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

Queen Anne Remembered

By Richard Newman

Early Watches were as much about status as they were about timekeeping, and significant expense in precious materials and labor went into the adornment of these timepieces. However, after the introduction of the balance spring in 1675 made relatively accurate timekeeping in watches possible, the focus shifted from decoration to timekeeping, and makers were challenged to come up with new ways to tell time down to the minute and in rare cases, down to the second.

The next 25 years saw a number of important technical advances in England including the adoption of the four wheel movement train, repeaters that sounded the hours and quarters on a bell, pierced jewels to reduce friction, and the Tompion regulator to easily adjust the rate of the watch. During the same period in France, there was massive social unrest culminating with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantz in 1685 that eliminated religious and civil liberties for the Huguenots (French Protestants), and upwards of 400,000 left Catholic France. They were manufacturers, merchants and skilled craftsmen, including clockmakers, watchmakers, and goldsmiths. Many settled in Protestant England (including the American colonies), Holland and Switzerland giving a boost to the availability of skilled labor. English watch making was on the move; scientific innovation of skilled craftsmen, political stability and organization/specialization of the guild structure under the guidance of the Clockmakers' Company made London the undisputed preeminent watch making center of the world. Albeit 300 years later, one can still find wonderful examples from the early

Statue of Queen Anne in front of St. Paul's Cathedral

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first quarter of the eighteenth century on the internet and at NAWCC Regionals, and this article is about one such watch made by Thomas Bell of London.

As often happens, the acquisition spurs curiosity leading to research, and that's exactly what happened to me. Bell is hardly a recognized name; he is recorded in 1691 and apprenticed to John Norcott and later to Samuel Mather, however his watch, like many from this period, is wonderfully finished and just a "work of art" (Figure 1). It has a large, intricately engraved and pierced balance table with the wings or "ears" to the left and right of the mask formed into birds' heads, and also features particularly nice broad Egyptian watch pillars with pierced gallery that are more often seen on watches by renowned London makers. The verge movement, characteristic of the period, is contained in its original plain silver "box" and outer case that later became known as a pair case. Case hallmarks are extremely helpful in dating watches, however these cases have none. That's normal for English watches from the first quarter of the century (and even later), although more often than not a maker's mark is present.

Figure 1: Tho. Bell, London, verge showing intricately engraved and pierced balance table

The most interesting feature on this watch is the Royal cipher for Queen Anne that serves as the fusee stop foot (Figures 2). Notice the crown and symmetrical initials "AR" (Regina meaning queen). Anne was the daughter of deposed King James II and ascended to the throne in 1702 after the death William III, who ruled jointly with his wife during a period that later became known as William & Mary. The Kingdom of Great Britain came into being under Anne's reign with the union of Scotland and England in 1706 and she ruled another eight years before dying of gout in 1714.

Watches commissioned by royalty often have coats of arms, crowns, monograms and other royal symbols fabricated on elaborate cases and/or the movement, and examples can be found in royal and museum collections. However, it is more than likely that Bell made this watch for a wealthy patron shortly after 1702 to commemorate Queen Anne's ascension to the throne.

Figure 2: Side view of Bell watch showing Egyptian pillars with pierced gallery and Royal cypher for Queen Anne, circa 1705

Figure 3: Charles Gretton, London showing same Royal cypher for Queen Anne, circa 1705

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Our Next Meeting
Will be at the
NAWCC National Convention
Pasadena California
June, 2012

Our Speaker will be
Dennis Radage

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President's Message:

The National Convention marks our last meeting of 2012 and attendance at all our events was outstanding throughout the year. I often hear that NAWCC members are not interested in education and always reply that they should attend one of our meetings! We are just beginning to layout our 2013 programs and articles and can certainly use some help to identify topics and presenters. Please consider sharing your time and expertise to British Horology by submitting an article. Simply contact any of the officers to volunteer.

One of our strategic initiatives is to improve our use of technology. We redesigned our website for ease of use, began electronic distribution of the British Horological Times, and most recently began working with National to eliminate the hassle of paying dues, especially for our international members, by setting up a payment facility on the NAWCC website. If you have not looked at our website recently, I think you will find it easy to navigate, informative and current. Our URL is "britishhorology.nawcc.org". Why not give it a try?

Rich

Editor's Corner:

The following recognition is past due to one of our members, VP of the chapter, Dennis Radage. He was inducted into the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers in 2011. Congratulations Dennis.

The **Worshipful Company of Clockmakers**, a City of London Livery Company, received it's Charter from Charles I on August 22nd, 1631, and is the oldest surviving horological institution in the world. The motto of the guild is '*Tempus Rerum Imperator* meaning 'time is the commander of all things'. Before this, clockmakers had been members of the Blacksmith Company due to the fact there was no Guild or Livery for clockmakers. By 1629 the clockmakers were in sufficient numbers to petition the king to form their own company, but received opposition from the Blacksmiths Company. Regardless of this, a new petition was made and the Charter was indeed granted in 1631.

If you are interested in more on the Clockmakers Company, check here:
http://www.clockmakers.org/

Deena

Dennis, now a Freeman with the Master of WCC

Workshop Notes

By Dennis Radage

Shipping Clocks is for Professionals

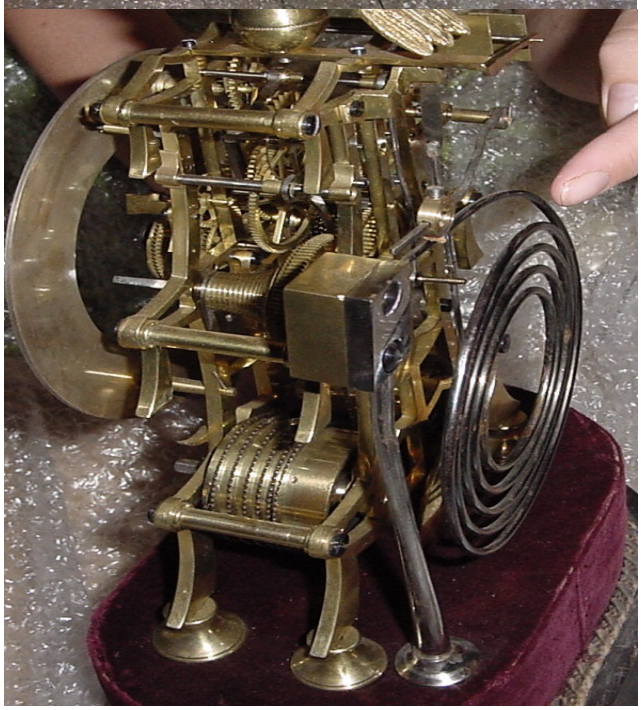
At least once a month I get a call from a clock owner who has had a clock shipped to them, often from the UK, to their home in Vancouver. This might be an inherited clock, a purchase or a gift from relatives.

Skeleton clock with broken dome.

The shippers are more often than not just home content movers who have wrapped the clock as any ordinary piece of furniture, boxed it and shipped it over to the owners. By this time things have already gone terribly wrong. The owner, with great expectations is horrified to find that the clock arrives quite severely damaged.

Quite often a longcase clock is wrapped and shipped complete with hood still in place, the pendulum and even the weights still hanging, unrestrained, inside the trunk. The whole being wrapped in a shipping blanket and boxed or crated for shipping.

Two clocks came in for repair, just weeks apart, after being shipped from the UK. Both shipments were covered by insurance, but that is of little consolation when a 200 year old clock is severely damaged. No amount of effort can return the clock to its for-



Left and Right:

The results when a pendulum is left on the movement during shipping: Broken suspension spring and cracked framework, bent pendulum rod, gong and gong support.

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mer condition. The first clock was a two train time and strike fusee skeleton clock that struck the hours on a rear mounted coiled steel gong. The second clock was a single train fusee wall mounting dial clock. Both were shipped as complete clocks, mostly fully wound and with the pendulums still installed, unrestrained and hanging from the back cock.

Above and Below:
Handsome dial clock that experienced an internal 'explosion' during shipping

The skeleton clock was simply bubble wrapped then boxed, and yes, of course, the glass dome was still in place when packed. The owner had the unpleasant task of unpacking and removing hundreds of pieces of the broken antique glass dome. The pendulum had broken loose fracturing the suspension spring. The delicate pendulum rod was quite bent as was the coiled gong and gong support. The package was obviously handled quite roughly since the brass framework was also fractured in two places.

The dial clock was also shipped complete, bubble wrapped and boxed. This owner had a similar unhappy experience. The unrestrained pendulum had broken loose but worse, the plate pillar taper pins had vibrated out allowing the plates to separate. The chain drive fusee fell out of its pivots allowing the mechanism to immediately unwind, releasing the full energy of the mainspring to break teeth and bend both wheels and arbors.

While these are both interesting jobs for my workshop, both were very preventable through let down, dismantling, appropriate restraints and correct packing. I never use newspaper or Styrofoam peanuts, and also minimize the use of bubble wrap. I tend to use
cut to size solid foam that suits the clock, its size and shape. While the cost is higher, damage is unlikely to occur.

Unfortunately there are thousands of movers and thousands of clocks being shipped interstate and internationally. In most instances neither the owners nor the shippers have any knowledge of how to safely ship clocks. I expect therefore a continual supply of such repair work over the weeks and months ahead.

Editor's Note: This timely article saved me from making a potential mistake when packaging and shipping a lathe across the country. I rethought my strategy and switched out Styrofoam peanuts for solid foam. The resulting carton was much sturdier and allowed for no movement of the heavy parts inside. Thanks Dennis.

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A second example by Charles Gretton was bought to my attention by Dennis Radage, our Chapter Vice President, who is coauthoring a definitive work on this eminent clock and watch maker (see BHT March 2011). What a coincidence! Gretton's watch is pictured in Figure 3 (courtesy of the Gretton Project) and features an identical Queen Anne cipher on the fusee stop foot that was authenticated by the curator of the Royal Collection at St. James' Palace, London. Apparently, both Gretton and Bell ordered their movements (or at least this movement) from the same (unidentified) movement maker who developed this feature.

I was also able to locate several other early watches 18th century watches affiliated with Queen Anne on the website *Pieces of Time London* (www.antique-watch.com), a site that I often frequent due to the large inventory of watches and excellent descriptions and photographs. Figure 4 shows a watch by David Lestourgeon (a Huguenot) that has an engraving of Queen Anne's profile on the balance table, while Figure 5 is another example that features Queen Anne's coat of arms that she adopted after the Union in 1707.

Figure 4: ***David Lestourgeon, London*** **with close-up of Queen Anne profile located on balance table, circa 1705**

Figure 5: ***Badollet, London*** **showing Royal coat of arms on balance table adopted after the Union in 1707. Around this the Order of the Garter "Hony soit qui mal Y pense" and below "Iem Rau Antiend". Flanking this the lion and unicorn and above a detailed crown, circa 1710**

Our meeting at the SOR held in April featured Rich Newman entertaining all in attendance with his talk on a newly discovered 300 year old watch by John Wright. Wright was one of the first Colonial clock and watchmakers that arrived in New York in the early 1700's. Attendees to the talk were able to inspect the watch and view detailed photos of the rare sun and moon dial. Watch for an upcoming Bulletin article by Rich.

Workshop Notes

by Frank Del Greco (OH)

Occasionally we all come across repairs that just don't seem right. In the last issue of BHT, Dennis Radage talked about a longcase movement that had been repaired "inappropriately." Today let's look at two bushing repair jobs I encountered.

The first is on an old European wrought iron turret clock I own. It was probably made in the late 1600s or early 1700s. Now I know very little about blacksmithing, but I would think that it would be easier to punch a round hole in a piece of wrought iron to receive a pivot instead of a square hole. The iron movement bar shown below has an original square pivot hole on the left side. At some point in time, a repairer tightened up the hole by bending a piece of brass shim stock to fit against two sides of the square hole. Also, on the right side of the bar, the square pivot hole was tightened by placing a piece of brass shim stock on one side of the square hole. All I can say is that the clock runs this way!

The second example I have is the brass bushing block from the winding side of the strike drum of a 1880s three train turret clock by Rudof Gschurtz of Vienna. If you look closely you'll see that a repairer dovetailed in a piece of brass and then curved the top to match the rest of the pivot hole. Obviously, that repair won't run for a long time, as there is so little bearing material there. It would seem to me that what the repairer did was more work than making and inserting a traditional bushing!

Workshop Notes is a feature of our newsletter started by Dennis Radage. It is a place for members to submit short stories or notes on their workshop experiences. If you are not a writer, don't let that stop you from submitting a photo or two and explanation describing your project. We can do the rest. Send your material by email or postal mail to our editor listed on page 3.