

Sprechen sie ...?

The item in the last issue on keys in art, and dating, prompted a communication from Ingo Schmoekel in Germany.

He has sent me some material in German, including pictures. I can understand the pictures, but not German. As Ingo has offered more German material, can I have offers to translate, so that we can share the results of Ingo's studies? You can't all be like me, learnt French at school and not used it since?



This publication is called a newsletter, but I am conscious that it doesn't actually contain much news. I have had some difficulty finding advance news of events such as antiques fairs. Sorry, by the time you receive this, the Newark fair will be passed. Can readers let me know of events which might be of interest to others? Remember that there are only 3 issues, so plenty of notice is needed.

I hope all readers will find somewhere of interest to them amongst the places listed. I would be pleased to know readers' interests, when you renew your subscriptions, so the newsletter can be best tailored to what you would like.

"Locks & Keys" needs your contributions!

Inside This Issue

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Roman padlocks

The article *Keys in art* in the last *Newsletter* interested me very much, because it reminded me of my own efforts. Being, however, a collector of padlocks, my search was directed not towards keys, but to padlocks. It is in my experience much more difficult to find representations of padlocks in works of art. Therefore my findings are rather unusual.

St Leonhard

In Bavarian churches that are dedicated to St Leonhard, one can occasionally find pictures of the saint together with his attribute, the chain and a padlock. In the first half of the sixth century he was abbot of the Abbey of Noblac in southern France. He was noted for his good works on behalf of prisoners. Unfortunately I have no picture of any of these paintings.

Roman chain padlocks

The drawing 4 shows a tombstone in the Roman Museum in Metz, France. It was made for a Roman merchant of locks, showing him with three typical Roman padlocks. This type of lock was, I am certain, the origin of the French word for padlock: *cadenas*, from the Latin *catena*, a chain.

The photographs show a well-preserved old padlock of this type 3, and a modern 1, 2 museum reconstruction. It is probably one of the earliest types of padlock in Europe. The padlock has a cylindrical form, and has a chain attached, any link of which can be put into a slot in the bottom of the lock. The lock and key are of iron. Many of these keys are of bronze, often cast. The Romans also sometimes made brass (from naturally occurring mixed ores), and occasionally

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Roman padlocks (continued from p.1)

(by chance), steel. This reconstruction was made in the Roman museum in Kaiseraugst near Basle, Switzerland. The pictures come from an annual report of the museum.

Romano-British padlocks

I am not aware of any such lock having been found in Britain. Although the Romans certainly had turning keys, as far as I am aware, all the padlocks so far known are of the 'chinese' expanding spring barb type, with a sliding key. Several, found in Essex, Kent, and Dorset, for example, are illustrated by Pitt-Rivers¹. Even Eras² shows only the expanding barb type, and does not show any chain padlocks. Does any reader know of chain padlocks in Britain?

Targetting security

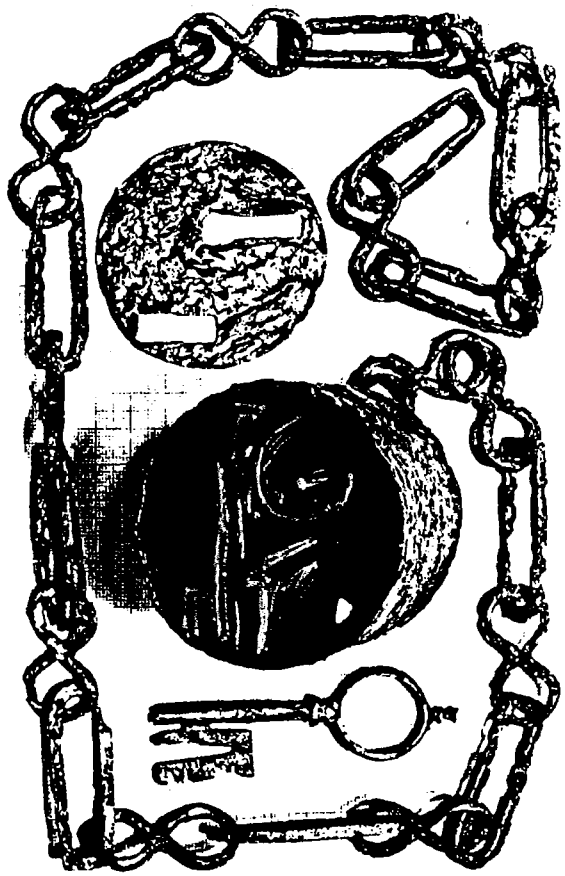
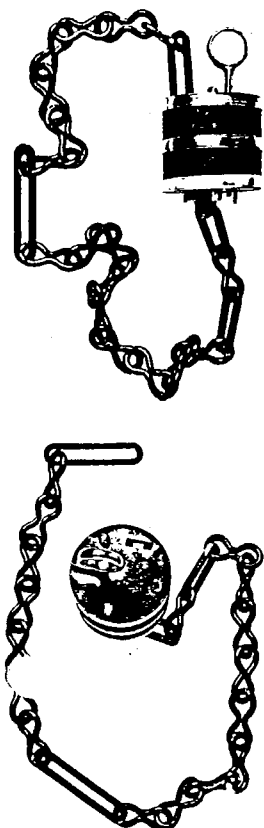
In the castle of Coburg in northern Bavaria there is a collection of painted shooting targets, made for Duke Johann Casimir of Saxe-Coburg. One of the targets 5 shows

among other things a padlock in a typical form. The target is dated 1610. So this type of padlock was in use at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the following centuries padlocks of this type had to be reproduced by apprentice locksmiths in their examinations to become master locksmiths. I have three similar locks, of which only one looks really old. Another is surely a later reproduction. But I do not regard it as a fake. Instead I value it as a testimony to German craftsmanship.

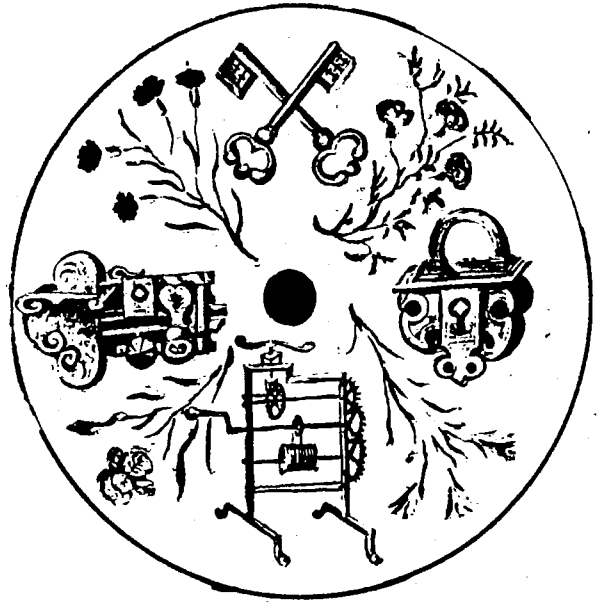
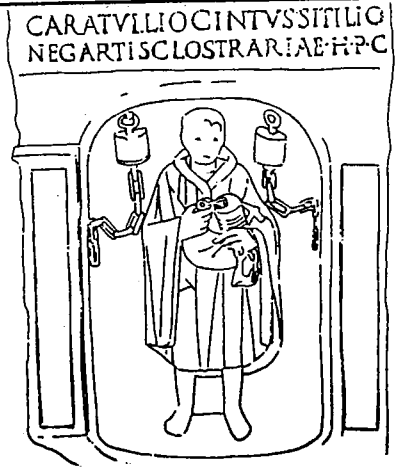
Ingo Schmoeckel, [with additional contributions from R Phillips]

¹PITT-RIVERS, A H L *Fox On the development and distribution of primitive locks and keys*. Chatto and Windus, 1883.

²ERAS, Vincent J M *Locks and keys throughout the ages*. Dordrecht, Lips' Safe and Lock Manufacturing Company, 1957. (Originally published in Dutch in 1941, this has been reprinted since.)



- 1
- 2
- 3
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- 5



Places of interest here and there

At the beginning of June I was invited on a whistlestop visit to France, to spend Twenty-Four Hours at Le Mans.

I did achieve a few detours in Normandy, to visit some historic places. The coastal strip of Normandy on June 6th 1944 must have been an unimaginably terrifying place. I visited Caen and Arromanche, and Bayeux. Half a century later, most of the scars of war have been effaced - though the cemeteries and war memorials remain.

I visited several churches. English churches contain a wealth of historical material, chests and other furniture, ironwork,

stained glass, and more. In Normandy churches there is precious little old glass, but some ironwork survives.

Several of the larger churches had been extensively restored. Several door locks had been converted by inserting modern mechanisms - some less sympathetically than others.

I had hoped to find a French locksmith shop to visit during my brief tour. However, I found two warehouse DIY stores, like Britain's B&Q.

French DIY store lock stock

The range of locks was extensive, but there were more rimlocks than one would find in Britain. Many locks were warded, usually with bulletted keyholes. There were many more lever rim locks than are available in Britain. Many French front doors have a double-handed upright cylinder rim lock. This is also available in a double cylinder version. There were more cheap padlocks on sale, but I was struck by the ready availability of inexpensive multipoint locking systems.

Though I did not find a locksmith, I did find a key-cutter shop in Le Mans, near the cathedral.

French Bramah locks and keys

The owner and his wife generously made me welcome during my brief visit. They were a mine of information about old and

modern locks and keys. Bramah type locks were widely used in France, and he had two waiting to be collected.

I came back with the gift of a brass Bramah blank, marked VP601. This did not fit either lock at hand, so blanks must be available in a range of sizes. Does anyone have any information on this?

I thank Monsieur for his welcome and his time; he also gave me directions to the nearby Fichet office, but I was unable to visit that.

Trevor Dowson has sent me a list of places to visit in Britain. Some I have visited, though not recently. Up to date accounts of places of interest to lock collectors would be welcome.

Several old prisons have become museums open to the public, in some cases after having been used as police stations.

Some of them might not be worth travelling far out of your way to visit, but if you are nearby, or interested in nostalgia, they might be worth seeing.

Some museums with locks and keys

Ripon Prison & Police Museum, St Marygate, Ripon (01765 690799): small collection of locks, keys, and restraints.

Tetbury Police Museum 63 Long St, Tetbury Gloucestershire (01666 503552): small collection of keys.

In a class of its own is the lavishly presented award-winning tourist attraction of Inveraray Jail, Argyllshire (01499 2381) with 2 prisons, a courthouse, and shop. The custodians are in period dress as warders, and there are sometimes other staff in costume. The exercise yards and several cells can be inspected. There are various displays, including the popular birching table for juveniles. Curiously, delinquent boys, as long ago as the early eighteenth

I was made very welcome by Clé Rapid in Le Man

Clé Rapid 

Clés en tous genres

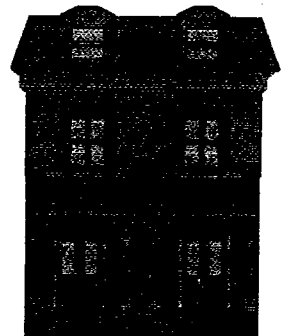
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Networking

There is a considerable amount of material on the Internet, for anyone who is on the Net. I am not, so the information here is what has been passed to me. The Net can change quickly at any time, so many hypertext links, which should point to an information site, have ceased to be valid. At any moment, more than a quarter of these links will be invalid, so don't be surprised if some of this is now inaccurate.

There is a newsgroup at *alt.locksmith*, which has answers to frequently asked questions. Questions and answers are mainly American, as you might expect.

There are some expensive trade catalogues, many from the last century, for sale by High Ridge Books Inc., PO Box 286 Rye NJ 10580, phone 914 967 3332, fax 914 967 6056. See <http://highridgebooks.com>.

A search for 'Willenhall' will find some relevant material. There is a bibliography about the place. Some of this your library could obtain by interlibrary loan. There are several old local directories online, and links to Willenhall Lock Museum (presumably the one in Willenhall Library?), and Walsall Local History Centre. See

<http://freespace.virgin.net/m.harbach/willenhall.htm>

Joe Kingsmill's (Joe's Collectibles) website has links to his padlock collection and railroad locks;

<http://members.aol.com/jolock99/index.html>

There is an overview of the relations and current products of the Chubb group at

<http://www.security.co.za/j.p/range.htm>

There is a gallery of antique rim locks at

<http://www.eddonaldson.com/rimlocks.htm>

Several British public libraries are collaborating to provide an enquiry service for anyone on the Internet. Ask a Librarian normally e-mails a reply to enquirers within two working days. The service is free to anyone (though probably could have difficulty with non-English language enquiries), and is available 24 hours a day. It was launched at the end of last year for six months. It is presently under review, but is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. As the service only had a budget of £40, it has been very good value.

The address of Ask a Librarian is:

<http://www.earl.org.uk/ask/>

Let me know if any of this is of use to you; if it is, send me more so that I can share it with other readers!

Richard Phillips

Places of interest here and there

(continued from p.3)

century, were sent to Wellington approved school at Penicuik (it's still in use) - a long way from Argyleshire! (It's near the Editor's home.)

Jedburgh Castle prison was one of the early modern prisons in Scotland, in use from 1820 to 1886. Similar to Inveraray Jail, but more bare. There has been less effort to restore the ambience of the former prison. The cell locks are large warded locks with round bolts widely used (at least in Scotland) on prison and police cell doors in the mid-nineteenth century. Gloucester Prison Museum, Barrack Square (01452 529551), 'the first museum of a working prison' has a small collection of keys. (open Easter - September.)

York Castle Museum is the old prison building. The condemned cell, used by Dick Turpin, is still in the museum. In its Street Where the Sun Ever Shines is a reconstructed police station, and reconstructed shops include an ironmongers. Lovers of nostalgia will enjoy this museum, with probably the best reconstructed shops to be found in Britain.

There are numerous antique and collectors' fairs and car boot sales all over the country, especially in the summer. Many are noticed in *Antique Collecting, the journal of the Antique Collectors' Club*. The subscription is £19.50 from 5 Church Street Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 1DS, 01394 385501 fax 01394 384434. It should be in larger libraries. Unfortunately, the rest of its content and advertisements are rather up market fine art.

Just one example date for a fair: 6-9 August at the National Exhibition Centre Birmingham - details from 0121 7667 2760.

Apology

The Editor regrets the delay in publishing this issue, caused by an unsolved problem with printing, which has cut short the top and bottom of the pages.

Meter locks: Wormald and others

From before the end of the last century, until fairly recent years, gas, and later, electricity, was supplied to many customers by pre-payment meters.

Such meters were fitted by the utility Company or Board with a small padlock. Several lock companies supplied the locks used. Millions were made; there must still be many around.

As the locks were small, they could not be very robust, and were more in the nature of physical seals. Indeed, some of them actually were seal padlocks.

Seal padlocks

A piece of printed paper was locked under a hinged cover, and covered the keyhole. The key inevitably tore this when inserted into the keyhole.

Such locks had previously been used by Customs & Excise on Bonded Stores. They are still in use in Russia today. Some were made by Lowe & Fletcher, but most came from The Tourtel Manufacturing Co., Birmingham.

The most typical locks, however, were designed to exclude the keys in public circulation. Various shaped keyholes were used, and the keys were not supplied to the public. Lowe & Fletcher made some of these also.

Wormald locks

Best known and most numerous, however, are Wormald self-locking meter locks. They made lever locks with shaped keyholes, usually with sliding shackles. Some have a feature to prevent rapping open.

Nozzle locks had hinged shackles, and various mechanisms. Their distinctive feature was a projecting round nozzle.

Nozzle locks, with pivoted key

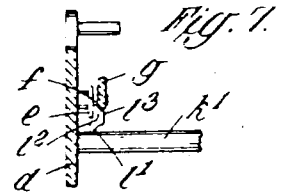
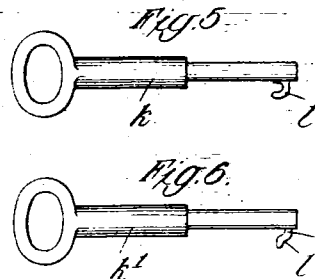
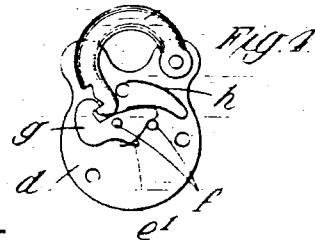
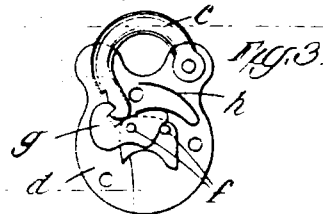
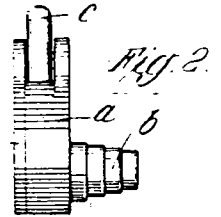
Two different types are illustrated here. The idea of pivoting the key bit was used several times in the nineteenth century. It might have been born in the sixteenth century. Wormald keys, however, seem to owe more to Henry's late eighteenth century invention.

In BP400,827 of 1933, the main security element (apart from the keyhole) is a fixed ward *e* pinned to the backplate. Its size and shape could be differed within small limits. The bolt was held by a spring-loaded tumbler.

There are probably still many of the meter locks in gas and electricity stores around the country. Some might be released if it were possible to speak to friendly storemen or foremen. Even, perhaps, some of the keys, which are conspicuously rare.

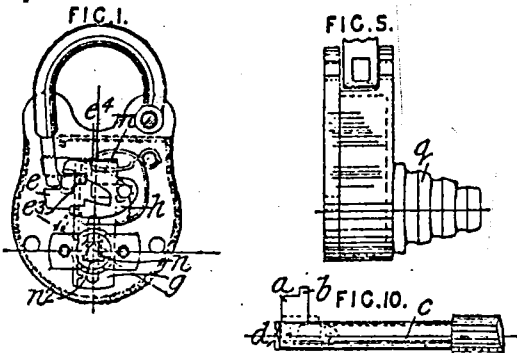
Information from Trevor Dowson

BP400,827
1933

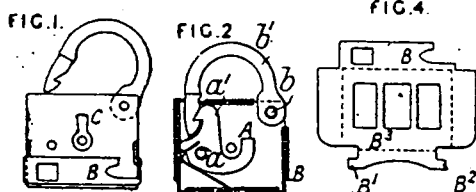


6610. Wormald Patent Locks Co., and Wormald, A. H. March 29, 1905

Locks, key; padlocks; keys; keyholes. — Relates to a lock adapted to be operated by a key such as is described in Specification No. 23,418, A.D. 1892. As applied to a padlock, the locking-bolt *a* is blocked in its shot position by the tumbler *b*, the shoulder *c* of which springs behind the projection *e* on the bolt, and by the slider *g*, the projecting edge *m* of which engages with a recess in the bolt. The key *c*, as shown in Fig. 10, is provided with the pivoted bitt *a* with the extension *b*, and also with the triangular projection *d* on the end of the shank. On inserting the key into the barrel keyhole *g*, Fig. 5, the projection *d* enters a corresponding recess *n* in a pinion *n*, which is mounted in the casing with its teeth engaging a rack on the slider *g*. On turning the key, the slider *g* is raised by the rack and pinion, and the tumbler *b* by the extension *b* of the key bitt *a*, thus releasing the bolt, which is withdrawn by the bitt *a*. Either the slider *g* or tumbler *b* with its corresponding operating-bitt on the key may be dispensed with.



3004. Tourtel, J. M. Feb. 12, 1901



Padlocks, seal, such as are described in Specification No. 479, A.D. 1895. The invention consists in simplifying the method of hinging the frame to the case. The case *A*, Fig. 2, which is formed from a blank, is provided with a pin *a*, on which is pivoted a spring catch *a'*, a pin *b*, on which is pivoted the hasp *b'*, and a central pin for the key. The frame *B* is formed from a blank, Fig. 4, and is provided with projections *B'*, *B''*. These projections are placed within the case before the cover *C*, Fig. 1, which is formed with a cut-away portion for the passage of the part *B''* of the frame, is fixed to the case. After the cover is fixed, the frame cannot be withdrawn from the case, and the projections *B'*, *B''* serve as pivots upon which the frame can turn.

Fig. 2 is a side elevation, Fig. 3 is a front view of the back plate, Fig. 4 is a front view of a modified form of back plate. Fig. 5 is a side view of a key as usually employed with the type of lock with which this invention is concerned. Fig. 6 is a side view of a key as constructed for use with the improved form of lock, and Fig. 7 is a detail view showing the key of Fig. 6 in use.

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.



12] Any information, please, on an old screw padlock marked on the shackle: FROGGAT, C. Does anyone know anything about the maker? Also, a brass rimlock marked: GI[B?]SONS, MAKER W'hampton. The third letter is unclear, and might not be B. It is an excellently made small 4"x2" double lever lock. Can anyone give any information about the name/age?

R A Beck

13] Can anyone identify the maker of a modern padlock, and describe its mechanism? The lock has just been bought in France. It is marked CARDLOCK SAICOSS. The blister card is marked FTH THIRARD. The lock is operated by pushing a punched card key into a slot. The card has a pattern (in 2 rows) of large and small holes. The body is square, of zinc alloy, the shackle steel. It appears to lock at heel and toe.

Richard Phillips

14] Can anyone supply information on the varieties of early Bramah locks, such as a catalogue? And an early price list? [Would anyone contribute an article/bibliography about Bramah and his locks? *Ed.*]

Andrew Self

For sale

4 'chinese' type padlocks with expanding spring-barb mechanism. Dates uncertain. Sizes from 3x2½" to 4x7". £7 each each +postage.

Wooden Banbury lock 8x5½", no key.

Metal bands on front. Good condition. £5 + postage.

3 key tags: Liverpool Mutual; Edinburgh; and British Key. £3 each, post free.

Also, accumulated surplus locks and keys - sae or telephone to ask for details.

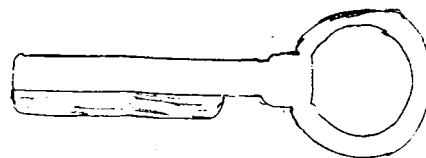
R A Beck 19 Lawrence Ave Chaddesden Derby DE21 4RD 01332 679358



2 safeplates: cast brass oval Ratner fire resisting safe plate, 5½" wide, good condition; Milner stamped brass circular plate, 8" diameter. Worn by polishing, with some damage. To exchange for what have you? *The Editor*

Wanted

An old egg-shaped iron padlock has lost its inside mechanism; also the case has been severed across the middle. The shackle is fitted across the middle top of the case. Size 1.75"x1.5" wide. There is a pipe key. I would like to have this lock repaired. Can anybody help? The pipe key:



R A Beck 19 Lawrence Ave Chaddesden Derby DE2 4RD 01332 679358.



Richard Rank is interested in large brass locks, especially padlocks. He also likes combination padlocks.

C Richard Rank 43 Picardy Lane St Louis, MO 63124-1629 USA. Tel/fax 314 997 4312.

"Married . . . With Children" cutie Christina Applegate is beefing up her home alarm system after a thief somehow bypassed a security gate at her Laurel Canyon digs and stole her new Toyota Landcruiser. The vehicle was found two days later, but the shaken star is spending thousands on new alarms to make sure it won't happen again.

Cyflator bicycle lock

Raleigh were, apparently, the only bicycle maker to fit a lock as standard. They fitted a disk tumbler steering lock in the front forks in the nineteen-thirties. It is not known when this was discontinued. Numerous chain

padlocks and padlocks with long shackles have been sold for locking bicycles. The Cyflator Lock was another special purpose lock, from 193x.

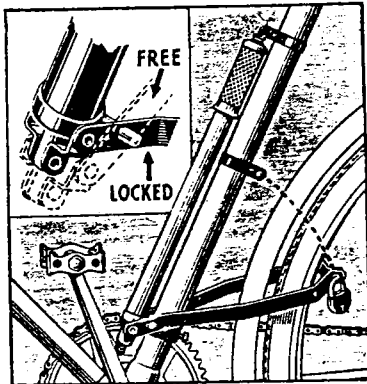
sent by Trevor Dowson

CYFLATOR LOCK

(Patent No. 58857)

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- * No danger with the "Cyflator" of being thrown over the handlebars by forcefulness.
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1. Slacken hexagon screw so that no thread projects through hole in saddle.
2. Insert pivot pin through stirrups and saddle. Ensure that recess in pivot pin nestles on down tube.
3. Loosely assemble pump clip to take pump between centres. Spring stirrup over rear wheel and between spokes and insert padlock. After finding best position of saddle tighten hexagon screw. Move pump clip downwards, closing pump centres until pump is solid, then tighten pump clip screw.
4. Fit retention clip between pump clip and "CYFLATOR" convenient for insertion of padlock to retain stirrups in 'out of use position'.

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Queen locked in Palace

THE Queen was left fuming at her police minders when they locked her into Buckingham Palace—and couldn't find the key.

Her Rolls-Royce had to circle the palace grounds until they could find a spare set to open the locks on the front gates.

A palace aide said: "You've heard of someone being detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure?"

"Well this time it was Her Majesty being detained, and it was certainly at her displeasure."

The cock-up happened as the Queen and Prince Philip—who celebrate their Golden Wedding on Thursday—were leaving for the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph last Sunday.

As their official car swept up to the palace gates, the procession came to a grinding halt. Red-faced police on guard duty had to admit that the officer with the keys had disappeared.

Thunder

The aide said: "These things normally go like clockwork but for some reason the officer in charge had been called away."

"They had to tell the Queen's driver to circle the grounds until he could be found."

"She was going round and round for four minutes."

"When she finally got out she had a face like thunder."

Now royal officials have asked police chiefs to find out why the Queen's journey to one of her most important official engagements of the year was delayed.

The palace has been on full security alert since the Queen was identified as a named IRA terrorist target on a list dis-

By CLIVE GOODMAN

covered last year. The incident is the latest in a string of security blunders.

In the worst, a convicted drugs dealer was discovered wandering the corridors of Kensington Palace.

He was only found by police after a palace maid saw him and called for help.

The aide said: "They seem to have no trouble letting in any passing weirdo who fancies a trip round the palace."

"But when the Queen wants to leave her own home, they can't find the key."

News of the World
16/11/97

The Miracle of the Keys

In 1202 John Lackland, King of England and count of Poitou, tried to take possession of Poitiers in the teeth of strong resistance. A traitor, promised in exchange for a ransom, to surrender the town to him on Easter eve, but on the appointed day it was discovered that the keys had disappeared. Fearing treachery, the mayor came to the church to place the town under the protection of the Virgin Mary; to his utter amazement the keys they were searching for were there in the hands of the statue of the Virgin.

Meanwhile outside the walls of the town the English were retreating in disorder. Those captured declared that they had seen during the night on the gate of the town a Queen, a Bishop and a Nun. Thus the town of Poitiers was saved by Mary, assisted by St. Hilary and St. Radegonde whose bodies are interred in the town. Miracle or legend... it makes a good story.

There is also a stained glass window of the 'Miracle' put in, in the 17th century.

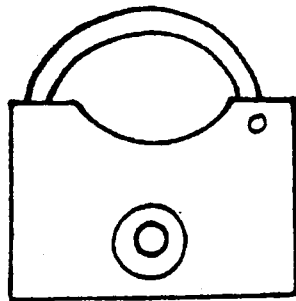


Woodworker, August 1978

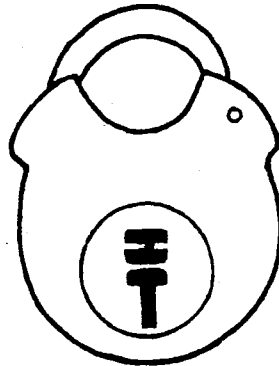
Mystery padlock: can you help?

Who can explain how these padlocks operate? They are probably all European, indeed probably English. There is little more information than the drawings themselves.

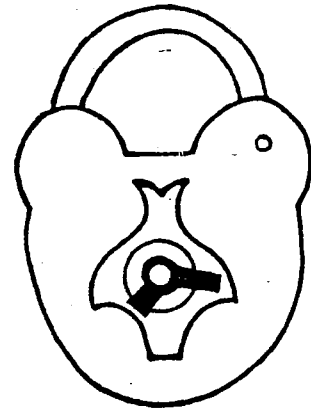
No keys appear to be available for any of the locks. One of the keyholes of the top centre lock might be a dummy. Has anyone else seen or handled locks like these?



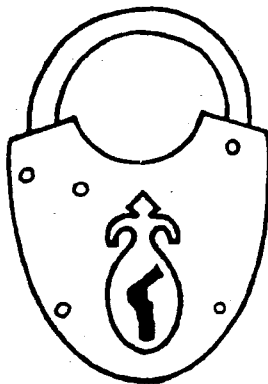
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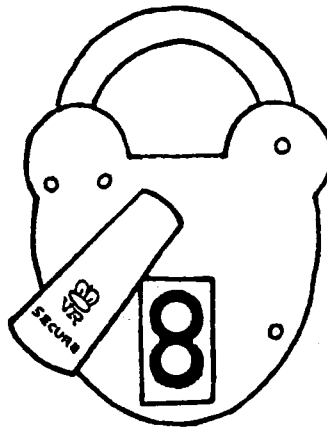
2 3/4"



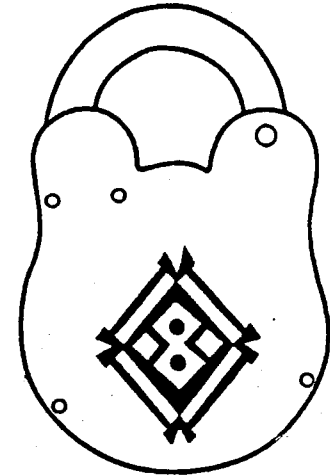
3"



2 1/2"



3 1/4"



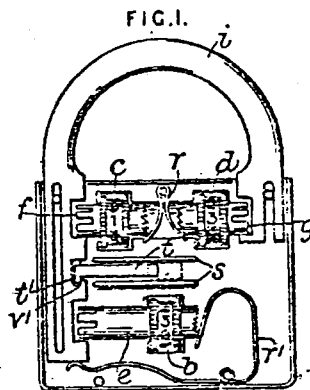
— 1 inch —

"Home Improvement" star Tim Allen, who has a new line of tools, wanted to show off a cordless drill he designed so he used it to install a new lock on a prop box on the set. Everything went smoothly until the prop man said, "That's great. Now give me the key." And Tim cringed in embarrassment when he realized he'd left the key at home. But the drill came in handy again — the prop guy used it to REMOVE Tim's new lock.

★ ★ ★

140,767. Baumgarten, P. Feb. 10, 1919. [Convention date].

Locks, permutation; padlocks.—To increase the difficulty of opening permutation padlocks by



trial, an externally operated bolt is provided as an additional lock to the shackle, and can be withdrawn only when the combination is correctly set. The shackle *i* slidable in a stamped case is locked by the notched ends of three hollow spindles *c, f, g* extending into gaps in the shackle arms, and is further locked by an externally-operated bolt *t* having a lug *t'* engaging a notch *v'* in the shackle arm and mounted between guides *s* in the case. The spindles are set by disks *b, c, d* so that diametrically opposite notches, of which only one pair are so arranged, in each spindle are aligned with the shackle arms, whereupon the case and shackle can be pressed towards one another to allow the bolt *t* to be slidden out of engagement and the shackle can then be opened. Springs *r, r'* bear on ratchet toothed ends of the spindles to prevent accidental displacement.