



Est 1858

# South London Branch British Horological Institute

Newsletter No. 548 7th November 2024

Branch No 25. Founded 1978

*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.*

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NEXT  
MEETING

September  
MEETING

BRANCH  
OPEN DAY

Duncan Greig

Wanted

EFHC

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

“Daylight saving time, a monstrosity in timekeeping.”  
Harry S Truman

## Next Month's Meeting

7th November

Gordon Hoare

### ‘The Idiosyncrasies of working on Chronometers’.

Some of you attending the South London branch open day, on Saturday the 5th of October, may have stopped to talk to Gordon with his terrific display of fine chronometers in the Garland Hall of Soper Hall. Gordon has been fascinated with horology for over 60 years, being a longstanding member of the Sussex branch of the BHI and attends the AHS meetings at West Dean.

He has been lucky to have the support of expert chronometer craftsmen. When starting on chronometers he was given support by Robin Thatcher and later when suffering Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, cleaning one of his chronometer balances, the jewels fell out when the shellac failed Roger Stephenson came to the rescue

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and expertly tutored him putting the jewels back into their rightful places. Gordon wishes to share some of the idiosyncrasies and problems he has experienced while working on and maintaining his collection of chronometers and will bring along some examples for us to admire.

Gordon is 7th Dan Kyoshi, Black belt, Senior Instructor of the Horsham DKW Wadoryu Karate club, which he helped to set up. He is also interested in electrical horology and inexpensive watches.

Duncan Greig.

## **REPORT ON SEPTEMBER MEETING**

### **THE BERESFORD HUTCHINSON MEMORIAL LECTURE.**

#### **DARLAH THOMAS**

#### **The Condliff Family, Four Generations of Clockmakers.**

#### **Their lives and Business**

Darlah travelled from Chester to present our September Lecture which has become our annual tribute to Beresford Hutchinson. Although Darlah and her husband Steve did not meet Beresford she paid tribute to him by reminding us he was a founding member of the Turret clock group. It was this group that first introduced them to horology. Darlah started her talk on the Condliff family using an extensive family tree, with particular regard to James, 1790/1861. Martin, who died in 1804, was the father of James, Thomas and Joseph, Joseph also became a clockmaker but died at the age of 32, and the third son Thomas, ran a pub named "The Clock Inn". Joseph had three sons John, Thomas and James.

At that time, it was common practice throughout the trade to buy in from specialist makers, a supply of clock parts. Among them was George Ainsworth (wheel cutters and pinion makers), Richard

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Roberts (wheel cutter and multi-talented engineer), Peter Stubbs (tools and clock parts) and Thomas Leyland (fine chronometers and clock parts). There were considerable records in Liverpool of the family but these were unfortunately lost or destroyed during or after the blitz.

The Census of 1851 showed James employed 8 men and the later Census of 1861 showed he employed 6 men and 5 boys. When James died in 1861 his will detailed the contents of his workshop and the Auctioneer's catalogue recorded the items to be sold. The three brothers John, Thomas and James continued the business until the partnership was dissolved seventeen months later.

Darlah then showed us many photographs of impressive Turret clocks attributed to James, as follows: St. Helen's, Market Hall 1852. Made for the cost of £28.00, which worked for 172 years but now is in storage at the local museum. Made with lateral tooth escapement. St. Editha Church Eaton, Staffs. No attribution 3 train with sloping sides in private ownership. Further research pending. Castle Park, Frodsham. Sloping frame style, lateral tooth escapement and made for William Stubbs, son of Keith, toolmaker of Warrington.

St. John Knotty Ash. 1836. Cumbria Clocks repaired and added auto-wind, it has a very unusual strike control.

St. Marys, now (All Saints') Edge Hill. L'pool. 1819 made by James. Frame styles resemble William Lee of Newton Willow Skeleton Clocks, Series1.

The late Derek Roberts said of James Condliff "there have seldom been equals and never bettered by any maker"

(18) A 3 train No.818 signed Rob Roskell, the retailer,

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displaying a Serpent. This they believe to be JC's first skeleton clock. The serpents varied in style and complexity, some with different scaling engraved on them. It is worth noting, in the same pictures balance wheels varied as some were made of steel, some brass, round and straight edged.

Clock (19) JC stamp on it, retailed by R Hess who died in 1819. They were Silver Smiths and retailers located in prestigious Church Street. Rosetta his widower, then ran the business after the death of Esra, trading from 1820/1840.

Series 1/2

No 21 Signed JC. Single dial with barrels in the base.

No. 22 William Scoresby signed JC. No serpent. Strikes the hour, skeletonised barrels at the base. Balance mounted at the top of the frame.

No.25. A quarter chiming on bells skeleton clock exhibited at the International Exhibition in London 1862 was awarded a medal to James and Thomas Condliff. The following day this was rescinded, and the medal awarded to Thomas Cole.

No 26 Series 31855 simpler in design, a JC signed clock, large great wheel with Gridiron pendulum, dead beat anchor escapement, and passing strike. Right hand picture of a clock also by J C, Joseph Mayer's name on the front, a goldsmith and jeweller, who donated his whole collection to Liverpool which formed the basis of the Museum.

Darlah described the differences in regulators designed by JC and Thos Leyland. Duncan and Jonathan Betts at Belmont dismantled 2 regulators made by Leyland and signed by Vulliamy .On examination there appeared to be more Vulliamy work than was anticipated.

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Darla described further regulators, musical clocks with 19 bells, double sided dual time clocks and much more. This lecture shows us the immense detail that has gone into research of this subject, and our members expressed their great appreciation.

Duncan, on behalf our members, thanked Darla for an excellent lecture to much applause.

Michael McDonnell.

## **SLBBHI Open Day 2024**

It was at 0630 on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October when a few hardy souls descended upon the Soper Hall building in Caterham to begin preparations for this year's SLBBHI Open Day. The upper car park was prepared for receiving visitors and the Hog Roast van, while advertising banners were attached to the exterior of the building. Tables and chairs were placed around the three halls for the exhibitors to put on their displays. Information signs were posted around the walls describing the exhibits, with others indicating the location of refreshments, toilets etc. Most important of all several enthusiastic people commandeered the kitchen, providing all present throughout the day with limitless cake and refreshments.

The exhibitors started arriving from 0830 turning Soper hall into a hive of activity. A selection of these included H S Walsh, The Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, the AHS, Bonhams auction house, Epping Forest BHI, the Music Box Association, the Hand Engravers Association, Charles Frodsham Ltd and the East Surrey Museum. A selection of the exhibits provided by SLBBHI members demonstrated hand piercing, hand turns, 3D Printing, clock case construction, dial painting and restoration,

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chronometers, the Thwaites & Reed Clock and wheel cutting. Proceedings were called to a halt around 0930 when all were gathered into the Memorial Hall to witness Ron Rose present Duncan Greig with a certificate awarding him with Honorary Fellowship of the BHI. Duncan was congratulated by those present with a very long and well deserved round of applause. The doors were opened to the public at 1000 after which followed a steady stream of approximately three hundred visitors throughout the day. Many people eagerly signed up to attend the three thirty minute lectures given by Ron Rose in 'The Lavender Room' and to participate in the four planned tours of the SLBBHI Workshop. Branch membership was promoted on the dedicated SLBBHI stand with a good number of people showing a keen interest by requesting and taking membership forms away with them. The doors closed on proceedings at 1600, with branch members and exhibitors clearing the halls in a timely fashion.

The Open Day was well received by those who attended, with a great interest shown by both the young and old in the practical and interactive demonstrations. The conclusion of the day was followed up with positive feedback including, 'very happy to do the same next time', 'it was a good day', 'the 6 of our members who came really enjoyed the show', 'looking forward to the next one', 'thanks for organising such a fascinating event' and 'it was amazing that you were able to get all those experts together in the same place at the same time'.

The SLBBHI Committee would like to thank again all those who contributed towards making this year's event a success.

Gary Thwaites



At the branch Open Day on Saturday 5th October, before the public were admitted, a presentation was made at Soper Hall. Duncan Greig was presented with a framed certificate to upgrade his Membership to Honorary Fellowship of the British Horological Institute. The award was a total surprise for Duncan, which had been kept secret and instigated by Alistair Lewis.

## **FREE ADVERTISING FOR BRANCH MEMBERS**

One of our members asked me to place this ad.

### **WANTED**

I am looking for a working second hand watch cleaning machine, an old National would do providing it is in good working order. Or any other which is not expensive

Contact David Roberts

Mobile No: 07811028056

Home Phone No: 01322 224657

### **ALSO WANTED**

I am currently studying the first year of the BHI distance learning course and I have just completed the D4 course, servicing and correcting faults in a quartz movement. I have purchased a number of quartz movements to practice on prior to the examination in May 25. I have all of the tools required for servicing but the test kits are extremely expensive and it is not financially viable for me to buy one of these units at the moment.

Does anyone have a quartz test kit that I could loan on a temp basis so that it would allow me to measure Consumption rates, seconds/day, EOL etc to check my servicing is accurate?

I am more than willing to pay for the period of the loan

Regards Derek Herbert 07799 572527

## **EFHC**

Epping Forest Horological Center have published their program for next year. I enclose a copy. email members will receive an attachment.

If you wish to place an advert in our newsletter , contact Bill :- 01543 506195 or [electricwilliam@gmail.com](mailto:electricwilliam@gmail.com)

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