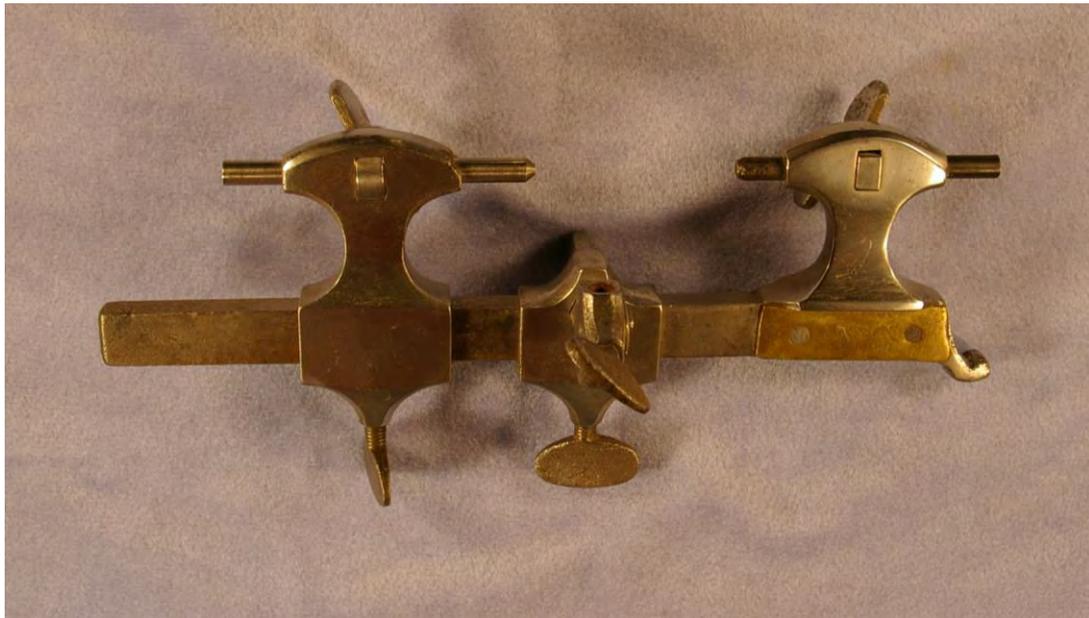


Newsletter of the Horological Tool Chapter #173 of the NAWCC

Tool Enthusiasts' Round-Up

In This Issue: The Turns

Upcoming Chapter Activities and Classified Ads



The Geneva Turns

Summer 2016

No. 28

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.

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Your Dues are Due Again – Maybe????

Once again Chapter 173 has completed its financial year. This means that the Treasurer will present his financial report in this issue of TER along with a reminder to mail in your dues. Some of you pay in advance, some pay by the year. Please look at your mailing label that was on the envelope that this issue was mailed in. If the label has the year 2016, printed on it, then you need to send the treasurer \$10. If you use email delivery, we will bill you if you need to pay again.

The editor would like more help with the newsletter. He could use additional people to help edit TER before publication. Common sense is the only requirement and an email connection. No pay provided but you do get a first look at the tool ads. Much like being an early bird at the MART.

I have heard some people complain about the high commissions they have been paying to sell their collections. If you have tools for sale, remember that TER has classified ads. They are free to members. You can cut the price of your tool in half and still make the same profit with this type of low overhead.

Also, we are always looking for tool articles to publish. This year we got very few submissions from the members. If you wish to keep the chapter newsletter strong, we need more contributors to these pages. Otherwise we may be forced to reduce the number of issues we publish each year. Remember, we can help craft an article for you, if you can submit photographs of the project you have been working on. We also accept relevant book reviews or a review of a new clock or watchmaking tool

Bruce Forman
Editor

The Turns

The turns is a small metal lathe used by clock and watch makers for hundreds of years. It is sometimes referred to as a dead center lathe because the work to be turned is held between two fixed centers. Lathes of this type vary in size, from just a few inches, to over 18 inches long. The common points of these lathes are that they are designed to be held in a bench vise during use and they are powered by a bow. In addition, the cutting chisels are held freehand supported by a “T” rest much like a normal wood lathe.

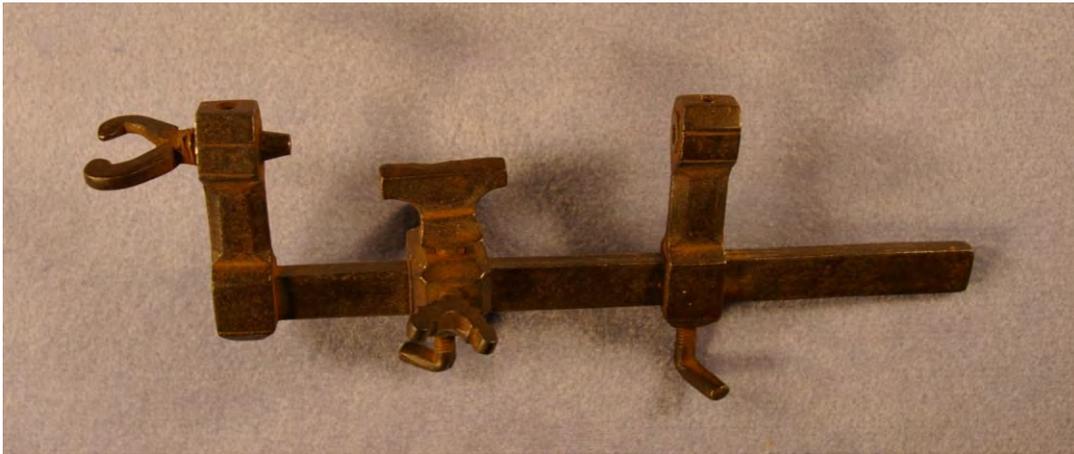


Figure 1. An early iron turns.

Not much has been written about the origin of this tool but every clock and watchmaker owned at least one before the era of the modern watchmakers lathe, circa 1850. Even after the introduction of the modern watchmakers lathe, the turns was still commonly offered by horological supply houses well into the 1900s. Turns were cheaper to purchase than a fully equipped watchmakers lathe and many believe that they are superior for turning watch parts. Used turns are still commonly found at most NAWCC Marts, where they can be purchased for as little as a few dollars, although some examples sell for much more.

The majority of turns in my collection came from a box lot I purchased at a local auction. Apparently not many horologists saw value in these obsolete tools as many were missing their centers or needed a little cleaning. Since that time, I have collected a few more examples and soon realized that although many of these tools look similar there are many differences in their details.

The earliest turns in my collection is hand made by a blacksmith, Figure 1. Blacksmiths were the toolmakers of their day and made any tool imaginable as well as nails and metal hardware. It is often difficult to date such objects because blacksmiths still use the same tools as they did one

hundred years ago. However, workmanship of this turns is reminiscent of metal working from the 1700s, or even earlier. Because there is added decoration to the surface of this tool, my belief is that may have been made in Europe.

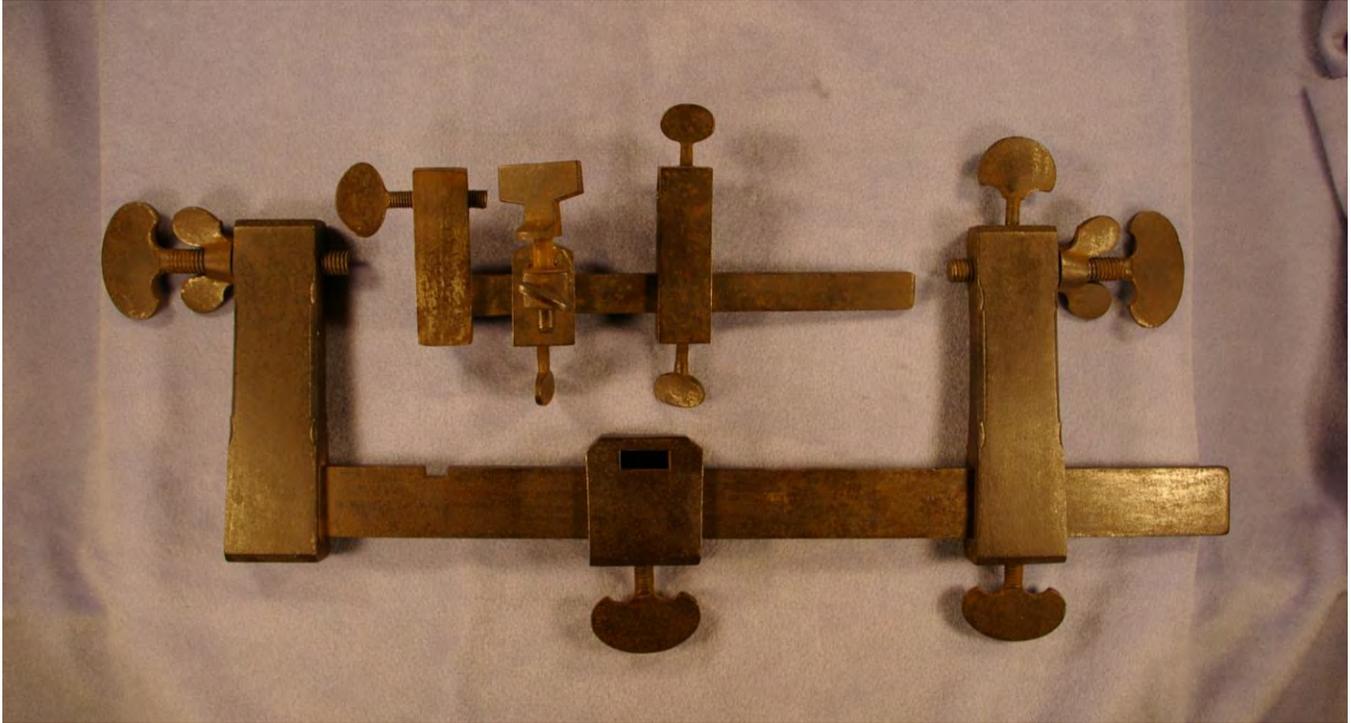


Figure 2. Two English bench turns.

By the late 1700s there were toolmakers that specialized in nothing but making horological tools. The English horological tool maker, John Wyke of Liverpool, shows many different size turns in his catalogue published in the last quarter of the 18th century. Sizes range from those for watchmaking to those used for clockmaking. The larger turns were made from steel and the body parts are rectangular in shape. This standardization made manufacturing them much easier and they were called “Bench Turns.” Two partial examples of the English bench turns are shown in Figure 2.

The smaller turns use by watchmakers, were made from a brass casting rather than forged steel. These also appear in the Wyke catalogue and they are referred to as a “brass pivot turns.” An example of an English brass pivot turns is shown in Figure 3. It is marked with the stamp “W. S” and so this unit may have been made by the English firm of William Stubs. One catalogue describes this as the “Lancashire pattern.” Turns of this pattern continued to be sold well into the 1800s. Versions made in France, still appeared in American tool catalogues as late as the early 1900s. One example is shown in Figure 4. This unit appears to have never been used and may be new old stock from a horological supply house.



Figure 3. A brass pivot turns made in England.

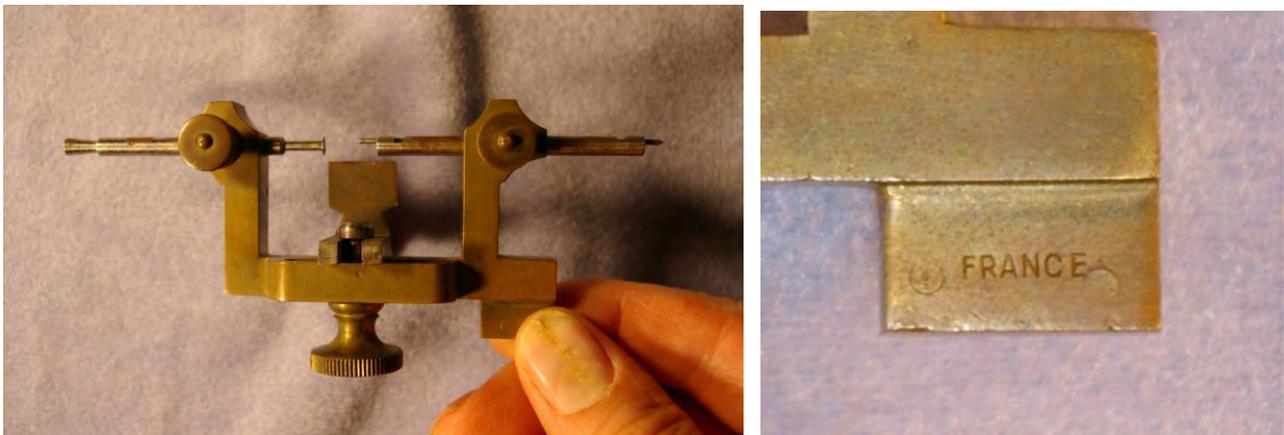


Figure 4. An early 20th Century brass pivot turns, made in France.

Switzerland is well known for its horological tool making and supplied many watchmakers worldwide. The majority of turns they produced seem to date from the 1880s. This was a time period when there was an explosion in the number of watches being sold and an equal amount of repairmen were needed to maintain these watches. Catalogues show two types of turns from Switzerland. One had the locking screws for the centers on the top of the poppets while the other located the screws on the side, Figure 5. These are typically referred to as “Geneva steel pivot turns” or “steel verge lathe” in the literature. They came in many different sizes and a majority are unmarked. The best bows for doing sensitive turning of small watch parts were made of whale bone with a cat gut cord. However bows were also made of steel and wood.

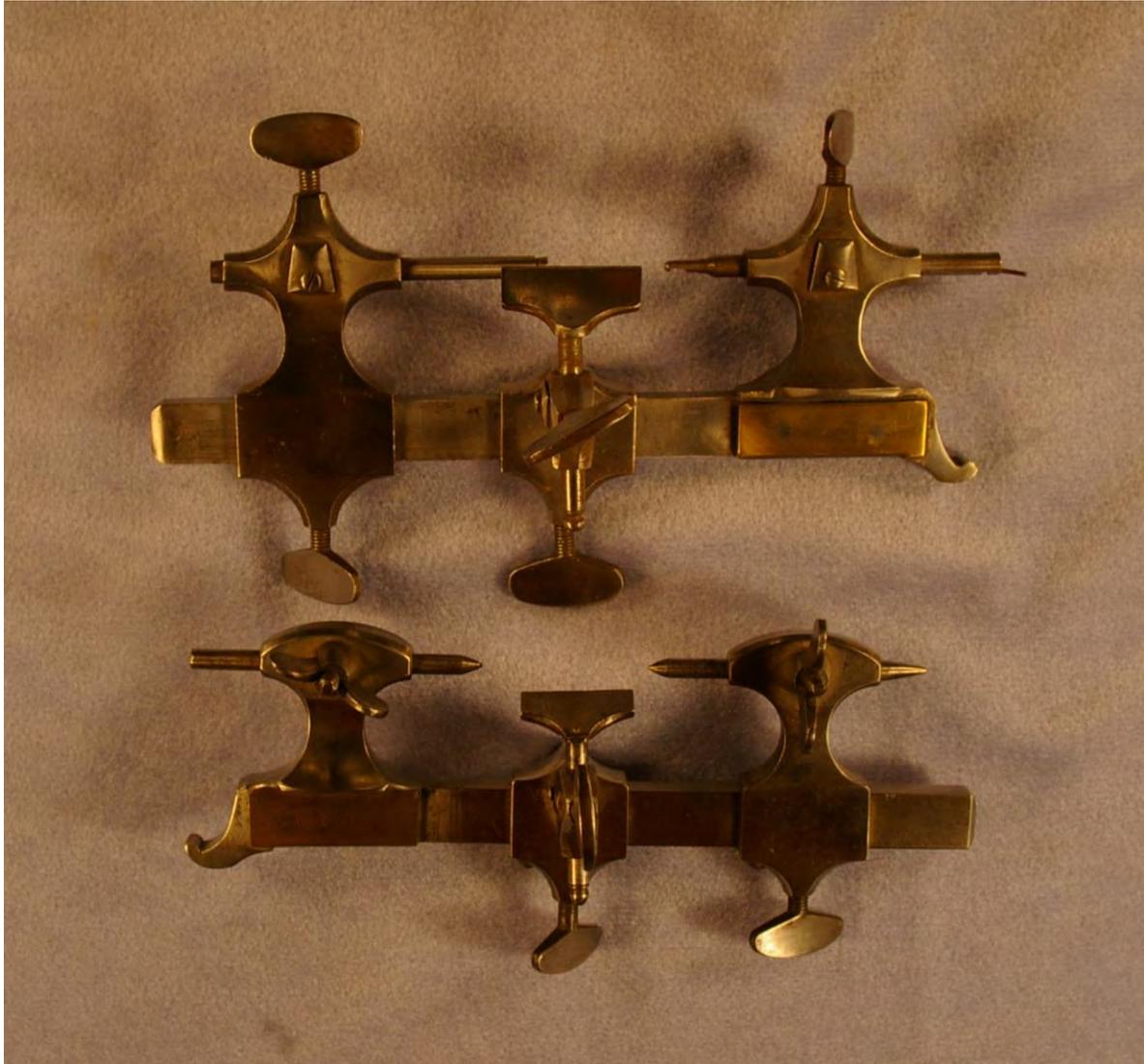


Figure 5. The two patterns of Geneva steel pivot turns.

In examining many turns I find that a majority are unmarked. Still, others are marked on several parts with identical numbers, such as 15, 7, 10, etc.. One theory is that these marks were placed on the tools to keep the parts together through the finishing process. Another theory is that these numbers identified the outworkers who made these tools for dealers. Figure 6, shows four of the marks found on turns but it is still unclear if they are dealers or manufactures marks.

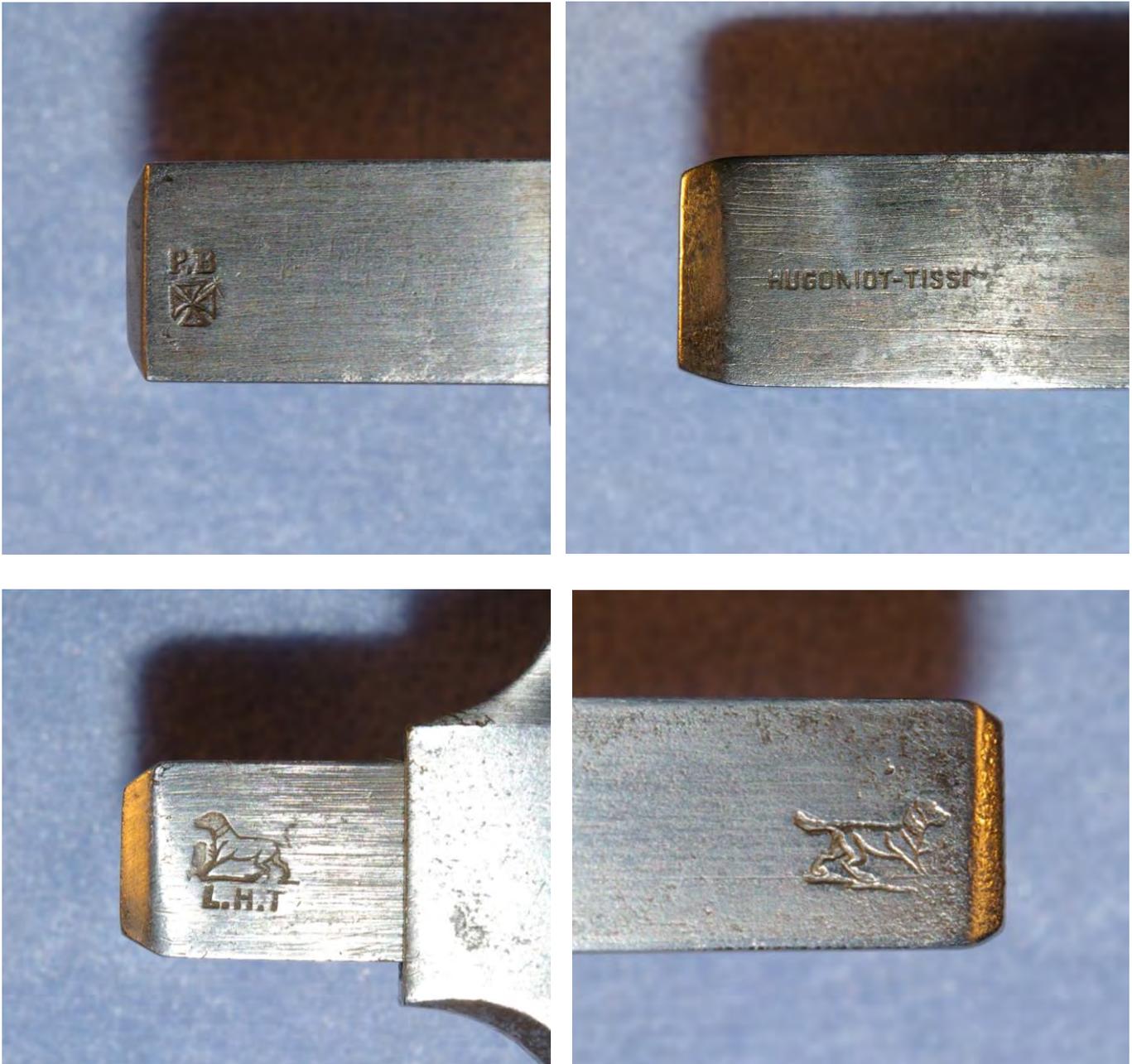


Figure 6. Four marks found on Geneve turns.

Toward the end of the 19th century we find that several manufactures started to move away from the rectangular bar used as the bed of most turns. This was replaced by a triangle or D bed. It is assumed that the makers thought that these bed shapes would be more accurate than the rectangular bar. Some of these lathes look very much like the steel Geneva pattern lathes but the locking thumb screws have been replaced by levers. A well preserved example of one of these lathes is shown in Figure 7, and is marked L. HUGONIOT-TISSOT.



Figure 7. A triangular bar turns marked L. HUGONIOT- TISSOT.

Steel and brass will tarnish or rust in normal use. Nickel plating eliminated this problem and many of the newer style turns started to be nickel plated. In addition their thumb screws used to lock the centers are replaced by more modern knurled thumb wheels, Figure 8. I have seen several examples of this same lathe that are unmarked.



Figure 8. A nickel plated D bed turns with knurled thumb screws.

Boley is one firm that advertised the triangular bed lathe. Figure 9 shows a triangular bed lathe that is unmarked and it is nickel plated. It looks very much like the Boley lathes advertised in the late 19th century. The tool box that came with it is marked "Boley", Figure 10. It can be powered by a bow like the traditional turns or by a drive belt powered by a motor or foot treadle. Boley continued to sell turns well into the 20th century and these were available with different

accessory packages. A marked G. Boley turns is shown in Figure 11. A very similar set appears in a 20th century G. Boley catalogue but it now had a D bed. The catalogue is dominated with motor driven lathes but many purists still preferred the turn. Accessories to this lathe allow it to be bow driven or powered by a belt, Figure 12.



Figure 9. Unmarked nickel plated lathe possibly made by Boley?



Figure 10. The box of runners that came with the lathe is marked Boley.



Figure 11. A 20th century G. Boley turns with accessories.

Some purists may argue that these latter sets are not really turns. It is noted in one early tool catalog that a hand wheel drive could be purchased to convert your turns into a throw lathe. So, any dead center lathe not driven by a bow may no longer technically be called a turns?

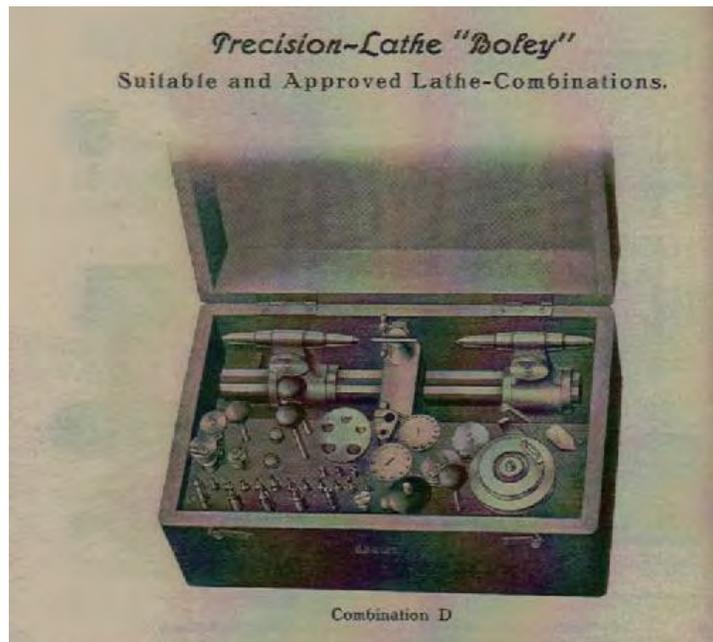


Figure 12. A G. Boley catalogue cut from the 20th century.

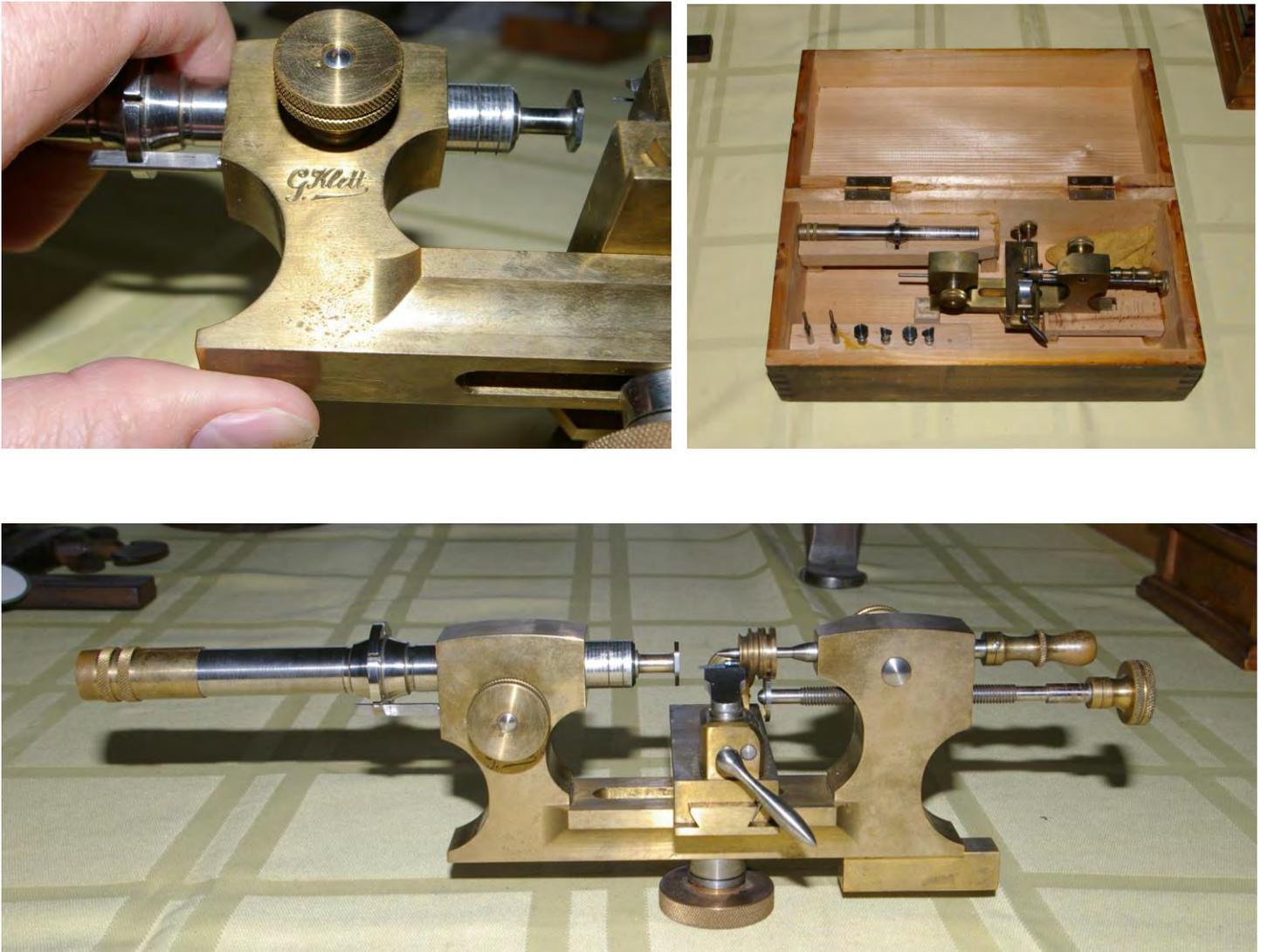


Figure 13. G. Klett brass turns from the 1950's?

The last example of a turns I will show probably dates from the 1950s? This is suggested by the construction details and the modern style knurs on the thumb wheels. It came with several runners that could be used for turning watch pivots, Figure 13.

I am told that there is at least one company still making turns today. They are valued at over \$1,500 dollars and you must wait a year for delivery. It would therefore appear that the original watchmakers lathe is still a useful tool in the trained hands of a professional.

Bruce Forman
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Still Available
The Library of Lathe & Tool Catalogs

Thanks to John Koepke and others, we can now offer a Library of Lathe & Tool Catalogs to our members on one CD. Tool catalogues are hard to come by as many were printed on poor quality paper that deteriorates with time. Still, others were printed on high quality paper but were quickly discarded once a new issue was printed. These catalogues hold a wealth of information and over 50 have now been digitized by John Koepke for your reading enjoyment. There are 35 catalogues from Levin which include the instructions for their screw cutting attachment and Micro Turn II. All these are available on one CD at a cost of \$13. Please send a check for \$13 to Chapter #173 Treasurer: Dave Kern, 5 Hilltop Drive, Manhasset, NY 11030

About the Classified Advertisements

Each Chapter 173 member can place a free add in this section of the newsletter. We have a wanted and for sale section. If you have something of general interest we can print a photograph of the object in question, if we have space. Please only submit advertisements related to horological tools.

Wanted

Levin and Derbyshire headstock and tailstocks (lever feed) in 10 mm sizes, any condition, running or not. Also 10 mm Levin collets and other related equipment. M. L. Shetler, Watchmaker, 4151 Paul Road, Woodhull, N. Y. 14898

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

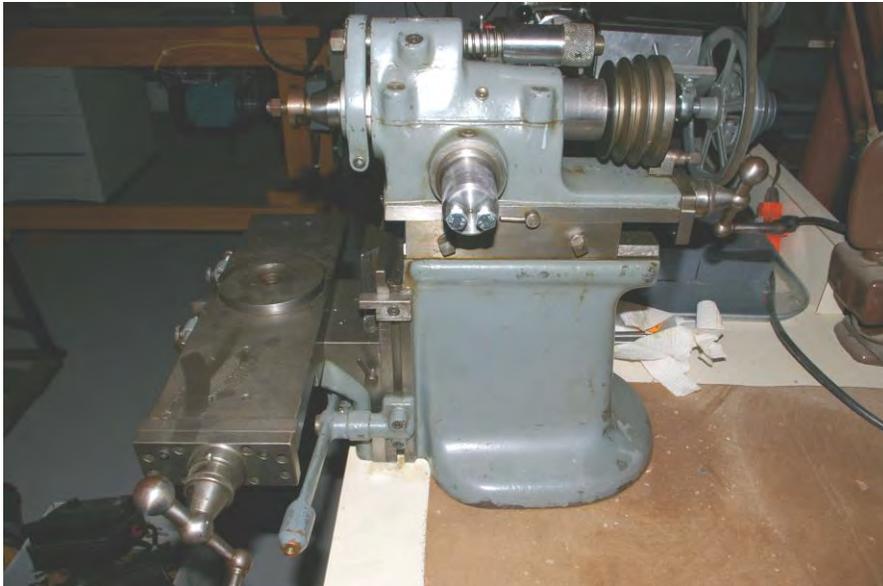
Derbyshire Elect model lathe attachments- pivot polisher, screw cutting attachment, roller file rest, and screw feed tailstock - will trade - for sale: tools from the Elgin watch factory, lathes, grinders, millers, etc...some made by American Watch Tool. J. Dill, 2117 22nd St. Road, Greeley, Co. 80631, Tel: 970-353-8561, jimdle@yahoo.com.

Antique clock and watchmaking tools from before 1900. Also, any tools related to hairspring making. Bruce Forman, 234 Eagle Ridge Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46385, (219) 763-4748, email: forman21@netzero.net will buy or trade.

For Sale

Waltham Thread Mill, \$500 and Waltham Spur Gear Cutter, \$500, the gear cutter headstock appears to take W15 collets. Mark Fulmer (330) 877-2021, Markusfu@hotmail.com

For sale a bench top milling machine. It is reported to have been used in a plant that did jewelry making. The bed moves up and down using a level feed. The table has a pad to mount a fixture. It must have been used for a special operation, could this be part of a faceting machine? \$350 is the price. Will sell or trade for antique tools I want but do not need. Bruce Forman, 234 Eagle Ridge Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46385, (219) 763-4748, email: bruce.forman@frontier.com



Horological Tool Chapter 173, NAWCC
 Financial Comments
 Year Ended 6/30/16

Fiscal year ended 6/30/16 showed a net income of \$756 on Revenues of \$1,585. The year saw a mixture of positive cash flow timing and some different real experience. Revenues were much higher due to timing of Dues receipts and a significant increase of CD revenue. Our biggest CD item has been the Newsletter history CD which many Members purchased in the past and by its very nature has a natural decline. This year we still had the TER History CD plus the Becken Catalog, the Elgin Jewel Video and the new Chapter 173 Library CD of a myriad of old catalogs. Expenses for Newsletter publication was higher due to timing plus CD costs. Bruce continues to operate on a reasonably low cost basis due to less expensive ink sources while maintaining a high quality publication which I'm sure you will all agree with. Bruce continues to do the printing himself, no small effort. Anyone agreeable with Email delivery should switch allowing for both lower cost delivery and relieving Bruce of some dog work. Membership was down slightly from 99 to 92. The Newsletter is our main expense but the CD's add some costs and are priced at about break even. Of course the volunteers help save costs and the future looks good financially with the dues rate of \$10. 40% of the Member's Dues expire at 6/30/16 so we are counting on you to promptly remit your Dues for the new year. We are in sound financial condition with \$4,187 in cash, the Chapter's only asset. The cash basis operating statement simply shows cash in and out. Notionally, 92 Members paying their annual dues should give us enough revenue to cover 4 newsletters and about break even. Selling CD's helps also. Bruce is very resourceful in coming up with interesting articles and often seems to find interesting tool guys to write about. Of course, he still needs articles for the Newsletter so please continue to send them in. Any suggestions positive or otherwise are welcome. A summary of results of operations follows:

Respectfully,
 Dave Kern, Treasurer

Tool Chapter 173, NAWCC
 Operating Statement
 June 30, 2016

Cash Balance - June 30, 2015	<u>\$3,431</u>
Revenues	
Dues	\$1,100
CD Sales	485
Total Revenues	<u>\$1,585</u>
Expenses	
Newsletter costs	\$ 682
CD & Other	<u>147</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 829</u>
Net Income	\$ <u>756</u>
Cash Balance - June 30, 2016	<u>\$4,187</u>