



British Horology Times

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

It Pays to be Caught in the Rain

A story by Richard Newman

I purchased my first British timepiece about 25 years ago while on a short vacation to England. After spending a few days in London, I hopped a train to see some of the North Country, finishing up in Edinburgh. It was there that I ducked into an antique shop to escape a driving rain and first saw the sundial pictured. I was immediately smitten by the carved swirls, angel with wings at the top and apparently original gnomon. The price was reasonable. The problem was how to get this 40+ pound souvenir back home to the States! But with my mind made up, I returned with my backpack later in the day, fastened a small cardboard box on top of the gnomon to protect both it and my backpack from otherwise certain damage, and carefully packed it into the backpack's cavity surrounded by clothes for protection.

I quickly learned that the hard part was negotiating the pack onto and off of my back in a controlled fashion. But with street map in hand, I headed slowly and deliberately to the Edinburgh train station. At Heathrow the next day, the airport security screener called his pals around to see the crazy American that had a "brick" in his carry-on luggage. I don't think I, or my back, will ever forget that day.

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My 40 pound souvenir and first sundial.

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Chapter 159

Our Next Meeting
Will take place
At the
Florida Winter Regional
February 24-26, 2011
Daytona Beach Florida
Rich Newman will speak on
Colonial and
Early American Watchmakers

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President's Message:

This is my first letter to the membership as the President of the Chapter. Before providing an update, it is certainly appropriate to thank our past President, Ken Johnston; Secretary, Julie Kern; and Treasurer, David Kern for their excellent service over the past term. Upon joining BH, I was immediately struck with the friendly atmosphere of the membership and outstanding quality of presentations. This is perhaps one of the smaller chapter's in the NAWCC, however, it is very well represented by experts in the field of horology that are accessible and willing to share information and advice. That was my experience when Ken encouraged me to publish my first article for the Bulletin back in 2005, and I hope every member has had similar positive experiences. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the other officers with your views and suggestions for continued Chapter improvement.

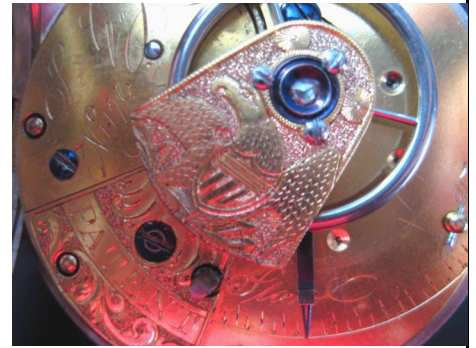
I'm quite excited to be working with Dennis, Marion, Peter and Deena to continue the fine traditions of BH. Our immediate focus was to organize our programs and major articles for the coming term, insure we have convenient times and prime facilities at our meetings, and promote the Chapter. As many of you know, we have three meetings and publish BHT three times a year. We would like to build a more extensive inventory of presentations and articles, so please tell us your ideas no matter how large or small. I personally always enjoyed the show-and-tell portion of our meetings, so please take a few minutes to grab an interesting movement, clock, watch, etc., on your way out the door to attend our next meeting at the Florida Winter Regional!

Rich

Leslie Update

Tom Spittler, in the May 2010 BHT article discusses Robert Leslie and associated clock & watch materials firms operating in Philadelphia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. I thought the readership would be interested to know that the dispute between Robert Leslie and John Wood in 1790 is additionally significant because it documents the existence of a clock and watch maker's company, comprising approximately 20 members, operating in early America.

The last advertisement for Patton and Jones is 1813. An ad in 1814 states "Samuel G. Jones, Late Patton & Jones, has on hand a few Patent Lever Gold and Common Silver Watches." The watch pictured is signed S. G. Jones, No. 1173 (Baltimore) and has a Massey lever escapement with stop feature and wonderful American eagle balance cock, ca. 1818. At least two other surviving Jones watches are known and the owners are collaborating for a possible future article. Richard Watkins describes an example with an interesting 15 seconds bit feature in the December 2009 Bulletin, and the third watch apparently has the same American eagle balance cock as the example pictured. Please contact the BHT if you have any information on S. C. Jones or other examples of his watches.



British Horology – Chapter 159 – Request for Speakers

British Horology Chapter 159 meets three times a year, at the Florida Winter Regional, at the Southern Ohio Regional and at the National. The chapter is currently seeking speakers for these events and invites you to present an educational or interesting program on any aspect of British Horology.

If you have a program that you would like to present, or if you are willing to create such a program for either 2011 (or 2012), please contact Dennis Radge: Email clocks@telus.net

2011 Schedule:

Florida Regional, February 24 - 26

Colonial & Early American Watchmaking by Rich Newman

Southern Ohio Regional, April 7 - 9

How I Met Arnold #74; How I Found an Arnold Chronometer in the Midwest
By Safwat Wahba

National at Overland Park, KS. June 8 - 11

Remember, if you are planning to attend the National or either of the regionals, be sure to also attend the British Horology Chapter 159 meeting. We look forward to seeing you there. *Dennis*

NAWCC Clock Tour 2010 by Ken Johnston

Monday 23rd August 2010 saw 35 intrepid travelers assemble in London at a Mayfair Hotel for a tour of Horological collections and many side trips to add historic perspective and, dare I say it, just plain fun. Our field of endeavor spanned from Kent in the south to Perthshire in the north. The picture shows the group on the steps of the British Museum.



During our four days spent in London we were privileged to view the collections at the Guildhall (The Clockmaker's Collection) hosted by Sir George White; the British Museum hosted by David Thompson and the Lord Harrison collection at Belmont House hosted by Jonathan Betts, Commander Peter Lingstead-Smith and Duncan Greig. These people are unquestionably pre-emanate authorities on British Horology and to have the opportunity of having them give us the benefit of their huge knowledge and insight was, as the advert says, "Priceless". On day four those fit

enough climbed clock towers and studied movements at four locations including St. Paul's Cathedral with credit to Rev. David Bert who orchestrated the tour; meanwhile the rest studied church architecture and local colour.

A small diversion – The BM recently opened a new gallery for Horology. It is splendid and they have an enlightened view regarding taking photo-graphs. They are allowed and the illumination is sufficient to get good pictures of the clocks, as shown in the examples. The watches are tougher - as they always are - due to reflections. Most of the other museums do not allow photography.

A visit to Bletchley Park to see code breaking computers etc. may not sound very exciting but with Brigadier Tim Tulverman as guide, the significance and its vital contribution in WWII became a gripping and heroic story.

The following day we visited the collection at the BHI at Upton Hall in Newark, hosted by Dr Kenneth Lloyd-Jones and with Viscount Alan Middleton as guide.

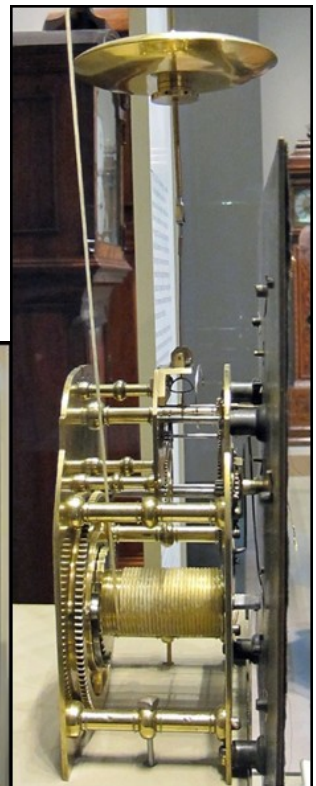
We then headed north to capture a little of the wonder and history of the area. We saw Roman ruins and Edinburgh Castle; Blair Castle and the Blair Athol whisky distillery; Scone Palace and a glass factory; the Discovery and Glamis Castle; also Lauriston Castle.

We will all take home our particular favorites but the highlights will have to be the Ceilidh we had at our hotel in Perth and for me Hadrian's wall and the day in Dundee.

As we headed south we saw Lyme Park with its fine collection of English Golden Age clocks which lead to a debate on just who had the finest

One of the regulator clocks made by Thomas Tompion for the Octagon Room in the Royal Observatory, Greenwich founded by Charles II in 1675.

The pendulum is 13 feet long and swings fore and aft.



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collection of these clocks in England.

At our farewell dinner in Birmingham the NAWCC poet Laureate, Ray Cobb gave us the epic saga of the trip that he might just be persuaded to publish in the future.

On the last full day several people came away with treasures from the Birmingham Watch and Clock Fair and our final visit was in Coventry at the Herbert Museum and the Watch Museum Project in Spon Street.

This tour would not have come about had it not been for several notables who gave of their time and talent. Roger Gendron was the instigator and persuaded

Philip Priestley to organize it all while Jim Nichols took on the task of treasurer. We sincerely thank these gentlemen for their dedication and patience.



Bob Prizker scaling the heights at the Main East Gate of Roman Fort Chesters. A part of Hadrian's wall built in the second century AD and abandoned about 1600 years ago!



The epic story of Scott of the Antarctic is an essential part of my generation and so seeing the HMS Discovery in Dundee was very moving.



Addressing the Haggis is a traditional part of any Burns night and also part of the surprise Ceilidh that we had at the Jarvis Hotel in Perth.

A Ceilidh is a Gaelic word for a Scottish gathering during which people perform traditional music and dance.



We saw many significant castles while in Scotland and for me Glamis Castle, home of the Queen Mother, was the most impressive, as it made the connection with old times and current history.



Close up view along the top of my sundial. While there is wear along the upper right from years of enduring the elements, you can still plainly see the angel's facial features and wings

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Before the age of watches and clocks, sundials were the primary means for telling the time for thousands of years. Hundreds of books were written about sundial design and associated technical observations, before clocks and watches became more prevalent in the latter part of the 18th century. Interestingly, sundials remained very popular until the late 19th century as a reliable means to correct or confirm that one's pocket watch was keeping good time.

According to the antique store proprietor, this vertical sundial came from the area around Fife and was likely several hundred years old judging from the wear, - perhaps early 18th century.

Whether true or not is still a mystery to me, but it has had a sheltered and rather distinguished life in my home ever since. I would certainly appreciate if

any of the members can tell me more about it or has any further insights.

Time Well Spent

By Frank Del Greco (OH)

During the recent Chapter 159 tour of England and Scotland, our coach (bus) stopped in Dundee, Scotland so we could view the HMS Discovery and spend some time in the town on our own as we wished.

As a tower clock enthusiast, I immediately spied a tall church steeple with four skeletonized dials. I went to the church, St. Mary's, and looked for a way to get in to ask someone about the clock. I realized that I was under a time constraint – it was 11:15AM and the coach would leave Dundee promptly at 1PM.

Most of the doors of the church were locked shut with no handles or knobs on them. I found a door near the steeple with a doorbell. I rang it and waited. And I waited. No answer. Finally, I walked about three-quarters of the way around the church and found another door with two doorbells. I rang them both. And I waited. And waited. I pushed them again and after another long wait, a man emerged who identified himself as the janitor. I introduced myself, told him I research turret clocks, and was interested in getting some information about the church's clock. He informed me that he knew nothing about the clock as it belonged to the City Council – not the church – and that I might find some information at the city's museum. I asked for directions, which he gave me as quite straightforward, although he admitted that he had never been there. It was now 11:30AM.

I hoofed it down to the place where he said the museum was only to find that there wasn't one there. I looked at a large map posted nearby and found the location of the City Council in an area called the City Centre. It wasn't far away so I walked there. I saw a door to the left of the huge courtyard labeled "City Council," and went in. I found myself in a stairwell with a lift (elevator). A sign read "Personnel – First Floor; General Information – Third Floor." I took the lift that only holds four people to the third floor but found the office door locked. I took the stairs down to the first floor and entered the personnel department where I found a counter, a buzzer, and a stack of job application forms. I rang the buzzer. A young man came from a back room and I asked about the clock. He said that I needed to see Ian, the archivist. "I'll get you his telephone number," he said, and disappeared into the back room. After what seemed like

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forever (remember, I was under a time constraint) he reappeared and told me he would take me to see Ian. We left the building, walked across the courtyard at a brisk pace, and entered another building. It was now 11:45AM.

At a door at the end of a long hallway, he pressed a buzzer and a woman appeared who took me to see Ian in the archives room. Ian looked old enough to be shelved with the rest of the materials there. I told him what I wanted. After I signed in, he started producing materials. The first was a published book that contained excerpts of City Council meetings going back centuries as dictated by the book's author to a transcriber. It contained much information about who the various men were who through the ages took care of the steeple clock (there were actually three clocks in that tower over the last 450+ years). But that wasn't what I wanted. It was now 11:55AM. But in a flash Ian had another booklet on the history of Dundee including a discussion of the steeple clocks. Success! Here are the details:

The first clock was made in 1543 by William Purves of Edinburgh. It was a "substantial clock weighing 113 stones" (1582 lbs). Obviously, it had a foliot escapement. (Purves died before 1560.)

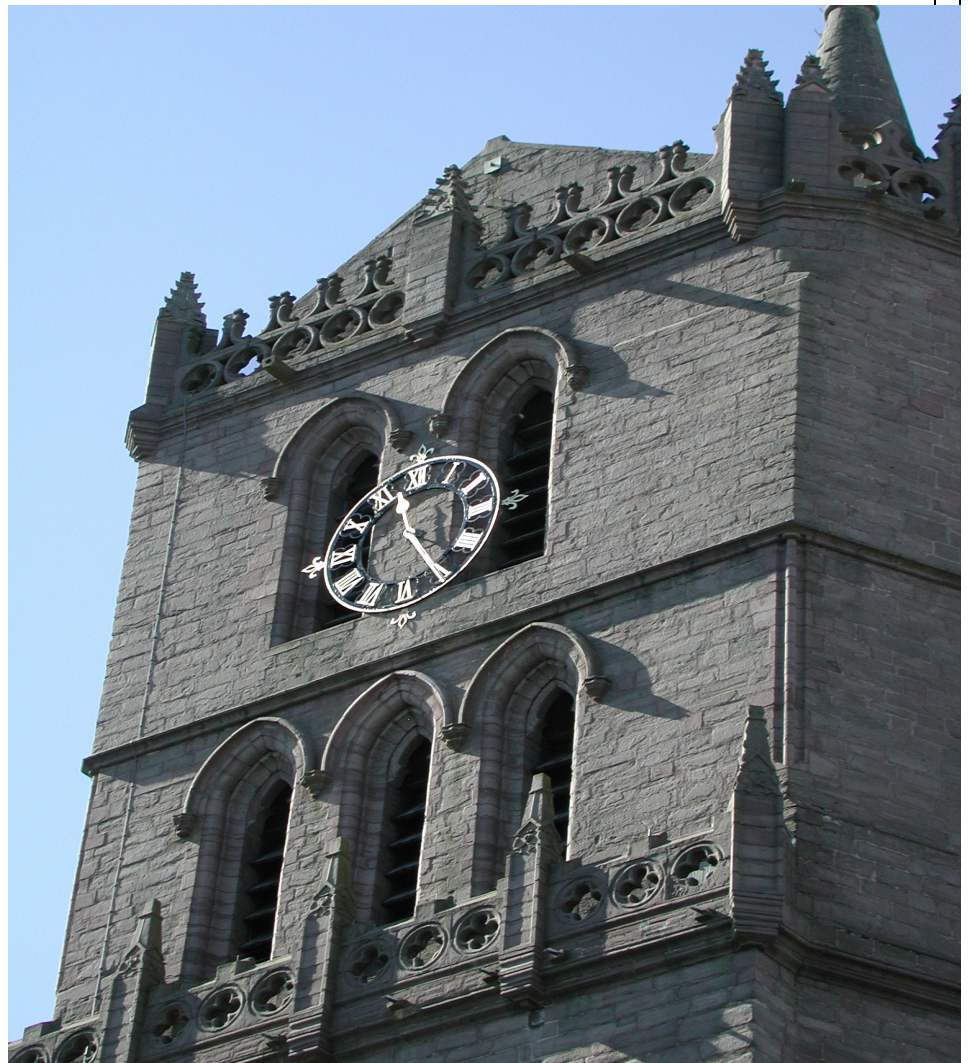
The clock lasted only five years as it was destroyed by the English with fire along with part of the tower. The tower was rebuilt and a new clock – again with a foliot escapement – was made by David Kay of Edinburgh in 1553. It was "pounded out of wrought iron and of barely satisfactory quality," with two large stones for weights, although the City Council paid 200 pounds Sterling for it. It drove a single hand on one dial that faced east.

In 1862 a new, three-train clock with Westminster chimes was made by James Rattray of Nethergate, Dundee, and remains there today. It is one of the largest turret clocks in Scotland, and its five-legged gravity escapement with 13-foot pendulum keeps the clock to within three to four seconds a week. Supposedly, the 1553 clock was left in the tower and remains there to this day.

The new clock drove four wooden dials each nine feet in diameter. Then in 1884, the City Council decided that the wooden dials detracted from the architecture of the steeple. They were replaced with 11-foot diameter skeletonized dials that remain today.

I found that once a year, sometime in September, there are public tours up the steeple, but they weren't happening today.

I left the archives at 12:15PM and still had enough time to grab a bite to eat before the coach left.



British Horology Chapter Dues Notice

We do hope that you are enjoying your membership in the British Horology Chapter 159. We meet three times a year; at the National, at the Winter Florida Regional and at the Southern Ohio Regional. We also publish British Horology Times, our chapter newsletter, which is sent out three times a year in March, June and November.

The Chapter's new fiscal year starts on 1st January 2011 and ends on 31st December 2011. Please help the effective management and planning of the Chapter by the prompt remittance of your annual dues. Dues are \$10.00 for two years or \$5.00 per year. This is \$12 and \$6 for addresses outside the USA.

Dues can be paid by mailing your cheque payable to "NAWCC Chapter 159", along with this completed form, to the treasurer at the address shown at the bottom of this page. Please ensure that you inform us of your correct mailing address, phone number, email if you have one, and your NAWCC Membership number.

Thank you,

Peter Stipanovich Treasurer, Chapter 159

Please ensure that the chapter has correct contact information by completing the following :

Surname: _____ First: _____ Spouse: _____

Street & No. _____

City : _____ State/Prov : _____

Zip/Code : _____ Country : _____

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