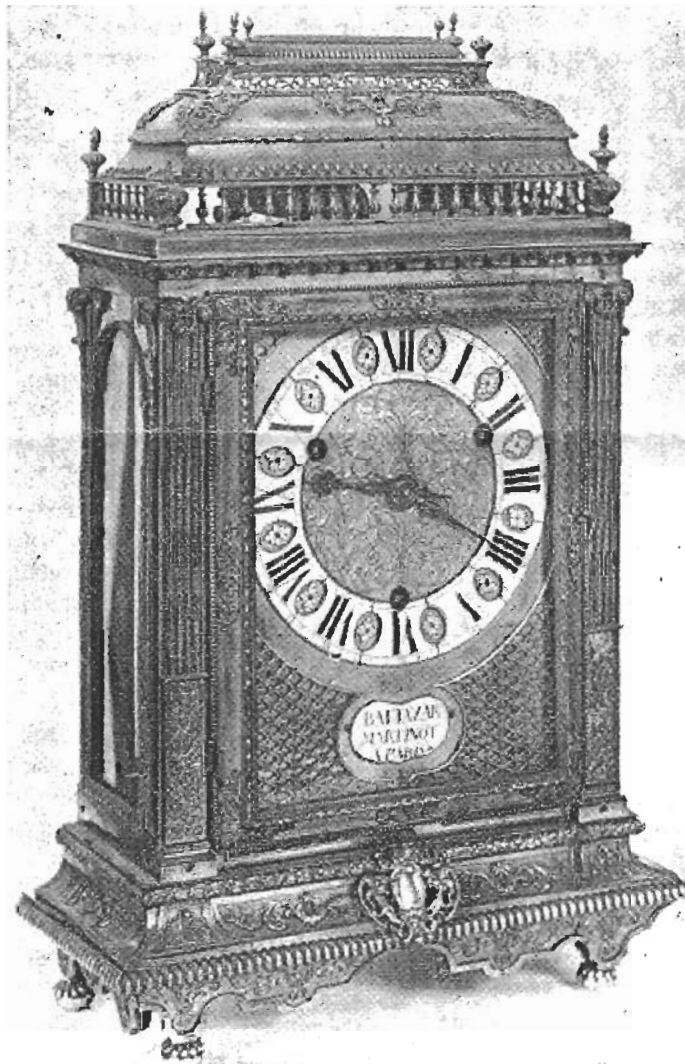
Nothing.

"I'm getting the East treatment," thought Henry.

"How much do you pay your apprentices?"

Balthazar looked up and thought "Who does this Englishman think he is?" He said, "Why don't you go to Holland and try Huygens?"

(The East treatment indeed. Henry could cope with that.)



A quarter striking clock by Baltazar Martinot



Baltazar Martinot 1637 - 1695
Clockmaker to Louis XIV,
teacher to Henry and Tom.

Balthazar was still looking at him so Henry said, "Mr Martinot, I'll work for you for one-half of what you pay your apprentices."

Balthazar was quick: "One-half of nothing is nothing."

"So," said Henry, "you can't turn that down, can you?"

Balthazar actually smiled. "What is your name, Englishman?"

Henry told him.

"I'll put you to work at no pay. One meal only: dinner. You sleep under your bench. Start at 8 in the morning, stop at 7 each evening, Monday through Saturday. I give all the orders. If there's laziness or mischief I'll throw you out." (Henry had heard that before.) He looked down at the books as if it was all settled. Henry came up to the books and fairly stuck his head in them so Balthazar had to look at him.

"Mr. Martinot I will not sleep on the premises. Since you are not paying me, I will take a day off periodically. There will be no term to my apprenticeship — you can dismiss me at any time and I in turn am free to leave your tutorage. Otherwise I accept your offer." Henry stuck out his hand. They shook on it. Balthazar escorted Henry to a bench in the shop and put him to work.

Thus Henry gained his em-

ployment in Paris on July 14, 1665, at age 33.

At the end of his first day in Baltazar Martinot's shop Henry returned to his lodging and was eager to tell Tom of his experience and success in finding clockwork to do.

Tom was impressed but it was all he could do to hear Henry out. When Henry ran out of words, Tom said,

"Now it's my turn. Listen to this: I have been in the Louvre Palace. Entered through the kitchen and found that the help didn't mind working in the kitchen because there was food available, yet nobody wanted to do cleaning. So I thought to myself, 'I'll do cleaning if it gets me into the Palace'. So they set me off with mop, pail, cloth and oil. The King was not expected back from Fontainebleau so I had a clear run of places to clean.

"I found a long hall with all manner of beautiful art and many clocks. I made my way along it with my mop and pail, dusting here and there, but mostly looking. I was so intent on examining the clocks, backs as well as fronts, that I was astonished to come upon a tall ladder propped against the wall. As I was about to step around it, a voice came from above,

" 'I think you like clocks.'

At the top of the ladder was a man dressed all in black and he was obviously up there to perform some kind of work on a wall clock. He didn't wait for an answer and added,

" 'Fetch that box and bring it up here.'

"I noted that although he spoke in French, he had a curious accent. I was halfway up the ladder when I heard the crash of a door being thrown open wildly and I could see a man with no shirt running into the room. As he approached the ladder he began shouting in a language

unknown to me, he drew his sword and waved it threateningly at the man at the top of the ladder. Looking up at the man, I could see that he was white with fright.

"Still shouting, the swordsman grasped the ladder and shook it. The man at the top hung on but I couldn't. I had the box in one hand and was clinging to the ladder with the other and all the while my body was turned to watch the swordsman and my feet were facing towards the wall — an altogether awkward position. The shaking of the ladder caused me to lose my balance. The box flew up in the air in one direction and I flew down in another direction. As luck would have it I landed sitting squarely on the shoulders of the swordsman who slowly sank to the floor and as soon as my feet touched I bounded onto the floor and ran for the sword which had been knocked away by my fall.

"While I held the intruder at swordpoint the man on the ladder climbed down and spoke in a rough manner to the swordsman. He now spoke in another language, not French. At that the swordsman, recovering from the blow I had given him, attempted to get to his feet but with a prick of the sword point, I convinced him to remain sitting.

"Now entered the kitchen help with pots and cleavers for they had heard the ruckus. They bound up the swordsman and escorted him out, leaving me alone with the man who had been on the ladder."

Henry had listened attentively. "Whew!" he said, "you did have a time."

"There's more," replied Tom and here is the rest of the story he told.

The man in black who had been at the top of the ladder was now feeling the results of the encounter. He looked to Tom to be about 36



The man at the top of the ladder

years of age which was 10 years older than Tom.

He was unsteady on his feet and Tom reached out and helped him get to a chair where he simply sat until his breathing became regular again. Tom sat in silence and when the man recovered he asked,

"What is your name?" in French now.

Tom told him

"You're not a Frenchman."

"No, sir, I'm English."

"I'm not French either. I'm Dutch. And by the way, stop calling me 'sir'." This time in English: "That was a brave thing you did."

"Brave...? I simply..." Tom was interrupted from saying "fell off the ladder".

"Of course you were brave. You saw what was happening and you acted. You jumped onto that man, disarmed him and held him at bay. You quite possibly saved my life. That man is a zealot from my country with misguided ideas. I am in your debt."

"Well...no," said Tom, I lost my..." ⌚

To be continued



Paul Odendahl's tale about 17th century clockmakers is part true historical events, names and dates, and part imagination.

ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY No. 5

Through analysis, description and a bit of historical research Don Levison (CA) shows that an apparently typical English watch is actually a rarity that has led a fascinating life. Reprinted by permission, from NAWCC Bulletin Vol. 33/1 No. 270, page 48. ©1991 by the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Inc.

I have often contemplated the historical associations of an old pocket watch, visualizing it at a great opera, in the halls of Parliament, or in a wonderful mansion or estate filled with antique treasures. I wonder if it was used strictly for pleasure by a wealthy nobleman or had a more utilitarian purpose, in service to a military officer or sea captain.

Otherwise known as Lund & Blockley #2/931, this rare explorers' watch provides an unusual opportunity to trace the history and functionality of a timepiece. But first, a description of the features of the watch may be in order for all those non-romantics who are more interested in the horological characteristics.

At first glance the watch is reminiscent of a typical good-quality English lever watch with up/down indicator, dating from the last half of the 19th century (Fig.1). The case of this "explorers' and travelers' watertight watch" is

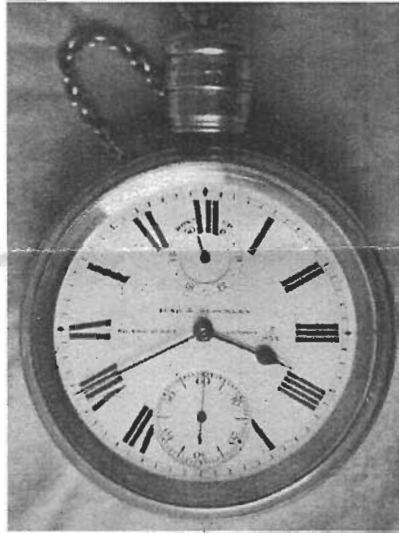


Fig. 1. Lund & Blockley #2/931 (RGS #5)

hermetically sealed, protected from moisture and humidity by a screwed-down bezel and crown with leather washers. Fig. 2 is an illustration from a Smith and Sons catalog, circa 1899, which illustrates and describes a similar timepiece. The 57mm case, unlike later examples which I've examined, is not made of hallmarked sterling silver, but of a white metal, non-ferrous alloy, probably a form of nickel or "German-silver". The movement (Fig.3) is of good quality English construction, with gilded three-quarter plates, reverse fusee, jeweled to the third wheel, bi-metallic compensated balance with gold timing screws and regulator, and with the English form of pointed-tooth escape wheel lever movement. The movement is signed Lund & Blockley #2/931, "to the Queen", 42 Pall Mall, London. The white enamel dial has Roman numerals, fine blued spade hands, a 30-hour state-of-wind indicator, and is also signed with the maker's name and serial number.

As I examined the watch, two things stood out as being very unusual, further piquing my curiosity: While there is a sealed cap to protect the winding crown, there is a separate screw-in plug in the rear of the case which allows access for winding: key-wind, stem-set!

S. SMITH & SONS "R.G.S." EXPLORERS' AND TRAVELLERS' WATERTIGHT WATCH.

This Special Type is made according to the Suggestions of the ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

The movement is of a very high-class All English Lever, Half-Chronometer Equipment, Fully Jewelled in the very best manner and Keyless, and is rendered Absolutely Watertight by having both the front Bezel, that holds the glass, and the Back Cover constructed to screw on and off, and between the male and female screws there is a groove in which is fitted a leather washer, so that when the covers are screwed home there is no possibility of anything getting into the movement from the outside. The Keyless Action is protected in the same way by a screw top, that carries a ring which takes the place of the ordinary pendant. The greatest care is taken in the manufacture of these Watches, the cases by themselves are specimens of fine work; the movement is adjusted and rated for great extremes of heat and cold, as well as all changes of positions, and nothing short of real violence will do any harm to these Magnificent Specimens of English Work.

All the improvements that are possible will be found added to the "R.G.S." Watch, and the following Testimonials (quite unsolicited) are in respect to a Watch of the same make and movement.

Price: Silver Cases, £40; 18 Ct. Gold, £60.



Fig. 2. Catalog page showing a watch similar to the one described in this article

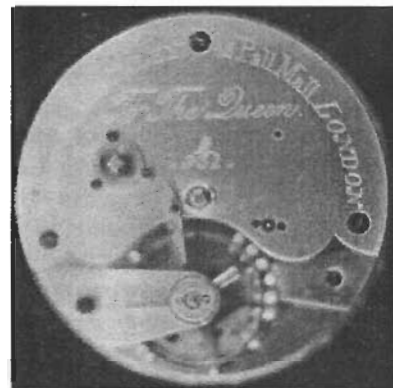


Fig. 3. Movement of RGS #5

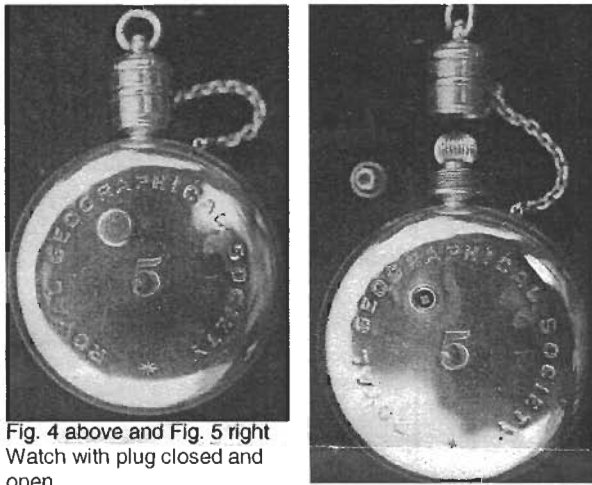


Fig. 4 above and Fig. 5 right
Watch with plug closed and open

Figs. 4 and 5 illustrate the watch with the plug closed and open. The Explorers' watch is much earlier than others I have seen which were all stem-wind, stem-set. Presumably this is one of the earlier examples of a watertight pocket watch. I can find no reference to this type of timepiece other than the Smith's catalog and a reference in the Camerer Cuss book of antique watches, page 293. (This is undoubtedly the basis for the highly successful Rolex Oyster, which through acquisition of the Oyster Watch Co. led to the development of the modern waterproof wrist watch.)

Engraved on the back of the watch is "Royal Geographical Society 5", a reference to that esteemed British institution associated with Jules Verne, Phineas Fogg, and countless others interested in the exploration of the planet Earth. The case shows signs of much use, yet the movement has been well cared for and remains in nearly perfect condition.

Armed with the (correct or incorrect) assumption that all British institutions are unparalleled in maintaining fastidious records, I sent a letter of inquiry to Christine Kelly, archivist of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). This proved most rewarding. Mrs. Kelly wrote that the RGS has been purchasing and loaning instruments to travelers for the purpose fixing positions and making accurate observations since the 1840s. RGS #5 was "purchased in June 1879 from Lund and Blockley at a cost of £35 and sent out to Keith Johnston for his use during the RGS East Africa Expedition. It was carried by him until his death and then by Mr. Joseph Thompson (who took over leadership of the expedition and who reached Lake Tanganyika and the head waters of the Congo). The watch was returned to the Society and then lent in May 1881 to Mr. James Stewart, C.E., for use in East Africa (Lake Nyasa, etc.), and after his death the loan was transferred to his successor, Mr. W. O. McEwan, in February 1884. (Stewart and McEwan were missionaries attached to the Livingstonia Mis-

sion.) After the death of Mr. McEwan in 1894, the watch was struck off the list but was returned belatedly to the Society in 1900. Its use in the following years is not recorded. In May 1937 the watch was taken by Michael Spender (the surveyor who accompanied Eric Shipton, the well-known explorer and mountaineer) to the Shaks-gam Valley (Karakoram Mts.) and returned to the RGS in March 1938. In November 1947 it was sent for repair to Lilly and Reynolds and shortly afterwards was sold." I knew there was good reason for the external wear to the case. This watch seems to have survived more than one master during its service in the field.

It would be interesting to know the whereabouts of other RGS watches. Certainly the annals of the Society are full of heroic and romantic adventures and expeditions which, without an accurate timepiece, could not have succeeded. Mrs. Kelly also writes that #5 was part of a new series of timepieces, purchased subsequent to the appointment in 1877 of John Coles as Map Curator. The price and year of purchase of the first five in the series is as follows:

1.	1878 Lund and Blockley	No. 2/932	£35
2.	1878 Brock	No. 1580	£20
3.	1879 Lund and Blockley	No. 2/946	£35
4.	1879 Brock	No. 1618	£20
5.	1879 Lund and Blockley	No. 2/931	£35

The RGS had purchased and supplied watches prior to 1878 and Brock is recorded as the usual supplier of pocket or box chronometers. However there probably were not many (up to 1877 the RGS records with regard to timepieces are scattered and incomplete), as the RGS always recommended that travelers take two sealed watches with them, but expected that they would already own them or purchase them for themselves.

I hope that future owners of #5 will take full advantage of its experience and pedigree. While new expeditionary ventures are unlikely, I envision the Lund and Blockley being used on hiking trips in the California Sierra mountain range or fishing in the Florida Everglades. Perhaps the owner will get lost and have to use the watch to navigate by the stars . . . ⌚

Don Levison is the 4th generation in the family watch business which began in 1859 as Levison Bros. and the California Jewelry Co.. He earned an MBA and worked as a financial consultant for 20 years before joining the business which sells and restores watches, clocks, mechanical music, singing birds and mercury barometers. Levison Bros. was the first West Coast distributor for Waltham, Elgin and Howard. Don's great-grandfather stayed with Edward Howard when visiting the Boston area.



IT'S DUES TIME !

If your envelope label shows 2002 please send \$5 for U.S. and Canada, \$6 overseas, to Bernie Pollack, 1932 Sunlight Ct., Oceanside CA 92056.

A LOOK INTO THE PAST

Here is page 2 from British Horology Times Number 1, April 1993. We reprinted page 1 in our previous issue (BHT27). There were 4 pages in issue #1 and we plan to bring you the other pages as space allows in the next issues because issue #1 is, as we try to make all issues, chock full of interesting information.

BRITISH HOROLOGY TIMES #1 page 2

MAPS ON AMERICAN & BRITISH DIALS

Most of you are aware that there was a white painted dial industry for longcase clocks in both England and America. Birmingham, England was the center of it, and the first recorded advertisements for these dials appeared in Birmingham in 1772. Just a few years later, British dials were also being used on American clocks. Interestingly, I have found that the world maps that appear beneath the moving moon aperture are different between English and American clocks. I wonder if Canadian clocks are different from both?

Before explaining the typical differences, I will provide some background on the clock dial industry. The period of the white painted dial American and British longcase clocks is roughly between the Revolutionary war (early 1770's) and the American Civil War. (early 1860's). Previously, brass dials dominated the market. In Britain, clockmakers began in about 1772 to order painted dials from Birmingham dialmakers, who generally were specialized firms.

There also was an American painted dial industry, but many if not most of the American painted dials actually came from Birmingham. This was true despite two wars, in the early 1770's, and 1812-14, when trade must have been limited.

Now to the differences in the dials' world maps! Some have been obscured by dial repainting. But, if one finds a sharp original British moon dial with maps, and made for the British market, it will show the British Isles in detail on the right hand map. England dominates Europe and is clearly marked. For dials used in America, whether made domestically or in Birmingham, the British Isles hardly show, or may be missing entirely.

Conversely, the left hand map on American clocks shows a dominant America, labelled and in the center. South America is hardly shown. British clocks show much more of South America, sometimes with North America not even labelled.

You may enjoy looking for these differences in future, and restorers of painted dials should have two patterns available, to use on the appropriate clocks.

If you find exceptions to these observations, the author (Tom Spittler) would like to know. He'd also like a photocopy of the maps on a good original English painted dial if anyone can obtain one.

Here are 2 ways a member can help our lack of articles to print: 1. Write a new one or dig up one you've already written. 2. Offer to get permission to re-print an older article you like from another publication. Please help.

Editor's Corner from page 1

lished in the Bulletin by Mike LaForest.

So. . . I say: what an erudite group you are. Thank you for sharing and for making your newsletter such interesting reading.

-Paul Odendahl

NEXT MEETING

At Orlando during the Mid-Winter Regional February 13-16, 2003.

For details please consult your program upon arrival.



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