



Est 1858

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.

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE**

**NEXT
MEETING**

**LAST MONTH'S
MEETING**

**WORKSHOP
NEWS**

**BASIC LATHE
COURSE**

**John Hatt
Auction**

Membership

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ADVERTISING
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"If time travel is possible, where are the tourists from the future?"

Stephen Hawking

Next Month's Meeting
J E Allnutt & Son Ltd. Midhurst.
Expanding the business and training Apprentices.
Geoff Allnutt MBHI.
and two of his apprentices.

The last 10 or more years we have enjoyed the company of many young horologists training at West Dean College. Unfortunately, this May, Malcolm Archer has suffered the Covid 19 virus and as a result has had to cancel our talk from the students. You are however welcome to see their presentations at the college on Saturday, 14 May.

I'm extremely grateful to **Geoff Allnutt**, for stepping in at the last minute, accompanied by two of his apprentices Jacob Russell, FBHI. And Patrick Woodward, MBHI.

continued



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 electric-william@gmail.com

Geoff, a watchmaker, started his career working alongside his father, John, when he was 14. At 16 he left Midhurst and studied horology in London for three years at Hackney Technical College passing the final grade of the British Horological Institute exams with merit in 1985. He then embarked on the famous WOSTEP (Watchmakers of Switzerland Training and Education Program) course in Neuchatel Switzerland studying under master watchmaker Antoine Simonin. Upon his return to the UK, he rejoined the family business and for the past thirty years he has successfully developed the vintage wristwatch restoration and sales side of the company. He is also one of two Programme Advisors for the Postgraduate Diploma Conservation of Clocks and Related Objects at West Dean College in West Sussex. He has already trained one apprentice to FBHI status and has also mentored a number of clock and watchmakers.

Jacob Russell. Watchmaker was the recipient of the Beresford Hutchinson prize in 2016. Geoff is delighted that Jacob Russell, his apprentice for the last 5 years has passed his British Horological Exams with Merit together with the highest mark for his portfolio; thus, becoming the youngest Fellow of the British Horological Institute in Britain.

Patrick Woodward. Watchmaker initially approached Geoff in November 2017, after reading an article about Jacob's success in the local press. Geoff saw great potential in Patrick, and he offered him a full-time apprenticeship in watchmaking in April 2018.

Patrick has recently completed his apprenticeship of 4 years and qualified to become a Member of the British Horological Institute. He has been doing some most intricate work making a jewelled locking roller for a duplex and is also studying for FBHI Status.

[Also on ZOOM details to follow](#)

Duncan Greig

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 21st May** at the White Hart Barn in Godstone. The auction starts at 2.00 PM viewing is from 12.00.

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 still a large residue of pocket and wristwatch parts, some gold items, spares and materials as well as small lathes, 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, tools, wheel cutters, pocket watches, microscope and some unusual machines are to be auctioned.

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.



sun and planet epicyclic maintaining power for this clock. Ian was keen to point out the importance of listening to your customer and producing what they want.

Ian recounted the time a customer phoned up from the island of little Sark with the tale that his "Tatty Old Kitchen Clock" has stopped working. As little Sark is rarely accessible in the winter Ian had suggested the customer leave it until Spring when he could more easily get to it. The customer having a sick bovine that needed to go to the vet decided to ship the sick cow and the clock together. The skipper was not impressed, apart from transporting a cow that was leaking out of every orifice the six-foot blanket wrapped "tatty old kitchen clock", was leaking silver fluid and turned out to be a Brockbank and Atkins mercury pendulum regulator transported fully assembled. Finally, Ian told us of the Poppo clock, an Owl clock with eyes that move with the tic of the escapement, that caught him out with the customers description. He was rewarded with one of those repair shop moments when the customer burst into tears when he delivered the completed repair.

After questions I thanked Ian with some South London Branch Lubricant. Duncan Greig

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!

Basic Lathe Course

Saturday 11th June 10AM - 2PM (to be confirmed)

Four places available.

Introduction to basic lathe principals in our workshop. Please contact Trevor Keast on 07507-142-704 to book or for further information.

LAST MONTH'S MEETING Ian Lihou clockmaking in Guernsey, Surviving the distance learning course.

One of our youngest and most recent South London branch members Ian Lihou travelled from the island of Guernsey to be with us in April. Ian was honoured to be our guest that night and was at pains to point out that being a professional horologist was one of the best jobs in the world. How he got to the position of being a horologist, was difficult. Coming from a good family and with a father who was a teacher his parents thought the key to success was education, but at the age of eight he still had a struggle to write his own name, as he pointed out to us it only has three letters in it. Not given the opportunity of special needs schooling Ian was sent away to a school founded by Elizabeth the first, where eventually he was diagnosed as profoundly dyslexic. It was here that despite not being offered help he developed his own coping strategies that he still uses today. He was fascinated by mechanical things learning to take them apart and put them back together again, sometimes repairing them. A short film that he saw when he was 14 was of a watchmaker driving a Bentley, "A man of time", This gave Ian the inspiration for what he wanted to do as a career., He wanted to make watches. This didn't go down too well with his schoolmasters, but his father arranged for him to have some work experience with an old watchmaker in St Peters Port. Unfortunately, the elderly man was of the opinion that all watches would soon be battery operated and he had no idea why somebody would want to sit down and make a watch these days. Ian's boyhood dream of entering the horological trade and learning skills from an older local craftsmen fell at the first hurdle.

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Ian was to study hard and trained as an osteopath, joining a busy practice in Guernsey, when he returned from qualifying at the European School of Osteopathic Medicine. Throughout all this, the desire to tinker with watches and clocks never left him. He joined the BHI and started reading the journal. Despite having recently married and now having a mortgage, on impulse he decided he was going to build a clock. Choosing a John Wilding design, of a dial clock, he made as a gift for his parents. This inspired him to buy the first year of the BHI distance learning course. Using his spare money and spare time from osteopathy he built up his workshop and studied for his BHI qualifications over the next four years. Being a very proud man travelling to Upton Hall to receive his qualifications.

Ian's young wife, being Swiss, heard of a group of Swiss businessmen who were aiming to commission a clock to hang where they would often meet for lunch. Ian tendered for this commission which was to be completed in 18 months. He gave up his job as an osteopath and has not looked back since. Completing a three-train quarter striking wall clock Ian had quite significantly caught the horological bug and wanted more.

He moved to speak of the island on which he was born, Guernsey, how it was formed from a lump of granite located in the middle of the English Channel and includes the islands of Herm, Sark, and Alderney. He touched on the history of the island how it was known for its high-quality knitwear which eventually failed. The island being ideally placed for a new industry of merchants trading between France and England, enabled people to buy expensive goods, such as clocks and

and bring them to the island. The 1800s and 1900s were a boon time for horticulture, but in the 1970s the effect of joining the common market and heating oil prices were to change Guernsey's future again as it became a centre for offshore finance which remains the main source of income on the island to date. Ian was not to leave out the other islands making up the Bailiwick group, telling us that Herm provided the granite for the steps of St Paul's. Although not having any cars on the smaller islands Sark has an interesting tower clock in the church which he was pleased to report is now functioning perfectly. Alderney also has its island clock although a bit unusual, the clock tower is not connected to the new church but houses a nice three train movement. Lihou island is only accessible at high tide by a causeway. This has been gifted a Smiths of Derby electrical clock at St Saviours parish church.

At a time when privateering was flourishing, Nicholas Blondel, Guernsey clockmaker, was born (1703). For his first 20 years he flourished on the family farm undertaking metal work repairs i.e., belt and buckle making until an itinerate French clockmaker crossed his path and introduced him to the world of clockmaking. Ian then went on to show, in intricate detail, many examples of Blondel's work that has crossed his bench including the clock reputed to have been made for the Dean of Guernsey, John Hemingway. Blondel was unusual in that he numbered and dated most of his early clocks.

Ian then went on to 21st century clockmaking showing us photographs of the construction of the three-train dial clock he made for Swiss clients, case by Chris Ayres and dial by Cindy Welland, with anecdotes on the construction and delivery. His latest commission is a double 4-legged gravity escapement regulator with case and pendulum by Jake Sutton. Ian designed a