



# British Horology Times

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## Masonic Watches

*By Douglas Caulkins*

**D**uring the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Ancient and Accepted Order of Free Masons was expanding and gaining status in England to the extent that King George IV was a Mason. From the Masonic symbols found on watch papers it can be concluded that many watch makers were members of this ancient fraternal order and would be able to incorporate unique Masonic symbols in the decoration of the balance cock or the dials of watches that would identify the owner as a Mason. The dial of this small (51mm in diameter) circa 1767 silver pair case watch in Figure 1 not only spells the owner's name, Thomas Lucas instead of numbers, but it also displays a sun at the 12 position. Only Masons would know that this is a Masonic symbol. T. Lucas and June 29, 1767 is also engraved on the dust cover (not shown). The movement of the Masonic dial, signed by John Howells is shown in Figures 2 and 3. Howells is listed as working with his son John in London in 1766, the silver 47mm case is hall marked 1766. Looking closely at the balance cock you can see the Masonic symbols of the compass with the all seeing eye on the hinge. The square, two pillars and Jacob's ladder are pierced in the design.

On the solid portion below the piercing a level is engraved. The mosaic pavement is engraved in the rectangular window at the base of the foot. The gilt verge fusee movement has a Tompion regulator, baluster pillars, and a continuous screw set up for the main spring. Keeping true to the oath of secrecy only the symbol of the sun on the dial can be seen until the movement is opened and the dust cover is removed.

*(Continued on page 4)*



Figure 1: "Thomas Lucas" dial on John Howells watch

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### **British Horology Times**

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Chapter 159

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### **Next Meeting**

**Florida Mid-Winter Regional  
Daytona Beach, February 13-15  
“Arnold #10”**

**David Cooper will talk about a marine  
chronometer made by John Arnold, including  
the making of a detent, and discuss differences  
between Arnold and Earnshaw  
chronometer escapements.**

**See the Events page of our website for details**

## Presidents Message:

Dear friends,

Chapter elections took place at the 2013 National Convention in Dayton, Ohio and your existing officers were elected to serve a second three-year term. Huge thanks to Dennis Radage (VP), Marion Krajewski (Secretary) and Pete Stipanovich (Treasurer) for stepping up to the challenge. Together, with the help of our Advisor, Frank Del Greco, we're committed to providing you with a good balance of education, fun and comraderie. To be successful and maintain the fine traditions of BH, we do need your continued help! The Chapter had outstanding participation during the past year and I would like to extend a personal "thank you" and recognize the following members:

BHT Authors:                     Joanne & Frank Del Greco, Bruce Forman, Doug Cowan, Tom Mostyn,  
  Dennis Radage, Deena Mack and Jean & Philip Priestley  
Chapter Presentations:       Johnny Wachsmann, Dan Osterud and Philip Poniz

We continue to work closely with organizers for the Southern Ohio Regional that we co-host, and the National Convention providing support and general session lectures. This year we co-hosted the National Convention in Dayton that emphasized hands-on workshops and a wide range of lectures in addition to an excellent mart. I had a great time and was personally pleased to see how well the sessions were attended - - our meeting was packed and the lecture that Philip Poniz gave on isochronism and complicated timekeepers was outstanding. Next year should be more of the same - - we have already submitted two general session lectures (details will be published on our website and in the next BHT) for the Milwaukee National Convention and our line-up for BH meetings has been finalized and is listed below. Huge thanks to David, Mark & Dennis for stepping up!

Mid-Winter Regional (February 13-15):     *John Arnold #10*, by David Cooper  
Southern Ohio Regional (April 10-12):     *A Brief History of the Great Clock at Westminster Palace*,  
  by Mark Frank  
National Convention (June 17-21):         *The English Longcase Clock*, by Dennis Radage

Please help promote British Horology and consider volunteering at one of our events - - we are constantly looking for volunteers and can really make good use of even a few hours of your time.

See you in Daytona!     *Rich*

(Continued from page 1)



Figures 2-3: Movement of John Howells watch with close-up of the balance table on right



On the dial of the second watch, shown in Figure 4, the Masonic symbols are line monotone drawings that include the compass and square pillars, mosaic pavement, Jacobs's ladder and the moon, sun and stars plus other Masonic icons. This large 59 mm silver pair case is hallmarked 1796 and has two roundels of contemporary newspapers in the outer case as padding. The dust cap and fusee verge movement is signed Henry Ward London (Figures 5 and 6), who is not listed in my reference books. The watch features a large diamond cap jewel on the pierced balance table, a solid engraved foot, Tompion regulator and cylindrical pillars.



Figures 4-6: Dial, dust cover and movement of Henry Ward watch

Boldly displayed on the dial of the watch in Figure 7 are polychrome Masonic symbols and the owner's name Richard Young, a Mason and an army officer. Again we see the depiction of many of the same symbols, the compass and square, pillars, sun, moon, stars, mosaic pavement and other Masonic icons and the unusual addition of a seconds bit that is not normally found on verge watches of this period. The movement, Figure 8, is signed Baird & Co, London. There is a listing of a John Baird, later W&J Baird, working in London in 1787 to 1820. The balance table is pierced and engraved with a solid engraved foot, a Boseley regulator and cylindrical pillars. A small lever extending from the dial moves a thin wire that stops the contrate wheel - - a so called "doctor's watch". The silver pair cases are hallmarked 1799.

The all Seeing Eye and array of other Masonic symbols are found on the dial of the watch in Figure 9. The movement shown in Figure 10 has a verge fusee escapement, Bosley regulator, cylindrical pillars with a pierced and engraved balance table and a solid engraved foot.



Figures 7-8: "Richard Young" dial and movement signed Baird & Co., London



Figures 9-10: Masonic dial and movement signed Thomas Parkinson, Bury (Lancashire)

The plain enamel dial of the watch in Figures 11-13 has Arabic numbers and pierced gold arrow hands whereas the unsigned movement displays an intricately pierced balance cock that shows more Masonic symbols than found on the dials of the previous two watches. The verge fusee movement has a silver Tompion regulator and cylindrical pillars. The silver pair cases have a Chester 1902 hallmark.



Figures 11-13: Unsigned movement with close-up of intricate Masonic balance table

Again a plain white dial with Roman numerals, seconds bit and gold hands is shown in Figure 14. In Figures 15 and 16, the Masonic symbols of the compass and square, pillars and mosaic pavement are shown. Possibly the diamond cap jewel represents the all Seeing Eye that is revealed in the aperture in the dust cover. The watch features a verge fusee escapement movement with cylindrical pillars and a Boseley regulator, and is signed F. Walker Radcliff. The small balance cock is only pierced to reveal the compass and square. The silver consular case is hallmarked 1841.


(Continued from page 6)



Figures 14-16: Dial (with seconds), dust cover and movement of F. Walker Radcliff watch

Masonic watches of this era represent how deeply this fraternal organization was imbedded not only in British society but also in our nation. Our first President, George Washington, along with thirteen others were Masons. Figure 17 is a photograph of Harry S Truman wearing his full regalia as a Grand Master.

In summary, both my grandfathers were 32nd degree Masons and seeing their watch fobs and one of their Masonic aprons sparked my interest in learning more about the Ancient Honorable Order of Accepted Free Masons. With a little research I learned about this charitable society and was able to interpret many of the Masonic symbols. Many years ago I was able to add the first Masonic watch (Figure 11) to my collection, with its nicely pierced balance cock filled with many of the Masonic symbols. It fit well with my broader interest in British watch making. As I have continued my quest to learn more about this Ancient Brotherhood, I assembled the group of Masonic watches illustrated in this article.

NOTE: It has come to my attention that many fake Masonic dial watches are offered for sale on the Internet. 

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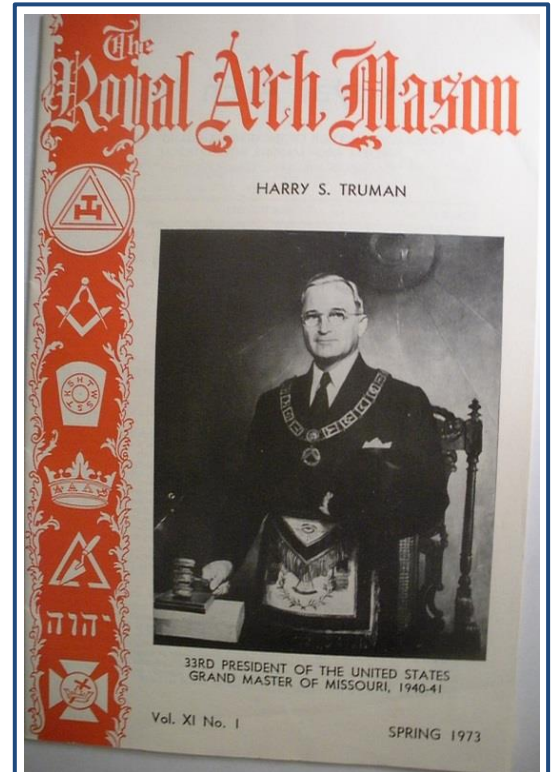


Figure 17: Harry Truman, the 33<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States and Grand Master of Missouri, 1940-41

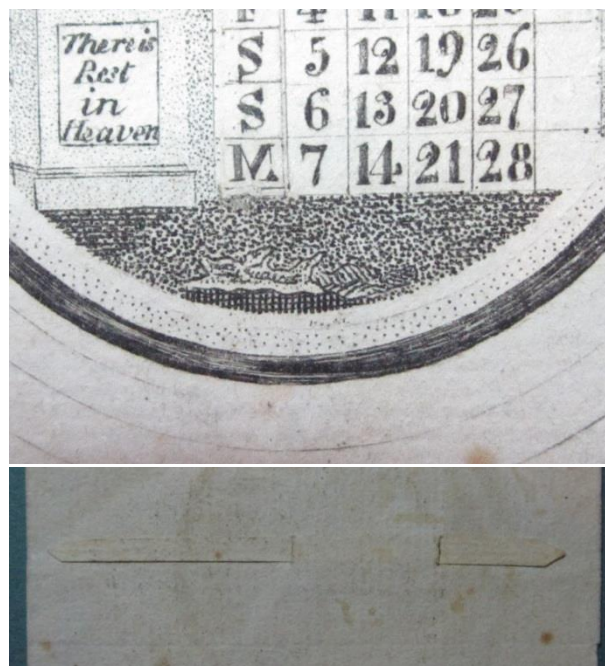
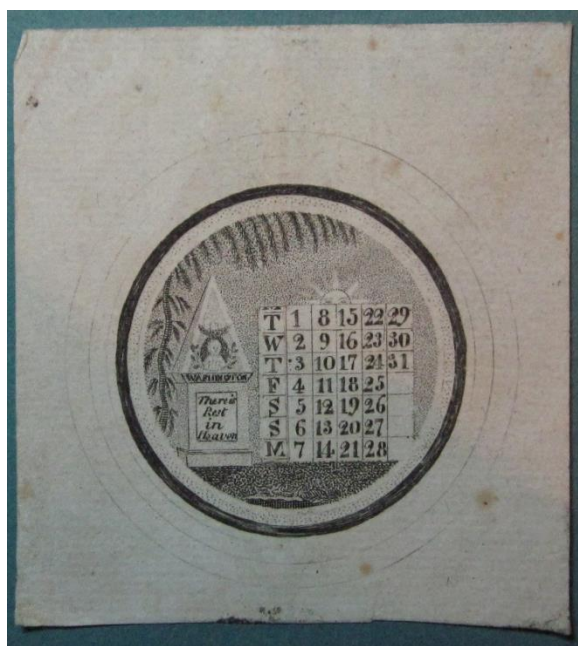
# Washington Perpetual Calendar Watch Paper

By Rich Newman

Figures 2-4 are pictures of an intriguing uncut watch paper that commemorates George Washington's death on December 13, 1799 and features a perpetual calendar. Watch papers from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century are difficult to find and those affiliated with a historical event appeal to a wide range of collecting interests. Similar to the passing of a king or queen, Washington's death dominated American society and numerous mementos were produced to appeal to the grieving public including Washington-themed prints. One such print was made by the famous engraver Thomas Clarke of Boston that he also miniaturized for use in pocket watches. Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Figure 1 (right) shows a rare surviving example of Clarke's watch paper that was printed in about 1801, only a couple of years after Washington's death. It is similar to the example below that also features an obelisk and the same "There is Rest in Heaven" inscription.



Who printed this example with the perpetual calendar is unknown but it is from the same general period and has a similar motif as Clarke's famous print. It was found in Vermont over 15 years ago and is in its original uncut condition that still shows the circular guidelines that would be used to cut the paper to fit different watch case sizes. Of additional interest is the perpetual calendar that has been incorporated into the design. To set the calendar, the paper tab is moved up or down to show the correct days of the week. Although one can speculate on the practicality of this arrangement, watch papers with moving parts are uncommon. Having this feature on an early American uncut watch paper commemorating George Washington just adds to the charm of this example. ❁❁❁



Figures 2-4: Washington perpetual calendar watch paper with close-up of unidentified signature below the "M", and removable calendar strip as seen from the back. Both the paper and the removable strip are made of hand laid paper.