

Antiquarian Horological Society

Finding Aid - BUNT, ERIC AND EILEEN (BUN)

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BUNT, ERIC AND EILEEN

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Summary information

Repository:	Antiquarian Horological Society
Title:	BUNT, ERIC AND EILEEN
Reference code:	BUN
Date:	compiled in the 20th century (creation)
Physical description:	6 files in 1 box (0.17 linear metres)

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Eric Frederick Bunt (1907–2001) was the Librarian of the Antiquarian Horological Society in 1965–70 and 1974–80.

He was born in Wandsworth to Cyril and Agnes Bunt. His father, Cyril George Edward Bunt (1882–1966) was a respected art educator at the Royal College of Art in London, who had earlier served as the Librarian of the Royal Academy of Arts from 1924 to 1948, a role that perhaps influenced Eric's career. Cyril was also a keen horologist and was a relatively prolific contributor of articles, particularly to the *Watch and Clockmaker* between 1928 and 1938 (essentially the whole run of the journal). These articles often focussed on fine pieces held in major museums, and were examples of connoisseurship, rather than the writings of a collector. We can perhaps infer that Eric developed an appreciation for horology from his father.

Eric joined the British Geological Survey as a General Assistant on 14 October 1926 and worked in the library. At some point he was made a Technical Assistant (2nd class) and then on 1 April 1936 moved to the new scale of Assistant III. After the outbreak of the Second World War he became a field assistant doing some magnetic survey work, and later worked for the Water Department, although he continued to do some library work when required. By 1942 he was being referred to in Survey records as Laboratory Assistant – Skilled. Bunt was one of those who supervised the moving of part the Survey's library and museum collections to University College, Bangor, North Wales to prevent it being damaged by enemy bombing. From 1 January 1946 Eric was classified as an Experimental Officer. He remained working in the library but attended evening classes and did a lot of private reading to improve his knowledge of general geology. In January 1953 he was transferred to the Atomic Energy Division. On 1 January 1954 he was promoted to Senior Experimental Officer. In November 1962 Eric was transferred back to the library to take executive charge of it, on the retirement of the previous postholder. In 1967 he moved from the library and was entrusted with preparing the Survey records which had been selected (with the help of the Public Records Office) for permanent preservation. This meant he played a significant part in the setting up of the Survey's archives. He retired from the Civil Service in June 1967 but was re-appointed as an unestablished Senior Experimental Officer. In 1969 he temporarily took charge of the library again until a new librarian was appointed. Eric finally retired from the Survey on 30 October 1970.

Eric met Eileen (the donor of this archive) at the British Geological Survey, where she also worked. The two had a strong interest in history and genealogy and were regular researchers at the Public Record Office. Eric also had a strong interest in astronomy, being a member of the British Astronomical Association from 1944

to the mid-1960s. He was a member of their Council 1952–54 and Curator of its Lantern Slides Collection 1951–53.

Eric's association with the AHS is marked by two distinct contributions. At a practical level he served as the AHS Librarian from 1965 to 1970, being succeeded by Charles Aked, but when Aked wished to step down in 1974, Eric took up the reins again, until 1980.

He published a single though important article in *Antiquarian Horology* in March 1973, entitled 'An Eighteenth Century Watchmaker and his Day-Book'. This charted his and Eileen's painstaking archival detective work in identifying the author of a remarkable daybook to which the AHS Council's attention had been drawn by Robert Foulkes in 1967. Triangulation of a number of fine details in the daybook with documents in the Public Record Office, particularly Chancery records, as well as parish records, revealed the watchmaker to be Benjamin Gray (Watchmaker-in-Ordinary to George II).

Eileen was clearly important in the research, and his paper notes 'Few research projects, however small, can be carried out single-handed, and the present minor piece of historical detection is no exception. It is a pleasure therefore to acknowledge the help given by my wife, who has spent many hours patiently copying documents and searching records. Without her encouragement the search might never have been completed.' Partly on the back of the Gray research, Eric published 'A chronological directory of Royal Clockmakers 1369–1900' in *Clocks Magazine* (in four parts, December 1985 to March 1986) together with Cedric Jagger.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Eileen Bunt, née Pyatt (b.1926) met Eric Bunt through joint work at the British Geological Survey, probably in the 1950s. The couple were together from the early 1960s, and shared a mutual interest in research and history, frequently visiting the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, and then later at Kew. She was of invaluable help in Eric's research centred on the Benjamin Gray daybook, now deposited by the Society with The London Archives, and held at Guildhall Library.

Scope and content

This collection comprises Eric Bunt's handwritten notes on watch and clockmakers from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries, compiled from original documents held at the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, and from printed volumes of Calendars of State Papers; handwritten transcripts of eighteenth-century newspaper articles about watch and clock thefts; and Eileen's Bunt handwritten transcript of Benjamin Gray's Daybook (original at the Guildhall Library, London).

Notes

Immediate source of acquisition

Deposited with AHS at Ticehurst by Mrs Eileen Bunt, Eric Bunt's widow, in 2013

Arrangement

The collection was originally arranged into four ring binders: Watch and Clockmakers in Ordinary 1 and 2, Lost and Stolen Watches, and Benjamin Gray Daybook. During cataloguing, the Watch and Clockmakers material has been split into four files to reflect the subdivisions within the original folders.

The records have been catalogued under a single series

BUN/01: Transcripts and research notes

Location of originals

The original of Benjamin Gray's Daybook is held at the Guildhall Library, City of London (part of The London Archives), ref. CLC/B/227/MS23726/001.

The original list of lost watches compiled by Buckley is also held there, ref. CLC/239/MS03338/001-002.

Restrictions on access

These records are available for public access by prior appointment.

Accruals

Eric and Eileen Bunt's archive has been fully catalogued and no further deposits are expected.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published

Series descriptions

Series BUN/01: TRANSCRIPTS AND RESEARCH NOTES

Date: compiled in the 20th century (creation)

Scope and content: This series comprises notes and transcripts of fourteenth to eighteenth-century sources relating to clockmaking and watchmaking.

Physical description: 6 files

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
BUN/01/001	File - Watch and Clockmakers in Ordinary: handwritten transcripts and notes on individuals mentioned in original sources from 1317 to 1617	compiled in the 20th century	1 folder of loose papers
	<i>Scope and content:</i> Includes note on sources and abbreviations. Names include Nicholas Kratzer, Anthony Crasillon, Sebastian (Bastian) Lesseney (Lesney / Le Sene) , Nicholas Urseau, Peter Dellamere, Bartholomew Newsam, Randolph Bull and others.		

BUN/01/002	File - Watch and Clockmakers in Ordinary: handwritten transcripts and notes on individuals mentioned in original sources from 1613 to 1708	compiled in the 20th century	1 folder of loose papers
	<i>Scope and content:</i> Names include David Ramsay, William Partridge, Edward East, Thomas Tompion and others.		
BUN/01/003	File - Watch and Clockmakers in Ordinary: handwritten transcripts and notes on individuals mentioned in original sources from 1676 to 1717	compiled in the 20th century	1 folder of loose papers
	<i>Scope and content:</i> Names include mainly Thomas Herbert, but also Mansell Bennett, Thomas Tompion and Joseph Antram.		
BUN/01/004	File - Watch and Clockmakers in Ordinary: handwritten transcripts and notes on individuals mentioned in original sources from 1714 to 1801	compiled in the 20th century	1 folder of loose papers
	<i>Scope and content:</i> Names include Thomas Herbert, Joseph Autram, Richard Vick, Francis Robinson, Thomas Cartwright, Benjamin Gray, George Lindsay, John Ellicot, Benjamin Vulliamy, and Thomas Mudge. Includes a few pages at back on earlier sources.		
BUN/01/005	File - Lost and Stolen Watches: handwritten transcripts of adverts from eighteenth-century London newspapers	compiled in the 20th century	1 folder of loose papers
	<i>Scope and content:</i> This is a copy of a two-volume list compiled by Francis Buckley and G. B. Buckley, held at the Guildhall Library (ref. CLC/239/MS03338/001-002). Newspapers include *The Post Man*, *The Daily Courant*, *The Daily Post and General Advertiser*, *The Daily Journal* and *London Gazette*. The file includes a list of references to lost pieces by Gray and Vulliamy, and references to other lost watches not included in the original volume, some in the hand of Eileen Bunt.		
BUN/01/006	File - Transcript of Benjamin Gray's Daybook 1704-19	compiled in the 20th century	1 folder of loose papers
	<i>Scope and content:</i> Handwritten, made by Eileen Bunt. The original book was donated to Guildhall Library on the death of its owner and is held there under ref. CLC/B/227/MS23726/001.		