

## For Sale from the late John Hatt

A Bergeon watchmakers Bench, complete with Bergeon vice. In good condition with the drawer locks removed. £500.00 Offers considered.

Apply James Marten, 07917 226598, jamesnmarten@aol.com



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## South London Branch British Horological Institute

Newsletter No. 516 March 2022

Branch No 25. Founded 1978

**Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month**

**At The White Hart Barn (Godstone Village Hall)**

**Godstone Surrey RH9 8DU at 7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.**

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*"Time is a waste of money". Oscar Wilde*

**Next Month's Meeting  
Thursday 10th March  
AGM. Followed by  
2 SHORT TALKS**

This meeting will be a two stage event. Firstly there will be the AGM where you have the opportunity to find out about the current state of branch affairs. There will be a report by James Marten; finances will be presented by Barnaby Smith, workshop reports and the election of members of the branch committee.

**1st Talk  
Barnaby Smith  
Godstone Clock & Watchmakers**

Barnaby who is the Treasurer of the South London Branch is also a member of the Kent branch of the B.H. I. He is a liveryman of the clockmaker's company, a life member of the A.H.S. and a former recipient of The Percy Dawson Award from the A.H.S. He will be giving a short talk on his recent efforts in researching information about clock & watchmakers in Godstone.

## 2nd Talk Gary Thwaites St Giles Church Clock Farnborough How Mother Nature Stopped The Clock

Gary Has been a branch member for around 8 years and a committee member for about 7 years including a spell as librarian and some time on the workshop committee. His short talk will tell how mother nature was responsible for failure of this church clock.

**The Whole evenings proceedings will also be on ZOOM (details to follow)**

## LAST MONTH'S MEETING DAVID ROONEY.

### ABOUT TIME,

### A history of Civilization in Twelve clocks.

It is always a delight to members of the SLB, when David gives us one of his lectures. This evening was no exception, many zoomers and a full house wanted to know "About Time", David's latest book.

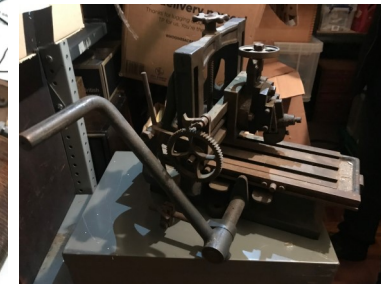
The proposition, put forward by David, was to discuss the influence time had on the history of civilisation. What roles have clocks played, in the ways we are governed, our beliefs, the way we tell stories, power and wealth, exchange knowledge, build empires and physically shape the world around us? Truly fundamental questions.

David uses the broadest definition of clocks. Any human made device with the purpose of tracking the passage of time, Sun dials, water clocks, sand clocks etc.

1). In 263BC war treasures captured from Catania in Sicily included a sundial which was mounted on a column to show Rome's military might and for all to admire. Further sun dials were soon erected around Rome to control and regulate the citizens who complained that their day was so regulated they could only eat when the clock allowed, not when they were hungry. Verona in 507AD erected an acoustic water clock which screamed out the hours and

## South London Branch Auction of The Effects of the late John Hatt

We are holding an auction of the late John Hatt's effects on Saturday 12th March at the White Hart Barn in Godstone. The auction starts at 2.30, viewing is from 12.30. We started to auction these effects in our November auction, there will be another on Saturday 21st of May. Anyone who knew John Hatt will be aware of his interests in watches, watchmaking, machinery and the odd clock, his effects reflect the quality of the man. There is a large residue of watch parts, spares and materials as well as a quantity of watchmaking lathe parts, accessories and measuring equipment, John was a regular stall holder at the Uxbridge clock and watch fair specialising in watchmakers lathes. Tool boxes and small filing drawer cabinets will be available, pocket watches, stereo microscopes and some unusual machines are to be auctioned. Also a small collection of old woodworking tools. This is a private auction, entry will be £3.00 on the door, membership of the BHI or South London Branch will be required for bidding. Tea and coffee will be available



12). The Plutonium clock, from Osaka, something like an Atmos clock with bellows that expand pulling the single hand around the dial. Each division on the scale marks the passage of a century and will take 5000 years for the hand to go full circle. This clock contains a message of peace, exhibited at the Japan world Expo in Osaka in 1970 before being buried until the year 6970 when the message may be read

After Duncan invited questions, David was presented with a well earned throat lubricant to the applause of a very grateful audience.

After reading this report you will have many questions, so if you refer to David's book, "ABOUT TIME" A History of Civilisation in Twelve Clocks, all the answers will be found in your copy.

Michael McDonnell

## Membership

If you have paid you membership for 2022 you will have received your new orange membership card. If you are one of the few That have not paid please complete the membership form and return to me with your cheque. If you have paid and not received your card please contact me and I will sort it out :-Phone 01543506195 or email electricwilliam@gmail.com

## WORKSHOP NEWS AND VACANCIES

The workshop has reopened, there has been some changes to personnel as one would expect after such a long time. This results in some spaces to be filled for the evening classes. Anyone interested in joining us and using the excellent facilities in our workshop please contact me on 01959577312 or 07917226598 The only restriction at the moment is that we require people attending to be double jabbed!

James Marten

everybody knew what they should be doing every moment of their day. By the eighth century every major city had its water clock. By the nineteenth century wherever colonisers went, clock towers were mounted high above the heads of the people. David considered these as stand ins and proxies for the Emperors and Empresses ruling over the people in the lands having been taken. Over Table Bay a cannon would declare the hour of the day. Hardly a subtle symbol of power.

Whether in Ancient Rome, Gothic Verona, Imperial China or Japan, clocks mounted high above the people were visions of order.

2). In 1206 the Al Jaziri Castle clock was an awesome automaton in the form of a house. In Islamic terms water clocks represented God's wisdom and dominion, and above the doorway were two rows of twelve smaller doors with a single crescent moon made of gold able to move along in front of them. Above them a brightly rotating disc showing the signs of the zodiac, pierced with a pattern of those constituent stars back lit by oil lamp. On the ground level were five life size automaton human figures. The moon and the sun moved across the scene at the correct pace. Al Jaziri was instructed by his master to set out his experience in a lavish book entitled "The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices" These water clocks although uncommon were something of a fixture in medieval Islamic society. The clocks represented God's wisdom, dominion, and omnipotence on earth. The divine power of Clerics and rulers who governed the Islamic world. Clocks were a reminder to their subjects of their place in the universe. Cock crow was referred to much more frequently in literature than the water clock as a symbol. Growing in significance was the idea that time could be wasted and became prevalent by the Puritans of the 16th and 17th century with the idea of a work ethic as the foundation of Pius devotion.

3). We were shown the earliest depiction, a wall fresco in Sienna painted in 1338 by Ambrosio Lorenzetti, of a sand glass held in the hand of Temperance warning us the sands of time are running out. A depiction of the dance macabre, by Hans Holbein published in 1538 showed the ever-present grinning figure of death. About twenty-five years later Peter Bruegel Senior's painting depicted death in detail and in the bottom left-hand corner can be seen an hourglass.

Today, the symbol of Extinction Rebellion is a stylised hourglass, which shows us just how effective Italian political theorists of the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century using the hourglass encouraged us to lead better lives having been steeped into our Western consciousness.

4). The World's first Stock Exchange was built in Amsterdam in 1611. The City Council by law, restricted trading to one hour per day, from 11am to noon Monday to Saturday. The clock tower above the exchange would toll a bell at the hour of noon for seven and a half minutes and any active trader caught after the chime stopped would be fined. The role of the clock was to concentrate the traders together. Crucially transactions could be accurately timed. Today, HFT (high frequency trading) accounts for over 50% of trades in the US. HFT is all about speed, computers are housed in anonymous windowless buildings where they can sequence, and date stamp every trade. EU directive MIFID2 demands the time stamp for HFT must not deviate by more than 100 microseconds.

5). The world's largest sun dial in the City of Jaipur built in 1730 for the Maharaja Sava Jai Singh II. One of a suite of monumental astronomical observatories being built across India, not only for learning but to be seen commanding over his people. The picture showed a roofed pavilion located at the top of the structure. Rulers of other nations built Observatories as an exercise of global power. Francis Bacon said, "Knowledge was Power".

6). In 1833 the Greenwich time ball was erected so seamen could set their Chronometers on departure. In 1615 Walter Raleigh said "whosoever commands the sea commands the trade, whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world and consequently the world itself". Chronometers allowed those nations to command the world, at least for a while. A time ball was also erected at the Cape of Good Hope and followed by hundreds of time signals throughout the maritime nations.

7). The hammer men of Gog and Magog striking the bells of John Bennet's shopfront clock in Cheapside attracting crowds from around. A manufacturing reformer who realised innovation was essential with labour organisation, machine production and technical education as in Switzerland, France and America. John Bennet was a founder of the BHI and disliked for his radical views on globalisation. For his museum in Michigan Henry Ford purchased John Bennet's shopfront and the Hammermen of Gog and Magog.

8). An Electric clock is on a church tower in the Czech city of Brno. Developed in the 1850's. A method by which time could travel at light speed over vast territories thereby standardising human behaviour.

9). Standardisation gives rise to dissent and sometimes we resist and sometimes we fight back. In 1913 the telescope driving clock was almost destroyed by a bomb at the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh laid by Suffragettes. Before that an anarchist tried to bomb the Royal Observatory in Greenwich.

10). In 1935 the telephone network held a competition to choose the voice for new speaking clock. The winner Ethyl Kayne and not for her voice, but her looks was chosen. Clocks are proxies or stand-ins for us and other people. Today Apple is the biggest watch maker, having given us a watch which knows the most intimate details of our lives. If you wear a watch like those of Frodsham it is like borrowing the identity of its maker. The ticks of watches are the heartbeat of the people who made them.

11). The next clock was made by Ephrem of Germany in 1972, weighing 1.3 kg measuring 10cm cube, fabulously accurate and needing very little power. This atomic clock NTS 1 launched by America in 1974 were the first atomic clocks in space for GPS navigation. Over 100 satellites are orbiting above us now, all carrying three or four clocks apiece.