

# Bytown Times



Volume 28, No. 2, March 30, 2008

ISSN 1712—2799

## NEXT MEETING

### WHEN:

Sunday, March 30, 2008  
 Course begins at 11:30 AM  
 Meeting begins at 1:30 PM

### WHERE:

Qualicum & Graham Park  
 Community Centre  
 25 Esquimalt Ave., Nepean

### MEETING AGENDA:

- Microset Watch & Clock Timer workshop (before meeting) and talk (during meeting)
- Gary Fox will have 25 pocket watches for sale. Some gold cases; mix of work-ing & not, American & Swiss
- Please bring your treasurers for Show and Tell

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Peace Tower Clock	1&3
March Meeting Workshop	1
Library Display	2
Training Update	2
January Chapter Auction	3
Toronto Invitational	3
Meet Our Members	4
Handbag Watches	5
January Meeting	5
Club Info & Contacts	6
Secretary's Corner	6
The President's Desk	6

## Canada's Peace Tower Clock

Ottawa Valley Chapter President, Wally Clemens, recently had the opportunity to have a personal tour of the Peace Tower Clock at the Canadian Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. The tour proved to be informative and picturesque. Wally shared his experience with the chapter at the January meeting, showing pictures and discussing the history of the clock.



The original Parliament Buildings were inaugurated on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1867. The Library and Victoria Tower, which housed the original tower clock (Messrs Dent and Company, London, England), were added over 20 years later, in 1879. Un-

fortunately, the Parliament Buildings suffered a large fire in February of 1916, which destroyed all the buildings, except the Library. One bell from the original clock also survived, having crashed to the ground just after the stroke of midnight, on the night of the fire. Today, this bell remains on display at the current Parliament Buildings.

The modern Parliament Buildings opened 4

years later, in 1920, though the current tower, standing over 300' high, was not added until 1927. The new tower was dubbed the Peace Tower, in honour of those who died in WWI. The

clock, installed by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon, England, had a Hipp type clock movement.

The Hipp clock movement acquired its name from Matthias Hipp, who, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, invented a switch to help control the pendulum swing on a clock. The switch would send an electro-magnetic impulse to the

*cont'd on page 3...*

## Workshop offered at March Meeting

Wally will give a short class on the Microset Watch and Clock timer. This modern, and unique, timer was developed by Bryan Mumford, an Electrical Engineer in California. Among its many features is its ability to plot a watch and clock's characteristics on a computer monitor where it can be visually studied for errors. This visual representation can be used to spot faults and is perhaps the timer's most interesting feature.

Although Wally expresses his limited understanding of the Watch and Clock Timer's abilities, he will attempt, with you, to display the characteristics of the watch and/or clock you bring to the class. The class will start at 11:30 AM.

## Clock Club Display at the Ottawa Library

In February, while visiting the Centennial Branch Library at 3870 Richmond Road in Bells Corners, Maynard Dokken noticed that their main display cabinet was empty. We had provided a Chapter 111 display there some years ago, which had attracted considerable interest, and it seemed they were very interested in our providing another.

As a result, on Wednesday February 27th, Maynard and I went to the library with a selection of clocks and other items from Maynard's collection.

The display features Canadian clocks, and inside the cabinet, on the top shelf, are several mantel clocks by Pequegnat, Forrestville and Snider, while the middle shelf is devoted to a wide variety of Westclox alarm



clocks. The bottom shelf contains books on Canadian clocks, including of course, all of Jane Varkaris' publications, plus a few others.

One side of the Cabinet is utilized to display

a complete issue of the latest Bytown Times in colour, while on the other are flyers promoting Allan Symons museum in Deep River, together with several thumbnail pictures of typical antique clocks with their prices at auction.

There are several promotional notices for Chapter 111 in the display, together with dates of our next meeting, etc. Also, sample copies of the latest Bytown Times, as well as flyers for Allan's Museum, are available on a table adjacent to the cabinet: all with the aim, of course, of generating Interest, and possibly attracting potential members.

The exhibit will remain in the library until the end of March.

*Article provided by Ben Roberts*

## Update on Training Activities

### Fundamental Clock Repair (F200): to be held Spring 2008

The F200 course has no pre-requisite. It is a good opportunity for members to enhance their skills utilizing hand tools, and also to learn how to make or adapt tools. The F200 course itself is a pre-requisite for the NAWCC lathe courses. Those members who eventually want to learn how to work with a lathe (whether watchmaker's or micro lathe) need to take this skills course. A full course synopsis is available on the NAWCC website.

The course will be held at Algonquin College, in Ottawa, on May 16,17,18, & 19, 2008. Lodging will be available on site. The cost for lodging will be approx. \$25 per night (to be confirmed at a later time). Family members are welcome to stay at the college as well, but the course coordinator, Grant Perry, will need to be advised ahead of time. The cost for attending the course is \$275 USD. Payment is due by mid April. Scholarships are also available.

For more information, contact Grant: [paretime@rogers.com](mailto:paretime@rogers.com) or 613-324-0347

### Introduction to Clock Repair

If there is interest, this course will be run again from early September through early October, 2008. Classes will be held from 9-3 on Saturdays. Please contact Dan Hudon for more details.

*Course info provided by: Dan Hudon & Grant Perry*

### Introduction to Pocket Watch Repair (F301)

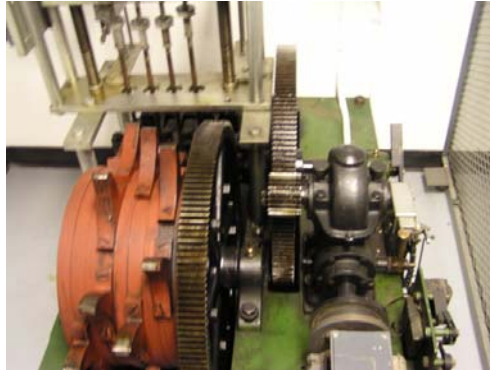
Plans are in the works to hold this course sometime after April 2008. Course details are available at [www.nawcc.org](http://www.nawcc.org). If you are interested in attending this course, please speak to Dan Hudon, or email [erinfxnawcc111@gmail.com](mailto:erinfxnawcc111@gmail.com).

## Peace Tower Clock cont'd...

pendulum when its swing would lag below a certain level.

In the case of the Peace Tower clock, the movement would receive a pulse every 30 seconds from the Dominion Observatory Official Time Service, to keep the tower clock in sync. The clock ran in this manner for many years, until the movement was disconnected in 1970, when an electric motor was installed to operate the clock hands and keep the clock synchronized with official time.

Gillett & Johnston also provided the carillons (48 bells), Westminster chimes (5 bells), and clock faces of the Peace Tower. Interest-



ingly, the clock faces were designed using the Roman numeral 'IIII' rather than the more traditional 'IV'. The diameter of each clock face is 15'8", with minute hands 8'4" long, and hour hands 5'1" long. The largest bell, the Bourdon

Bell, weighs 22,400 LBS, has a diameter of 8'3", and a height of 6'8". The total weight of all 53 bells is 60 tons.

*Notes for this article were provided by Chapter President, Wally Clemens*



## Annual Chapter Auction

Every year, our January meeting comes alive with the hoots and calls of our Annual Chapter Auction. Members have the chance to sell unwanted timepieces, tools, books, and all things horological, while giving other chapter members the chance to acquire new treasures. As usual, Past Chapter President, Maynard Dokken, officiated the event, to much applause. These are some pictures from that day.



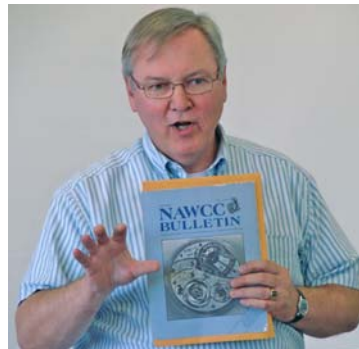
## NAWCC Toronto Invitational

**When:** May 4th, 2008

**Where:** Neilson Park Creative Center  
56 Neilson Drive  
Etobicoke, ON  
M9C 1V7

**Admission:** \$10 (pre-registered)  
\$12 (at the door)

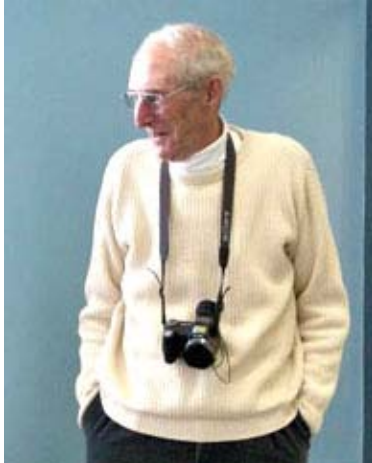
for more details, email [erinfoxnawcc111@gmail.com](mailto:erinfoxnawcc111@gmail.com)



This spring, NAWCC Chapter #33 will once again be hosting the Annual Toronto Invitational meeting. 3 Seminars will be held, including a talk by our own chapter member Gary Fox, who will be discussing his latest research on the Canadian Horological Institute. There will also be a mart, which will open at 8 AM.

## Meet Our Members! Introducing: Ben Roberts

I was born on in Altrincham Cheshire on 7 April 1924, but when I was six, my father, who was a Chief Steward with Cunard White Star Shipping Lines, was moved to their Atlantic run docking in London. So we moved south and located in Sidcup, Kent, on the very edge of South East London. Here I grew up and went to elementary school, and apart from my time in the RAF, I lived in that general area until I came to Canada in 1957.



After elementary school I opted to attend Technical College at Dartford, some 12 miles away by train. As wartime years go, 1940 started reasonably quietly for the Brits, but one could say that things went more and more down-hill as the year wore on. 1940 was my final year at Technical College, but in March of that year the buildings and well-equipped workshops of the college were requisitioned for war purposes, which made things somewhat difficult. As a result my last few courses and final exams were all conducted in different schools around the area.

That April I became 16. Despite not being old enough to have a license, and gasoline only being available for essential war work, I had acquired a completely disassembled motorcycle some months previously, and had spent many hours rebuilding it. Now at 16, I was able to obtain a license and volunteer as a motorcycle messenger in the local civil Defense Organization. With my father's written permission I was accepted, and this led to some 'interesting' motorcycling during the next few years.

Also in April of that year, I accompanied my parents on an emergency visit to my ailing elderly great aunt who lived in a tiny village in Leicestershire. Before the war, I had spent several happy summer holidays at her cottage, and had been fascinated by her Jerome OG Clock, dating from the late 1800's, which stood on the fireplace mantel. On that visit, to my surprise and delight, because the clock was no longer working, it was given to me to take home and repair. Guesswork and plain dumb luck made the clockwork again, (I knew about internal combustion engines, but nothing about clocks). I hung it high on the wall in our house, but by only a single attachment at its top. Here it ticked away merrily for a while, but unfortunately, only a few months later, a bomb fell not too far away, and the clock crashed to the floor in a hundred pieces - beyond repair. To the day my great aunt died some years later, I could never summon up the courage to tell her what had happened to her clock. So ended my first foray into horology, not to be repeated until the early 1980's.

Late in 1940, I was accepted for employment by the British Post Office, who ran all telecommunications in the UK at the time. This was virtually an apprenticeship, and entailed working full time in the various branches of the telephone system while also studying and taking examinations at a local Polytechnic College. Because of the war, it was necessary to work during the week and then attend classes on most Saturdays and Sundays. This more or less continued until I volunteered for the RAF in 1943, where I was trained and flew as a Flight Engineer until 1946. On release from the RAF, I continued in Telecommunications, until thoughts of emigrating to "The Colonies" stirred. Eventually I was offered a job by Bell Canada, and came to their



engineering department in Montreal in 1957. Ten years later I was transferred to Ottawa, and, apart from a three-year stint in Toronto, have lived here very happily ever since, retiring in 1988.

1982 had brought about a renewal of interest in antique clocks, and remembering my great aunt's OG with some trepidation, this time I decided to learn something about clocks before I dabbled. I attended several of John Plewes's repair courses, then held at Algonquin College, and I still regard John as a good friend and mentor. I became a member of the NAWCC and joined Chapter 111 in 1984, when Chapter meetings were held in the old War Museum on Sussex Drive. My interest in clocks has gone through several phases, involving American, Canadian and English clocks, with a major interest in the English Long Case. Some 4 to 5 years ago I started to combine another life-long interest with horology - Vintage Aircraft. So I now have a complete collection of RAF cockpit timepieces up to 1945, and am currently in the final stages of completing a fully illustrated specialist book on the subject. This has also made use of a couple of my other interests which are photography and computers (Macintosh of course).

# Westclox Handbag Watches

Allan Symons showed a rare lady's leather handbag with a pouch inside to hold a mid 1930s Westclox handbag watch so that its dial is visible from the outside. He found the dark brown handbag on eBay in California and acquired it for the museum's Westclox collection, complete with its original black Westclox Handbag Watch, change purse and mirror. The handbag dimensions are 9 1/2" (24 cm) by 6 1/2" (16.5 cm) by 1" (2.5 cm) thick. There were at least five different colours to choose from for the two-piece plastic watch case: black, white, bright red, bright blue, and light green. Allan passed around the white example from the museum's collection.



According to Gary Biolchini's book (*Westclox: An Identification and Price Guide*), Westclox introduced the Handbag Watch in 1933 (red version in 1935) and they were produced only until 1937. The diameter is 2 3/4" (7 cm). The unusual watch won an industrial design award in 1934. Apparently the movement is the same as the one used in the Pocket Ben watch. Although these watches were definitely sold by Westclox in Canada, Allan believes that they were always brought in from the U.S. factory. An early 1930s Westclox Canada catalogue states that the Handbag Watch was imported. Has anyone found an example with the movement marked Made in Canada? But be very careful separating the fragile plastic case halves - damaged cases really drop the value of these rare watches!

*Article provided by Allan Symons*



*On the Right: picture of the inside of the handbag, showing the watch in the pouch*



## January 2008 Meeting Highlights



*Above: Iain MacDonald shares his latest project. He has successfully refinished and painted another beautiful clock dial.*

*Below: On January 27, 2008, 51 people attended our first meeting of 2008, including 3 new members who joined our club that day. Members enjoyed talks on the Peace Tower clock and Westclox Handbag Watches, along with other show and tell items. The meeting was topped off with our annual chapter Auction, officiated by past president Maynard Dokken.*



*Above: Peter Kushnir shares one of his acquisitions to the club: a French thermometer/hydrometer/clock, built to look like a traditional carriage clock. The clock is adorned on either side with paintings of beautiful women.*

## 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  
Box 311, 4970 Opeongo Road, RR#3  
Woodlawn, ON, K0A 3M0  
(613) 832-3085

**Vice President:** Patrick Bigras

**Secretary:** Erin Fox  
erinfoxnawcc111@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Bill Pullen

**Auditor:** Georges Royer

**Librarian:** Wally Clemens

**Bytown Times Editor:** Erin Fox

**Immediate Past President:** Maynard Dokken

**Program & Social Director:** Tim Bryans

**Education & Workshop Chairman:** Dan Hudon



## Secretary's Corner

After 50 hours a week at work, 10 hours a week spent on a course, time spent with family and friends, keeping up with my hobbies, and staying on top of the housework, it's difficult for some people to understand how I have time to put out this newsletter as well. The answer to that is easy: I always receive lots of help!

I would like to thank Wally Clemens, Dan Hudon, Grant Perry, Charlie Beddoe, Maynard Dokken, and Allan Symons for their contributions to this issue. I would like to extend a special thanks to Peter Kushnir for presenting the chapter with the idea for the 'Meet the Members' portion of the newsletter, which will now be a regular feature in the Times. Also, I cannot forget Ben Roberts who not only contributed the Library article for this issue, and many pictures, but also agreed to be the first member profiled in the new feature article.

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](mailto:erinfoxnawcc111@gmail.com)

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

[www.ottawaclocksandwatches.ca](http://www.ottawaclocksandwatches.ca)

## Notes from the President's Desk

Now that our web site is up and running, I feel it's time to revisit an original request regarding its advantages to members: to provide a link to members' web sites or to their identity (i.e. phone number, address etc). After discussions with the executive, it is agreed that the sub-heading "Members Links" will be placed under the main heading "Links". It is also agreed that we will use the same disclaimer as the NAWCC website which reads:

*"The following sites are provided for your information only. The NAWCC's Ottawa Chapter is not responsible for information displayed on these 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. The NAWCC's Ottawa Chapter is not responsible for the reliability of these links."*

At the March 30th meeting, members will be asked if they agree with adding the link.

Remember to bring dry shoes.