

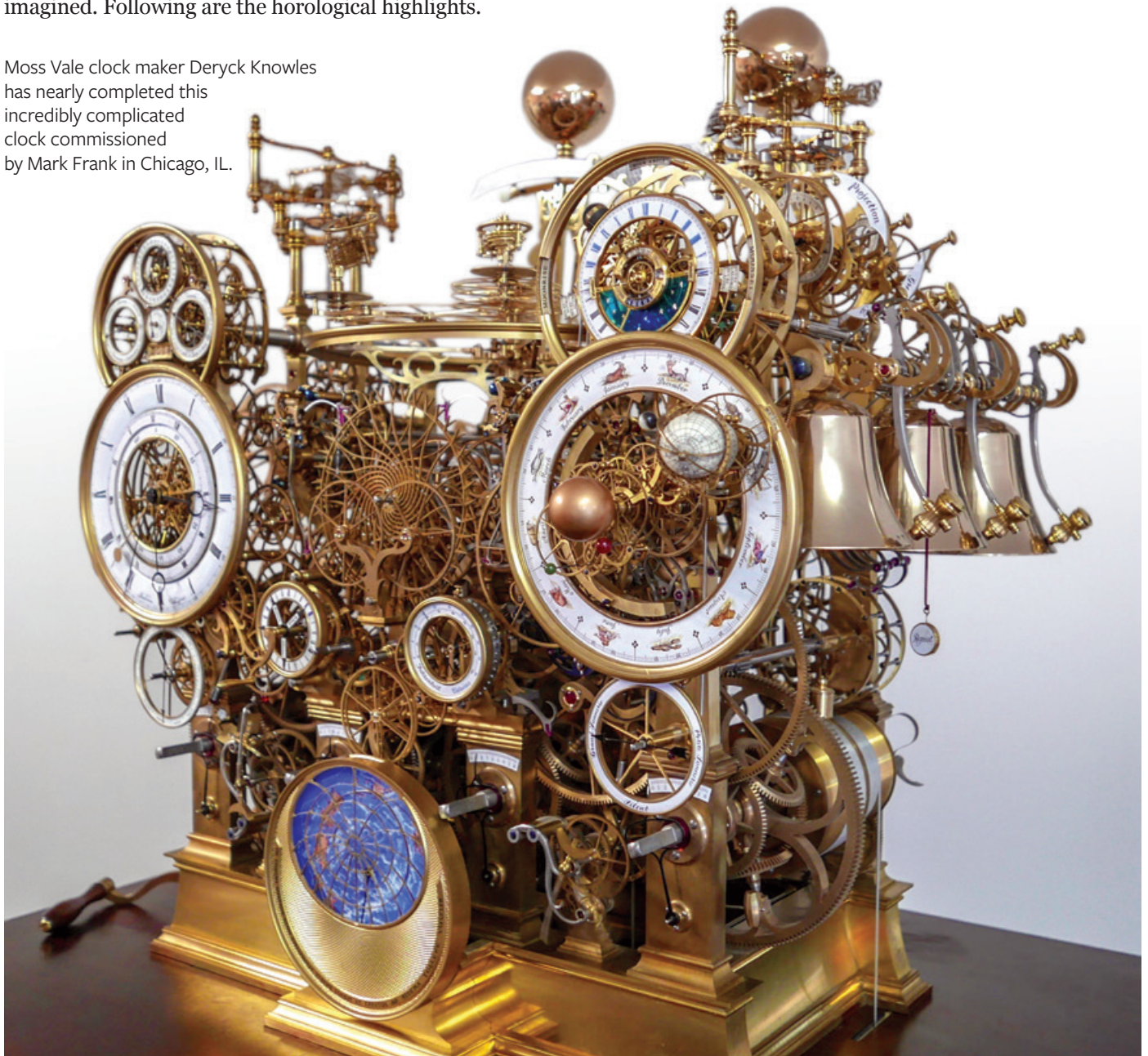
Horology in Australia

By Bob Frishman, FNAWCC (MA)

When I told my Australian friend Doug Minty, who is also an NAWCC fellow and former Board member, that I would like to visit Australia and speak at his local chapters, he was happy to invite me. We were chatting at the fantastic exhibit of carriage clocks he helped organize at the National Watch & Clock Museum in Columbia, PA, during the 75th anniversary celebrations. Thanks to his generous hospitality, and some exploring on my own, the visit “down under” a few months later was even more rewarding than I and my wife, Jeanne Schinto, could have imagined. Following are the horological highlights.

Moss Vale clock maker Deryck Knowles has nearly completed this incredibly complicated clock commissioned by Mark Frank in Chicago, IL.

Doug and his wife, Joan, met us at Sydney airport. Our first stop was at the workshop of Deryck Knowles, who for years has been building, as a commission for Chicago collector Mark Frank, the world’s most complicated mechanical clock. The amazing machine is nearing completion, and a full description is on Mark’s website <http://www.my-time-machines.net>. Deryck’s business name is Buchanans of Chelmsford.



We then proceeded to Australia's capitol city, Canberra, where we visited the fully equipped shop of horologist Roger Little. Roger then joined us at Norm Bannerman's home, where in the dining room sits his spectacular accurate working replicas of all four Harrison sea clocks. A stroll through the National Gallery of Australia produced one *Horology in Art* example, a circa 1840 portrait by Maurice Felton whose well-dressed matronly subject sported a large gold watch and chain. I presented

a specially prepared illustrated program to their local NAWCC Chapter 182 of which Roger Little is President.

Back in Sydney, a walking tour included the late 19th-century Queen Victoria Building where two large and lavishly decorated four-sided clocks hang from its ceilings. The Sydney Observatory, with its rooftop time ball, hosts twilight tours and celestial viewings for the public. In its small museum is an 1818 Breguet astronomical clock used to time the 1874 transit of



A monumental 19th-century model of the famous clock in France's Strasbourg Cathedral can be found at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney.



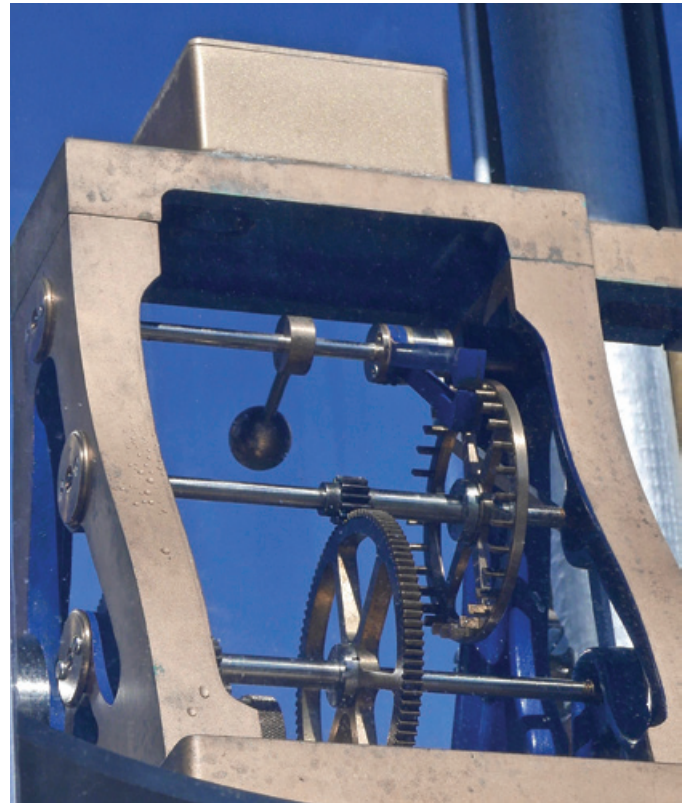
Artist Stuart Ringholt in 2014 produced this oversize illuminated mechanical mantel clock on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

Marine chronometer no. 1774 by Parkinson & Frodsham, Change Alley, London (1801-1890), on display at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum



Portrait of a woman of New South Wales, circa 1840, by Maurice Felton (1803-1842), exhibited in the National Gallery of Australia, Sydney.

A steam-powered clock stands tall at Scenic World in Australia's beautiful Blue Mountains.



The steam clock's pinwheel escapement tops the movement made in Vancouver.



A view of the Blue Mountains of Australia. IMAGE COURTESY OF PIXABAY.

Venus, and a Thomas Earnshaw chronometer, the only one of five timekeeping instruments still working at the conclusion of explorer Matthew Flinders early 19th-century three-year voyage of Australian discovery. A handout map of the southern hemisphere night sky revealed the constellation *Horologium* (clock in Latin). Although faint to us, it comprises the Horologium Supercluster, a massive cloud of about 5,000 galaxy groups.

The State Library of New South Wales, the oldest library in Australia, recently opened updated galleries of more than 300 paintings displayed salon-style, with descriptions offered on large digital screens. Several 19th- and 20th-century portraits included clocks or watches, and I dutifully photographed them for my collection. In the building's new Collectors' Gallery, several old clocks, watches, and sundials were displayed.

The Powerhouse Museum, full of science and technology exhibits, features a massive working model of the famous monumental Strasbourg Cathedral clock, including several dials and animated figures. Richard Bartholomew Smith, a Sydney clock maker, built this replica between 1887 and 1889, although he never saw the original. In a nearby display case is a Parkinson & Frodsham boxed chronometer, a few other good clocks, a 1771 pocket watch by John Ellicott, and another made in 1850 by Louis Clement Breguet. The Maritime Museum, where I toured a full-scale tall ship replica of Captain Cook's HM *Bark Endeavour*, displays boxed chronometer No. 2112 by Hewitt & Sons, London. In the Museum of Sydney, I viewed a list of female convicts who were among the first settlers transported from England in 1788. At the top of the list was Elizt. Barber, age 27, Book Stitcher, who received a seven-year sentence for stealing 27 shillings and a watch.

Looking up at the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney.
IMAGE COURTESY OF PIXABAY.



The Museum of Contemporary Art Australia owns a huge illuminated mantel clock made, with a horologist's assistance, in 2014 by artist Stuart Ringholt. Nearly 10 feet tall, it assumes that Earth's rotation is 18 hours, not 24, and thus runs that much faster, probing the differences between "mechanical" time and "emotional" time. An oversize ticking and striking movement is visible through a rear clear panel.

Sydney-area NAWCC Chapter 72 had their Christmas meeting during my visit, and I presented my special program to that group, too. We again saw member Carl Sona, a local collector and horologist, whose home and small-clock collection we visited earlier that week. Also present was Stan Boyatzis, who with his wife Sylvia hosted a dinner for us at his home. His carriage clock collection is outstanding, and he recruited me into NAWCC's International Carriage Clock Chapter 195, which he heads.

During the second week of our Australia time, Jeanne and I mainly were tourists in rural areas outside of Sydney. However, during our three days in the beautiful Blue Mountains, we came face to face with the large four-dial Scenic World Steam Clock crafted by Raymond L. Saunders of Landmark Clocks International, Vancouver,

Canada. Another of his steam clocks stands in Vancouver. Dedicated in 2014, the clock announces time's passing on steam calliope whistles. Its mechanical pendulum movement, with pinwheel escapement, is powered by weights in the form of coal-filled rail cars lifted every 10 minutes by a small steam engine.

I know that Doug, and the other friendly Australians I was privileged to meet, would be happy to welcome other NAWCC members to their country. Both he and I can gladly share more details about who you could meet and what you could see.

About the Author

Bob Frishman has repaired, restored, collected, sold, and researched antique timekeepers since 1980. His business, Bell-Time Clocks, is based in Andover, MA. He lectures regularly about the history, science, and culture of mechanical timekeeping; has authored many articles for the *Watch & Clock Bulletin*; and can be reached via www.bell-time.com. He is an NAWCC Fellow, Chair of the NAWCC Ward Francillon Time Symposium Committee, and a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers.



One of two large modern four-dial hanging clocks in Sydney's restored 1898 Queen Victoria Building.



Time ball atop the 1859 Sydney Observatory on the city's Observatory Hill.

Risky Tissot

If you're eager to salvage
What time is chewing up
A worn-out car for example
Or computer on last legs
Being Einstein if it works
Forrest Gump if it doesn't
You would probably take a chance
On this thrift-shop
Tissot quartz
Crown missing like a tooth
That I got and research raved
Never had a crown
(A pusher it's called)
Plus its 70s Omega movement
Presto with a cell
Making me Einstein smart all right
But somehow feeling like Gump

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Many of our members know that vintage watch collecting can have its surprises. In this whimsical poem the poet buys a watch not knowing that it sets by using a pusher mechanism (you push against a dimpled stem with a ball point pen), not the usual crown, nor that it has an excellent Omega movement (Tissot was owned by Omega at the time). Ray is a lecturer and past associate dean in Harvard University Extension School, where he teaches courses on literature and management. His email is comeau@fas.harvard.edu.

