

The Chandos Delander

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with appendices by Richard Garnier and Guy Boney

Sadly, we often do not know who commissioned or originally purchased the spectacular clocks and watches from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that still survive. This paper, however, identifies James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, as the person who commissioned from Daniel Delander the extraordinary weight-driven clock that came to light again when it appeared at auction in 1989, to be auctioned again in 2002, and which is now in the John Taylor Collection.¹

Identifying the Chandos Delander

During a search for Daniel Delander clocks and watches in the Burney Newspaper Collection of the British Library, an advertisement placed in May 1765 by Benjamin Lucas, Auctioneer, stood out.² It was for the sale of ‘the Stock and Effects of Mr. James Cox, of Shoe-lane, jeweller, who was declining that part of that business.’² James Cox was ‘a most ingenious mechanic, silversmith and watchmaker’,³ who was later to open ‘Cox’s Museum’ in Spring Gardens. There, patrons paid a half-guinea to view his large collection of automata that had originally been destined for the Far East market.

The advert makes particular mention of ‘a most curious astronomical clock that goes a month, made by Delander’. Fortunately, just before the auction, further details of the clock were published in two newspapers⁴ of which the following is a composite:

The fine astronomical clock made by Mr. Daniel Delander for his Grace the late Duke of Chandos [Fig. 1], goes a month, shows equal and apparent time by different

minute hands, the sun’s place in the ecliptic, rising and setting, declination, right ascension, and amplitude, the day of the month, the age of the moon and her phases, and the time of high water. The case is of the finest black ebony, highly finished and decorated with rich ornaments, elegantly designed, and strongly gilt, the dial plate adorned with festoons of silver flowers, and paintings on ivory representing the Sciences, on the top Ceres, Mercury and Fame. It is without its fellow in Europe. It was later put up to raffle, at the Court of Requests, to fifty subscribers, at ten guineas each.

There can be little doubt, especially considering the use of ivory on the dial (a unique feature), that the clock in the Taylor collection (Figs 2–5) is this Delander clock, which also has the same specifications as given in the two newspaper reports. Sadly, the three figures that surmounted the hood have not survived, and nor have the representations of the Sciences painted on the ivory. Evidence of the initially intended presence of applied

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1. Sotheby’s London, 9 October 1989, lot 203; Christie’s London, 11 December 2002, lot 80.

2. *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London, 16 May 1765).

3. G. L. Apperson, *Bygone London Life, Pictures from a Vanished Past* (New York: James Pott & Co., 1902).

4. *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London, 20 May 1765); and *Public Advertiser* (London, 22 May 1765).



Fig. 1. James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos by Herman van der Myn. NPG 530. Oil on canvas, before 1726. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London. This life-size portrait is the left half of what was originally a double portrait of the Duke and Duchess of Chandos. The Duchess's shoe and the hem of her dress are still visible in the lower right corner.

metal spandrels suggests that the ivory veneer 'spandrels' and their painted scenes were not included in the original design. The Sotheby's cataloguer noted that the hands were nineteenth-century replacements, that the pinwheel escapement wheel was not the original and that mounts on the sides of the hood⁵ had been lost. The clock was taken to France possibly before the end of the eighteenth century. It may be here that the case was painted a light olive green. The case was re-ebonised before being auctioned in 2002. Apart from these losses and changes, the Chandos Delander has survived in remarkably original condition for 300 years.

None of the catalogues traced, or the adverts placed, for the Cannons house sales



Fig. 2. The Chandos Delander. © 2002 Christie's Images Limited.

5. These would likely have been in the form of swags or festoons.



Fig. 3. The Chandos Delander – hood and dial. © 2002 Christie's Images Limited.

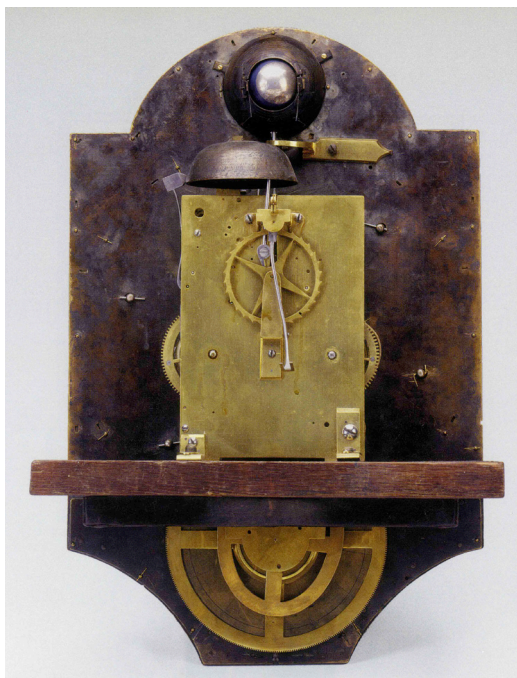


Fig. 4. The Chandos Delander - back-plate with the duplex escapement's locking wheel. © 2002 Christie's Images Limited.

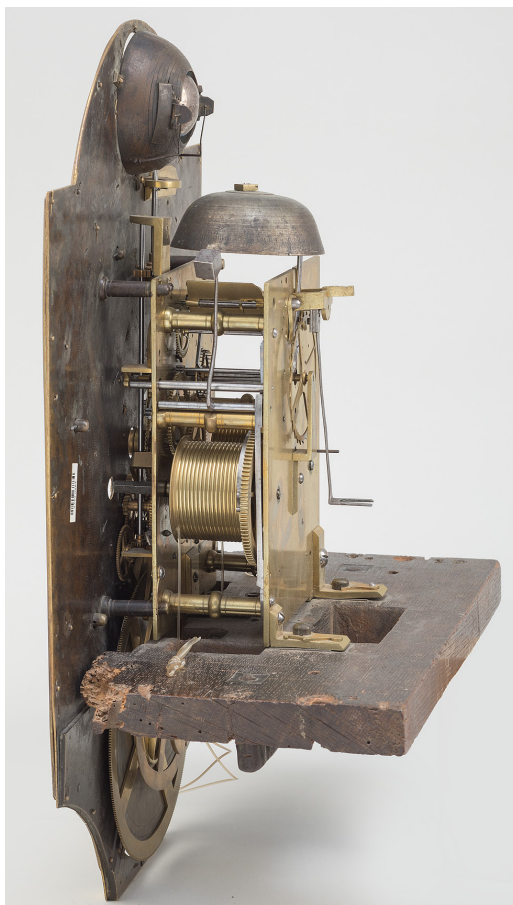


Fig. 5. The Chandos Delander - movement from right side. The replacement pin-wheel has not been restored indicating that the locking wheel on the back-plate is original. Courtesy of Carter Marsh & Co.

contains any reference to the clock (see Appendix 1). It is likely, therefore, that it was, indeed, disposed of by raffle. So there would have been forty-nine losers in the raffle and one lucky winner who might, subsequently, have sold the clock (at great profit) to Cox.

The Chandos Delander would have fitted perfectly into Cannons, the Duke's Palladian home near Edgware (Fig. 6), but if the clock was raffled in 1722, which seems to be the case, then its presence at Cannons must have been very short-lived. James Brydges acquired the house as part of the estate of Great Stanmore in 1713, but its reconstruction (particularly of the interior) was not completed until 1725.⁶ Amongst the twenty-one sculptures crowning the parapet were Fame, Sincerity (Ceres) and Mercury,⁷ echoing the hood ornaments of the clock. The sculptures also included Learning and Astronomy and featured a variety of scientific instruments, redolent of the Sciences painted on the ivory veneer.

Cannons was the focus of a great deal of interest and controversy, but nobody doubted that it was 'a wonder of magnificence'.⁸ Alexander Pope's description of Timon's Villa in his 1731 *Epistle to the Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington* was taken by many to be a depiction of Cannons, and it includes the following couplet:

But hark! the chiming Clocks to dinner call;
A hundred Footsteps scrape the marble Hall.

6. C. H. Collins Baker and M. I. Baker, *The Life and Circumstances of James Brydges, First Duke of Chandos, Patron of the Liberal Arts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 114.

7. *The Life and Circumstances of James Brydges*, p. 142.

8. *The Life and Circumstances of James Brydges*, p. xvii.

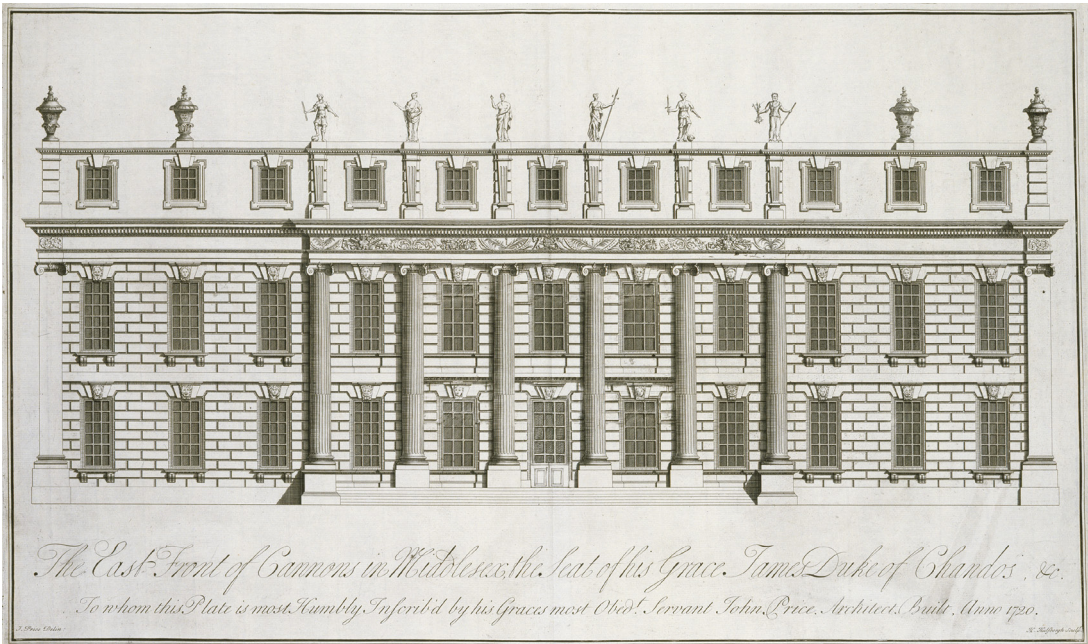


Fig. 6. James Gibbs's revised (1720) design for the East Front of Cannon's, drawn by J. Price, engraved by Henry Hulsbergh. From J. Badeslade & J. Rocque, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, vol. IV, London, 1739, plate 28/29. Courtesy of the Royal Academy of Arts.

It is highly likely (though not, without further evidence, absolutely certain) that the clock was the subject of a 1722 court case involving Chandos and Delander. Frustratingly, however, a thorough search of Chancery records has failed to locate any reference to throw further light on the matter, and it is possible that the records were destroyed when the archive was weeded out at the beginning of the twentieth century. Consequently, all that is known of this court case comes from the following newspaper notice: 'We hear the Duke of Chandos has brought his Writ of Error against the Judgment given in a Cause betwixt his Grace and Mr Delander Watchmaker.'⁹ Had there been a dispute regarding costs or even payment which led to the clock being raffled? Guy Boney argues that there had (Appendix 2).

The Chandos astronomical clock was not the only Delander gem to be abandoned around this time because of financial losses:

A curious Gold repeating Watch, made by Mr. Delander of this City in South Sea Days, the Circumference of which does not exceed that of a Half-penny,¹⁰ and made by Order of an English Gentleman of Quality, who design'd it as a Present to the young Monarch of France, having lain upon Mr. Delander's Hands a long Time, through the Misfortunes of his Employer, who lost a plentiful Estate in the Stocks, was lately sold to another Person of Quality for One Hundred and Fifty Guineas.¹¹

The Delander Duplexes

Delander was one of the most innovative makers working in London during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and this clock incorporates a form of escapement that he probably invented and that later became known as the duplex escapement. The escape arbor carried two wheels — one for locking

9. *The Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post* (London, 16 June 1722).

10. A George I halfpenny had a diameter of 27mm, slightly more than an inch.

11. *Newcastle Courant* (Newcastle, September 26 1724) quoting a London paper.

and one to provide impulse — which was clearly to separate these functions in an attempt to reduce the adverse effects of the friction that is prevalent in the action of a standard recoil escapement.

With its multiple complications the Chandos Delander stands apart from the series of clocks that he produced which also had the duplex escapement. These were housed in less elaborate walnut veneered cases and they were numbered in series. The earliest recorded from the series, number 2, is signed *D. Delander, London, Invenit. No. 2*, which can be viewed as his claim to priority for the invention of the escapement. The highest number so far recorded in the series is 18.¹² Delander has never received the credit he deserves for this invention but his work certainly pre-dates the later eighteenth century watchwork of Dutertre, Le Roy and Tyrer, whose names are usually, and surely without justification, linked with the invention.

Unfortunately, none of these duplex clocks can be accurately dated with any confidence, so it is not clear whether the present example is the earliest to have been fitted with the escapement. The Sotheby's cataloguer described the unfilled holes in the front plate of the movement as 'valuable evidence of the experimental nature of the clock' which suggests that it may well have been the first. Is it possible that the spare holes at the base of the dial (just visible in Fig. 3) once held a plate inscribed with Chandos's patronage and the words 'Invenit & Fecit'?

Apart from the probable influence that Delander's escapement had on the application of the duplex to watches, it does not seem to have been viewed enthusiastically by other makers for use in clocks. This is despite the fact that it is an efficient escapement and that it is as accurate as any standard recoil escapement. Perhaps it was not taken up by others because Graham's dead-beat

escapement, in production from the 1720s, answered contemporary needs adequately enough when used for regulators in conjunction with a compensated pendulum. Delander's duplex escapement, and its action, are illustrated and described by Tom Robinson.¹³

Did Delander ever combine his escapement with a compensated pendulum? This is unlikely, although a clock is recorded which was advertised with the following description:

To be disposed of, an exceeding good REGULATOR, upon Delander's much approved principle, two swing wheels, friction rollers, gridiron pendulum, &c.

The description was included in an advert relating to the disposal of the business of James Smyth, silversmith, of Woodbridge in Suffolk, who was retiring from business.¹⁴

None of the surviving members of Delander's group of duplex clocks has a gridiron pendulum, but an example, formerly in the S. E. Prestige Collection (subsequently in the Albert Odmark collection, U.S.A., and then Tom Scott, Channel Islands, collection),¹⁵ should be considered here. Its dial almost certainly carried a plaque signed Delander but this was replaced by one signed Vulliamy who was subsequently 'credited' with having replaced the duplex escapement with a grasshopper escapement. This conversion work, however, is now believed to have been carried out in the second quarter of the twentieth century by Charles Hobson, but it is not clear when the gridiron pendulum was added. The clock has recently been converted back to duplex control and a Delander plaque has been substituted for the one signed Vulliamy. Interestingly, the clock is driven by weights housed in a wooden box with brass-inlaid date 1783, and with wooden rollers. Were these the friction rollers mentioned in the advert placed by Smyth of Woodbridge in 1786?

12. This group of duplex clocks is listed in Jeremy Evans, Jonathan Carter and Ben Wright, *Thomas Tompion, 300 Years* (Stroud: Water Lane Publishing, 2013), p.638; number 14 has since been added to this list.

13. Tom Robinson, *The Longcase Clock* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1981), pp. 161-3.

14. *Ipswich Journal* (Ipswich, 30 September 1786).

15. Discussed and illustrated in H. Alan Lloyd, *The Country Life Collector's Dictionary of Clocks* (London: Country Life, 1964), p. 188, figs 474-6; sold Christie's, London, 11 March 2005, lot 448.

Appendix 1: James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos

Richard Garnier, an authority on eighteenth-century architecture, horology and genealogy, has supplied the following character sketch of Chandos, who commissioned the clock.

James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos (1673–1744), Privy Councillor, Deputy Lieutenant, and FRS, was something of an exception on numerous counts: a leading English nobleman who was (unsurprisingly) a landowner, politician and statesman, but also (more surprisingly, for a nobleman) a merchant trading to the Levant, a financial speculator and war profiteer. In this he was no different from many an over-mighty, exceedingly rich man throughout history, over-confident that he could ride the bucking bronco of his rising debts. Charitable activity provided an additional veneer of respectability. In 1721, he was appointed governor of the Charterhouse, and in 1739 he was one of the founding governors of the Foundling Hospital.

He succeeded on his father's 1714 death to his family's ancient, but obscure, ancestral barony as 9th Lord Chandos, and so took his seat in the House of Lords. He had previously sat as MP for Hereford since 1698. Almost immediately, he was created Earl of Carnarvon. In 1719 George I recognised Brydges's pre-eminence by elevating him to the highest rank in the peerage, creating him Duke of Chandos. The final accolade was his appointment to the king's Privy Council in 1721.

James Brydges was heavily involved in international trade. In 1700 he had become a member of the 'old' East India Company, and later (1718–36) was a governor of the Levant Company — a corporation of merchants trading with the Turkish Empire, and which also controlled the appointment of the British ambassador to 'the Sublime Porte', the Sultan's court in Constantinople/Istanbul.

Chandos's exceeding great wealth sprang in large measure from his time (1705–13) as paymaster-general of forces abroad during the Marlborough wars against Louis XIV of France. Like many contemporaries would have done (if not on the same gargantuan scale, causing some adverse comment at the time), he milked the vast sums advanced through his hands to pay the troops. On relinquishing his post at the end of the war, the Duke of Chandos was worth some £600,000 (approximately £60 million today), making him one of the richest subjects in the kingdom.

Chandos was a lavish patron of the Arts gaining him the sobriquet 'The Apollo of the Arts' amongst his contemporaries. He had inherited the estate of Great Stanmore with its Elizabethan manor house called Cannons in 1713 from his first wife's childless uncle. This he proceeded to rebuild (1714–25) at a reputed cost of £200,000, employing a bewildering succession of leading architects. He furnished Cannons in the most lavish way, filling it with old master paintings, objects d'art, the latest and most fashionable furniture, silver and clocks, most likely including the Chandos Delander.¹⁶ 'O'er all the Waste, a blooming Change prevails / A Desert rising to a grand Versailles', as one commentator, Samuel Humphreys has it, waxing lyrical that 'Magnificent o'er all the Fabrick shin'd / The rich Profusion of a Royal Mind',¹⁷ while John Macky called it a residence 'inferior to few Royal Palaces in Europe', and *The Foreigner's Guide* of 1729 commented that the house

is built with such a Profusion of Expense, and finished with such a Brightness of Fancy, and Delicacy of Judgement, that many sovereign Prince's Palaces abroad do not equal it.¹⁸

A French visitor in 1728 described the house as

16. Chandos's London townhouse, on the north side of Cavendish Square, was never finished and so unlikely to have housed the Delander clock; the Duke's great concentration was on Cannons.

17. Samuel Humphreys, *Cannons, A Poem* (London, 1728) as quoted in Terry Friedman, *James Gibbs* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 108 and 111.

18. Friedman, *James Gibbs*, p. 111, comments 'These monarchical allusions are more than literary ones for Gibbs's [first] design (and to an extent the ones as revised and erected after 1719) owe much to the Pavillion du Roi at Marly on the fringes of Versailles'.

panelled in marble and all the doorcases also are made of marble or of walnut or inlaid. The locks and door handles are of silver, and most of the chimney-pieces are filled with silver fire-backs and grates. There is silver everywhere... the outlay has been immense, but carried out in the worst taste in the world,... it appears that the only aim has been to spend...¹⁹

One of the sales catalogues describes brass balustrades with iron rails finely ornamented with ivory, ebony and mother-of-pearl.²⁰

Having initially consulted Sir John Vanbrugh, Chandos's architects ranged through William Talman (in 1713), John James (in 1714), James Gibbs (in 1715–19) and thereafter the surveyors John Price and latterly Edward Shepherd (in 1723–5). Gibbs received fee payments totalling £5,500 between August 1716 and May 1719, a sum then sufficient to build a very substantial house. Despite Gibbs's dismissal, the exterior elevations were completed by the last two executants mainly to his designs (Fig. 6). The house was illustrated in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, a series of folio volumes aiming to record the more important, architecturally Classical mansions of England.

Now that the original owner of this clock has been rediscovered, the possibility must be entertained that the Duke of Chandos's principal architect from 1715 to 1719, James Gibbs, was advanced to help design the clock. This is the same process as happened with the duke's chaplain and hydraulic engineer, Desaguliers, at the York Buildings (Water) Company. The first reason for suggesting Gibbs as designer is circumstantial, for there are a number of clock case designs in the extensive collection of his drawings which Gibbs left to the University of Oxford, and now in the Ashmolean Museum,²¹ demonstrating that Gibbs was interested in clock case design. The second is methodological, namely the way the mouldings of varying projections sweep into

and merge with each other within the gilt brass framing to the ivory plate spandrels, etc. on the dial-plate, can be paralleled with the way such equivalent mouldings in his plasterwork ceilings do the same. This is unlike the work of other architects of the time, and is seen in the ceilings at his London churches of St Martin's in the Fields, and the Marylebone Chapel in Vere Street, plus the chapel at Witley Court, in Worcestershire, and All Saints, in Derby, now the cathedral, at the Great Room of St Bartholomew's Hospital and also a ceiling from no. 11 Henrietta Street, now preserved in the V&A Museum. Third is a stylistic comparison, the silver swags to the dial-centre mount being reminiscent of the decoration within the tympana over the principal windows of his church of St Mary le Strand, both as built and again in a preliminary design for the same church.²²

The Chandos Delander with its profuse gilt and silver mounts would have fitted perfectly the silver and gilt milieu of Cannons. In the way that Chandos repeatedly switched architects, it seems he may have acted similarly during the construction of the Chandos Delander. Its ivory plate spandrels (originally painted with the Sciences) were replacements for earlier spandrels, possibly of silver to match the silver central dial mounts still in evidence. Chandos was evidently a tinkerer, unable to leave alone, whose great wealth allowed him to make changes at whim.

Today, Chandos is best remembered for his patronage of the composer George Frederick Handel (1685–1759), who during his time as 'master of musick' at Cannons composed the *Chandos Anthems* and his most popular opera *Acis and Galatea*. Another noteworthy recipient of Chandos's patronage was the Rev. John Theophilus Desaguliers, FRS, the Cannons house chaplain, who played a major role in the construction of the water elements in the 105-acre pleasure grounds with their outstanding fountains and waterworks. The architect Nicholas Hawksmoor commented, 'I cannot but own that the water at Cannons...

19. Friedman, *James Gibbs*, p. 113, citing London, V&A Mus. 86NN2, p. 138–41.

20. *General Advertiser*, 23 May 1748.

21. Illustrated in Friedman, *James Gibbs*, p. 72, pl. 56.

22. Friedman, *James Gibbs*, p. 45, pl. 16.

is the main beauty of that situation and it cost him dear.’

Profligate as was his spending on Cannons, Chandos’s downfall was brought about by the financial upheavals of 1720 with its interconnected collapses of the South Sea Company (known as The South Sea Bubble) and the York Buildings (Water) Company. Chandos had been a heavy speculator in both concerns and had recommended his chaplain, Desaguliers, to the York Buildings Water Co. for his expertise in water pumps and machinery. Both companies had ventured way beyond their initial commercial brief into unrelated, and frankly risky, fields. This led to feverish speculative rises in their stock prices, followed by a precipitous collapse, the classic bubble and bust. Simply put, Chandos lost more than a fortune.

Even though Chandos continued to build and beautify the house and park at Cannons after the financial crash of 1720, his finances were increasingly precarious. Becoming infamous as a non-payer, Brydges’ creditors congregated and started to push for payment, it seems Daniel Delander was amongst them (Appendix 2). At Chandos’s death in 1744 his son and heir, the 2nd Duke, inherited an impecunious estate and was forced to sell the complete contents and even the very materials of the magnificent mansion in several auction sales that took place between May 1747 and October 1748. Thus significant elements of the house were relocated elsewhere. The columns, for instance, form the portico of the National Gallery, London, the equestrian statue of George I was set up in Leicester Square, London and the organ – ‘Handel’s Organ’ – was installed at Gosport Chapel, Hampshire.

The exciting, newly rediscovered provenance of the present Delander clock enables it to be added to the list of Chandos’s pre-eminent artistic and scientific patronage, adding considerable colour to our appreciation of his endeavour, overly spendthrift as that may have been, in commissioning one of the most important clocks of the early eighteenth century.

Appendix 2 : The court case and the raffle.

His Honour Guy Boney QC speculates on how the Delander v. Duke of Chandos court case led to the raffling of the Delander astronomical clock.

As a lawyer I am well aware of the purity of guidance by evidence alone, but absent any known record of the case between Daniel Delander and the Duke of Chandos I am encouraged to speculate on what may have transpired 300 years ago. Like a good clock restorer, I will make clear where the original material stops and restoration takes over, trusting that it does more good than harm.

We begin with the fact that the Duke of Chandos had applied for a Writ of Error in a case involving himself and Mr Delander, watchmaker. This can only mean that a case had been heard and a judgment given in favour of Delander. The Duke has embarked on challenging this judgment, requiring him to argue in the next court that it was given ‘in error’. This is wholly consistent with Delander having sued the Duke in the Court of Requests for recovery of the money owed to him for the astronomical clock. The Court of Requests was exactly the place where an unpaid craftsman of the early eighteenth century would go for a remedy.

But how to explain the raffle? The notion of a court nowadays involving itself as part of its proper function in some kind of raffle is bizarre, and it is hard to imagine it being any different in the eighteenth century. The court’s task was to decide whether or not the evidence showed that the defendant (the Duke) owed to the plaintiff (Delander) the money claimed by him. And no more than that. The raffle surely did not stem from any proactive conduct by the court but presumably by agreement between the parties or the unilateral action of the Duke.

Imagine yourself the Duke of Chandos. You are on the brink of financial ruin, struggling to pay bills. How much do you owe Daniel Delander for the astronomical clock? Based on what Thomas Tompion charged top class clients for top class work, probably somewhere between 300 and 500 pounds. Delander has already won his case against you in the Court

of Requests (presumably based on rock solid evidence) and whilst you have initiated an appeal, you foresee losing this as well. You need £500 to satisfy the judgment of the Court of Requests. A year ago, there would have been plenty of wealthy people ready to take such a magnificent clock off your hands. But the odds of selling the clock now are slim. A raffle, however, looks like a practical possibility. Surely it will be possible to find fifty people ready to wager just ten guineas apiece for a chance to win this magnificent clock, netting you more than enough to pay the wretched Daniel Delander and be shot of the whole business!

With an unsatisfied judgment of the Court of Requests against him and a Writ of Error case pending in the court lists, the Duke would have to make application to the Court to notify them that he proposes to satisfy the outstanding judgment against him by holding

the raffle. Approval for this remedy by the court offers a possible explanation for later reports linking the raffle to the Court of Requests.

After 300 years, the scent has been lost, the trail is obscured, and records have disappeared, but it is possible to piece together a plausible story of how the Chandos Delander came to be raffled.

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