British Horology Times

November 2014 Number 63

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

A Most Unusual Industrial Clock

By Rich Newman, Chapter President (IL)

During our Southern Ohio Regional meeting in March of 2011 the clocks described in this article were discussed at the show-and-tell portion of our program by Tom Spittler and me. Both are by the same maker and have nearly identical movements that are housed in different diminutive cases measuring approximately 9 ½ inches tall with 3 inch diameter enamel dials (Figures 2 & 3). If the name William Bartleet sounds familiar, you may have been perusing some of our very early BHT articles that have been posted to our Internet site (www.britishhorology.nawcc.org) where Tom first introduced this interesting timepiece to the membership back in 1996.

Figure 1: Trusted's Patent Repeater, Wm Bartleet Birmingm

The purpose of this article is to provide a more in-depth look at these clocks and in particular the unique movement that makes them so interesting to study. Unfortunately, very little information is known about the maker (or retailer), William Bartleet of Birmingham or the "Time Repeater" patent owner, Charles Trusted of Oversley whose names are prominently engraved on the front of the movement (Figure 1). The date of the patent is 1796 and the clocks were likely made in the early 19th century until 1810 or perhaps a bit later.

What I can say, as far as I have been able to determine, is that the unique mechanism was never used again by any other maker. The fundamental concept for the patent provides a design for ordinary and relatively inexpensive watch-like movements to control a companion alarm and quarter-strike mechanism. Apparently, the idea was to make a bedroom clock with features, specifically an alarm and pull quarter repeat, that was previously only obtainable in much more expensive bracket clocks, available to the middle class at an affordable price point. This was accomplished by using a one-day time movement that is about an inch

(Continued on page 4)

British Horology Times
Is a newsletter of British Horology Chapter 159 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Inc.

Correspondence and manuscripts should be sent to the email *britishhorology@gmail.com*
Applications for membership and payment of dues should be sent to the Treasurer (see address above)

Annual membership costs $5.00 Worldwide. See website for details.

www.britishhorology.nawcc.org

Table of Contents

Brian Loomes – The Poet

By Frank Del Greco, Chapter Advisor (OH)

We are all familiar with Brian Loomes, best known for his work with English lantern and longcase (both brass and painted dial) clocks, and the many books and articles he has written. Some of you who know him a little better might know that his formal training was in genealogy. We can now add "poet" to his list of credentials.

I was reading a back issue of *Clocks* magazine (May 1982). When I look at an issue that old, I like to peruse the ads to see which dealers or clockmakers that were around then are still in business today. I found an old ad for Brian Loomes. I've reproduced it below using the same fonts as closely as possible:

Brian Loomes

They seek him here, they seek him there,
They're seeking Loomesy everywhere.
Over field and hill and vale
In parts of rural Nidderdale.
Don't search the one-inch map in sections.
Just phone first for the right directions.

For good longcase clocks.....
0423-711163

Presidents Message:

Dear Friends,

Our last meeting held at the National Convention in Milwaukee may have been our largest with close to 100 enjoying the several presentations that BHT sponsored. These included terrific talks by Dennis and Laila Radage on Charles Gretton, my presentation on Nathaniel Mulliken's 18th century clockmaking tools, and another by Dennis on The English Longcase Clock that he gave at our official BH meeting. The Gretton and Mulliken lectures were taped and are available through the NAWCC Lending Library for those that missed it.

I always find the depth of knowledge that our members have amazing and a casual discussion with Philip Poniz at the National Convention triggered the lecture topic for our next meeting in Florida. Huge thanks to Philip for volunteering to share his fascination and research on watch ébauches.

> *Prior to the age of machine made parts, watches were hand-made by dozens of separate specialist trades working in cottage industry conditions, and, with few exceptions, watches sold from London to Paris to New York, even chronometers and those with complications, owe their origins to one of the movement manufacturing supply centers predominantly located in England and Switzerland. While watchmakers from the early 18th century could order both unfinished and finished movements made to his specification and desired quality finish, the focus of this lecture is on unfinished movements, also known as rough movements, blanks, movements in the grey and ébauches. British Horology is pleased to have Philip Poniz, the well-known antiquarian horological expert, share his original research and insights into this fascinating yet often misunderstood topic.*

Please be aware that the dates and location for the Florida Regional have changed due to scheduling issues and the Regional will be held from March 13-15 in Kissimmee, Florida. I'm sure it will be a fine show and we hopefully will have an improved environment to conduct our meeting than we've had in the past.

Although scarcely a month later, our second meeting for 2015 will be at the Southern Ohio Regional at the Roberts Center in Wilmington, Ohio from April 9-11. It was called to my attention that we have not had a proper show-and-tell meeting for several years and that will be the focus of our program. Please bring your show-and-tell items!

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 Florida, *Rich*

(Continued from page 1)

larger in diameter than those found in common watches of the period and a fairly simple and inexpensive case design to offset the cost of the companion alarm and strike movement. It is evident by the examples shown at the Regional that at least two models were available but it is unclear whether they were offered at the same time or perhaps the Sheraton model replaced the plain-cased one. Indeed, the plain-cased model has a verge escapement (Figure 4) while the Sheraton model has a rack lever but both escapement types were in use in the early 1800s when these clocks were likely made.

I suppose all I can say at the moment is that the Sheraton model would have been more expensive than the plain-cased example at the time these examples were made.

Figure 2: Trusted's Patent Repeater clocks. On the left, Sheraton style example with Arabic numerals and on the right, a comparatively plain-cased example with Roman numerals.

Figure 3: Inside of the clocks in Figure 2 showing nearly identical movements. The movement is signed: "TRUSTED'S PATENT REPEATER / WM. BARTLEET BIRMINGM".

Figure 4 (left): One-day time movement disassembled from the companion alarm and pull quarter repeat mechanism. The movement pictured is from the plain-cased example and carries the ebauche maker's initials "WR" with a pellet between on the dial plate. The elongated fusee arbor that interfaces with the setting slide can be seen on the right side of the large plate.

Figure 5(right): Close-up of the setting slide. The alarm is set for 6am. Assuming the current time was 10pm, the slide would be raised until the pointer at the top aligned with the 10pm marker that is toward the bottom of the slide.

The key to the entire invention lies in the "figured slide", as it is called in the clock's instructions. For this article, however, I use the term "setting slide" that better reflects its purpose. It extends beneath and slightly to the right of the movement just in front of the bell (see Figure 5). To set the quarter repeat, the setting slide must be either raised or lowered on a daily basis to match the current time shown on the clock dial. An elongated arbor on the verge time movement engages the slide so that once it is set by the owner, the slide and the time are

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

synchronized and the correct time can be rung on demand by pulling the repeat cord found on the right side of the clock. Separately, an alarm can be enabled by moving an indicator located in the center of the same slide to the desired alarm time, and priming the spring that drives the alarm by pulling the respective cord located on the lower left side of the clock. The indicator "rides" with the setting slide as time passes until it trips the alarm and activates the double-sided hammer that is situated inside the hour bell.

The instructions printed on the label explain the process as follows:

> *Instructions for using the Patent Repeater with an Alarum.*
>
> *On going to Bed, wind up the Time-piece, move the figured slide to the right, till the brass Index points to the same Hour and Quarter, as is shewn by the Time-piece. On waking, draw the white Button as far as it will go, loose it, and it will strike the Hour and Quarter required. When the Alarum is wanted, move the small blued Index in the slide to the time you wish to rise, and draw the yellow button to wind it up. William Bartleet, Birmingham*

The repeating movement is impressive having very well constructed parts, substantial plates, and a design that functions quite well - - although extremely difficult to describe! The front of the alarm and repeat mechanism, with the companion time movement and setting slide removed, is shown in Figure 6. The large pin barrel with spiraling pins on the right determines the hours, and at the bottom of the barrel one can see the pins that drive the hour bell. The quarter strike is governed by the narrow 13 tooth brass comb, located in the middle of the movement that swings into position upon pulling the cord for the quarter repeat.

Figure 6: Front of the alarm and pull quarter repeat mechanism with the companion time movement removed. The pull repeat is on the top right with the quarter bell adjacent. The hour is rung on the bottom bell that also doubles as the alarm.

Figure 7: Right side of movement showing the pin barrel that controls the hour strike. A plate (not visible) between the timepiece and the strike mechanism allows easy adaptation of different timepiece movements. This photo has the time movement reattached to the alarm and quarter repeat mechanism frame.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

I think members will agree that the design is most unusual. It seems likely that the inventor was not a trained clock maker and had no desire to copy clockmaking conventions, but instead approached the design from an engineering perspective. That fits rather well with the city name engraved on the movement. Birmingham was an industrial powerhouse by 1800 and the movement certainly has a somewhat industrial feel. An Internet search identified another example that is in the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich where Bartleet is listed as being from Redditch (about 15 miles south of Birmingham) with later trade directory entries as a manufacturer of needles and fishing hooks!

Further investigation produced an entry from the London Gazette in 1837 informing the public that "William Bartleet of Redditch, Worchester, needle manufacturer bankrupt", but Bartleet fishing hooks seems to have caught on, pardon the pun, and was a financial success. There may be a tenuous connection between the mechanization of the needle industry and Bartleet's early clock making venture that apparently ended quite quickly, but I think it wise to leave that question to the next person who comes across one of these unusual clocks.

A Musical Longcase Clock by Claude de Chesne, London

By Doug Cowan (Ohio)

Figures 1 & 2 shows an elegant clock with certified provenance since 1926 that has a very interesting past in Europe and in America. Made ca. 1710 in London by the French refugee clockmaker Claude du Chesne for the palace of King (Elector) Friedrich Augustus of Saxony (1670-1733), the almost nine feet tall oak case is veneered in burr walnut on the front and figured walnut on the sides, and has complex frets and "stringing" (Figures 3 & 4). A similarly cased clock by the same maker can be seen in the Christie's catalog #8548, October 1996, log 110, in the Vitale collection.

Figures 1&2: Majestic caddy-topped, burr walnut musical clock by Claude de Chesne

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Figures 3&4: Close-up of case showing very fine sound frets on hood and delicate banding on door panel

The dial reads "Claudius du Chesne, Londini" since the maker preferred to use the Latin version of his name on his dials. In the arch is the four times repeating title "Air Polonais" choice which is selected by a manual hand (Figure 5). The movement is a five pillar, three train anchor escapement and plays one of four Polish tunes at the hour, followed by the hours striking. Twenty hammers and 9 bells are used to play the music, and an additional hammer and bell is for the hours (Figure 6). The weights and pendulum bob are brass clad, as expected for a clock of this period.

As stated, Tardy records Claude Du Chesne as a "refugee" from Paris to London in about 1690. He was made "free" of the Clockmakers Company shortly afterwards in 1693, and probably worked until 1730 according to Loomes. He made "a good number of clocks, several of a complex nature." I have also read that he was a favorite maker of Eastern European royalty.

Now to the back story: A metal plate inside the case reports, in the German language, among other data that "This clock was made in 1710 by Claudius Du Chesne in London and later came to Germany and to his Majesty Freidrich August into the royal castle. The clock came into my* possession in October 1925 and I sold it in June 1926 to Mr. J. B. Winfreem of Lynchburg, Virginia. The signature of the seller is then officially notarized by the Notary in Dresden. *The seller in 1926 was R. Pleissner, Dresden, a firm founded in 1874 and representing Glashuette, Vacheron and Patek Phillipe.

August was King of Poland/Lithuania twice between 1697 and 1710 as well as retaining the Saxony crown, owing allegiance to the Habsburgs' Holy Roman Empire. He converted to Catholicism in order to gain Poland, and although judged later to be a mediocre ruler, he had visualized Dresden as becoming the "Paris of the East" and commissioned museums and artworks to support this goal. These facts probably explain the presence of the English clock in Dresden and also why the tunes are Polish.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

August was a larger than life character. He was commonly known as Augustus the Strong, and was in fact physically very strong being reputed to be able to bend horseshoes in his hands as well as physically overpowering two opponents in a court exhibited "tug of war". He is also reputed to have fathered over 300 children, but only a single legal heir with his Queen who quickly decided to live apart from him.

Figure 5: Close-up of dial showing elaborate spandrels and manual hand to select the music in the arch

Figure 6: Pin barrel with 20 hammers and 9 bells above

I obtained the clock from the daughter-in-law of the American buyer and was informed that the clock was bought during a European buying trip to furnish his house in Lynchburg when he was newly married. She had never allowed the clock to leave the home for servicing, which was always performed on site.

Finally, please remember that the inner city of Dresden was destroyed by days of English and American carpet-bombing during February of 1945 as retaliation for the bombing of London. It makes me glad to know that the clock escaped this savage time, which was memorialized in part by Kurt Vonnegut's famous novel "Slaughterhouse Five". Jean and I visited Dresden a few years ago and can report that it is again a beautiful, vibrant city, being rebuilt from the rubble of the 1945 bombings.