



LOCKS & KEYS



Issue 17

The Newsletter for lock collectors

March 2002

James Gibbons Ltd, Wolverhampton

The company was set up by Thomas Gibbons as lock makers in 1670. Early customers included Robert Adam, Sir John Sloane, and Sir Christopher Wren.

They manufactured mortice locks (spelt

mortise in 1926 catalogue) rim locks, brass cabinet locks, prison cell locks, door furniture, letter plates, door knobs, counter grills, door bolts, hinges, steel casement windows, safes, strong room doors, and steel locker cabinets and shelving, architectural and monumental iron and bronze items.

In 1851, they were awarded Prize medals at the Great Exhibition.

On the 29th November 1899, Mr F J J

Gibbons was granted a patent for the "MASTERSHIP" two-keyhole lock. This made master keying of mortice locks more secure, as the master key was inserted into a separate keyhole from the ordinary key. This was replaced in 1960 by a new patent

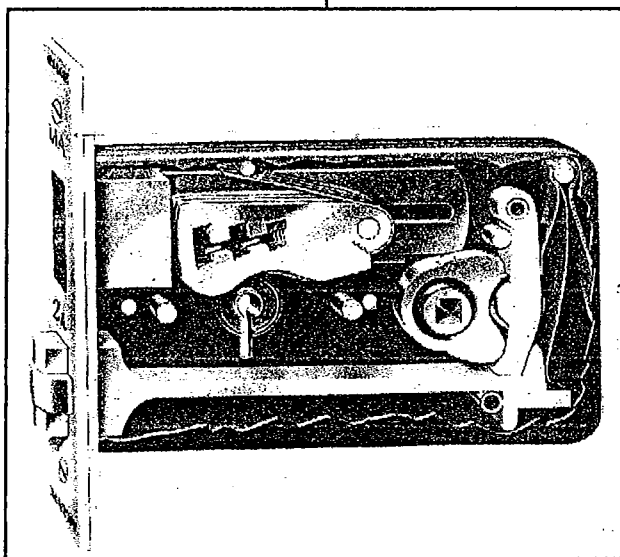
system for a ward-less lock on a single keyhole system. The "NEW MASTERSHIP" system achieved the same degree of security without the complication of the larger size of the two key lock.

They had over 200 patents and registered designs. In addition, by the mid 1920's they had designed

and made a small key "Thief-Proof Rim Night Latch" to combat the competition from the "Yale Cylinder Pin Tumbler Lock".

In 1907 the firm of George Price, of the Cleveland Safe Works, was acquired. This enabled Gibbons to introduce safes and strongroom doors into its product range. In the 1930's, they acquired the safe making firm of Cyrus Price and Co. Ltd, (Patent Lock and Fire Resisting Safe Manufacturers.) of Britannia Works Wednesfield Road Wolverhampton. They

continued on p.3



Gibbons Double-locking 2 bolt mortice lock; triple-locking versions were also offered

"Locks & Keys" needs more subscribers. If you know any other collectors, please ask them to subscribe to their own copies!

"Locks & Keys" welcomes contributions, preferably with uncoloured illustrations on separate sheets. Unfortunately, colour photographs tend to be too dark to reproduce well. PC disks with files in Word7, Works4.5, Write, Wordpad or saved as .rtf can be used. Please send an sae if you need a reply.

In This Issue

5 James Gibbons' Ltd masterkeys

6 For sale / Questions / Answers

9 Workshop supplies

11 Just in case ...

12 Dollhouse locks and safe

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Help still needed ...

Several enquiries come to me repeatedly. Two of the most common are for booklists of *available* useful books on locks and keys, mainly for medieval period onwards. And suggestions on how to clean/conservate old locks and keys. These often come from new collectors or someone curious about just one item. Will you experts help me produce leaflets on these subjects? I am trying to be helpful to collectors of all stages of experience. We do need to help newcomers especially, as so many collectors are older rather than young. Or will lock collecting as a hobby die out in a decade or so?

I made this plea in the last issue, but perhaps it was not sufficiently prominent, as I have not yet had any response.



Another project has been in the back of my mind for many years. Perhaps some readers in Britain would like to help with it.

Years ago I saw a book describing the old church chests of Essex. I went out to visit many of them. In the six decades since the book was compiled, a regrettable number of chests had actually disappeared; others had decayed.

There are various books about English churches which mention incidentally occasional interesting chests, or doorlocks, or ironwork. But there is no complete list of church chests. Such a list would be a valuable historical record, and an aid to lock collectors on tour. It could include anything of interest to us, up to, say, 1950. Modern security is of course a matter of concern to the Church, so no details useful to a modern safebreaker/burglar would be included. However, chests and their successors do not stop being either interesting or historically important just because they are all metal. Square corner 19th century safes are now legally antiques. The range is from Norman chests through medieval ironwork to 19/20th century safes, including some wallsafes, and some significant varieties of collecting boxes.

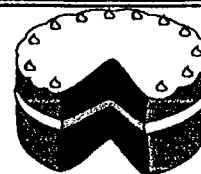
This is probably a project for a small team; is anyone interested in pursuing it? Please write in.

...and finally

HUNDREDS of pairs of handcuffs are being taken by staff at British Airways. Bosses have issued a memo accusing cabin crew of being fetishists and stealing the £50 cuffs – which are used to restrain unruly passengers – for kinky sex.

In the past year, 255 pairs have gone missing. Safety chief Simon Packer told staff: 'We have a huge number of fetishists amongst crew. Your exotic practices in the bedroom are your own business but please stick to the Ann Summers furry handcuffs – replacing ones from the restraint kit is costing BA a fortune.'

Jottings ...



A curious sight has caught my attention as I walk around the middle of my city. On numerous cycle racks and railings, there are locks, left locked, but securing nothing! Most of these locks are of good quality, bicycle and motorcycle locks mostly, but some padlocks and chains. I have noted over a dozen in the last year. Many have clearly been left for more than a year, to judge from their condition. A Chubb Battleship padlock chained to a drainpipe was painted over when the drainpipe was painted, certainly more than a year ago. They appear to be abandoned, free to anyone who can unlock them. Have any other readers noticed this phenomenon?



British churches contain a wealth of items of interest to lock collectors. There are increasing efforts to have churches kept open, especially during the summer, with stewards present.

The Scottish guidebook, *Churches open in Scotland*, has just been published, and is available from bookshops. In England, the *Open Churches Trust* (c/o The Really Useful Group Ltd, 22 Tower Hill London WC2H 9TW; oct@reallyuseful.co.uk) organises church trails with guide leaflets.

Some of the chests in English churches will be mentioned in a future issue. Though few of us can own medieval chests or locks, there are still many to be seen freely around the country. Keys are more plentiful, and do circulate in the antiques trade, though many of the best are in museums.



I mention some Internet site addresses and email addresses sometimes in these pages. For readers who are not on the Internet, access is possible in 'cyber cafes', for about £1.50/hour - you pay for your coffee separately. Many public libraries also provide access, often free, but be aware that most British libraries will log everything you look at and the log will be monitored by library management and IT staff. Also, some do not allow access to email, and censor some lock sites.



Sun 21/1/2002 ↙

List of modern locks

There is an extensive list of modern (mainly US) locks and blanks for them at:

codelocks.com/names.htm

Additions, corrections, and contributions to updating welcome!

also took over the local firms of James Mace (est. 1807) and George Monk (est.1842).

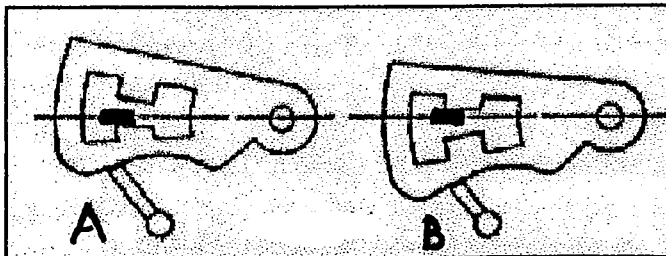
The firm carried on through eight generations of the Gibbons family until 1969 when Mr Paul Gibbons retired after 44 years with the company. This marked the end of the family's direct association with James Gibbons Ltd. The company became part of Tube Investment Group and the name was changed soon after 1974 to T.I. James Gibbons Ltd. (Name in June 1975/May 1976)

The company then split into two divisions. These were TI James Gibbons Windows, specialising in the supply and installation of high performance windows; other major products include the "Slimline" range of aluminium doors, screens and shop fronts. The other was TI James Gibbons Ironmongery, specialising in the supply of an extensive range of architectural ironmongery, including the "Format" range of door furniture and accessories. By this time, they had virtually finished making locks.

In 1978 they sold the sole rights to the manufacture of James Gibbons Locks to Evered Security Products Ltd (Formerly Erebus Manufacturing Co., and later Erebus Ltd).

On the 18th April 1988, Erebus Ltd sold the sole rights to Quality Lock Ltd.

G J Evans / Black Country Bugle Feb.-March 1992



Masterkeying lever locks by wide gating. A shows the masterkey, B shows the servant key. The amount of differing is limited, especially in two-sided locks. Servant keys can only differ from masters by a small amount. Wide-gating many levers reduces security.

Quality Lock Company

Founded by Peter Cartwright and Frank Constable (both former employees of Erebus Ltd) in July 1971, in a garage in Frank Constables garden in St Anne's Road. They made hand made rim, mortice and gate locks, and also specialising in repairing old locks. Their original equipment consisted of a single phase Black and Decker drill, their first order for 200 upright brass mortice locks were all hand filed, and from the proceeds of this order they purchased a finishing machine.

After 18 months they moved into Rotunda works in Wood Street, which they purchased from James Banks whose business was incorporated into Quality Lock, although they never made any of JAMES BANKS range of locks. In c1989 they moved premises, this time moving into the works formerly used by Thomas Worrall in Doctors

Gibbons key markings

MA	Male Attendants on Male side
FA	Female Attendants on Female side
S	Steward's Attendant
E	Engineer's Attendant
K	Kitchen Attendant
MM	MALE MASTER (Head Attendant on Male side)
FM	FEMALE MASTER (Head Attendant on Female side)
SM	STEWARDS MASTER key
EM	ENGINEER'S MASTER key
AMO	ASSISTANT MEDICAL OFFICER'S MASTER key
GM	GRAND MASTER Key for Medical Superintendent

MALE and FEMALE wards are quite separate. Locks can if necessary be double locked by the Master keys, thus preventing the Attendant's key opening them. The end of the key is slotted; this allows a locked lock to be opened from outside with a screwdriver, if the attendant's key is left in the lock.

Piece, although their entrance is in Leve Lane. Frank Constable retired in December 1990 leaving Peter Cartwright to continue to run the company employing 4 lockmakers.

They purchased from Erebus the manufacturing right of the old James Gibbons range of locks and keys., and also produce locks to pattern, brass ships locks, galley locks and furniture, galvanised gate locks (to old imperial sizes) fire escape locks, cell locks and hospital locks.

Quality Lock.
Leve Lane
Willenhall
West Midlands.

☎01902 602942.

Peter Cartwright should be able to fill you in about James Gibbons, and what is available today.

Jim Evans

GIBBONS

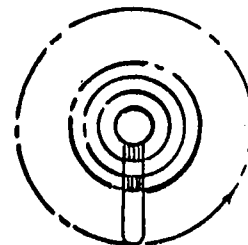
KEYS

The KEY is the most important part of a lock and an accurate guide to its quality. For this reason we wish to draw special attention to the "Gibbons" key which, in precision, workmanship and finish is superior to any other key of its type.

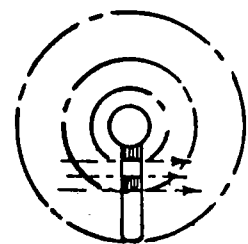
The STEPS on the key bit are spaced and machined in accurate jigs and are finished by hand. The dimensions are gauged all over to limits of .002 of an inch.

By maintaining this high standard we are able to use the very close gating which is a characteristic of our lever locks and which makes them almost impossible to pick.

The WARDS on both sides are cut by a special machine so that they are all developed as parts of cylinders, co-axial with the key pin. This is more accurate than the old method of chiselling and hollowing out the wards by hand and it is far superior to that, which many manufacturers use now-a-days, of cutting the wards straight across by milling or filing. This co-axial warding gives greater security and enables us to make almost any number of keys under one master key with an absolute certainty that not one of them will operate any but its own lock. The keys are given a glassy finish by polishing them all over on a diamond lap. An examination of the "Gibbons" key will show its great superiority over other makes.



Gibbons' method



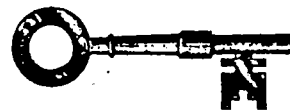
Method shewing straight cutting.

THE TWO KEYHOLE SYSTEM.

With the two keyhole system all locks are varied on the levers, so that one key does not indicate in the slightest manner what another key may be on the building. It is therefore, impossible to alter an ordinary key into a master; they vary in size, the ordinary key being larger than the master. Further, owing to the fine limits so essential in the relationship between levers and keys, an ordinary key, if tampered with, will not operate its own lock.



Ordinary Key



Master Key

WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH THIS REMARKABLE SYSTEM.

An unlimited number of locks can be differed without the possibility of any two keys passing the same lock.

Each floor of Hotel or Department can have locks ALL TO DIFFER and with a master key to pass. The master keys for these respective Departments will be entirely different from the others and will not open locks beyond the Departments to which they have been allotted. It does not matter how many floors or Departments there are.

A GRAND MASTER KEY is supplied to pass all the locks in the building.

The locks can also be made to double lock by the master key, thus preventing the ordinary key or sub-master key from operating, until unlocked by the grand master key.

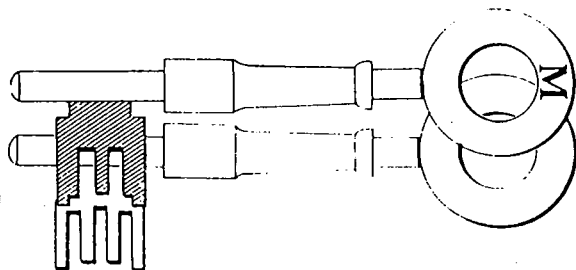
Various methods of master-keying have been used in the history of locks. Warding was an early method, and still has some uses. However, it is apt to be vulnerable to unauthorised skeletoning. This is especially true when used with bit keys. Gibbons used several methods. One was wide-gating with lever locks. This requires great accuracy with levers, and keys. Such accuracy is now easier and cheaper to achieve with pin tumbler locks, and other patent mechanisms.

Normally, the master key has the higher step, as in A opposite, and the servant key the lower step. Gibbons made cabinet locks with 2, 4, or 6 levers, for mastering.

F. J. J. Gibbons obtained a patent in 1899 for a 2-keyhole master system. This was called the 'Mastership system'. With single, double, or triple locking, complex key control was possible. If the keys were different, they had to be used in the correct sequence. Cabinet 'Mastership' locks were made with a double-ended keyhole. The servant key is piped, the master a pin key.

In 1960, a single-keyhole system called the 'New Mastership' was patented. This used only 1 keyhole, but master and servant keys were quite differently bitted. Locks could be smaller, and servant keys could still not be made into master keys by removing metal.

There was also an emergency lock using 2 keyholes, for old people's homes.

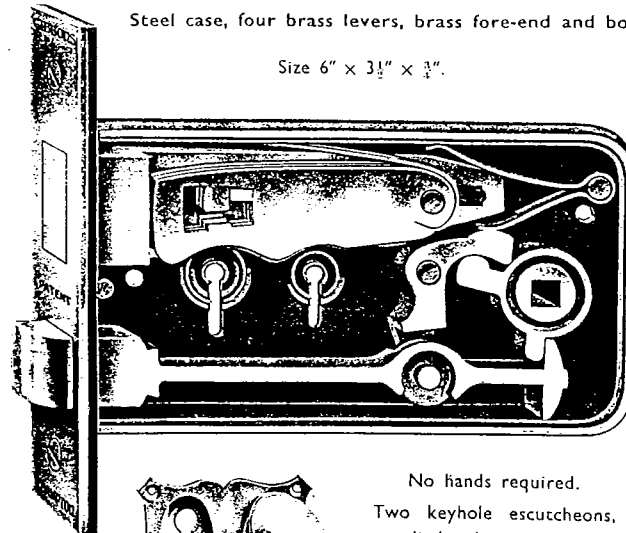


PATENT "MASTERSHIP" TWO KEYHOLE LOCK

GIBBONS

L 194.

Original Patent granted to F. J. J. Gibbons, 29th November, 1899.



Steel case, four brass levers, brass fore-end and bolts, with long wearing recessed follow.

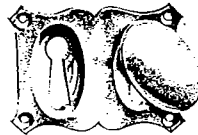
Size 6" x 3½" x ¾".

L 194B. As L 194, but to lock twice.

L 194C. Dead Lock as L 194.

L 194D. Dead Lock to lock twice.

Locks are made for differing and master-ship, with one ordinary key to each lock, engraved with letter and number of its respective lock. This two keyhole system of locking is particularly recommended for Banks, Hotels, Asylums, Schools, Factories, Hospitals, and buildings where absolute security is required.



Escutcheon.

No hands required.

Two keyhole escutcheons, supplied in brass or bronze. Made in other metals to special order.

GIBBONS "NEW MASTERSHIP" LOCKS

Patent Application No. 42291/60.

The Gibbons "New Mastership" patented system of wardless locking is a very great advance in security on any single keyhole system hitherto available for mastered suites. The original patent for the "Mastership" two keyhole system was granted to James Gibbons in 1899. The New "Mastership" system achieves the same degree of security without the complication and the larger size of the two keyhole lock.

Single keys cannot be made into master keys by skeletoning out or reducing the steps. The five levers are double slotted providing separate slots for the single and master keys. The single keys are differed on the levers from the master key and there are no ward differs.

The full size illustration clearly shows that the single key does not resemble the master. In fact the single key requires metal to be added to the steps to turn it into a master, a practical impossibility even given the facilities, without having a master key to work to. This action can be incorporated in a wide range of Gibbons locks in mastered and sub-mastered suites.

Questions from readers

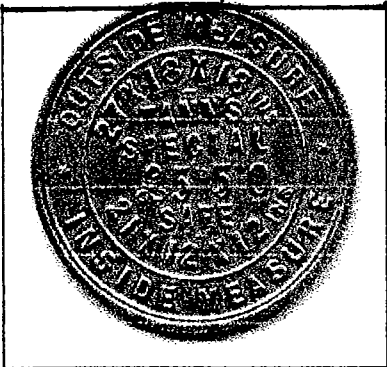
Write in to "Locks & Keys" with your questions about locks. Somebody will surely be able to supply answers. The Editor will be pleased to print a composite answer to questions. When replying, please mention the number of the question.

24] This padlock is actually a *'Bashful trick lock cigar cutter'*. They were made in large number and some variety; they are common in the USA. This example was found in Britain. Have any more been seen in Britain, and if so, at what sort of price?

The shackle opens in two halves, moving aside the cutting blade.

Below are the two sides of an advertising medallion for a Tann safe. It is marked: **TANN'S DEFIANCE SAFE AND LOCK WORKS LONDON FIELDS STATION G.E.R LONDON**

Such advertising medallions are not uncommon in other fields. Has anyone seen any more relating to locks or safes? Can anyone date this one; and is there any



relationship with John Tann, who made the *Reliance* lock and safe?

Tony Beck

For Sale / Wanted

Tony Beck is still interested in key reward tags, and will buy/swap any he does not have. He also would like to buy/swap safe plates and escutcheons.

*Tony Beck Beck 19 Lawrence Avenue
Chaddesden DERBY DE21 4RD UK
☎01332 679358*

Also interested in collecting safe plates is

*Trevor Dowson 17 Landseer Drive Gleadless
Valley SHEFFIELD S14 1BS UK*



There is an easy way to see most of the lock and key items on offer on eBay. There are thumbnail pictures shown at:

<http://listings.ebay.com/aw/glistings/list/all/category3557/>

Many US readers will know of the publishing effort of Don Stewart for collectors. Since Don's death, Richard Chenovick has taken over the business. The list of what is available was reprinted in issue #15. Padlocks are a particularly popular aspect of lock collecting in the USA. Contact Richard at 1491 Sycamore Canyon Road, Santa Barbara, California 93108 USA. rchenovick@juno.com

Readers might also like to be reminded of the West Coast Lock Collectors Newsletter. The Editor is Don Jackson PO Box 272 Pleasanton California 94566 USA. Fax is 925-846-4022; doggyjack@home.com. Subscription is US \$16, other countries \$19.

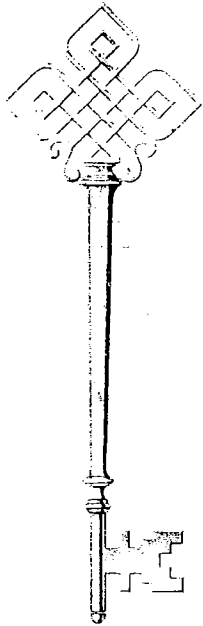
Answers from readers



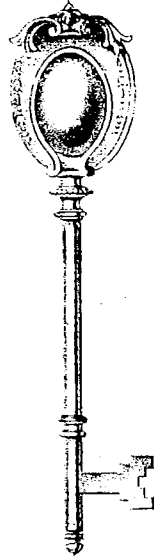
21] The object shown (issue # 14) is indeed a chatelaine: French, 18th century. A similar one, with three completely plain iron keys, sold

about two years ago for £300, as noticed in a sale price notice in an antiques magazine. I am aware that there is a book by a collector of chatelaines, probably published in Britain, but as yet I have no details.

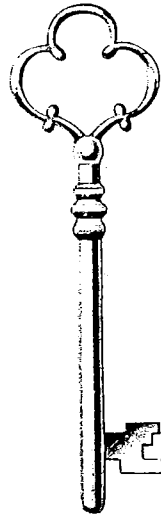
Gibbons Presentation Keys, 1935 catalogue



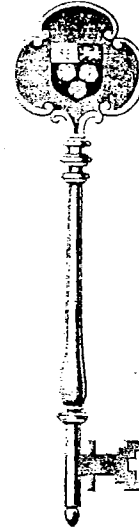
B 786.



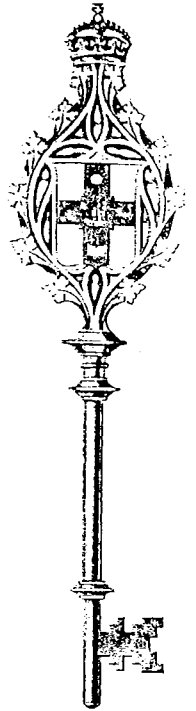
B 3845.



B 4617.



B 2063.



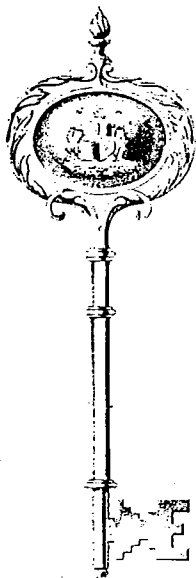
B 785.

Presentation Keys are generally made to special designs. We are illustrating several examples.

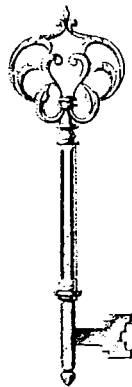


B 4618.

Made in Silver, Silver Gilt, or Gold, with enamelled motifs if required. Keys supplied with engraved inscriptions in leather covered satin lined cases.



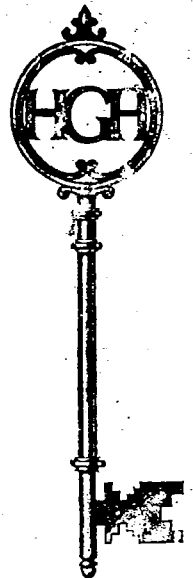
B 799.



B 848.



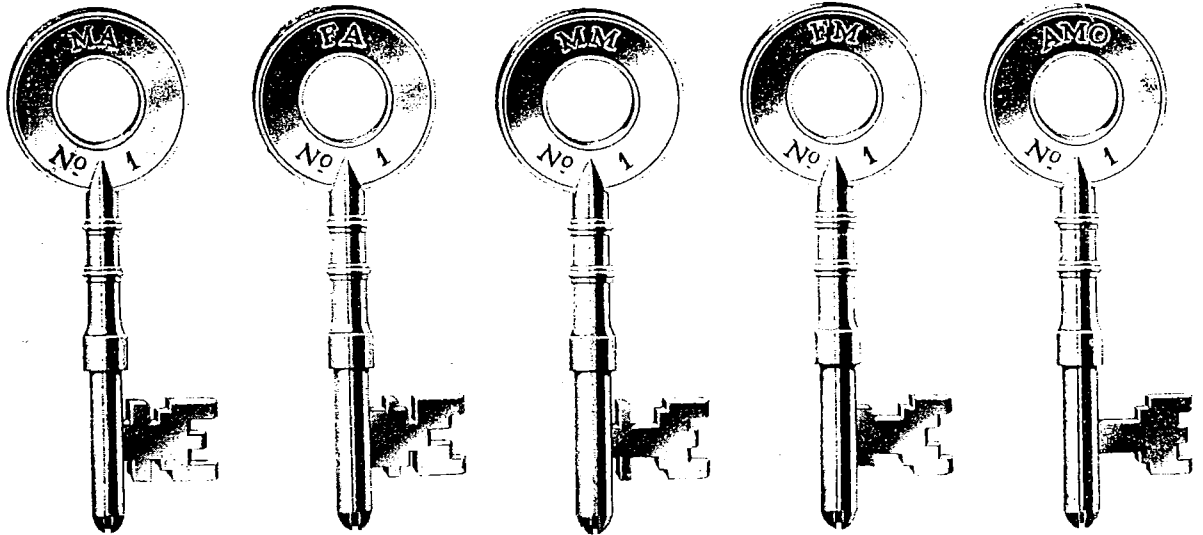
B 833.



B 840.

KEYS FOR MENTAL HOSPITALS

GIBBONS

**14th century key depicted**

Half of a pilgrim's badge found in excavations on the Scottish island of Islay, at Finnlaggan. It shows St Peter, and the missing half would have been a representation of St Paul. This is a souvenir of a trip to Rome in the 14th century. It is 20x30mm; drawn by Marion O'Neil

DESIGN AND WORK

[May 26, 1877]

432

How safes are blown open

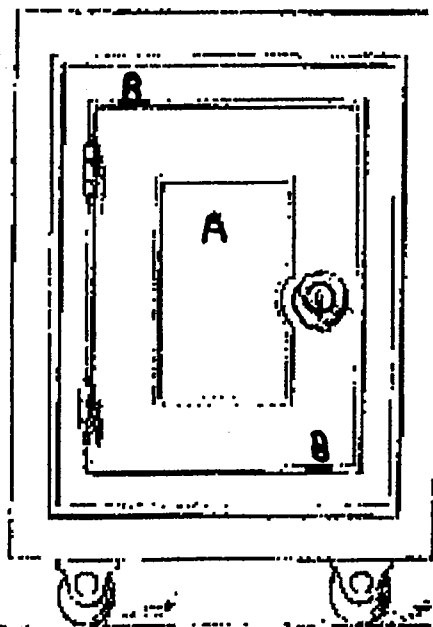
A criminal lately gave to a reporter of the New York Herald the following mode of introducing powder within a safe for the purpose of blowing open the doors.

"What tools did you use for in drilling the holes?" said the reporter. "Good cracksmen don't use tools," answered the burglar. "I'll show you how to blow open any safe in New York without any tools. Just take me to a safe." There happened to be a safe in Judge Kilbreth's private room, and the writer acquainted the magistrate with the prisoner's proposal. "By all means," said he, "let us learn;" and in a moment the room was filled with spectators. The prisoner knelt beside the safe, which was locked. "Look," said he, "at this door. It fits so tightly, that no instrument can be introduced in the cracks and the powder cannot be inserted. So far so good. The burglar," continued he, "simply sticks putty all along the cracks, except in two places, one at the top of the door and one at the bottom, where he leaves about an inch of

space uncovered by the putty.

At the lower place he puts a quantity of powder, and he sucks out the air from the upper place, either by a suction pump, which is the better way, or by his mouth. The vacuum created in the safe draws in the powder through the small crack below. The entire work does not occupy more than five minutes."

The diagram illustrates the method described. A is the safe door, B B are points left uncovered by the putty. The powder is placed at the lower point, the suction pump at the upper one.



Tool Maker Supplies of Worcester
 24 Charlotte Bronte Drive
 Droitwich Spa
 Worcestershire WR9 7HU

08/01

Tel: 01905 774029 Fax 01905 774029

The following is a range of products assembled for use with Dremel, Black & Decker Wizard, Minicraft or similar, and conventional electric drills.

- 1-1 Mounted soft felt wheels, 30mm diameter x 3mm wide x 3mm shaft.
 For use with polishing bars or pastes these are very good at bringing up a high lustre on all metals.
Pack of 5 soft felt wheels £ 7.00 per pack.
- 2-2 Mounted hard felt wheels, 30mm diameter x 3mm wide x 3mm shaft.
 Hard felt is better for removing deep scratches. Use with a coarser polishing bar or paste.
Pack of 5 hard felt wheels £ 7.00 per pack.
- 63-63 Mounted Silicone Carbide and rubber bonded points on a 3mm shaft.
 Ideal for the removal of corrosion and surface preparation prior to polishing.
Pack of 6 mixed silicon carbide and rubber bonded points £ 7.50 per pack.
- 64-64 Mounted Silicone Carbide and rubber bonded points.
 80 grit on a 3mm shaft. Ideal for the removal of corrosion and surface preparation prior to polishing.
Pack of 6 silicon carbide and rubber bonded points, 80 grit £ 7.50 per pack.
- 65-65 Mounted Silicone Carbide and rubber bonded points.
 120 grit on a 3mm shaft. Ideal for the removal of corrosion and surface preparation prior to polishing.
Pack of 6 silicon carbide and rubber bonded points, 120 grit £ 7.50 per pack.
- 66-66 Mounted Silicone Carbide and rubber bonded points.
 180 grit on a 3mm shaft, Ideal for surface preparation prior to polishing and controlled removal of corrosion.
Pack of 6 silicon carbide and rubber bonded points, 180 grit £ 7.50 per pack.
- 60-60 Light duty Flexible drive
 A light duty flexible drive that can be attached to an electric drill. Max RPM 3000 chuck capacity 0-1/4". A light duty inexpensive flexible drive.
Light duty flexible drive £ 26.50 each
- 46-45 Polishing Compound - Non Ferrous
 1 bar of brown compound to remove deep scratches using hard felts. 1 bar of blue to final polish with softer mops and felts to obtain a mirror finish.
Polishing Compound - Non Ferrous £ 5.00 per pack

Should you have a requirement for a product that is not listed, phone or fax and I will see if I can help. I do have 14,000 available.

Workshop supplies

Mr Henning has a huge selection of cleaning and polishing materials available. There are wheels, mops, flexible drives, polishing compounds, probably most things you might need for cleaning and polishing locks and keys. There should, of course, be a debate in these pages as to how far collectors like to go, or should go, in cleaning and restoring their locks. Contributions are welcome on all points of view. So far there has been no response to my request for advice on cleaning/conserving/restoring locks and keys; but it continues to be a common enquiry to me.

Further suggestions for dealing with rust are also welcome.

Editor

Just in case ...

What if your house burnt down? Could you tell your Insurer what you had lost? And more importantly, could you prove your claim? It won't happen to you, of course. And supporting an insurance claim is not the only, or even the best, reason to catalogue your collection. Nevertheless, some years ago a lock collector did suffer a total loss of his house and collection in a fire.

Even a small collection can grow to the point where the owner can no longer remember reliably what he has, where everything is, and all the details of each item. A catalogue can help with this. If you give talks, or put items of your collection on display, the catalogue can be useful.

The forms of catalogues possible

There are several forms the catalogue may take, and different methods of making it.

Perhaps the simplest is a ledger. Each lock or key is written in the ledger, and given a unique identifier, such as a running number, which is also marked on the item. This links the item to its catalogue record. No record can be lost or misfiled, though it may be deleted. However, it is not easy to amend, and it cannot be re-arranged. Records can only be sought by item number or scanning the catalogue. Instead of

or higher with DOS 3.1 or higher is the absolute minimum. This will run a program available from the National Museums of Scotland². Most computers will have a database management program. If not, there are many available, ranging from free to costly. Quite a simple program is adequate for the purpose of a collection catalogue. For ease of use, you would want a 486 (PC) or better computer, to run Windows 3.1 or better, essential if you wish to include pictures.

This is not an article to explain the details of using any particular database program. Many PC's came with Microsoft Works for Windows, which is quite sufficient in any version; newer or top of the range ones come with Microsoft Office, or Access. Others have Novell's equivalents. There are also similar programs for Macs and Arcs. Simpler programs are quite adequate for the purpose, and there are some already written for cataloguing collections³.

Basically, it's a 'database'

You are already familiar with the concept of a 'database', even if the name is unfamiliar. The telephone directory, or your customer list, are databases. They contain information organised in groups which all contain the same information. E.g., the left column of a phone directory is all surnames, the right all telephone numbers. If you are creating a database yourself, planning is the first essential. What information do you wish to store? Divide the items of information into separate small parts (fields). They are

#	/ Make	/ Description	Date	/Size	/Key	/Condn	/£/Value	/Source	/ Notes
68/1	Slaymaker	dial combination padlock	1968	45mm	44-20-40	new	1968 \$3 £5	Pittsburgh	Old type, can be manipulated.

handwriting a bound volume, pages may be typed and stuck into a guardbook, or a ring-binder.

A more flexible catalogue can be made on index cards. These are readily available in a range of sizes, with storage containers to suit. They may be written, or typed in a typewriter. They are flexible, easily re-arranged, amended, or re-written. Individual cards can be discarded easily, or lost or misfiled.

The most satisfactory catalogue, however, is a computerised catalogue. Once set up, it is easily maintained, copied, or printed. Searching for information is easy. It might well be able to do other things for you also. It might print labels, or calculate the expenditure on the collection; and its current value, revising this periodically.

To create a computerised catalogue you do need a computer. Even the oldest and simplest ones have been used; more modern ones are easier and more satisfactory. If you have any sort of (IBM compatible) of 286 or higher, or an Apple Macintosh, or Archimedes, it could be used. Most common are (IBM) PC's. A 286¹

Example of a catalogue record

easier to handle that way in most databases. Amending the structure of a database later is possible, but it is better to think ahead initially.

You probably wish to keep item number (which could be supplied automatically), make, type or function, size, condition, maker, date, date of acquisition, price, and a field for notes. You could record where the item is displayed/stored, if the collection is extensive. You might also consider photographing your items; many programs now can include pictures, from a digital camera or scanner. (To include pictures, you will need a more modern computer, e.g. a Pentium PC.)

Most database programs allow some entries to be made automatically, by default. That means the computer makes a predetermined entry, unless you tell it something else. Thus, if most of your locks are Chubb's, you could have a default entry for the Maker field of 'Chubb'. You only need change this for the minority of other makes. Sometimes you can save typing (and typing errors) by choosing from a pre-set list of choices you create. (MSWorks does not provide this, but ClarisWorks (for Macs) does.) You could use

simple codes to describe lock type or function; condition, and whether there is a key. You might wish to record the cost. Most modern database programs could then calculate a new value by increasing every item by a suitable price increase index. Your insurer can advise on this, as most insured values of houses, contents, etc., are index-linked annually. Thus they keep your insured values current. You can do the same for your collection.

Having made a catalogue record for an item, the item itself probably needs to be marked to link it to the record. The Museum Documentation Association has produced a short training video on labeling objects⁴.

Use it, and don't lose it

Many computer databases can also be used to provide data for printing a 'mailmerge'. The same process used for printing address mailing labels can print labels for your displays, for example. You could also print a catalogue to show visitors; this need not include all your information - you might wish to exclude values, for example.

The main point is that any catalogue is better than none. If you make it too complex, you might not maintain it, which would be of little use. Consider that we are only temporary stewards of what we 'own'. At some time, you, or someone else, will have to dispose of your collection. A catalogue of it will make the task much easier. Having catalogued your locks and keys, you can then do the same for your books etc.

Periodically print your catalogue, and place a copy with your valuable household documents. Also keep a computer copy somewhere safe, preferably off the premises; remember to update this copy periodically. The best place to store your valuable documents and records is in a fireproof cabinet or chest. You might like to heed the example of the Phoenix Safe Company in Issue 12.

¹Such a machine would not even sell in a charity shop, but could be adequate for a lock catalogue, so hardware need not be expensive or very modern!

²*Museum Inventory System* © National Museums of Scotland 1997. For further information and advice, contact Mr Ian Morrison at the National Museums of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF; (☎ 0131 220 4819, fax 0131 220 4819 email ian@nms.ac.uk). He will supply the program on ☐. It is intended for small museums and private collectors.

³See any source of shareware/freeware programs; they are often advertised in computer magazines. The charge is little more than the cost of sending you a ☐. You pay the programmer if you like the shareware; freeware is free to use.

⁴*Missing links? Labelling and marking museum objects* 18mins VHS. Explains the importance of proper labelling and marking and demonstrates recommended techniques for a variety of collections. Accompanied by MDA factsheet. Can be borrowed from British Association of Friends of Museums (☎ 01276 66617 fax 01276 61480; there is a small charge to cover post and packing.

Richard Phillips

Master Locksmiths Association meeting April, Castle Donnington, Derbyshire

Donnington Park Conference & Exhibition Centre, Castle Donnington, Derbyshire, England:

19-21 April 2002.

The venue is 2 miles from East Midlands Airport (shuttles from London Gatwick and London Heathrow), with frequent connections by bus.



Booking information available from The Master Locksmiths Association, 5D Great Central Way, Woodford Halse, Daventry NN1 3PZ United Kingdom ☎ 01327 262255; Fax: 01327 262539

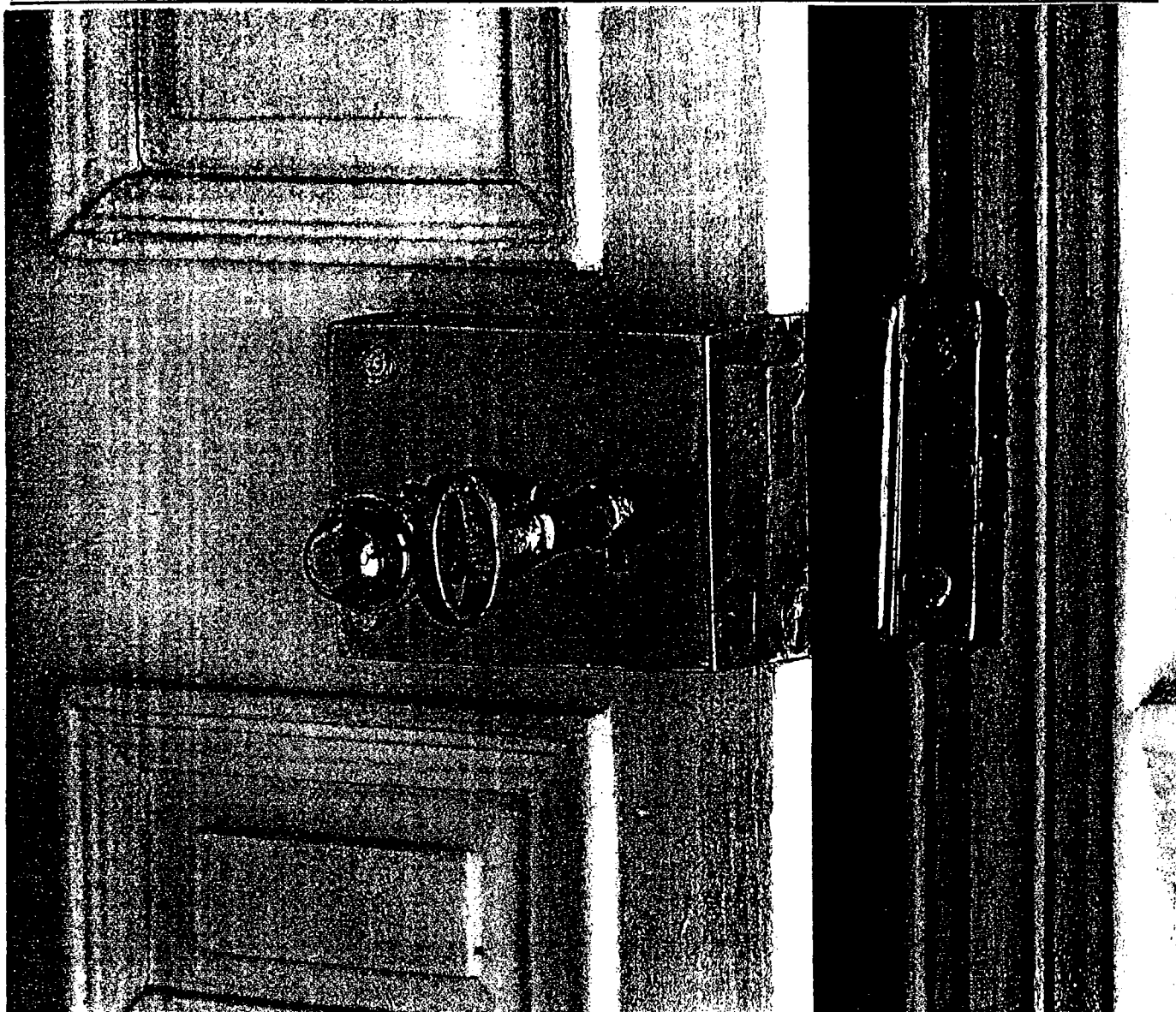
Email: mia@locksmiths.co.uk

URL: <http://www.locksmiths.co.uk/>

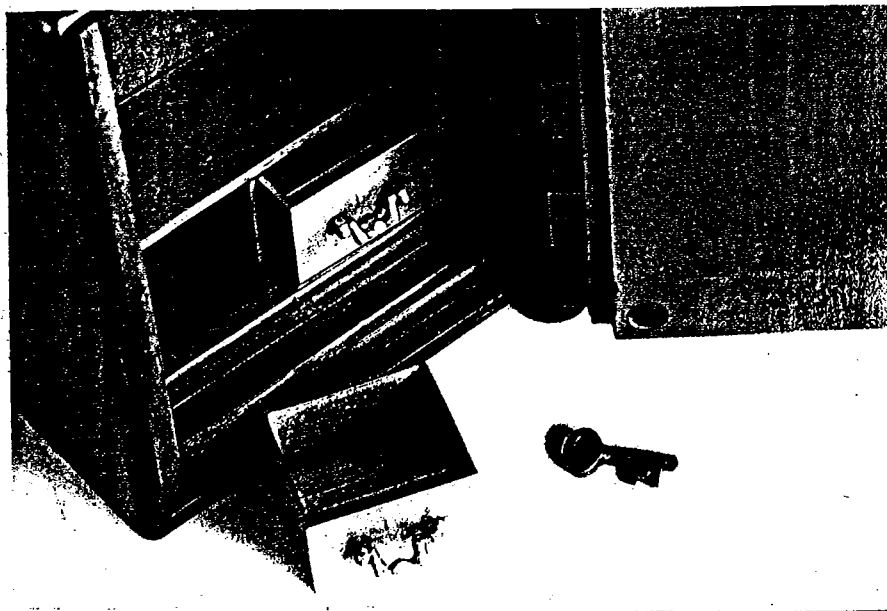
Rooms in nearby hotels can be booked through Neil Martin of Action Venues ☎ (00 44) (0) 1423 797008. A shuttle service will run between the hotels and the Exhibition Centre.

Peter Hall can assist with transport arrangements from East Midlands Airport to Donnington Park; call him on ☎ (00 44) (0) 115931 2411, mobile ☎ 07773 776710.

There will be some lock collectors attending and presenting a display of old locks. Overseas visitors are especially welcome.



Scratches around the brass door handle and lock bear witness to use over the years. Every lock in the house is in perfect working order.



The Queen's Dollshouse: an inspiration to modellers

All the room locks were made by Chubb & Sons Lock & Safe Co. Ltd, in several varying patterns, and all are functional.

The jewel safe (left) was also made by Chubbs. By permission of the Queen and with the consent of the Cauldon Potteries Ltd, (who were making pottery house replicas), Sir George Hayter Chubb had painted metal replicas of the house made, with a lock and key, and money slot in the roof, as children's money boxes. The Queen asked for two dozen for Buckingham Palace.

Richard Hopkins