

Bytown Times

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NEXT MEETING

WHEN:

Sunday, September 28, 2008

Course begins at 11:00 AM

Meeting begins at 1:30 PM

WHERE:

Qualicum & Graham Park
Community Centre

25 Esquimalt Ave., Nepean

MEETING AGENDA:

- Gary Fox will give a talk discussing his latest research on the Canadian Horological Institute
- Please bring your treasures for Show and Tell
- Mart Tables

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Character Watches

During the May 2008 meeting, chapter member JP Tourigny gave a talk regarding his collection of Character watches, touching on the history of these watches, their features, and sharing pictures and samples from his ample collection.

Character watches usually depict comic/animated characters (such as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, etc.), but



some, especially when used for advertising purposes, will portray images of politicians, company logos, sports teams, movies, snacks, etc. Most often, all the images are contained to the dial of the watch, but often (in the case of wristwatches) the band, and even the case include the character images.

Continued on page 3

September Workshop: The Floating Balance (with double helical hairspring)

Beginning at 11 AM, and running until the club meeting begins in the early afternoon on Sunday, September 28th, Dan Hudon will be giving a workshop on the floating balance, at the Qualicum & Graham Park Community Centre. The course outline will be as follows:

- Learn how to properly remove the floating balance from the movement.
- Learn how to test, adjust and regulate the floating balance.

- Diagnose potential problems such as: the freedom of the balance to bounce, the position of the balance, out of beat, bent wire, bent frame, hairspring problems

- Cleaning the floating balance
- Regulating the floating balance

Interested parties are encouraged to bring a floating balance or a movement with floating balance. A small screwdriver and a pair of tweezers will come in handy.

Information provided by Dan Hudon

Time for a Lucky Find

In May of this year, in Dunfermline, Scotland, a man received the surprise of a lifetime when, having brought his watch to a local jeweller to have the strap changed, he was informed that the watch in question was worth over £50,000 (approx. \$94,000 CND).

Less than 1000 units of this rare Rolex SBS Submariner were made for the Royal Navy commandos of the British Special Boat Service in the 1970's. The watch is a self-winding military diver's wristwatch, which can withstand dives as deep as 660ft (200m).

The man had wanted to replace the nylon-style strap with a bracelet-styled strap, which would have required drilling out the fixed pins. Fortunately the jeweller recognized the watch and

it's inherent value, and did not replace the strap. Had he replaced the strap, the value of the watch (which, other than the hands being slightly corroded from diving, was in fantastic condition) would have plummeted to between £3000 (approx. \$5600 CND) and £4000 (approx. \$7500 CND).

The man was given the watch by his uncle who had served in the Merchant Navy, and had purchased the watch for less than £100 (approx. \$190 CND) at a naval auction. The man has since sold the watch to a private collector for £55,000 (approx. \$103,000 CND).

Information for this article provided by Bill Pullen



Russel Needham looks proud as he and his 'hog clock' won our Tacky Clock contest at the May 2008 meeting!

From the Diary of James Lees-Milne

September 3rd, 1977

Joan Hewitt staying here last weekend watched me winding up the grandfather clock in the kitchen. She told me how during the last war Aunt Dorothy had a visit from some evacuee youths from Glasgow. One of them said to Aunt Dorothy, 'I want to go to the toilet.' So she said, 'Go down the passage and you will find it the first door on the right.' Within a flash the youth was back, saying, 'The door's too small. I couldn't get through it' — referring to the door of this clock. Mercifully he didn't pee through it.

James Lees-Milne, English author, 1908-98.

Lees-Milne, James (diarist), Taylor, Alan and Irene (editors). The Assassin's Cloak: an anthology of the world's greatest diarists. Canongate Books: Edinburgh, 2000.

Update on Training Activities

Introduction to Clock Repair

This course is currently running at the Nepean Creative Arts Centre, Unit 7, on Saturdays from 8:30 AM to 3:30 AM. The course began September 6th, and will run through October 18th, though no classes will be held on September 20th or October 11th. As usual, the course is being run by Dan Hudon.

Course info provided by Dan Hudon

Wine & Cheese Party: looking for a host

In only a couple of short months, it will be time for our next Annual Wine & Cheese party, which is traditionally held each November. We're still looking for a host for the party. If you are interested in opening your home to club members and their spouses, and having the opportunity to show your collection to the club, please contact either Wally Clemens at 613-832-3085, or Erin Fox at 613-820-7871. Thanks.



Character Watches (cont'd)

Continued from page 1

Character watches were largely geared towards children, being rather inexpensive (quality not being a selling point of these watches), but after WWII, highly jewelled and even gold-cased watches were being made, attracting more adults.

Prior to 1933, watches and clocks promoting World's Fairs, politicians, and products were common. In 1933, The Waterbury Company (who had purchased the Ingersoll Watch Company some years earlier) had a large supply of World War pin level movements, with which they thought to make affordable watches. To make these

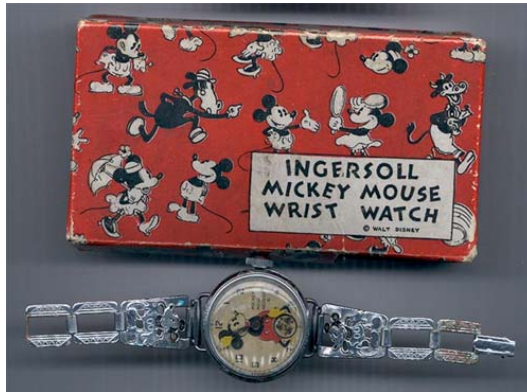
watches a little different, they added a picture of Mickey Mouse, and introduced them at the Chicago World's Fair that same year. The watches were a wild success, selling almost one million units that year, 11,000 of which were sold in one day at New York's Macys department store! With this success, more watches featuring other characters were produced.

Since then, character watches have continued to be made, of various styles and values—anything from inexpensive plastic McDonald's character watches, to gold cased Disney watches worth hundreds of dollars.

Information for this article provided by JP Tourigny



Above: Mickey Mouse display case



Above: 1933 Mickey Mouse Watch and box



Above: 1949 Babe Ruth watch



Above: 1976 'The Fonz' watch (from TV's "Happy Days")



Above: 1930 Guinness Beer watch



Above: 1948 Gene Autry watch

Important Reminder: Queensway closure

Just a reminder that, if travelling east on the Queensway, the Bayshore exit onto Richmond Road is closed through October. Instead, exit the Queensway at the Pinecrest exit, travel south to Baseline Road, proceed west on Baseline, then turn right on Beaumaris Drive, which leads to the Qualicum and Graham Park Community Centre.

Meet Our Members!

Introducing: Bill Pullen

I was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on February 19, 1928. My childhood was quite a happy combination of receptive storytelling and many shades of music provided in various forms. It was, however, somewhat altered on September 2, 1939, one day prior to the beginning of World War II, when me, my siblings, my mother and many thousands of children and their mothers all over the UK were evacuated from major cities to more rural areas or villages due to the perceived threat of imminent mass air-raid attacks. We had been temporarily billeted in a small village hotel for one night when a radio broadcast at 11 AM Sunday, September 3, told the country that war had been declared.

During my youth, it was traditional that family house clocks were purposely set fast by unbelievable amounts which, depending on the owner's anxiety factor, varied from 10 to 75 minutes! The idea behind this mystifying habit presumably was to preclude lateness for any event. As a result, I developed an early faculty for mentally calculating the real time of day. No doubt this ability was the basis for my later affinity towards small mechanisms.

On leaving school, I had a number of jobs in quick succession, among which was a stint in a small engineering workshop where I was exposed to the existence of, and allowed to operate, several machine

tools. At age 16 I was given the opportunity to become either a gunsmith, requiring an apprenticeship of 7 years, or a watchmaker graduating in 5!

I chose the latter and never had any regrets, for the prestigious silverware designer/owner of Brook and Son,



Bill (left), Rita (Bill's wife — middle), and Maynard (Chapter 111 Immediate Past President — right) enjoying drink and a good laugh at the November 2007 Chapter Wine and Cheese party

87 George Street, Edinburgh, had a jewellery manufacturing facility and a clock and watch repair workshop on the premises as well as a retail jewellery shop in the classic style. The company had the added cachet of having been bestowed a royal appointment warrant.

My apprenticeship was interrupted in April 1946 by mandatory military service. I chose the British Army and, for me, they chose the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. Over two years of my Army time were spent in the British Zone of Occupation, Germany, dedicated principally to the destruction by demolition of unexploded Allied bombs and still-viable German munitions.

I returned to civilian life in Sep-

tember 1948 and resumed my apprenticeship until completion in 1951. On September 3, 1952, I was awarded BHI Craft Member Certificate No.4835.

During the foregoing period, I was fortunate to have as a friend a young man employed as an apprentice by James Ritchie and Son, an eminent Edinburgh enterprise which actually designed and manufactured tower and public clocks and exported them worldwide. This

friend's function was to wind many of the Ritchie clock installations in several city churches and public buildings. We would meet somewhere and visit his assigned locations together without my boss' knowledge, then he and I would go on some of my company's clock-winding contracts such as the head offices of three Scottish Banks on Saint Andrew's Square. But his duties were infinitely more interesting and encompassed many of Edinburgh's horological gems. For example, the Floral Clock in West Princes Street Gardens,

the tower clock inside the crown-shaped steeple of Saint Giles Cathedral (which, to this day, has no dial but strikes the hours), the clock of Saint Stephen's Church, Frederick Street (which boasts a pendulum almost 60 feet long beating in 4.1/10th seconds). We also wound the associated mechanism which raised an 8 foot diameter hollow copper time-ball vertically to the top of it's mast, ready to drop at 1 PM local time. The device was, and probably still is, located atop the 'Nelson's Telescope Eyepiece' portion of Nelson's Column, Calton Hill, which at that period provided a visual time indicator to ships in the Port of Leith and the Firth of Forth, synchronized with the audible signal of the One O'clock Gun at Edin-

burgh Castle, both of which were controlled by the local Blackford Hill observatory.

Unfortunately, Brook and Son decided to close, so I was forced to walk, but not too far, for I was immediately hired by a very respectable retail jeweller, Wilson and Sharp, 139 Princes Street, where I remained as workshop foreman until Rita and I decided to head for Canada. So, by ship and rail we arrived in Montreal on January 9, 1954.

After only 2 weeks searching for employment in Montreal, I was hired as a watchmaker by the owner of a medium-sized jewellery shop, who paid his staff by cheque on Saturdays at 1 PM, when the banks were already closed. (Bank openings with extended hours came many years later.) This arrangement lasted barely 3 months for obvious reasons, but I was fortunate to obtain a similar position with Mappin and Son, 1000 St. Catherine Street West, Montreal, which I enjoyed immensely, but after 3 years decided to move into a wider field, and joined Dominion Engineering Works, Lachine, whose staff peaked at 2800,



Erin (Chapter Secretary — left), and Bill (right) working hard at the September 2007 meeting

and comprised many machine and assembly shops as well as 3 foundries. I began as a 'B' class inspector, and laid off 20 years later as Superintendent, Quality Control, responsible for all shop inspection operations and non-destructive testing on a 3-shift basis. This unexpected termination of my services was caused by a downturn in the economy and the cancellation of several major rolling mill contracts.

My next stop was Atomic Energy of Canada, where much time was spent as a liaison engineering specialist with AECL engineers in several

AECL's nuclear generating facility under construction. Furthermore, my responsibilities included assessments and examination of AECL components sub-contracted to Argentinian manufacturers. Not long after returning to Canada, AECL was obliged to lay off 600 staff in all categories, including me, due to lack of new projects, and so history again repeated itself.

My ultimate employment was with the Standards Council of Canada in Ottawa. This continued for 10 years, until I retired in 1993. During my tenure, a total of 1550 National Standards of Canada were approved, resulting from consensus standards prepared and submitted by Canada's 5 accredited Standards Writing Organisations.

One of my most interesting, unique, and prestigious assignments was performed by virtue of Brook and Son's 'By Appointment' status mentioned earlier. This occurred in 1949, when, with the Company's senior jeweller as guide and mentor, we reported to the Crown Room, Edinburgh Castle, where the Scottish Crown Jewels are publicly displayed. It had been decided that these national treasures had to be spruced up, so our task was to apply our expertise to Scotland's Honours, and would be the only ones permitted to handle these precious, irreplaceable, historic artefacts. There was a great deal of red tape and tight security attached to this incursion into the very heart of the ancient castle, which, as a fortress, dates from the late 9th century. Besides the senior man and myself, other luminaries, functionaries, and dignitaries were present to witness our activities, as were the author of a magazine article on the subject and a photographer to record and support his writing.

Submitted by Bill Pullen



Ben (left) and Bill (right) enjoying themselves at the July 2007 Chapter picnic

different locations, and weekly air travel was frequently necessary to resolve field design changes at various sites including Point Lepreau, NB. In 1978, I was posted to AECL's corporate office in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where I liaised for 3 months with the local staff and the field engineering staff at Cordoba,

NAWCC Chapter III, 2008 Annual Picnic

With the rain this summer, we had to cancel the picnic once, and then resort to “flipping a coin” to determine whether it was a “go-ahead” the following Sunday. Some 45 members and guests had a great time, even though there was a light drizzle as we packed up. Once again, we owe a great thank you to Teresa Dokken and Judy Graham who are the real organizers behind this annual event (not to forget their good-looking and talented “better-halves” Maynard and Peter). Ben and Charlie for their photo excellence, and all those who worked hard.... who, because of my bad memory, I can't remember all their names.

Note provided by Wally Clemens



May 2008 Meeting Highlights

The May 2008 meeting began with a workshop on dealing with loop end mainsprings. The workshop was a success: it was attended by many chapter members.

JP Tourigny gave his talk about his collection of character watches, and various members shared their latest finds during our show and tell period. The meeting wrapped up with Dan Hudon sharing some of the tips he learned from the NAWCC F200 suitcase course held in Ottawa that same month.



Above: Iain MacDonald shared the latest dial he's been refurbishing. The brass dial is from a Dutch that is hundreds of years old. The dial has moveable ships, mermaids, etc., but the mechanism that runs their movement was lost long ago.



Above and right: Ben Roberts brought his aviation clock display to the meeting to share with the chapter members, while they perused the mart tables.



Above (both pictures): Peter Kushnir shared his silver "onion watch" with the chapter. The watch was made between 1650 & 1720 by Joseph Windmills in London. It has a tortoise shell case, and a still functioning fusee movement.



Left: Dan Hudon, Grant Perry, and Pat Bigras hard at work during the NAWCC F200 suitcase course

Right: F200 instructors Dave Gorrell (left), and Lehr Dircks (right) pose with Scott Whiteside (middle).



Club Information

This club acts as a meeting place for antique clock and watch enthusiasts. Members are interested in a wide array of topics: some collect, some do research, some do repairs.

Formal club meetings take place five times each year, on the fourth Sunday of every second month, with a break in the summer. Meetings are held in January, March, May, September, and November. Doors open at 1:00 PM.

Club members also enjoy two annual social events: a Wine and Cheese party each November, and a Picnic BBQ each July.

Courses on clock and watch repair are held throughout the year.

The Bytown Times is published five times each year.

Annual Dues for club membership is \$16. Club members should also have memberships to the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors (NAWCC). NAWCC dues are U.S. \$55.

Club Officers & Contacts

President: Wally Clemens
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Woodlawn, ON, K0A 3M0
(613) 832-3085

Vice President: Patrick Bigras

Treasurer: Grant Perry

Auditor: Georges Royer

Librarian: Wally Clemens

**Secretary &
Bytown Times Editor:** Erin Fox

Membership Chair: Veronica West

Immediate Past President: Maynard Dokken

Program & Social Director: Tim Bryans

Education & Workshop Chairman: Dan Hudon



Secretary's Corner

It's hard to believe it's already been four months since our last meeting! Unfortunately I had to miss the annual picnic this July, as I had some family responsibilities to which I needed to attend (not to mention a sore toe—an iron fell on my foot!).

I would like to thank Charlie Beddoe, Bill Pullen, Ben Roberts, Maynard Dokken, Dan Hudon, JP Tourigny, and Wally Clemens for their help with this issue of the Bytown Times. This newsletter would not be what it is without their contributions of pictures, articles, and other content. Thanks so much.

As usual, I would like to welcome members to submit their own articles for the newsletter. Topics can be anything: a review of your collection with pictures, a summary of some research you've gathered, 'how-to' or instructional information, museums and other horological sites you've visited, etc. Articles and pictures can be emailed to me at:

erinfoxnawcc111@gmail.com

Please don't forget to visit our website as well:

www.ottawaclocksandwatches.ca

Notes from the President's Desk

What a rainy summer! I can only expect we have spent more time at auctions and indoors, and will have many new treasures to bring to the show and tell session.

As a reminder, we did approve a members' link section on our website at the last meeting. This new feature will allow members a number of options. Members will be able to list their name (or business name, etc.) which, if selected, will link to contact information (telephone, email, mail box, etc.) or to their own website. This is an optional feature — members who wish to be listed will have to contact me. This section will carry the same disclaimer as the NAWCC's National site: "This site contains links to other Internet sites. These links are not endorsements of any products or services in such sites, and no information in such site has been endorsed or approved by this site." If you have questions or concerns about this section, please feel free to contact me.

Don't forget your Show and Tell items.

Wally