



LOCKS & KEYS



Issue 30

The Newsletter for lock collectors

March 2006

Mentioned in dispatches

The British government and aristocracy have used leather covered wooden despatch boxes from long ago. Some time in the 17th century, German rulers began to carry their

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

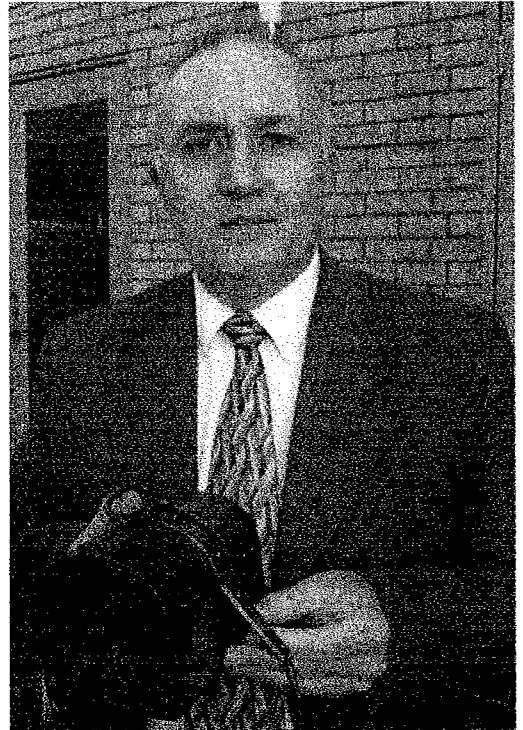
"In addition to the Government, many nobles and gentry also adopted the fashion of red leather-covered despatch boxes, and Bramah locks were widely used."

"Locks & Keys" welcomes contributions, preferably with un-coloured illustrations on separate sheets. Unfortunately, colour photographs tend to be too dark to reproduce well. PC disks with files in MSWord7, MSWorks4.5, Write, Wordpad, or saved as .rtf can be used. Articles may also be emailed to the Editor — see below

important state papers in secure wooden cases. When King George I came from Hanover to ascend the British throne in 1714, he brought this practice with him. By 1760, all government ministers and important officials were using such cases, which had become known as 'despatch

(Continued on page 4)

17th century trick casket



Isaw Peter Phillips' lock collection in the mid 1980's when Peter was already 'quite elderly'. It was an impressive display at an antiques fair in Kimbolton (Beds). Peter was non-communicative about the contents, which were displayed in a series of demountable frames, specially made from interlocking teak or mahogany frames that built into a tall curved display. I was unable to engage him in conversation. I was not a collector at the time nor was I a skilled locksmith: he probably sniffed me out as a fraud!

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Edited & Published by Richard Phillips
"Merlewood", The Loan, West Linton,
Peeblesshire, EH46 7HE
UNITED KINGDOM

☎ West Linton 00 44 [0]1968 661039
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email: rphillips52@btinternet.com

Editor

This newsletter is produced entirely by myself, with encouragement from my wife. I am buzzing with ideas for articles, some of which are half-written. But I still have a day job, and all the other things to occupy me, together with my involvement in a magic society. (I don't do much performing now, I produce a lock newsletter instead! (grin))

I welcome any help with the newsletter — articles and pictures are most welcome. Inevitably, it makes much use of things I find interesting, have, or know about. My knowledge is, however, limited. Many of you readers know much more about locks than I do.

In the past year, I have seen the deaths of four men, all possessing enormous knowledge and skill. Their collections and books will be dispersed and pass into other hands. The wealth of knowledge each individual accumulated through a lifetime of study and practice, however, mostly died with them. Two of them did write some articles, which preserved for posterity a tiny part of their knowledge.

I would like to make another plea for written articles. Not only so that I can publish them and make this a better newsletter, but also to preserve the knowledge you have garnered.

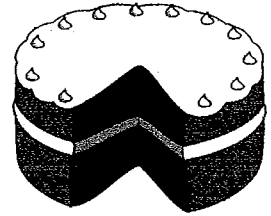
And I would also exhort you to take every opportunity to advertise lock and key collecting as a hobby — especially to younger audiences. Keys in a large range of sizes can be objects of interior decoration, and so can safeplates. They can be talking points, and they have stories to tell which could be interesting, with a little knowledge.

Locks also embody the whole history of mechanical technology and much of economics and sociology. When I was a boy, I found locks less exacting than watches and clocks (they needed so many expensive special tools), and smaller and cleaner than the motor-bikes and cars my brothers worked on in the garage.

Looking around us, most collectors are not exactly young; our hobby needs some youngsters if it is to have a future. There do seem to be collectors out there, but we have nothing to do with them. Maybe those of you who spend time on eBay, for example, could talk to buyers and tell them about the hobby (and recruit them as subscribers for me!). We would benefit by encouraging more people, especially younger ones, into the hobby.

Feedback

Several items have been sent to me which I have not yet been able to use, but hope to in coming issues; more work needs to be done on writing an article, or pictures supplied will not reproduce.



I had previously thought there were only some half a dozen different types of British handcuffs. Now I am aware of a collection of about 50 manacles and fetters, (including some combined restraint sets). So when I can write something on these, and find pictures that are clear, I hope to have an article in a forthcoming issue.

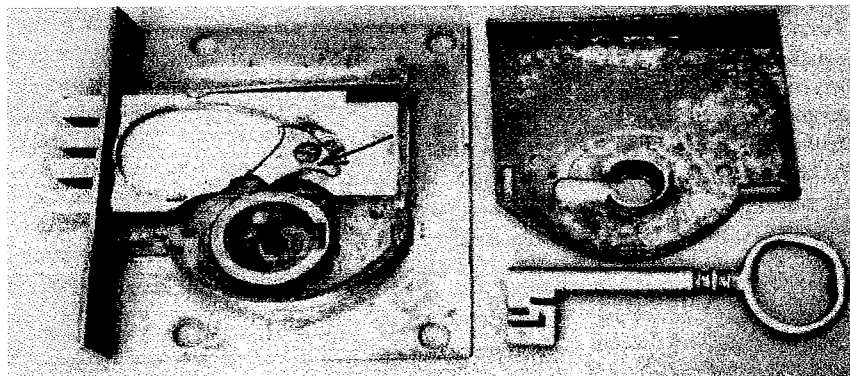
I know there are all manner of interesting locks out there in your collections — it would be nice if you would share them with fellow collectors through these pages.

eBay continues to make life easier for collectors to build a collection without moving further than their computer screen, though there are items on offer which are not quite genuine. I still like to look in antique and junk shops, however!



Many readers have other interests besides locks. Richard Hopkins has been seen on television assisting the reconstruction of ancient celtic chariots; and his book on knots has now appeared in a smaller format edition.

On the fly ...



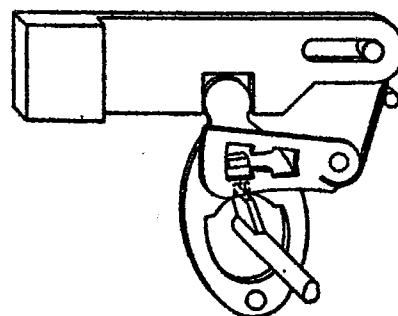
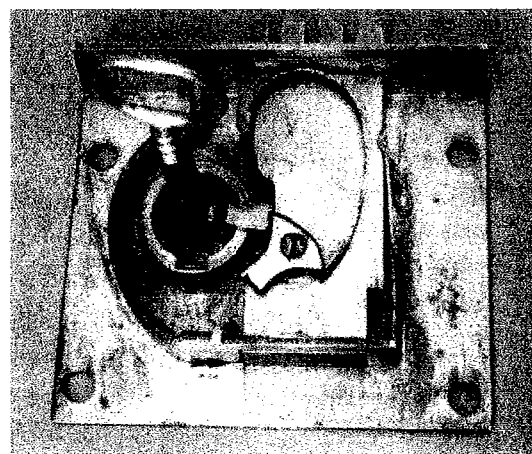
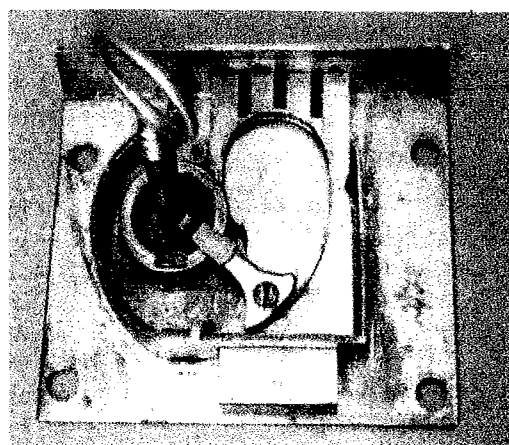
Clockwise from top left: figures 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6.

Barron's Fly-talon

Robert Barron patented the double-acting tumbler lock in 1778. He also invented the first version of a 'fly-talon' lock, soon after, but did not patent it. These illustrations show an early specimen, from a Georgian bureau, which an antique dealer believed to be about 1770, but which must have been a little later. (Modern key made by Roger Davies, 1992.)

The bottom of the bolt-tail, in an ordinary tumbler lock, has a notch for the bolt step of the key. The key bit works in this notch, called the talon, to cam the bolt either shot or withdrawn. If the back of the talon, (i. e. furthest from the bolt head) is removed, there is nothing for the bolt step of the key to contact to withdraw the bolt. The fly-talon acted as a movable back edge to the talon. It was a member pivoted to the bolt tail, and able to swing towards or away from the talon. Its position was controlled by a long spring, using the 'over-centre principle': see fig. 6, and arrowed, fig. 1.

This lock has the bolt locked by a single common tumbler, positioned beneath the bolt tail. After shooting the bolt, the key is turned again,



(Continued on page 13)

boxes'. They have altered little since this time and they continue to be made in the same way.

The differences are matters of detail. At least some of the earlier ones had slightly coved (rounded) lids – a style in common use for travelling trunks. A painting of William Pitt addressing the House of Commons in 1793 shows two red despatch boxes in front of him that have coved lids with a gold-tooled border. These still have brass handles, on the top of the lid. Later boxes had leather handles.

Today the handle is leather, and now at the rear of the box. This is so that after the box is placed on his desk by the official, the minister can unlock the box, which is facing him.

Red despatch boxes are issued to Government ministers, some very senior civil servants, and High Court judges. HM the Queen and other members of the Royal Family use boxes of various distinctive colours. The Scottish Office uses blue, the Welsh Office green, and the Cabinet Office, black despatch boxes.

Present day despatch boxes

The present maker is Barrow & Hepburn (established 1760); they have certainly held the contract to supply the government for over eighty years, but have few records from before WWII.

Despatch boxes are now made in sets of 12 with 2 keys. On the night of a general election, staff are ready to change the locks on all the boxes in use, if a change of Government appears to be occurring. Thus new keys and sets of boxes will be available to incoming ministers by the time they are appointed.

Props for the TV series 'Yes Minister' were fitted with common 2 lever box locks, not real security locks.

The current locks are Chubb detector box locks, but various other locks have been used in the past. (A 1999 picture of the Foreign Secretary shows an apparently modern box that appears to have a Bramah lock.) At the beginning of the 19th century George Davis locks (patented 1799) were used. These were somewhat of a puzzle to operate, and not particularly robust; and they were expensive. They were engraved inside with a warning to locksmiths not to make keys, and offering a reward for information. In 1815, a Wolverhampton locksmith received the 20gn reward for reporting that someone had sought a key, but did not divulge the person's name – foregoing a further 100gn reward!

Later, Bramah locks became popular. The Bramah lock is the oldest patent lock still in production. It is still a high security lock. After the patent expired, anyone was free to make locks of the type, and there were good copies by S Mordan & Co., and other makers, and some inferior copies from others, including some continental makers. Markings on genuine Bramah locks can be helpful for dating. As well as door locks, they were

widely used on good furniture, and boxes of all kinds.

Not only did the Government use them; many nobles and gentry also adopted the fashion of despatch boxes, and Bramah locks were widely used. There were numerous references to them in books. The Duke of Wellington lost his small despatch box at Waterloo, and ordered a replacement from Messrs Bramah with the same lock as the original.

Provincial box makers made boxes in the official style for private customers. Boxes are wood, covered in roan (sheepskin), with linings of skived leather, paper, or cloth. Most boxes had leather handles on the top of the lid. The leather was dyed with stain made by dissolving dye in alcohol. Until recent times, there were no ready-made coloured polishes. The polishing was done separately with wax polish. Scarlet red was most popular, but other colours were also used. Private boxes sometimes appear on the antique market, but official boxes are normally destroyed when withdrawn from service. (Ministers on leaving office are customarily permitted to retain one box as a souvenir. A number of friendly foreign diplomats have also been given such souvenirs.) Indeed, boxes of many varieties were popular in the Victorian period, both in the home and for travelling.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's despatch box

The one long used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to carry his Budget Speech to Parliament was used by Gladstone (he of the "Gladstone bag", a frame bag, covered in leather, and fitted with a small push-button lock; or in larger versions, sometimes made of a patterned canvas, called a 'carpet bag').

Every year, on the morning of budget day, the Chancellor of the day is photographed outside the door of his official residence, 11 Downing Street, holding up this battered red box containing his Budget Speech, before he goes to Parliament.

However, for 1997, the Government had a new box made. And not by the usual maker. Instead, some boys on a youth employment scheme (for training young unemployed) made a new, slightly larger one. The size was increased to accept A4 folders. It has the handle at the front, and surface mounted attaché case locks. The old one is now on display in the foyer of the Treasury.

The Government has also been seeking to modernise. After much development, at last, the Government Communications Headquarters (the US equivalent is the National Security Agency) is satisfied that it has a secure laptop computer, and can transmit files to Ministers electronically.

The government has assurances that it contains security that would defeat even the most determined hacker. The machine is cleared to carry top-secret information. It will not work until a chip-carrying signet ring, which generates an encryption "key", is

connected - and then a fingerprint ("from a warm finger", according to a Cabinet Office spokesman) must be tendered for access.

Dismantling the machine would simply reveal a machine whose hard disk was scrambled beyond decryption. The box, which consists of a Dell laptop



computer, then speaks to the user with the voice of a "female middle-ranking Southern Counties civil servant" (whose identity is being kept secret).

Issues of these slightly shallower boxes began in 1998; they cost £2,500. Until now, the government has moved ministers' boxes between their London offices and their homes by secure courier. (At first, horse-drawn Broughams were used around London.) Of course, ministers all take work home; our Parliament has absurd working hours (but that's another story, which has no place here). Now, instead of such large numbers of the old despatch boxes in circulation, ministers are issued with one or two much smaller boxes, containing a laptop computer.

Early in 2000, it was announced that on leaving office, ministers would be able to buy their despatch box - the computer-containing one.

Modern office fashions

Fashion has moved on over the years. By the middle of the 19th century, professional men had adopted the leather-covered frame bag ('Gladstone bag'). The push-nozzle lock for this was invented by a Mr Ruberry about 1826, but he did not patent it. He supposed there would be little demand, but demand was from the beginning considerable. Although many such locks used a simple spring-loaded tumbler to lock, a variety of secure, quality, bag locks was made, and Bramah locks were popular. Frame-bag locks are still made by Liston Products.

For most of the 20th century, professional and businessmen favoured the barristers' leather briefcase. This usually had a simple surface lock, but quality locks were also made. Hodges Locks even made a dial combination lock, though sales outside the diplomatic

service were not common. In the middle of the century, there were also many cheap attaché cases of fibreboard, or leather, with surface case locks, usually simple and cheap.

The ABS plastic attaché case

In the 1960's there appeared some attaché cases of ABS plastic with aluminium frames. The cheapest had cheap surface single-tumbler key locks, but better ones had flush disk tumbler key locks; the best had three-wheel combination locks, led by the Corbin Sesame. (All-metal cases became popular with photographers and service engineers.) There then appeared attaché cases essentially similar to the old despatch box, in all but name! They were wooden boxes, covered with vinyl or leather, according to quality, mostly in black or brown. Initially, most had surface locks again, (like early chests); combination locks became increasingly common. These locks were also made in flush form. They have the convenient advantage that the user can change the combination without needing any tool. Some cases have a mixture of combination and key locks, normally disk tumbler. These are usually better quality cases, with flush locks.

Since then, fashion has moved on again. Laptop computers are generally carried in bags, typically of a black nylon-like material, which often have a shoulder strap. Many professional men and office workers are changing to small rucksacks, often of similar material, which leave both hands free. Rarely are these bags fitted with locks, but the zipper tags usually have holes, so that small padlocks can be used. Initially, small brass pin tumbler padlocks were common, but now small combination luggage locks are becoming popular.



Despatch Box

The Barrow and Hepburn Despatch Boxes can now be bought by the public, from The History Company UK, price £650 + carriage. Each box comes in distinctive red leather roan. Their website site address is here, but I have been unable to contact them, there is neither email nor snailmail address, only an online order form. There is no information concerning the lock.

<http://www.lightlink.com/history/uk/products/015.html>

Barrow and Hepburn: 25 Bury Street, St James's, London SW1y 6AL

Note: 'dispatch' and 'despatch' are permissible, but the former is preferred today. However, Barrow and Hepburn themselves use 'despatch'!

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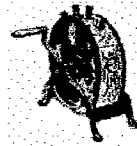
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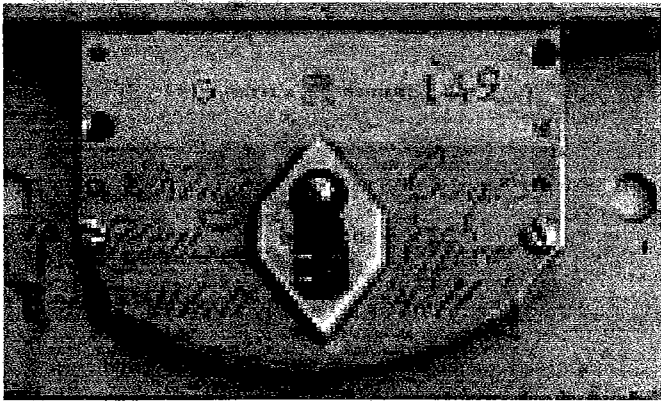
Tel: +44 (0) 1488 682317

Email: hofgartner@belowstairs.co.uk

Website: www.belowstairs.co.uk



George Davis' lock



George Davis box lock. Inscribed: " J. King Esq. Lord Pellhams Office, White Hall "

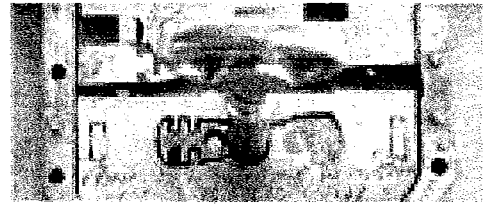
George Davis was a Windsor locksmith, and whitesmith, who flourished at the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries. His lock was quite intricate, and expensive.

Davis lived in Windsor, where the royal residence of Windsor Castle is in the middle of the town. King George III was a patron, and often in Davis' workshop, according to George Price. Indeed, the King even offered Davis a knighthood, which he declined. This patronage perhaps explains why the lock was much used on government dispatch boxes; indeed most of the production went to the government, and the locks are now rare.

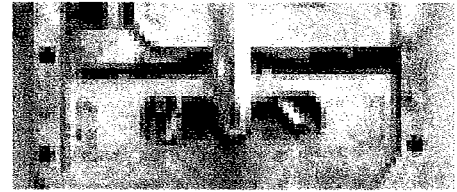
Many are engraved with the owner's name, and inside, where only a locksmith would see it, a reward notice to any locksmith asked to make a key. According to size, or the office of origin, the government offered rewards of £5, £20, up to £50 pounds for a lock from the Prime Minister's office. These rewards were paid on several occasions. For the name of the person seeking the key, the government offered a further reward of £100! There is no record of anyone claiming this large sum, either from loyalty, or not knowing the name. Considering that skilled workmen earned around 15/- – 18/- a week, this reward was more than two year's pay!

The lock was made with a double chamber, and had wards on the sides of the keyhole. The key was inserted into the first chamber, given a quarter turn; it was then pushed forward into the inner chamber, where was a rotating plate, containing a series of small pins or studs, which were laid hold of by the key. By turning the key half a turn, the plate was moved round, the locking tumbler was raised, and the bolt shot or withdrawn. The key is turned anticlockwise to lock, clockwise to unlock.

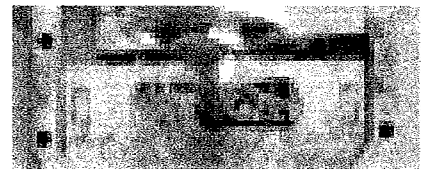
A few stock locks have also been made with somewhat similar action. However, the unusual movement presumably added to the lock's security, as it would be



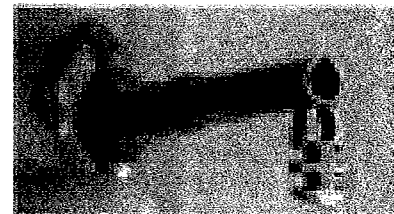
Lock showing the cap removed; the key has had ¼ turn, and been pressed into the inner body.



The key is turning through ½ turn, during this movement it is moving the bolt. At the end of this movement, the key may be withdrawn from the inner body. Then a final ¼ turn brings the key back to the outer keyhole, so that it may be removed.



The key ready to be withdrawn from the inner body, and given the final ¼ turn to bring it back to the outer keyhole, for removal.

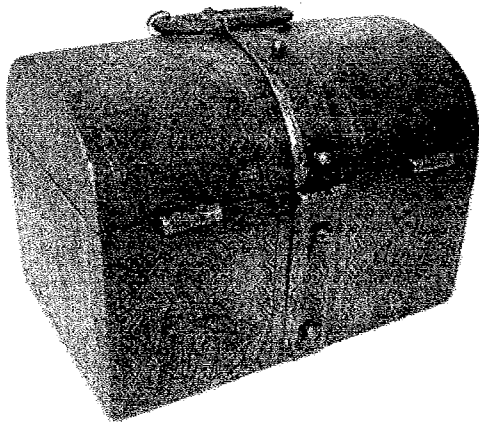


Original key end on, showing ward cuts.

unfamiliar to many persons.

John Chubb, addressing the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1850, opined that it was 'expensive, without affording any very great security.' One of his workmen could pick any of them in half an hour. The make does not appear in George Price's mid-19th century price lists. It is possible Davis' lock was no longer in production by then.

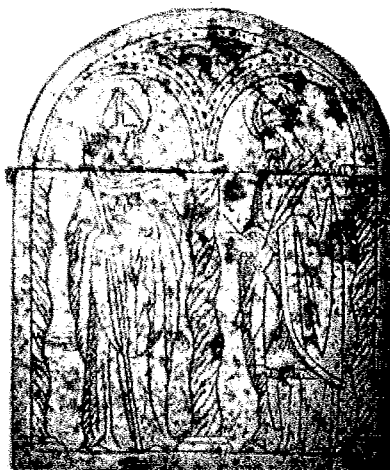
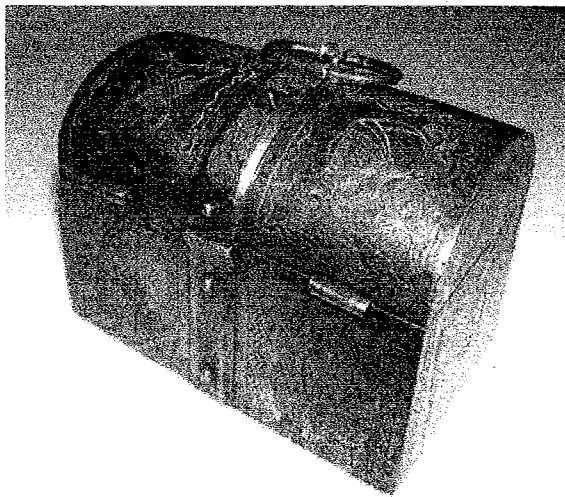
Richard Phillips

17th century trick casket: the pictures

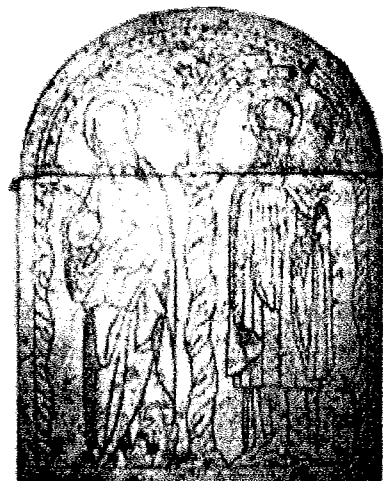
The casket closed; mechanically, both sides appear identical.

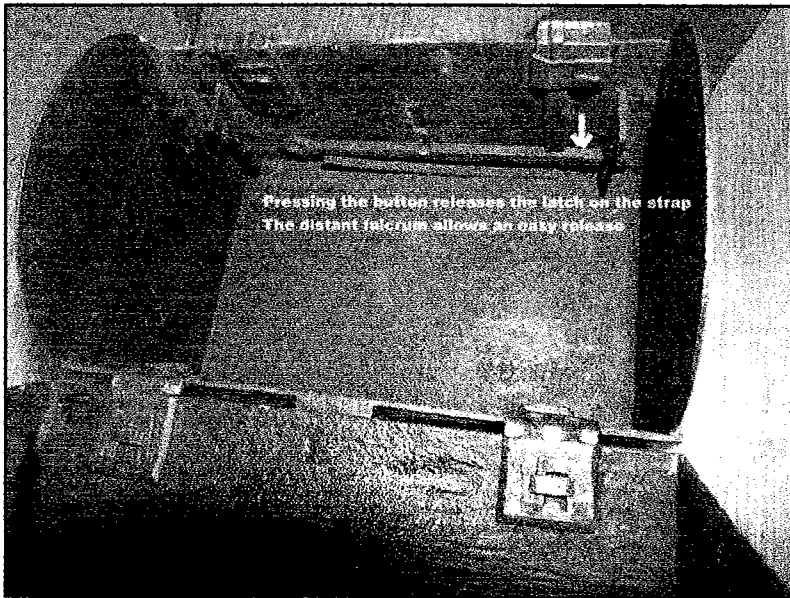


Front, left end (above), right end (below).



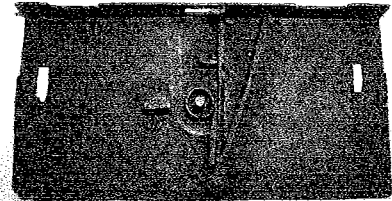
The casket ends: the dark blotches are rust pitting.



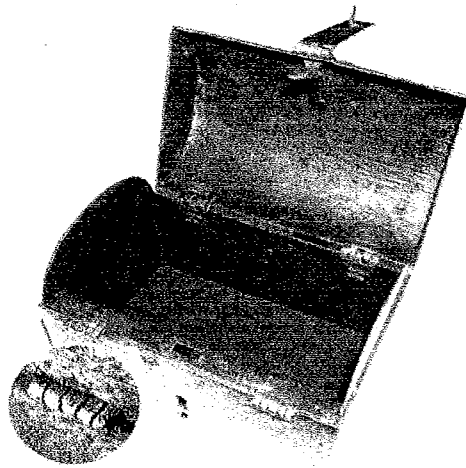


The inside of the casket with the lockplate removed, showing the secret latch holding the keyhole cover.

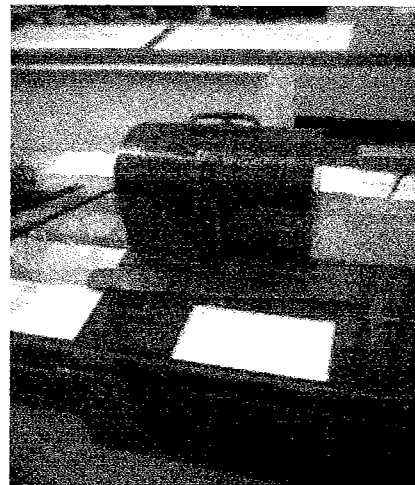
17th century trick casket: more pictures



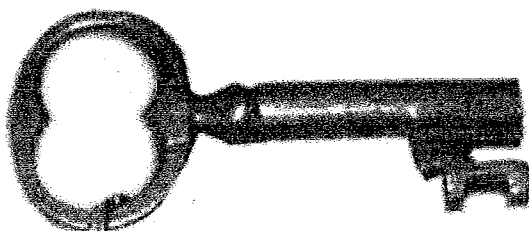
The latch, mounted on the backplate. Operated by a scotch spring, it has simple wards



The dummy hinge



The similar casket displayed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; described as Italian.



The key

In October 2002 I heard about the sale of his collection at Sotheby's. I knew it would be magnificent so went to the Sunday preview. I was hooked. I had some savings so decided to go to the sale just in case no one else was interested. I couldn't have been more wrong. I thought to myself, 'great, wouldn't it be good to pick up the whole lot for twenty-five grand'. Whoops, that was barely ten percent of what was raised!

There were many fabulous items and I earmarked several pieces as being of interest. The locks turned out to be way out of my league and I managed to secure only a few items, one of which was the trick lock casket.

Wrought iron trick casket

It is not the lock that is interesting to me but the 'safe' aspect of its construction. It is a clever little box that relied on a secret 'button' to protect the contents. The box must have been kept close to its owner because the trick would not prevent anyone stealing the box complete. It would not take much to smash it to smithereens either. The trick would certainly keep the casual 'nosey parker' at bay. I was lucky to be at the Sotheby's preview when Paul Prescott (*antique-locks.com*) was looking at the box. He showed me how it worked. Thank you Paul.

Sotheby's described the box as a Nuremberg engraved iron trick lock casket, 17th century with domed cover, later engraved with armorials in foliate cartouches. The sides later engraved with niches of saints.

The casket described

The casket is 154mm long by 102mm wide by 110mm tall (6" x 4" x 4¼"). It is constructed from wrought iron about 1mm thick. The iron has been lightly polished. It is pitted, so I suspect it has been very rusty at some time during its history. Internally, it has been coated with a rubbery-looking substance that resembles car underseal. Externally, there is an oval carrying handle at the top of the lid held on by a strap that runs from one side of the casket, over the lid to the other side. The strap is fixed on by raised rivets. This strap obviously covers the keyhole and you are not given a clue as to which side lifts because there are four hinges showing, two on each side. On first glance (and second?) it looks like a sealed box, and it is so beautifully engineered it gives no clue as to which pair of hinges are the fakes.

The casket is covered in rather simple two-dimensional religious engravings. Engravings on the sides are people: one is certainly of Jesus carrying the cross. Others are religious figures: one is certainly a monk. On the lid there are four engravings. One is a coat of arms in the form of a shield; one is of a display of shield and helmet with a pike/spear and a bow and arrows crossing at the rear. The coat of arms is a quartered shield with two double-headed eagles and two panels with diagonal stripes that contain stylised heart shapes. On

the other side of the lid there is an armoured helmet with a very fancy feather. The final engraving is of a quiver of arrows with bow, hunting horn and a stag's head in the background.

The opening puzzle

To open the casket you have to work out how to lift the strap. The raised rivets are my friends' favourites for pushing, pulling and twisting but they are solid. Apart from the strap and hinges there are no other protrusions so what can you go for? You can deduce that two of the hinges are fakes but the excellent construction does not give away much. The hinges show five sections, on one of the fakes there is a small break which when pointed out seems obvious but I can assure you that with the surface of the whole casket to choose from it is not apparent. This part of the hinge can be depressed, which releases the nearby strap to reveal the keyhole. One turn of the key releases the lid.

It can be seen from the internal photographs, the strap is held by a single bar that is pivoted at a distance to provide an easy push of the secret button. The main lock is a simple warded device. Turning the key pushes the spring-impelled latch to release the lid. The lock is a simple spring-operated device, which releases the spring-latch as the key is turned. The key has a continental style cranked bit.

I was surprised and pleased, when I went to the Victoria & Albert Museum with Tony Beck's lock collectors party, to see a similar type of box on display. It was obviously made in the same workshop, but the engraving is completely different. Unlike my version I believe it has been uncorroded and polished from the day it was made. Its engravings are also of a far higher quality but they are simpler, being swirling patterns in panels. It is marked as being 'Italian'. My contention is that they were made in the same workshop – but that contradicts Sotheby's statement that it is a 'Nuremberg casket'. So, to conclude: it is either German or Italian! I'm no expert, I do not intend arguing with Sotheby's or the V & A. It is a very interesting piece to own. I love showing it to friends and asking them to find the trick. No one has discovered it on their own, so far!

Richard Hunt

Richard is a Peterborough locksmith who set up in the security business in 1977. He is an occasional collector, having acquired a few interesting locks and associated pieces through the business. He has an interest in safes and has a collection of a few dozen safe plaques.

This casket is another item demonstrating that, even in the pre-Industrial Revolution period of hand-made craftsmanship, a workshop could produce more than one similar example of a product design. These caskets might have been made in Germany, and decorated, possibly to order, in Italy.

Illustrations are on pp. 2 and 8 above.

Editor

European lock collectors' meeting

Dear Lock Friends!

Here is the invitation to the 5th European lock collectors' meeting. This year it will be held in Nuremberg (Germany) **7-10 September 2006**. The reason for Nuremberg, and host of this meeting, will be the **GERMANISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM** — truly a world-class museum on gothic art - and not only locks, but the best of all the arts of this period. Please check out their web site:
www.gnm.de

MANFRED WELKER, lock and iron specialist on the museum, and I, have put together a programme that will lead you through the ahhhh and wow's for the long weekend of our stay. For our little lock market, we selected the brand new Holiday Inn in the city centre (4 star). We got a deal on the price and get our rooms for 80 euro with everything included. Same price for the double OR single but sharing is ok. Rooms can be booked by Internet under:

info@holidayinn-nuernberg.de

or by phone +49 911 242500 or fax +49911 24250777

Please book early under the code *lockcollector* since we don't know how many more rooms we need (last year, one after the other of 3 hotels filled up and still it wasn't enough) The hotel is right inside the old walled city, and walking distance from all attractions. Please check out the website of Nuremberg's many attractions under:

www.nuernberg.de

I will be there from September 7th at lunchtime to assist incoming guests. An informal lunch and dinner will be organized that day. On Friday when most of the people come, starting at 3 pm is the biggest outside fleamarket in Germany. It will last well into the night, and there will be plenty of

chances to pick up some FINDS. At 7 pm, we meet in the restaurant BRATWURSTROSLEIN RATHAUSPLATZ 6 where we have booked tables for us — it is right in the centre of town. A fleamarket and a typical German restaurant - you will enjoy it! Walking back from there to the hotel will take you 15 minutes at most.

Saturday at 9a.m., we start with a rich buffet breakfast and after, some might go back to the fleamarket, which opens for the second day around 9a.m. From 11a.m. to 1.30 p.m., we will hold our lockmarket in the hotel, where we have booked a room for it. **PLEASE BRING STUFF TO SELL AND TRADE!!** From 2 p.m. onwards, we will have guided tours in English and German, as well as specials in the museum. The museum is about 7 minutes walking from the hotel. From 7.30 p.m. we have booked tables in the restaurant TUCHERBRAU AM OPERNHAUS KARTAUERTOR 1 just around the corner of the museum on the city wall and (again) very German; probably it will get late ...

Sunday is a good day to visit the many attractions Nuremberg has, such as the castle, the medieval churches, the houses and the museum of the famous painter ALBRECHT DURER etc. Every guest pays his own bills in hotel and restaurants, as well as the tickets for the attractions. There will be no fix menus in the restaurants and you can order whatever you like. Hotel, restaurants, and museum staff speak English, and also there are English menus.

On arrival, everyone will receive an information pack on Nuremberg. Nuremberg has its own airport, and is well served by the train system - (10 minutes walk from the station to the hotel) and approximately 4 hours by train from the Frankfurt airport.

For any information (not on cheap flights) please contact me by e-mail:

perterschnurzel@hotmail.com

or on telephone +49-171-5460901

Please pass this mail to others we might not have in the mailing list. Bring your wives and girlfriends, as there is more than locks to see ... and bring your nametags!!!

See you there,

PETER FRIEDHELM VON KNORRE



Questions from readers

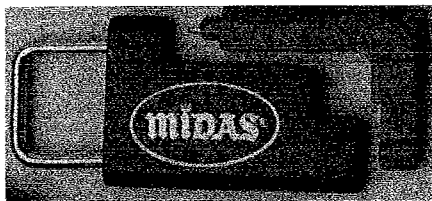
Write in to "Locks & Keys" with your questions about locks. Somebody will surely be able to supply answers. The Editor will be pleased to print a composite answer to questions. When replying, please mention the number of the question.



Trevor Dowson would like any information or trade catalogues on the safemakers George Withers, Samuel Withers, and Thomas Withers, who had separate businesses in West Bromwich. Also the safemaker Bash & Co, in business in Glasgow c.1874 - 1911.



About fifteen years ago, I had to source some novelty advertising give-aways. I don't know who actually made these things, but I found many of the same items in different suppliers' catalogues. They could be person-



alised with, e. g., names and telephone numbers. Pens and keyrings were popular. These were a couple of items which might appeal to lock collectors. The 'padlock' also contains a small emergency pen.

Some readers might even consider such items more interesting than their usual plain advertising key fobs!

Editor

For Sale

On a recent visit to Edinburgh, I came across a small antique shop with a stock of brass, and iron, warded rim locks of Georgian / Victorian period. There is also other door furniture, such as knobs and handles, mainly from Edinburgh's New Town. In addition, there is a stock of assorted keys, mainly for warded locks, to fit doors, cabinets, and padlocks. There is a stock of padlocks, mainly late 19th / early 20th century.

Also in stock is a quantity of keys known in

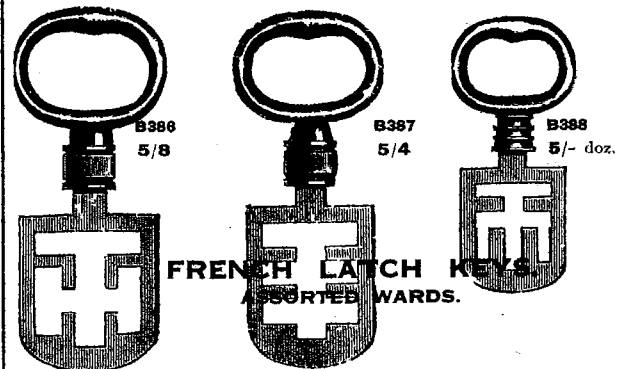
Telephone: 0131 556 8260
Mob: 0771 400 4370



JAMES SCOTT
Antiques and Curios

43 DUNDAS STREET,
EDINBURGH EH3 6QQ

Edinburgh as 'latch keys, for common stairs'. The reason for the name is that until the 1970's, many Scottish apartment blocks had a 'common stair door' (i. e. the street door to the 'common stair', serving all floors of the usually four or three floors) fitted with a latch lock collectors know as an 'Odell latch, or French latch', though these names are not familiar to most Scots. The latch was originally remote operated from inside each flat, by a cable. These keys sell for around £10 — £12 pounds. [Today, most common stair doors have an entryphone system installed.]



(Continued from page 3)

swinging the fly away from the talon. Now the key (or a skeleton key or pick) will turn endlessly in the unlocking direction, but without withdrawing the bolt.

Fig. 1 shows the lock with cap removed — and fixing the cap by screws rather than simply riveting it on was a rare sign of quality then. The wards, on both backplate and cap, are typical of Barron locks — almost interleaving, and including a hook ward. These keys are often difficult to skeleton, (although this particular one could be). However, these wards leave the key rather weak, and vulnerable to bending. Even on a 'thick bit' key there is very little metal connecting the working end of the bit to the stem. The ward cuts should be developed as a radius from the keyhole centre (see fig. 2) so that they are as narrow as possible; and this is quite difficult to cut by hand.

The fly talon in operation

In figs. 1 and 3, the position of the fly would allow the key to withdraw the bolt. In fig. 4, however, the key (or a skeleton key) will turn endlessly in the unlocking direction, but without withdrawing the bolt. There will be spring tension felt, which would be the spring on the locking tumbler and the spring on the fly; but the bolt is not moved.

To unlock, the key must first be turned twice in the locking direction. The first time, the bit will catch the small nib visible on the end of the fly, fig. 6, and swing the fly to a right-angle with the bolt tail. The next turn will tilt the tip of the fly towards the bolt head, where it will be held by its spring, and form the unlocking side of the talon. Then one turn of the key in the unlocking direction will withdraw the bolt.

This is a lock of good quality, very well made. The bolt is divided into four sections, all fitting snugly into their holes in the faceplate. This form of bolt is a common 18/19th century cabinet lock form. It

makes a deal of extra work, for no obvious benefit. Here, the parts are polished, and some appear to be hardened.

The price?

Written in ink on the inside of the backplate are some figures. They appear to be 2/7 followed by a letter. This might be 'l' or 'c' or 'e' or 'd'; it appears to be a price. Two pounds seven shillings would appear too much. Barron's locks were listed by George Price in 1856 as '2½" till locks, @ 4/5 [i. e. four shillings and five pence, pre-decimal English money] per doz.', compared with '2½" 3 wheel ward brass till locks, @ 9/6 per doz.'

If it is indeed "two shillings and seven pence each", that is quite a mark-up! There was very little price inflation during the first half of the 19th century; indeed, prices of staple foods, and cloth for clothing, actually fell. A skilled manual worker, such as a locksmith, would earn around 15/- — 18/- a week (there were 20 shillings to the pound).

Gould's sliding talon lock, about 1817

A somewhat similar idea was re-invented by Gould about 1817: a sliding talon. It differed in the manner of fixing a movable member to form the unlocking side of the talon. Neither Barron's nor Gould's movable-talon locks appear to have had much commercial success.

One reason might be that they were unlike most ordinary locks to operate, and a bother. Another might be that they were perhaps not always secure. If mounted vertically up, (such as on a drawer), turning a skeleton key in the unlocking direction could not *move* the bolt, but would *unlock* it — vibration of the lock or furniture could then assist gravity to cause the bolt to drop!

Another form of fly-talon

Finally, the term 'fly-talon' has also been applied to a quite different mechanism. As shown in fig. 5, this is intended to provide a long bolt throw with a small key, in a lever lock. Many cylinder locking devices achieve the same effect with a cam, as do some lever locks which use a cam on a barrel, or a rib on a curtain.

R Phillips, based on information from Roger Davies in Tools and trades history soc. newsletter, 1992. Pictures reproduced by permission.

Lock price lists 1856:

from George PRICE: *Treatise on fire & thief-proof depositories.* London, Simpkin Marshall, 1856.

LIST No. 1.	Size.	COMPARATIVE PRICES.				
		Chubb's Detector. 6 Levers.	Cottrell's Climax Detector. 6 Levers.	Gibbons' Patent. 6 Levers.	Hobbs' Protector. 6 Levers.	
Fig. 393. Portfolio and Writing Case.	10 0	10 0	10 0	10 0	10 0	
		12 6				
Fig. 394.—Ditto, with a projecting nozzle.	10 0	10 0	10 0	10 0	10 0	
		12 6				
Fig. 395. Trunk and Port-manteau.	To 8 3 4	15 0	18 0	13 0	15 0	
		20 0	20 0	14 0	18 0	
		20 0	20 0	15 0	20 0	
		20 0	20 0	10 0	20 0	
Fig. 396. Book-edge or Ledger.	To 1 2 4 2 4	20 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	
		22 0	16 0	15 0	17 6	
		24 0	17 0	16 0	20 0	
		24 0	17 0	17 0	22 0	
Fig. 397. Carpet Bag.	15 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	
		15 0				
Fig. 398. Letter Bag.	15 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	
		15 0				
Fig. 399. Escutcheon Lock.	20 0	20 0	28 0	20 0	28 0	
		28 0				
Fig. 400.—Combination Latch.	To 4 6 6	13 0	14 0	13 0	15 0	
		14 0	14 0	14 0	15 0	
		15 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	
		15 0	15 0	15 0	15 0	

	COMPARATIVE PRICES.						
	Nettled's Guardian. 6 Levers.	Parnon's Balance-Lever. 6 Levers.	Parnell's Defence.	Parnell's National.	Rastell's Protector.	Barton's. 5 Levers.	Tucker's Safe-guard.
Fig. 393.	7 6	..	12 0	10 0	7 6	..	8 0
Fig. 394.	7 6	..	12 0	10 0	7 6	..	11 0
Fig. 395.	9 6	..	16 0	15 0	7 6	..	13 0
Fig. 395.	10 6	..	..	..	8 6	..	15 6
Fig. 395.	11 6	..	..	..	9 6	..	..
Fig. 395.	12 6	..	..	..	13 0	..	17 0
Fig. 396.	10 6	..	14 0	12 0	..	..	..
Fig. 396.	11 6	..	16 6	14 0	14 0	..	17 0
Fig. 396.	12 6	..	18 0	16 0	15 0	..	19 0
Fig. 396.	13 6	..	20 0	18 0	16 0	..	21 0
Fig. 397.	10 0	..	16 0	10 0	..	..	13 0
Fig. 398.	7 6	..	16 0	10 0	..	..	13 0
Fig. 399.	13 0	..	..	..	..	..	20 0
Fig. 399.	14 0	..	..	..	..	..	22 0
Fig. 400.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fig. 400.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fig. 400.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Fig. 400.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

LIST No. 2.—LATCHES, FOUR LEVERS, TWO KEYS, BEST QUALITY.

Per dozen Locks.	4 inch.					4 1/2 inch.					5 inch.				
	4 in.	5 in.	6 in.	7 in.	8 in.	8 in.	9 in.	10 in.	11 in.	12 in.	12 in.	13 in.	14 in.	15 in.	16 in.
Flush	9 0	9 0	9 0	10 8	10 8	10 8	11 0	12 0	12 0	..
Rim	10 6	11 0	11 0	12 0	12 0	12 0	13 0	14 0	14 0	..
Mortise	15 0	15 0	15 0	16 0	16 0	16 0	17 0	17 0	17 0	..
Mortise, extra strong, with slide...	17 0	17 0	17 0	18 0	18 0	18 0	19 0	19 0	19 0	..

If made to lock as well as latch, 1s. each extra. Extra keys, 6d. each.

DOOR LOCKS, FOUR LEVERS, ONE KEY, BEST QUALITY.

Per dozen Locks.	4 in.		5 in.		6 in.		7 in.		8 in.		9 in.		10 in.	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Rim dead, to lock on one side only	11 0	11 0	12 0	12 0	14 0	14 0	17 0	17 0	20 0	20 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0
" " to lock on both sides	13 0	13 0	14 0	14 0	16 0	16 0	19 0	19 0	22 0	22 0	25 0	25 0	25 0	25 0
Drawbacks and 3-bolt rim, with best furniture	..	..	21 0	21 0	23 0	23 0	25 0	25 0	27 0	27 0	30 0	30 0	30 0	30 0
Mortise dead, 1-bolt.	13 6	14 6	15 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6	17 6
" " 8 "	..	..	20 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0	22 0
" " no furniture	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Extra keys from 1s. each.

LIST No. 3.—BRAMAH LOCKS, WITH 4 SLIDES AND 2 KEYS, BEST QUALITY.

Each Lock.	To 2 1/2 in.		3 in.		3 1/2 in.		3 3/4 in.		3 7/8 in.		4 in.	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Till	5 0	5 4	5 10	6 4	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 6	8 0
Straight cupboard	4 10	5 4	5 8	6 2	6 8	6 8	6 8	6 8	6 8	6 8
Cut cupboard	5 0	5 4	5 10	6 4	6 4	6 4	6 4	6 4	6 4	6 4
Box, sloping desk, mortise, camp desk, pedestal, link-plate cupboard, and mortise box	4 10	5 4	5 8	6 2	6 8	6 8	6 8	6 8	6 8	6 8
Folio and writing case	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0	3 0
Trunk	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0	7 0

BRAMAH SPRING BOOK-EDGE LOCKS AND PADLOCKS.

Each Lock.	To 1 in.		1 1/8 in.		1 1/4 in.		1 3/8 in.		1 1/2 in.		1 5/8 in.		2 in.		2 1/4 in.		2 1/2 in.		3 in.		
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	
Book-edge	6 0	6 4	6 8	7 0	7 4	7 8	8 0	8 4	8 8	9 0	9 4	9 8	10 0	10 4	10 8	11 0	11 4	11 8	12 0
Padlocks	4 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0	5 0

BRAMAH NIGHT LATCHES.

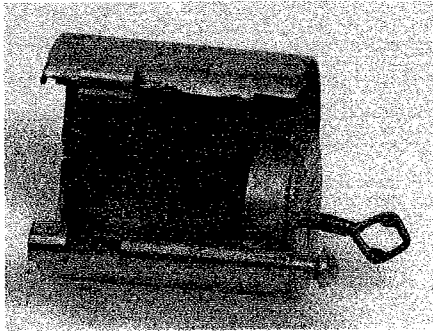
Each Lock.	4 in.		4 1/2 in.		5 in.	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Flush	9 0	9 0
Rim	12 0	13 0

BRAMAH DOOR LOCKS.

Each Lock.	4 in.		5 in.		6 in.		7 in.		8 in.		9 in.		10 in.		11 in.		12 in.	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Rim dead, to lock on 1 side	14 0	15 0	17 0	19 0	21 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0	23 0
" " both sides	25 0	26 0	28 0	30 0	32 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0	34 0
3-bolt rim, for front doors	..	..	35 0	38 0	42 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0
Drawback or spring lock for front doors	..	..	35 0	38 0	42 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0
Mortise, 1-bolt..	..	..	38 0	40 0	42 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0	44 0
" 2 "	..	..	39 0	41 0	43 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0	45 0
" 3 "	..	..	40 0	42 0	44 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0	46 0

Second quality, each kind and size, 1s. less.
Locks to spring, 1s. to 2s. each extra.
Extra keys, 1s. to 2s. each.

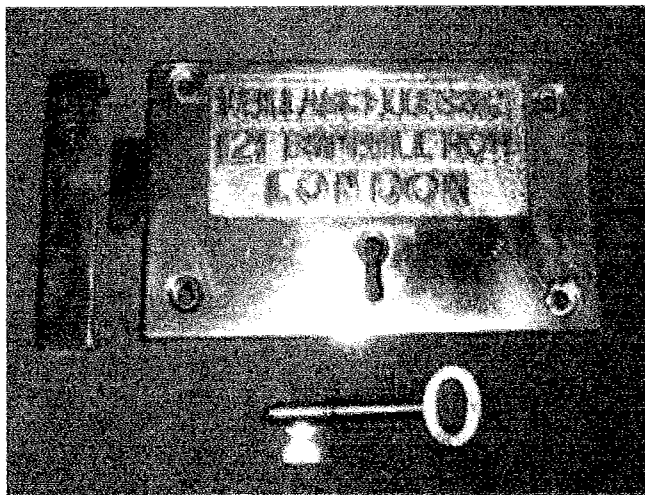
Some uncommon locks



For those of you who, like me, have never seen a 'Burns bottle lock' open, here is how it works. When shut, the movable pin is locked down by turning the key.

This appears to be the commonest bottle lock, patented in 1881; I have seen several examples, though never had one in hand to examine.

This example, and the 'Gendarm' alarm below, are from the gadget collection of *Maurice Collins*.



Brass Rim Lock

Original quality brass rimlock manufactured circa 1900 (or a little later? Ed.) by *W.H. Lascelles & Co.* 121 Bunhill Row, London. With key and keep. Can be used both left or right hand. Replacement keep made to suit. Complete and in good and working order. 6" x 3.5"

Price: £160.00 Including VAT at 17.5% from *Below Stairs*, see p. 6 above.

(Lascelles & Co. is best known for its combination padlock, much used as a bicycle lock.)

Puzzle

An online game page offers several puzzles; one of these is finding the combination to open a combination padlock, using the clues given.

<http://www.combinationlock.com/>

Enter your answer by clicking on the numbers or typing it into the box. Use the clues below.

Then click in the silver loop or the 'Try' button. The lock will open if you are correct.

- Wheel B is 1 or 8
- The first wheel plus the last wheel is 9 more than wheel C plus wheel B
- Wheel A is an odd number

The first wheel and wheel B are the same number.

The web page shows a picture of a modern combination padlock, with 3 or 4 wheels, according to the level of difficulty selected, and a space to input a proposed combination. Not really a 'lock' puzzle, so much as a logic or mathematical problem — but one can spend a few idle minutes on it!

"Gendarm" combination door lock

Powered by clockwork, this French door alarm of c1900 sounded a high-pitched alarm bell if anyone attempted to open the door to which it was attached, without knowing the preset entry combination.

Unless the combination were correctly entered, movement of the door handle would cause the bell to swivel, and the alarm to sound.

I've never seen one, don't know if the combination can be changed by the user, nor how common they are.

