

Museum profile

Halim Time and Glass Museum, Evanston, Illinois

Text and photos by Bob Frishman

Editor's note: The June 2014 issue contained a short article on Claphams National Clock Museum in New Zealand. It was the first in what I hoped might become a regular feature in this journal: portraits of lesser known horological museums, or horological galleries in more general museums. Since then we have had pieces on the Willard House and Clock Museum in Grafton, MA, USA; the Auckland War Memorial Museum in New Zealand; the clocks and watches displayed in Schloss Ludwigslust in Germany, and the Museum of Horology and Mechanical Music in Oberhofen, Switzerland. The series now continues with a portrait of another museum in the USA kindly supplied by Bob Frishman. He has collected, repaired, researched, lectured and written about timekeepers since 1980, and publishes frequently in *Clock & Watch Bulletin*, *Maine Antique Digest*, and elsewhere. Recently he contributed several book reviews to our journal. He can be reached via www.bell-time.com.

The next Museum profile will present the horological collection of the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan, Italy. Suggestions for further articles in the series are always welcome.

At the landmark Sotheby's auctions which dispersed Seth Atwood's Time Museum, dozens of important lots were high-bid by Caleem Halim, a collector unknown at that time to auction attendees. We learned that Mr. Halim is an immigrant from Egypt and owner of a thriving Chicago-area real estate business with more than 5,000 apartments under management. Originating from a lifelong interest in horology and bolstered by his Time Museum acquisitions which account for approximately 20 per cent of his current holdings, his collection numbers more than 1,100 iconic clocks, watches and tools. These now are beautifully displayed in his modern four-story purpose-built Halim Time and Glass Museum which opened in October, 2017.



Halim Time & Glass Museum viewed from Oak Street, Evanston, Illinois.

The museum is a private endeavour, and includes a banquet hall for third-party events which will supplement sales of admission tickets to sustain the museum's financial viability, even after control passes to his three children and their spouses. For now, Mr. Halim continues to acquire, and he plans to add exhibits, particularly of fine American examples which presently are outnumbered by clocks from Europe and Asia.

Ironically, the bulk of the Time Museum's holdings had been slated for permanent exhibition in Chicago back in 1999. A deal was reached between Atwood and then-Mayor Richard Daley for the city to purchase the collection and exhibit it in a local public museum. However, funding fell through and a succession of auctions followed. Now, more than two decades later and just over the city line in Evanston, we find this new horological centerpiece.

In the building's entry level is an impressive 150-piece array of stained glass, a second Halim passion. Louise Comfort Tiffany and John La Farge are the featured artists of



Horological tools including, on the left, a rose engine from the workshop of A.I. Breguet.

several colourful back-lit large-scale windows. Perhaps most rare and unusual is a Tiffany 'Dogwood' lamp shade salesman sample, fabricated as a flat panel for frequent travel that no heavy and fragile leaded glass shade could have survived.

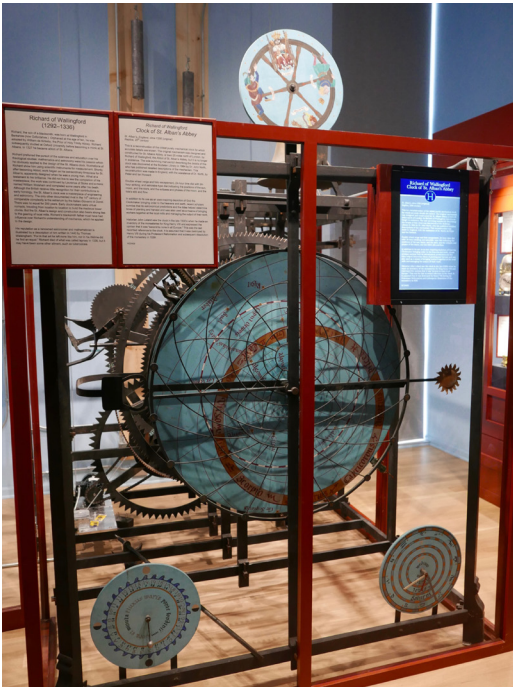
Upstairs are snug galleries lined with well-lit cases arranged chronologically and by country of origin. Framed labels are in large type, full of details, and supplemented by flat-screen digital displays portraying movements, 360-degree views, and operating functions. Independent curator Faith Dukor-Chaplick, whose local shop services the collection, also is working on digital and printed catalogues, but for now a museum visit is the sole way to experience the collection.

Appropriately, the exhibits commence with early tools of the trade. There is a relatively primitive mostly-wood American wheel-cutting engine, probably from late eighteenth-century Connecticut, but more sophisticated

English and Continental metal tools and machines provide the bulk of the display.

Further on, an entire room houses a 1936 full-scale iron replica of the oldest known mechanical tower clock on which we have clear details. The Richard of Wallingford Clock of Saint Alban's Abbey, constructed around 1356 and described in John North's 2005 *God's Clockmaker*, no longer exists. The original's 24-hour striking as well as indications for tides and astronomical predictions all were recreated and are viewable here.

A first-century B.C. Egyptian stone sundial, and then Renaissance clocks, continue the timeline progression. Next are English longcase clocks by makers including Fromanteel, Knibb, Quare, Graham, Clement, Ellicott, and Tompion, as well as elaborate bracket clocks, several made for Turkish and Asian markets. Highly ornate French, German, Chinese and Japanese clocks join



Twentieth-century full-scale replica of the circa 1356 Richard of Wallingford clock.



Chinese Imperial tribute-style table clock with automata, double gourd and quarter striking.



English bracket clocks. Left by Diego Evans, center by Stephen Rimbault, right by Markwick Markham.

Left: Su Song's astronomical and time-telling tower replica.



Early European clocks and, at center, a stone sundial from ancient Egypt.

the lineups, and an expansive round case holds several important marine chronometers by Breguet, Margetts, Arnold, Dent, and Earnshaw. In that same room are wall cases of astronomical regulators by Dent, Frodsham, and Arnold, as well as later precision clocks by Riefler, Shortt, and Fedechenko.

American clocks occupy their own galleries, with fine examples of longcase, wall, shelf, and mantel styles including a number by the Willard family. A Lemuel Curtis girandole banjo clock hangs between pristine shelf and dwarf clocks by Joshua Wilder. Two extremely rare regulators by Charles Fasoldt reveal the mystery of who bought them by phone at a Marlborough, Massachusetts, Skinner auction in April, 2017.

Mark Frank, a collector of rare and important clocks, resides in Chicago near the museum. He has befriended and assisted Mr. Halim, and has visited the museum many times. After its opening, he recorded a 20-minute video survey of nearly all the displays, and he is happy to share this large

digital file. He can be contacted through his website — <http://www.my-time-machines.net>. Even without narration or titles, the video offers a well-paced introduction to this world-class collection.

The museum’s own website is <http://halimmuseum.org> and regularly showcases an item of the month.



English bracket clocks. From left: William Carpenter quarter-chime musical, Eardley Norton musical, Robert Ward quarter-chime musical.



English bracket clocks. From left: Daye Barker, silver-cased by B.L. Vulliamy, musical by Thomas Bray, japanned by Robert Higgs.



English longcase clocks. The one at the left is by George Graham, in the center is a William Barker astronomical equation clock, at right is a Richard Eve musical with automata and astronomical dial.



French cast-bronze ormolu mantel clocks by bronzier Jean-Joseph de Saint-Germain. Note the large-panel video screen below with images.

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French gilt-bronze mantel clocks. From left: *Love Triumphs Over Time* by bronzier Etienne Martincourt with movement by Gabriel Courieult; *Erato and Eros* by bronzier Andre-Antoine Ravrio, movement by Mesnil; Pierre Le Roy *Allegory of Wisdom*.



Left: Ferdinand Berthoud month-going regulator with multiple functions and equation of time. Case by Balthazar Lieutaud.



Right: Antide Janvier 15-day regulator with three movements. Lower dials show calendar and lunar indications.



Japanese chamber clocks, two with double foliot.



American clocks. Above: Joshua Wilder shelf with striking; Lemuel Curtis girandole banjo; Joshua Wilder dwarf. Right: American shelf clocks. Seth Thomas Plymouth Hollow double-dial calendar; oak Theodore Timby with calendar and Gilman Joslin 6-inch globe.

