



South London Branch

British Horological Institute

Newsletter No. 535 October 2023

November Meeting

November the 2nd is our **Branch Auction** so now is the time to start sorting those surplus items , Clocks, Watches, Books, Tools, and Sundry horological items. Everything is welcome.

Free advertising for branch members

The newsletter is happy to advertise free of charge to members. We have had great success in the past .

So is there a particular clock part you are looking for or perhaps a specific tool or other sundry item. Give us a try.

Contact Bill 01543506195
electricwilliam@gmail.com

www.slbbhi.co.uk

*Meetings are held on the 1st 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

Upton Hall

Workshop

Last Month's
Meeting

Starting a
business

November
Meeting

Free advertising

www.slbbhi.co.uk

"The hours of folly are measured by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure"
William Blake

NEXT MEETING

5th October 2023

Women in Horology

Su Fullwood and Geoff Allnutt FBHI

I am sure many of you have seen, or have had, examples of clocks and watches signed and made by Women. My own interest started by wanting to know more about Mary Anne Viet.

But the "Highlighting Mary" project began when Geoff asked Su to try and find how many women were listed as clockmakers or watchmakers in Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World, G. H. Baille and B. Loomes, and in various text that were already published. Taking note of how many women were working alongside horologists, or women who could not legally run businesses in their own names, but who took over the running of the business when widowed or un-married. This was the tip of the Iceberg, and they discovered two women working in West Street Midhurst where Geoff has his business.

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. This spurred Su and Geoff on to, "A shop in time", an exhibit at the Chichester Museum. Today they continue to compile a very extensive spread sheet of information. Inspiration also came from Dr Mike Flannery with his regular "My Bench View" in the horological Journal Issue No. 141 Early Female Clockmakers.

Duncan Greig

VISIT TO UPTON HALL 11th AUGUST BHI ALAN TURNER PRESENTATION

Friday 11th August was a special day for 36 members of the South London branch of the BHI. Ron Rose organised a coach to take us to Upton Hall, where we were welcomed by Viscount Alan Midleton. Beautiful clocks were ticking, bells chiming and pendulums swinging as we enjoyed a refreshing coffee after our 7.45am start from

9/ If carrying out multiple jobs for one client explain at the outset that you will be billing them monthly or at completion of each item (It's your choice)

10/ If working for large a organisation like English Heritage or The National Trust, make sure your terms of contract are clear Make sure you issue invoices in a timely manner as they often only have yearly budgets so late invoicing could cause problems.

11/ Do your paperwork weekly, make it the last thing you do on a Friday. Keep records on a spreadsheet of what you are doing this will make tax returns easier to do at the end of the year.

12/ The financial year starts on the April 1st each year. You should complete your tax return by June at the latest. This means you can relax for the rest of the year, leaving it until January will only cause you heartache and misery . Also your accountant will get very upset with you.

13/ You need to be aware of cash flow. This will take at least a year to ascertain . Keep a log of when payments come in this will tell you compared to your monthly outgoings on living expenses how you are doing. You will need to have sufficient buffer in you account to cover short income in some months. This is why it is best if your client is happy to charge monthly. This will probably not work for individual jobs. So, to clarify, one off jobs are good for short term income, having a client with multiple jobs is good for monthly payments.

14/ Finally you must do your paperwork. **GUESSTIMATION** will not work

Anon

Some further thoughts on starting your own business

You should consider the following when quoting for a repair.

1/ How long will it take

To ascertain this you will have to inspect the item. This may involve having it in your own workshop or inspecting at the client's property. If they bring it to you there will only be an inspection cost (note you must charge for travelling time) If you attend the client you have two choices.

A/ Explain your hourly charge and tell them how much the initial assessment will cost . They can then decide whether they are really interested in the repair or not. This charge, at your hourly rate will consist of the time taken to travel to and from your workshop to the client plus an estimate of your time on site, this should be a minimum of an hour.

B/ Not charge for initial assessment but include it in the final bill should you get the commission. This is a personal choice and if you take this route you need to collate the unpaid time for lost work and reinsert it into your initial costings per hour in order to recoup the loss. Your hourly rate will go up to account for this.

2/ Take photographs as you proceed so that you can demonstrate to the client what work you have carried out.

3/ If upon stripping you find the repair will be more extensive you must give the client opportunity to accept or refuse.

4/ if upon inspection the repair is not feasible tell the client.

5/ do not accept more work than you can handle.

6/ if your workbook is full you must be doing something right so give the client an accurate assessment of when you could carry out the work.

7/ Do all the work in the order that you received it, if you are awaiting materials keep the client informed. They should not be left in the dark it makes collecting your fees more difficult.

8/ You must log all the hours you work on any one object. Keep a timesheet and make sure you fill it in immediately. (if you leave it for tomorrow you will get very muddled).

Caterham and Godstone .Because of the distance involved it is all too rare for us to visit Upton Hall, but this occasion was greatly significant as a presentation was to be made to the BHI in the afternoon.

After our coffee we formed two groups. The first, followed Viscount Midleton who took us around the main hall where he described the clocks and their history, the large clock hands above the main entrance and the portrait of a sombre Lord Grimthorpe. The second group followed Alan Burtoft who took us around the watch workshop and pointed out some of the new tools and cleaning equipment now available to students.



At

Lunch time, a group went to the local pub where Alan Westgate had booked us in for an excellent lunch. Suitably sustained we returned to Upton Hall for the main purpose of our visit. In 1990 twelve members of our branch, led by Ron Rose and Peter Elliott met at Upton Hall for the National Exhibition of Time at the BHI headquarters. Over the weekend of 14-16 September, the challenge was to make a skeleton clock from a box of brass and steel. The completed clock was raffled at the Exhibition and presented to the winner.

In 1990 a further group of 12 was led by Ron Rose and Arnold Heijmer. Not having our own workshop at that time, the team met once a month for two years at Upton Hall to each make a clock of their own design. The results being much acclaimed were exhibited around the country. Seeing the need for a further Myford lathe in their workshop the South London Branch purchased a new lathe from Myford which was donated to Upton Hall. Funds were received from members and the horological trade to meet the cost.



A stalwart member of the branch was Alan Turner, who in 1998 was one of twelve members who joined Ron Rose and James Marten with the object of each making a clock to celebrate the Millenium. Each member contributed £400.00 to purchase the required equipment and paid a monthly fee to cover the rent rates and electricity of a local shop. After meeting monthly for two years, the completed clocks were greatly admired at the BHI Millenium show. Alan Turner, an accomplished horologist, set himself the

Transported to Keith's business premises, a workshop near a 14th century castle. The Cumbria Clock Co. is based in a small village, Dacre in the Lake district, where parts were refurbished, cleaned to the highest standard. The strike fly Arbor pinion was worn to excess, so a new one had to be cast and machined. In the 1976 tragic failure, replacement bronze bevel wheels for the flies were fitted but had been mis-machined. After due consultation replacements were machined to the correct specification and fitted. Much of the repair work consisted of rebushing and the polishing of pivots and pinions. All the brightwork had to be cleaned by degreasing, aqua blasting, and dry ice blasting, as used by the V & A. The parts having been cleaned, were protected by painting in the original colours and then lacquering. The bright steel work was cleaned and received several coats of micro-crystalline wax, applied hot, to penetrate the crevices.

The clock is fitted with Lord Grimthorpe's double three-legged gravity escapement, found to be very accurate. His Lordship not being one to take out patents, gave makers of large clocks free title to duplicate his design. Keith explained to us that this was not the first design of gravity escapement that Lord Grimthorpe, (Edmund Beckett Denison), had envisaged, but he had a single legged version with remontoire.

Keith gave us an insight to the amount of effort in which the clock required to be wound, so early 20th century an electrical rewind mechanism was installed. The design and operation of this will be the subject of the Dingwall Beloe lecture. Sadly, this clashes with our Auction.

Throughout the project, photographic records were kept of all stages during conservation, resulting in excess of 3000 images being saved. Also, a full set of engineering drawings were compiled, so at any time a particular part can be replicated.

The audience asked many questions which were expertly answered by Keith. Duncan thanked Keith for this outstanding lecture, which was enthusiastically applauded by the gathering, then presented our speaker with some very heavy oil.

Michael McDonnell.

BERESFORD HUTCHINSON MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Conservation of the Great Clock of Westminster, Big Ben.

Keith Scobie-Youngs, FBHI.ACR.

Over forty members enjoyed refreshments and a glass of wine before our chairman, Trevor Keast, introduced Keith to an expectant audience for what was to be an exceptional lecture.

The Great Clock is probably the most prestigious and famous in the world, weighing in at about 5 tonnes and the size of a truck. If you add the four sets of hands for the 22½ ft dials, motion work, bell hammers and weights we have 11.5 tonnes of history, not including the 13 ½ tonne great bell, all of which is located at the top of the 113ft. Elizabeth Tower.

The repair, restoration and conservation of the Elizabeth Tower was a mammoth task to be undertaken by the most skilled in heritage crafts people, who were to fit a service lift, improve energy efficiency, reduce environmental impact and install the latest fire safety system.

Keith emphasised the superb standard of workmanship in the 1850's when describing the ends of the minute arbor, and hour pipe. These were machined on a taper, and the hands had corresponding collets. Fortunately, a puller had been made in anticipation that the process of removing the hands could be difficult. After removing the hands, the next task was to remove the minute arbors, 80kg and 2.5 meters in length, then manoeuvre them around the scaffolding into the lift and down to ground level. It was required that one dial should always show the time. To achieve this, two pairs of hands of the same appearance to the originals and powerful synchronous electric motors were successfully utilised to meet this necessity. An electric tolling unit had to be made to maintain continuity of striking the bell for Remembrance Day and welcoming in the new year.

Painstaking removal of the 15ft pendulum, 240kg, which was described as awkward, the dismantling of the clock commenced. Over three days, all of the parts of the great clock, with the exception of the flat bed frame, were lowered down the weight shaft. Secrecy was important, where all was

task of making a Congreve clock. This showpiece clock was the main purpose of our visit to Upton Hall.



We all met in the library to hear Mrs. Ann Turner tell us of her and Alan's journey together with their three sons and of taking Mike Barber under his wing and their retirement to Whitstable. Ann then presented the Congreve clock to the British Horological Institute which was accepted by Izzy on the Institute's behalf. Ann received the members' enthusiastic ovation.

Now for the journey home!

Michael McDonnell.

WORKSHOP UPDATE

As most of our members will be aware, we do have our very own well equipped workshop located in Caterham. Three evening classes take place during the week and a clock making weekend is held once a month.

As you can imagine there is a considerable amount of behind the scenes work involved in keeping things running smoothly. This summer has been no exception and some additions, maintenance and updating work has been carried out.



At our last meeting, and before the speaker was introduced, our chairman spoke about this and expressed his thanks to those responsible for carrying out the works, namely; **Alan White, Alan Westgate, Mick Welch and Gary Thwaites.**

Alan, Alan and Mick between them constructed some new bench tops, giving extra work space, an enlarged area of shelving above all work benches and an area that is effectively a fume cabinet with air extraction and space for ultrasonic tanks underneath. The Branch Library, which is co-located within the workshop has had a makeover with extra storage space added.

With the threat of Power Sharing last winter emergency lighting has been installed in each of the three rooms, so that the occupants are not left totally in the dark should the power supply fail.

Recently the branch has been fortunate in being bequeathed a considerable number of books from various sources to add to the ever increasing list of titles that are held. So in conjunction with the works outlined above, **Gary Thwaites**, our librarian, has been busy carrying out a stock take and incorporating the new titles onto the shelves and disposing of duplicate titles. Doing this has meant that there is more storage space and the digital catalogue is up to date



All of the books are available for members to borrow or study. Please feel free to pop in when one of the classes are being held. All we ask is that you sign for the books you borrow and return them promptly.