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*Compliments
June 1951.*

THE ONE AND ONLY

EDWARD EAST

by

H. Alan Lloyd, M.B.E., F.B.H.I.

Reprinted from HOROLOGICAL JOURNAL, May and June, 1950.

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THERE has always been uncertainty about the life span of Edward East, one of the original members of the Court of Assistants of the Clockmakers' Company on its foundation in 1631, and Clockmaker to King Charles I and later to King Charles II.

To be elected to the Court of Assistants on the formation of the Company indicates at least a man who was already free of some other company (most of the original clockmakers were blacksmiths), and not only free but free for sufficient time for him to have shown himself outstanding in his craft and so worthy of the honour of selection.

Apprenticeship was usually embarked upon at about the age of fourteen, freedom followed seven years later at the age of twenty-one, to be succeeded by at least two years as journeyman, during which time the new freeman could submit his masterpiece. Add to this another two or three years in establishing a reputation and we arrive at the late twenties as the earliest age that a young man could have achieved that degree of proficiency and renown to be selected as an original member of the Court of Assistants of a new company.

Sixty-eight clockmakers paid or guaranteed various amounts towards the cost of the Charter, East's contribution being £1 15s. with an additional loan of £5, out of a total of £201 6s. subscribed and £60 loaned. The original officers of the company were:—

MASTER

David Ramsey, Esquier.

WARDENS

Henry Archer, John Willow, Sampson Shelton.

ASSISTANTS

James Vautrollier, John Smith, Francis Foreman,
John Harris, Richard Morgan, Samuell Lynnaker,
John Charlton, John Mydnall, Symon Bartram,
Edward East.

It will be noted that East figures last on the list and since this is not alphabetical, it may be assumed that he was the youngest.

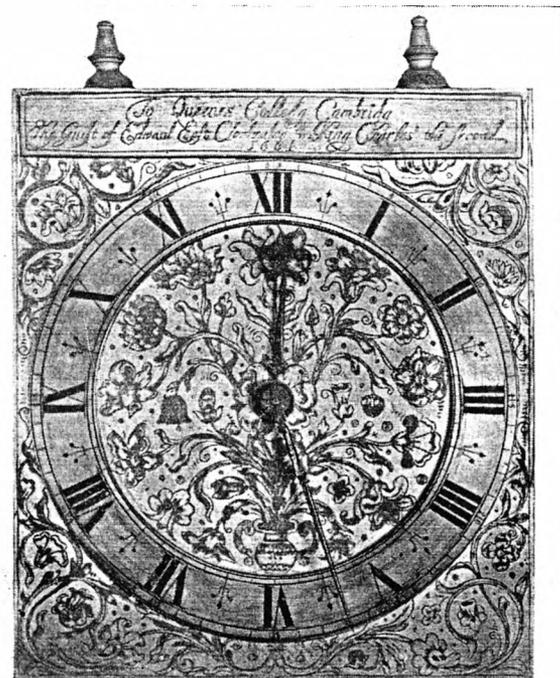
In a book entitled *Behind My Library Door*, Dr. C. G. Williamson, dealing with the lives of various prominent Quakers, claims that an entry in the Friends' Burial Register recording the death of one Edward East on October 11, 1701, who at 84 died "of age," refers to the famous clockmaker. There are several inconsistencies in this claim. The East

so buried died in the parish of All-Hallows and was buried in the Coverlie Fields.

In the first place, to be aged 84 in 1701 means birth in 1617 and an age of only fourteen at the time East was appointed assistant to the clockmakers, which is, of course, impossible; to be our East he would have to be at least 94. In an attempt to elucidate the mystery, I consulted the original records of the Society of Friends at Somers House. Here, while practically every other male burial recorded the trade of the deceased, no mention was made of the trade or profession of East. True, the age was recorded as *about* 84, but since the expression was used in every entry, including children of a few months old, whose exact age must have been known, it must be assumed that the word "about" merely means that the age is recorded to the last completed year only, and not that there is any room for error.

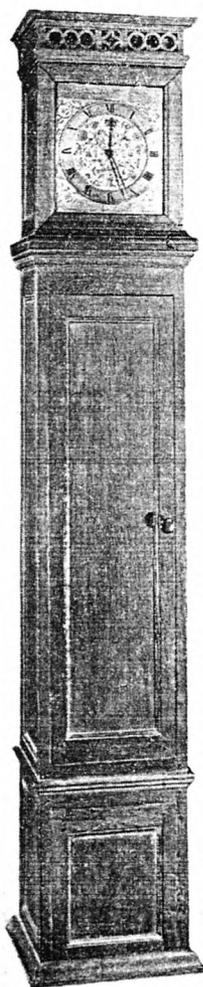
Further, it has been ascertained that the Devonshire House meeting place which he attended was located near the present Liverpool Street Station,

Dial of the Queens' College clock.



that Coverlie Fields and All Hallows on the Wall are in the Shoreditch area; in none of these localities have we any record of East having lived. An additional point is that the Quakers usually buried anyone of importance at Bunhill Fields, irrespective of the meeting place attended by the deceased or the locality of his death, and it struck me as odd that East was not considered of enough importance so to be interred.

This wrong claim to identify the East who died in 1701 aged 84 with the clock-maker has led Baillie and Britten to surmise that there might have been two men of the same name living and working during the long life span of East; not an unnatural assumption until



the Clockmakers' Company records are studied carefully.

Recently I discovered in Somerset House the record of a will drawn July 21, 1688, and proved February 3, 1696/7. This was made by Edward East of the parish of Hampton in Middlesex, watchmaker and citizen and goldsmith of London, and reads as follows:—

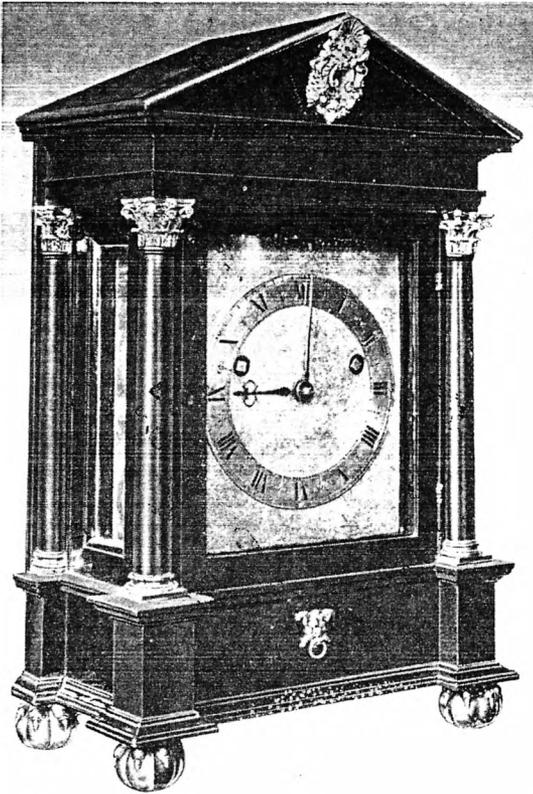
The Queens' College Clock in its later case.



Watches by Edward East: *Left*, One made about 1630 has an oval silver pair case. The silver dial has an engraved hour circle and steel hand with long tail. The verge escapement has a pinned-on cock with narrow oval table. Ratchet set-up. Three-wheel train. Size 1.5 × 1.25 × 1.4 in. *Right*, An egg-shaped watch made about 1640. It has winding hole with shutter, verge escapement, and a cock with an oval table, balance with broad steel rim, tangent screw set-up and three-wheel train. Size 1.45 × 1.15 in.

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN

I EDWARD EAST of the parish of Hampton in the County of Middx. . . . Watchmaker and Citizen and Goldsmith of London do make this my last Will first I humbly resigne my Soul into the hands of Almighty God And whereas I have fully advanced all my children except my Daughter Elizabeth East I give all those my five severall messuages situate in old fish street and in Distaffe lane London unto my said Daughter Elizabeth and her heires and assigns for ever Also I give to my Daughter Anne Saunders my capitall messuage or Inne in Ladd lane known by the name of the Swan with two necks To hold the same for and during the Term of her naturall life upon condition that she yearly pay forty shillings for a Sermon to be preached in Ironmonger lane on St. James day five pounds yearly to Brazenose Colledge in Oxford and two pounds and twelve shillings yearly to Queens Colledge in Cambridge att the days and times mentioned in the Will whereby I hold the same And in default thereof my will is that the next person in reversion shall enter and take the profitts during her life And from and after her decease I give the same messuage or Inn to Edmund East son of my Son Edward East and to the heires male of the said Edmund And for want of such issue I give the same messuage to the heires males of my said



An early wood-cased bracket clock designed to go for seven days only. C.1660.

son Edward and for want of such issue I give the same message or Inne to my sonne James East and the heires males of his body and for want of such issue I give the same message to my Executrix Sara East and her heires for ever And whereas my said sonne Edward East hath had a great Part of my Estate and much more than his share I give him only tenne shillings But if the said Edward East do and shall within three months after my decease seal and deliver unto my Executrix a good and sufficient release and discharge of all claimes and demands in and to my estate with such covenants as Henry Trinder Esq. Serjeant att law shall advise and directt then and in such case and not otherwise I give the said Edward East the sume of twenty pounds to be paid him by five shillings a week the first payment to be made on the monday next after the said release shall be duly executed And whereas I entered into Articles with my son in law ffrancis Rolph to pay him only two hundred pounds as a marriage portion with my Daughter Lydia which is not yet paid but I am obliged to pay the same persuant to those Articles I have since paid and given the said ffrancis considerable summes of money so that I have fully advanced my said Daughter Lydia when the said two hundred pounds shall be paid pursuant to the said Articles Which I will my Executrix shall pay according to the true intent and meaning of the said Articles And it is my express will that my Executrix bury me privately in the nighttime and that she give nothing but Rosemary att my ffunerall Allso I give my said loving Wife Sarah East all the rest and residue of my Estate goods and chattels wheresoever and whatsoever And I make and appoint the said Sarah East sole Executrix of

this my last Will and do revoke all former Wills by me made In witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand and seal this one and twentyeth Day of July one thousand and six hundred eighty and eight and in the fourth yeare of the reign of King James the second over England.

Edward East.

Signed sealed and published by the said Edward East to be his last Will and Testament in the presence of Wm. Shaw Ja. Marriott Samuel ffranklin being all of us present at the premises.

The will was proved in London on February 23, 1696/97.

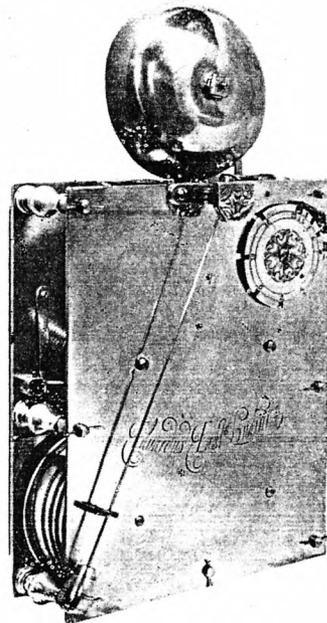
Searches kindly undertaken by the Clerk of the Goldsmiths Company have produced the following two very interesting entries:—

Apprenticeship Book No. 1, p. 236 v.

“The 27th daye of March 1618. Memorandum that I Edward East sonne of John East of Southill in the Countye of Bedford yeoman doe put myselfe apprentice to Richard Rogers goldsmith for the terme of eight yeares from May day next.”

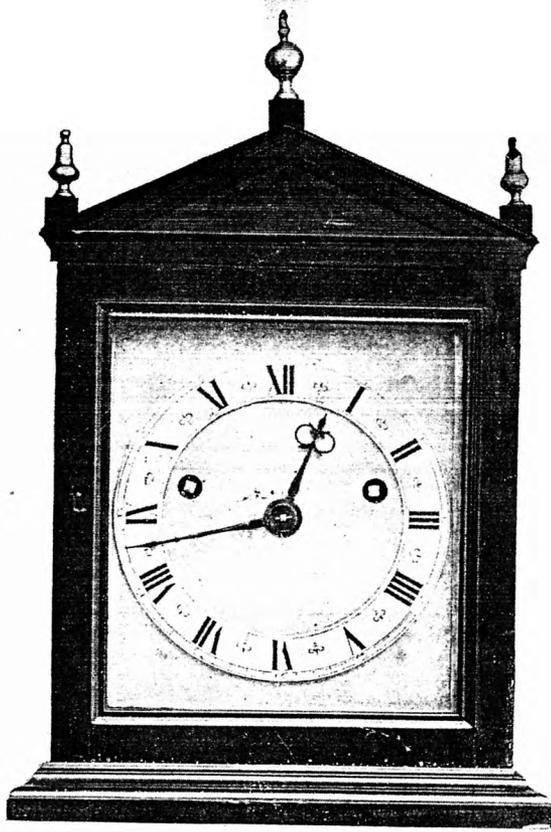
Wardens' Accounts and Court Minutes. Vol. 15, 1624-1629, p. 78.

“Friday, 8 February 1627. Edward East apprenticed with Richard Rogers was sworn and made free by service.”



The back plate of the 7-day bracket clock shown in the illustration above.

A search kindly undertaken by the Vicar of Southill has revealed that Edward East, son of John East, was baptised on August 22, 1602. He had an elder brother, John, baptised September 7, 1600, and younger brothers and sisters, Angelett 21.2.1604, James 18.10.1607, Jeremy, 25.3.1610, Jonah 25.11.1612-1616. East's mother died in July, 1623.



Eight-day bracket clock circa 1665.

HERE we have a young man, born 1602, who was made free of the goldsmiths in 1627 at the age of 25 and who would be 29 at the time he was elected Assistant to the Clockmakers' Company in 1631. Examples of East's early watches in the British Museum and Clockmakers' Museum show him to be equal in craftsmanship to any of his contemporaries, most of whom must have been much older men, thus gaining for him his place as Assistant by virtue of his skill. The charter provides for the appointment for life: "And we have assigned, named, constituted, appointed and made . . . our well beloved James Vautrollier, John Smith, . . . and Edward East, to be the first and present Assistants of the said Fellowship, to continue in the said office of Assistants during their natural lives, unless . . . etc."

FINED FOR LATE ATTENDANCE

On October 23, 1632, Edward East was fined 1s. for late attendance at the Court.

In 1647 we hear of his being appointed treasurer:

"1647. October 11. The day above said it was likewise ordered, That whereas Mr. Helden being Renter Warden and refusing to give security for the stock of the Company, the Company thought fit that it should be put to voices that Mr. East and Mr. Hackett should be putt in

nomination for Treasurer and then Mr. East was chosen and it was ordered that the money should be paid unto him, and he to give a bond to the Company for it."

East was the only treasurer; the office ceased at his death.

The plate of the Company was checked from time to time as the following entry shows:—

"1652. November 20. There are severall pieces of plate followinge were weighed being then in the hands of Mr. Edward East, Treasurer of the Company."

Then follows a list of the different pieces, all found correct.

"1659. November 9. Momento that the Keyes of the oulde Chest which is in St. Dunstons Church are in Mr. Hill's hands.

"This Court day Mr. Hill delivered to Mr. Hackett all the Plate, the Charter, Mr. East's bonds one of £100 and another of £10 with ye chest and both the Wardens Bonds with severall Books of Records of the Company, which are all put into the chest and sent unto our Master's house, which our Master is to give a Bond of £200 to give a true account of, when he shall be required to do it by ye Company, casualty with Fier excepted only."

GRANT OF ARMS

The continued association of East with the Company is recorded in the following inclusion of his name in an application for a grant of Arms made in 1671.

"January 15th 1671. It was agreed voated and ordered That the Company shall take upon them a Coat of Armes fitt and proper for them to beare. . . . And the Master and Wardens Mr. East Mr. Nicasius and Mr. Jeremie Gregorie are desired and ordered to treat and agree with Sir Edward Walker King at Armes and to act in this business according to this order."

The grant of arms contains the following passage:—

"Know yee therefore that I the said Sr. EDWARD WALKER Knight Garter Principall King of Armes by the power and authority annexed unto my office . . . Do by these presents grant and assign, unto said Incorporate Company . . . whereof at present Nicholas Coxeter is Master . . . are Wardens as also Edward East the only person now living of those mentioned in the said Letters Patents of Incorporation . . ."

ONLY SURVIVING MEMBER

Here we have proof that after 40 years of incorporation, Edward East was the only surviving member of the original founders.

On August 22, 1654, Henry Jones was apprenticed to Edward East, being made free on July 6, 1663. Jones rose to be Master, being elected on September 29, 1691. During his year of office it is recorded that:—

"1692. October 20. Mr. Henry Jones the present Master this day acquainted the Court That Mr. Edward East formerly Master was pleased to give £100 now in his lifetime to this

Company for the benefit of the poor. And the said Mr. Jones after the charitable example of his said Master having promised to give one hundred pounds more for the benefit of the poor likewise in such manner as shall be hereafter appointed and declared by the said Mr. East and Mr. Jones. . . .”

“1693. June 20. Mr. Edward East gave the £100. Ordered that it be put into the Company’s chest and that the Master and Wardens do go to Mr. East and give him hearty thanks for this his charity.”

There is no record that East was present when he made his promise in 1692 and we see that definitely he did not make the payment in person. He is now living at Hampton and is getting too old to travel about much. He is nearly 91 and wishes to give a gift in his lifetime. That we are dealing with the same man is shown in Jones’s reference to him as “his said Master,” not *the* said Master.

In 1694 it was resolved to invest the money:—

“1694. January 15. It was resolved to invest the £200 given by Mr. Edward East and Mr. Henry Jones on the security of the first Act of Parliament passed to raise money for the King.”

It will be noticed that the expression “the late Mr. East” does not occur; he is therefore still alive in January, 1694, and his death in 1696/7 at the age of 94 is as much in accord with probability as is his identification with the young goldsmith apprentice of 1618; more especially when it is remembered that in his will he relegates his connection with the powerful and very much senior Goldsmiths Company, which was granted rights of assay by Edward I and its charter by Edward III, to a subsidiary place to that accorded to his connection with the still very young Clockmakers’ Company.

Unfortunately, Somerset House has not the original will, so there is no means of comparing the signature with any in the Clockmakers’ Company’s records; the burial registers of the parish of Hampton for these years are lost, so indirect confirmation through a record of his age is not available. There is no proof that he actually died at Hampton, though at his advanced age he would not want to move about much. Assay marks were not instituted until 1697, so there is no means of identifying his early watch cases. Thus we are deprived of any exact check. Atkins and Overall state that he resided in Pall Mall, near the tennis court, but they give no authority; they also state that when Prince of Wales, Charles II used to play tennis, the stakes being an “Edward East.” If this be correct, the Prince must have been quite a boy at the time. He was born in 1630 and was sent out of London to the Scilly Isles in 1646, later joining his mother in Paris. He did not return to London until the Restoration.

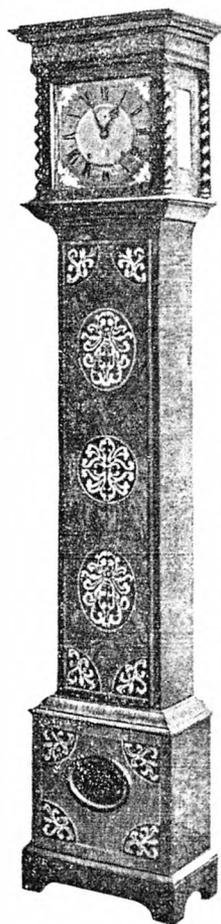
East was watchmaker to King Charles I and, as we shall see a little later, also to King Charles II. In connection with the former appointment, Sir Thomas Herbert records the following:—

“Another night His Majesty appointed Mr. Herbert to come into his Bed Chamber an hour sooner than usual in the morning; but it so happened that he overslept his time, and awakened not until the King’s Silver Bell hastened him in. Herbert (said the King) you have not observed the command

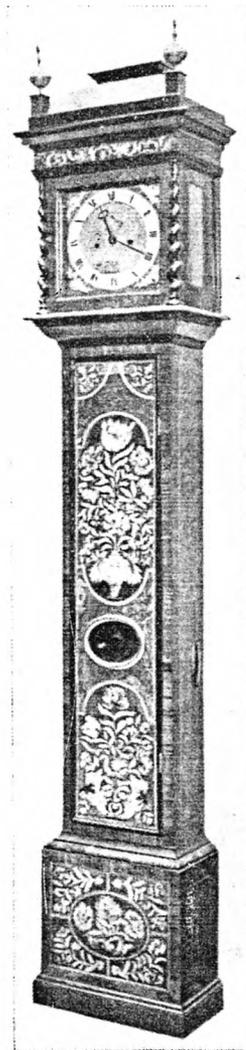
I gave you last night. He acknowledged his fault. Well (said the King) I will order you for the future; you shall have a Gold Alarm-Watch, which, as there may be cause, shall awake you; write to the Earl of Pembroke to send me such a one presently. The Earl immediately sent to Mr. East, his Watchmaker in Fleet Street, about it; of which more will be said at His Majesty’s coming to St. James’s. . . . The Earl delivered to a military Officer who was going to St. James’s the gold watch that had the Alarm desiring him to give it to Mr. Herbert, to present to the King. . . .”

The above is from a record of happenings in the years 1647 and 1648. East was then in Fleet Street. Britten gives 1635 and 1646 as two other dates when East was known to have been living in Fleet Street, but I have not checked them. Britten also gives a reference to a Mr. East living at the Sun outside Temple Bar in 1690, but there is no indication that it is mentioned that the East was a clock-

(Below) Marquetry long case 8-day striking clock, height 7ft. circa 1680.



(Above) Long case inlaid month striking clock with 1½ sec. pendulum which can be seen through the glass in the base circa 1690.





Eight-day bracket clock circa 1675

maker. I was impressed with the many Easts who were alive at this time. In my researches the "wrong" East was always turning up. The entry may have referred to the son Edward, who, as we have seen from the will, was not a particularly worthy character. He was only left 10s. (having had more than his share in his father's lifetime), unless he squared up his debts, when he was to have £20 paid at 5s. a week. Papa East seems to have "known his man."

In the will, the reversion of the inn, "The Swan with Two Necks," to another son, James, occurs; this is another indication that we are on the right track. In the Calendar of State Papers (Domestic), Britten quotes an entry in 1662 of a grant to Edward East of the office of "Chief Clockmaker and keeper of the Privy Clocks," fee 12d. per day and £3 6s. 8d. livery, and on April 14, 1662, James East, the King's servant, is to be sworn as clockmaker to the Queen. The Court servant of King Charles I regains his position at the Restoration and takes the opportunity of securing a position at Court for his son.

The grandson, Edmund, son of Edward, referred to in the will, is believed to be Edmund East, apprenticed May 7, 1688, to Richard Lyons, t/o Samuel Clyatt, 8 years. Free July 6, 1696.

Another link between the will and Edward East is the fact that East presented a clock to Queens' College, Cambridge, which is illustrated by permission of the President. The clock is inscribed, "To Queenes Colledg Cambridg The Guift of Edward East Clockmaker to King Charles the

second 1664," thus confirming the appointment set out above. It is a 30-hour clock and was evidently originally placed on a bracket with the inscription plate on the apron of the bracket. This plate has later been rivetted on to the beautifully engraved dial plate, spoiling its proportions, when the clock was encased at a later date.

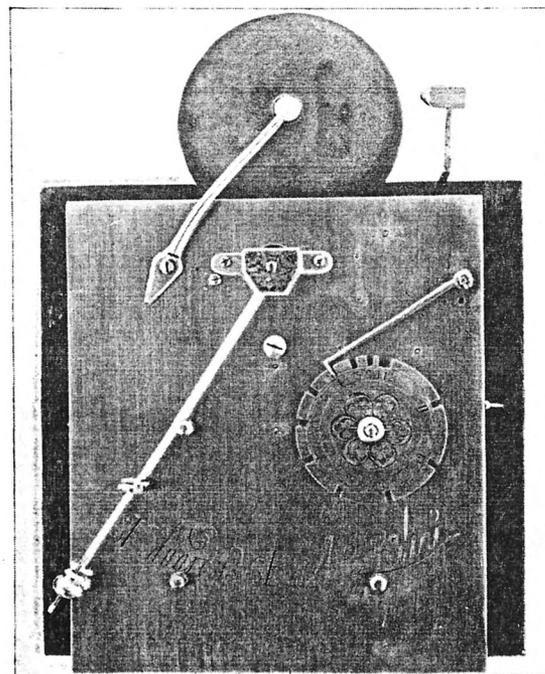
It will be noted from the will that an annual rental of £2 12s. was payable to Queens' College, Cambridge, in respect of the inn, "The Swan with Two Necks." The College is still receiving rent in respect of the site of this inn. In connection with the inn, the Principal and Archivist of Brasenose College have kindly supplied the following facts: It appears that in 1607 James Stoddarde (or Binks) left £10 annually to be paid as to £5 for a poor scholar at Brasenose College, Oxford, and as to £5 for a poor scholar at (Queens' College) Cambridge. This sum was charged on "The Swan with Two Necks" in Lad Lane (?Old Jewry), London. There was some dispute about the will, but in 1634 Francis Goldsmith, then owner of "The Swan," agreed to charge the inn for ever with £5 yearly in favour of Brasenose College on the College abandoning its suit in Chancery.

The College accounts show that "Mr. East" (no Christian name given) was paying this charge during the 1670s and 1680s. He does not seem to have discharged his debts very regularly as he got badly into arrears in the 1670s and had to pay £29 odd at one stage in the 1680s.

From the fact that East lived to the age of 94, an exceptional age at any period, but especially in the seventeenth century, and that he had a widow who survived him, one forms the opinion that he was married late in life and to a woman much younger than himself.

It is a peculiar coincidence that the two greatest masters of seventeenth century horology, Tompion

Back plate of the 1675 clock.



and East, should both have been born in Bedfordshire within three miles of each other and that the localities should be named Northill and Southill. It is an interesting speculation whether East's success had any influence on young Tompion in determining him to go to London.

In conclusion, while definite proof of a connection between the maker of the will and our subject cannot be established, I submit that the different pieces of the puzzle fit together sufficiently well to make a sound and credulous whole. Thus we are whittling down, one by one, the few remaining outstanding problems in antiquarian horology.

[NOTE.—The illustrations to this article, which unfortunately have to be limited, have been selected to show East's earlier and more characteristic work. East's later work, both in watches and clocks, loses its individuality and is not appreciably different from the general fashions of the day. This would seem to indicate that as he grew older, productions bearing his name were the product of his workshops, rather than of his hands. Thanks are due to The Clock-makers' Company and Lord Harris for some of the illustrations.]