

## 2022 NAWCC Time Symposium

# Horology's Great Collectors

BY LAURA TAYLOR (PA)

The 2022 NAWCC Ward Francillon Time Symposium took place on October 21–23 at the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen in Midtown Manhattan, NY, in association with the Horological Society of New York and sponsored by Sotheby's. With a theme of "Horology's Great Collectors" ([www.greathorology.com](http://www.greathorology.com)), eminent speakers from around the world gave presentations on the lives and collections of people who have expanded our appreciation of horology and enlivened the conversation about what makes a collection great.

Organized by Chair Bob Frishman and the NAWCC Symposium Committee, the educational event featured 17 scholars, collectors, curators, and horologists leading the audience through a survey of collectors, no longer living, who have left their watch and clock legacies to us in various forms. From these legacies we can learn about the social and technological world in which the objects were created and collected. To aid in understanding the scope of horological collecting, Frishman created a companion book with an annotated and illustrated list of more than 200 watch and clock collectors (Figure 1). Contact him ([bell-time@comcast.net](mailto:bell-time@comcast.net)) if you would like to request a copy while supplies last. If you were not able to attend this year's Symposium, the lectures were recorded and will soon be available on the NAWCC's YouTube channel.

### Friday, October 21

On Friday morning, 30 attendees participated in a two-hour private tour of horological objects at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 2). The tour was led by Wolfram Koepppe, Marina Kellen French



**Figure 2.** Wolfram Koepppe (right) led a special tour of the Met's timepiece exhibits for a small group of Symposium attendees. COURTESY OF BOB FRISHMAN.



**Figure 1.** PDFs of this compilation are also available at <https://www.greathorology.com/greatcollectors>. Frishman will continue expanding these files to update the information printed in the book.



**Figure 3.** Attendees enjoyed seeing this beautiful 17th-century French watch. Case: rock crystal with engraved and enameled floral designs, set in enameled gold mounts; dial: champlevé enamel on gold. [METMUSEUM.ORG](http://METMUSEUM.ORG).

Senior Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. This department was established in 1907 by J. Pierpont Morgan and now includes not only sculpture of all kinds but also horological and mathematical instruments, jewelry, ceramics, woodwork, and textiles. The tour's participants enjoyed seeing a number of important European watches and clocks donated to the Met by Morgan, one of the greatest horological collectors and essentially the first curator of the Met's collection. Morgan delighted in timepiece complications that performed well, though he may not have thoroughly understood their intricacies. Koeppe noted that only about 5% of the museum's collection of clocks and watches are on exhibit. Attendees viewed pieces such as an exquisite watch by 17th-century French watchmaker Pierre Vernede (Figure 3) and an intriguing 18th-century German longcase clock by clockmaker Johann Schmidt and casemaker David Roentgen (Figure 4).

Not only did attendees see incredible timepieces on public display, the group also had access to the museum's restricted storage area where several clocks and pocket watches were on view for everyone to see up close. One such clock was a 17th-century German astronomical table clock, which features 10 dials, the four seasons depicted in repoussé scenes on the base, and a top obelisk that can be removed and used as a winding key (Figure 5).

On Friday afternoon, a special bonus program was presented as a tribute to the late John Redfern's animated horological illustrations of escapements and movements. Hosted by the Antiquarian Horological Society (AHS)—American Section in the library of the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen of the City of New York, the program was opened by AHS Chair Dr. James Nye (Figure 6). Noting that Redfern had accessed digital libraries in supporting his illustration work, Nye emphasized the importance of horological inquiry and access to digital archives in aiding horological research. Bob Frishman, "Horology in Art" scholar, provided an overview of horological illustration from the beginning of mechanical timekeeping (Figure 7). He touched on several key works, from the replica of Giovanni Donni's 1364



**Figure 4.** The dial shows local time plus the time in ten other cities, and the clock originally had a clavier that played after the hour was struck. The clock also shows the phases of the moon, the day of the week, the day of the month, and the number of days in the month. METMUSEUM.ORG.



**Figure 5.** Case: gilded brass and gilded copper; dials: gilded brass and silver. The large dial on the front has chapter rings for the French hours (I–XII), Italian hours (1–24 starting at sundown), and Nuremberg hours (daylight and night hours, varying according to the season). METMUSEUM.ORG.



**Figure 6.** Dr. James Nye addressed the audience at the Symposium's special program on the horological animations of John Redfern. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



astronomical clock, da Vinci's remarkable clock illustrations, and Ferdinand Berthoud's illustrations of marine chronometer movements, to Tran Duly Ly's illustrations of Ingraham movements and Henry Fried's drawings from his *Watch Repairer's Manual*.

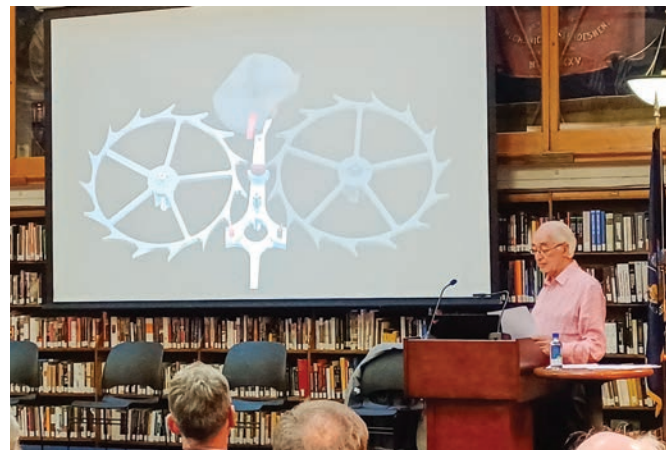
Martin Conradi (Figure 8), a computer graphics entrepreneur, noted that he had met John Redfern in 1993 and was amazed by his innovative animation of Harrison's H1. Redfern had an abiding interest in anything mechanical, Conradi said, as seen in his love of fast cars and his work in restoring them. His early career was spent as a film editor and then in the 1970s he began learning about clocks. Redfern started his own clock restoration business, and then in the 1990s launched Redfern Animation where, said Conradi, Redfern could "take the viewer into the beating heart of a timepiece." After Redfern's death in 2019, Conradi gathered the bulk of Redfern's work on a website (<https://redfernanimation.com/>) to teach and inspire the public through these horological animations. A panel discussion followed (Figure 9), exploring Redfern's career and technical prowess and answering the audience's questions.

The Symposium's formal program began on Friday evening in the library of the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen. Chair Bob Frishman introduced the 59th James Arthur Lecture and provided an overview of its history since it began in 1932. Daryn Schnipper, Sotheby's senior vice president/chairman, International Watch Division, gave the 2022 keynote lecture and was the second woman to do so (Figure 10). She discussed several key collections that she handled at Sotheby's and her experiences meeting many of horology's eminent collectors.

In her lecture, Schnipper described several remarkable auction experiences, including pieces from King Farouk's collections, auctioned in 1954 and then sold by the buyer's descendants at auction in 2016. She spoke on Sotheby's Antique Automaton of Maurice Sandoz, of which the singing bird bottle sold for \$2.1 million and is now at the Patek Philippe Museum. Between 1999 and 2004, Sotheby's sold Seth Atwood's collection of pieces from The Time Museum in Rockford, IL. Schnipper recounted how Atwood wanted the Patek Philippe Henry Graves Jr. Supercomplication—a pocket watch with 24 functions—and was able to buy it from Pete Fullerton, grandson of Graves, in 1969 for The Time Museum. The watch was later auctioned by Sotheby's for \$11 million, the most expensive ever sold at the time, to Sheikh Saud bin Mohammed Al-Thani of Qatar. Then in 2014, the watch came back to Sotheby's and



**Figure 7.** Bob Frishman provided an overview of horological illustration throughout history. COURTESY OF MARY JANE DAPKUS.



**Figure 8.** Martin Conradi spoke on the groundbreaking horological animations created by John Redfern. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



**Figure 9.** A discussion of Redfern's work was led by (l to r) Will Andrewes, Dr. James Nye, Jonathan Betts, and Martin Conradi. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



**Figure 10.** Daryn Schnipper delivered the James Arthur Lecture on great collections she has worked with in her role at Sotheby's. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.

was auctioned for a record-breaking \$24 million. Schnipper also spoke on master watchmaker George Daniels and the only watch he ever made by commission, when Seth Atwood asked him to make a watch with a frictionless escapement, requiring less oil and making it more accurate. She ended her lecture by sharing details of the auction of Andy Warhol's collection of watches, art, and jewelry in 1988. It was a nine-day auction, and clients lined up around the block to see the exhibition. Included in the collection were three quartz wristwatches, each with a well-known character (Fred Flintstone, Judy Jetson, and Gumby). The Gumby watch, with an estimated auction price of \$60–\$80, sold for \$2,400.

## Saturday, October 22

Saturday was a full day of stimulating lectures presented in the library of the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen. The Society was founded in 1785, and its library is the second-oldest in New York City. Nicholas Manousos, executive director of the Horological Society of New York (HSNY), provided opening remarks welcoming the Symposium attendees (Figure 11).

The first presenter of the day was Johannes Graf, curator of the German Clock Museum in Furtwangen, Germany (Figure 12). Graf spoke on Oskar Spiegelhalder (1864–1925) and his collection of Black Forest clocks. Spiegelhalder viewed clocks



**Figure 11.** Nicholas Manousos welcomed nearly 100 attendees to the Symposium, an annual event that has been running almost continuously since the 1980s. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



**Figure 12.** Johannes Graf presented his insight on what makes Oskar Spiegelhalder a great collector. COURTESY OF MARY JANE DAPKUS.

differently from other collectors, seeing more value in them being excellent examples of the culture in which they were built, rather than in the clocks having high-quality craftsmanship. Graf suggested that Spiegelhalder should be considered a great collector because of the excellent quality of the collections' objects, the detailed documentation he kept, the preservation of the collections by selling them to museums, and his positive impact on the image of Black Forest clocks.



Oliver Cooke (Figure 13), curator and conservator of horology at the British Museum, discussed Courtenay Adrian Ilbert (1888–1956), whose horological collections arrived at the British Museum in 1958. Ilbert collected not only watches and clocks but also prints of makers, watch papers, horological literature, and scientific instruments, and maintained excellent records in several ledgers. He built very good relationships with horological auction houses and businesses, which certainly aided in his acquiring pieces for his collection. Ilbert had a tremendous impact on the British Museum, as his collection—which stayed intact—comprises half of its horological holdings.

Jonathan Betts (Figure 14), horological scholar, conservator, and author, provided an overview of the 5th Lord Harris's life and collection. While in his professional life Lord Harris (1889–1984) was a stockbroker, he had a broad, informed, and passionate interest in watches and clocks. He was the founding president of the Antiquarian Horological Society (AHS). His collection includes timepieces from the English Golden Age (1650–1750s), the French Golden Era (1780–1820), and clocks with some sort of novelty element. If Lord Harris could not purchase the original timepiece, he would buy a reproduction of it. He decided upon the future of his collection by creating a charitable trust so that much of the collection stayed at Belmont, which opened to visitors in the 1980s as a museum with the clock collection on display. Betts invited everyone to visit Belmont and participate in a special horological tour there.

Robert C. Cheney Jr. (Figure 15), executive director and curator of the Willard House & Clock Museum

in North Grafton, MA, discussed collector J. Cheney Wells (1874–1960). He was one of three brothers who ran the American Optical Co. Cheney Wells was awarded more than 50 patents for eyeglasses and lenses. The Wells brothers founded the Wells Historical Museum in 1935 and later established Old Sturbridge Village to showcase their collection of everyday items used in a New England village setting. The living history museum opened in 1946 and includes the clock and paperweight collection of J. Cheney Wells.

Will Andrewes (Figure 16), horological scholar and author, spoke about collectors Seth Atwood and Winthrop K. (Kelly) Edey. Atwood (1917–2010) promoted innovation, having funded and helped develop a three-wheel car, a super yacht, and several clocks. In addition to collecting outstanding watches and clocks for The Time Museum, Atwood's goals in commissioning clocks were to create replicas of pieces whose details existed only in manuscripts, to recreate clocks that he could not buy the original of, or to show people a potential future of clockmaking. Starting in his boyhood, Kelly Edey (1937–1999) was a passionate collector of watches and clocks, particularly French clocks, eventually becoming an expert in the field. Though he inherited the family fortune, Edey still worked for Getty and Christie's in order to fund his collecting habit. He directed that his watches, clocks, and related materials be donated to the Frick Collection upon his death.

Tom McIntyre (Figure 17), technical administrator of the NAWCC Forums, presented the story of Paul Chamberlain (1865–1940), watch and clock collector and author of nearly 200 articles, as well as the book

**Figure 13.** Oliver Cooke discussed the life and collection of Courtenay Adrian Ilbert.  
AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



*It's About Time.* Chamberlain purchased his first watch at age 48 and donated his first collection of more than 300 pieces to his family's Chamberlain Memorial Museum. His strong relationships with collectors and makers helped him buy or trade pieces and see others normally kept from public view, such as Queen Charlotte's Mudge lever watch. Chamberlain's collection has been dispersed over the years, with some items having been housed at various times at Michigan State University, the American Clock & Watch Museum, and the Mariner's Museum, and many others are currently at the NAWCC's National Watch & Clock Museum.

Russ Oechsle (Figure 18), scholar, author, and collector, examined the common ground collectors

of all kinds may find by focusing on their motivations for collecting horological items. Oechsle described the extraordinary American wooden-works shelf clock collection of Christopher R. Brown (1936–2012). From his first purchases of miniature clocks at yard sales, Brown amassed an impressive collection of more than 300 wooden-works clocks, all stored in his own home. Brown was among the first to carefully examine and research wooden clock movements, sharing his findings with others and in the NAWCC's *Bulletin*. Oechsle summarized Brown's collecting objectives as trying to obtain an example from every individual or firm who made or cased a wooden works clock and trying to get an example of each type of wooden movement made by every maker.



**Figure 14.** Jonathan Betts spoke on the collection of the 5th Lord Harris. COURTESY OF MARY JANE DAPKUS.



**Figure 15.** Robert C. Cheney described the collections of clocks and paperweights of J. Cheney Wells, one of the founders of Old Sturbridge Village. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



**Figure 16.** Will Andrewes presented his lecture on Seth Atwood and Kelly Edey. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



**Figure 17.** Tom McIntyre spoke about the life and collections of Paul Chamberlain. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



John Reardon (Figure 19), watch expert, author, scholar, and collector advisor, spoke about several passionate Patek Philippe collectors. He described former clubs run by Patek Philippe in which members could participate in drawings to win a free watch. Reardon shared the stories of several noteworthy Patek Philippe collectors, including Orville Hagans (1897–1988), Seth Atwood (1917–2010), James Packard (1863–1928), Henry Graves Jr. (1868–1953), Reginald “Pete” Fullerton (1933–2012), Joe Ben Champion (1917–1975), Bernie Cornfeld (1927–1995), Peter Knoll (1943–2018), Sheikh Saud Al-Thani (1966–2014), Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman (1940–2020), Lee Kun-Hee (1942–2020), and Henri Stern (1911–2022).

Saturday ended with a reception and banquet at the elegant Harvard Club on West 44th St. After brief remarks from Bob Frishman, Rory McEvoy, and James Nye, the banquet’s keynote was given by Marsha Malinowski (Figure 20). She is a professional appraiser of rare books and manuscripts who recently worked with Fortunat Mueller-Maerki on his large donation of horological books, catalogs, technical articles, and ephemera to the Horological Society of New York. Malinowski shared four case studies of remarkable collections she’s dealt with, the first being that of Mueller-Maerki’s donation. The second was Barry Halper’s massive collection of baseball-related items, including Mickey Mantle’s game-worn baseball glove, which Billy Crystal

bought for \$239,000 at a Sotheby’s auction. An eccentric, impulsive mystery collector was the third case study Malinowski provided. This collector amassed a silver trophy collection, possibly to atone for never earning a trophy as a child. He also collected manuscripts, such as 35 papers signed by George Washington. The fourth study focused on a new collector who won a very special historical document at his first major auction. The document—one of the originals of the 1297 Magna Carta—had been owned by US presidential candidate Ross Perot and on loan to the National Archives. There were no restrictions on its sale, so there was a chance the document would end up in private hands in another country. This new collector won the bidding and promptly placed the Magna Carta on long-term loan to the National Archives for public display.

### Sunday, October 23

Some attendees extended their stay to participate in an all-day field trip to the Morris Museum in Morristown, NJ (Figure 21). The museum is home to the world-class Murtoth D. Guinness Collection of mechanical musical instruments and automata. Special presentations and tours were offered by conservator Jere Ryder, internationally renowned for his technical and historical expertise with these rare, antique objects.



**Figure 18.** Ross Oechsle discussed wooden-works shelf-clock collector Chris Brown. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



**Figure 19.** John Reardon presented the varied stories of Patek Philippe collectors. AUTHOR'S PHOTO.



**Figure 20.** The banquet's keynote address was provided by Marsha Malinowski. COURTESY OF JAMES NYE.

## The 2023 NAWCC Time Symposium

Plans are underway for the 2023 NAWCC Time Symposium, "Horology Treasures of Lancaster and the NAWCC Museum." The event will take place on July 16–17, immediately following the 2023 National Convention. Lectures will be held at the historic Hamilton Club at 106 E. Orange Street in Lancaster, PA, just a short walk from the Convention venue.



**Figure 21.** Several Symposium attendees, including Fortunat Mueller-Maerki and Susan Foreman, participated in the bonus trip to the Morris Museum on Sunday. COURTESY OF BOB FRISHMAN.