



## RIP MICHAEL McDONNELL

We are very sorry to have to inform you that Michael McDonnell, a Branch Committee member, our auctioneer and all round decent chap, died on 30th June following a series of events that started after our June 5th meeting.

He was admitted to St George's Hospital Tooting that evening and, following assessment and one operation, was transferred to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. We understand he survived two further operations but sadly died a few days later having not regained consciousness.

Coincidentally I was also in St George's at the same time and we were in regular communication with each other.

Michael's funeral will be held on Tuesday 5th August 2025 at St. Michael's Church, 25A Woodfield Lane, Ashted, KT21 2BQ at 12.30 hrs, followed by burial at Dorking Cemetery, Reigate Road, Dorking, RH4 1QF at 14.00. Members are welcome to attend either or both of these services. The family have requested no flowers but a charity donation instead to Smile Train, <https://www.smiletrain.org.uk/about-us> would be most gratefully received. Michael was a supporter of this charity which provides safe and quality cleft care for children worldwide.

Mick Welch

*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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MEETING**

**MEETING  
REPORT**

**SATURDAY  
AUCTION**

**LATHE  
FOR SALE**

**RIP  
MICHAEL  
McDONNELL**

*"If you spend too much time thinking about a thing, you'll never get it done."  
Bruce Lee*

**NEXT MEETING  
7th AUGUST 2025.  
DAVID ROONEY  
THE BIG HOP**

For our August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting we welcome back fellow member of the South London Branch, David Rooney, who has a new book release. When I asked him if he would come and tell us about it, he was a little hesitant at first as it is not a horological subject. "There has to be navigation there somewhere" I told myself.

Over the years we have enjoyed many lectures from David's repertoire like "Sir John Bennet" his impact on Horology, Clocks in Urban Infrastructure, The Greenwich Bomb Outrage and his previous books, "Ruth Belville" The Greenwich Time Lady, "About Time" A history of civilization in twelve clocks. With a little prompting and reassurance on my part he has agreed to share with us his latest work.

## **THE BIG HOP.**

David Rooney is a writer and curator; he was formerly curator of time keeping at the Royal Observatory Greenwich and Keeper of Technology and Engineering at the Science Museum. His latest work which is a true story of the first flight across the Atlantic and the ordinary heroes who risked their lives in pursuit of progress, has been enjoying some very good reviews from the Times, Telegraph, Observer, Daily Mail and The Wall Street Journal to name a few. So why not join us, before you fly off in this the holiday month to another dynamic presentation from David Rooney.

Duncan Greig

**Heads up.  
Next Special Branch Auction Saturday  
the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August.**

## **GODSTONE SINKHOLE**

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

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## **FREE ADVERTISING FOR BRANCH MEMBERS**

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)

favourites says the time indication is so well hidden that it is not noticed by many visitors who are astonished when he goes to wind the movement up. Chronos is on the left with an hourglass in his left hand a scythe in his right hand the tip of this is the pointer for the indication of time. This is on a globe with two rotating dials in the middle of the clock standing on a rouge marble pedestal. Study, representing Learning, (Knowledge) to the right has her arm outstretched trying to stop him or hold him back. There is one small hole in the front of the marble rouge base which is the only indication this movement has been replaced by B L Vulliamy. Bachas made a presentation of South London Branch clock oil to Fjodor.

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 pictures see last month's newsletter.

For more information contact :-

Norvin 07922813998 or [norvin@astoolhire.co.uk](mailto:norvin@astoolhire.co.uk)

## LAST MONTH'S MEETING

**Fjodor van den Broek.**

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

Trevor Keast opened the June meeting with an announcement that the South London Branch dinner will be on Monday 23rd March 2026. See Allen Westgate for details and to obtain a menu sheet these will be available in October. Trevor also mentioned several tickets available for the Kent show which we attended on the 4th 5th and 6th of July in the Detling Hill show-ground near Maidstone.

Our June speaker is one of three permanent clock conservators that has the privileged duty to look after the King's horological collection. Fjodor Van Den Broek has been working for the Royal collections Trust <https://rct.uk> at Windsor Castle for about five and a half years, the trust is the largest private art collection in the world more than 1.5 million objects made up of 7,000 paintings, with 150,000 works on paper and 700,000 works of art. Including some 1400 clocks.

His talk French Clock cases and the paintings that inspired them had its premier at the South London Branch.

Fjodor concentrated his presentation on four paintings and four clocks. The clocks were collected by George the IV who loved French Horology mainly as Art Objects. These were based on the French Neo-Classical style. The inspiration of this style comes from Greek and Roman mythology.

The first of these inspirational paintings was by the Artist Jaques Louis David. The Oath of Horatii, (painted 1784), depicting the scene where three brothers swear an oath to their father to defend Rome against their rivals the Curiatii. This painting not only depicts patriotism and sacrifice but became a powerful

political statement during the time of the French revolution. Imagine if you were able to reproduce this in a sculpture and take it home to your own Palace, what great importance this would give to your mantelpiece. The clock cases were produced, sculpted in wood and terracotta. A wax negative being made and a plaster cast made so that multiple castings could be produced. After casting in bronze (usually brass), finishing and gilding would be undertaken. These processes not always were easy, and could be to the detriment, to the health of the Artisan. Fjodor ran through some of these processes and was able to enlighten us to who the Master bronze casters and ormalu makers were, like Pierre-Phillippe Thomire who were responsible for these great works. Fjodor also gave a breakdown of what the cost of these processes might be. So, although the clock may have the name of an important clock-maker on the dial approximately 10% would have been for the design, 20% would have been the casting costs and 30% for the chiseller responsible for finishing the castings, 30% for gilding and perhaps the enamel dial. Which in his opinion would leave only 10% to procure the movement.

George the IV's clock was upgraded by Benjamine Louis Vulliamy with his movement No 668 in 1809 as he considered the French movement to be both useless and good for nothing. Fjodor went into the description of the clock case and how it portrayed the Oath of Horatii, he elaborates on the meaning behind the painting and the portal of the women in the picture particularly Camilla.

The intervention of the Sabine Women (painted 1799). The second clock case was inspired by another of the paintings of Jacques Louis David showing the Abduction of the Sabine women. The painting depicts Romulus wife Hersilia the daughter of Titus Tatius leader of the Sabines rushing between her husband and her father and placing herself with her babies between them. Both men are portrayed in a state of battle,

(undress), only shield and sword covering their nudity. This impropriety of Titus and Romulus was thought to be too risky, so on the clock case there is a removable cloak to cover the modesty of Hersilia's husband Romulus. The clock was made in the early 1800s six versions of the case were made and described as perfectly chiselled. The case has four retractable handles to assist in the lifting and carrying of the piece, but Fjodor was playing it safe when moving this piece with a colleague and not trusting these as this was a heavy clock. The clock was purchased June 1812 for Carlton House by George IV the original movement is unknown but is again by B L Vulliamy. No.677 with half dead beat escapment and was placed in this case in 1819.

The third painting discussed, again by the Artist Jacques-Louis David was Leonidas at Thermopylae (painted 1814), This depicts the Spartans led by Leonidas after the battle of Thermopylae. The Greeks 300 men were outflanked by the Persians, 7,000 men. Leonidas is looking to the heavens for inspiration before the battle seated with his sword unsheathed, his cape and shield around him. Despite being outnumbered the Spartans held their ground for three days with extraordinary bravery and tactical skill. This became a symbol of courage and resistance against tyranny. The clock depicts Leonidas sitting on a rock. A Greek Spartan with gold helmet and shield.

The fourth painting by Francois-Guillaume Menageot "Learning Resisting the Passage of Time".

The only image I could find for my report was from an etching engraved by Avril after Menageot depicting the Study, "Knowledge" holding onto Chronos trying to hold him back. Chronos with hourglass in one hand and his scythe in the other thrown over his left shoulder is fleeing as quickly as he can. A cupid is trying to stop Chronos from leaving and is kneeling on learned papers. A celestial sphere, a square and the Rod of Asclepius symbol are all depicted. The clock one of Fjodor's