

South London Branch Open Day. Saturday 23rd April 2022

at

SOPER Hall CR3 6HY 10.00 - 16.00

Less than two weeks away now!

We hope that most of the branch will turn up at some point during the day. Perhaps with husbands, wives, kids and relatives, as there is something to interest everyone, even if it's the coffee and cakes.

Did you know that we have **Bonhams, Music Box man, Turret Clocks, West Dean College, Frodshams, H.S.Walsh** and many more. There will be guided tours to our workshops and the restored Thwaites & Reed Drum Clock will be on display.

Amongst all this will be the exhibits of clocks made by the South London Branch and displays by the evening class students.

Demonstrations will take place of **Silvering, Gilding, Balance Staff Turning, Lathework with Turns, Wheel Cutting, Piercing Saw use** and many other things.

If you would like to help, please contact Ron as there are plenty of things to do. Whether skilled or not, there are jobs for all. You may be able to take over the piercing saw while the person has a break or keep the supply of coffee flowing to others. Maybe you just want to hand out leaflets or give directions to the car park? All these are important.

Phone Ron Rose 07980 175181 or email ronalderose@btinternet.com

Membership

If you have paid your 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



Est 1858

**South London Branch
British Horological Institute**

Newsletter No. 517 April 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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"The hours of folly are measured by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure." *William Blake*

Next Month's Meeting

14th April

Ian Lihou.

Clockmaking in Guernsey, Surviving the Distance Learning Course.

When Ron Rose organised courses for the South London Branch members at BHI Upton Hall, not only did we get to meet some of the best Tutors but other horologists, many of them starting out in their careers. Meeting Ian at Paul Schroders course on Platform escapements was wonderful. A young man dedicated to traveling from Guernsey to Upton Hall in the pursuit of his career humbled me.

Ian was to be the recipient of the Beresford Hutchinson prize that year awarded from the South London Branch.

Very little was exchanged but friendship and advice until a mutual customer took delivery of his latest treasure and the opportunity to visit Ian's workroom while waiting for the ferry in Guernsey took place.

Continued

Here was a great workroom of a young and enthusiastic recently qualified MBHI working as a full time Clockmaker in the Channel Island. Most of his study had been achieved using the Distance Learning course and Ian was embarking on making his first clock. He has now completed his second commission, a 4-leg gravity escapement regulator.

The South London Branch welcomes Ian, one of our newest members to have joined during the last two years as he briefly touches on the history of the island, its significant clockmakers, and some of the work that has crossed his bench over the last nine years, Warts, and all. The reality of working in isolation and as we all experience in horology, the knowledge that we are still learning, seeing something new.



Duncan Greig

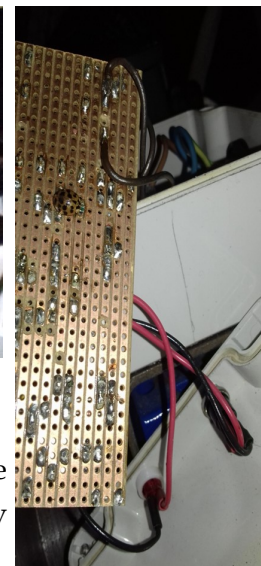
LAST MONTH'S MEETING A.G.M. Followed by two Short Talks

Our first Annual General Meeting since March 2020 was held at the White Hart Barn Godstone after moments of silence and reflection on those we have lost over the last two years, our chairman James Marten led the meeting. We have, like many branches and societies survived the Covid pandemic with a liberal helping from our Zoom presentations culminating getting back to our monthly meetings in August of 2021. A fantastic double act in September, from Ron and Robert gave us the first outing, A walk around Clerkenwell.

Learning to re-invent the meetings giving our members and guests the benefit of sharing our talks with those in the room and those joining us via Zoom has sometimes been a little tricky. We will continue to use this medium so that members who cannot or do not want to expose themselves to the risk of infection can still join us. We are also continuing to use Zoom to hold our committee meetings which does benefit seeing our far-flung friends.

was with the control circuit board.

After making checks Bill and James discovered the sabotage as having come all the way from Asia, a Harlequin Ladybird, it had crawled inside the control box to hibernate and wandered across the copper tracks damaging the components and frying itself. (Evidence available).



The audience gave enthusiastic applause for this, the first very detailed and succinct lecture from Gary which we hope will be followed by many more.

Michael McDonnell

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

John Hatt Auction

See insert for details

Gary Thwaites

St. Giles Church Clock Farnborough

How Mother Nature Stopped the Clock.

Gary had been a member of our South London Branch workshop for about ten years when Ron noted St Giles clock was not working and felt something should be done. Permission was obtained from the Church authority to rectify this anomaly, and as is Ron's way, this was considered another opportunity for further student knowledge. Gary was enlisted as Ron's apprentice and with nerves of steel ascended the heights of St Giles to see a flatbed clock by Gillet and Johnson which had been in a fire damaged stable block in Bromley and donated to the Church in 1951, 'though the donated clock was of an earlier period. The bell made by Whitechapel Bell Foundry had been date stamped 1766.

Until 2008 the clock was manually wound each day until a bequest provided the funds for Gillet and Johnson to retrofit an auto-wind system, but they had to return in 2016 to replace the Going Motor.

Gary went on to describe the hazards of accessing the clock mechanism in the tower so it would be too frightening to put details into print if you are reading this report in bed.

When the assessment of the clock was conducted, it was determined that the Going Train Auto-wind system was at fault. The red going light on the control box did not illuminate when the re-set button was pressed. Time to call for the Sparks! Bill Horan very kindly agreed to come down early on the morning of our monthly meeting, from the middle of England to check out the electrics. At the same time the church decided to replace the clock strike with a radio-controlled electrical strike system to enable strike silent (**To pacify the new arrivals from London?**) The now redundant strike silent might be used for the going unit. Bill concluded that the motor was OK and that the fault

As well as losing Peter Steward, our past chairman, we have had three committee members stand down due to ill health or other family commitments. They will continue to support us as much as they can but as our chairman, who started giving us his time in 1999, pointed out this this has put strain on the committee. This may mean we are not able to achieve as much as we would like and to the high standards as we have done in the past. If you are able to give a little of your time to the benefit of the branch, please talk to the committee members. Andrew Gayler has put himself forward to join the committee.

We are organising the branch open day at Soper hall on Saturday April 23rd where the newly restored Thwaites and Reed hanging exterior clock will be on show thanks to the endeavours of those hard-working clock-making members of the workshop. Thanks to all involved.

Our Treasurers Barnaby Smith and Trevor Keast delivered the reports on the branch and the workshop. Our branch funds have depleted approximately 10% over the last two years mainly due to the donation we have made to the Upton Hall boiler fund, and we lost money on the George Daniels Memorial Dinner due to the rising costs of our venue not being passed on. We will address this, this year.

Our income is slightly less due to the decrease in door revenue, but the workshop figures were shaken harder mainly due to having expenditure for rent and electricity costs during lockdown and half the level of income. We have made a saving on Tutors Fees. Classes and fees are showing a return to the levels we had before March of 2020. An independent auditor has been sourced.

Ron Rose pointed out were we aware when we had changed the meeting dates to the second Thursday in the month this clashed with the AHS meetings and members who wanted could not attend both. We want to change the meeting dates again and the White hart Barn is available to us on the third Thursday. Your comments would be useful. The meeting was concluded.

Barnaby Smith. Godstone Clockmakers

After the AGM, one of the speakers for the evening was none other than our treasurer Barnaby Smith. When he heard somebody talking at our meetings who lives in Godstone if he had any knowledge of clocks made in the village, Barnaby decided to research the clockmakers who have traded in Godstone over the last few hundred years. Barnaby nearly 40 years' service to Peugeot Cars is a collector of his native Dartford clocks and the clocks from Stow in the Wold. A local historian and now author on the life of the Headmaster of Dartford school, Charles Jodrell Mansford, worked the history of the school back to former headmaster, William Adison circa. 1605, whose brother was a clockmaker. Perhaps a future talk?

Following a format by many previous speakers Barnaby started to talk on the local church. Many of us are aware of the workshop being involved in the restoration of the Gillett and Johnson quarter striking three train double 3 leg gravity escapement movement that was installed in 1915. This being organised by past chairman Alan White, even the two 4'6" dials were restored.

Records from the horological Journal 1912 revealed Nicholas Fry was the first clockmaker known in Godstone circa 1692 his death in 1739. Barnaby remembered being sent details of just such a lantern clock by Nicholas Fry from a well-known clock establishment in Tonbridge which he visited in 1996.

Barnaby proceeded to catalogue the various different clocks that he has seen from salerooms and clocks owned by friends, either hooded wall clocks or longcase clocks. The second clock maker from Godstone was William Pain. There appears to be at least three clockmakers from this family in the village. William the father, William the son and another Robert. There is a document that survives reporting that William Pain rented a house in Godstone for £7.05 shillings per annum in 1760. Barnaby was indebted to Bob for allowing him to show a picture of a 30-hour oak longcase with hour and minute hands signed William Pain which is still in Godstone. Three examples of this clock maker were shown before moving on to the son William and brother Robert, where a further two examples exist. There then came details of the clocks made by Richard Walter and his family with an illustration of a watch number 110. Richard had a son James Walter born 1799 who died in 1832 aged 32 but only one example of a clock made by him has been found. Richard Walter had a second son born 1808 and died in 1882 aged 73 years. Next a clockmaker by the name of Richard Hills who was in Godstone up to 1888. An article from the Surrey Mirror remarks, Richard Hills. He took in watches to repair then did a runner pawning them before giving himself up to the police. Similarly, our next recorded horologist was Joseph Webb, travelling watchmaker, who was remanded for stealing a watch and charged with theft. The last clock/watchmaker recorded is Richard William Arthur Bridger, details found in Kelly's directory reported on his death in 1934, an advert stating Richard Bridger as well as clocks and watches he repaired umbrellas and fitted electric bells. Barnaby, who does a lot for the branch, very modestly remarked that it's amazing what information you can find about something if you take the time to put it together.

Duncan Greig.