

## Letters to the Editor

Letters offered for inclusion in the March 2021 issue of *Antiquarian Horology* should reach the editor before 10 February. They can be sent to peterdeclercq@btinternet.com, or c/o The Editor to the AHS, 4 Lovat Lane, London EC3R 8DT.

Opinions expressed in 'Letters to the Editor' are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the AHS. The Editor reserves the right to refuse publication.

### More on Bonniksen

*The author of the four-part article on Bahne Bonniksen published in this journal has sent this reply to the letter by Alan Myers published in the September issue:*

Thank you for your kind words about the article being interesting and informative. In answer to your view that it was based on a misquotation, I feel that your interpretation is a misrepresentation.

The quotation verbatim is indeed what you quoted, but it goes on to state that 'already some £50,000 have been invested in Karrusel Watches and that scarcely ever a complaint has come to my notice, and all movements have been made on these premises.' Premises he refers to is 16 Norfolk Street.

I have read and reread the quote and still believe that it means how much money customers have invested in his company i.e. by buying the watches he has made. The quote says 'that already some £50,000 have been invested in karrusel watches and scarcely ever a complaint has come to my notice.' From this I assume it means he has sold £50,000 worth and no one has complained. I think my interpretation is absolutely correct.

The reason I think it is meant to be interpreted in this way is because there are many articles which have also interpreted it this way, not least in his obituary in the *Horological Journal* Vol. LXXVII April 1935 entitled 'The Late Mr. Bahne Bonniksen', which states: 'As a foreigner without capital,

and no workshop, his task was great, but during the ten years following the appearance of the first movement he had made and sold £50,000 worth of these watches.'

I would hope the *Horological Journal* would get his obituary correct.

Dr Clare Woodward

### More diamond dials

I enjoyed reading recent submissions by Martyn Pettifer and John Robey regarding clocks with diamond dials. Two American examples also are worth noting.

An uncommon variant of the classic American banjo clock, more properly termed Simon Willard's Patent Timepiece, featured a diamond-shape head and dial. These may support one explanation for the rarity of certain clocks; in my opinion it is an unappealing modification and their present scarcity attests to few ever made and sold. Nearly all patent timepieces, mostly with round painted iron dials, originated in the Boston area from the shops of the Willards and their associates and competitors during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The circa 1800–1804 wall-hanging clock illustrated on the next page was made by Daniel Munroe & Co., of Concord, Massachusetts. It features a typical brass eight-day weight-driven time-only movement. At the 2016 *Clocks at Winterthur* NAWCC symposium I created, Concord Museum curator David Wood lectured about these clocks and included the museum's example attributed to the shop of Aaron Willard Jr., Simon's nephew. The Winterthur Museum in Delaware, site of the three-day conference, owns another by Jabez Baldwin who at that time worked in Salem, Massachusetts.

The second more-unique diamond dial appears in the 1770 engraved print, also illustrated on the next page, by famed American Revolutionary-War patriot Paul Revere. A large dark diamond dial is visible on the sloping roof of "Old Brick", Boston's First Church and meeting house completed in 1713 and demolished more than two centuries ago. Benjamin Bagnall, one of Boston's first clockmakers, constructed the public clock's



Wall-hanging clock c. 1800-1804 made by Daniel Munroe & Co., of Concord. Photo Courtesy of Gary R. Sullivan Antiques, Inc.

movement 1717-1718. He promptly converted it from one-day to eight-day winding as the town's Selectmen insisted, and he still was maintaining it in 1738. Records indicate that the movement was in good order when sold at auction in 1838.

Centered in this iconic image is the Old State House, still standing, with its building-mounted vertical sundial as another witness



The Bloody Massacre..., engraved and printed by Paul Revere, 1770. Below a detail showing the diamond dial and the sundial.



to the "Boston Massacre". Depicting one of the bloody precursors to America's War of Independence, the propagandistic print promoted many inaccuracies about the March 5th event. Paul Revere plagiarized the scene from Boston's young artist Henry Pelham, half-brother of one of Colonial America's finest artists, John Singleton Copley. Revere rushed his copy to publication but the initial

pressings had the time of the carnage wrong by two hours. A hasty correction was made, and subsequent prints had adjusted the clock's hour hand's position to ten, not eight. Originals of both states of this small print today are rare and costly. Revere himself was plagiarized by another local clockmaker, Jonathan Mulliken of Newburyport, who issued and sold the print under his own name.

Oddly, a later depiction of "Old Brick" showed a round white clock dial. It is unlikely that the dial's appearance was misrepresented, so subsequent events or simple deterioration may have led to the dial's replacement in a more conventional shape.

*The Bloody Massacre* image, with its two viewable time displays, is one I use regularly to promote the *Horology 1776* symposium I have organized for October 7–9, 2021, in Philadelphia. I invite all *Antiquarian Horology* readers to attend; details are at [www.horology1776.com](http://www.horology1776.com)

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