



# British Horology Times

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

## Member Shares Sun & Moon Watch

*By Rich Newman, Chapter President (IL)*

**C**ourtesy of a collector who was seeking information but wishes to remain anonymous is a rare English sun & moon watch with false pendulum made by William Martin of Bristol.

While collectors do not come across clocks and watches from Bristol often, the city has a thousand year history as one of the largest and wealthiest in England, second only to London in the 17th century. At the time this watch was made, circa 1695, both Bristol and Liverpool were becoming very prosperous port towns capitalizing on trade of goods and slaves between Africa, England and the Americas.



Figure 1: Silver champlévé dial showing moon and stars (left) and sun and clouds (right) animation that turns once in 24 hours. The single hand points to the minutes. The watch is key set, as were all English watches at the time, by turning the squared center arbor with the same key used to wind the watch.

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### British Horology Times

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Chapter 159

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Interesting sundial motto recorded in Alice Earle's  
1902 book, *Sun-dials and Roses of Yesterday*:

SEE THE LITTLE DAY-STAR MOVING  
LIFE AND TIME ARE WORTH IMPROVING  
SEIZE THE MOMENTS WHILE THEY STAY  
SEIZE AND USE THEM  
LEST YOU LOSE THEM  
AND LAMENT THE WASTED DAY



## President's Message:

Dear Friends,

The first quarter was quite busy with two BH meetings, the Florida Regional and Southern Ohio Regional, taking place just over one month apart. This was due to venue issues that resulted in the Florida Regional being pushed a month forward and held in Osceola instead of Daytona Beach. Unfortunately the show suffered; not only did the new date conflict with the Arizona Sunshine Regional but I glean that some members preferred the way it was and decided to skip Florida this year. Whether BH participates in the Florida Regional next year is yet to be decided; one idea is to have a meeting during the second half of the year instead, perhaps All Texas (Houston). Your input on changing the meeting to later in the year, or general insights regarding experiences at regional events is appreciated (regional experiences, good and bad, is a topic at the Chapter Relations Committee meeting at the National Convention).

Our next meeting is at the National Convention in Chattanooga, Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. Huge thanks to Philip Priestley for presenting our program. Philip Priestley is a longtime BH member, and his works on the antique watch case making trade, including *Watch Case Makers of England 1720 -1920* (published 1994), and *Early Watch Case Makers of England 1631 to 1720* (published 2000) are the definite reference for scholars worldwide. His latest book, *Aaron Lufkin Dennison, An Industrial Pioneer and his Legacy*, was recently published by the NAWCC, and reflects his particular interest in watches made in America. Philip is a Fellow of the London Society of Antiquaries, a Freeman of Lincoln and London, a member of the Silver Society and the Jewellery/Plate/Horology Society, a professional Member of the British Horological Institute, a Silver Star Fellow of the NAWCC, a member of the Antiquarian Horological Society and a Liveryman of the Clockmakers' Company.

### ***Impact of American Technology on the English Watch Trade, by Philip Priestley***

*The lecture explores the relationship between American and English watch manufacturing during the second half of the 19th century, including the contributions of Aaron Dennison and his travels to England and Switzerland on behalf of the newly formed Boston Watch Company, and the devastating impact of mass production techniques on the English watch industry.*

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 at the National! *Rich*

*(Continued from page 1)*

A.J. Moore's, *The Clockmakers of Bristol 1650-1900*, provides good background on Bristol's history; however, there is little written about William Martin whose working dates are recorded as 1689 to 1739. He is primarily known as a clock maker and Moore writes that he had one apprentice, Wiliam Sturgess in 1695, followed by Thomas Bartonhead in 1703 after Sturgess obtains his freedom. A few of Martin's lantern and tall case clocks can be found in auction catalogs and collections on the internet and they appear to exhibit high quality work. Interestingly, a Martin 30-day duration walnut tall case is believed to have been imported by William Penn to America at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Known as "The William Penn Clock," it has been in the Library Company of Philadelphia since 1857.



*Figure 2: Close-up of signature cartouche on the silver champlévé dial, with unusual mask above and shell below.*

Period sun and moon dial watches are rare, and one with a false pendulum even more so. The visually appealing dial design first appeared in the last quarter of the 17th century, after the invention of the balance spring made accurate timekeeping in watches possible and makers began experimenting with ways to indicate the passing of both hours and minutes on the watch dial. The concept is to differentiate daytime from nighttime hours by displaying either a sun or a moon to point to the hour.

Figure 1 shows the sun and moon champlévé dial; the dial on the left is displaying 9:56 pm, and the dial on the right 8:41 am. Notice that the sun or the moon points to the Roman hours number that is located just beyond the automation aperture, while the single hand points to the Arabic numeral 5-minute markers on the edge of the dial. The engraved and chased cartouche signature on the dial, shown in Figure 2, reads "Wm Martin Bristol" and has a pleasing (and unusual) mask, above, and shell, below, the script signature.

There are many features that help date early watches in addition to the working dates associated with the watchmaker and the casemaker; the engraving style of maker's name on the dial and movement, and the balance table and pillar design are just a few.

*(Continued from page 4)*

For example, the tulip pillar design on this watch, shown in Figures 4 and 5, became popular in about 1690 and was replaced by the Egyptian pillar design by about 1705. While Martin (1689-1739) finished watches to his desired quality standards, and adjusted, repaired and retailed them, as evidenced by his signature on this very collectable and rare example, he purchased the case, dial, the rough movement, pillars and other components, as was the practice.

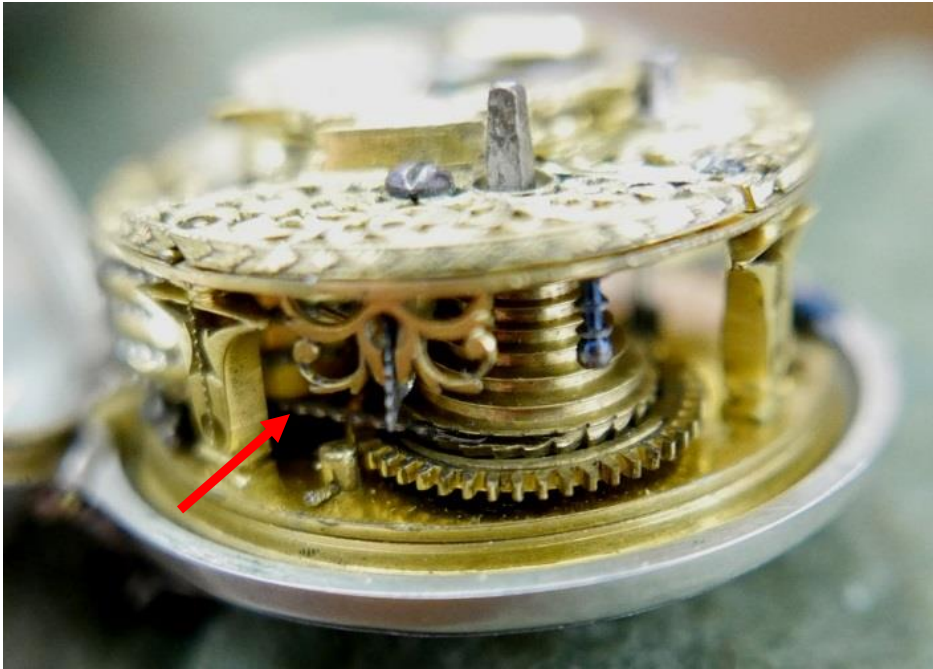


*Figure 4: (top) Martin movement showing fine finishing work. Notice the intricate tulip designed pillars.*



*(bottom) Top plate of movement showing the false pendulum. The movement is signed "Wm Martin Bristol" and has no serial number as was common for early English watches.*

Watches at this time had verge escapements with a fusee and chain, a design that remained predominant in English watchmaking for 100 years after this watch was made. The fusee is a conical shaped gear that acts as a pulley to compensate for loss of power as the mainspring winds down (Figures 5 and 6).



*Figure 5: The fusee and fusee stop foot (located in front of the fusee) part of the mechanism that prevents over winding. The intricate chain that transfers power between the barrel spring and fusee is highlighted by the red arrow.*



*Figure 6: Another picture of the movement showing the intricate tulip designed pillars and the nice engraving around the balance table. Notice the crown wheel that is highlighted by the red arrow.*

Figure 7 shows the back plate with the balance table removed. The balance is steel with two support crossings; one is pendulum-shaped, visible through the balance table aperture, while the other is triangular-shaped and of similar weight as the false pendulum to provide equal balance to the wheel. As shown in Figure 4, the majority of the balance wheel is hidden under the balance table giving the appearance of a functioning pendulum.

The watch is regulated by turning the arbor with the winding key (Figure 7). An index scale and the words “slow” and “fast” are engraved on the plate under the spring (one can just see the word “slow” below and just to the right of the left curb pin. Turning the arbor changes the effective length of the spring, by means of a ring gear that carries the curb pins located underneath the pierced and engraved cover plate, to make the watch go slower or faster.

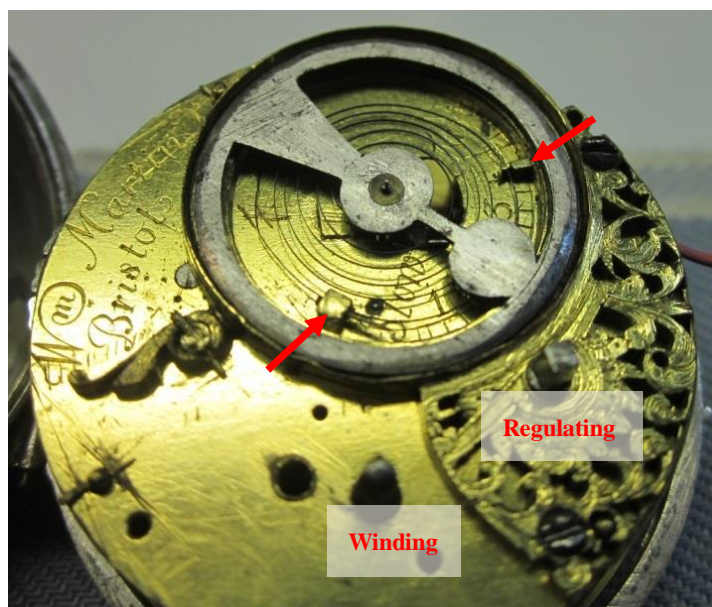



Figure 7(left): Back plate with balance table removed to show the design of the balance wheel that has two arms, a pendulum-shaped crossing and triangular-shaped counter weight crossing. Also shown is the 4 ½ turn balance spring and curb pins (highlighted by the red arrows). The watch is regulated by turning the arbor with a key, which changes the effective length of the spring.

Figure 8 (right): Cuthbert Weaver's makers mark "CW" as shown on the inner pair case (enlarged in the red square).

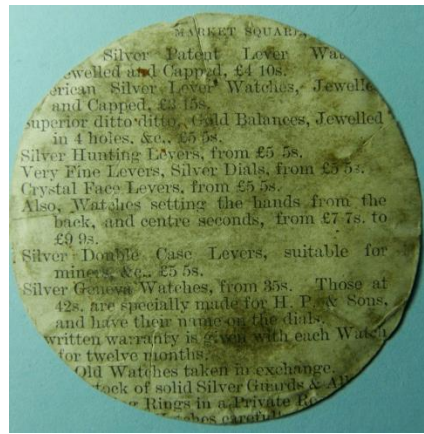
Early silver cases, generally before 1740, rarely have full hallmarks. The plain pair cases on this example have a maker's mark that thankfully is still clear, "CW" (Figure 6). This mark is likely for Cuthbert Weaver (1661 to 1698) who Philip Priestley lists as one of the earliest found on watch cases in his excellent book "Early Watch Case Makers of England 1631-1720" (NAWCC Supplement #3).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the BH member for sharing his wonderful find with the Chapter, and to Dennis Radage (VP, BH) who contributed to this review. If readers have a clock, watch, or other interesting article, please consider sharing it with fellow British Horology collectors. All we need is a few good photographs, as was supplied for this article. 

# Watch Paper Observations

By Rich Newman, Chapter President (IL)

Watch papers primarily served as advertising and a reminder to have the watch serviced by the establishment advertised. Papers were also practical because they eliminated rattling and prevented dust and moisture from entering the movement through the winding hole on the (inner) pair case. I've written about watch papers in the past and continue to actively photograph and collect American papers as well as interesting examples from abroad. The two papers below fall into the interesting category as they both are quite unusual.



English Pidduck & Sons paper documents watches they carried and the prices (above). American Whitney & Hoyt paper advertising their expertise as makers by showing their workshop. Notice the bow lathe in his hands (right)

The first appears to be a very ordinary English paper from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Pidduck & Sons of Hanley. As advertised on the front, they retailed watches, clocks, jewelry, spoons, keys, chains and seals. However, the back is a gold mine of information that documents the types of watches they sold and prices:

Silver Patent Lever Watches Jewelled and Capped, £4 10s.

American Silver Lever Watches, Jewelled and Capped, £3 15s.

Superior ditto ditto, Gold Balances, Jewelled in 4 holes. &c., £5 5s.

Silver Hunting Levers, from £5 5s.

Very Fine Levers, Silver Dials, from £5 5s.

Crystal Face Levers, from £5 5s.

Also, Watches setting the hands from the back, and centre seconds, from £7 7s. to £9 9s.

Silver Double Case Levers, suitable for miners, &c., £5 5s.

Silver Geneva Watches, from 35s. Those at 42s. are specially made for H.P. & Sons, and have their name on the dials. Written warranty is given with each Watch for twelve months.

The second paper is Ebenezer Whitney and Seymour Hoyt, New York, and dates circa 1830. This example is communicating their repair skills by showing a watchmaker at the bench using a bow lathe. Illustrations of watch tools are extremely unusual; I wonder if the well-clothed gentleman is one of the partners. 