

THE MIDSUMMER CHRONOPHAGE

Dr John Crawshaw Taylor OBE, creator of the Chronophage clocks, is a world-respected inventor and an admirer of the acclaimed clock maker, John Harrison. In c1720, Harrison created the first low-friction grasshopper clock escapement for his Brocklesby Hall Stable Clock. John Harrison then went on to develop the first clocks to give longitude at sea. As a tribute to Harrison, all of the Chronophage clocks feature a huge grasshopper escapement dressed as a mythical creature that claws its way across the top of the dial as time marches relentlessly on.

The word *Chronophage* is derived from the ancient Greek words *chronos* and *phage* meaning *time-eater*. Following the huge success of the Corpus Chronophage, Dr Taylor focused on creating a new clock, the Midsummer Chronophage. It features a mythological fly-like creature with intricate wings and a sting in its tail, devouring each minute as it passes. Like the Corpus Clock, this time-eater is eternally voracious reminding us to reflect on how we spend our lives and to make the most of our fleeting time on earth.

The clock pays its respects to *relative time* as theorised by the renowned physicist, Albert Einstein. Einstein made the point that when you are having fun, time goes quickly and when you are anxious, time passes slowly. The timepiece interacts with audiences, going fast or slow, sometimes even stopping, but it is exactly correct every fifth minute. Lights race around clockwise in three concentric circles on the 24-carat gold dial. The largest outer ring shows the seconds, the middle ring the minutes and the central circle shows the quarters and the hours. Each quarter the forked tail stings and quivers. Striking each hour, the resounding chimes match the number of stings. On every 59th second the creature eats each minute reminding you not to waste time as you cannot get it back.

The first iteration of the Midsummer Chronophage showed the creature in a dark, gothic style. It was first exhibited in this original form on Midsummer's Day at the inaugural Masterpiece Fair in 2010, which took place at London's Chelsea Barracks.

This Chronophage was then exhibited at the Science Museum, London, to great acclaim in 2011 before being displayed at the National Museum of Scotland, Chambers, Street, Edinburgh in 2013.

There is great detail shown in the depiction of the Midsummer Chronophage. The creature is covered in spiky hairs and the wings rock backwards and forwards, balanced by the halters, used by certain insects to provide better stability when flying.

Like many insects, the Midsummer creature then metamorphosed, in this case from *steam-punk* to *psychedelia*, with spectacular results. With its exoskeleton vacuum deposited in titanium, oxidized to a completely new livery, the reborn Midsummer Chronophage entertained hundreds of thousands of visitors at Lion Yard in Cambridge in the summer of 2019.

The Midsummer Chronophage can now be enjoyed by those in the Isle of Man at the *1886 Bar and Restaurant* in Regent Street, Douglas, Isle of Man.