British Horology Times

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

An Interesting Door Frame Style English Turret Clock

By Frank Del Greco (OH)

While on our chapter's tour of England last year we visited Upton Hall, the home of the British Horological Institute. In their museum was an early English door frame style turret clock, shown in Figure 1. It was made by Richard Roe in 1686. Roe worked in Epperstone. Epperstone is a village in Nottinghamshire located near both Lowdham and Calverton. (editor's note: Nottinghamshire is the fabled land of Robin Hood and the Sherwood Forest). The village has a population of around 500. Roe died in 1720.

The clock has lost a few parts. First, the fly, located in the left-most third of the clock, has lost its vanes. They were riveted to what remains of the vertical arm. Second, the pendulum is missing. The pendulum swung front to back, instead of side to side. See Figure 2. Fi-

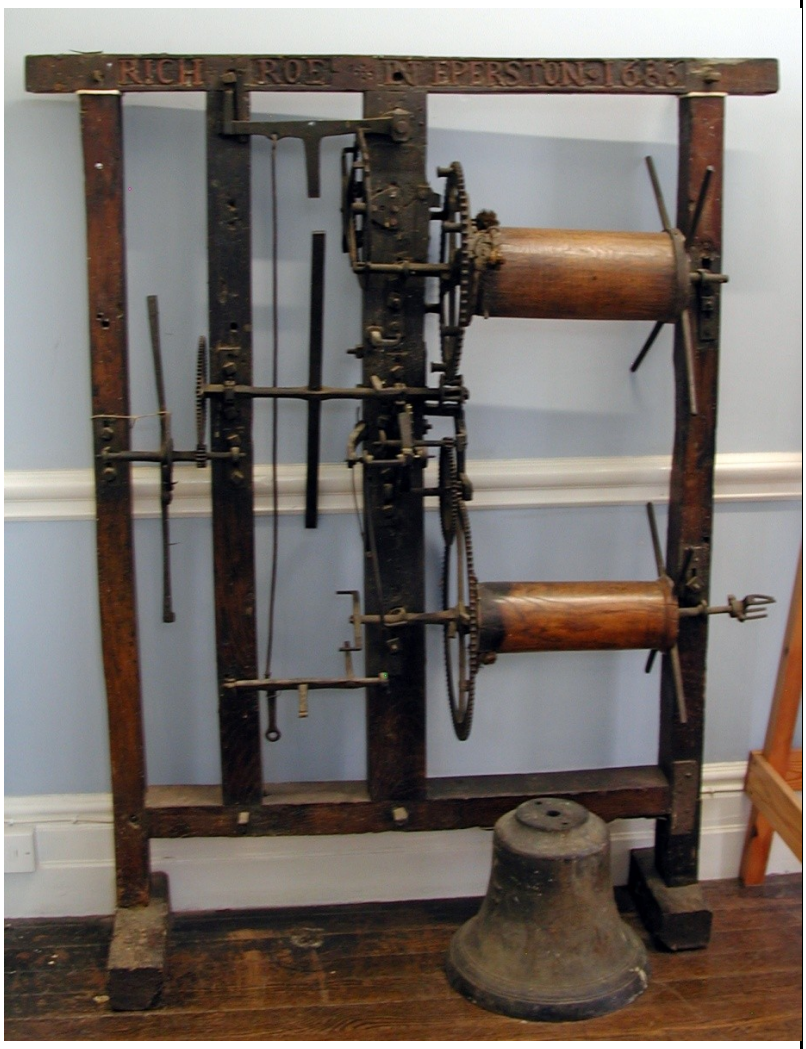

Figure 1. The Door Frame Style Clock by Richard Roe

(Continued on page 2)

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nally, at the very bottom of the center section there is a horizontal arm. There is a finger pointing straight out of the photo. There originally was a weight attached directly to it – probably about three to five pounds.

Door frame style clocks are characterized by their very two-dimensional look – like a door frame – and by one train above the other. I stared at the clock for quite some time trying to figure out how the strike control worked. It wasn't until I got home and reviewed C.F.C. Beeson's book, "English Church Clocks: 1280 – 1850," did I realize that the clock had "kick start" strike control, used by very early English turret clocks in conjunction with a countwheel. There is no warning with this type of control. For those of you who do not have Beeson's book, I'll describe kick start striking here.

Figure 2

Close up of Escapement

First, examine the center vertical section of the clock in Figure 1. At the top is the countwheel, driven directly by the strike side winding drum arbor. Note the "T" shaped bar across the top. The right end pivots on a bolt, and the left end rides in a slot formed by a bracket. The right side sits in a countwheel slot. The middle of the horizontal bar has a vertical leg. It interferes with one of the two arms on the horizontal arbor midway in the center of the clock. That arbor is driven by the strike train and transfers rotation to the fan fly located in the left section of the clock. (The vanes on the fan fly are missing.) That arbor can't spin unless the clock is striking; hence, the arms on that arbor act as locking levers and the leg of the "T" acts as the stop pin.

Now look at the bottom of the center section of the clock. There is a horizontal arbor with three arms, or fingers, attached. The finger on the right rides against a right angle lever on the time side winding arbor. As the clock ticks away and time side arbor and great wheel turn clockwise – as viewed from the left side of the clock – that right angle lever pushes the arm on the center section arbor down and toward the back. See Figure 3.

The center finger on that horizontal arbor rises forward. That arm had a weight on its end – now missing – of cast iron or lead. The left finger – the one with the hole in it, rotates down from behind and forward. When the clock is just ready to strike, the right finger is pointing toward the back and

(Continued on page 8)

Our Next Meeting

will take place at the National Convention

Overland Park KS

Friday June 10, 2011

The program will be:

Dating Challenges of Early English Verge Watches 1660—1770

Presented by Dennis Radage

The exhibit at this year's convention is

British Horology

A sample of some of the beautiful watches included in Dennis' presentation. See more at the meeting in Kansas.

Table of Contents

President's Message:

Our last meeting at the Southern Ohio Regional in April was a huge success. A captivating and informative presentation by Safwat Wahba on finding an Arnold chronometer, was followed by interesting show-and-tell items. They included an unusual miniature Birmingham bracket clock with pull quarter striking and alarm, an unidentified early 17th century tall case movement, and a trapezoidal shaped fusee movement. Thanks to Tom Spittler and Robert Butler for sharing. I find the interaction of show-and-tell items to be especially interactive and fun. If you have an interesting item, please bring it to one of our meetings.

Please consider contributing to the publication of BHT by putting your thoughts and expertise to paper. Topics can cover just about anything related to British horology. If you've come across an interesting timepiece or have a good collecting or repair story to tell, we want to hear about it! All we need is a brief write-up and a good picture or two.

Our next event is at the National Convention on Friday June 10, 2011 and features a presentation by Dennis Radage on dating early English verge watches. The Convention theme and exhibit will also be on British Horology so this National should be especially interesting. Look for the Union Jack in the Mart for Chapter 159 information. Why not bring a friend and sign them up!

Rich~

Editor's Corner:

Frank DelGreco's feature story on Richard Roe and his 'door frame clock' movement is a fascinating peek at an interesting clock and the man who made it. I really appreciate Frank for taking the time to send it to us for use in our newsletter. Do you subscribe to Clocks magazine? Learn more about Richard Roe of Epperstone in the March 2007 issue, page 9, in an article by Brian Loomes. Also check out his website; Brianloomes.com.

I recently attended a clock show, and happened to pick up a book titled The Wetherfield Collection of English Clocks by Arthur Vernay. You will recall our feature article in the January 2011 newsletter, Dennis Radage's "The Gretton Project". He mentions the Wetherfield collection in his article. What a coincidence to find the book in a jumble of titles.

Let us know what you think of "Workshop Notes". This informative feature was suggested by Dennis Radage. Our last newsletter featured one by him and also one from Tom Mostyn. Not long after the last issue was published, a friend of mine told me he had to repair a mainspring barrel. Tom's notes were about that same subject. Just in time!

~Deena

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More on Sundial Mottoes

By Deena Mack

A few issues back we were treated to a story by Rich Newman about his acquisition of a sundial. His story provoked an interest in sundial mottoes. I found a book titled A Book of Sundial Mottoes by Alfred Hyatt, and have chosen a few to share with you.

Ut. Hora. Fugit. Vita.
(As. An. Hour. Life. Flies.)

Avaritia. Hodie. Dominatur
(You. Covet. To-morrow.)

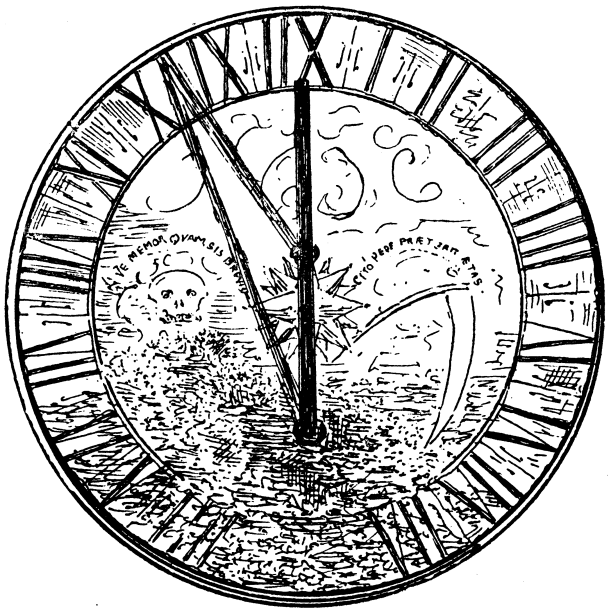
Deus. Adest. Laborantibus.
(Heaven. Favours. The. Diligent)

Ut. Umbra. Sic. Vita.
(Shade. Is. Life's. Pattern.)

Disce . Dies . Numerare . Tuos.
(Learn. To. Value. Your. Time)

Via . Vitae.
(Life's . Road.)

See,. And. Be. Gone. About. Your. Business.
Trifle. Not,. Your. Time's. Short.



WIGMORE GRANGE.

WORKSHOP NOTES

This section is for members to submit a short story or notes on their workshop experiences. Just send a photo along with your thoughts or opinions. These can be "What I Found", "How I Fixed It", "An Interesting Clock", "Dial Engraving", "What I Made", "Bodgers Leftovers" or just about anything horological that you feel you might like to share. Of course, British clocks.

Bushing – Performance Improvement or Decorative Art By Dennis Radage

Re-bushing clock plates is an integral part of many clock restoration projects. While I do believe that many more re-bushing jobs are undertaken than are truly necessary, it is clear that some clocks are neglected through the lack of appropriate cleaning and lubrication that the pivot holes have worn and become severely elongated causing slop and poor meshing of the wheels, re-bushing therefore becomes a necessary remedy.

Bushing usually entails dismantling the movement, determining where bushing is needed, then further determining the correct position for the bush before reaming out a hole appropriate for the new bush. Many repairers turn their own bushes from brass rod, but kits and reamers are available from companies such as Bergeon and KWM that can make the job a somewhat simpler operation.

Unfortunately there are amateurs and bodgers who employ less attractive, unsightly fixes to try and save time and cost. They don't have the tools, parts, skills or knowledge, so they improvise. They attempt to shrink a worn or elongated pivot hole by punching around the hole. In all cases the result is unsightly, the repair technique is quite wrong and ends up reducing the value of an otherwise fine antique clock. Further, future repairers and restorers have little chance to remove the incorrect punch marks, so the clock becomes damaged for life.

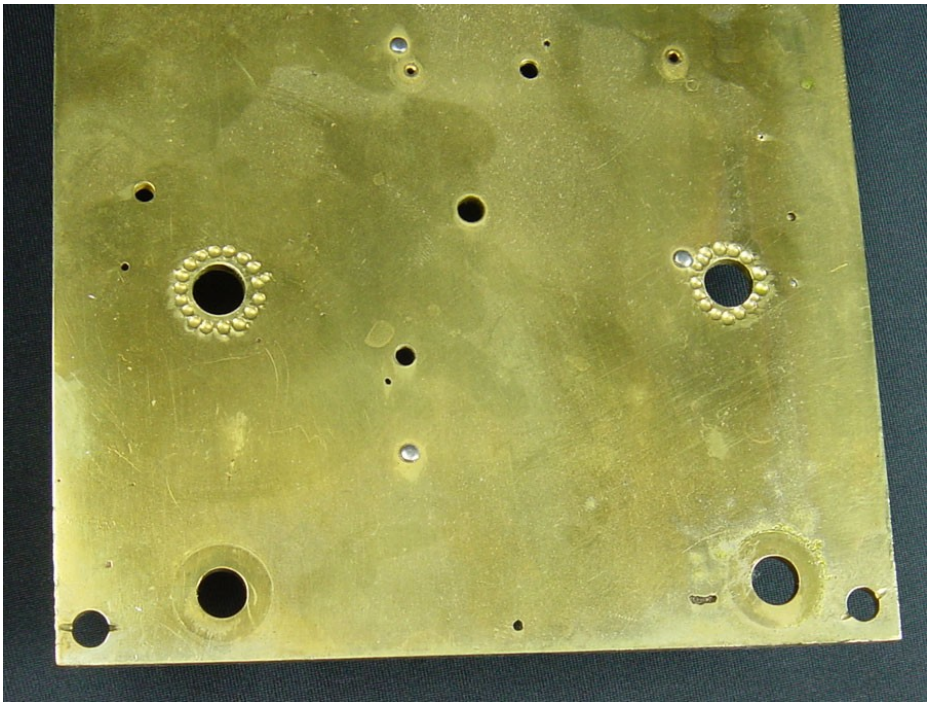
The attached photos show a plate of a clock that recently came in for repair, in this case the barrel pivot holes were painstakingly punched to try and solve a bushing problem. This individual was very careful in his work, obviously thinking that he was doing a superb job but in fact he all but ruined the originality of the clock. Maybe his work was not quite that of an artist, but the evenness of the punching is something that I have not seen before. Still, the clock is damaged for life and the procedure did not necessarily center the hole in its original (correct) position.

The options available to new restorers are limited, possibly cutting away all of the punched brass, then inserting a large piece of brass to fill the hole. The plate can then be reamed in the correct position for the barrel arbor pivot. Complications include finding a piece of brass that is as similar as possible to the original plate. Al-

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

ternatively, the repairer can just ignore the punching and insert a barrel bush in the correct position. The higher end restorer may select the former, but due to cost, the proposed repair should first be discussed with the clock owner.



Not what we like to see when servicing a movement.

The close up, below, shows a poor solution to a problem. It probably took as much time to accomplish this than a proper repair would have taken.

(Continued from page 2)
nearly horizontal; the center finger with the weight is horizontal and pointing toward the front, and the left finger is pointing down.

There is a thin but stiff wire that is attached to the left side of the "T" bar and runs all the way down the center section of the clock, along the back side of the lower horizontal arbor, and through the hole in the left lower finger. (The wire isn't in the hole in the photo because it is broken off.) What

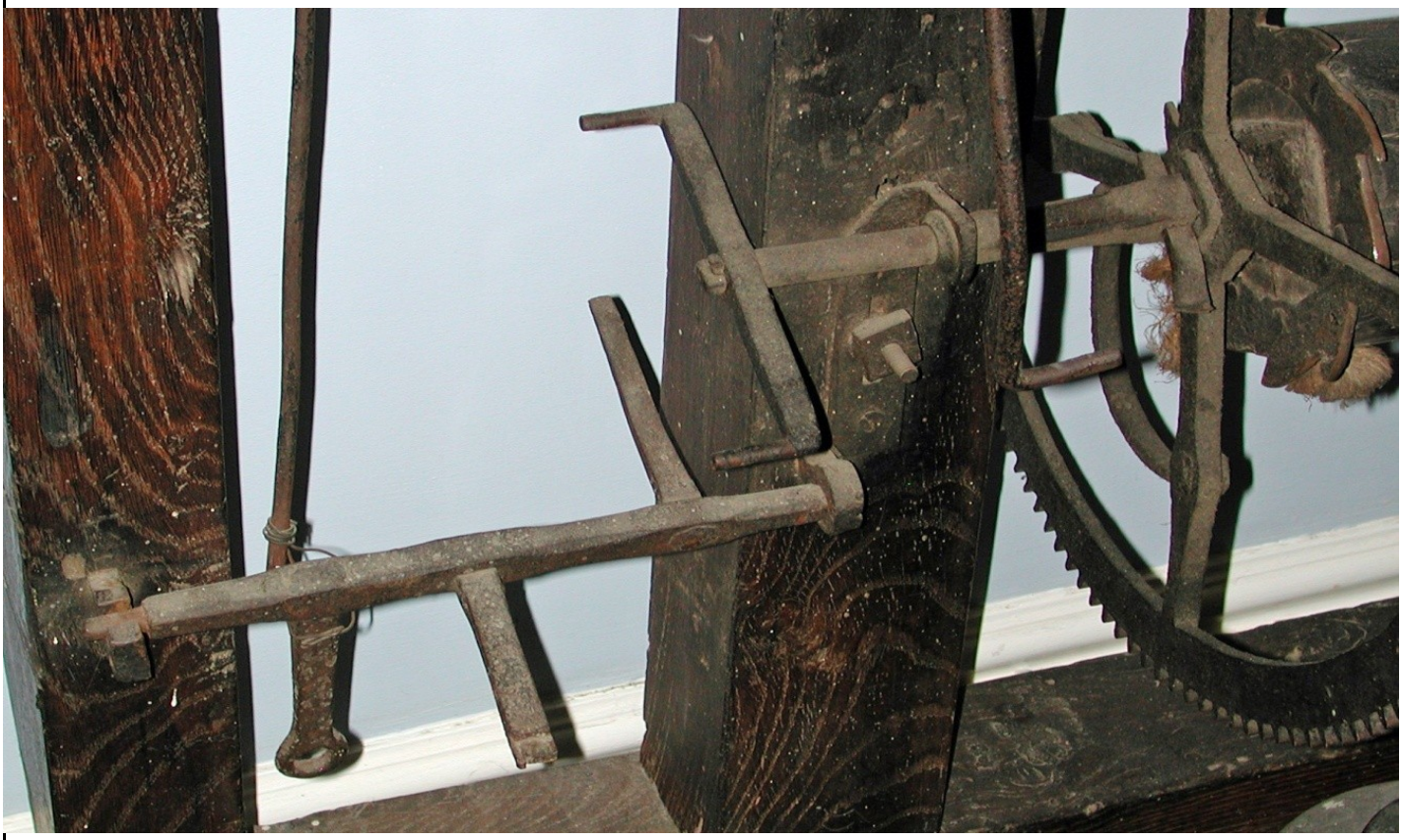


Figure 3 Close up of horizontal arm

was on that wire (but isn't now because it was on the piece that broke off) just behind the arbor was a knob or flange that was bigger than the hole in the finger.

On the hour the right angle lever on the winding arbor slips off of the right finger. The weight on the middle arm causes the arbor to rotate quickly – fast enough that when the left finger rotates backward and encounters the flange on the wire, it gives it a "kick" that is transferred up the wire and knocks the "T" bar out of the countwheel slot while the leg of the latter simultaneously clears the locking arm. The strike train starts to rotate. Although the "T" bar tries to drop – as it was only given a brief kick – the train has already rotated far enough that it can't fall back into the countwheel slot. The clock strikes until the "T" bar falls into the next slot and the vertical arm stops the rotation of the train.

There are variations of kick start striking but this is the only one that I've examined closely. I've been told by a repairman that kick start striking was used in some German table clocks as late as the 19th or 20th century.~