



# British Horology Times

NAWCC CHAPTER 159

## Notes FROM CHAPTER 159

This is my first report to you, the chapter members, since I assumed the office of President on July 1st. I want to use my space in this issue of the newsletter to recognize two individuals who have selflessly contributed to our chapter. On behalf of the entire Chapter 159 membership I want to express our deep appreciation.

Frank Del Greco retired after three years as chapter president. In spite of many other NAWCC responsibilities that included being a Council Director, an active member of the Membership and Publicity Committee and a member of the Task Force formulating the Plan and Agreement of Merger of the NAWCC and the NWCM into one 501(c)(3) organization, including Proposed Bylaws and Standing Rules for the new corporation, and being President of his home chapter in Ohio, Frank put in an exemplary performance as President of Chapter 159.



FRANK DEL GRECO

Bernie Pollack retired after six years as chapter treasurer which was only one of Bernie's NAWCC tasks. Until 2002 he was a member of the NWCM Library Committee. In addition to many chapter activities and responsibilities in Southern California, Bernie has been the President of Chapter 175, Industrial Time Recorders, since its inception. Even though Bernie is retired, the amount of time and energy he devoted to NAWCC and Chapter 159 has been phenomenal.



BERNIE POLLACK

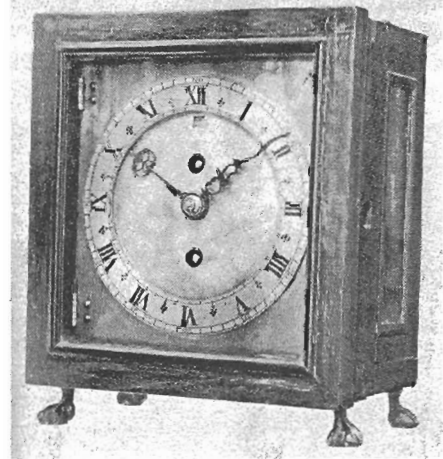
I fully realize that not many chapter members have the extra time and energy to contribute to our success and well being like Frank and Bernie. However I really believe that many of you can make your own contribution to increase the knowledge of your fellow chapter members. We need both speakers to make presentations at chapter meetings and members who will write articles for this newsletter. I have no doubt that a substantial

number of you have knowledge of or have collected items related to British Horology that can be used to educate your fellow chapter members. Please don't just think about this for a few minutes and then do nothing further. Proceed with preparing an article, brief or long, about some favorite horological item or acquired information. We have an extraordinary editor, Paul Odendahl, who can help you with the organization of your article. All you have to do is supply Paul with coherent information and he will work with you to come up with a polished product. If you have a special item or area of expertise that can be used for a chapter meeting presentation, I will be pleased to work with you to develop a presentation that will enhance the knowledge of the members and guests at the meeting. The continued success of the chapter depends on as many members as possible contributing.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent Chapter 159 for the next three years. -Roger Gendron

Here's an odd one. It's the feet. If you hold your hand to cover them up it looks better. The feet are later replacements to a clock origi-

**EDITOR'S  
CORNER**



nally designed to hang on the wall. It's by Ahaserus Fromanteel from the first half of the 1660s. Another odd thing about it: the placement of the spring barrels. It has verge escapement, count wheel, calendar ring, movement mounted on the dial plate and the dial plate hinged to the case as is the front door. Height 8 inches. Too bad about that later minute hand. It sold for \$68,500 in 1983 which shows that odd things can be valuable.

Maybe the name of our new column *Second Line* on page 2 might strike you as odd. If so just hold your hand over the heading and find the value below.

-Paul Odendahl

## SECOND LINE



Doug Cowan (OH) gives us a glimpse of 20th century English clockmaking.

## THE METAMECS HAVE LANDED!

Importers are bringing these 20th century English clocks into the US. I have seen perhaps a dozen in malls during 2004, and at least am not aware of seeing them last year, although undoubtedly this mini-invasion has been going on for some time. These clocks are offered for \$20 to \$50 in England and \$30 to \$60 in US malls so there doesn't seem to be a high profit in importing them. They are probably arriving as "container stuffers".

Metamec was established in the early 1940s in (East) Dereham, Norfolk. The name derives from "Metal and Mechanical Products" and production began in 1945, encouraged by the British government's concern that there be manufacturing jobs available to the returning soldiers as the war wound down. The firm ceased production in 1984, though the name was sold in 1983 to FKI of Halifax, Yorkshire, who use it for some of their products.

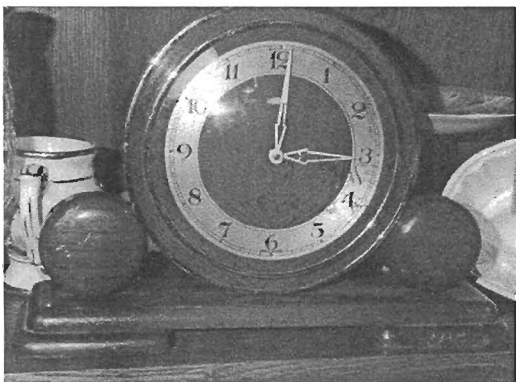


Fig. 1. Metamec Model 701, the first model produced

named B.A. Smart. Smiths of London was their main competitor.

Figure 1 shows an oak veneered example of Model 701, the first that was produced. Figure 2 is Model 812 from the late 1940s. These clocks cost about \$US 10 to 15 when new (£2 to £3). All of the early clocks were 50 cycle, 230 volt synchronous motor electrics. They included a patented "Tick" device that could be turned on so that the clock sounded like a traditional windup lock. By the late 1940s the range of models had expanded to include 30 hour and 8 day spring powered clocks, using movements purchased from Smiths. Many parts were "bought in" throughout the company's production years, though they produced on site whatever they could economically justify.

By the 1960s the peak of production was 25,000 clocks per week, of 350 models. The company was the largest clockmaker in England and had its own sales force, selling to every possible outlet, including electrical shops, mail order and export, as well as the normal ones. I

Dereham was certainly not an obvious site for a clockmaking concern but it did have a history of industrial development and good rail transportation. Companies in the town made wooden boxes for military use and also model boats and trains. The actual cause of clock production in Dereham was a shortage of domestic clocks in the 1940s, unused wood cuts and metal from a firm named Jentique Furniture which had a sales force and an entrepreneur

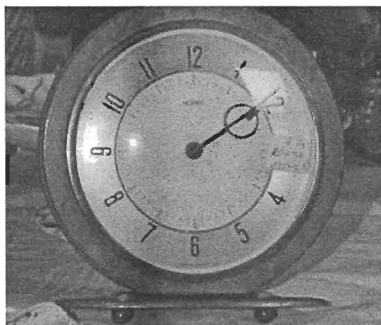


Fig. 2. Metamec Model 812, from the late 1940s

have not seen any in Canada, but they did sell to Australia, and made 60 cycle electrics as well as the UK 50 cycle ones. Quartz controlled battery clocks, long-case clocks, wall clocks, lighted and other alarm clocks, automatic tea making machines, insurance premium collection clocks, carriage clocks, barometers, reproductions of Dutch, German and English clocks and vibrating alarms for deaf people were in their repertoire.

Why did they fail? As usual, a combination of competition from lower cost importers, bad marketing decisions and complacency. Their closing was a blow to the loyal employees and the city of Dereham, since the firm had employed nearly 800 people in the 1970s.

Want to know more? The AHS has published a book by Clifford Byrd entitled *METAMEC The Clockmaker Dereham*. Price is £14 plus postage to AHS members. I think about £20 to non-members. ☺ -Doug Cowan

Doug continues to delight with facts and pictures of all manner of British horology.



**BRITISH HOROLOGY TIMES**  
IS A NEWSLETTER OF  
BRITISH HOROLOGY  
CHAPTER 159 OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
WATCH AND CLOCK  
COLLECTORS

British Horology Times is published  
3 times yearly by  
THE ROYAL ARCHIVISTS  
975 Topaz St.  
New Orleans LA 70124

Editor: PAUL ODENDAHL

All correspondence, manuscripts and applications for membership should be sent to Roger Gendron, 7301 Ronrick Place, Frankenmuth MI 48734-9107; email: RandJGendron@worldnet.att.net  
Opinions expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the writers and are not necessarily endorsed by the Chapter and/or by the newsletter and/or by the National Association.

Annual membership costs: USA \$5; Canada \$5 overseas \$6 — in US funds or equivalent.

Copyright© 2004 by  
British Horology Chapter 159

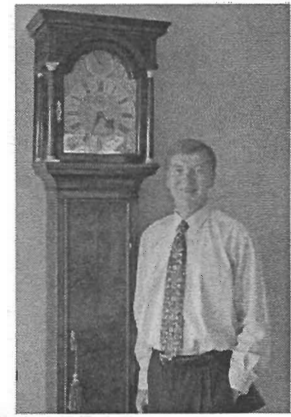
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## THE ENGLISH LONGCASE CLOCK



Fig. 1. Early longcase c1690

Following the Annual General Meeting of Chapter 159 in Oklahoma in July, Dennis Radage (CANADA), a member of Chapter 159 and President of BC Chapter 121, also a member of the National Program Committee, gave us some history of the rise and fall of English domestic clockmaking, focusing on the longcase clock. Dennis kindly provides the following brief summary of his talk.



There were English made domestic clocks in use before the pendulum (c1658), the most familiar being what is now referred to as the Lantern Clock, wall hanging, weight driven and using a balance wheel regulator with verge and crownwheel escapement. The components took a long time to appear. The toothed gear being in use around 300 BC, then the verge and folio escapement appearing more than a millennium later, about 1300. Leonardo da Vinci experimented with the pendulum in 1494, then Galileo applied this to horology in 1637. However it was the Dutchman Christian Huygens who in 1656 successfully built a practical solution for the clock. Fromanteel then brought the **secrets of the pendulum to England** and by c1660 verge and crownwheel pendulum regulated clocks and then longcase clocks were being made. The first longcase clocks had a short bob pendulum, similar to those of the bracket clock. It would be another ten years or so before the first long seconds beating pendulums were applied, following the invention of the anchor recoil escapement. Certainly the longcase was not originally intended to protect the pendulum.

English longcase clocks dominated from 1660 to about 1860 but never completely disappeared. Longcase clocks were still being made, but in lower num-

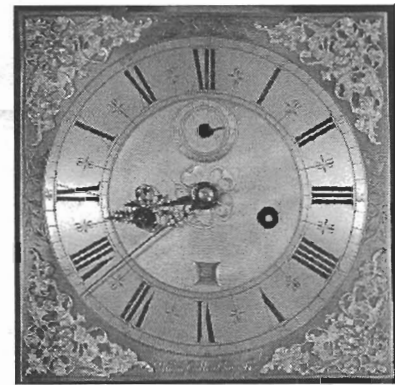


Fig. 2. Early Brass Dial c 1690

bers, right into the 20th century during Edwardian times.

The pendulum, the catalyst so to speak, for the introduction of accurate clocks was introduced just before the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. While clockmaking was at a standstill during the **Civil War from 1642 to 1647**, the restoration of the monarchy brought about a more luxurious way of life and an increased interest in science. The demand for fine clocks increased and in 1675 Christopher Wren built the Royal Observatory for the purpose of finding a method for determining longitude at sea.

Just as East, Fromanteel, Knibb, Tompion and others were approaching their prime, the Plague (1665) then the Great Fire (1666) again severely hampered clockmaking putting more than half of the clockmakers out of business. It was not until the 1670s with the rebuilding of London that commerce and clockmaking

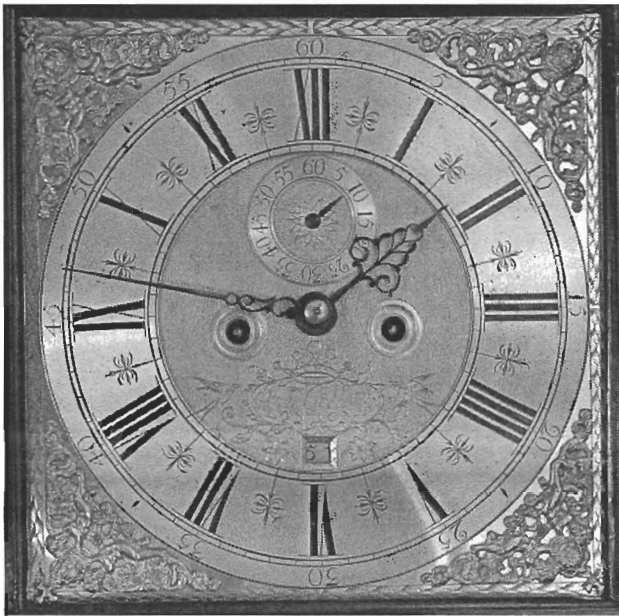


Fig. 3. Brass Dial c1705

returned to normal.

Early longcase clocks were ebony veneered and had an architectural pediment. It is said that this design is that of Sir Christopher Wren who had a longcase weather clock made with an architectural pediment. These early clocks had a brass dial, narrow chapter ring and winged cherub spandrels. They were weight driven, had a verge and crownwheel escapement with a short bob pendulum regulator.

The invention of the anchor recoil escapement in c1670 with its narrow rocking arc allowed for the design of the long seconds beating pendulum. Rack striking appeared about 1675 and by the early years of the 18th century just about every mechanical feature found in clocks in the next century was already developed and in use.

Features found in early clocks such as dial type, square or break arch, the numbering system, spandrel designs and engraving styles along with case features such as the rise-up hood, convex and concave under hood moldings, etc. are all good dating features. Case finishes also help in dating from the early ebony veneers through marquetry, walnut, oak, mahogany and the lacquered styles.

Longcase clocks quickly became the specialty of provincial makers. While London makers made both bracket clocks and longcase clocks, provincial makers tended to focus mostly on longcase clocks. Provincially made longcase clocks quickly outnumbered those made in London. The traditional open cut swan neck pediment became a provincial icon, often with a center brass finial.

Other than the early carved cresting, London clocks are rarely if ever seen with a swan neck pediment.

By mid century c1750/60 mahogany veneered cases started to become popular and dial engraving became simpler, with the loss of features such as the inner quarters circle and the half hour markings. The white dial was introduced in 1772 and dominated dial types by c1800.

The cases of London longcase clocks usually conformed to one of a handful of distinct styles. These did not usually follow the furniture trends of the time since the Clockmakers Company believed that since the movement is the key component, the case should not detract from it. For this reason Chippendale and other such designs were never adopted. They were also considered too flimsy and difficult to mount a movement in. Provincial clocks on the other hand, did adopt some decorative features of the major furniture makers.

By the early 19th century London makers also started producing a distinct form of the longcase regulator, usually a simple design with glass trunk door so as to view the mercury filled "Graham" compensating pendulum. Provincial cases continued to be slender through most of the first quarter of the 19th century, but then as

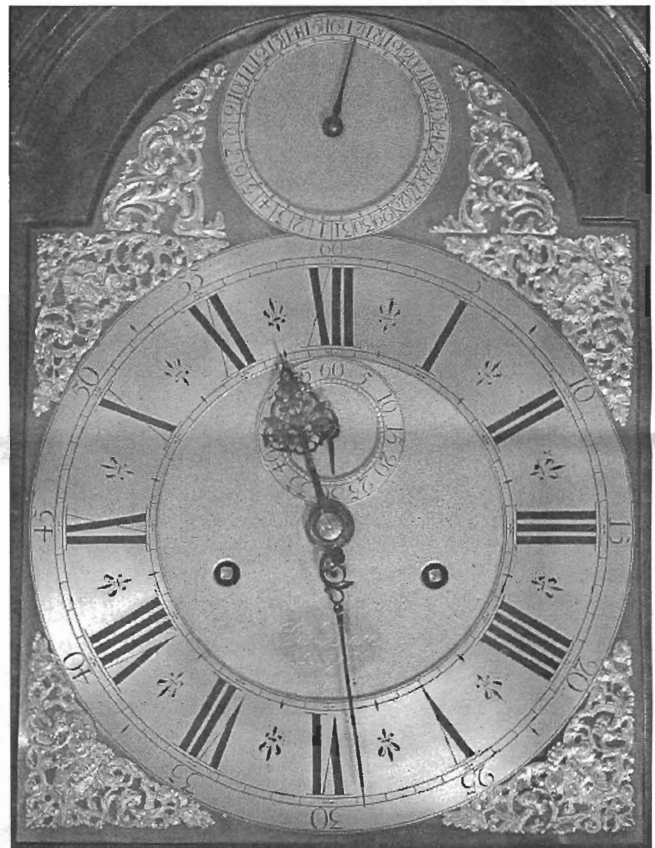


Fig. 4. Break Arch Dial c1715

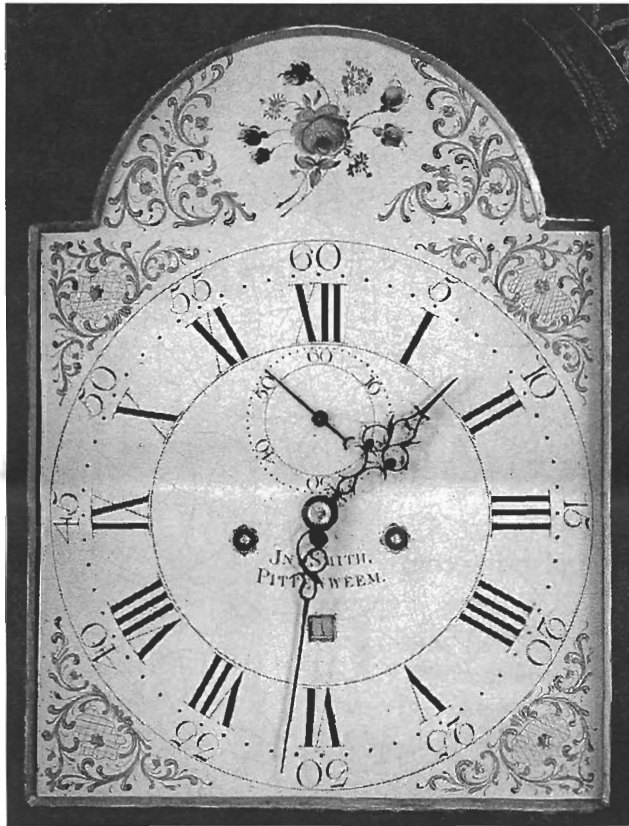


Fig. 5. Early White Dial c1780

dial sizes increased beyond 12 inches to 13, 14 and 15 inches across, cases not only became taller to maintain some form of proportion, but also got wider. By 1840/50 some provincial cases became quite wide and some would say equally as ugly. Demand started to drop off even though there was no specific longcase competition. Partly because of this perceived ugliness and certainly aided by the new onslaught of shelf and mantle clock imports from France, Germany and America, longcase production almost ceased. London makers did continue to make longcases to order and continued to produce regulators, but the so called 200 year dominance had come to an end.

To properly date a clock and confirm its authenticity, meaning that all of the major components such as dial, movement, case, etc. all started out life together, requires a careful examination of each of the clock's components. As already indicated, the case features, decoration, veneer type etc., the movement type, wheels and collets, the striking method and escapement, the dial type, engraving style, numbering system, spandrels and hands are all excellent dating features. Once a date is estimated the maker can be researched from one of the many books on the subject. A great deal of additional information can often be found about the makers, their

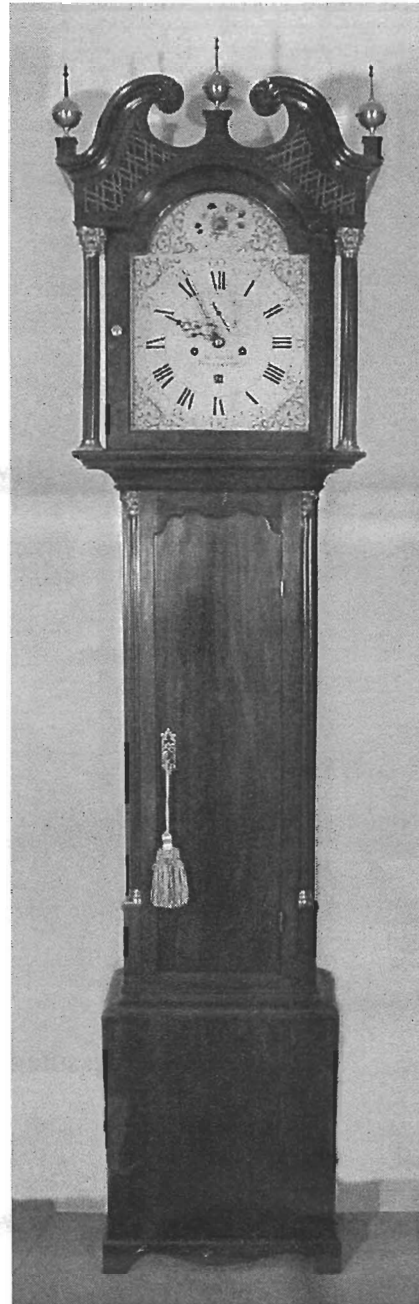


Fig. 6. Swan Neck c1780

working times, their families, the places of birth and burial etc., from provincial books on the subject.

The talk concluded by describing a few of the wealthy individuals who purchased the early clocks. A summary of what to look for when considering the purchase of a longcase clock was given along with a list of recommended reference books.

The presentation was created in Power Point and presented using a computer and LCD projector. ☺

—Dennis Radage

## WHO ARE THESE GUYS?



Roger Gendron, President of Chapter 159  
7301 Ronrick Place  
Frankenmuth MI 48734-9107  
Phone 989-652-6870  
RandJGendron@worldnet.att.net



Lee Yelvington, Vice-President of Chapter 159  
103 Blowing Rock Lane  
Cary NC 27511-9700  
Phone 919-851-3073  
itsabouttime@mindspring.com



Ken Johnson, Secretary of Chapter 159  
2006 Williamson Drive  
New Bern NC 28562-9178  
Phone 252-635-6431  
horology@newbernnc.com

David Kern, Treasurer of Chapter 159  
5 Hilltop Drive  
Manhasset NY 11030-3411  
Phone 516-627-1012  
dkern@optonline.net



Paul Odendahl, Editor and Publisher  
of British Horology Times  
975 Topaz St.  
New Orleans LA 70124-3627  
Phone 504-288-2479  
peoden@webtv.net



British Horology Chapter 159 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

**HENRY - Part 12**Abridged from *The First Henry*, copyright © by The Royal Archivists. Used with permission.

The 1680s were productive years for all of London's best clockmakers and they proudly carried on. But in 1685 an ominous event occurred which should have set them thinking. **Paul Odendahl LA** continues the story.

**O**n 2 February 1685 came an event which did not directly affect the life of Henry but did bring to an end an important era of patronage of the arts. Charles II, King of England, died.

The event was also a harbinger of the approaching end for

Henry, died in 1695  
 Edward East, died in 1696  
 Ahasuerus Fromanteel, died in 1703  
 Joseph Windmills, died in 1710  
 Joseph Knibb, died in 1711  
 Thomas Tompion, died in 1713  
 Daniel Quare, died in 1724  
 Joseph Norris, died in 1726

## TRUE RELATION OF THE Late Kings Death.

**O**N Monday, being the 2d. of February, the King rose early, saying, that he had not slept well the last Night: And about seven of the Clock, coming from his private Devotions, out of his Closet, fell down, (and scarce any sign of of Life remaining in him for the space of four Houres) of a Fit of an Apoplexy, but with the loss of sixteen Ounces of Blood, and other Applications, came again to his Sences, and great Hopes were of his Recovery, till Thursday one of the Clock; so that at five, the Doctors being come before the Council, declared that the King was in great Danger; and on Friday, a quarter before twelve, he departed this Life. God have Mercy on his Soul.

**I**n 1689 Henry became Master of the Clockmakers' Company. He also became 57 years old. One evening Thomas Tompion was a guest for supper to be prepared by Hannah in the premises in Inner Temple Lane in quiet celebration of Henry's honor.

Henry had a plan. "I have told you," he said, "of how well I was treated by Major Buffington and his mother back in the days when I was learning at your father's forge. They encouraged and helped me down the road to clockmaking. While we are all still on this earth I want to do something for them and you, Tom, can help. I want to give them a clock that is worthy of them."

"What a splendid idea," said Tom.

"Tom, I want you to make a clock for them."

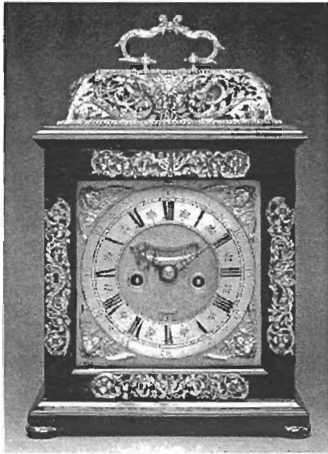
"Me? Wouldn't that best be your honor?"

"I would like this to be a very special clock," said Henry. "You are the acknowledged leading clockmaker in England and you are reknowned on the continent. I want you to build it, finish it and sign it."

Then Henry outlined the details of the clock he had in mind. First of all it should have a movement of Tom's finest workmanship. Second, the case should be made in the French manner. He was thinking of Mrs. Buffington's taste for French furnishings and of Major Buffington's unspoken need for a good English clock. Tom felt the enthusiasm and felt a challenge. He agreed.

By autumn 1689 there was still no Buffington clock nor had Tom even begun work on it. Henry showed his distress at Tom's shop. Tom told him that he had seen a pretty clock at Joseph Windmills'

HENRY from page 7



The pretty Windmills clock that wasn't suitable, 1689

shop and was much impressed by it. Perhaps Henry could buy it and save time.

Henry went directly to Mark End Lane and Joseph Windmills showed him the clock that Tom saw. It was black and not French at all. It just didn't meet Henry's requirements. Nevertheless it was beautiful with pull quarter repeating work, calendar, in an ebony veneered case with sterling spandrels and a sterling basket top.

Walking right back to Tom's shop, Henry presented a plan. If Tom could see his way clear to begin work at once on a movement, Henry would write to Baltazor Martinot in Paris to find a casemaker.

"I shall begin on a movement in two weeks," said Tom.

Henry posted his letter to Martinot that very day and four days later he had an answer. Martinot's letter said that Daniel Marot had just emigrated to England and was at this moment in London. There was even an address. Henry went to Marot at once.

"Will you visit Thomas Tompion with me?" he asked after introducing himself and stating what kind of new clock he wanted Tom to make for him. Henry was a

reputed maker and associating with him and Tompion was enough to make Marot agree without hesitation.

At Tom's shop out came the pencil and paper. Three heads were together and within a half hour a clock was designed to the satisfaction of all.

Daniel Marot asked if Tom would make and finish the clock movement and then turn it over to him. Marot would then make the carcass in his own shop. Upon finishing it, Marot would send the carcass to André-Charles Boulle in Paris for veneering. Tom's time to produce the finished movement was six weeks. Marot could have the carcass done in two weeks. He thought it would take about three weeks for Boulle to do his work.

"Eleven weeks," calculated Henry. "If you begin right now, Tom. Will you?"

"Tomorrow."

In his mind Henry guessed a total time of three months, allowing for delays. In actual fact it took six months. ☹

-Paul Odendahl  
To Be Continued

# MART

MART ADS are free to members and should pertain to British or Anglo-American horology.

**SOTHEBY'S**  
Watches, Barometers  
and Clocks  
LONDON

There were no takers for Paul Odendahl's old clock and watch auction catalogs so the price has dropped and he found more catalogs. Here's the list:

- 5 Christie's, London and New York, 1981-82;
- 61 Sotheby's, London, Chester, Geneva, Belgravia, Holland and N.Y. 1981-86;
- 10 Ineichen, Zurich, 1979-84;
- 8 Stolberg, Graz, 1979-83;
- 4 Neidheidt, Dusseldorf, 1979-81;
- 9 UTO, Zurich, 1979-84.

Total 97 catalogs. \$80 for the lot, you pay for packaging and shipping.  
Phone evenings: 1-504-288-2479, email: peoden@webtv.net

**IT'S DUES TIME !**

If your envelope name shows 2004 please send \$5 for U.S. and Canada, \$6 overseas, to David Kern, 5 Hilltop Dr., Manhasset, N.Y. 11030-3411.

## CONTENTS

- NEWS From President Roger Gendron. 1
- NEW COLUMN could have value says Paul Odendahl 1
- THE METAMECS by Doug Cowan 2
- THE ENGLISH LONGCASE CLOCK by Dennis Radage 3
- WHO ARE THESE GUYS? 6
- HENRY Part 12 of a 17th century historical story by Paul Odendahl 7
- MART 8