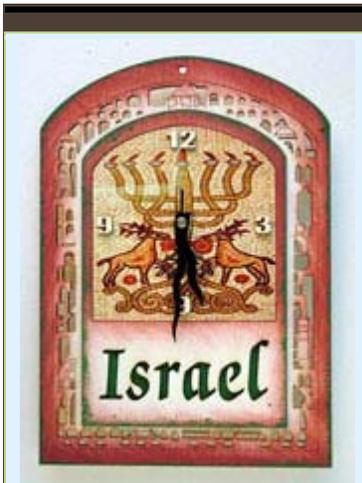


Harris, Markus

From: NAWCC [newsletters@nawcc.org]
Sent: Thursday, December 23, 2010 11:32 AM
To: Harris, Markus
Subject: Horological Happenings from the NAWCC

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



[This lovely Israeli Menorah Clock celebrates Channukah throughout the year!](#)

NAWCC APPRAISAL COURSES

The NAWCC now offers both Watch and Clock Appraisal Courses.

Watch Course Dates:

May 9-14, Sept. 19-24

Clock Course Dates:

May 16-21, Sept. 12-17

Click [HERE](#) to learn more!

HUGE WATCH/CLOCK TOOL AUCTION



JANUARY 14-16, 2011

Dear NAWCC Member,

Happy Holidays! This month we learn the origin of a famous New Year's Eve tradition, share a bit of holiday news and mechanized magic, and find horology in Holiday films and literature.

Enjoy these stories and more in this issue!

New Year's Time Ball

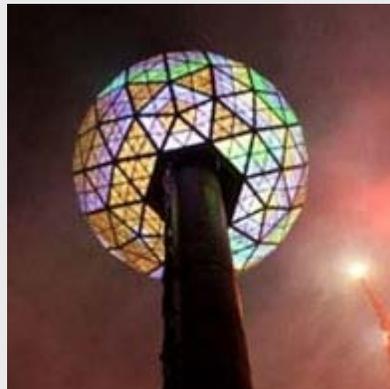


PHOTO CREDIT: Associated Press

Where did the time ball tradition custom originate?

The famous New Year's Times Square ball first appeared at the top of the New York Times Building in 1907 and has made its slow descent every year since then, except for the war years of 1943 and 1944, when chimes rang as a blackout precaution against German submarines. It wasn't the first time ball; similar devices were in use 78 years earlier.

During the nineteenth century many other time balls were used in the United States and elsewhere. Residents of larger cities depended on them to set their watches once a day.

WHAT IS A TIME BALL?

A time ball is a large wooden or metal ball that drops at a predetermined time. They were invented to enable sailors to check marine chronometers from offshore (accurate timekeeping enabled mariners to determine longitude at sea).

Time balls were usually dropped at 1pm (in the United States they were dropped at noon). Ships were alerted when the balls were half raised, about 5 minutes before being dropped; two to three minutes prior to being dropped they were completely raised. Time was recorded when

**15th Annual
"CABIN FEVER EXPO 2011"**
Model Engineering Show
Clock & Watch Tooling Auction

Toyota Arena
York Fairgrounds & Expo Center
334 Carlisle Avenue
York, Pennsylvania 17404

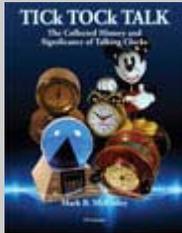
Admission Price: \$10.00

[Click HERE to learn more about
the AUCTION](#)

or visit the Expo website at:

cabinfeverexpo.com

TICK TOCK TALK



This new book, a historical overview of talking clocks by horologist and talking clock collector Dr. Mark B. McKinley, captures in words and pictures the varieties and uses of talking clocks over the past 100 years. The book has hundreds of color images, detailed descriptions, and includes a CD with audio files and video links.

[Click HERE to learn more!](#)

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Our online home for auctions, trading, and classifieds now has over 725 registered members and is growing by leaps and bounds. **Auction fees are 1/3 the price of similar online auction websites.** NAWCC members can sell and trade; non-members are welcome to browse and buy.

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CLOCKWORK MAGIC

the ball began its descent, not when it reached the bottom.

The first time ball was erected at Portsmouth, England, in 1829 by its inventor Robert Wauchope, a Royal Navy Captain. Others soon followed in most major ports.

In 1845, the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., set up the first time ball in this country, following the British example. Other American cities followed, so began the everyday routine of dropping a sphere down a mast atop a tall building.

The time balls of the 1800s usually measured three to four feet in diameter and were almost always painted black (although Chicago's was red and Boston's was copper colored).

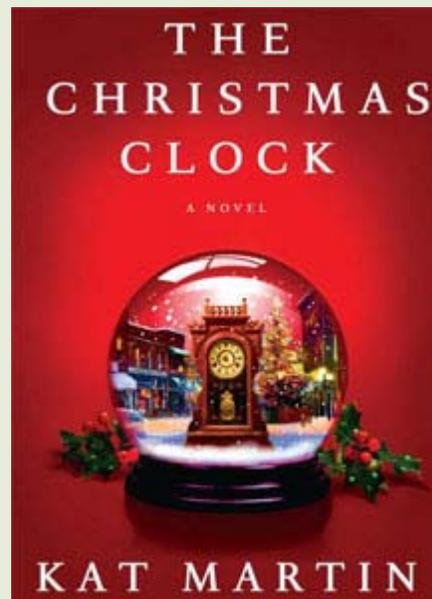
Time balls began in ports, but they were also used by railroad companies. Every day at noon, cities in each time zone received a telegraph signal from an affiliated observatory, used to start their time balls. With the adoption of radio time signals (in Britain from 1924), time-balls gradually became obsolete.

NEW YEAR'S TIMES SQUARE BALL

The latest incarnation of New York's New Year's Eve time ball is six feet in diameter and weighs 1,070 pounds. The spherical design is a geodesic dome covered with 504 Waterford crystal triangles and illuminated with 600 multi-colored Philips Habgema light bulbs, 96 high intensity strobe lights and 92 rotating pyramid mirrors. The ball is placed on a 77-foot pole and, when dropped, descends the pole's length to mark the last ten seconds of the year.

Horology in the Media

THE CHRISTMAS CLOCK



THE CHRISTMAS CLOCK: A NOVEL

By Kat Martin

Publisher: Vanguard Press, 160 pages

In this novel Kat Martin creates a touching story focused on the childhood memories Teddy Winters. As an adult, present-day Ted Winters reflects on these memories: one long-ago Christmas, as his family seemed on the verge of disintegration, and his favorite grandmother battled Alzheimers disease, young Teddy is determined to buy his dear grandmother a beautiful Victorian clock that reminds her of her own youth. The clock serves as the centerpiece for Teddy's interaction with members of his community, who change his life forever



Photo: Artomic.com

Even the Nutcracker's Herr Drosselmeyer would be jealous of this creation!

Traditional watch/clock making skills combine with modern modelmaking to create amazing artistic **Automata**.

Click below to view video of the **The Alchemists Clock Tower**

[Watch VIDEO](#)



Santa talks with a Museum Visitor.

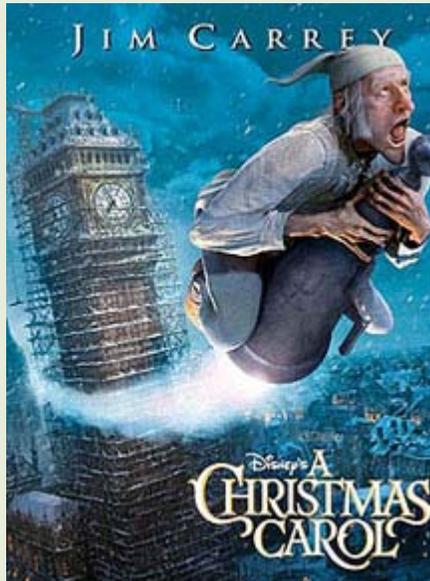
National Watch & Clock Museum
December 11, 2010.

NAWCC Library Debuts New Digital Howard Records Online!

The NAWCC Library & Research Center has partnered with the *Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History Archives Center* to digitize and make available the clock records of **E. Howard Company**. Access to these priceless historical records

in the months leading up to Christmas.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: Why a "Dickensian" London Landmark Is Really "The Ghost of Tower Clocks Yet To Come"



The Poster for 2009's animated **A Christmas Carol**.
Note the scaffolding surrounding Big Ben.

(Photo: © 2009 Walt Disney Studios)

A Christmas Carol is a novella by English author Charles Dickens first published in December 1843. The story tells of sour and stingy Ebenezer Scrooge's transformation after supernatural visitations by four nocturnal Christmas ghosts. The novella has never been out of print and has been adapted many times for film and television.

Many of these adaptations include a distinctive London landmark: the famed Westminster clock tower, home of the great bell Big Ben.



Big Bens, clockwise from bottom left: **A Christmas Carol** (1971 animated), **Scrooge** (1970 film musical), **The Muppet Christmas Carol** (1992), and **Scrooged** (1988).

Big Ben's clock tower **didn't exist** in its now-familiar form when **A Christmas Carol** was published. The clock tower wasn't actually completed until April 10, 1858, almost 16 years later after the novel's

is now available online to
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SEEKING STRETCH

The Winterthur Museum is researching the early Philadelphia clockmaker, **Peter Stretch** (1670-1746) and his two clockmaking sons, **Thomas** (1697-1765) and **William** (1701-1748), to create a scholarly catalogue on the men and their work. The researchers seek clocks made by these men (for study purposes) as well as any manuscript materials, bills, personal correspondence, account books, letter books, diaries, advertisements and business records that will help with the project. Readers who wish to contribute can contact **Donald L. Fennimore**, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, 19735, telephone (302-888-4698), email dfennimore@winterthur.org.

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publication.

Some adaptations of **A Christmas Carol** set the story in the 1860s or as late as the 1880s. But the story, written and published in 1843, was **ACTUALLY** intended to be set much, much earlier. The story recounts events that took place before 1843 and ends with Scrooge having lived many years as a repentant philanthropist up until a time contemporary with the novel's 1843 creation.

Many adaptations do leave Big Ben out of the old London landscape entirely. And in at least one recent version, the 2009 computer-animated movie released by Walt Disney Studios, the Westminster clock tower is depicted surrounded by scaffolding and still under construction. Kudos to the filmmakers for acknowledging a more historically realistic rendering of the clock tower in this latest version.

POLAR HOROLOGY: Holiday Magic Spares The Polar Express From Railroad Time Regulations

The children's book and film *The Polar Express* puts time on display.



© 2004 Warner Bros.

Santa's Workshop is apparently regulated by tower clocks; the largest is shown above.



© 2004 Warner Bros.

The conductor's magic pocket watch fails to meet 1897 regulations: it lacks an hour and minute display, and the hinged hunter case would not pass inspection.

Is that why the Polar Express needs so much Christmas magic to successfully complete the annual Christmas Eve run?

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