

Number 46

May 2009

Deena Mack

Editor

British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

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

President's Notes:

I am very pleased to let you know that Dennis Radage has accepted the post of Vice President of the Chapter. As you probably know Dennis is a well respected authority on British horology and lives in British Columbia, Canada. He has given several presentations at Chapter meetings and is scheduled for another at the National at Grand Rapids. He brings more than a profound knowledge of the subject. He also has the talent of delivering an engaging presentation, so whatever the topic it will be interesting to you whatever your specialty. I hope you read his article on *My Favorite Clock* in the Bulletin a few issues ago. It was engaging and made me think what I would do if asked to make a presentation/article on my favorite item. I would have no trouble making my selection but putting it across and making it interesting would be something else altogether. I am afraid that mine would be as interesting as reading the Telephone Directory, and so I respect Dennis not only for his knowledge of British Horology but also skill at getting the message across.

The topic of Dennis's presentation at the National will be "Horology in the Pacific North West"

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Editor's Corner:

Ah, the joy of Spring is finally upon us. Yet, it has put a cramp in my British Horological education. Yard work beckons me outdoors and there are tasks everywhere waiting to be attended to. My copy of English Dial Clocks is bookmarked on page 109, not nearly as far as I had thought to be at this point. In my defense I will say that a wonderful gift I received also managed to divert my attention from ...Dial Clocks. I am now the proud owner of The Longcase Clock Reference Book, Volume 1 by John Robey. This is an amazing reference. The tremendous amount of research presented is phenomenal. I'd like to learn more about the Clockmakers' Company. I

(Continued on page 2)

have come across references to the guild here and there and it sounds as though there was a lot more to it than meets the eye. Graft, devious means, and favors for special members perhaps??

I received replies to my query on British currency vs. American dollars. I am pleased with the explanations I received and impressed at the changes experienced and overcome since 1971. Learning about the currency helps me not only when reading about horology. I enjoy British television especially the series "All Creatures Great and Small." It recounts the tales of a country veterinarian in the Dales before and after WWII. There are always references to shillings, crowns and the like. Check out page 8.....where I will share with you what I have learned.

The newsletter in March was a surprise. Somehow somewhere between my computer and the print shop, the pages got jumbled up. I am sending this edition in a different file format. We'll see what happens.

Hope to see many of you in Grand Rapids! I am excited and looking forward to my first trip to Michigan.

Till June,
Deena

OUR NEXT MEETING

Will take place at the
NAWCC National Convention
Grand Rapids Michigan
June 10-13, 2009
Featured Speaker:
Dennis Radage

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British Horology Times—BHT

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and/or by the newsletter and/or by the
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Curiosities for BHI

By Richard. Newman

One thing that I always look for at a regional is a clock or watch book to read on the trip home. I keep a list of books that I already own with me as I walk around from table to table to make sure I don't inadvertently pick up a duplicate. A lesson learned more than once. At a show last year I came across a book that I knew I had never seen before and although literally fallout out of the binding paid the \$30 asking price without even consulting my list. The book is titled CURIOSITIES OF CLOCKS AND WATCHES FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES by Edward Wood, published 1866 and is filled with interesting formation and stories. I thought the readership would enjoy an excerpt that focuses on the mechanical aspects of watches and division of labor. This taken verbatim from Chapter XI:

We here propose to give a short account of some of the curiosities of the mechanical details of watches. A

good three-quarter plate watch as usually made requires no fewer than one hundred and thirty-eight distinct pieces in its frame, train, escapement, po-tence, fusees, arbors, clicks, ratchets, and other nicely-contrived and adjusted constituents. To these appliances must be added the chain, which contains sixty-three links and forty-two rivets to every inch, and being generally six inches in length comprises six hundred and thirty pieces; thus swelling the contents of a common detached lever-watch to seven hundred and sixty-eight separate pieces, to construct which gives occupation to no less than thirty-eight or forty different kinds of artificers. Babbage, in his 'Economy of Manufactures,' tells us that the division of labour cannot be successfully practiced unless there exist a great demand for its produce; and it requires a large capital to be employed in those

arts in which it is used. In watchmaking it has been carried, perhaps, to the greatest extent. It was stated in evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons, that there are a hundred and two distinct branches of this art, to each of which a boy may be put apprentice; and that he learns only his master's department, and is unable after his apprenticeship has expired, without subsequent instruction, to work at any other branch. The watch-finisher, whose business is to put together the scattered parts, is the only one out of the hundred and two persons who can work in any other department than his own.

Thanks for sharing that Richard. I look forward to more 'curiosities' from you in the future.

Readers: These contributions make our newsletter pleasurable. Send in what interests you, and you can bet it also interests others.

**Introducing
Our New
Vice President**

Dennis Radage

Dennis lives in Vancouver, Canada. He has been CEO of several hi-tech companies being employed by owners and venture capital companies in a "performance turnaround" capacity. He retired from corporate life in 2003 to focus on his passion for clocks, he does continue to consult on a part time basis.

Dennis has been collecting clocks for more than thirty years, he collects mostly English clocks spanning the period 1675 to 1875. He has a library of more than 700 horological books and has given many lectures on the history and restoration of clocks at local chapter meetings, regionals, at various

Nationals and at third party associations such as the Association of Professional Engineers, the American Society of Appraisers, the Vancouver Science World and at the Whatcom Museum in WA. Dennis restores mostly high value clocks, and sells and services clocks through his company Pacific Antique Clocks.

Dennis is a Fellow of the NAWCC, a Past President of BC Chapter 121 and has held the position of Treasurer, Vice President, President, Program Chairman

and Chair of the Ethics committee within the chapter. Dennis is past chair of the National Program Committee. He is a member of the British Horology Chapter and Chair of the Antiquarian Horological Society Western Canada Section. He is a keen photographer and is computer literate. Dennis is an accredited appraiser (CPPA) and also writes articles for the Bulletin and for Clocks Magazine (UK), he is also writing a book on Charles Gretton, Clockmaker who was Master of the Clockmaker's Company in 1700.



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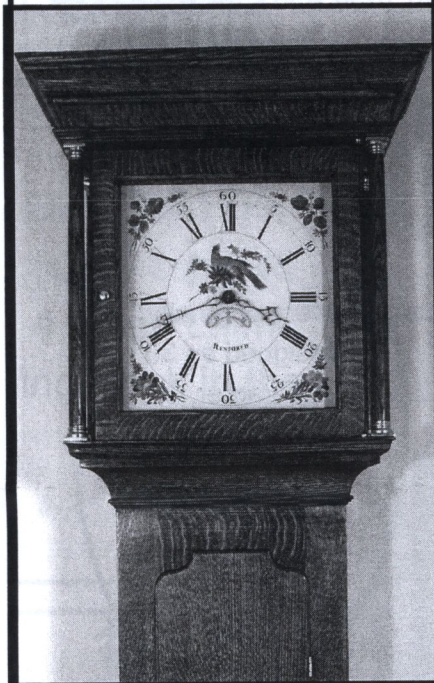
As a measure of his regard by others in our community he has given this lecture to a group in England in May, a local chapter in BC and at the 50th anniversary of the Vancouver Maritime Museum in August. I have requested a room for Friday pm and as usual we will open with a light libation hosted by Betty Brown.

The Southern Ohio Reginald at Ft. Mitchell

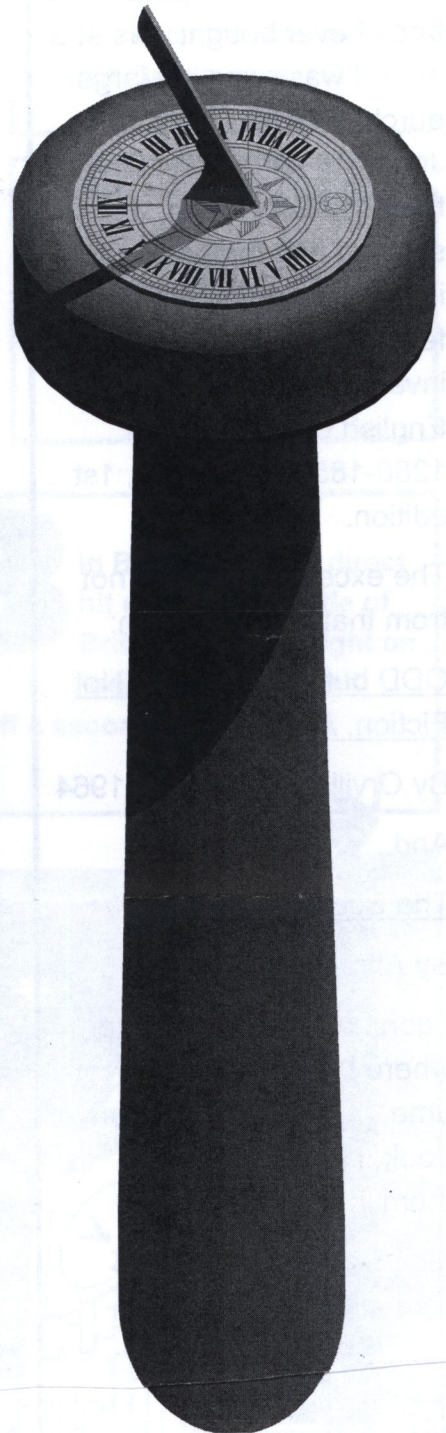
As seems to be the case at all our meetings something goes amiss when I get to Regional despite my requests in writing prior. At Ft Mitchell they did not have a projector. I had prepared a brief presentation on John Forrest, more on enlighten rather than a presentation on fine watch-making. JF was apprenticed in Clerkenwell and claimed he was a Chronometer maker to the Admiralty when in fact it was not true. The facts all came out long after his death when a Coventry maker licensed his name and created a fir tree logo. He was sued and William Crisp wrote a letter to the HJ. Now JF watches fetch exaggerated prices on eBay based on the fact that people think that they are superior when in fact they are just good examples of watches made at the time.

I was not able to give my Power Point presentation but Roger Gendron had some fine photographs of a tall case he had made for a thirty hour movement and his stand up presentation sparked a lively dialogue. The case looked wonderful and I am very grateful to Roger for bringing it to our attention.

I hope to see as many as possible at the National. We have a table and feel free to use that as a base in the Mart and do not forget our meeting. All the best,
Ken Johnston



This is a picture of Roger Gendron's fine clock case and restored dial. Isn't it a beauty?



Interesting bits about Big Ben.....from Deena Mack

Besides being a horologist, I am also a bibliophile. Often times you will find me under a mart table digging through boxes of books. The most expensive book I ever bought was at a mart. I was ruing my large purchase when I met Ken Johnston for the first time in the hospitality room. I showed him the book and immediately he made me feel much better about my investment. The book was English Church Clocks 1280-1850 by Beeson, 1st edition.

The excerpts here are not from that book but from:

ODD but TRUE Facts, Not Fiction, About Time....

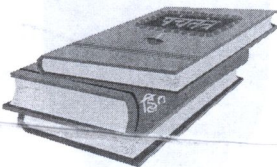
By Orville R. Hagans, 1964

And

The Book of Big Ben

By Alfred Gillgrass, 1946

I don't remember when or where I acquired either volume, but like the Beeson book, I am glad to have them in my library.



The clock is actually named "The Clock Tower".

"Big Ben" is the name of the bell inside.



From the time of application to Parliament for authority to build a clock in 1844, to completion of Big Ben in 1859 was 15 years!



The dials were originally designed as 30' in diameter, but architect Augustus Pugin redesigned them to be 22 1/2'.

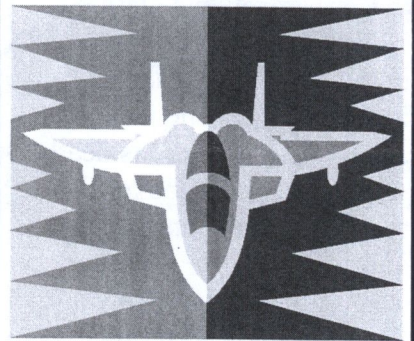
The hammer lifts about a foot before the striking bell.



Before electric lights were installed in 1912, 2 attendants climbed to the dials each evening to light gas jets which illuminated the dials. Each morning they had to climb back up to turn them out.



During WWII, every dial suffered damage.



However, the clock's performance was never interrupted, even when the south dial was blown in on May 10, 1941.

Ben's bell cracked soon after being put in use. Since this was the already the second bell cast for the clock, instead of replacing it, workers turned it one eighth of a turn. The correct 4 cwt hammer replaced the 7cwt one that had been used. After all this time, no appreciable wear has been noted on the bell.

Big Ben was built to replace the Old Palace of Westminster after it was destroyed by fire in October 1834.



The Tower *leans* slightly Northwest by 8.66"!

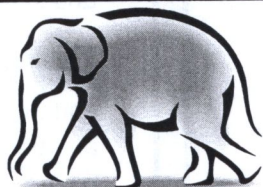
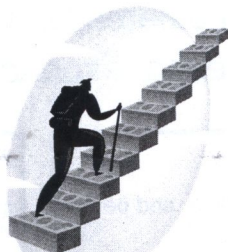


When Big Ben strikes 12, the weight drops 3 feet.

Number of steps to the belfry: 334

Number of steps to the lantern: 393

Number of floors: 11



Our friend Ben is the biggest 4 faced chiming clock in the world



The clock tower rises 320' from it's base.

The first floor of the tower (not open to visitors) contains a room which constitutes Parliamentary prison. Members guilty of a misdemeanor could be committed to the clock tower for the remainder of that session. The last occupant was Mr. Charles Bradlaugh in 1880.

Each dial weighs 4 tons.



Big Ben received a direct hit during the Battle of Britain, but kept right on running. Ben hasn't been off 4 seconds since 1858!



Understanding British Currency

In the last newsletter, I asked for an explanation of British vs. American money. Much to my surprise and dismay, not only do I need to learn about pounds and pence, but to relate this to the study of horology past, I also need to become familiar with many outdated terms. *And then* I still need to convert one currency to the other. Perhaps this information would be a good project to print and laminate for quick future reference. Each explanation I received from my faithful advisors was stated a bit differently, which was helpful while I was trying to 'get it'. Here are excerpts from each responder:

Al Dubin:

Prior to 1971 old British Units were: pounds , shilling, and pence

A guinea = 1 pound & 1 shilling

Crown= 5 shillings

Half crown = 2 shillings & t pence

Pound was nicknamed a 'quid'

Shilling was nicknamed a 'bob'

12 pence to a shilling

20 shillings to a pound

After 1971:

No more guineas crowns or half crowns.

From Doug Cowan:

1. British money: The British pound is worth about \$1.75 US and has been as high as \$2.00 not long ago. When I was a kid, it was worth \$5 and in the 1970's got as low as \$1.00.

Since 1971, the pound has been decimalized and the only legal definitions now are pounds and pence, one pence being 1/100th of a pound.

Before 1971 the definitions were:

2. Pound— same as now. On the streets the pound is often called a 'quid'
Symbol for shilling was "s"
Symbol for pence was "d"
As an example, 3 shillings and 6 pence would be written "3s/6d", and would be slang named "three and six".
There were earlier small coins too-- sixpence was 6d., thruppence was 3d.
Tuppence was 2d., a farthing was 1/4 d.

From Lewis Miller:

Before World War 1:

1 shilling was worth 25 US cents

1 pence was worth 2.1 US cent

1 sovereign = 1pound =>20 shillings

Present Time:

Pound = 1.45 US \$

1 pence = 1.5 US cents

1 pound = 100 pence

