

Newsletter of the Horological Tool Chapter #173 of the NAWCC

Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up

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John Shallcross using a clockthrow.

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The Horological Tool Chapter of NAWCC

The Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up is the newsletter of the Horological Tool Chapter #173 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors Inc., a non-profit educational organization. This chapter and its newsletter are intended to foster interaction among NAWCC members who share a common interest in the use and collection of horological tools of all sorts. If you have an item you have researched, a book of interest, or notes on a project you have made, please consider sharing your knowledge with others through the newsletter.

The annual chapter dues of \$10 will ensure that members receive the newsletter and are included in the Membership Directory when it is published. Members are also entitled to one classified ad in each issue. If you are interested in joining this chapter, which will meet at various large regionals and also at the National Convention each year, please send your annual dues to the Chapter Secretary/Treasurer.

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Editor's Message

The New Year is here and NAWCC Chapter 173 is doing well. We gained several new members last year and I hope you will all enjoy the activities of NAWCC Chapter 173 this year.

If you have tools to sell, remember each member can place one free classified add in the Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up. We are also offering all the back issues of the newsletter on CD. All proceeds will go to support the publishing efforts of our chapter. Details are given elsewhere in this newsletter.

Newsletters are only possible when we have articles to print. There have been several outstanding articles submitted to the newsletter over the last two years; so, please keep them coming! I would also like to thank those who have contributed their time to edit or give guidance to the publication process.

The current newsletter contains an article inspired by Chapter 173 member, John Shallcross. I met Mr. Shallcross at a Tom Harris Auction, in 2009. Up for auction was a large collection of rounding-up tools. In addition, there was a nice escape wheel cutter and a Prescott lathe. We had a brief conversation and I knew Mr. Shallcross bought the lathe.

Years later, I began collecting information on English lathes and contacted Mr. Shallcross. My original intent was to get a photograph of the lathe he bought. My aim was to incorporate this with a few English made tools from my own collection for an article. Little did I know that Mr. Shallcross had more than just that one English tool in his collection.

After visiting Mr. Shallcross last year, I was convinced that the membership would enjoy seeing some of his tool collection. I wish to thank Mr. Shallcross for allowing me the privilege of seeing his collection and sharing it with our membership.

Bruce Forman

Collecting English Horological Tools

Tool collectors come in many shapes and sizes. Some are hoarders who measure the quality of their collection by the ton, while some select only the best quality tools that money can buy. John Shallcross is a collector of a different type. His tool collection is made up of tools he has acquired to perform his many duties as a classically trained English clock and watch maker, Figure 1.



Figure 1. John Shallcross in his workshop.

Born in England, Mr. Shallcross served a formal watch making apprenticeship that lasted four years. When his apprenticeship ended, he continued his horological training and became a Fellow of the British Horological Institute and Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers. In his youth, old horological tools could still be purchased at a reasonable price. Many were considered obsolete and found their way to a local scrap dealer or second hand shop.

Shallcross remembers visiting Charles Allix, the well known English Horological book dealer. Charles Allix was the person selected by the heirs of Dr. Torrens to dispose of his legendary tool collection. Dr. Torrens was a university professor and historian of British and Swiss horology. He became friends with many of the remaining old school clock and watch makers in

Great Britain. When they died, he often purchased the entire contents of their work shop. Dr. Torrens died in 1967 and nine tons of books and tools were shipped to England for liquidation.

Mr. Shallcross had the privilege of picking through what remained of the Torrens collection stored in the basement of Charles Allix. All of the better tools had been sold by that time and a large portion had been purchased by the American tool collector, Ted Crom. In 2010, Mr. Shallcross was able to purchase some of the tools he missed when the Ted Crom collection was auctioned at the Skinner Auction House, in Boston. (See Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up, Summer 2010) One item he acquired was a 19th century pinion cutting machine from Lancashire, England, Figure 2.



Figure 2. A Lancashire pinion cutting machine purchased from the collection of Ted Crom. It was probably originally owned by Dr. Torrens.

Most of the tools in the Shallcross collection are foot or hand powered. Mr. Shallcross was trained on how to use these tools by some of the great horologists in England. For example, he spent one day a week for a time in the shop of Daniel Parkes. Parkes was known for his great skill in restoring old English time pieces using only the traditional methods. The only electric power used in his London shop was for the telephone, lights, and a motor for his wheel cutting engine.



Figure 3. A collection of clock size bow drills.

Mr. Shallcross acquired several tools from Daniel Parkes. One object is a large sector suitable for clock work. Another object is a partial set of bow drills, Figure 3. One is marked with the initials of clockmaker, Charles Parkes, an uncle to Daniel Parkes, Figure 4. This drill set is still used in the Shallcross shop and I asked for a live demonstration.



Figure 4. The bow drill ferrule is marked "C P" for Charles Parkes.



Figure 5. Mr. Shallcross demonstrates the use of a bow drill.

A brass plate was used as the demonstration work piece and held in a vice. The drill is positioned between the operator and the work piece, Figure 5. The bow string is wrapped around the drill ferrule and the cutting action takes place on the downward stroke of the bow. At the same time, pressure is applied to the drill to drive it forward into the work piece. On the return stroke, the pressure is relieved and no cutting takes place. The chest of the worker is protected from the drill butt end by a breast plate, Figure 6. Mr. Shallcross explained that the breast plate was traditionally attached to the clockmakers vice with a piece of cat gut so it could be easily found. This reminds the author of the modern practice of attaching the chuck key to a drill press with a chain. Using the bow drill, however, takes far more skill.



Figure 6. The iron breast plate used with the bow drill.

Another hand powered tool I asked to be demonstrated is the clockthrow. Several examples are in the shop from different time periods. Some are free standing while others require mounting in a vice. The one selected for demonstration had a makers mark. It was very faint but appeared to read "THEWLIS & Co., Warrington." It has a steel body with a brass driving wheel. The left hand is used to turn the drive wheel while the right hand is used to guide the turning graver, Figure 7. During the demonstration, the process was carefully overseen by Thomas Tompion whose portrait hangs on the back wall above the work bench.



Figure 7. Mr. Shallcross demonstrates a clockthrow made in the mid to late 18th century.



Figure 8. A close up of the clockthrow.

The lathe was an important tool in any English clock or watch making shop. Because there was no universal chucking system in the early years, tool makers designed many lathes for one specific task. The Shallcross shop has a good selection of these specialized turning tools. Some were made just for polishing screw heads, turning watch staffs, or chasing a fusee to match the mainspring of a watch, Figure 9.

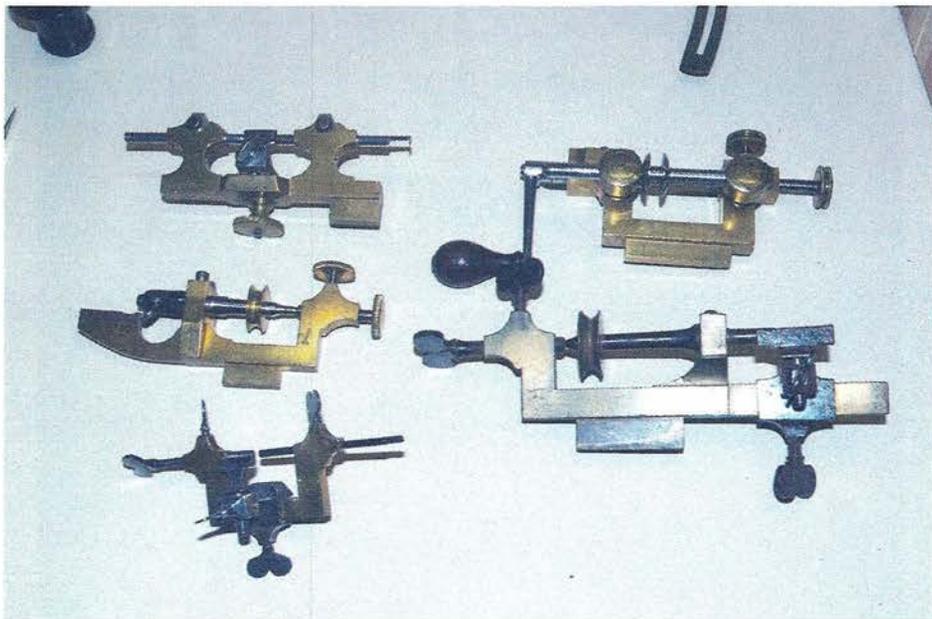


Figure 9. Some of the many specialty lathes made in England from the late 18th to the mid 19th century.



Figure 10. A Prescott mandrel lathe made by J. & T. Jones in the late 19th century.

I was surprised at how many of these little lathes were actually marked with the makers' name. It has been my experience that many horological tool makers never signed their work. Some of the English marks in the collection are: Stubs, J & T Jones, William Fogg, and T. Jump. Documenting these marked tools is a future project that I hope Mr. Shallcross will support.

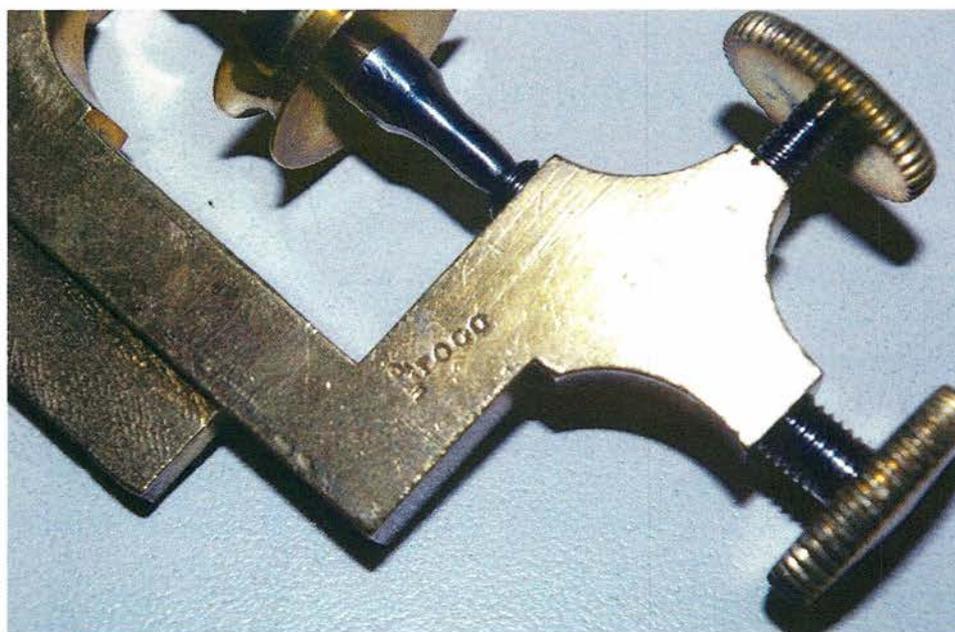


Figure 11. A screw head polishing lathe marked by William Fogg and made in the early 19th century.

One might wonder how Mr. Shallcross and his shop of English tools ended up in the U.S.A? It is because the Time Museum of Rockford, Illinois, needed a conservator and Mr. Shallcross was imported for the task. The Time Museum was operated by the wealthy industrialist Seth Atwood from 1971 to 1999. He spent many years collecting the best timepieces money could buy. The museum eventually held more than 3,000 objects and was ranked as being one of the best horological collections in the world. Shallcross became its conservator in 1985 and spent 14 years with the institution. After the Time Museum closed an attempt was made to sell the bulk of the collection to a public museum in Chicago. This attempt failed and the museum collection was eventually sold by Sotheby's in a series of three public auctions. The last auction took place in 2004. The collection fetched over 57 million U.S. dollars.



Figure 12. Mr. Shallcross and his wheel cutting engine.

After a lifetime in the horological trade, Mr. Shallcross is still enthusiastic about collecting horological tools. Unlike most of us, however, he actually uses his antique tools for their intended purpose rather than just putting them into a fancy display cabinet to admire.

Reader's Feedback

Dennis Kaplan writes in regard to an interesting tool many of us have seen in the estate of an old watch maker or jeweler. It has a patent date of 1929 and is labeled as "The Buffalo Pad." Dennis, like most of us, could never figure out what this tool might have been used for. He recently discovered a description of the tool and thought that the members might be interested in his findings. It appears that this rubber pad was used to transfer a pattern to a metal object before it was engraved. For more information see "The Jewelry Engravers Manual" by R. Allen Hardy and John J. Bowman.



Back Issues of the Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up

Thanks to the efforts of Ron Bechler all back issues of the Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up are now available as pdf files. Issues from 1997 through 2008 are available on one CD for \$20. These early issues vary in print quality and are mostly in a black and white format. Issues from 2009 through 2011 were composed on a computer and were printed in color. They are available for \$20 on a second CD. You can also buy both on one CD for \$40. Some of the topics covered are: the deeping tool, Paulson lathes, uprighting tools, the Ted Crom Collection,

making a screw cutting lathe, making a split stake for pinion repair, hairspring making and restoration, the screw head polishing tool and more. CDs can be ordered from the treasurer by sending a check with your request. Proceeds will go to chapter activities.

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Classified Adds

For Sale

NOW AVAILABLE ONCE AGAIN "THE WATCHMAKERS STAKING TOOL" BY PERKINS & LUCCINA, \$35.00 Postpaid, send remittance to, Ronald G. Bechler, 726 Royal Glen Drive, San Jose, CA 95133-1446, (408) 926-3212

American Watch Tool lathe, length of bed 28", swing is 7", Includes compound slide and one 3WO Hardinge collet. \$450. Deena Mack, 644 Geise Rd. Attica, NY 14011, 585-591-1343, email dmack18@rochester.rr.com.

10 mm Collets made by Derbyshire and Levin, surface rust pitting but otherwise in good usable condition. Fractional sizes: 1/8, 3/16, 1/4, 5/16, 5/32, 15/64, 19/64, 9/64 (new Levin), \$135 for all, postage paid. Bruce Forman, 234 Eagle Ridge Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46385, (219) 763-4748, email: forman21@netzero.net

Looking for 8 mm Derbyshire Large Collets? I have a set of 52. Odd & Even numbers : 3-50. Plus an extra #50, a 1/4 screw chuck; taper chuck, and modified taper LARGE collets, **Derbyshire Large headstock & drawbar, Derbyshire LARGE faceplate, All the above \$425...**Plus: An optional set-up that includes : a Perton lathe bed. TipOver T-Rest, Motor, light, foot pedal, mounted on portable workbench with drawers - \$45. Headstock fits WW lathes. Derbyshire LARGE collets have a different diameter thread pitch and use stronger drawbar than standard 8 mm collets. Postage extra. Info or pictures: Deena Mack, 644, Geise Rd., Attica, NY 14011, (585)-591-1343, email dmack18@rochester.rr.com

Antique Engraving Machine, with three boxes of fonts. \$500 or Best Offer
Jim Bove, 3654 Dryden RD, Fremont, Ca 94555, 510-792-7352

Wanted

Deckel, Aciera, Rivett, Schaublin, Lorch, Hardinge, Levin, lathe or mill accessories wanted. Will trade, or sell if I have duplicates. Mark Fulmer
(330) 877-2021, Markusfu@hotmail.com

Derbyshire Elect model lathe attachments- pivot polisher, screw cutting attachment, roller file rest, and screw feed tailstock - will trade - for sale: tools from the Elgin watch factory, lathes, grinders, millers, etc...some made by American Watch Tool. J. Dill, 2117 22nd St. Road, Greeley, Co. 80634, Tel: 970-353-8561.