Peter’s first degree in physics was followed by two years research at Queen Mary College, London University into the properties of semi-conductors at liquid air/helium temperatures for microwave communication applications following which he spent a year with Post Office Telecommunications working on the early trans-Atlantic TV satellite relays. A spell as a reactor physicist in the north of Scotland working on the use of liquid metal coolants in an experimental reactor followed. Deep down though, he always wanted to follow his father and grandfather into the Navy, so in the late 1960s he joined as a graduate officer and served at sea in diesel and nuclear powered submarines and after qualifying as a meteorological and oceanographic specialist, in a frigate and aircraft carrier. Shore appointments included the staffs of Flag Officer Submarines, Commander In Chief Fleet, Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (USA) the Naval Staff and Flag Officer Training and Recruiting. As a precursor of going to the Naval Staff in the MOD he was sponsored on a Masters degree in Business Administration at Warwick University. In the Training Agency as Head of Corporate Strategy he was Project Officer for setting up a unique partnering arrangement between the Agency and the Defence Industry to improve training efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Leaving the Navy in 1998 Peter took the Antique Clock Restoration and Conservation Course at West Dean College in pursuit of a life long interest in practical horology and was awarded the Geoffrey Moss prize. Peter’s wife died shortly before he left the Navy, and after leaving West Dean, he relocated to London having met his partner Liz, a Freeman of the Information Technologists and International Bankers, and joined Greenwich Hospital, the oldest Naval Charity founded in 1694, as Head of Strategic Development.

At sea he has used mechanical timekeepers for navigation as well as the more modern satellite navigator. As a holder of an RYA Ocean Certificate he has taught meteorology and astro-navigation and whilst serving also qualified as a Skipper of the Nicholson 55 feet ocean going Service sail training yachts. His offshore sailing has included two Fastnet and the Annapolis – Bermuda ocean races and, not surprisingly, he still takes his sextant, tables, stubby pencil and two watches to sea. His other interests include astro-physics, theatre and opera.

A volunteer at the Royal Observatory he assists in the Horological Department and has been a member of the Council of the Antiquarian Horological Society since 2003. He is a Trustee of the Friends of the Clockmakers’ Museum charity in addition to using his West Dean practical skills in a part time capacity. Peter has two daughters; Tracey who works in the USA and the younger Sarah who works in Edinburgh.
In October, the Clockmakers’ Museum and Guildhall Library were delighted to provide the venue for the launch of Liveryman David Rooney’s fascinating new book Ruth Belville, the Greenwich Time Lady.

The book begins by describing the many ways in which the public now has access to the time, demonstrating that before the advent of electricity, obtaining the time with any accuracy was quite a different matter. Indeed the only effective way that the chronometer makers of London could obtain exact time to regulate their products, was by “striking a transit” in their own workshops, or by sending a chronometer to be set at Greenwich.

Enter then the mysterious and entrepreneurial John Henry Belville, whose mother is known to have fled to England from revolutionary France, but whose father (if not the Astronomer Royal, John Pond) remains unknown. As a young man Belville had been given employment at the Royal Observatory and it was there c.1840, that he decided to turn the difficulties of obtaining the accurate time to his advantage. He bought a fine pocket chronometer and set about delivering the time to the London makers on a regular basis himself. On John’s death in 1856, his watch became the property of his widow. Maria Belville doggedly continued the daily journeys to sell the time, even braving the streets terrorised by Jack the Ripper. She retired in 1892. Again the watch moved on, this time into the hands of their redoubtable daughter Ruth. Ruth continued the business with spirit, despite the dirty tricks of her increasingly devious competitors. Ruth finally retired in 1941 and applied for a Clockmakers’ Company pension, which she was granted. She died in 1943.

Ruth willed her family’s pocket watch to the Clockmakers’ Museum, hoping that her name would be “perpetuated for all time”. She had affectionately named it “Arnold”, because it was made by the great John Arnold c. 1794, and it bears his surname on its dial. “Arnold” remains on display in the Museum to this day and is the reason why Guildhall was chosen to celebrate the publication of David Rooney’s book.

Guests included many distinguished members of staff of the National Maritime Museum and many celebrated horologists. Speeches were made, at the end of which “Arnold” was carried ceremoniously into the Library Reading Room by Joanna Migdal, dubbed by David Rooney as “the modern-day “Time Lady””. Then came the surprise.

David Rooney had discovered that in 1926, Ruth had become concerned about “Arnold’s” health and so had purchased a back-up. It was a distinguished pocket chronometer by Charles Frodsham. She named it “Charles”. Despite every effort to trace “Charles” before publication, David had given it up for lost. Then, days before the book-launch “Charles” re-emerged as part of the celebrated collection of the late Lord Harris. Through the generosity of the Trustees of Belmont, “Charles” travelled first to Greenwich and from thence to Guildhall. There, to the cheers of the assembled company, “Charles” was carried in by Jonathan Betts, to be reunited with “Arnold” for the first time since Ruth’s death. The two were displayed side-by-side in the Museum until the Clockmakers’ Livery Dinner on November 11th.

Ruth Belville
The Greenwich Time Lady
by David Rooney
is published by the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich 2008.
THE CORPUS CHRISTIE CLOCK

On the sunlit evening of Friday September 19th, the junction of Trumpington Street, King’s Parade and Bene’t Street Cambridge was closed to all traffic. A vast black curtain hung over the doorway of what had (until recently) been the National Westminster Bank. A low grandstand had been constructed on the other side of the street. Photographers and film crews stood around in clusters as the crowd of onlookers built up. Distinguished guests filed through the gateway of Corpus Christie College, to be welcomed by Liveryman Dr. John Taylor, an Honorary Fellow. The event had by then attracted worldwide publicity. It was the public unveiling by Professor Stephen Hawking of Dr. Taylor’s extraordinary Corpus Christi clock, set in the old bank’s doorway. Three members of the Company were fortunate to be invited.

The evening began with an opportunity for the guests to visit the interior of the old bank building, now connected by a narrow passageway to Corpus Christi’s mediaeval Old Court and converted into an elegant modern undergraduate library. The conversion had been sponsored by Dr. Taylor and is named after him. The guests then made their way back into the street, past the expectant crowd and up into the grandstand. Speeches were made by the President of the College, Dr. Taylor and finally Professor Hawking, who musing on the nature of time, hoped that the clock would “become a much loved and possibly feared addition to the Cambridge cityscape”. There was an audible gasp as the black curtain fell away, revealing the million pound clock, its gilding glinting in the evening sunlight, its evil “chronophage” or time-eater, crouched above its dial, its capricious pendulum beating – apparently - below.

As the crowd surged forward, the guests moved to a nearby lecture theatre to hear Sir Arnold Wolfendale give a sketch of John Harrison’s life and achievements. From there, as darkness fell, they moved back to the lawn of Old Court and from thence to the glorious 19th century hall for “the Chronophage Banquet”. Three speeches were given. A characteristically amusing and informed dissertation on John Harrison by the broadcaster Adam Hart-Davis, made without notes, set the scene. The ceremonial handing over of the clock by Dr. Taylor followed. This took the form of the presentation of the clock’s ‘virtual’ key, an extraordinary example of contemporary art. In outline it resembled a short civic mace, but internally it was another example of Dr. Taylor’s famous inventiveness. By gently rotating the polished finial at the end of its handle, a smooth internal fly-wheel is set in motion. This causes the fretted, fan-like fan of the mace-head to spin at such a speed that what at rest appears to be random pierced decoration, joins magically together, to form a legible dedicatory inscription.

As the evening drew to a close, all electric light was extinguished, and the hall was lit solely by flickering candles. From the far end, the actor Hugh Bonneville declaimed the desperate thoughts of Marlowe’s Dr. Faustus on the subject of time, before he was dragged at last to Hell.

“…..Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature’s eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn’d…..”

Marlowe was himself a Corpus student and it was through his chilling words that Dr. Taylor’s clock, itself symbolic of our certain death, was merged seamlessly into College history. It was a remarkable evening.

The Corpus Clock has been described at length in newspapers and news programmes throughout the world. Descriptions can be found on its website www.chronophage.co.uk. and in Christopher de Hamel’s copiously illustrated book The Corpus Clock (Fromanteel Ltd., Isle of Man).
At the close of the Haddington Project (see May Newsletter) HMS Endurance returned to Deception Island where a boat camp was set up to provide more detailed charts of the island entrance known as Neptune’s Bellows. Deception is an extremely popular tourist designation and our teams rarely had a day without passengers coming ashore from cruise ships. One Royal Marine found himself doing an interview for Croatian TV as he waded ashore in his dry suit. Following deployment to the Falkland Islands for an official reception and maintenance to the ship, we sailed for West Africa.

HMS Endurance left Freetown, Sierra Leone, during September. Discussions had taken place at Ministerial level on Climate Change, Environmental Management and Maritime Security whilst the ship had given training to the local Maritime Forces as well as hosting numerous visits by local school children. Our aim was to provide a usable template for future visits by Royal Naval vessels to this region.

We are now proceeding south once again, preparing for the 08/09 season in our stamping ground of the Northern Antarctic. Sadly I will not be on board to experience the ice as I am to be relieved by Captain Gavin Pritchard at the end of October. I have really enjoyed my interaction with you all and thank you for your continued friendship and support over my time in Command.

Man of the Year Award

On August 22nd, the Master, Dr. Michael Sanderson presented the Man of the Year tankard to Leading Logistician (Catering Services) Adam Stead. The Company was delighted to welcome Adam Stead to a small ceremony at the Clockmakers’ Museum at Guildhall attended by Liverymen who were celebrating Charter Day. After the presentation he was taken to lunch by the Senior Warden Commander Peter Linstead-Smith.

Charter Day – August 22nd – is the day in 1631 King Charles I granted the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers its Charter.
A group of members of the Company visited Lyme Park, the National Trust property in the Peak District, recalling scenes in the Pride & Prejudice (1995) film, where Darcy emerges from a lake. Originally Tudor, it now resembles a fabulous Italianate palace built around a splendid court yard. Inside there are fine Mortlake tapestries, an important collection of clocks, and beautifully furnished rooms, along with a colourful family history.

Jonathan Betts, Senior Curator of Horology at the National Maritime Museum and a member of the Court of the Company, kindly conducted the visitors around the very exceptional and interesting clock collection - one of the finest National Trust collections - incorporating two complete museum rooms in the house.

Clockmakers Visit The Hammermen of Glasgow

The Master is a Hammerman of Glasgow, so he chose to include a visit to Glasgow amongst his list of Master’s outings; in addition his great friend Ian Young was to become Deacon – their equivalent of Master - later in 2008.

Founded in 1536, the Incorporation of Hammermen of Glasgow originally comprised craftsmen associated with metalworking - traditionally, “men who wielded the hammer”: blacksmiths, goldsmiths, lorimers, cutlers, armourers, sword-makers, clockmakers, locksmiths, pewterers, tinsmiths etc.

Thus a plan was hatched for a group of 22 Clockmakers to dine together with The Hammermen in their Glasgow Trades Hall, with some suitable cultural activities arranged around the dinner to make a varied and interesting three-day visit. The hotel was ideally located in Glasgow’s Merchant City surrounded by an abundance of culture and we could soon see why Glasgow was recently described as one of the most vibrant cities in Europe. Ian Young insisted that we dine on the first evening at a pub nearby called Babbity Brewsters, and he was of course absolutely right – it was an exceptional meal in jovial surroundings at a very friendly price.

After a good night’s sleep we were taken by coach to visit The Burrell Collection. When Sir William Burrell and his wife, Constance, Lady Burrell, gave his collection of over 9,000 works of art to Glasgow, the city acquired one of the greatest collections created by one person. It was a special pleasure to experience at first hand such important collections of medieval art, tapestries, alabasters, stained glass and English oak furniture, European paintings, including works by Degas and Cézanne, together with an important collection of Islamic art, and modern sculpture including works by Epstein and Rodin. The biggest disappointment was the absence of clocks - except one!

This was, however, put right when we later moved across the park to tour Pollok House, and lunch in the servants’ hall. The Pollok Estate, now managed by The National Trust for Scotland, has been the home of the Maxwell family since the mid-13th century. The current house is an impressive 18th century mansion, filled with splendid collections of Spanish art, antique furniture, silverware and ceramics, and a nice library – and some interesting clocks. It was well worth the visit.

Back in Glasgow, again, we dressed formally for dinner and walked a few streets to the Trades Hall, one of the most important historic buildings in Glasgow. Designed and built by Robert Adam and his brothers from 1791-94, it was to serve as a public hall and meeting place for the city’s Trades House and 14 incorporated Crafts. We met Late Deacon Norman Hamilton in the Old School Room and he kindly gave us a conducted tour of the Hall, prior to dinner, ending up with drinks in the Saloon. Dinner was a very happy occasion with good food, wine, and outstanding company. There were short speeches, and a ceremonial hammer was presented to the Master by Late Collector and Deacon Elect Ian Young “from the Men of the Hammer”.

Norman Hamilton, Ian Young and the Master
The Master and his wife Mariana together with another 17 Clockmakers’ and partners visited New York City recently to view the Frank Hohmann III collection of American clocks and bronzes. Frank is a Liveryman and lives in one of the few remaining original early 1800s brownstone town houses located at 77th Street across from Grand Central Park.

On the first sunny day, some of us had the chance to go up the Empire State Building for a fantastic view of Manhattan. In the evening we all dined in a private room at the Doubletree Hotel in Manhattan with Frank as our guest of honour. A good time was had by all.

The weather was absolutely brilliant for our second day when we split into three groups to visit Frank’s house and his collection, the Frick Museum and the Pierpont Morgan Museum and Library. Although taxi was the prime mode of transport, some members missed lunch and walked from 35th Street to 77th Street a journey that took almost an hour. On Thursday evening, the Court members dined at Frank’s house while the bulk of the party had dinner in a private room at the Master’s favourite hotel, The Algonquin. Once again the food and wine were excellent.

On the Friday morning, the whole group toured the Metropolitan Museum of Art next to Central Park. This is a huge building requiring coffee and soda stops. Of particular interest was the English section which contained longcases by Tompion and Quare, plus elaborate James Cox clocks and exquisite English watches in gold and semi-precious stone cases.

On Friday afternoon the party dispersed with some members staying on for a short holiday to meet family members and friends, made more delightful by the colours of the Fall.

Livemaryman Frank Hohmann III is preparing a new book Timeless: Masterpiece American Brass Dial Clocks which will include approximately 100 of the finest American brass dial clocks by over 50 makers including those from major museums and private collections. If you wish to purchase the book, publication is expected in 2009, please contact the Clerk as soon as possible (Tel: 020 7638 5500 or email clockmakersco@aol.com) in order to reserve a copy. The price is £60 per copy which includes post & packing and a contribution to the Clockmakers’ Charitable Fund.
In July, Past Master Diana Uff hosted a luncheon in a magnificent marquee in the Walks in Gray’s Inn at which the guest of honour was the Master’s wife, Dr. Mariana Sanderson. This luncheon, which has now become an annual event, is an opportunity for women members of the Company to meet. Champagne beforehand was kindly donated by the Master and conversation flowed before and during lunch, the party eventually dispersing well into the afternoon.

We are all continuously bombarded by mail shots, advertisements, cold calling by many charitable causes, all laudable in their own right – it is part of modern life and is perhaps a reflection that in spite of State support in one form or another there is an increasing call on charities. Members of the Livery and Freedom of the Company are aware of the philanthropic side of Livery Companies - financially based on charitable funds, which have accrued over time through donations and legacies or time expended in fund raising / contributing expertise in different ways.

In the case of the Clockmakers’ Company, our Charity structure is straightforward. In common with other Livery Companies we have a Charitable Fund which primarily through bursaries, scholarships and prizes supports and encourages education and training in horology and science, supports the Lord Mayor’s and other worthy appeals, and the payment of grants to relieve poverty. The fellowship will be well aware of the Company’s world famous Collection (including important books and manuscripts) displayed in the Guildhall Museum for which the Collection Fund was established in 1873 to augment, improve and maintain. The Court of Assistants is the Trustee body for both of these charities.

There are two other charities associated with the Company but which have separate, independent Trustee Bodies. First, the Clockmakers’ Museum & Educational Trust, the objects of which are to hold all chattels and articles of horological or similar like interest, (the Collection), given, bequeathed, or lent to the Company and deposited in the Guildhall Museum and Library on public display. In common with most charities of this nature there is an educational element to its charitable objects.

Finally there is the Friends of the Clockmakers’ Museum a separate charitable membership organisation, drawing its members from the general public as well as the Livery. Its objects in common with many Friends organisations are, in this case the education of the public by promotion, support, assistance and improvement of the Clockmakers’ Collection along with the promotion of public and professional education in horology sciences. To raise funds visits and talks for members are arranged and members are invited to participate in suggesting the types of event.

Please support our charities in whatever way you can. Remember it is your Company and they are your charities. Gift Aid forms and bank standing order forms are available from the Clerk.

FROM THE MASTER ELECT

Enter Warden Howard Newman has been instrumental in co-ordinating the Exhibition at the Saffron Walden Museum. It opened on November 15th and will continue until February 22nd, 2009. For further information contact www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org
We welcome the following new Freemen
Douglas Alfred Bateman
Michael Alan Brain
Annie Jarrett

We congratulate the following Freemen on being raised to the Livery
Robert Andrew Ball
Geoffrey Edward Heywood

We much regret to record the following deaths
Honorary Freeman Audrey Buxton ............................................. 1998
Liveryman Albert Cordery ....................................................... 1977

Joe Buxton, the Clerk has just returned from Nepal where he and his wife Ann trekked to Everest Base Camp. Joe has described it as a most exceptional and rewarding experience – a major challenge and not for the faint hearted. His 3-page account of the trek is available by e-mail or post.

Joe served as a regular officer with the Grenadier Guards and the welfare of Grenadiers, particularly those many youngsters who have been killed and maimed – many scarred for life during their recent military service in Afghanistan – is very close to his heart. He and Ann raised over £2000 sponsorship of their Everest Base Camp trek prior to departure. Information about The Colonel’s Fund Grenadier Guards can be found at: www.thecolonelsfund.com. If you feel so inclined and are able to do so, please send a cheque, however small, to the Clerk, made out to The Colonel’s Fund Grenadier Guards. Every donation will be gratefully received and formally acknowledged.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 8th Baronet, who visited London with his wife and son in May and was made an Honorary Liverymen by the Court.

Past Master Philip Willoughby on being awarded the Master’s Medal at Installation Court by David Poole, who was Master at the time. David thanked him sincerely for his exceptional work and diligence in assisting the Clerk and the Company with its finances for so many years.

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