



Thomas Cruttenden, Yorke, late 17thC, marquetry and walnut month going longcase clock, inscribed 'Tho. Cruttenden, Yorke, Fecit', rising hood, spoon lock, remnants of original latch, dial 10in case, 82.5in high. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Feb 06. HP: £16,000. ABP: £18,820.*



Two globes by Thomas Malby & Son, London, one a terrestrial globe dated 1850, brass meridian, ebonised stand, ring with zodiac calendar scale, 16.5in wide, and a matching celestial globe dated 1847. *Andrew Hartley, Ilkley. Feb 04. HP: £7,000. ABP: £8,233.*



Victorian 18ct gold keyless minute repeating hunter chronograph, dial and movement signed Chas. Frodsham, By Appointment to the Queen, 84 Strand, London, No. 08381, AD Fmsz, partly Swiss, hallmarked for London 1894. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 04. HP: £4,200. ABP: £4,940.*



Rolex gentleman's stainless steel, gold and diamond 'Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona', ref. 16523, 8 diamond-set markers, centre seconds, subsidiary dials for constant seconds, minutes, hours, steel case, calibrated gold bezel and on a steel and gold 'Oyster' bracelet, wooden case, spare link and certificate of guarantee dated 1995. *Bearne's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £4,000. ABP: £4,705.*

A History of Time

Toby Pinn of Clevedon Salerooms welcomes us aboard his time machine and takes us on a whistle-stop tour of the history of clocks and time keeping.

Professor Stephen Hawking's best selling book of the above title begins at a point in time considerably earlier than our starting point here, and whilst not wishing to confuse his 'Big Bang' with my 'Big Ben' we do at least share an astronomical link in our nearest Star.

The sundial was developed in the second millennium BC in Egypt and Mesopotamia and consisted originally of a pole in the ground. The Greeks made further improvements, aided of course with an ample supply of sunshine, and by the fourth century BC had portable sundials. So accurate is a correctly set up sundial that until the end of the nineteenth century and the invention of the electric clock, they were being used to set the time on mechanical clocks!

We now need to fly around the globe to those clever Chinese and to one Su Song who not only built, but also described and illustrated what is considered the first mechanical timepiece in 1090AD; a clock that was powered by water. Back to Europe and it is not until the beginning of the Renaissance that things start to get mechanical with cogs and hands in what we would today recognise as a clock. It is thought that one of the earliest mechanical clocks in Europe was set up in a church in Milan in 1335. It is no coincidence that churches would often own the only clock in the vicinity. Not only did they have the necessary wealth to purchase one, but the congregation would no longer have a valid excuse for missing church when you could see the clock face high up on the tower or hear its striking from several miles away!

These early clocks relied on suspended weights to drive them but this meant that they were not at all portable as any movement would cause the clock to stop. In the latter half of the fifteenth century someone came up with the idea of a coiled spring as the driving power. With the wristwatch still some 400 years off, it was for the first time possible to carry a portable timepiece from a belt, assuming you were wealthy enough to afford one. The problem at this time however was much the same as for those folk in the early 1980s with their cumbersome mobile phones. It was all very well owning one, but until lots of other people had one they were of limited use, except of course as a status symbol!

A big breakthrough occurred in 1656 when the Dutch scientist Christian Huygens invented the pendulum as a means of regulating clocks. The use of the long pendulum became the speciality of the English, and world-renowned makers such as Johannes Fromanteel, Thomas Tompion and Joseph Knibb ensured English clocking making was, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century unsurpassed. In 2003 a long case clock by Tompion sold at auction in London for just under £1,000,000. A lot of money you might think but when you consider the

price some people will pay for a hundred year old rectangle of painted canvas, perhaps not?

English clocks of the seventeenth century sat on a bracket fixed to a wall, hence their name bracket clocks. With a pendulum swinging back and forth and one or two weights hanging beneath the clock it became apparent that anyone brushing past the weights and pendulum could easily disturb the smooth running of the clock. The solution was to enclose the weights and pendulum in a long case – hence the name long case clock. A little tip, the name Grandfather clock is a Victorian term relating to a popular music hall song and should be avoided, especially if you are trying to sound as if you know what you are talking about! In the eighteenth century, as the nation prospered more and more, people could afford to have clocks in their homes, though they were still a costly purchase. If you think that governments in recent decades have rarely missed an opportunity to impose taxes on the people spare a thought for clock owners in 1797. Pitt's government passed an Act of Parliament requiring the owners of clocks to pay an annual levy of five shillings per clock! This was not a major vote winner and as a result the Act was repealed the following year.

The Victorians produced ever more fanciful creations and in the second half of the nineteenth century we often think of France and their delightful carriage clocks. You can buy a brand new carriage clock from any high street jeweller but I am afraid to say, that with a few exceptions, they are but poor imitations of their predecessors.

Into the twentieth century and one of the biggest developments was the move from the pocket watch to the wristwatch. As the mechanics became ever smaller, so someone had the idea that by attaching a strap to the watch you could glance at it on your wrist rather than having to take it from your pocket.

The trouble with time is that you have either too much of it, (I hear such people exist) or not enough of it. Here I am out of time, and I did not even mention Rolex, Switzerland, cuckoo clocks or quartz movements! Like me you probably have a timepiece of some sort in virtually every room of your house, one on your wrist and another on your mobile phone. Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save. With that in mind I will leave you with these wise words. 'A man with a watch knows what time it is. A man with two watches is never sure'.

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Two day marine chronometer, by Victor Kullberg, engraved 'Victor Kullberg maker to the Admiralty the Indian and Italian Governments 105 Liverpool Road, London N', brass strung and inlaid coromandel case, plaque engraved and numbered 3136. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 01. HP: £3,800. ABP: £4,469.*



An 18ct gold open-faced pocket chronometer, James McCabe. *Gorringes, Bexhill On Sea. Dec 04. HP: £3,400. ABP: £3,999.*



Mid 19thC gilt-brass carriage timepiece, chronometer movement by Knight & Bucknell, London, Earnshaw spring-detent escapement with diamond endstone, single fusee with chain, 6in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jan 04. HP: £3,200. ABP: £3,764.*



18ct gold J.W. Benson minute repeater chronograph hunter cased pocket watch with original 1918 invoice & warranty, formerly owned by W.H. Cutler Esq. *John Taylors, Louth. Dec 04. HP: £3,100. ABP: £3,646.*



Early 18thC Dutch longcase clock movement, arched brass dial, moonphase and signs of the zodiac, inscribed 'Pieter Swaan, Amsterdam', seconds dial, ringed winding holes, triangular calendar aperture showing the days of the week, overall height 2.22m. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £1,900. ABP: £2,234.*



Two-day marine chronometer, by Frodsham & Keen, Liverpool. No. 3390. *D M Nesbit & Company, Southsea. Jul 03. HP: £1,500. ABP: £1,764.*



White metal keyless pivoted detent pocket chronometer with enamelled Roman dial, subsidiary seconds and blued steel hands, free sprung movement, cut bi-metallic compensation balance and blued steel spherical spring, signed Henry Capt, Geneve, no. 20330, associated brass bulkhead case. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 04. HP: £1,500. ABP: £1,764.*



Late 19thC French 'The Navisphere' patent celestial globe, devised by Commander M. H. DeMagnac of the French Navy, illustrating various constellations, brass measuring gauge, lacquered brass stand, mahogany case, instruction pamphlet, 13.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £1,300. ABP: £1,529.*



Lacquered brass quadrant by Yeates, Dublin, lined leather case. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 02. HP: £1,250. ABP: £1,470.*



18thC brass perpetual calendar, 3 dials each with silvered back plate, showing month, day and date, 5.25 x 4.75in, inscribed, dated 1713. *Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Feb 04. HP: £760. ABP: £893.*



Swiss keyless calendar/world time bulls-eye desk timepiece, enamelled Roman dial with subsidiary moonphase/seconds, date, day & month, inscribed 'Greenwich Time, Dobson and Sons, Piccadilly', reverse dial with subsidiary dials for New York, St Petersburg, Paris, Calcutta, Melbourne, Vienna and Berlin, 3in high. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 04. HP: £700. ABP: £823.*



18thC Butterfield-type sundial compass, bird gnomon engraved with foliage and latitude scale of 45-60 degrees, compass with blued iron needle, underside of the horizontal plate engraved with latitudes of 16 English and Irish cities and towns, original fish skin covered case, 6.3cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 05. HP: £680. ABP: £799.*



Tudor, gentleman's Prince Date chronograph steel bracelet watch, automatic movement, silver dial, Oyster bracelet. Model No. 79280, Serial No. H119347. *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. Oct 03. HP: £650. ABP: £764.*



Bronze sundial, John Da..., Windsor, engraved Roman numerals, compass points etc, pierced gnomon, signed, 30.5cm dia. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £460. ABP: £541.*



19thC brass compass sundial by Stanley, silvered compass dial, engraved decoration, marked Stanley, Gt. Tiernstile, Holborn, London, tri-form adjustable screw feet, spirit levels, base plate, mahogany transit case, 17.5cm. *Rosebery's, London. Dec 04. HP: £380. ABP: £446.*



Late 19thC two-day marine chronometer, silvered dial signed Bassnett's, Liverpool, No. 5005, subsidiary up-down and seconds dials, cedar box. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 05. HP: £320. ABP: £376.*



19thC bronze sextant, mahogany case, 'Frodsham & Keen Successors to Parkinson and Frodsham Chronometer Makers' paper label. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Jun 05. HP: £260. ABP: £305.*



'Geographica' 10in Terrestrial globe on stand, c1900, sphere with coloured detail, depicting 'Railways, Steamer route distances in sea miles, Heights in English feet, British Possessions Red', brass meridian on a turned wood and ebonised stand, 48cm high. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Feb 05. HP: £260. ABP: £305.*



Pocket sundial, fitted turned and ebonised case, 6cm, and another in a leather case, and another inscribed O'Leary, Dublin in a carved ebony case inscribed 'Killarney'. (3) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 04. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



Indian circular brass compass sundial, with glazed compass, engraved with zodiac signs, 14.7cm dia. *af. Rosebery's, London. Mar 06. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*



Edwardian brass tabletop sundial, four engraved rings on twin post support and circular mahogany plinth, unnamed, 17cms high. *Rosebery's, London. Jun 05. HP: £100. ABP: £117.*



19thC ivory round pocket perpetual calendar, the outer border reading the days with moveable centre with the dates, 2in dia. *Ewbank Auctioneers, Send, Surrey. Dec 05. HP: £35. ABP: £41.*