

Tick tock

London

Big Ben – one of the most famous clocks in the world

Some people think that Big Ben is the name of the clock on the clock tower of the Houses of Parliament in London, but it is actually the thirteen-ton bell which hangs inside the tower. The bell was named after the first commissioner of works, Sir Benjamin Hall. It originally came from the old Palace of Westminster and was given to the Dean of St. Paul's by William III. Before the bell returned to its present home, it was refashioned in Whitechapel in 1858. The BBC first broadcast the chimes on December 31st 1923. There is a microphone turret connected to Broadcasting House.

During World War II, the House of Commons was destroyed, but the clock tower remained intact. Big Ben continued to keep the time for London. Its unique sound was broadcast to the nation and around the world. It was a welcome reassurance of hope to all who heard it.

Info from: <http://library.thinkquest.org/>

New York

Metronome – Union Square

According to the artists, Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel, the 'Metronome is an investigation into the nature of time'. The 15 numbers of the digital clock display time going and coming relative to midnight. For example, 070437000235616 means 7 hours, 4 minutes and 37 seconds after midnight, with 16 hours, 56 minutes and 23 seconds remaining until midnight; the middle three places are a blur of instantaneously changing digits.

Tick tock

Edinburgh

The Floral Clock

The working clock is the oldest floral clock in the world. It is made with thousands of varieties of flowers and is re-created each year designed to commemorate special occasions. There is also a cuckoo which calls each hour.

<http://www.princes-street.com/>

The one o'clock gun

In 1852, Edinburgh installed a time ball on the Nelson Monument on Calton Hill. The time ball was raised shortly before one o'clock every day, then lowered at one o'clock so that the people of Edinburgh and the ships in the Firth of Forth could check their clocks and chronometers.

Click on the picture to read more about the one o'clock gun.

Observations of the stars were made, using the telescope on Calton Hill. This enabled the precise time to be known.

In 1861, the time ball was linked by an overhead electric cable, 4,200 ft long, stretching across the valley from Calton Hill to Edinburgh Castle on Castle Rock, so a canon could be automatically fired at one o'clock. The gun could be heard from far afield, but it took several seconds for the sound to travel even the two miles from Edinburgh Castle to Leith. The gun can still be heard in Edinburgh today and makes many tourists jump every day!

http://www.edinphoto.org.uk/1_edin/1_edinburgh_history_-_time-gun.htm

Tick tock

Safety Last

In the film *Safety Last!* Harald Lloyd performed the medium-shots and close-ups (such as the famous clock sequence) himself. The camera and sets were ingeniously positioned so that Lloyd appeared to be hanging above the streets of downtown Los Angeles. These stunts were dangerous and demanding.

Lloyd dislocated his shoulder during the filming of the famous clock sequence. But the effect was truly remarkable, and audiences remain astonished at the vivid sense of danger. At original screenings of the film in 1923, audience members were reported to have fainted, a fact played up in the film's promotion.

Information from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

See film clip: <http://www.youtube.com/>

Tick tock

What does time mean to you?

In the west we are fascinated – perhaps even obsessed - by time. That's perhaps why there are so many famous clocks. But not everyone sees time in the same way.

African Insights Ezine – September 2004

Keeping Time in Africa

I grew up in Germany where time ruled life. The bells of the nearby church tolled on time every 15 minutes during the daytime hours. You were never late, no matter what you had to do. Punctuality was part of being German. Here in America "time is money". You simply move and dance to the tune of the clock. At work we clock in and out and the clock rules the day.

In Africa, it is not the clock that rules the day...but the relationship. It is being a human being instead of a human doing. Life is short in Africa. AIDS has taken another ten years or more off the average life span of Africans. Life expectancy is often half of that in the West where it approaches 80 or more, whereas in Africa it is 40 and falling.

When your life is short and you know that most of the people around you are dying young, your approach to life becomes different, you value relationships more than tasks, for it is the relationship that will nurture you when you hit rough waves in your life's journey.

Yes, when life is short, the clock reminds one of that shortness, probably one of the reasons that Africans will often ignore the clock. They realize that enduring things in life have to do with family, friends, relationships and not a day ruled by the clock.

Extracts from: <http://kabiza.com/>

THE "INDIAN-TIME" SYNDROME

*A narrative by JUNE SUMMERS
Mexico Connect*

Indian time

Most newcomers to Baja California quickly realise that the indigenous Indian people (as distinct from the Mexicans who have adopted western customs) live in a space-time different from their North American neighbors. Their time is more leisurely and they are totally unaware of clocks.

This difference in time perception between the two cultures stems from a point of view. The gringo views time as being on a single line and always in one direction ... a horizontal time ... yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Whereas INDIAN TIME is completely different. It is vertical and unchanging, and the speed concept boggles the gringos' minds.

When asked, a Tarahumara Indian once said it would take an hour to walk to the next village. Then, after due consideration, "Two hours if you walk quickly enough." Absolutely!

Extracts from: <http://www.mexconnect.com/>