

# The Story of the Epping Forest Horology Centre



The last School of Horology in the London area was at Hackney College. It closed in 2000, and all the equipment from Hackney found its way to Epping College, where a small adult education course in Clockmaking began. This ran for a number of years, but in 2004 the college had its funding cut and the Horology course was one of several that had to close. The people attending the course decided to form a Club so that they could continue, and got the agreement of the college that if they did so, and found suitable premises, they could have all the equipment. The formation of the Club was supported by the British Horological Institute and assisted by a small grant from the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers. One of the founder members lives next door to a farm where a number of outbuildings were being converted into light industrial units, so the Epping Forest Horology Club was formed in 2005, rented a small workshop, and began classes.



The Club had a maximum class size of 12 and began with two Clockmaking sessions per week. It quickly added a Watchmaking session and grew rapidly with demand for places always exceeding the available space. In addition to the regular sessions, the Club began to run occasional Short Courses at weekends on topics such as Watchmakers Lathe, Dial Restoration, Silver Soldering, Engraving and so on. It also began to teach the BHI Courses on and soon became the Southern Exam Centre for the BHI.

In 2008 EFHC was made an Honorary Member of the British Watch and Clockmakers Guild in recognition of its efforts to preserve Horological Skills in the UK.





In 2009, the Landlords developed some additional buildings across the yard from the original workshop, so the Club rented a second unit which was turned into a 12 bench Watch Workshop with a small Audio Visual lecture area. This gave the opportunity for significant expansion of watchmaking activities, so three new tutors were recruited and within a year the classes were filled.

EFHC obtains all its insurances by being a member of the Southern Model Engineering Federation. Each year, the Club is invited to exhibit at the London Model Engineering Exhibition at Alexandra Palace. Two years ago, Anthony Cousins was a visitor to the show. He is the Managing Director of the largest watch parts and tools supplier in the UK, and on seeing the stand he immediately offered his support. Cousins UK have donated several thousand pounds worth of tools and equipment to the Club, and assisted with publicity on their website.



The Club continued to grow and at the end of 2011 it was running five clock and three watch classes every week and was rapidly outgrowing its clock workshop. At that time, a new unit more than double the size of the original one became available directly alongside the watch workshop, so EFHC took the opportunity to expand again and now has a complex



consisting of a watch workshop, a lecture area, a machine shop, a clock assembly workshop, and a lounge and library facility.



The new facilities were named the Epping Forest Horology Centre and were formally opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2013 by Anthony Cousins and Mark Elliott, the Master of the



Worshipful Company of Clockmakers with more than eighty guests in attendance to help celebrate including the Chairman of the British Horological Institute along with several of the Board.



Also present were the George Daniels Educational Trust Advisory Committee to whom EFHC had applied for a grant, and in April 2013 they awarded EFHC £24,000 to help to develop activities further.



As part of the award the Club were required to convert into a charity, and in June the members voted unanimously to do so and to call the new organisation the Epping Forest Horology Centre.