

# ANTIQUARIAN HOROLOGY

NUMBER SIX

VOLUME THIRTY-THREE

DECEMBER 2012



The original document describes his amazing journey in a vivid and fascinating narrative, but it is written in a phonetic style with happily irregular spelling. For example, writing of a fellow crew member who had been taken prisoner and wrote pleading for help, he notes:

This letter was wrytten so pittifully as yf they had bene prersoneres thare seven yeares; showinge how they were taken from the fountayne and copled together lyke as they had bene two doggs, with a cheane of could rustie iron, and led into a dark dungeon, thare cheane and fastened with a staple . . .

Nonetheless this style may deter some readers. The book of this review renders Dallam's text into regular English, and as such it is still a very interesting read.

For those who would like more context, covering the state of trade and diplomatic relations with the Ottomans, the earlier book of Stanley Mayes should be consulted, but he only quotes sections of Dallam's diary, and the book is now difficult to obtain.<sup>2</sup> For more discussion of the organ clock and its makers see Drover.<sup>3</sup>

As an introduction to Dallam's journey this is a compact and inexpensive book, and a 'good read'. For those who need to know more, the references cited below, and others noted by the author, should be consulted.

Ian White

1. J. Theodore Bent (Ed.), *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, available as pdf download (21.6MB) at <http://archive.org/details/earlyvoyagestrav00dallrich>
2. Stanley Mayes, *An Organ for the Sultan* (London: Putnam, 1956).
3. C. B. Drover, 'Thomas Dallam's Organ Clock', *Antiquarian Horology*, March 1956.

Editor's note: the clock is also discussed in Ian White's book *English Clocks for the Eastern Markets*, reviewed in this issue, and we quote his discussion of the clock's dramatic demise:

Like many other early clocks it has long since disappeared, but its demise in this case is documented. After Mehmet III's death his son Ahmed I (1607-1617) visited the room (kiosk) in which the clock was housed.

Having listened to the sound it produced the Sultan declared 'By God most gracious, what absurdity, what heresy'. His conscientious heart and upright temperament were horrified, and he felt loathing for the organ clock. Then the Sultan spoke again, 'In the seat of the Sultanate and a throne of glory and felicity devoted to piety and worship, what business have these monstrous images and human forms in the contravention of holy writ?' Although the clock was most precious and costly the Sultan took up a stick in the hand which had laid enemies low, and in the presence of Ibrahim Halil did due justice to those images.

After he had broken up the clock completely, he ordered it to be burned.



GEORGE DANIELS, *All in Good Time. Reflections of a Watchmaker* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2013). Hardback, 224 pages, ISBN: 9780856676802; £25.00.

The George Daniels Horological Collection was auctioned at Sotheby's, London, on 6 November 2012; his collection of vintage motorcars had been auctioned earlier this year by Bonhams. The Sotheby's sale catalogue describes and illustrates 137 lots and comes with extensive introductory essays; we understand that it is already becoming a collector's item.

To coincide with this sale, a new edition was published of his autobiography, which was first published in 2000 and reviewed in this journal (Vol 26, 571-73). A revised edition followed in 2006. This updated edition covers the period up to the end of Daniels's life, and includes an updated and expanded plates section (20 more plates than before); a chapter from Roger Smith, offering insights into Daniels's working methods; and an afterword from Daniels' long-time friend (and owner of Daniels London Ltd.), David Newman, who also supplies a list of his complete watch and clock production. The book has been reset and corrected and comes in a new jacket.

Peter de Clercq

DEE HELMORE, *A Quest for Perfection. The life of John Gottlieb Ulrich, chronometer maker* (2012; High Wycombe; privately printed). No ISBN number; 71pp. No price quoted, but available from the author by email at [petedeehelmore@talk21.com](mailto:petedeehelmore@talk21.com) or by post at 15 Lyndon Gardens, High Wycombe HP13 7QJ).

This booklet about John Gottlieb Ulrich (1798-1875), chronometer manufacturer and watchmaker, originated as a contribution to his family's history and is by his four-times-removed great niece. It will also be of special interest to horological historians.

Born in 1798 in London, Ulrich was named after three preceding generations of immediate forbears, two of whom had been watchmakers in Hamburg. Ms Helmore explains that it was the lure of monetary award, initially arising from the Longitude Act of 1714, (conceded again by the Admiralty in the 1830s that they would still 'occasionally reward' any improvement to chronometers) that drove Ulrich's life obsession, namely an extraordinary quest for absolute perfection in a marine chronometer. His pioneering investigations began at age fifteen with an attempt to solve the 'middle temperature error' in chronometers by demagnetising the balance and spring. In 1824 he experimented briefly with balance weights formed of iron, steel or glass tubes containing mercury and then, between 1824 and 1828, with a 'constant force escapement' for chronometers. Airy, the Astronomer Royal, damned it as 'perhaps the most remarkable instance of misapplied ingenuity which was ever seen. It is utterly useless' and a century later Rupert Gould described it as 'the most complicated escapement ... ever devised ... very expensive to make and very difficult to adjust. Of necessity its size was considerable.' And it can still be seen on display in the Clockmakers' Company's museum in the Guildhall.

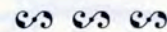
Ulrich made innumerable unsuccessful attempts through a stream of letters to claim rewards from the Board of Longitude, Admiralty and Royal Society. Finally he was granted a pension by the Clockmakers' Company but soon lost it after disagreements. He undoubtedly possessed great ingenuity but was embittered – indeed paranoid – in his suspicions that others, Eiffe and Molyneux in particular, were stealing his ideas. Other *dramatis personae* whose

names and firms appear in these pages include Brockbank & Atkins, Sir Francis Beaufort (hydrographer), Charles Babbage, I.K. Brunel, Edward Dent, Edward Loseby, Sir John Bennett and B.L. Vulliamy (who thought Ulrich's talents 'were of the first order').

But Ulrich had no business acumen and consequently his large, extended family were forced to move homes (and churches) several times. Ulrich was ill-fated by the untimely deaths of many of his immediate family. Neither his wife nor three brothers (all younger) survived him: his eldest son died aged nineteen and only two of his eight children and two of his six grandchildren outlived him. He was bankrupt twice, and victim of an attempted garrotting. His extraordinary life and considerable achievements would seem apposite raw material for an instalment of the popular television series 'Who do you think you are?'

Dee Helmore deserves a bouquet for an episode of her family's history that is also of much interest and value to historians of horology. There is a useful index and the 112 footnotes reveal sources including archives in London and Hamburg, Board of Longitude papers, trade journal and directories, parliamentary papers, records of the Royal Society and the Clockmakers' Company, church registers and census returns. There are 18 sepia illustrations (alas, some too small to be legible).

Alun C. Davies



#### ADDENDUM:

In the September issue, pp. 663-64, we published a review of two books on Dutch watches, but failed to give the information needed to order them. CEES PEETERS, *Hollandse Horloges* has ISBN 978-90-74083-03-4, JOHN BERINGEN, *Horloges van Nederlandse Uurwerkmakers* has ISBN 978-90-818942-0-3. Both books can be ordered from the Dutch Clock and Watch Museum, Kalverringdijk 3, 1509 BT Zaandam, the Netherlands, Tel +31 (0)75 6179769 or by sending an e-mail to [directeur@mnuurwerk.nl](mailto:directeur@mnuurwerk.nl).