



**South London Branch  
British Horological Institute**

*Newsletter No. 542 May 2024*

**South London Branch  
OPEN DAY**

SLBBHI. will be holding an open day on the 5th of October 2024  
full details to follow.

*Meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of each month  
at 7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.*

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**NEXT MEETING**

**LAST  
MONTH'S  
MEETING**

**ATTENTION**

**SOPER HALL  
MAP**

**WANTED**

**2024  
MEMBERSHIP**

**OPEN DAY**

**Free  
advertising for  
Slbbhi members**

**Please note we have a venue change,  
due to the Elections.**

**This Month's Meeting will be at  
Soper Hall Community Centre,  
Harestone Valley Road, Caterham,  
CR3 6HY.**

**West Dean Students.**

**Annual Presentations from four students.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**

**Doors open 19:30 Starting 20.15 hours.**

The South London Branch is delighted to welcome back  
Malcolm Archer, Tutor from West Dean.

He will give us a short introduction on how he has been  
coping with teaching horology to the students over the last  
year and then individually introduce one of four student  
presentations.

**FREE ADVERTISING FOR BRANCH MEMBERS.**

Is there something you require, an obscure tool or clock/  
watch part. We can try and help we have had great  
success in the past. Just contact Bill: -  
01543506195 or electricwilliam@gmail.com

[www.slbbhi.co.uk](http://www.slbbhi.co.uk)

## LAST MONTH'S MEETING

### The Antikythera Mechanism

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

Trevor, our chairman introduced us to Stephen Phillips whose enthusiasm for this Greek device, made around 70BC was soon passed on to a full Hall of members.

The second part of this story began in 1900 when Symiote sponge divers discovered a 2000-year-old Greek shipwreck containing fine bronze, marble sculpture and glass. In 1902 fragments of a bronze mechanism were separated from other objects removed from the wreck and stored at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Scientific examinations have since been carried out to understand the purpose and function of this device. One of the more recent was reported in 2012 ISAW papers by Tony Freeth and Alexander Jones, which Stephen took as the basis for his reproduction.

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## WANTED

One of our members asks :-

Does anyone have old copies of Model Engineer magazine? I need a copy of the final part VII of "Making a Striking Lantern Clock" from **5 December 1975**. Please contact Geoff. Murray at :- [geoffrey34066@gmail.com](mailto:geoffrey34066@gmail.com)

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Branch Membership subscriptions are nearly complete with only 7 memberships not received so far. Membership cards have been sent out to members who have paid (check the envelope if you didn't see it). If you received a membership form with this news letter it means I have not received your contribution yet. **If you have paid but not received your card please contact me.**

01543506195 or [electricwilliam@gmail.com](mailto:electricwilliam@gmail.com)

**Please note this is the final reminder.**

## Soper Hall location



Soper Hall - Location and Parking  
(CR3 6HY)

- Parking OK any time
- Parking OK 6pm - 8:30am

Continued

Stephen claims not to be an expert in Astronomy but described planetary movement, solar and Lunar eclipses and retrograde motion in relation to this device, the Antikythera mechanism. It was 2015 in his workshop at home that Stephen made his first orrery and then went on to make further clocks and orreries, the most recent being stepper motor driven, with the Anikythera reproduction being made 1n 2016.

Eighty-two parts of the Antikythera mechanism were found in a wooden box. Images from X ray CT scans were done in 2005. The physical structure was studied and then related to a mathematical model and tooth count and resulted in a model being constructed.

The front plate was divided into three sections, the central dial system displaying planetary outputs from the mechanism on a Zodiac dial and an outer rotatable Calendar dial. Above and below the dials were covered in inscriptions, which formed a user-guide to the mechanism. On the right-hand side was an input which may have been turned by a handle.

Continued

Removal of the back cover revealed two major dial systems in the form of spirals, divided into lunar months with subsidiary dials inside them.

So intricate is the Antikythera Mechanism that one is well advised to examine the detail on YouTube. The "Clickspring" website is making a faithful reproduction using the tooling available to the Greeks at that time.

Stephen and the audience found it astonishing that in 70BC, both in understanding cycles, planetary movement and eclipse predictions and in physically making a portable device that can model so much. One wonders how much more advanced would we be if this knowledge was not lost to us in the intervening period.

Our understanding of the Antikythera Mechanism is still growing through study, but Stephen tells us the beautiful model he made is now out of date and suggests he does not intend making another. With the enthusiasm and knowledge he explained this device, plus future developments, one might hope he will slip into his workshop just one more time.

Continued

Duncan thanked Stephen for a stimulating and detailed lecture on this amazing device made some two thousand years ago and completely lost for nineteen hundred of them. Our audience was immensely impressed with the lecture and also the display of orreries and the Antikythera Mechanism made by Stephen for us to examine. After many questions we showed our gratitude as only the SLB can, with resounding applause and the presentation of a lubricant.

Michael McDonnell.

**ATTENTION**  
**CHANGE OF VENUE FOR THIS MONTH ONLY.**  
**MEETING TO BE HELD AT.**  
**SOPER HALL CATERHAM**  
**CR3 6HY**

**See map on next page**