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Deena Mack  
Editor Pro Tem

# British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

## British Horology Chapter 159 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

### *President's News:*

As you all know our editor Paul Odendahl passed away earlier this year. It is a great loss to those he knew personally and also to those who only knew him as editor of our newsletter. He made a great contribution with the British Horology Times and served as editor with all the presidents of the Chapter.

I only met Paul two or three times at our Chapter meetings but came to have a great respect for his work with our newsletter. In the words of Doug Cowan, the co-founder of the Chapter:

*He did not like to talk about himself nor his other interests. He joined the Association in 1972. In 1997 he took over from me as BHT Editor, undoubtedly realizing that he could do much better at it than I - and he was right. He loved to write, and not just about clocks, having published long articles concerning the life of Henry Jones of London (fictional) and also the escape from Katrina's aftermath (factual) in New Orleans among other things. Despite relatively little time with him I came to respect his talents, his compassion and his passion for good English clocks - not to forget his stimulation of Chapter 159 through the pages of the British Horology Times.*



I had intended to publish his account of Katrina but it was only recently I was able to get a copy. The account makes fascinating reading but runs to forty pages which would be rather expensive to send to all our members.

Paul will be missed but his memory will live on with those he knew and with his published works and for these we are eternally grateful.

President's News continued on page 2

### *Words from Doug Cowan*

Paul E. Odendahl Jr. passed away in his hometown of New Orleans on April 10th, 2008 at the age of 92. Paul was the most important member of the British Horology Chapter for most of the 15 years of its existence. He volunteered to take over the Newsletter from me after seeing my miserable efforts for the first three examples in 1994. Neither myself nor Tom Spittler, the other chapter founder, knew Paul at all at that time. To our shame, we asked ourselves "Can this older guy be trusted with our baby?". He could, and more, made the Chapter blossom with his wit, creativity and enthusiasm.

Paul was an architect and engineer by education and a writer, adventurer and businessman by experience. He was also a romantic, seeing the more spiritual side of life and relishing that as he went along. At the same time he was mentally very quick and perceptive. A story he told me will demonstrate that. One day he was working alone in his records storage warehouse (a post retirement business) in the "badder" part of town. Two very tough character walked in. He immediately thought "They are here to rob me!" When asked whether he was alone in the building he replied quickly "Oh no Bruno is upstairs" and then loudly called for Bruno to come down immediately. The rough characters turned and ran out!

But Paul was also compassionate and caring, as his friend Martha can attest. Paul, we miss you.

Sincerely, Doug Cowan

Continued from page 1

After so many months I am pleased to be called upon to put together a few thoughts for the BHT. Like so many things that occur on a regular basis you get complacent and take them for granted – so it was with our Newsletter. To pick up the reins when Paul passed away proved to be a bigger task than anticipated; remember we are a volunteer organization and getting someone to be our editor proved to be a monumental task. I did have visions of taking on the task myself but I have no talent in the field. I did approach it in true engineering fashion and looked into publishing software, the means of reproducing our comparative few copies etc. only to realize that it's not the means but the content that is important. The mechanics are a big factor and our new editor has mastered these in exemplary fashion.

In 2007 at the Regional at Fort Mitchell, Deena and I sat next to each other in the hospitality room, Deena had just purchased Beeson's book on Oxford tower clocks. I saw it and we got talking and now she is our editor. I could not be more pleased. Remember, however that as members of Chapter 159 this is your newsletter and it is only as good as it's content and this must come from YOU.

My other good news is of a huge 'Stimulus Package' for members of Chapter 159. In these trying times, our treasure, Dave Kern suggested and the board concurs, that we defer the dues this year and so the current members in good standing will get two years subscription for the price of one and you will not see a renewal notice this year. I wish the IRS consider this option also.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting in Florida and all our other meetings and thanks for your patience. *Ken Johnston.*

**Great  
News!!**

### *Editor's Corner:*

Temporarily moved from page 1...

Wow, my first Editor's Corner. I feel like I'm on a stage and you are all staring. So may I offer you a short soliloquy in the words of Kenneth Ulyett? It is the first line of his book "British Clocks and Clockmakers" and it goes like this:

*"With characteristic doggedness, British clock craftsmen for 350 years have striven to perfect that curious instrument the clock which measures something that does not exist: Time."*

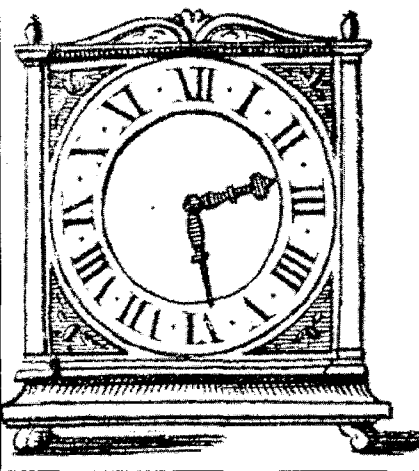
Gee, for something that doesn't exist, it sure rules our lives, doesn't it?

I'll introduce myself on page four. For now let me say I hope to offer you a newsletter that will improve with time and experience. Paul's style was entertaining, informative, friendly and engaging. He made it look easy. (That remains to be seen.) Ah, but remember, BHT is written by YOU the members. Paul's task, and mine is to take the information and turn it into a publication. If I can provide you with a paper that has you looking forward to the next issue, I will feel successful.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I present Number 44, November 2008 British Horology Times?

~Deena Mack

**NOTICE  
NO DUES DUE THIS YEAR!!**



**NEXT MEETING**  
Will take place at the  
Daytona Florida NAWCC  
Regional

February 18-22, 2009

Lee Yelvington will  
speak on  
Dating Dials



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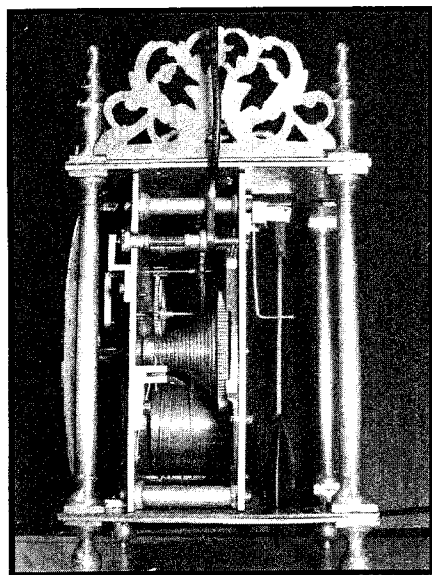
## A PARTNERSHIP MADE WITH LOVE

By Dennis Radage

Vancouver BC

One of my recent clients, Ms Ramsbottom (a real client but fictitious name) is 91 years old and recently downsized from a huge ocean front home in Vancouver to a much smaller condominium not too far away. I was contacted by her daughter, Norah, who informed me that her mother had an appreciation for clocks. She would like me to collect six clocks from her mother's home, service them, then return the clocks to the new condominium after the move.

The clocks were varied, one English Longcase, a Regency chamfer top bracket clock, a lantern clock, a nice porcelain sided French repeater carriage clock, an English late Victorian bracket clock with a German movement and an American shelf clock. Ms Ramsbottom, who was in a wheel chair and serviced by a live-in home help, was certainly quite alert and very "with it" while explaining the history and her fondness for the ticking and chiming (striking) of her clocks. Purposely, there was always



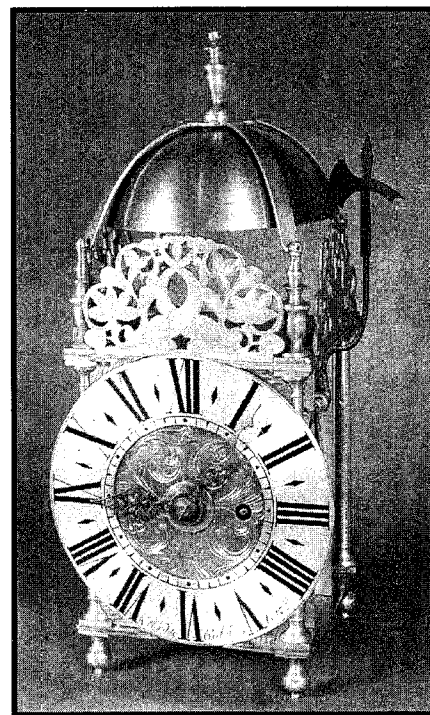
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fresh tea just brewed each time I visited, her intent was to prolong the visit and conversation. Several of the clocks were quite dirty and in need of TLC. Ms. Ramsbottom insisted that I look at each clock while with her and explain briefly what I would do with each of the clocks. There are obviously several stories here, but the lantern clock is the subject of this short story.

The name on the lantern's chapter ring is Cooper and Hedge, Colchester (England). Both William Cooper and Nathaniel Hedge were apprenticed to John Smorthwait, a successful and important businessman and a strict Churchman in the Parish of All Saints', Colchester. Examination of the clock shows that not much of the original is left. The frame, dial, chapter ring and bell, with straps, are all original. The movement however, is a complete late Victorian replacement.

The movement was of reasonable quality, a plated time only, anchor escapement with fusee and spring barrel and gut line drive. The motion works has a pin strategically placed to allow passing strike to a side mounted hammer that strikes the original top mounted bell. The dial center is engraved with scrolls quite similar to that of No. 43 (also by Cooper and Hedge) shown on page 69 of *Clock and Watchmaking in Colchester* by Bernard Mason, OBE, published by Country Life, 1969. Much of the history is borrowed from this very informative book.

Of interest here is how Cooper and Hedge came to be partners. During his apprenticeship with John Smorthwait, Nathaniel Hedge took a fancy to Sarah, Smorthwait's only daughter. It seems that Nathaniel "allowed his affection for Sarah to outrun his discretion". Sarah became pregnant and on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1733, Nathaniel applied for a marriage license in the nearby village of Alresford. He was just 23 and she 27, however, the Marriage License shows Nathaniel to be



26 indicating that he had added some three years to his age.

Nathaniel said nothing to his Master until after the wedding. Smorthwait was a proud man and stern father, and proved to be of an unforgiving nature. Smorthwait turned them both out of the house and from that moment on, he ceased to have a daughter. There was no mention of his daughter, his son-in-law or the grandson in Smorthwait's will dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 1736. Nathaniel had only completed five-and-a-half years of his apprenticeship.

Not to be discouraged, Nathaniel turned to his friend William Cooper, who had completed his apprenticeship with John Smorthwait in 1728 and then started his own clockmaking business also in the parish of All Saints'. William took Nathaniel into partnership and they traded as Cooper and Hedge until the death of John Smorthwait in January 1739. Ironically, Nathaniel purchased Smorthwait's business from his widow and then continued the business under his own name. The partnership with William, which started in

~continued from page 3

The Victorian movement is quite substantial and basically quite reliable. Its fit into the lantern frame was far from simple. New top and bottom plates were fitted, likely to hide the cut-outs of the original frame, and to limit the amount of dust that could enter the movement. A slot had been cut through the bottom plate to allow the new pendulum and bob to function. The movement plates are an almost exact fit between the top and bottom frame plates. This meant that no part of the movement could extend above or below the movement plates without further altering the top or bottom frame plates. To accomplish this, the back cock had been bent downward to allow a minimum suspension spring brass piece to support the suspension on the back cock. It was indeed quite difficult to manipulate the pendulum on and off during servicing. The anchor arbor collets had been filed flat at the top so as to not foul on the bottom side of the top plate.

Restoration included a thorough cleaning, fitting a heavier suspension spring, lubrication, polishing the anchor pallets and then adjusting for an acceptable drop. The minute hand friction washer was also replaced, the original being an uncompromising piece of bent iron, allowing practically no movement when inserting the taper pin through the minute hand arbor. The chapter ring was also silvered and the bell hammer blackened for aesthetics.

Since the movement is spring driven, a new hole had been cut through the engraved center section of the dial for the winding arbor. The new life for this clock is an 8 day table standing clock with both hour and minute hands. While the antique value of the clock has been lost, the clock does remain an interesting functional piece with a fascinating history of love and "perceived improvement". Without question, this is now one of Ms. Ramsbottom's favorites, for it ticks

both fast and loud, and strikes the hours without prolonged aggravation.

Dennis Radage  
Vancouver, BC  
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Thanks Dennis for a fine story and stunning photos. I have so much to learn.

I was thinking it may be fun and interesting if the faithful readers would like to send in photos or descriptions of their favorite clock or one they find interesting or unusual. As of yet, I do not own a British clock. It pains me to say this! I know one will come along and I will know it when I see it.

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**A**n Introduction is in order.....My name is Deena Mack. I live in upstate NY in rural Wyoming County where we boast of having more cows than people. Suits me as I have an aversion to crowds, unless it is opening day at an NAWCC regional. I've been a member since 1994, and joined after being given a Gilbert gingerbread clock from a dear friend. Well you all know how clocks have a way of multiplying. So did mine. Along with the clocks came a desire on my part to learn more. I have met many people who generously share their knowledge with me. In fact it was Ken Johnston whom I met at a regional who encouraged me to join Chapter 159. Let me confess here and now, I know literally nothing about British horology. That's why I joined the chapter. Of late, I have been feeding my book habit with tomes of a British nature. Some of my acquisitions are from the following authors: Loomes, Tyler, Ulyett, Goaman, Beeson, Lloyd, and Cescinsky. I subscribe to Clocks magazine and eagerly await each issue. I'd appreciate recommendations from you. The way I see it, being your editor will be the perfect opportunity to help me learn more. Of course, unless you send me the material, we can't continue to grow in our shared passion. Whether it be an article, a snippet you read that you'd like to share, a picture, question or just a thought, send it on over. I have a few ideas of my own but as one of your newer members, I need you to tell me what's important to you. I get the idea Brits are strong on tradition. I like that. So educate me and help me do the job justice. I want a publication Paul would be proud of.

**S**incerely,  
Deena

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