



Public clocks in Ventura County

by Robert Gary

When the average person on the street thinks of timepieces, invariably grandfather clocks, mantel clocks, and watches of all kinds are the first things to come to mind. But the oldest and the most visible of time pieces is also the most forgotten when it comes to collectors. Perhaps this is due to their sheer size, but they are also the most vulnerable of timepieces. These are the tower and street clocks. The term "tower clock" refers to any clock mounted high on a building, steeple, or tower. A "street clock" is mounted on a pole or pedestal in front of a building or in a park.

Ventura County has its share of these wonderful pieces, but most go unseen in our daily lives. How many of the clocks pictured here can you place in their correct location? (The answers are below)



- A. Vineyard and Ventura Blvd, Oxnard
- B. Camarillo Plaza on Daily Dr, Camarillo
- C. Arnell Dr and Ventura Blvd, Camarillo
- D. Clock Tower Inn, Ventura
- E. Street Clock, 720 Main St, Santa Paula
- F. 4601 Telephone Rd, Ventura

When your watch gets out of order you have a choice of two things to do: throw it in the fire, or take it to the watch-tinker. The former is the quickest.

Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would rather have been talking.

Both are quotes by Mark Twain

IT'S OFFICIAL!

by Ken McWilliams

It took awhile, but the Ventura area now has its very own chapter of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Chapter 190, Ventura County.

I believe that fate created this chapter, it was just meant to be. Mike Schmidt says in his presidents message that he was inspired by the enthusiasm of the students in the Ventura College clock repair classes and that is what motivated him to pursue establishing a local chapter. Well, let me tell you the story behind those classes and how they almost didn't exist.

Karen Gorback was the director of community education at Ventura College. She had read an article that I had written for a Southern California magazine on clocks and decided that the school needed a clock repair class. She contacted me and asked if I would be willing to create such a class. I was already involved in quite a few projects and told her that my schedule wouldn't permit it at that time. Plus, I live in Northridge and Ventura is a bit of a drive. Karen is a clock collector herself and a woman that just won't take no for an answer. For the next two months she would call or e-mail me, applying not so subtle pressures, inquiring about by schedule and when would I be ready to start the classes.

She called one day and said that she was holding the cover of the fall class catalog open for me. She thought that I may be able to provide a nice photo of an old clock for it. "This would be a nice introduction to the new clock classes wouldn't it?" she said. I couldn't help but admire her tenacity and finally agreed to come up with a schedule, curriculum, and a photo for the catalog.

Our agreement was, that if less than 10 students enrolled the class would be cancelled. I really didn't think that we would have a class. I could check who was enrolling in my class online and was shocked to see the numbers going up every day. When it hit 21 students I called the school and said that this was getting out of hand. Karen said "Don't worry, the class room only holds 22 and we will cap it at that."

Well, I ended up with 22 enrolled students, a long waiting list and six more people just showed up on the first day of class. This is when I began to realize that the Ventura area may well be a very special place when it comes to interest in Horology.

That first class spawned additional classes and

continued on page 5

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

By Mike Schmidt

Chapter 190-Ventura County is finally a reality. The idea of forming a Chapter in Ventura County began over a year ago when I visited Ken McWilliams clock repair class at Ventura College. The enthusiasm of the students from this class and of the students from his other repair classes and workshops inspired me to see if there was interest in establishing a new NAWCC Chapter in Ventura County.



With the assistance of the NAWCC home office, I was able to contact over 100 NAWCC members from Ventura County and Santa Barbara. Ken's students as well as antique dealers and other non-members were also contacted. The question was; "Is there a need to provide watch and clock collectors with a chapter in their area?" The answer was a resounding yes! The need was there with very strong interest and support.

The process to receive approval from NAWCC has taken about 5 months. This has given us time to form an executive board, find a place to meet and work on a plan to make this chapter a great success.

Each monthly meeting will have a Mart, a program of horological interest and a short chapter business meeting. We will be sharing horological items and information, conducting silent auctions, workshops, appraisals and help for all of us that have watch or clock repair problems. The Chapter will utilize technology and a web site to provide all kinds of information and will have the ability to give and receive help with repair questions.

Chapter 190 will have its first meeting on Sunday January 21, 2007. All meetings will be held on the 3rd Sunday of each month at Ventura College from 12:00 P.M. till 1:30 P.M. (No meeting in December) Setup for the Mart will begin at 11:30 A.M. (A map is located on the back cover)

An open invitation to join our Chapter or visit our meetings is extended to all. In the spirit of fellowship and goodwill, I am looking forward with great enthusiasm to meeting all of you at our inaugural meeting in January.

Mike Schmidt

A CLOCK WORD PUZZLE

By Ken McWilliams

FIND THE VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL OR DIAGONAL PATH TO A 25 LETTER ANSWER. USE EACH LETTER ONLY ONCE.

ⓐ	R	D	I	T
Y	A	I	N	I
C	D	R	H	Ⓝ
O	E	G	I	O
O	P	H	N	O

clue:
What actor in what movie was constantly looking at clocks?

The solution will be in the next issue

ⓐ	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	Ⓝ

"A man with a watch knows what time it is.
A man with two watches is never really sure."

Ben Franklin

Ventura Chapter 190 people

Each issue of our newsletter will feature members of our chapter with a short biography or some of their horological interests to help us get to know each other.

The next few issues will focus on our officers and board of directors. Get to know them, they are your key to making your ideas and opinions heard. We need your feedback, that is the only way we will grow and prosper.

Ferdinand Geitner, MBHI, CFI

Director, Continuing Education

Ferd, as he is affectionately called, is no stranger to horology. He is one of the most respected authorities on clocks and watches in the NAWCC.

His talents seem almost limitless, teacher, clock & watch repairer/restorer, lecturer, machinist, and on and on. He is also a great human being, always there to help promote the interests of horology.

Born and educated in Austria. Mr. Geitner qualified as a Master Watch & Clock Maker at the College for Horology & Precision Engineering in Karlstein Austria, 1968. He worked for the Omega Agency in Vienna then emigrated to Great Britain.

After seven years he became the Senior Technician/Conservation Officer at Prescott Museum for Clocks & Watches, responsible for the Liverpool Museum/Prescott Museum & Horological collection.

He has been a guest speaker at an International Conservation Symposium in Greenwich, England. In 1988 he accepted a repair & restoration position in California where he has also lectured for the NAWCC.

In 1995 he opened a restoration workshop in Montecito, CA. Mr Geitner holds Omega & Seiko Certification and is a qualified Field Instructor in Horology from the School of Horology, PA.

Paul Skeels

Director, Legal Advisor

Paul Skeels and his wife Linda have three adult daughters and two grandsons. Paul recently caught the vintage pocket watch bug. He happily utilizes a collection of watchmaking tools and books that belonged to his father and/or his grandfather, both of whom had an interest in the trade.

In real life Paul has been an attorney in Santa Paula since 1973. In 1975 he became a volunteer firefighter and later served for 17 years as Santa Paula's first full time fire chief. After his retirement from the fire service in June, 2006, Paul re-opened his law practice to specialize in estate planning, real estate and public employment law. He also serves as a City Planning Commissioner.

Working with old pocket watches at his "bench" gives Paul a welcome respite from the demands of public life, and he looks forward to helping launch Chapter 190."

William Robinson

Director, Mart

I became a member of NAWCC and local Chapter 75 in 1967. My primary horological interest is in American clocks produced prior to 1850, both weight and spring driven.

Of course I have a few weight driven wood-works clocks but I have also managed to acquire a number of brass movement clocks made before 1850. One of my favorites is a weight driven, brass movement, 8-day shelf clock made and sold by Hotchkiss & Benedict about 1836.

Charles Hotchkiss and Thaddeus Benedict bought the clock-making business from Asa Munger of Auburn, New York in 1834. The firm of Munger & Benedict had been using convict labor at Auburn State Prison to make their 8-day clock movements since 1833. When the firm changed hands to Hotchkiss & Benedict, the new partners continued using convict labor until they closed in 1836. I think this can be thought of as an early form of "outsourcing"!

For more historical information about this period see "The Contribution of Joseph Ives to Connecticut Clock Technology 1810-1862" by Kenneth Roberts.



Bills Hotchkiss & Benedict

**The first Meeting & Mart for Chapter 190
will be January 21, 2007**

Sellers may start setting up at 11:30

The Mart is open from 12:00 til 1:30

The Meeting starts at 1:45

PROGRAM

by Ken McWilliams

French Morbier Clocks. Their History & Evolution

(A time line guide to aid in dating the Morbier

will be given to all attendees)

SHOW & TELL

Bring anything that you would like to share with us

Assembly Instructions for Your Chapter

By Ken McWilliams

It may sound strange to talk about an organization as though it were a Christmas toy being put together, but in a way, that is exactly what it is. Our chapter is made up of many parts. Each part contributes to the total assembly and the stronger each part is the stronger our organization will be. The following is a breakdown of the parts.

Monthly Meeting & Mart

There will be a general membership meeting the third Sunday of each month in the cafeteria of Ventura College. (A map can be found elsewhere in this newsletter)

The **Mart** will precede the meeting. Generally, the mart will be limited to the sale of Horological related items. (Clocks, watches, tools etc.) Members may bring as many items as they like, and of course, there is never any additional charge to the seller. Sellers tables are free.

A successful mart requires two things, sellers and buyers. Let us all try to be at least one of these at each mart.

The **Meeting** is again made up of several parts. We will have a *Business Meeting* where chapter and national news and events are discussed. This is your opportunity to voice your views and make suggestions to improve our chapter.

A *Program* on horological topics will be presented after the business meeting. These will vary greatly and can cover virtually any aspect of horology. The presentations may be in the form of slides, videos, lectures or an interactive roundtable discussion. Any member may suggest a topic or volunteer to present a program.

A *Show and Tell* presentation will follow the program. This is one of my personal favorite parts of the meeting. Any member may bring an item or information to share with fellow members. It can be a recent acquisition, a favorite clock/watch, handy tool, general information or just about anything that you think would interest our members.

Website

Over the next few months we will be constructing a website for our chapter. This will be an evolving project that will grow as we do. The website is intended to be a help site, providing information on chapter 190 and other NAWCC events, with links to watch, clock, tool, parts and other sites of interest. It will also contain downloadable files with repair and collecting information. A color version of our newsletter will also be available for download.

Samuel Kirk has graciously volunteered to create our site for no charge other than out of pocket costs. (Domain name & host charges) He has created websites for nine other NAWCC chapters. Even though Sam is located in Arkansas, he will be an active member of Chapter 190.

Newsletter

This is an important document that links us all together. It is intended to keep us informed of coming events, chapter news with articles about horology and our members.

You have seen my name splashed around this issue a lot. That is only because this is the first issue and I don't expect this to continue. It is **our** newsletter, not just mine and we must all contribute.

Everyone has a story to tell. Just put a couple of clock or watch people together and listen. They will go on

for hours. Well, all we want you to do is share some of them with the rest of us.

Don't worry about spelling, grammar or format, we will take care of all those things. What we want is your story. If it is interesting to you it will probably be interesting to us also. If you have questions about submitting an article please call or e-mail me. (My contact info is on page 2)

Members

This is the last, but certainly the most important, part of the assembly. Our organization will only be as good as we make it. I am and have been involved with many non-profit volunteer organizations. Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, private clubs, and large and small charities. The good ones that grow and thrive all have one common thread, active, involved, contributing members. The struggling ones also have a common thread. I'm sure you can guess what it is.

So, come on kids, lets make this one of the best damn chapters in the NAWCC.

By the way, the organizations that thrive are also the most rewarding and fun ones to belong to.



The Southwest Regional Mart held at Del Mar Nov 17th & 18th of this year. Membership allows you entrance to all NAWCC sponsored events.

ATTENTION SELLERS

Since this is going to be our first meeting and mart, we really have no idea what to expect in way of seller turnout. If you would like to bring items to sell it would be very helpful if you could give us an idea on how much space you will need. Please call or e-mail **Bill Robinson**, our Mart director, with your requirements.

(805) 642-7329 • whrobi@adelphia.net

TABLES FOR SELLERS ARE FREE

Are There Any Horology Frontiers Left?

By Ken McWilliams

A while back I wrote an article for the chapter 75 newsletter about Breguet and his "Tourbillon" movement. Someone reminded me about the article recently and asked if there are any present day watchmakers with the potential of becoming a modern day Breguet, or has everything in horology already been invented.

I found this to be a very interesting question. There are some very, very excellent watchmakers today and no, I don't believe that everything in horology has been invented, and there is always room for perfecting existing concepts.

One man that stands out when I think of master watchmaking and innovativeness is Philippe Dufour. While there may be others contending for Breguet's throne, I have chosen Dufour for this article because he has perfected a movement that has the same goal as Breguet's Tourbillon and that goal is to compensate for gravity errors due to ever changing watch positions. This is Dufour's "Duality" movement.

Before we get to the movement, I'll give you a little background on Mr. Dufour. He was born in the Vallée de Joux in 1948, long considered as the cradle of high-end mechanical watch horology. At 15 he went to the Sentier technical school. He became a watchmaker in 1967 and was employed by Jaeger-le-Coultre. There the master watchmaker Gabriel Locatelli imparted to him his great knowledge of horology. Dufour worked in the Caribbean islands for a while but returned to Switzerland in 1974, and worked for Audemars Piguet and Gerald Genta. Later he was employed by the Osvaldo Patrizzi workshop working exclusively on restoring old and very complicated watches. He also made five "grande sonneries" for Audemars Piguet. In 1989, Dufour decided to produce watches under his own name.

Since then, Philippe Dufour has become one of the most sought after independent watchmakers. His search for perfection is what makes him so special in the "hurry up" and "good enough" world of today. He works alone (with the help of his daughter and a young assistant) in his workshop, making nearly all the parts of his watches by himself and focusing on an incredible level of finishing and precision that probably can't be found anywhere else today.

Now the movement. Dufour's approach to solving the problem of position errors due to gravity was to use two escapements or duel regulators. The original idea for using a double regulator goes back to Louis-Abraham Breguet. Louis envisioned putting this device into a clock but did not follow through on his inspiration. A century and a half later, the idea was taken up by the Technical School in Le Sentier, Switzerland and in the 1930s, the school's watchmakers put the double regulator into a pocket watch. And now, some 60 years later, Philippe Dufour is the first to adapt the concept to the wristwatch.

The device involves a complex system of a differential mounted with the two escapements on the seconds wheel. The two balance wheels function independently of each other but are powered by the same mainspring. The differential system compensates for the deviation between them thus reducing by half the potential working error.

It is extremely complex to make. The differential

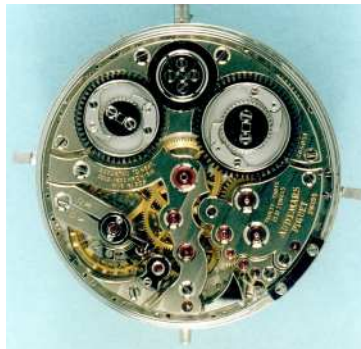
system alone is composed of 21 parts (twice as many as the Tourbillon), and that does not include the regulating parts, yet, the whole device measures only 30mm in diameter and 4mm in thickness!

Dufour has made ten "Duality" watches for collectors to date. He'll make one for you too for \$600,000.

In 1992 he stunned the Worldwide Watchmaking and Jewelry Fair in Basel with the wristwatch version of the Grande and Petite Sonnerie. He also makes a beautiful skeleton watch and the most popular of his watches "Simplicity" a manual wind without complications.



The Differential used in the "Duality" watches "Simplicity" a manual wind without complications.



The "Grande Sonnerie"



The "Duality"



The "Skeleton"



The "Simplicity"

"It's Official", continued from page 1

workshops, all had the same interest and enthusiasm.

I teach because I want to keep the interest alive in our old clocks and watches, and I want to instill a respect and pride in making repairs correctly. After many hours of clock classes and workshops in Ventura, I have to say that I have never been more pleased and satisfied than I am with the students in this community.

The reason I say it was fate that created our chapter is because it would not have happened had it not been for the stubbornness of Karen Gorback, and Mike deciding to visit the first class.

Karen, earlier this year, resigned from VCC and took a similar position with The College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita. Yes, she contacted me again, and no, I didn't give her any arguments this time, I just agreed to teach there. By the way, the interest in the Santa Clarita area doesn't come close to Ventura's.

What were we writing about 60 years ago?

The following article is from the July, 1948 issue of "The American Horologist and Jeweler" It may be a little difficult to follow as it was written by an Englishman in the grammar of the day. As you read this, keep in mind the date of the article and the era of Tompion.

The English Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company has just given a thousand guineas for a clock by Thomas Tompion. Four figures for a single clock proves the keen demand that there must be for this particular type. There is, for Thomas Tompion is not only regarded as the "Father of English Clockmaking," but he was the greatest of his time, the king and prince of craftsmen, whose work was marked by faithfulness and an outstanding sense of beauty.

One of the most famous collections of clocks assembled in recent years was owned by the late Mr. D. A. Wetherfield of Blackheath. It was valued by the owner at £50,000, but on his death the 200 clocks composing it, including many Tompion clocks, were sold en bloc for £30,000, and about half went to America.

A friend of the collector said it was a most interesting experience to be smoking with him late in the evening, and to hear many of the clocks in the dining-room, hall, and other rooms all striking at once. Some were even relegated to the bathroom!

The gem of the collection was a Tompion clock whose story proves the advance in value of this maker during the present century. It belonged to the Duke of Cambridge, a cousin of Queen Victoria and former C.-in-C. of the British Army. He died in 1904, and at his dispersal sale it was sold for 125 guineas.

Only seven years later it came under the hammer again and it fetched 380 guineas. Then, 20 years back no less than four thousand guineas were offered for it. The clock is a very beautiful specimen and eventually it crossed the Atlantic.

Fifteen years back a wonderful exhibition of Tompion clocks was arranged in the Royal Exchange Building, London, by the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers. The occasion was unique, for there were to be seen 33 clocks, all signed by Thomas Tompion, all in working order, gathered together in London, where they were all made. Sixteen were long-case or grandfather clocks, and the others bracket or mantle-piece clocks.

Thomas Tompion was born in 1639 and died in 1713. When he lived, clocks were much more valuable and rarer objects than today. They were made by hand, lovingly and carefully, and the very fact that Tompion clocks are still keeping excellent time is sufficient proof of the craftsmanship expended in their making.

Perhaps the most remarkable clock (although not the most beautiful one) was that which Tompion made to the order of William III. That monarch paid the clockmaker £1,500 for it, a very large sum for those days. It is an elaborate bracket clock, famous in the annals of clock making, and is called the Silver King. The clock strikes the hours and quarters and needs winding only once a year. A list of the 150 or so people who have wound it up since the day it left Tompion's workshop is preserved.

The collection contained an astonishing variety of clocks, no two of which are alike. Some are wound every month, others every eight days. Not all are in the original cases, as for example, one, a grandfather eight-day clock, found in a Kentish mill with the original case rotted. Another came from a Devonshire farmhouse, where it had been for generations.

Many of the tall clocks are exceedingly beautiful, a delight to the eye. Tompion himself had an eye for rare woods. One door consists of oyster pieces of olive wood veneered on oak, and another exquisite case consists of walnut.

The bracket clocks, too, are featured by the most exquisite detail and elaborate chasing, besides which Tompion kept strict rules about the hands of his masterpieces. The finger hand looked like a slender dart as it revolved around the dial, and the hour hand invariably bore a beautiful device. In a word, the finish of all his work was marvelous.

The debt English clockmaking owes to Tompion is incalculable, because before Charles II it was at the best a poor imitation of the Germans, the Dutch and the French, but it was he who gave the craft a world-wide reputation. As the outcome this country built up a prosperous trade with the Continent in English clocks and watches.

Thomas Tompion was the son of a Northill, Bedfordshire blacksmith, and in 1671 he was admitted as a "Brother" to the London Clockmakers' Company, and 10 years before his death he became Master of the Company.

His workshop and home were at the Sign of the Dial and Three Crowns at the corner of Water Lane (now Whitefriars Street) and Fleet Street. His premises consisted of his shop, where he displayed and sold his watches and clocks; his workshop where he and his journeymen and apprentices worked; and he himself probably dwelt above the shop. ■

This fine Tompion clock was made prior to 1680 and stands a little more than 13 inches tall. It is one of a small group of clocks made by Tompion and is his earliest Grande Sonnerie. This is thought to be the prototype. The striking train is on the right and employs a rack. It is believed to be the first use of a rack in a striking system. It has an extra rear plate that carries a dial to adjust the rise and fall of the pendulum for adjusting the rate, again, this appears to be a first.

Most of Tompion's clocks have survived, and in fact still keep very good time. British museums house some but the majority of the available clocks have been acquired by American collectors. One similar to this one was auctioned by Sothby's in December 1999 and sold for \$2,092,500. Sothby's pre-auction value (which is always high) was \$400,000 to \$500,000. A nice Christmas present for someone wasn't it?



CLASSIFIED PAGE

This page is dedicated to advertising for Chapter 190 members. It is, of course, free to members.

There are two ways to get your ad listed here.

1. The quickest way is to e-mail it to internut@socal.rr.com. Text should be in MS word, MS notepad or RTF format. If you want to have a photo in the ad attach it to the e-mail. (JPEG or TIFF Format)
2. Bring your ad to the monthly meeting and give it to Ken McWilliams or Mike Schmidt. Pictures can be scanned into your ad at no charge. If you want it returned provide a stamped self addressed envelope.

When you create your ad remember to describe the item or service clearly. When possible, include prices. ALWAYS include a way to contact you. Phone number and e-mail address if you have one. Just give us the information and we will help with the layout. If you prefer to create your own ad, provide it in an EPS format or hi res jpeg.

SERVICES OFFERED

**Do you have a business or service that you want to let
our members know about? This is the place to do it.**

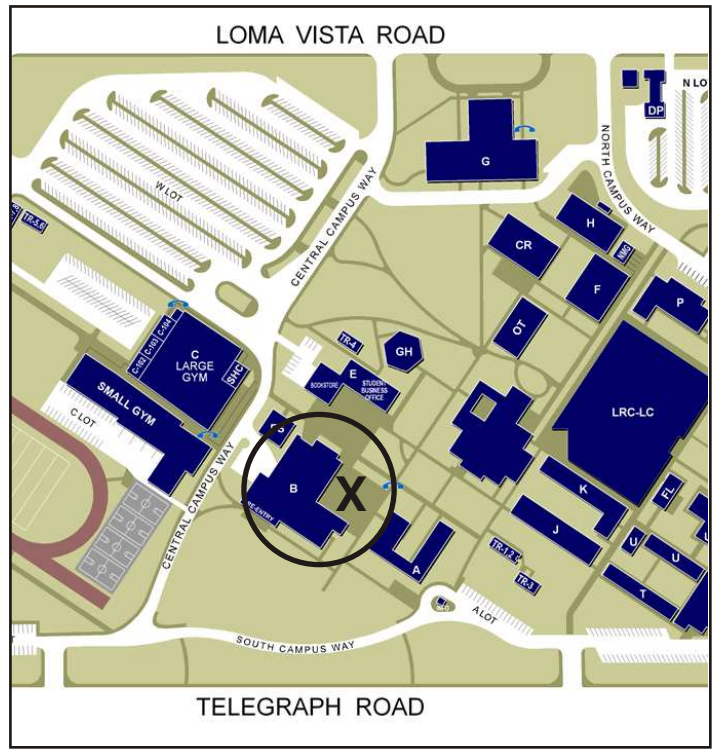
WANTED

**Looking for a particular clock, watch, tool, part service etc.
You may get lucky here.**

FOR SALE

**Need to dispose of a clock, watch, tool, excess stock?
Someone may be looking for just that item.**

The Chapter 190 meetings are held the third Sunday of each month. (No meeting in December)
 We will meet in the cafeteria on the Ventura College campus. The cafeteria is located in building "B", west of the gym and athletic field.



Hope to see you there!

December 2006 Issue

JAN 21
MEETING:
INAUGURAL

If Undeliverable return To:
 17738 Superior St. Unit 21
 Northridge, CA 91325

Chrono Times