



**South London Branch
British Horological Institute**

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

**Next Month's Meeting will be at
Soper Hall,
Harestone Valley Road,
Caterham, CR3 6HY
11TH JULY 2024.
7:30 PM FOR AN 8 O'CLOCK START.**

www.slbbhi.co.uk



**South London Branch
British Horological Institute**

Newsletter No. 544 July 2024

**Due to the General Election.
Our meeting will be one week later
and at a different venue**

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**NEXT
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June Meeting

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SLBBHI VISIT

MEMBERSHIP
FEES

Free
advertising for
Slbbhi members

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Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened but go on in fortune or misfortune at their own private pace, like a clock during a thunderstorm.
Robert Louis Stevenson

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**Douglas Bateman BSc FBHI
'Timekeeping: A hobby of a Lifetime'.**

Doug has been a horologist for over 50 years, his first interest was precision horology which grew and grew into an extensive career. He has an extremely active scientific mind and an understanding of mathematics that led to him contributing to the 2nd edition of A J Rawlings book The Science of Clocks and Watches.

Continued

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I first encountered him around 1978 when he handed over one of his radio check rate machines to Martin Burgess, creator of the Harrison clocks A and B after a Science Museum lecture. This was to my mind the infancy of the GPS clocks that we take for granted today. Douglas not only provided Martin with a state-of-the-art time base on which to test his Harrison masterpieces, but he also became involved in the 1990s with The Greenwich Time Ball when Jonathan Betts asked if it was possible for the Rugby radio time signal to control the raising and lowering of the ball. Doug is not only proficient with the making of a precision mechanical clock, i.e. temperature compensation and barometric pressure compensation, but also with electronics that are sometimes used to provide impulses and digital recording of time. He also understands the quality (Q) factor of a pendulum and he will bring along several Bob shapes to illustrate how a pendulum interacts with the air that surrounds it giving it a better Q. He was a lifelong friend of Philp Woodward and would have had many a

discussion with Bob Holmstrom the long-term editor of the Horological Science Newsletter who recently passed away. Doug has a parallel interest in trig points and the history of Ordnance Survey. He was also involved with measuring Big Ben in the 70s when the fly shaft sheared, he has written many an article on horology including "The Trouble with John Harrison" He is an inaugural member of the British Sundial Society, a Fellow of the British Horological Institute and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers.

Duncan Greig



A note from your Committee Membership Fees

As long term members of the SLBBHI will recognise, we have endeavoured to keep membership costs as low as possible over the years. We have also managed to maintain the same number of monthly meetings, lectures, auctions, open days and other events that we put on from time to time. This is mainly due to the dedicated voluntary work that so many of our members perform to make our branch what it is. Membership of the branch also gives people access to our monthly newsletter.

This year the committee has decided to **keep the membership fee the same** at fifteen pounds per annum however we will need to charge an extra fifteen pounds per year to those individual members that require a paper copy of the newsletter sent via Royal Mail to their home address. For a number of years now the SLBBHI has been absorbing the costs of postage. The cost of a 1st Class Stamp has now reached one pound thirty five pence and this can no longer be maintained without having a detrimental effect on our finances.

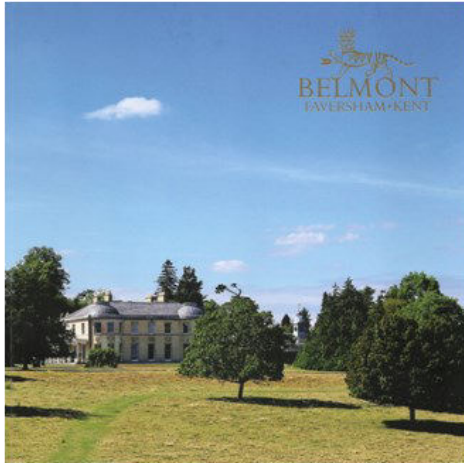
Nothing will change for now, however when members renew their membership at the end of this year they will be given the newsletter choice of "electronic copy" or "mailed copy". For those that choose a mailed copy the new fifteen pounds additional charge will be implemented. For everyone else membership fees will remain the same as last year.

Trevor Keast (Chairman)

South London Branch Visit to Belmont

The Lord Harris Collection

Friday 12th July 2024



I am pleased to announce that we have secured a Private Viewing of the Lord Harris collection of over 300 clocks and watches. The tour will be guided by Jonathan Betts and Duncan Greig, and we have to restrict numbers to 25 on a first come first served basis

Arrival at 10:30 – Tour 11:00 – Buffet Lunch 13:00.

Tea/coffee/biscuits on arrival

The cost will be £30.00 per head

To book a place please contact Duncan by email

djpgreig@btinternet.com

Text or phone 07767 303 289

Belmont House is located near Faversham Kent –Post Code: ME13 0HH

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

6th June 2024.

Barnaby Smith

'The Clock and Watchmakers of Stow - on - the - Wold'.

ENGRAVED FLEURS MAKE ARCHER CLOCKS INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE

Dials on clocks made by the Archer family who lived and worked in the Gloucestershire town of Stow-on-the-Wold in the 18th Century and later were, between about 1705 to 1740 characterised by a unique style of fleurs de lis engraved to mark the halfway point between each hour.

The markers make the clocks so recognisable, committee

member Barnaby Smith told members of the South London Branch, that simply seeing one in a shop window as he drove past with his wife prompted him to stop and try to buy it.

The Archer family, Mr Smith said, lived and worked in Stow-on-the-Wold for more than a

century, and while they were not the only clock and watch-makers in the town, they were the longest-lasting.



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His interest in Stow and the Archer family stemmed from his purchase some years ago of a Lantern clock made by Walter Archer, Mr Smith said.

“You may wonder why Stow-on-the-Wold? Was Stow a centre for clockmaking? No it wasn't. It was like almost every town in England in that it had clockmakers and watchmakers from the 17th century, onwards, making and selling clocks. so my talk is basically about the history of clockmaking in any provincial town in England,” he went on.

It was following a suggestion by his wife Gillian that he decided he would specialise in Archer family clocks.

Since then he had recorded more than 240 Archer clocks, of which about 200 were genuine, the others comprising clocks made up from orphaned chapter rings or dials.

Stow-on-the-Wold became a home for the Archer family because it was, at the time an important local centre for commerce and communications, he said.

The family originated in Moreton-in-Marsh, about four-and-a-half miles north of Stow, and started as blacksmiths, as did many clockmaker families, Mr Smith said.

Members of the family – shown variously on documents from the period as Orchard, Archard, Archar, and Archer – worked and lived in Stow from 1699 until 1824, a period covering three generation and at least seven clockmakers.

The family's founder was Thomas, a blacksmith, who was born in 1641 and died in 1721.

Like many clockmakers' families, Thomas was wealthy – he owned two houses in Moreton, two cow pastures or commons, ran the town's George inn, and had two seats in the parish church.

Workshop News

BASIC LATHE COURSE

The workshop would like to conduct another of our popular Basic Lathe courses. If anyone is interested in attending on a Saturday in the coming weeks or months please contact Trevor Keast on 07507-142-704

Workshop Milling Machine Courses

The workshop are offering an introductory course in the use of the Milling machine.

This will cover safety rules and basic use of the machine.

The mill is locked and can only be used with the tutors permission so unless you have completed this course you will not be allowed to use it.

You should be aware that it is a dangerous piece of kit and should be used with care and knowledge.

The dates are:

Saturday 6th July 2024 - 10.00am to 11.30am, 12.00pm to 13.30pm

Saturday 13th July 2024 - 10.00am to 11.30am, 12.00pm to 13.30pm

Maximum of three attendees to each session.

Cost - 20 pounds per person

Please contact Trevor Keast on 07507-142-704 to book

Some time between 1815-1820 the younger Walter moved to Birmingham and there was no trace of John, leaving William as the last Archer clockmaker in Stow.

The family's house in the town's marketplace was advertised as being for rent and available for immediate occupation in the Oxford Journal on February 21, 1824.

Although there were other clockmakers in Stow during the Archers' time there, Mr Smith said, he suspected that for some the competition from the family was just too strong.

The first, James Smith, was known to have been in the town in 1719, and was only known to have produced one watch, a 30-hour clock and an eight-day clock.

Another was George Pain Junior, whom he believed might eventually have taken over the Archer business.

Next came William Brookes, a watch and clockmaker who was also keeper of the Talbot Inn, who was followed by his son, George.

Other makers included Alfred Crannage, who was in Stow from 1867-1892, and Heironimus Schreiber, from the Black Forest, who worked in Stow from 1867-1892. He was one of the many German clockmakers who moved to Britain in the 19TH century, settling in towns across the land.

:: Mr Smith is the author of a book entitled "Clockmakers & Watchmakers of Stow-on-the-Wold", copies of which were available from him, price £20, at the meeting.

:: Pictures by kind courtesy of Gillian Quinney.

Mike Dodd

"Inns during the 17TH and 18TH centuries were, with the church, the centre of most towns' activities - where most people met to socialise," Mr Smith said.

"They were where the lord of the manor held his annual meetings to collect rents, where Coroner's courts were held, where properties were advertised, and where much trade was done. They were also, I believe, where many clocks would be sold."

Two of Thomas Archer's sons - Walter and Charles- were clockmakers, and moved to Stow to live and work. Walter, the senior partner of the pair and best-known clockmaker from the town, was there by 1699.

Mr Smith said he had separated clocks made by the family into three generations, for convenience, as change from one generation's clocks to those of another would have been gradual, with new generations first working with their parents before taking over the business.

Mr Smith said he knew of 16 eight-day clocks signed Walter Archer - and their dials came in three main styles.

Early day clocks in the first style, each dating from 1700 to 1710, were signed "Walter Archer Stow on ye Wold", a period when "Y" was a common abbreviation for "the". They also had early cross half hour markers, ringed winding holes surrounded by 12 smaller ring marks, small cross half quarter hour markers, and smaller than normal winding barrels.

In the next style of dial used by Walter, the 12 small rings stamped round the ringed winding holes were gone.

These clocks were signed "Walter Archer Stow-on-the-Wold" but the engraved name is larger and the "Stow-on-the-Wold" with "the" in full had been moved outside the minute band with the half quarter hour markers.

continued

The half quarter hour markers were now a shaded lozenge.

The third style – shown in a clock dated 1711 – had curved sided diamonds as the half quarter hour markers, a rack strike, and larger winding barrels.

There was, however, an exception – this eight-day clock (see below) signed “Walter Archer Stow on the Would”, and thought to date from between 1720-1730, had no half quarter hour markers and different engraving around the calendar, and was the only known example which was not in one of the three main styles.

On Lantern clocks, Mr Smith said he knew of two unusual clocks in this style, both signed “Walter Archer”, and dating to about 1700.

Other, more normal Lantern clocks – one signed on the fret, “Waltar Archar” and the other with the signature “Walter Archer” on the chapter ring – had the Tic Tac escapements which Walter favoured.

Walter also produced many hoop and spike clocks – a style of clock made all over the country but most popular in Oxfordshire

and Gloucestershire, Mr Smith said, adding: “It is suggested that many were sold as the first stage of owning a clock – the customer could own the clock and hang it from the wall, and later a case could be bought and the clock hung from the case’s backboard.”

Mr Smith said he believed that once Walter’s brother Charles



Archer bought the freehold of a house in Stow which was probably the house the family had previously rented.

Only two eight-day clocks were known from this period, one thought to date from about 1740-1750, and the other probably from 1760-1765, said Mr Smith, adding that he believed that fewer eight-day clocks were being made at this time because of an economic decline in and around Stow.

Only one hoop and spike clock from this period was known – it had a central engraving similar to that found on later first generation examples.

Many single-handed Archer longcases from about the early 1740s had nine-inch dials, and movements plates of iron, both intended to save money as brass was expensive. In other economies, the movements were smaller than previously, and cases were made of pine rather than oak.

In 1750 or thereabouts, movements reverted to brass and the dials expanded to 10 or 11 inches – but to save brass the movements were skeletonised – a highly unusual practice, used more by the Archers than any other maker.

From the 1750s the family only produced two handed clocks.

In about 1760 Archer clocks saw drastic changes in the engravings on the centres of dials, with no two clocks carrying the same design.

The third generation of the family, Walter, John and William, three of John Archer’s sons, operated from about 1775 – when the clocks dials changed to white – until 1824.

Mr Smith said there was evidence that the family’s earlier white dial clocks were fitted with birdcage movements, which he presumed they were making.

But production soon moved to plated movements which were likely to have been bought in.