

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



National Association of
WATCH & CLOCK
Collectors, Inc.



HAPPENINGS
NEWS FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION JULY 2009

2009 NAWCC NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 2009 NAWCC National Convention was held at DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids, MI, on June 10-13, 2009. The keynote speaker was longtime member Cathy Koolen, who explained the many intricacies of Dutch clocks. The 2009 convention program included many new horological exhibits, the annual craft contest, and the 2009 Watch & Clock Museum auction of de-accessioned Museum artifacts (to support the Museum acquisitions fund).

School Honors Spring 2009 Clock Class Graduates

The NAWCC School of Horology in Columbia, PA, graduated 10 new students from its Clock Program on May 11, 2009.

The school continues to pack classrooms with new students, including many former U.S. military (financially assisted via Veterans Services programs). Click [here](#) for the complete list of courses offered this summer.

Latest Museum Exhibit Officially Open

Dear NAWCC Member,

This issue explores the mysteries of recovered clocks and watches, celebrates the birthday of a Victorian wonder, and discusses the movie magic of a clock that runs backward. Everywhere one looks these days, horology can be found!

Enjoy!

19th Century Chronometer Survives Doomed Arctic Expedition



Detail of the chronometer's dial restored with the original maker's name.
Photograph: National Maritime Museum

A chronometer believed lost with Sir John Franklin's fatal 1845 Northwest Passage expedition has been found... nowhere near the Arctic. The valuable marine chronometer, once crudely disguised as a Victorian carriage clock, has been identified as "Arnold 294" in the British Admiralty chronometer ledgers, 123 years after it was officially written off as unrecoverable due to one of the most famous disasters in the history of polar exploration.

Jonathan Betts, of the British Royal Observatory, examined the clock and believes it must have been stolen from the ship or from a crew member. The Observatory bought the disguised chronometer ten years ago, and its true identity emerged when Betts recently examined the movement. The clock dial revealed obvious evidence of criminal deception; the maker's name had been concealed and another name substituted. Arnold's identification was found on the inner mechanism.

The clock is currently on public display in an exhibition at the National Maritime museum in Greenwich, England.

Lawrence of Arabia's Wristwatch Was One of Antique Roadshow's Best Finds



Lawrence of Arabia aviator chronograph-wristwatch,
1915, Copyright (c) 2009 OMEGA SA



Linn Moedinger, Department of the Geographer to the Army, 1777-1783; **Walter Hediger**, CEO, Gallet Watch Company; **W. Scott Smith**, Department of the Geographer to the Army, 1777-1783; Captain **Christopher Vitt**, United States Navy (hidden from view); and NAWCC Executive Director **Steve Humphrey** participate in ribbon cutting ceremony to open the new Museum exhibit **Time & Exploration: Earth, Sea, and Space**.

NAWCC Member Gives Clock Presentation in Hiroshima, Japan

Martin Cooke (Member #127664) gave a presentation on Tower and Public Clocks of New York City on May 15, 2009, at the Fukuyama Auto & Clock Museum in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima, Japan.

Cooke, originally from Meriden, CT, started his own business, *About Time Clock Restoration*, in 1998 after attending the NAWCC School of Horology in Columbia, PA. Martin is in the process of writing a book on tower clocks.

New Barnum Festival Ringmaster Receives P.T. Barnum's Watch



In a scene replayed 60

After eight years and over 200 shows, Michael Aspel has left *Antiques Roadshow*. In his last episode, Aspel featured favorite clips from the program's archives.

An item tinged with adventure was featured by Aspel in his first episode in 2000. It was an Omega military aviator wristwatch that had belonged to Thomas Edward Lawrence, the British archaeologist, officer, and writer better known as Lawrence of Arabia (1888-1935).

The previous owner, from Barnstaple, had bought the watch at a "bric-a-brac" stall in South Wales 20 years earlier and had not realized that the "T.E. Shaw" on the accompanying repair bill was an alias used by T. E. Lawrence.

Simon Bull appraised the watch for up to £10,000, but it was ultimately bought by Omega for a much higher sum.

Big Ben Turns 150



On May 31st, 2009, the celebrated British historical landmark known as Big Ben officially celebrated its sesquicentennial.

The name "Big Ben" actually refers to the 13.5-ton copper and tin bell (housed in St. Stephen's Clock Tower atop Westminster Palace), not to the clock mechanism itself. The "bong" of the massive bell measures 118 decibels - as loud as a modern jet airliner on takeoff.

The massive clock was designed by Sir Charles Barry with the help of Augustus Pugin, after the Palace of Westminster was destroyed by fire in 1834. The installation of the clock and bell mechanism was finished in 1859. At 320 feet, the clock tower is the world's tallest.

The booming E flat tone of the bell was silent during World War I for fear of attracting Zeppelins, but during the Blitz of World War II the clock was never silent.

A sudden mechanical failure at 4 a.m. on August 5, 1976, caused near panic in London; the clock started striking and couldn't be silenced until serviced by the Palace of Westminster's three full-time clock mechanics.

The flatbed clock mechanism - a revolutionary technology 150 years ago - continues to tick with remarkable accuracy, its 15-foot pendulum swings at two-second intervals, with minor adjustments for expansion or contraction using pre-decimal pennies: 1d (penny) speeds the clock up by 2/5th of a second over 24 hours.

Big Ben Facts

The clock started keeping time on May 31 1859; the bells began ringing on July 11 of the same year.

Each face is lit by 27 low-energy, radio-controlled bulbs.

The "Westminster" chimes were copied from Great St. Mary's in Cambridge.

Tunneling for a line of the London Underground left the tower leaning

times before, the latest P.T. Barnum Festival Ringmaster Michael Niedermeier recently received his official symbols of office: the whip ("of command"), the whistle ("for attention") and-- of course-- **P.T. Barnum's actual pocket watch** ("for punctuality"). The presentation took place at the annual Whip, Whistle & Watch luncheon at the Bridgeport Holiday Inn.

For more information, visit www.barnumfestival.com.

Taking The Time

by Bill Matthies

Hindra, 18, owns a wristwatch but he rarely uses it.

"A wristwatch is too much trouble," he said.

"To actually buy a watch or even waste valuable battery power on something you already have built-in in your phone, it's pointless."

That quote came from a recent Columbia School of Journalism article that asked the question **"Are wristwatches becoming obsolete?"**

I don't NEED a watch (or a cell phone for that matter) just to tell time. Rather, my watches are a connection to earlier times and people (I collect, and most are 50 years or more old, many 75+). I look at them, watching them mark my time as they have done for others for decades, thinking about where they've been and where they will be 75 years from now.

And by the way, Hindra-- there ARE watches that do not run on batteries. It was in all the papers.

--Used with permission of Bill Matthies, from his Blog [Coyote Insight](#).

220mm (8.66 in) to the north-west.

The minute hand is 14 feet long; the hour hand is 9 feet long.

The north and east faces of the clock have heaters to prevent the hands from freezing.

You can download the chimes as a cell phone ring tone from:

www.bigben.parliament.uk.

Horology in the Media



Horology plays a big part in the plotline of a recent film, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, which is based on a 1921 F. Scott Fitzgerald story and was the winner of three Academy Awards.

The film, which stars Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett, tells the story of a strange child, Benjamin Button (Pitt), who was born in New Orleans and lived backward, beginning life as an elderly man and growing progressively younger as time passed. The film implies that his strange condition is somehow linked with the work of a blind clockmaker named Gateau (Elias Koteas), who was commissioned to create a clock to hang in the New Orleans train station. After receiving news of his son's death in World War I, he continued to work on his clock, but intentionally designed it to run backward, in the hope that it would bring back those who died in the war.

"I made it this way," the clockmaker says, "so that perhaps, the boys who were lost in the war might stand and go home again...home to farm, to work, have children, to live long, full lives."

Benjamin lives a full and interesting life, continuing to grow younger year after year as Gateau's clock runs backward. Button travels the world, falls in love, and marries the love of his life (Blanchett)... while growing younger all the time.

Finally, Mr. Gateau's old clock is removed from the train station and Benjamin, technically age 85, leaves the world as so many others have entered it--as a tiny baby. Shortly afterward, in the spring of 2005, Hurricane Katrina strikes the city. Against the sounds of the city's emergency sirens and reports of breached levees, the backwards clock is shown in a basement, still working, as floodwaters envelop the storage room where it is kept, drowning it and its strange magic forever.

Join Our Mailing List!

[Forward email](#)

Email Marketing by

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to kosborne@nawcc.org by newsletters@nawcc.org.

[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors | 514 Poplar Street | Columbia | PA | 17512-2130