

Horologica

For more information on the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Inc., visit nawcc.org.

Share reviews and announcements of new and interesting books, websites, digital media programs, periodicals, exhibits, and all else pertaining to horology. Send contributions to Editor Therese Umerlik at tumerlik@nawcc.org or mail to NAWCC, Inc., Publications Department, 514 Poplar St., Columbia, PA 17512-2130.

In-depth Look at One of England's Leading Clockmakers of the Golden Age

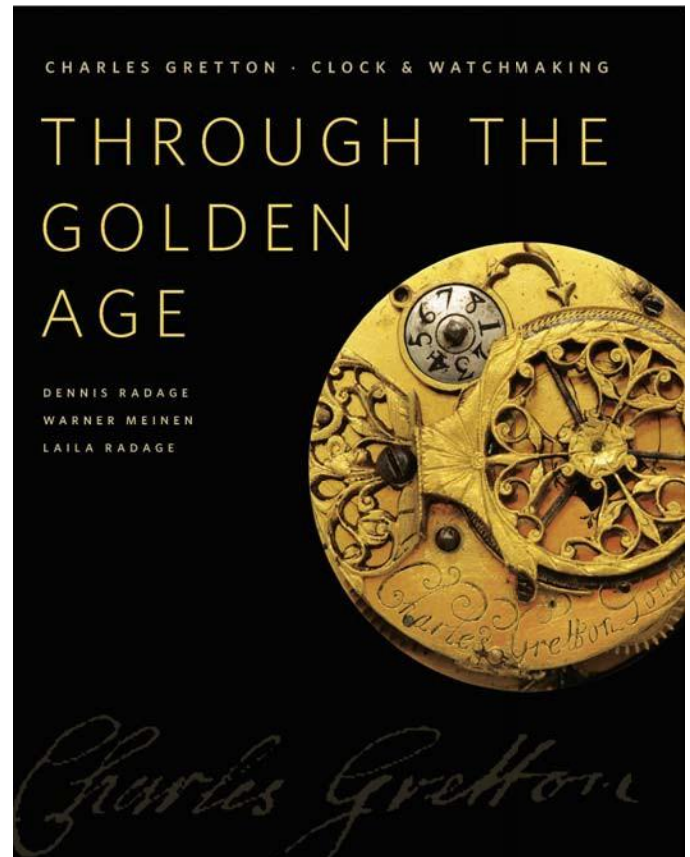
Most serious students of English timekeeping in the golden era of British horology will have heard of famous clockmakers, such as Thomas Tompion (1639-1713), Joseph Knibb (1640-1711), George Graham (1673-1751), and John Harrison (1693-1776). But a handful of artisans who were their contemporaries made clocks of similar quality and were nearly as prominent at the time. Joseph Windmills (circa 1640-1724) and Christopher Pinchbeck (circa 1670-1732) come to mind. Biographies were published about them. But no biography had been written on another prominent example, Charles Gretton (1647-1731), despite a large sample of his surviving clock making and watchmaking.

The book under review not only closes that gap, but it does so in a manner that is surprising in its thoroughness and insightfulness. After more than a decade of hard work, NAWCC members Dennis and Laila Radage, of British Columbia, Canada, and fellow Gretton enthusiast Warner Meinen from Holland have created a book, an amazing monograph, that goes beyond the standard glossy biography of a master craftsman of yesteryear. The book reflects the passion the three authors have developed for the life, the output, and the era of their subject.

Charles Gretton is an interesting person, with an interesting career, living in an interesting period of British and horological history. He also served as the master of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, the guild of London horologists, from 1700 to 1701. The book itself is structured into the following seven sections:

- The Man and His Life (73 pages)
- Longcase Clocks (162 pages), including a review of 30 Gretton longcase clocks
- Spring Clocks (156 pages), including a review of 23 spring clocks
- Lantern Clocks (22 pages), including a review of 2 lantern clocks
- Watches (101 pages), including a review of 18 watches
- Apprentices of Gretton (18 pages)
- Workshop, Staff and Production (20 pages).

In addition, the appendices focus on extant clocks



and watches as well as stolen watches. The bibliography consists of more than 100 references, and a name and subject index contains about 1,500 entries.

This book sets new standards for research into horological biographies. The only recent English-language biography in our field that comes to mind is the epic biography of Tompion written by Jeremy Evans, Jonathan Carter, and Ben Wright titled *Thomas Tompion 300 Years: A Celebration of the Life and Work of Thomas Tompion* (Gloucestershire, UK: Water Lane Publishing, 2013).

That book was the culmination of several decades of research by Evans that was finally turned into a publication by Carter and Wright.

HOROLOGICA

The Gretton book too had a long gestation. Early in the millennium some notices in *Antiquarian Horology*, the quarterly publication of the Antiquarian Historical Society, called for a working group to study Gretton's work, but only Dennis Radage and Warner Meinen really committed to the project in 2006. Laila Radage joined shortly after. These exceptionally motivated authors completely devoted their lives to tracking every known timekeeper associated with Gretton, physically inspecting most of them in situ, and documenting each item in detail. They also pursued with equal rigor every piece of archival and documentary evidence. They spent the past three years assembling all of that data into a well-organized, comprehensive publication, choosing to produce a beautiful and extremely high-quality book—which not surprisingly is reflected in its price. The result is well worth the money and will be of great interest to anybody with a desire to learn more

about early clock making and watchmaking in England. Thank you to the Radages and Meinen for creating a most valuable addition to the published record of a famous but still underdocumented era of British horological history.

Editor's note: For more information on the book, go to the July/August 2016 issue of the Mart & Highlights or visit www.grettonbook.com.

Charles Gretton: Clock & Watchmaking Through the Golden Age by Dennis Radage, Warner Meinen, and Laila Radage. ISBN 978-0-9940460-0-0. Toronto, ON: Three O'Clock Press Inc., 2016. 631 pages. Includes a foreword by A. D. W. Panes. Available in a hard cover with a dust jacket, a prestige edition with foil stamped slipcase, and a leather bound deluxe edition.

—Fortunat F. Mueller-Maerki, FNAWCC (NJ)