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Subject: Horological Happenings from the NAWCC
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EARTHQUAKE STOPS THE TICKING IN NEW ZEALAND



A broken Christchurch Tower Clock stopped at 4:35 PM - The moment the earthquake struck.

The earthquakes that struck New Zealand last February have certainly played havoc with clocks in the vicinity. Along with the damage caused to the contents of homes by the earthquakes, local clock shops were under huge pressure to repair countless clocks damaged by the seismic event.

Some clocks were destroyed, while others kept stopping or ran only intermittently. Broken glass and cases had wood and glass fragments scattered all through the mechanisms.

One local clock shop reported that it has 12 clocks and three barometers from Christchurch to be repaired, most due to earthquake damage. Another repair shop has 60 damaged tallcase clocks awaiting service.

NAWCC APPRAISAL COURSES

The NAWCC now offers both

Watch and Clock Appraisal Courses.

Dear NAWCC Member,

This month we discuss the [restoration of](#) several historical clocks and watches, witness a sunken treasure, admire a jeweled wonder, and learn how horology [found](#) its niche in the shadowy world of film noir.

Enjoy!



Photo: Whig.com

ORIGINS OF THE "BECKY THATCHER CLOCK" EXPLORED DURING RESTORATION

Restoration efforts on a 200-year-old clock at the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum may shed light on the clock's origins.

The seven-foot tallcase clock, dated to the late eighteenth century, was originally donated to the museum by a niece of Laura Hawkins Frazer, Mark Twain's childhood sweetheart and the inspiration for "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" heroine Becky Thatcher.

The clock was recently transported to the Ralls County Clock Co. for service and restoration. It is hoped fresh evidence will emerge about the clock's origin and provenance.

It has been estimated that the English-made clock was originally manufactured in the 1780s or 1790s. The case is English walnut, the movement is original to the case, and the hand-painted dial includes a calendar hand and moon dial complications used by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farmers as an aid for timing planting and harvesting crops.

The clock will be restored to working order over two to six months. It is hoped that as word of the restoration spreads, horological experts may help determine its origins. In any case, the clock stands on its own as a remarkable piece of history.

Clock Course Dates:
 May 4-9
Watch Course Dates:
 May 11-16
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**HITCHCOCK CLOCK
 TO BE REPAIRED**



Santa Rosa clock tower appeared in Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt*

The 104-year-old clock on the gold-domed cupola of the Empire Building, one of the best recognized landmarks in Santa Rosa, CA, has recently been restarted. The clock hadn't functioned since the former building superintendent retired last summer. In 1998 a tower clock conservationist performed some needed renovations, but he discovered some teeth were missing from a key gear on the bell mechanism. The estimated cost to replicate and replace the century-old gear was extremely high, so for 14 years the bell hasn't been used.



The clocktower as it appeared in Hitchcock's film

The cupola clock is working again and the building's new owners plan to keep the clock operational. They are setting aside funds to get the bell-works repaired,

Leap Second Beats the Clock



Photo: Thinkstock

Clock stops short on temporal debate

Time almost changed forever earlier this month when the International Telecommunications Union (the United Nations agency responsible for timekeeping standards) nearly voted to abolish the "leap" second-the extra second added to the time signal once every few years.

Delegates from 100 countries recently gathered in Geneva to debate the issue. The leap second, first introduced in 1972, is used to keep astronomical time (based on the rotation of the Earth) in synchrony with international atomic time.

Leap seconds were introduced because the rotation of the Earth is slowing down by about two thousandths of a second per day.

Many organizations, including Britain's Royal Observatory, are satisfied with the leap-second solution, which maintains the relationship between timekeeping and Earth's astronomical position. But other organizations, such as the International Bureau of Weights and Measures in Paris, disagree, citing the importance of perfectly accurate measurement in the event of human error.

Time experts are deadlocked over the issue. With no agreement, delegates have agreed to shelve the decision until 2015.

TITANIC WATCH TO BE SOLD AT AUCTION



Photo: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg

A pocket watch recovered from the suitcase of William Henry Allen, a third-class passenger of the Titanic, is among a collection of Titanic artifacts scheduled for sale in April. More than 5,000 objects were recovered by explorer Paul-Henri Nargeolet from the wreck site of RMS Titanic. Guernsey's auction house will offer the objects for the first time ever in one lot on April 11, the centennial anniversary of the fabled luxury liner's doomed maiden voyage. The sale will be held at the Intrepid Air & Space Museum in Manhattan.

The seller is Premier Exhibitions, Inc. Premier owns RMS Titanic, Inc., the company that recovered the objects, which were appraised in 2007 at \$189 million. The Atlanta-based company seeks to pass along the artifacts as well as its responsibilities at the wreck site. The company serves as chief monitor of the site, guarding against illegal scavenging.

and the bell should soon be tolling the hours over the busy city square.



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STOLEN CLOCK RECOVERED



Photo: BBC

Sharp-eyed British clockmaker David Card recently helped return a stolen clock to the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading, England. The mahogany-cased clock, originally bought from clockmaker James Trendall in 1840, was stolen from the hospital in 2004. Card was familiar with the clock and was surprised to find it listed in an auction catalog. Learning it was about to be shipped to America, Card and his son-in-law Paul Hyatt managed to identify the clock via a crucial detail: a unique drawing, inside the case,

About 50,000 objects remain on the debris field surrounding the sunken wreck.



Photo: Cartier.com

CARTIER UNVEILS NEW "GRAND COMPLICATION SKELETON" POCKET WATCH

Cartier recently unveiled its new 18-carat white gold Grand Complication Skeleton pocket watch at the Geneva watch fair, referencing a new trend toward the "classically modern." It is the first pocket watch produced by Cartier in many years, and its appearance suggests the famed jeweler is well aware of recent fashion trends involving high-end pocket watches.

Cartier is limiting production of the Grand Complication Skeleton to fifteen watches. The Roman numerals encircling the movement are machined from a single piece of white gold. The chain is also white gold. The watch features a hand-wound tourbillon movement with perpetual calendar and chronograph, triggered by a top-set button mechanism.

Cartier declined to give a retail price for the watch; watch experts speculate that it might cost more than 500,000 euros (\$619,000).

Horology in the Media

NOVEL

THE CHEMISTRY OF TEARS

done by clock repairer W. Snowden in 1886. Now fully restored, it once again resides in the hospital museum.



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HISTORIC CLOCK TO BE REFURBISHED FOR QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

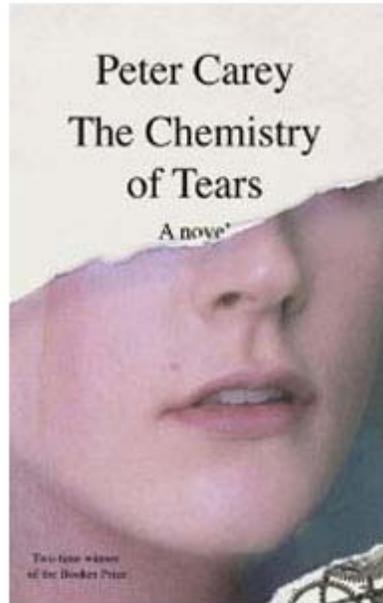


Photo by Tim Green

Dewsbury Minster's historic tower clock in West Yorkshire, England, is being given the royal treatment in time for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June. The tower clock is scheduled to be regilded, an operation requiring removal of the clock for an 8-week period at a cost of over £4,000.

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THE CHEMISTRY OF TEARS

By Peter Carey

Publisher: Hamish Hamilton, 288 pages

Peter Carey's latest novel tells the story of Catherine Gehrig, a horologist employed by a London museum. The novel opens with the death of her work colleague and lover due to a heart attack. Devastated, and transferred to a separate museum annex, Catherine is assigned the restoration of a mysterious object... a disassembled automaton of extraordinary complexity. Catherine works through her grief by attempting to solve the riddle of the strange device, via a series of notebooks written by the Victorian gentleman who commissioned the automaton's construction--an intricate mechanical duck, the exact replica of one famously created by Jacques de Vaucanson in 1739. The passage through grief and triumphant reemergence of Catherine Gehrig, via the cogs and gears of Victorian clockwork, is ultimately an uplifting (and intricate) tale.

FILM



**THE STRANGER:
A NAZI HUNTER PLAYS A DEADLY GAME OF
CAT-AND-MOUSE THROUGH THE CLOCKWORK
MACHINATIONS OF AN EVIL GENIUS**

The Stranger is an Academy Award-nominated American film noir directed by Orson Welles and starring Welles, Edward G. Robinson, and Loretta Young. It tells the story of Franz Kindler (Welles), a Nazi war criminal who has fled to Connecticut and assumed a new identity. When an Allied War Crimes Commission detective (Robinson) arrives in town hunting for Kindler, Kindler's new wife Mary (Young) discovers the dark truth about her husband's Nazi past.

The detective's only clue about Kindler's identity is the notorious Nazi's fascination with antique clocks. His deep obsession with horology and clockwork precision is a recurrent theme throughout the film, culminating in a suspenseful pursuit through the town's elaborate 124 foot tall clock tower (constructed specifically for the film on the back lot of the United Artists Studio in Hollywood).



The film's copyright lapsed into the public domain in 1973. You can watch the entire film for free by clicking this link:

[Watch The Stranger](#)

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