



South London Branch British Horological Institute

Newsletter No. 556 JULY 2025

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 8DT at 7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.*

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FOR SALE

FREE TO A
GOOD HOME

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Time and memory are true artists; they remould reality nearer to the heart's desire. John Dewey

NEXT MEETING

3rd July 2025.

Fjodor van den Broek.

'French clock cases and the paintings that inspired them'.

The South London Branch is delighted to welcome Fjodor from the Royal Collection Trust, Windsor Castle where he is one of the King's full time horological conservators.

"I started my journey in clockmaking in 2011 when I was accepted for the clock and watchmaking course at the 'Vakschool Schoonhoven' in The Netherlands from which I graduated in 2015, 2 months later I moved to England for the Graduate course in clock conservation at West Dean College, followed by the Post-Graduate course the year after.

After graduating from West Dean I moved back to the Netherlands and worked for various clockmakers and 6 months for the Dutch 'ZaanseTijd' clockmuseum on the 'ZaanseSchans' before setting up my own workshop. It wasn't long, however, until I saw the vacancy for Horological Conservator at the Royal Collection Trust, after which I was hired and moved back to England late 2019 to start my position in Windsor Castle".

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The talk will be focusing on (French) clock cases that were inspired by specific paintings, the history of these paintings and how they are represented in 3-dimensional bronze sculptures. The main focus will be clocks in the Royal Collection, but he might add one or two others.

In the March sale rooms there was a French clock with the dramatic depiction of the fall of Phaeton recreated in bronze which sold for £68,070 at Auctioneers Kastern in Hanover. With a striking movement. The dial signed Le Roy Hger du Roi.

Not the clock you see in branch auctions, but we can hope.

**Heads up.
Next Special Branch Auction Saturday
the 23rd of August.**

GODSTONE SINKHOLE

A large sinkhole has appeared near the venue, but the White Hart Barn is open for business. Diversions are signposted,

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

West Dean College Students Presentation

The evening of Thursday 6th June saw a number of Horological students from West Dean College and their tutor Malcolm Archer make the pilgrimage from the south coast to the White Hart Barn Godstone, to give an annual presentation to the eagerly awaiting members of the South London Branch of the BHI. Following light refreshments our Chairman Trevor Keast called the assembled members to their seats and introduced Malcolm Archer to the meeting.

Malcolm provided an insight into the International diversity of the college, whose Horological students are currently from the UK, Netherlands, America, Japan, Taiwan, Sweden and Germany. Pictures showed the students carrying out various tasks using both hand tools and machines, on a wide range of projects including work on longcase clocks, spring driven clocks, marine chronometers and pocket watches. Certain students have also been instructed on the processes involved in the grinding and setting of jewels under the tutelage of Seth Kennedy. Malcolm explained that the students are taught sketching, technical drawing, design drawing and are encouraged to find innovative solutions to problems whilst maintaining the integrity of the project they are working on. Students are encouraged to carry out in depth research and to understand the historical context of their work. Malcolm continued proceedings by introducing each student individually and inviting them to give their presentation.

Becky Brett

Becky informed those present that she joined West Dean as a first year student after taking the BHI Technician qualification. Becky explained that her main project is to make a simple wall clock; many pictures were used to show how the movement, pendulum, weights and hands were constructed. A detailed description was given of making the pendulum bob, cutting the blanks, forming them in a press, turning the blanks in the lathe for concentricity, soft soldering both halves together before finally filling the bob with pewter. Other tasks such as the cutting and crossing out of wheels, cutting pinions including spares in the anticipation of breakages, accurate filing to shape of the plates, the manufacture of lathe tools and fly cutters to form the personalized Ottoman style pillars were all explained and supported with pictures. Becky also informed those present how she had attended an engraving workshop, learnt engraving skills and then went on to produce an engraving of her sister's house.

Mike Dixon

Mike is a third year student and currently has two main projects to work on, both of which have made full use of his technical drawing skills. The first project includes the design and manufacture of missing parts from a Petite Sonnerie carriage clock. Mike explained how drawings and models were produced for a deadbeat escapement and hour rack. He used an innovative method using dividers to work out the radius of the rack and the relationship between the rack tooth form/gathering pallet. Mike showed comprehensive pictures

explaining the processes involved in manufacturing the replacement rack. Silver steel was used to make a fly cutter to form the correct tooth profile; a triangular shaped mandrel was devised to support the rack blank and how Rodico was 'sandwiched' between the mandrel and lathe headstock to reduce vibration during tooth cutting. Mike's main interest is in English watchmaking, his second project involved producing drawings and models for Geneva stop-work that was missing from an English spring pocket watch. Mike referred to a copy of George Daniel's book 'Watchmaking' and found the detail lacking in some of the processes.

Kye Leaver

Kye a second year student gave his talk based on a collaborative project between West Dean and The Cumbria Clock Company, featuring the service and repair of the Winchester Cathedral Clock, the clock made in 1777 is a quarter ting-tang, hour strike turret clock. Kye used pictorial evidence in his description of accessing the clock and bells in the tower; the unknown foundry marks on the frames and the 'Aynsworth Thwaites of Clerkenwell' setting dial. Kye found the Winchester clock shared similarities with the St Paul's clock, London and the St Giles clock, Edinburgh, both being made by Langley Bradley of London (b.1663 d.1790). Similarities included; the setting dial five minute markers, centre wheel crossings, side train bars and the low to high gear ratio of the manual winding mechanism. During dismantling it was noted that the wooden barrels and great wheels were probably repurposed from older clocks, also the quarter and hour strike pinwheels were of a different design. The dial and hands were

were removed by steeplejacks, stripped, primed, repainted blue and finished with gilded detail to the hands and numerals. Kyle described in detail the repairs undertaken, historical repairs discovered, reassembly of the clock; lubrication of lead off rods, motion work, hammer linkages and bars. Kye concluded by showing those present pictures of several plaques discovered, each denoting historical restorations and the retirement dates of three of the previous clock winders.

Penny

Penny is a first year student who has an interest in clocks and watches but did not previously possess any engineering or Horological experience as she was formerly a journalist and editor in the USA. Penny displayed pictures to the meeting of her parent's mantle clock; a pocket watch passed down through her father's family and a wristwatch given as a present by her parents. With the increasing difficulty in finding a local clock or watch repairer Penny and her husband decided to learn more themselves and subsequently travelled from the USA and attended West Dean to achieve their aim. Penny intimated the first things to learn were the differences between the languages and then having to learn to speak 'Clock' as she commenced her project to make a striking clock. Penny eloquently described how the students were taught to make their own tools such as file cleaners, scribes and fly cutters and how these tools were then used in the making of clock components. Penny explained the different skills learnt in making rope pulleys; great, intermediate, scape, wheels and pinions. This was followed by great relief and a sense of achievement when the wheels and pinions meshed correctly. Penny concluded her presentation by listing the remaining parts to be made and the fact that she is looking for a work placement.

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Jocelyn

Jocelyn who previously completed her Masters in Metal Conservation at West Dean College is currently a second year Horological student; Jocelyn gave the meeting an insight into a four week placement in the Speelklok Museum, Utrecht, Holland, a museum dedicated to musical clocks, organ clocks and automata. Jocelyn described and showed videos of a working mechanical organ clock; organ pipe clock, musical string 'Harp' clock and a 'Singing Birdcage' clock. The conservation project given to her at the museum was to conserve four of the 'Singing Birdcage' clocks, which she approached nervously due to concerns over removing the strong mainsprings. Jocelyn explained the correct cleaning practices used in conservation, the items being cleaned without removing the surface patina and the importance of keeping friction to a minimum to reduce power loss. Missing parts had to be manufactured and bellows repaired after drawings and templates were made, condition and treatment reports were completed for each project. Also four organ clocks with differing mechanisms were given to her as the basis for a research project which culminated in a research report. Using her love of musical clocks as inspiration, Jocelyn is going to attempt to build an organ clock in her third Horological year at West Dean; making the musical train, musical barrel, key-frame, wind chest, organ pipes and bellows.

Malcolm Archer concluded the presentations by thanking the students for their input, hard work and an interesting, varied year of projects.

Duncan Greig fielded questions from the floor before giving Malcolm a bottle of 'Clock Oil' and each student a token of thanks, those present concurred with a hearty round of applause.

Gary Thwaites

MAY MEETING

The Biography of a Black Forest

Organ Clock

Richard Constable

Richard, from the Midlands, came to talk to us about the biography of a Black Forest organ clock, himself a descendant of Black Forest clock makers, regaled us with the story of how he was invited to visit a family five years ago where a remarkable organ clock had surfaced at a rectory in North Yorkshire. The owners were in a quandary, due to deaths within the family, of where it should go. A work colleague of Richards had told him about the clock just before the pandemic. March 2020 it was undecided what would happen to the object as, not a small, but quite a broad Longcase standing 2.4 meters height it needs a large room to show off its grandeur. One of the most magnificent things about it was the fact that it had survived along with six interchangeable cylinders giving the clock a vocabulary of 48 tunes, unfortunately not all the tunes are known yet. That said the other remarkable thing about the clock is that it had been in the same family for over 200 years. During the lockdown Richard was able to research the family history five generations back to when they were Maltsters in Swansea.

Initially a new owner for this artefact was being sought, inquiries made with various museums but now the family have decided to keep it. The clock requires restoration and is currently with a leading Cheshire restorer, Tommy Jobson. Considering the pipes were in three carrier bags I think he will have his work cut out. There are no hands and no signatures

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on the dial, which is in very good condition, but the scene in the arch has been identified as Lydian King Croesus, renowned for his wealth, he is melting down gold to offer at the temple of Apollo. The four quadrants of the dial depict roses, (marriage), harvest, (fertility), wine, (richness) and a flaming torch, (love). The separate 30-hour wooden frame clock movement was made by the clockmaker Isidor Dorer of Furtwangen, and his name stamp is on the front of the frame. The clock was purchased from Liverpool in the 1830's as a wedding gift for Elizabeth Andrews by the wealthy Maltsters family in Swansea, when she married ships pilot John Walker. Richard gave an account of how competitive and dangerous this profession was. When John Walker died in 1856 the clock relocated with the family back to Liverpool where it remained for a hundred years before moving again with the family to the Yorkshire dales.



DUNCAN GREIG

For sale Myford ML7B lathe 240v £650

The lathe is in full working order on a metal stand with drip tray and jacking blocks fitted with a 3phase motor running from an inverter (giving speed control).

Comes with a 3 jaw and a 4 jaw chuck plus a Jacobs tailstock chuck and a screw cutting gearbox.

Lots of other accessories including face plates and catch plates, 4 way tool post, solid and revolving centers, morse taper sleeves, stop attachment, oil gun, sawing attachment, vertical slide, hand book, and cutting tools.

For more information contact Norvin 07922813998 or norvin@astoolhire.co.uk





FREE TO A GOOD HOME

One of our members has eight years of BHI Journals, He would like them to go to a new BHI member (his words) they are free but would need to be collected from Godstone. If you are interested see me (BILL) at the next meeting and I will put you in touch.

Heads up.

**Next Special Branch Auction Saturday the
23rd of August.**

FREE ADVERTISING FOR BRANCH MEMBERS

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

www.slbbhi.co.uk