

## September Program

On Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, Gene Galbraith presented a very interesting program – “A Bird Cage Turret Clock - The restoration of a Thwaites & Reed 1850 tower clock.” The Southwest Museum of Clocks and Watches



acquired this clock in 2009 and immediately began the extensive restoration, taking the clock from a sad-looking pigeon roost to the fascinating museum centerpiece it is today.

In addition to the restoration, Gene has begun extensive research to learn more about this particular clock. Thwaites & Reed only made a few hundred of the bird cage frame tower clock from 1850 to 1856, and they have records of the early purchasers in their archive. These records may help determine where the clock was originally installed.

Much of the clock was made by hand, including the dial pictured above. This is the original dial that the clockmaker used to set the time displayed on the external dials. Do you notice anything unusual about the face? If you look carefully, you’ll see that the roman numerals are in reverse order – or counterclockwise. This was due to the gearing used for this clock.

Thanks to Gene for telling us about this fascinating project as well as the other tower clock restorations currently underway. We’re looking forward to hearing more about where this clock spent its “early years.” In case you missed the program, or would like to learn more, a video of this clock can be seen on the website of The Southwest Museum of Clocks and Watches at [www.southwestmuseumofclocks.org](http://www.southwestmuseumofclocks.org)

## Restoration of Darche 1908 Flashlight Alarm

Ken Reindel

The Darche Manufacturing Company was a Chicago, Ill. Company that seems to have started its existence out of the Chicago Fire of the 1870s. It survived until the Great Depression in 1929. While short-lived, the company produced multiple patents and became a real innovator in battery-powered alarm clocks. Several interesting models, some with walnut cases but most in heavy nickel-plated steel cases, have been identified by others.

The subject clock for this restoration is shown below. In great disrepair, with rust and corrosion throughout, the challenge was to bring it back to life. (Continued on page 2)



The basic idea behind the Darche Flashlight clock is fairly simple. The alarm key is replaced by a winding lever which, when the clock alarm activates, turns and causes contact with an electrically "hot" C shaped bar, closing the alarm circuit which activates the electric bell.



See figure above. (We have Vince Angell to thank for this figure since our clock had no alarm winding lever present). The light on this particular clock was on a separate circuit and did not activate with the bell. A separate remote switch, tethered at the end of a cord, could be kept near the bed, under the pillow, etc. In the dark of night, the button could be pressed to illuminate the dial. The No. 6 battery was stored in the right-side "silo" can out of sight. Some of the Darches used two batteries, and these batteries mounted outboard behind the two cans. But this particular clock stored the battery internally.

Several enormous challenges with this clock are noted. First, the clock movement can is split all the way around its perimeter. It will have no part to play in a quality restoration and there is no way to repair it. A new can would have to be fabricated. Second, not quite visible from the pictures, is the corrosion resulting from battery leakage over the years. There was not a single wire that could be reused due to corrosion, dry rot, or other problems.

The case itself is built like a tank. It is constructed of very heavy gauge, .068" thick cold rolled steel which has been stamped, bent, formed and dovetail joined (quite the contrast to the .015" thin drawn brass can housing the movement). Tabs coming through the base are bent over to secure the silos. The clock movement can is cleverly held in place by draw bars (visible in the picture above) that are tightened by nuts on the bottom to sandwich the

clock between the two semicircular cross members acting as clamps.

As received, the front door combination lock was jammed shut. The internal mechanism would not turn with the knob so there was no way to get the door opened! This would not prove to be a big problem since the door rivets would have to be drilled out and removed anyhow, but could be a daunting challenge for a new owner if this was not the case. The silo had internal panels that were likewise riveted in place. These would have to be removed for restoration so that all corrosion and repair could be carried out. The buzzer coils, contacts, armature, etc. were also riveted in place and would need to be ground away for removal, drilled and tapped for replacement.



At the time of receipt, our plating tanks did not have the size capacity for this job. We have a small scale horological plating setup. The initial plan was to send out to have the larger parts plated. Unfortunately through the course of things, it proved difficult to find a plater familiar with the required restoration process and its relatively conservative nature in comparison to restoration of automotive parts that they are more familiar with. It therefore became evident that we would have to up-size the tanks.

It was clear that this was going to be a big job. It was my first Darche restoration. Restorers' remorse was beginning to set in. The balancing act was going to be to resist over-restoration. However not having been in 1908 at the time these clocks were built, it would be hard to judge. We'd have to play it by ear.

(Coming in November – the disassembly and restoration process)

<b>Treasurer's Report – no change</b>	
<b>Chapter Account</b>	<b>\$7,579.63</b>
<b>Regional Account</b>	<b>\$4,363.60</b>

## Upcoming events

### October program – October 23

Mark your calendar now for October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. when Pat Holloway will present our October program, The “Key” to Discovery: A Long and Winding Road. This will be your opportunity to learn more about the history of watches and watch winding methods from key wind to back wind and ultimately stem wind. In addition, you’ll get to see examples of various types of keys ranging from purely utilitarian to multi-functional to symbolic and decorative. See you there!

### Wooden works class – November 6/7

Chapter 15 is hosting a two day wooden clockworks class with Phil Gregory on November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. There are no prerequisites for this two day workshop. And, even better, if you don’t have a wooden works clock movement, just let us know. Phil has some works and test stands that he can bring.

The class will be held at the Holloways’ in Pflugerville. Cost for the two-day class is \$70 and is limited to eight attendees. Lunch will be provided. We’ve already filled several of the spots, and there’s not much time left, so please contact Pat (512-252-3881) as soon as possible if you’re interested.

### Third annual potluck – November 13

It’s almost here! Our third annual Chapter 15 Potluck Social will be Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at Jay and Pat Holloway’s home (1105 Lafayette Lane, Pflugerville 78660).

To allow travel time to and from surrounding areas, the social will be a lunch, from 11 a.m. till 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come a little early and stay later to visit if your schedule allows. Spouses and friends are also invited.

Coffee, iced tea, water and paper goods will be furnished. Please plan to bring a dish of your choice: meats/main dishes, vegetables, salads, breads, desserts, etc. are all needed.

*Welcome!*

Join us in welcoming new Chapter 15 members

**Leon Brown**  
**Paul Ranney**

## Chapter membership

It’s that time again – time to renew your Chapter 15 membership for 2011. It’s easier than ever with the addition of the Chapter 15 website PayPal option. If you have an email address, please consider receiving your newsletter electronically – not only does it reduce our costs, it’s environmentally friendly.

Chapter 15 Membership Application  
New Application / Renewal (circle one)  
Membership Dues are \$10

*You must be a current and paid NAWCC member to join a Chapter.*

*You may be a member of more than one Chapter.*

**Please Print or Type**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE’S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE/COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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NAWCC Member # \_\_\_\_\_

HOROLOGICAL INTERESTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send my Chapter 15 newsletter by email.

Make Check Payable To: Chapter 15, NAWCC  
Enclose this application and check and send to:  
Pat Holloway  
1105 Lafayette Lane  
Pflugerville, TX 78660

Newsletter Editor NAWCC Chapter 15  
1105 Lafayette Lane  
Pflugerville TX 78660

### **Save The Date**

- October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 10:00 a.m.  
The “Key” to Discovery: a Long and Winding Road (Watch keys)  
Pat Holloway  
Holloways’
  
- November 6 & 7  
Wooden clock works  
Workshop  
9 – 5 each day  
Holloways’
  
- November 13  
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
Annual Chapter 15 Potluck  
Holloways’

### **Chapter 15 Fall Events**



What are these? Discover the answer along with some interesting tidbits about the history of watch winding through the years during our October 23<sup>rd</sup> program.



Do you have a clock that looks like this in your home or shop? Would you like to learn more about it and how it works? Don't miss this opportunity. Sign up now for the wooden works class November 6/7!