



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF WATCHMAKING

A **WOSTEP** PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL



British School of Watchmaking

SPRING 2023

WELCOME BACK TO BSOW

2022 ended with the British School of Watchmaking delivering another eleven high quality watchmaking graduates.

With all these graduates now employed we turn our focus to the new 1800 and 3000 hour courses.

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2022 GRADUATION AND RESULTS

As 2022 drew to a close, so did both classes at BSOW. These two groups of students were put through their paces using the updated and much more challenging WOSTEP marking criteria. In addition the 3000-hour group found themselves following the course from home during one of the COVID lockdowns.

Despite these less than ideal circumstances, our students rose to the challenge; average results from both courses were in line with past years, but two surpassed expectations. WOSTEP 3000 student Rafal and Alice from the 1800 hour class both secured grades higher than anyone before them. Watches of Switzerland employee Alice is now our highest achieving student of all time. With a final grade of 96.04% she has certainly set the bar high for those who follow.

This year was also the first time since the pandemic that we have been able to give our classes the sendoff they deserve. On the 16th February our graduates, their families and a large number of industry professionals came together at the Edwardian Hotel in Manchester for a well-deserved celebration and welcome to their new profession. Well done to you all.



"Attending the Wostep 3000 and 1800 hour graduates' award night at The Edwardian Manchester gave me enormous pleasure and especially having seen all the successful students receive their well-deserved awards.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to speak to several of the students who were enthused by their future prospects. It was also encouraging to note that, through the George Daniels Educational Trust, a new generation of bright young watch makers is at the start of what I am sure will be exciting careers in watchmaking."

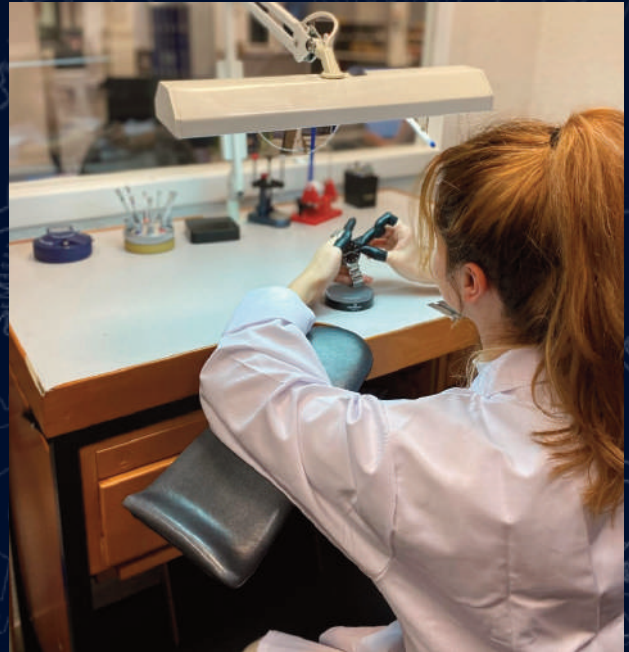
Roger Smith OBE, Roger W Smith Watches.

ANNUAL SUPPORTERS' MEETING

In February our annual supporters' meeting was held at the school, giving many their first glimpse of our new facility in Stockport. It was our pleasure to be able to invite everyone and gain valuable insight into the current requirements of the UK industry. Such industry input is crucial to us as an educational establishment, without this direction our graduates would not leave as well prepared for what lies ahead of them. Thank you to all who were able to attend and for your important contribution.

NEW SUPPORTER FRASER HART

Our commitment to the British School of Watchmaking reflects our desire to promote and secure the future generations of skilled watchmakers and is a testament to our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of quality and craftsmanship and delivering exceptional experiences to our customers.



NEW SUPPORTER H.L. BROWN

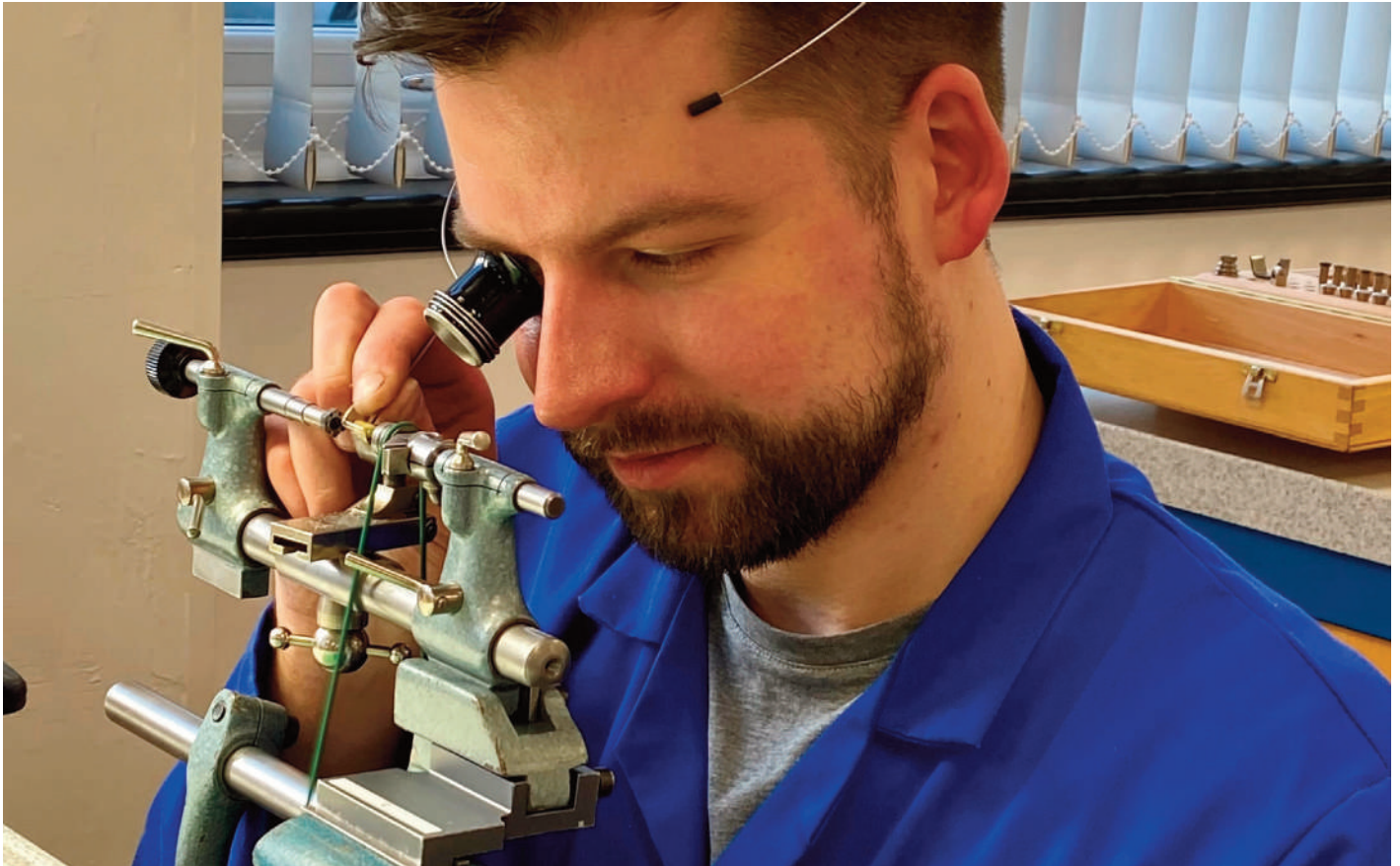


We have been a beneficiary of the School, with our watchmaker Matthew Ardron having graduated the 1800 hour course in 2020. "The School taught me a great deal, not just about the servicing of watches but also the professionalism and standards that are expected of you by clients and manufacturers. The tutors were incredibly supportive and always willing to help us go that extra mile, whether building project watches or perfecting service techniques, they were always happy to help".

The BSW faces many challenges in providing the high calibre training necessary for its graduates to service premier brand watches to the standard required; we understand the industry must help in this and HL Brown is delighted to play a role in doing so by becoming a supporter of the School.

James Frampton Managing Director

CURRENT 3000 HOUR STUDENT – MARCIN DOLEGOWSKI



Like many students who find their way to the British School of Watchmaking Marcin Dolegowski has always had a passion for mechanical objects, understanding how things work and putting things together. Eventually he turned his attention to watches and quickly knew he wanted to pursue a career in the industry.

Originally from Poland, where there is no watchmaking School, his journey has required more upheaval than most. After coming to the UK in 2016 and running his own IT business he decided to turn his passion into a career and set about gaining experience – making himself a workshop at home to practice on broken watches from eBay and enrolling himself on several BHI courses.

Then in September 2021 he interviewed for a role in aftersales at Fraser Hart and found a company who were looking to invest in education and training to grow their watchmaking talent. With the full support of Fraser Hart Marcin applied for a place on the WOSTEP 3000-hour course and was invited to the assessment day. He was impressed by the professionalism and modern facilities and was pleased that all the candidates, be they from a big brand, small retailer or a private student were treated the same. It was a nervous wait to see if he had scored high enough for a place in the top eight. Five months

later he found himself unpacking his tool kit and starting a journey that will take him from micro mechanics to chronographs. Nearly three months into the course he's loving it – even the filing!



AN INTERVIEW WITH A BSOW ALUMNUS

BSOW founding trustee Gordon Bryan caught up with ex-student Narinder Heer, who completed the WOSTEP 3000 Hour Course in 2016.



GB: When and how did your interest in repairing watches first start and how did you discover the BSOW? What was your interest?

NH: I started a degree in forensics, but after a year realised I'd made a huge mistake, I hadn't researched enough where to study, but rather than uproot myself and start again I tried to see what else I could do. The physics really appealed to me, then one of my colleagues said there's a watchmaking school, so I found the BSOW and saw it was WOSTEP, and this time I researched the institution properly. I remember leaving you a voicemail and you actually phoned me and spent a good hour explaining the ins and outs, stuff that I wouldn't normally find on the internet. As soon as I put the phone down, I knew it was what I wanted to do. A few years later I had saved enough to apply as a private student, but I applied through a watch retailer in the end, and got accepted! And I've not looked back since. Genuinely the greatest career I could have asked for.

GB: What was your first day like at the BSOW?

NH: It was horrible! I ended up crying and I'm not a crier, I promise you. When I researched the school, there was this photo on the website, I think it was taken from the back of the classroom, looking toward the front and you could see Tom and you could see the screen, you could see everything and I remember when I sat down in that classroom - and this happened the entire time I was at the school - I remember thinking I can't believe I'm here.. I remember getting in my car and crying and thinking I can't believe I've moved my entire life up here and I suck at this so bad, and they're gonna think she's hopeless, why did we pick this person? I really beat myself up over it. I had no skill, I went in with zero skill, but two years later I walked out a watchmaker.

GB: How would you describe your time at the school?

NH: The best time of my life, hands down. I say that to everyone, the best two years of my life. They were very stressful, it was hard, but I loved those two years, it was amazing. I met my best friend there, we talk every couple of weeks and a few of the others we check in and see how we're all doing.

GB: That's really great to hear, for me, that makes starting the school a worthwhile decision. What's the most interesting repair or restoration you've undertaken and why?

NH: There's a couple. Before coming to WOS I didn't touch anything vintage, it was all customer repair, all the same stuff. Now I work in pre-owned / vintage I had a 3 hand IWC that's probably from the early 50's or 60's. Normally I'd have been second guessing myself a lot, never done anything old, can I do this? But I was really confident, taking it

apart, learning about it as I'm taking it apart, putting it back together. The end result was that it worked and I refurbished it as well so it was quite a good one. I did an Omega 620 while I was at the school, a rose gold-plated movement, manual wind that had a broken balance staff and main spring, which were impossible to find, but we managed to source them, and eight years later it still works.

GB: Do you think the WOSTEP qualification as helped your career?

NH: Definitely. I think because it's so recognised now in the industry, every year it seems to become an even bigger deal, with potential employers and anyone you talk to. Any time I mention I went to BSOW people are like "oh wow, they're the best, they do WOSTEP", there is a ridiculously high standard in the school, the school is like a badge of honour.

GB: Where would you like your career to take you?

NH: Back to the school. It's no secret. Tom and James will tell you I do everything I can to constantly visit. I like seeing the new students, how they're getting on. It's really nice to see other people progress and become better. I like being in an educational environment, so I want to teach. I'm not anywhere near experienced enough yet, but I can't imagine anything more rewarding than teaching the next generation.

GB: What's your favourite watch that you wear most of the time?

NH: A Speedmaster 861. The school has done that to me. When you've worked on a movement so many times you develop this weird love for it and I love the Moonwatch.

GB: If you had no financial restraints, which watch would you buy and why?

NH: This is a hard question! I think with a blank cheque I'd have to choose something that turns head from miles away and is also very me, so I'd say the MB&F Legacy Machine Perpetual.

I'm a huge lover of physics and engineering. For me the perfect watch encompasses those feats of engineering married with a something a little bit insane which is why I love everything that MB&F have to offer. The cherry on the cake for that watch, is that it's British watchmaking at its finest - Stephen McDonnell, a watchmaker who I admire so much, not to mention he also went through WOSTEP at the beginning of his career.

GB: Tell us something not many people know about you...that we can print

NH: Everything's printable! (laughs) OK this is a fact, I hold the record, in the West Midlands, for the fastest driving test fail, it was about 2 seconds. My car was on a hill next to a fence and when I got back into the car with the examiner, it rolled back a bit into the fence, I hadn't put the handbrake on high enough. He'd never had anyone fail without physically getting the car into gear and driving off.

GB: What 3 words describe you best?

NH: I've been told I'm funny, but that's subjective. Dedicated and friendly.

GB: What advice would you give to anyone interested in being a watchmaker?

NH: It isn't easy. It can be mind numbingly difficult. But, it's not impossible if you're dedicated. It's important to know that you really want to do it and if you do, make the necessary sacrifices, but it is really hard. It's punishing and Tom is a really punishing tutor, which is why I absolutely love that man to bits. But what you'll get from it is something that you won't get from anywhere else and there is no better feeling then when someone asks you what you do, and every time you tell a new person their reaction is "wow".

KEY DATES

BSOW Supporters' Open Day

25th May 2023

1800 Hour Course Application Deadline

July 2023

1800 Hour Course Final Examination

December 2023

3000 Hour Course Application Deadline

July 2024



THE BRITISH SCHOOL
OF WATCHMAKING

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1186365

A WOSTEP PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL

SUPPORTERS OPEN DAY

Join us at the British School of Watchmaking's new premises to learn about the positive impact we can all make in the future of watchmaking in the UK.

Be part of Europe's
leading watchmaking school

25th May 2023

11am - 2pm

Evolution House, Cheadle Heath, SK3 0SB

Limited number of places available - Maximum 2 guests per invitation.

Please RSVP to Jayne Ward on admin@bsow.co.uk by 17th May 2023

BSOW SUPPORTERS

As a registered charity all of the donations we receive are directed straight back into training and the expansion of the services we are able to offer. We thank all current supporters for their contributions which enable us to provide our services to the industry.

BSOW supporters not only contribute to our operation they also benefit themselves from reduced training costs, access to on tap employees via our fee paying students, networking opportunities with other major brands and prestigious retailers and also the ability to influence the future direction of the School and have input on our future courses.

If you have a business and would like to join our network of supporters, please get in touch. We always love to hear from new sources and discuss how we can work together to help better our industry.



2023 is poised to be an eventful year, not only do our full-time courses continue, but this year should also see completion of our polishing workshop. We expect to take delivery of the polishing machines and equipment in the coming months, after which we hope to commence staff training.

As always, if you'd like to get involved in what we do, as a supporter or a student, we'd love to hear from you.

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