

# *B H I* *orological Journal*



*December 2011*



*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*

## Awards, Education and New Members' Day

Over 100 people attended the BHI's Awards, Education and New Members' Day 2011, which was held at Upton Hall on Saturday 29th October.

A welcome by BHI President Kenneth Lloyd Jones was followed by the introduction of the day's programme by BHI Chairman Richard Thomas MBHI.

Geoffrey Walker FBHI got proceedings under way with 'A Practical Approach to Conservation' which described the process of microwelding within clock conservation.

Microwelding enables worn components to be refurbished by building up the worn surface on, for example, pinions, gathering pallets and escapement pallets. After refinishing they are indistinguishable from the original. This approach provides an economical alternative to making replacement components and thus helps to maintain the originality of the movement.

BHI Chief Examiner David Poole FBHI then gave a talk on 'Examinations – This Year and Next', which offered an insight into the assessment and standard of candidates' work and explained the introduction of the new examinations commencing in 2012.

Candidates were advised about how they could improve the quality of their work. A detailed booklet: 'A Quick Guide to the BHI/EAL examinations', which is now available, will assist candidates to make decisions concerning which examination route they should follow.

Tom Keegan from the British School of Watchmaking then gave a watchmaking demonstration teaching students how to collet a balance spring and form the terminal coil.

Alan Middleton FBHI provided a conducted tour of the museum and collection.

Following a buffet lunch, the Prizegiving Ceremony took place. Roger Smith FBHI, who gave the address, thanked the BHI for inviting him to attend and said it was a great honour. It was, he said, almost 25 years since he attended Manchester School of Horology. He fondly remembered his first day as being the most enjoyable day in education that he had ever had. 'As I sat, wide eyed on the bus home that evening I knew that I had been gripped by this fascinating and multi-faceted occupation of horology.'

He said the beauty of the three year full-time BHI course was, and still is, its broad spectrum. He studied everything from turret clocks to modern mechanical wristwatches. At the age of 18, he left college and worked as a watch repairer at a service centre. Later he set up his own workshop on the Isle of Man.



Over the years much had changed in the trade, explained Roger. 'When I left college and began work there seemed to be very little respect for the watch repairer, often reflected by the low wages on offer. In the past 15 years or so, with the rapid expansion of the Swiss watch industry and its renewed interest in the mechanical wristwatch, along with the ever increasing numbers of watches and clocks that are now becoming collectable – I believe that there has never been a better time for the horologist.'

'To succeed in horology today you not only need to be skilled. If your goal is to become self employed, you need to become adept at the day to day running of the business, and if your dream is to be employed then you need a willingness to listen, learn and have patience'.

Roger said that the most important quality was professionalism because 'whether you like it or not you are the future face of British horology'. He added: 'I wish you well with your continuing education and for some of you, your first steps into employment within this thoroughly absorbing profession.'

Following Roger's address, the certificates and prizes were presented. There had been a record number of examination entries in 2011.

The BHI's Bronze Medal was presented to George Thomas for outstanding portfolio work. George thanked everyone for their support, particularly Phillip Gale FBHI, who has acted as a mentor, and Peter Watkinson FBHI. His full speech can be found on the letters page on 534.

The Master of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, Andrew Crisford, presented the Poole Cup, also to George Thomas, who is only the third recipient of the award, Ian Ford FBHI and David Higgon being previous awardees.

George said: 'It really is a honour. I hardly feel worthy of such an award at such an early stage in my career.'

BHI President Kenneth Lloyd Jones then announced the Council's Special Award 'in recognition of outstanding or exemplary personal service to the Institute' to Mike Corby.

Mike spent his professional life as an industrial chemist, but has always had a strong interest in horology. He has been an active contributor from his first days as a BHI member, and was also on the committee of the Notts & Derby Branch. As treasurer for many



Mike Corby, who received the BHI Special Award, with his wife Pauline.

by Jayne Hall



David Poole FBHI, George Thomas with the Poole Cup, which was presented by Master of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers Andrew Crisford.

years, he was responsible for putting the Branch finances on a sound basis. He also acted as treasurer for the Branch auctions, which have raised a great deal for the Institute.

Mike's love of history made him an ideal guide and he conducted tours of the Hall for a number of years. He also gave talks to non-horological groups, sharing with them his interest in horology in general. When at Upton, he always kept himself busy, being willing to help in any way which was needed.

Finally, the prestigious BHI, Malcolm Barratt Silver Medal, awarded for 'outstanding developments of achievement in any field of horology or related to horology,' was presented by Richard Thomas to Roger Smith FBHI. Roger now joins the ranks of 'horological greats' who have been previous recipients, including Anthony Randall, Derek Pratt and Jonathan Betts, to name but a few.

Roger said: 'It is a great honour and I would like to thank the BHI for this award.'

A champagne toast in celebration of the students' success, kindly donated by Director Hugh Barnes, was followed by a fascinating insight into the Bowes Swan Automaton, by West Dean Course tutor Matthew Read.

The scale of the task, together with the intricacies of the unique design, were well explained by Matthew, who has been in great demand to give his talk to BHI branches.



BHI, Malcolm Barratt Silver Medal winner Roger Smith FBHI.



Phillip Gale FBHI who mentored the BHI Bronze Medal winner George Thomas.



Richard Thomas MBHI, with Special Award recipient Mike Corby, and Kenneth Lloyd Jones.