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March 1996



Douglas Cowan  
Editor

# British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

News

FROM CHAPTER 159

The Editor didn't attend our Orlando meeting in February, so he will report on that in the next Times. *The April meeting will take place on April 12 in Cincinnati.* Members will get to closely examine a small collection of 18th century pair-cased English watches. By all means bring one or two if you can. ☺

Editor's  
Corner



The contributors to BHT8 are Philip Priestly, FNAWCC and President of the English NAWCC Chapter 103, and Ken Johnston of

Centerport NY. I am happy that more manuscripts concerning watches are arriving, so that you'll see these soon. Would someone send me observations concerning fake Tompion watches?

These are the fakes most commonly encountered and I think that it would be helpful to publish a guidance list for potential buyers. Please keep the mail coming. It's interesting to other members and will stimulate ideas for research.



It bears his name, but did he make it?

-Doug Cowan  
110 Central Terrace  
Cincinnati OH 45215

## POCKET WATCHES AND DORSET CLOCKS A RECENT TRIP TO ENGLAND

By Ken Johnston (NY)

*"A little earlier than usual, Fancy", the keeper said, as he sat down and looked at the clocks. "That Ezekiel Saunders o' thine is tearing on afore Thomas Wood again".*

*I kept in the middle between them", said Fancy, also looking at the two clocks.*

*"Better stick to Thomas", said her father. "There's a healthy beat in Thomas that would lead a man to swear by 'im offhand. He is as true as the town time".*

Under the Greenwood Tree  
-Thomas Hardy

Wessex, of which Dorset is a part, rightly holds Thomas Hardy in high regard. The county museum in Dorchester has his study on display, including his longcase by Thomas Wood. On a recent trip to the UK I resolved to run to earth a couple of references I needed on watch related topics and to seek out any special pocket watch bargains. I am pleased to say that these goals were achieved and as an added benefit I discovered a delightful collection of Dorset clocks.

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**DORSET, from page 1**

I have always been fascinated by the ability of craftsmen to produce fine watches using only primitive tools. In particular the pierced cocks and the fusee chains. In his book *Watchmaking in England 1760-1820*,

Leonard Weiss makes reference to *The Chain Makers* by Allan White. This paper was published in Christchurch by the

author in 1967 and as my base of operation is at Poole, only 10 miles from Christchurch, I felt sure I would have no problems finding a copy of the paper. At first I drew a blank until I was directed to The Red House Museum in Christchurch. They had a copy, but none for sale. Allan White is too ill to continue publishing the paper, however the curator was good enough to give me a photocopy with the suggestion that I make an appropriate donation. The museum has one small display case devoted to the tools and examples of fusee chains. The industry was started in Christchurch in 1790; prior to that chains were probably imported from Switzerland. By 1914 the last factory was closed.

My other quest was for *Brown Boots in Earlsdon* by Mary Montes. I have a particular regard for Coventry and in fact for many years as a part time student I attended the Technical College in the Butts, which borders on Earlsdon. I had no difficulty finding a copy at the records office. (Leisure Services Archives if you want to use the modern idiom.) Mary Montes paints a fascinating story with the birth of Earlsdon, mainly supported by watchmaking. These families made a good living and could afford a

second pair of boots for Sunday best. These were brown so all would know of their new found affluence, hence the title. The book is published by the Coventry branch of the Historical Association.

The records office is tucked away between the Tourist

*"...the asking prices were so high that I could never afford them. Now I look and it doesn't bother me. I still can't afford them but they don't know that."*

Information Office and The Herbert Art Museum. The Herbert always has something on watches, however I have come to the conclusion that it is very difficult to show watches in a museum environment; they really have to be handled to appreciate them. Years ago they featured the case making workshop of Frederick Trahern (see *Watch Case Makers of England*, supplement 20 by Philip Priestley) but usually had only a few examples. Recently a group has been formed: "The Coventry Watch Museum Project", to feature the watch heritage more prominently. I wish them all success.

England seems to abound with interesting clock shops. Some are so upscale that I used to be embarrassed just going in; the asking prices were so high that I could never justify buying them. Now I look and it doesn't bother me. I still can't afford them but they don't know that. Some upscale shops have been mentioned in previous issues of BHT. This trip I came across two shops in Shipston-on-Stour: "The Grandfather Clock Shop" and "Time in Hand" that had some genuine clocks that were not over-restored. The shops were small enough so that they were run by the proprietors who were interesting to

talk to. Shipston is on the north edge of the Cotswolds, off the tourist/antique trail with lower prices, in my opinion, than the more popular places, e.g. Stow-on-the-Wold, Morton-in-the-Marsh, Stratford, etc. The cost of shipping a longcase was quoted at £500, mak-

ing a purchase even less attractive. There must be many enthusiast collectors in the UK however, as a new shop "Pendulum of Mayfair" has just opened in

London — anything from a country oak at £2,000 to a walnut beauty at £68,000 (The Sunday Times, 19 Nov. '95).

See **DORSET**, page 3

**BRITISH HOROLOGY TIMES**  
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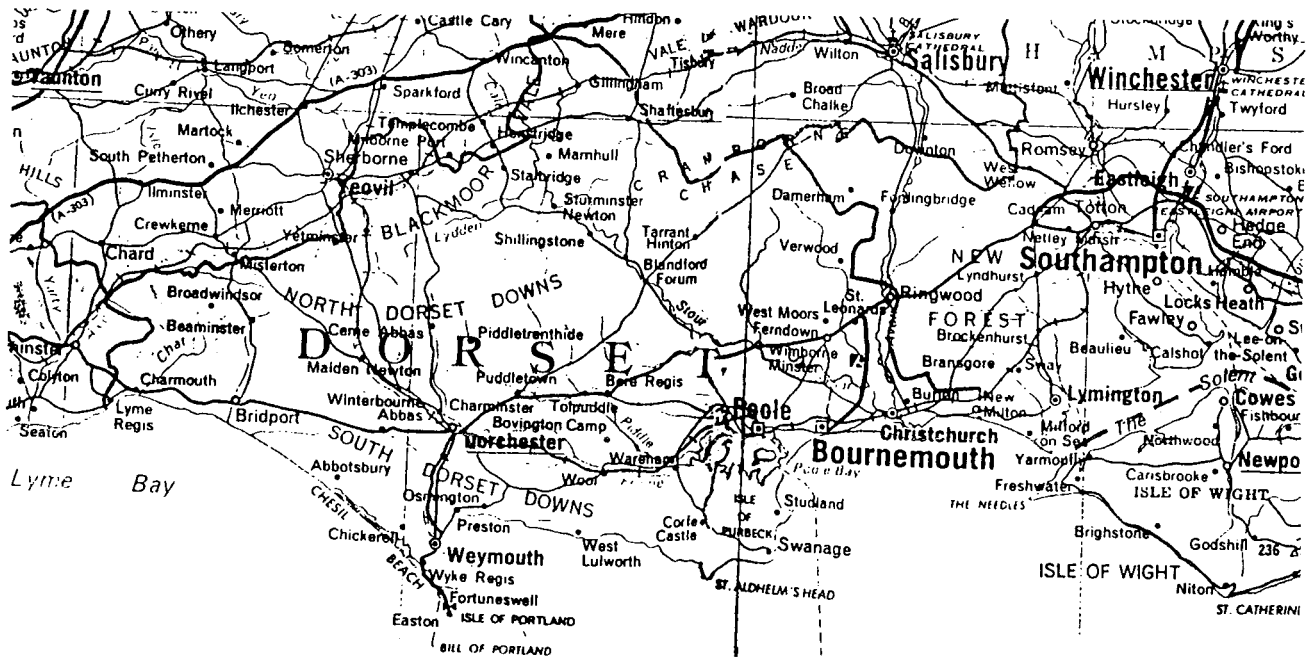
All correspondence, manuscripts and applications for membership should be sent to Doug Cowan, 110 Central Terrace, Cincinnati OH 45215, USA.

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### DORSET, from page 2

On a previous trip a shop in Sturminster Newton, right in the center of Hardy country, would not sell me a Dorset clock if I intended to ship it to America! The men of Wessex are very protective of their clocks. This time I came close to getting a 19th century oak longcase by T. Phippard of Poole. I left a bid at auction and missed it by £75. I believe I heard a sigh of relief when I told Yvonne.

I like Dorset longcases. They are honest, simple and have good proportions, so the discovery of the Dorset collection at Overmoigne nr. Dorchester was a find indeed. Clearly it had started as a private collection that had got large enough to be put on public display at a nominal charge. The exhibit is dedicated to the memory of Philip Whatmoor, who was co-author with Tom Tribe of *Dorset Clocks and Clockmakers*. In fact many of the clocks illustrated in the book are in the collection.

Overmoigne is on the road between Dorchester and Wareham. If you go, look for the sign to the Cider Museum (same location) and identify yourself as a collector. You will then get the guided tour by Michael Legg, the curator and brother-in-law to Philip Whatmoor.

Finally, I am pleased to say I did come home with a few additional silver pocket watches, including three pair case verges and two late going barrel English levers. ☺

### WANTED

English posted frame longcase movement.

Thirty hour, single hand preferred, with or without dial, circa early to mid 1700's. State condition, especially any missing parts. **Laird Nixon**, 1672 Lakeshore Rd, Samia Ontario N7X 1B8.

### WANTED

Watch papers and unusual watch keys. **Douglas Caulkins**, 4728 Crescent Dr, Shreveport LA 71106, 318-861-7215

# MART

### FOR SALE

Four finials identical to those shown on the Joseph Knibb bracket clock circa 1675 pictured on page 89 of *Early English Clocks* by Dawson, Drover and Parkes. **Stuart Kelley**, 1432 Greenmont Ct, Reston VA 22090.

### YOUR FREE AD

could be in this space. There is no charge to members for mart ads.

## SNAP-SHOTS OF TIME IN HOROLOGICAL HISTORY, PART I

By Phiip Priestley (UK)

**F**or the past year or so I have been researching a sequel to the Supplement #20 hoping to find evidence of watch case makers working in the 100 years prior to 1720. The work has proven quite difficult because of the paucity of horological records extant for this period. However there are a few key official documents that give a fleeting glimpse of who was working in the horological trade during the 17th century. It occurred to the author that a synopsis of this information might be of interest to members, particularly to those contemplating research endeavours.

For the first 100 years or so of English horology, say 1530 to 1630, the trade was based primarily upon the expertise of continental immigrants and controlled by the Blacksmiths' Company; furthermore, workers had to belong to this body of craftsmen. In general terms, an apprentice started work at 14 years of age and took the Freedom or became Free of his Company after a 7-year training period. There then followed a minimum two-year period as a journey-man working for the same Master usually, and only then could the trainee consider himself eligible to apply for the Freedom of London which allowed him to actually trade within the "magic" square mile. At this point he would set up shop and take on his own apprentices. Some workers never accepted the Freedom because it involved paying onerous quarterly fines/fees. If a Freeman of

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### THE LONDON CLOCKMAKERS' PETITION

In 1622 there were sixteen clock, watch and watchcase makers in London and they were complaining about a group of 32 other tradesmen in the city and suburbs who were not Freeman; referred to as "foreigners" but which included Englishmen and French Huguenots who had not "passed" through the London apprenticeship system. The 16 resident Masters produced a Petition to the City of London authorities requesting the formation of the Clockmakers' Company. The original parchment document exists and is located at the Public Records Office, State Papers, Domestic Series, 14, Vol 127, but it is most conveniently examined via pp 301-303 of the definitive R W Symonds biography of Tompion. The four main points of argument were:

1. Residents and qualified tradesmen paying high taxes were aggrieved that outsiders who did not pay so much were able to provide inferior articles at a lower price.
2. These same outsiders were visiting the homes of wealthy citizens to sell unserviceable and inferior wares.
3. They also accosted gentlemen outside tradesmen's shops and offered them inferior products at a cheaper price.
4. These unlawful outsiders train apprentices in a poor manner and then often return abroad leaving the untrained apprentice behind in London to make inferior products.

**SNAP-SHOTS, from page 4**

one Company joined another, for various reasons, then normally he was registered as a "Free Brother". The Company was led by an elected Master, supported by Wardens and Assistants.

Initially, most articles were iron-frame clocks but with the introduction of clocks with brass plates and watches, and further sophistication of the mechanisms, some craftsmen agitated to have their own Company to control the horological trade. This concerted effort to have specific recognition of the clockmakers in their own right led to the 1622 petition.

The Petition failed, as the well established Blacksmiths' Company successfully fought a rear-guard action with the authorities.

The following is an extract from this important seminal document. The two names marked with an \* are almost certainly watch case makers. There are actually two parchments, the second being a duplicate of the first list of Strangers, that is tradesmen who were English or foreigners but who had not qualified through the London apprenticeship/freedom system. The second parchment provides most of the address information. Where the spelling of the entry in the second parchment differs from the first it is shown and annotated in parentheses alongside.

**The names of all the 16 Clockmakers householders in London**

<i>Robert Grinkin</i>	<i>Edmund Bull</i>	<i>John Smith</i>	<i>Nicholas Walters</i>
<i>Henry Archer</i>	<i>George Bull</i>	<i>John Wellowe</i>	<i>Cornelius Yate</i>
<i>Ferdinando Garrett</i>	<i>Francis Forman</i>	<i>Anthony Risbie</i>	<i>Daniel Saunders</i>
<i>James Vautrolier</i>	<i>Isaak Simes</i>	<i>William Yate</i>	<i>John Harris*</i>

**The names of y<sup>e</sup> known Straingers of y<sup>e</sup> same Arte dwelling in & about London**

All in Cornelius Mellin's house, Blackfryers:

*Cornelius Mellin & 4 apprentices*

-*John Hutchinson*

-*John Cooke*

-*Peter Mitchell*

-*Nathaniel Delawne*

*William Marmott*

*William La Wray pierre & his apprentice (William Lara pierre)*

*Isaac Romier (Isaac Romeir -from Rouen?)*

*John de Mouchie*

*William Bull*

*James Goallon*

With Mr *Vautrolier*, Without Temple Bar:

*Lewes Cuper*

In St Brides Parish by the Connduit in ffilet street:

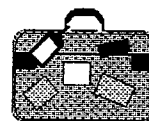
*John Cosine & his two apprentices*

*Alexander Cosine, with his brother*

St Olaues (Olavs) in hart street

*Peter Beshott*

See **SNAP-SHOTS**, page 6

**UK  
HOROLOGICAL  
TOUR**

Philip Priestley is now organizing his third horological trip to England on behalf of headquarters chapter (NAWCC). This will occur in the fall of 1996. Interested parties may contact Tom Bartels at NAWCC headquarters at 717-684-8261. Cost will be about \$2100 plus airfare. The itinerary will be almost identical to that reported in the Lone Star Chapter report, page 700 of the October 1995 Bulletin. A trip to the city of York has been added.

**RESEARCH  
REQUESTS**

PLEASE SEND REPLIES TO  
EDITOR: DOUG COWAN,  
110 CENTRAL TERRACE,  
CINCINNATI OH 45215

There is curiosity concerning Thomas Tompion's street sign: "The Dial and Three Crowns". The three crowns may have referred to the year 1660 when one man, Charles II wore the crowns of England, of Scotland and of combined England and Scotland. (Hopefully not all at once — those things are heavy! Ed.) It is known that Tompion was very pro-royalty, but there the connection ends. Stuart Kelley would like to have your thoughts on this subject.

(Research Requests cont'd on p.6)

**SNAP-SHOTS, from page 5**

Blackfriars:

*Glande Garandean* or *Gland Gerandine* (Gland Garander)

Gunpowder alley shoe lane at a smythes:

*Abell Monpaz* (Abel Monpas -foreign apprentice in England)*Vowtere* in the same house (Lewis Votier -foreign apprentice in Engl)

At Mr Garrett's house in St Martins:

*James Dudwitt* -servant or journeyman to Mr Garrett*Isack Perone* (Isaac Perone) - servant or journeyman to Mr Garrett

Att holboern att a bakers howse:

*Elias Volant* with two apprentices

At a Joyners at Broadstreet end at London Wall:

*Henrie Broe* (Henry Broe)*John Averill* (at the same house)*Josias Cuper* -the Lord dorsets page

At Mr Sampsons howse in blackfires:

*David Bowkett* (and his two apprentices)

With Mr Ramsy in Tutle street kings clockmaker:

*William Petit* (William Petitt) \*

St Martins in London:

*Gregory Spratt* & two apprentices

Detford:

*John Rawfinger*

In country:

*John Raymont*

St Bartholomews:

*Grebant* & his two apprentices

Next to the new Exchange:

*George Smith* & two apprentices-*John Jacob* att mr Smythes-*Paule Jacob* att mr smythesWith *John Canninge* behind St Clements Church:*Godrone***Foreign apprentice in England***Mr Vautroler* without Temple Bar*Lewis Vautier**Abel Monpas***RESEARCH REQUESTS (CONTINUED)**PLEASE SEND REPLIES TO  
EDITOR: DOUG COWAN,  
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Researching late 17th and early 18th century engraving, particularly on London clock dials and backplates, and on watches. Don't know where to start. Hope to find engraver's names, addresses, whom they worked for, their characteristics. Are there any reference books or articles? Any thoughts?

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