



# British Horology Times

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## Gam(m)age Unmasked!

*By Doug Cowan (OH)*

**T**he enclosed photos show a table clock sold by Barraud's, Cornhill London circa 1810. It is quite a special piece: striking quarters on a peal of 10 bells, and the hours on an 11th bell. The clock is 26 inches tall and is housed in a well-made "Chinese" lacquered case. The lacquer is in excellent shape, depicting Chinese figures, landscapes and foliage in gold and red in three dimensions on a black base.

I think it is generally agreed that as the various Barraud family businesses grew, they ventured further from their basic specialty of precision watches and marine clocks. These firms sold everything from pocket watches to tower clocks, and almost certainly had to "buy in" components or even whole clocks to which they assigned their name. Later, the Dent firm did the same thing, assuring purchasers that they had "gone over" the items before branding them.



*English bracket clock sold by Barraud, ca. 1810*

So, with no hope of knowing whose work my clock really was, I asked my friend Greg McCreight to replace one of the clock springs which had broken. He reported finding on the inside of that spring barrel cover a stamping reading "T. Gamage 498." After asking a few people, the consensus was that Gamage was a spring maker.

Recently during a file (nice word for junk) cleanout I was amazed to find a handwritten note from the late Gerald Keith. 15 years ago he had offered me a four-train musical table clock with the same maker's name and location. In this example all of the barrel covers and the clock's front plate were stamped T. Gamage.

*(Continued on page 4)*

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### British Horology Times

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Chapter 159

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### Next Meeting

**Southern Ohio Regional  
Wilmington, Ohio, April 10-12  
“A Brief History of the Great Clock at  
Westminster Palace, Its Concept,  
Construction, the Accident and Its  
Aftermath”**

**See details on this talk by Mark Frank in the  
Presidents Message within this issue or on the  
Events page of our website**

## Presidents Message:

Dear friends,

As this issue goes to press, I'm just back from our Mid-Winter Regional meeting where David Cooper presented an engaging lecture on a very early marine chronometer made by John Arnold, number 10. David has been involved restoring a large number of very fine early clocks and watches, and his insights regarding the mechanical alterations made on this chronometer during the past 200 years was fascinating.

Our next meeting will be in Southern Ohio at the Roberts Center in Wilmington (same location as last year) where Mark Frank will present the great clock at Westminster Palace, "Big Ben" (so named for its famous bell) and the catastrophic failure sustained the morning of August 5, 1976; "*A Brief History of the Great Clock at Westminster Palace, Its Concept, Construction, the Accident and Its Aftermath*." Mark has been researching and collecting timepieces for the past 25 years that exhibit interesting mechanical characteristics as demonstrated through complexity, novelty, or visual appeal and was most recently a featured speaker at the 2013 Time Symposium, "Time For Everyone." In this presentation, Mark investigates the protagonists involved with the building of the tower and the clock at Westminster, and how an unfortunate contest of wills between them planted the seeds of the accident 118 years later. Utilizing little known rare photos of the actual parts involved, the dramatic sequence of events preceding the disaster is analyzed second by second. Huge thanks to Mark for volunteering to give this exciting and informative presentation.

Doug Calkins article on Masonic watches (November, 2013) prompted a quick visit to the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia a few weeks ago. It has a large display of Masonic and Washington artifacts including his Mount Vernon table clock. Although difficult to see behind glass, an accompanying photograph reveals a fascinating movement (American?) in an English case that warrants further research. Below a few pictures; the movement photograph as shown on the far right. The dial signature is unclear, but perhaps says "Geo Hallowell London." On the left is a shot of the exhibit room that displays the clock. Please email the Chapter at [britishhorology@gmail.com](mailto:britishhorology@gmail.com) if anyone has information to share.



As always, please help promote British Horology and consider submitting an article, no matter how large or small for British Horology Times - - we are running low and need your help.

See you in Ohio! *Rich*

Gerald reported that he had found a reference that T. Gammage was a London maker of musical clocks during the early 1800s. That may have come from an article or book concerning musical clocks. What does match is one of



Movement signed "T. Gamage 498" on barrel cover

two Gammages in Loomes' latest clockmakers list. Most likely is Thos. Gammage in the Clockmakers Company 1814-1840. There is also a T. Gammage, London 1844-1863. There is no T. Gamage listed though that spelling of the last name is noted for Philip, London 1694.

The most likely conclusion is that the spelling on the movements, Gamage with one m, was an alternative spelling for Gammage (2m's). This was an acceptable practice and not uncommon in that period of history. Kent's London Directory of 1823, an alphabetical list of 18,000 merchants and traders, lists a William Gammage, musical clock maker, at 6 Bridgewater-square. Perhaps William is of the same family. I would certainly like to hear from anyone who might be able to tie together William and Thomas. Please send me an email if you have any information or ideas to share.

Sincerely, Doug Cowan [dojec@aol.com](mailto:dojec@aol.com) 

## Workshop Notes – The Garage Mechanic

*By Dennis Radage, Vice President (CAN)*

I have said this before, but it is worth mentioning again, many of my Workshop Notes have focused on restoration topics and have tended to highlight the very poor condition of some of the clocks received for restoration. For these short articles, I have purposely selected some of the worst cases just to illustrate what has been done to some otherwise fine antique clocks. My task in each case has been to bring the clock back, as nearly as is possible, to a condition that allows the clock to function as it might have done when it was first made. This process usually entails removing just about all of the previous fixes, then rebuilding in the correct manner.

Many clocks have either been seriously neglected, or worse, they have been put in the hands of amateurs who have no training, no skills and no understanding of the functioning of the various components and features of an English longcase clock. These earlier "garage mechanics" have employed tools and materials that should not even have entered the same room as the clock that is being restored. Globes of solder, nails, self-tapping screws, wire, washers and all manner of inventive but inappropriate fixes. The scars left by the use of a blow torch can also be seen.

This current clock is an English longcase clock from the 1840s. It is an 8-day time and strike, the strike being controlled by a rack and snail and the escapement being an anchor recoil with long seconds beating pendulum. It is quite obvious from examining the clock that it had serious running problems, but rather than send it to a specialist restorer, the clock had “fixes” applied that are crude, inappropriate and quite ugly. This is a typical “Garage Mechanic” bodge job. The clock had no chance of functioning properly after this “mechanic” had finished with it.

Figure 1 shows the mess behind the dial. The repairs are very poorly executed, several parts have been damaged beyond repair and much of the mechanism is held together with wire and soft solder. One would think that even the untrained would have a better sense of what is right than this repairer seems to have had. It is obviously quite frustrating to receive a clock in this condition since due to the damage, the cost to repair is now quite considerable. Figure 2 shows some detail of the rack mechanism. The gathering pallet is basically made of soft solder. The lifting piece is held together with soft solder and there are springs and wire used to control the rack counting mechanism.

Figure 3 shows detail of the snail, what is left of it, and the rack tail also held together with wire and solder. I am sure that this repairer was as equally frustrated in trying to make this concoction function as I was in stripping it all away. It could never have worked.



Figure 1: A view of the mess behind the dial



Figure 2: Detail of the rack striking control (above)

Figure 3: Detail of the rack tail and snail (below)

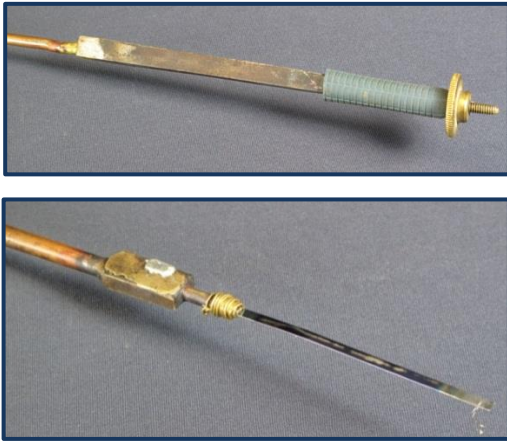


Figure 4: Detail of the homemade pendulum (three images)

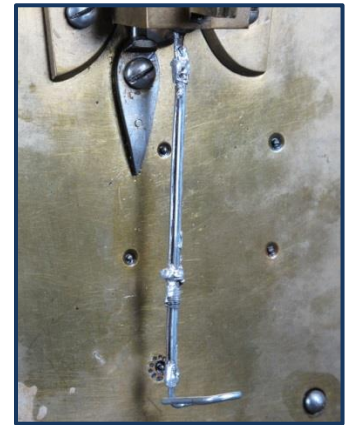


Figure 5: Detail of the homemade crutch

Figure 4 shows a completely homemade pendulum, the rod being a copper tube and the bob being brass covered wood. Again, wire was used along with rubber tubing to hold the bob in place. This pendulum was far too light for the clock. Figure 5 shows the crutch, made of bent wire and yet again, being held together with wire and soft solder. Obviously, this mechanic only had wire and solder in his workshop, so all fixes employ these techniques. Gummed up pivot holes and punch marks also indicate the poor state of this clock and its earlier repairs.

The dial of this clock is in a similar state that just leaves you speechless (Figure 6). Maybe this dial was not an original part of the clock since the mounting posts are now screws right through the dial. Copper tube was placed over the screws to form posts. The screws were then bolted to the front plate. For some reason, a blow torch had been used on the dial by the screws. The heat had obviously ruined the painted surface, which is now flaking badly.




Figure 6: Dial as received with detail of flaking damage (two images)

*(Continued from page 6)*

So here we have another fine clock that needs to be completely stripped down, many of the homemade parts are to be discarded and new appropriate parts need to be acquired or made. The dial was sent to a specialist dial restorer who first applied the correct mounting posts, then restored the paintwork.

Figures 7 and 8 show the restored clock. The movement now has the correct parts, although some previously damaged parts were retained since they were still functional after improving the previous repair job. A new snail was custom made for the clock.

During restoration, the movement was fully dismantled; each part was examined and repaired or replaced. All parts were cleaned. A new appropriate pendulum was made and new line fitted. The movement was assembled, lubricated and placed on the test stand. Adjustments were made and the clock was regulated and put in beat. My usual testing time is two weeks where I observe the functioning of the clock and adjust as necessary. Once satisfied with the functioning of the movement, the restored dial is fitted and the clock is again left for about a week to ensure that all functions are operating as appropriate for the clock.

In most cases, the owner is quite amazed at how the clock turns out. They are also very happy that their clock is again back home and performing as it would have done some 170 years ago. 



*Figure 7: The restored Movement*



*Figure 8: Functioning clock with the restored dial*

## 2014 UK Tour, by Philip Priestley

*By Philip Priestley (UK)*

Dear friends, I'm pleased to provide details on the UK tour scheduled for August/September, 2014 that includes UK Museums, Greenwich Harrison Celebrations, Portobello Market, Uxbridge Watch & Clock Fair and West Country. This is a non-profit (no travel agents involved) luxury tour with 4-star hotels, luxury coach and many included meals (14 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 8 dinners) – see details below. Depending upon participants and exchange rate the price will be US\$3,600 per person LAND ONLY. Single supplement is US\$500. US \$200 deposit is needed for those interested. Please contact our treasurer, Jim Nichols at [jmn427@aol.com](mailto:jmn427@aol.com) to reserve your place ASAP.

Sunday, 24th August - Depart USA

Monday, 25th August - Check in Holiday Inn Mayfair. Free afternoon for shopping or sightseeing.

Welcome dinner included.

Tuesday, 26th August - British Museum, Students' room. Clockmakers' Museum.

Lunch included, Dinner on own. Overnight London.

Wednesday, 27th August - Science Museum. Victoria & Albert Museum.

Lunch included, Dinner on own. Overnight London.

Thursday, 28th August - Belmont House, Lord Harris collection of Edward East, Tompion and Knibb clocks.

Afternoon to Charles Frodsham's workshops, Heathfield, Sussex

Lunch included, Dinner on own. Overnight London.

Friday, 29th August - Dr James Nye's new Clockworks Electrical horology workshop in South London.

Dinner on own. Overnight London.

Saturday, 30th August - Coach to Portobello Road Antiques Market for clocks, watches and objects-d'art in morning. Coach to Greenwich Observatory for John Harrison Tercentenary Exhibition.

Lunch on own. Dinner on own. Overnight London.

Sunday, 31st August - Travel day to Salisbury. Visit Stonehenge.

Lunch on own. Dinner included. Overnight Salisbury.

Monday, 1st September - Salisbury Cathedral (earliest British clock). Possible visit to Wimborne Minster.

Lunch on own, Dinner included. Overnight Salisbury.

Tuesday, 2nd September - Tour of Devon Coast. Steam train and river cruise included. .

Lunch on own, Dinner included. Overnight Torquay.

Wednesday, 3rd September - Tour of Plymouth (Home of the Pilgrim Fathers) and Lands End.

Lunch on own, Dinner included. Overnight Torquay.

Thursday, 4th September - Free day or extra tour (to be decided).

Lunch on own, Dinner included. Overnight Torquay.

Friday, 5th September - Tour of Dartmoor wilderness and possible mines.

Lunch on own, Dinner included. Overnight Torquay.

Saturday, 6th September - Travel day to London. Possible visit to Bristol Bridge and docks.

Lunch on own, Celebration dinner included. Overnight Heathrow Hotel.

Sunday, 7th September - Coach to public Watch & Clock Fair, Brunel University, Uxbridge.

Possible coach to London for the afternoon.

Lunch on own, Dinner on own. Overnight Heathrow hotel.

Monday, 8th September - Depart for USA/Canada after breakfast.