

# *“The Carriage Way”*



## International Carriage Clock Chapter #195 Founded 2013

The National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

Volume 2016 No.4



**Three Engraved Carriage Clocks of Differing Sizes from the Drocourt Workshops**

## President's Report



### Stan Boyatzis

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2016 with a special welcome to all our new members. At present, membership stands at 190. I again encourage current members to spread the word about Chapter 195 and invite friends with an interest in carriage clocks to join.

Discussion is underway with the NAWCC Museum to have a carriage clock display at the Museum to coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> National Meeting to be held in York in 2018. The Convention Committee is considering having a "Specialty Chapters" exhibit in the mart room to showcase the Specialty Chapters and raise member awareness. Chapter 195 will be participating in the exhibit. I will be keeping members updated as more information becomes available.

This month's feature article is by Leigh Extence (UK) on "The Drocourt Family (Pierre and Alfred) and a special relationship with Henry Jacot. Leigh has carried out extensive research on the Drocourt family and I am delighted to publish some of his research in the Newsletter.

I recently purchased a carriage clock by H&H that very closely resembles an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century carriage clock by Breguet. Richard Perlman previously published an article in the April 2008 Bulletin on similarities in Breguet and Tiffany carriage clocks built and sold at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Richard's article "Breguet and Tiffany Carriage Clocks, Circ. 1900-1905: Emulation is the Highest Form of Flattery" is revamped and republished in the newsletter.

Both Leigh and Richard welcome any questions or comments about their respective articles.

Remember copies of previous newsletters, hints and a question page are included on our website. There are also carriage clock articles from the Bulletin and carriage clock videos from the NAWCC library. You will need to be logged in as a NAWCC member to access these.

<http://community.nawcc.org/Chapter195/Home/>

A link to the Online Galleries website is again included. This is a useful website to research retail prices of carriage clocks and what is currently for sale. The website is updated weekly. We are happy to include other websites that may be of interest to the membership. The Executive Committee hopes you enjoy reading the Newsletter.

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## Pierre Drocourt, his son Alfred and a previously unrecorded relationship with Henri Jacot. Leigh Extence (UK)



I have been interested in carriage clocks since the early 1980s when I was working alongside renowned horologist and author Derek Roberts in Tonbridge, Kent. This was a period when he was quite possibly the most high-profile dealer in the world of antique clocks and we were producing quarterly catalogues of recently purchased and restored stock. A large part of each production was taken up by French carriage clocks for which I took a keen interest, but for which little was known about by comparison to the other antique clocks we dealt in. There was, of course, Charles Allix and Peter Bonnert's book, *Carriage Clocks, Their History and Development* published by the Antique Collectors Club in 1974, but very few other references. I was lucky enough to get well acquainted with both of these fine men being as I lived only a few minutes from their respective homes.

A few years later, having set-up on my own account as a dealer and consultant, I purchased a very fine Jacot carriage clock and set about writing up a short history for my notes. Over the years I handled more and more Jacot clocks, alongside those of Drocourt and other well-known names in the Parisian carriage clock trade, each time adding more to my files on each.

In 2013, having twenty or so Jacot clocks in stock, and access to the same amount again that I had sold, I decided to hold an exhibition in my showrooms in Devon, and to produce a catalogue with an updated history of the maker. As I set about putting this together I began to realise how little was actually known about Henri Jacot, his family and their clocks. Indeed, as I delved into their history I realised that a fair amount of that published was incorrect, or uncorroborated, and that there was a story to tell. I hypothetically threw away the reference books and started from afresh and for good reason. For instance, most references to Henri Jacot state his successor to be his nephew also called Henri, but this is incorrect; his successor *was* his nephew, but he was named Albert Jacot, the son of Henri's brother and business partner Julien. After Henri's death in 1868 the business continued to be known as *Henri Jacot*, and rather like his father Julien before him, there were times when Albert was sometimes referred to as *Henri*, but that wasn't his given name.

I was also somewhat amazed that there was nothing at all written about the origins of Henri Jacot, where he came from and when; and so I used this as my starting point. This was to prove particularly difficult as there were many horologists named Henri Jacot working at this time in both Switzerland and France and all I had for my particular Henri was his known date of death. It was after some months of fairly intense research that I was able to finally state that he was born Henri-Louis Jacot-Descombes on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1796 in the Swiss village of Le Locle in the Canton of Neuchâtel, the son of the horologist Daniel-Henri Jacot-Descombes.

And so the story began; one which is still moving forward to a final publication. In the course of my research I have now studied nearly a thousand clocks signed for Jacot and nearly the same for Drocourt, along with many others attributed to both them and their associates.

After a year of long hours getting the Jacot exhibition up and running I proclaimed to my wife Bianca that I would never ever undertake such a thing again. But as soon as that exhibition was taken down I decided on a follow up the next year with an exhibition of clocks by Pierre Drocourt and his son Alfred. The reason for taking on the task of furthering my research into Drocourt was that whilst studying Jacot I had found a previously unknown link between the two families; one that was surely the reason that Etienne-Pierre Drocourt was to set out on the path to become an horologist and, along with his son Alfred, become one of the most influential of carriage clock makers.

As with my research into Jacot, I put aside for now what had already been written about the Drocourt family and basically started from scratch using only source material. After a number of twists and turns I came upon the birth of Etienne-Pierre Drocourt in a small village called Gargenville, at four o'clock in the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, 1819 to *cultivateur* Pierre-Francois and his wife Margueritte, neé Chappée. It was, and still is to a degree, a farming community on a bend of the river Seine and looking through the archives I could find no reference to any horological activity in the place that may have enticed the young Etienne-Pierre down that particular route. That was until I opened the map a little wider and saw that Gargenville was actually situated within a group of three villages, all within walking distance of each other, with another being Guitrancourt; which by now I knew to be the village where lived the *horloger* Julien Jacot, father of Albert Jacot, Henri's successor. Julien was fifteen years older than Pierre (as he became known) and was certainly living in Guitrancourt prior to 1836 when the young Drocourt was still living in the area; although Julien Jacot was also recorded at various times residing at rue Montmorency 25, later renumbered 31, the business premises and home to his brother Henri. It must be considered more than coincidental that Pierre took an interest not only in horology, but in carriage clocks in particular, having lived but a short walk from Julien Jacot, within a hamlet of villages situated some way out in the countryside.



Pierre was known to have left Gargenville by 1841 and was presumably now in Paris and living amongst the horologists of the Marias region of the 3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissement. The first record of him in the city shows his marriage to Marie-Adèle Vandel on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, 1845. Unfortunately the records of this marriage were destroyed when the Communards set fire to the Hôtel de Ville, the city hall, in January 1871. The next record of the family is the birth of their son, and successor in the business, Alfred Drocourt, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 1847. Although the record for this birth was also lost in the fire, it is known that they were living at rue Saintonge, 8, as it is shown as Alfred's place of birth on his wedding notice to Marie-Eugénie Jorre in 1868. This is an interesting address within the story as I also unearthed the birth here of Olympe Baveux in 1842, she being the daughter of Louis Baveux, *horloger* of Saint-Nicolas-d'Aliermont who, in my previous research into Henri Jacot, was proven to have been in a partnership with Jacot and actually witnessed Henri's death certificate. Olympe was therefore the brother of Alfred Baveux, born two years later in Saint-Nicolas, who himself went on to supply Henri Jacot's successor Albert from the early 1880's, being those movements stamped on the front-plate with his AB trademark. And so the connection between the two families was growing stronger.

*It was through these doors, when numbered rue Saintonge 8, that Pierre Drocourt lived and where Alfred Drocourt was born.*

To save confusion it must be noted that rue Saintonge joined with three other roads running through the region in 1851 and so number eight today isn't that of Drocourt's time. It is now numbered 38, and is interestingly just a few steps across the road from number 43, home of Raingo Frères, the famous clockmakers who made, amongst other pieces, Orrery clocks for which they became so well-known. It isn't inconceivable that both Drocourt and Baveux may've worked with Raingo as number eight wasn't registered as a business premises, purely living accommodation, and the clocks that Drocourt first advertised as making when setting up on his own would appear very similar to those made in the Raingo workshops.

The long-standing address for Pierre and Alfred Drocourt is rue Debelleye 28 and although some records suggest a further address, rue Limoges 8, these two are in fact one and the same with the street name changed after an amalgamation with others in 1865.

Pierre is first recorded as having set up on his own in 1853 with a workshop at Coutres-Saint-Gervais 3, a few yards from the lower end of rue Saintonge.



*The site of Pierre Drocourt's first workshops at 3 rue Coutures-Saint-Gervais*

Unfortunately when I last visited Paris this building was no longer standing and is now a restful tree-lined area within a small park in front of the Picasso Museum; but the footprint is clearly visible and it is obvious the premises themselves weren't very large. In 1855 this address was recorded in the *Annuaire du Commerce Didot-Bottin* alongside the new workshop in rue Limoges. Both entries gave descriptions of the business set-up, and both were remarkably similar except for one important part; the Coutures-Saint-Gervais workshops were making inkwell style clocks with no mention of carriage clock manufacture, whereas the rue Limoges workshops were described as producing *pendule de voyages*. Presumably Pierre moved to the much larger premises to allow him to now make and supply carriage clocks.

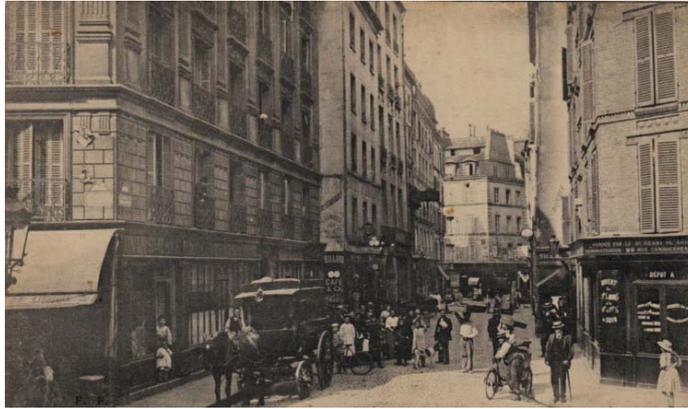
Delrieux Vve) et Kreski, *fab. spéciale d'encriers*, Puits-Blancs-Manteaux, 9. \*

Drocourt, *fab. d'horlogerie, spécialité d'encriers, pendules marbre et bronze, avec quantièmes perpétuels, à échappements circulaires*, Coutures-St-Gervais. 3. \*

Dubin, *fab. d'encriers de poche à ressorts genres anglais, bronzes*

Dreyfus, martyrs, 50.  
Dreyss, Université, 77.  
Drocourt, *fab. d'horlogerie, spécialité de pendules de voyage et encriers-pendules, marbre et bronze, avec quantièmes perpétuels, à échappement circulaire*, Limoges, 8. \*

Dromery, Buffault, 5.  
Drouot, pl. Maubert, 36.  
Droz (P.-F.), Roquepine, 11.  
Dubois (P. E.)-Poissonnière. 13.



*Rue Debelleye, previously rue Limoges, with 28 on the right-hand side beyond the round lamp. Further along and crossing over rue Bretagne can be seen a high prominent roof with two dark windows, this being the rear of Saintonge 8. Further along would take us to number 31, the address to which Drocourt was to move to in the early 1900s and then number 33 where lived Eugenie Didier who would marry Auguste Lechevallier before his move to take on the management of the Saint-Nicolas-d'Alhiermont workshops.*

Over the last few months I have been able to obtain two carriage clocks that are not only historically important in their own right, but build on the relationship between Pierre Drocourt and Henri Jacot. Most clocks that one sees signed for either maker are from the later period, the late-1860s/early-1870s and beyond, when both Pierre and Henri were no longer involved in the



*Henri Jacot: 489 from Period II and dated circa 1854.*

running of their respective businesses, that role now in the hands of the next generation; Albert Jacot and Alfred Drocourt. It was these latter two that built up the commercial side of both concerns, stamping the movements with their trademarks and producing clocks in greater numbers and for a growing market. It is quite unusual to find carriage clocks made prior to this time by Henri Jacot or Pierre Drocourt that bear either maker's signature. Both were producing clocks for others to retail and the need to place a signature or mark anywhere on the clock movement wasn't such an important matter. But I was fortunate enough to hear of a carriage clock becoming available for sale in the States in June of 2016, which was signed in fully engraved script *Henri Jacot* across the backplate, as well as on the dial. I obtained images and after careful consideration realised that this was indeed an example made before the well-known HJ parrot mark, a 'Jacot' being a South-African grey parrot, or the poinçon dating the various exposition awards which was stamped within the plates from the beginning of the period III clocks. Not only that, but my hope was that it would be the 'missing link' to a number of carriage clocks from this earlier period that I had bought and studied, finally proving them to be examples made in the Jacot workshops.

This period of manufacture also had its own different numbering system as compared to the later Period III examples.

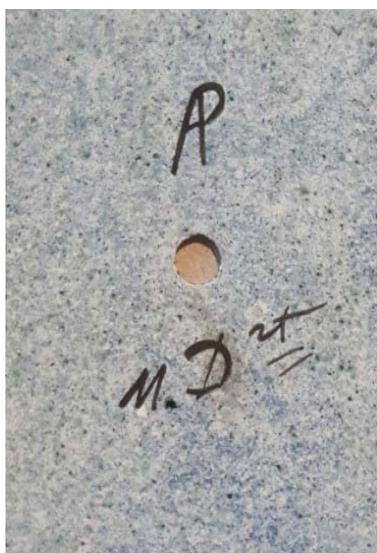
I bought the clock and on its arrival I spent some time studying it closely. It was indeed a carriage clock from this earlier period when Henri himself was running the business; at a time when he and Julien had just built the workshops in the centre of Saint-Nicolas-d'Alhiermont, across the road from where some years earlier Honoré Pons had built his own home and workshops and which were now home to his successors Delepine-Canchy.

The movement did match the others I owned and were obviously from the same source meaning that at last it was possible, using this signed example, to identify those early anonymous movements as being manufactured by Henri Jacot as I had believed.

Then in September of 2016 I was made aware of a carriage clock coming up for auction in Italy; a clock with a case style familiar to me. I was sent various images, none of which gave any clue in identifying the maker as there were no stamps to the movement nor a name on the dial. But it appeared to me like another relatively early Jacot movement, from what I was now terming Period II, those made from the time Henri Jacot set up his manufacturing workshops in Saint-Nicolas-d'Aliermont in 1854 until the production of the commercial Jacot clocks post-1867. I termed Period I as being from his and Julien's arrival in Paris in 1825 until 1854. There was a slight problem with this analysis though; the case style I had seen before was not one used by Jacot, but by Drocourt on clock number 1311, an early example at present in a Russian collection. Not only that, the platform escapement was unlike anything that Jacot would use, having a plain flat brass balance instead of the bi-metallic type with timing screws that he favoured. I went back and studied the images of number 1311 and there, seated on the top of the movement, was the same style of platform with the plain brass balance. Surely these two movements must've been finished in the same workshops, those of Drocourt, this example being particularly exciting in being numbered 2. I purchased the clock at and on its' arrival I spent some hours studying it carefully, comparing it to the early Jacot and various other clocks of that period. This study confirmed that the basic movement obviously came from the same source as the Jacot; the plates and wheelwork were identical as was the actual layout of the wheelwork, alongside other features such as the screwed movement pillars and the barrel bridge covering both barrels being in a crescent shape. The under-dial work was laid out slightly differently but interestingly there were unused markings which tallied with the known Jacot examples; for instance the hammer arbor had been moved at the outset from the higher 'Jacot' position, to a position lower down as favoured on later Drocourt clocks. Drocourt had also swapped the steel contrate wheel adjustment endplate to the more normal brass endplate with screw adjustment and used curved ratchet-wheel bridges rather than the straighter ones. Studies of various carriage clocks with Jacot movements confirm he was making complete clocks for others but



*Pierre Drocourt number 2, made circa 1855*



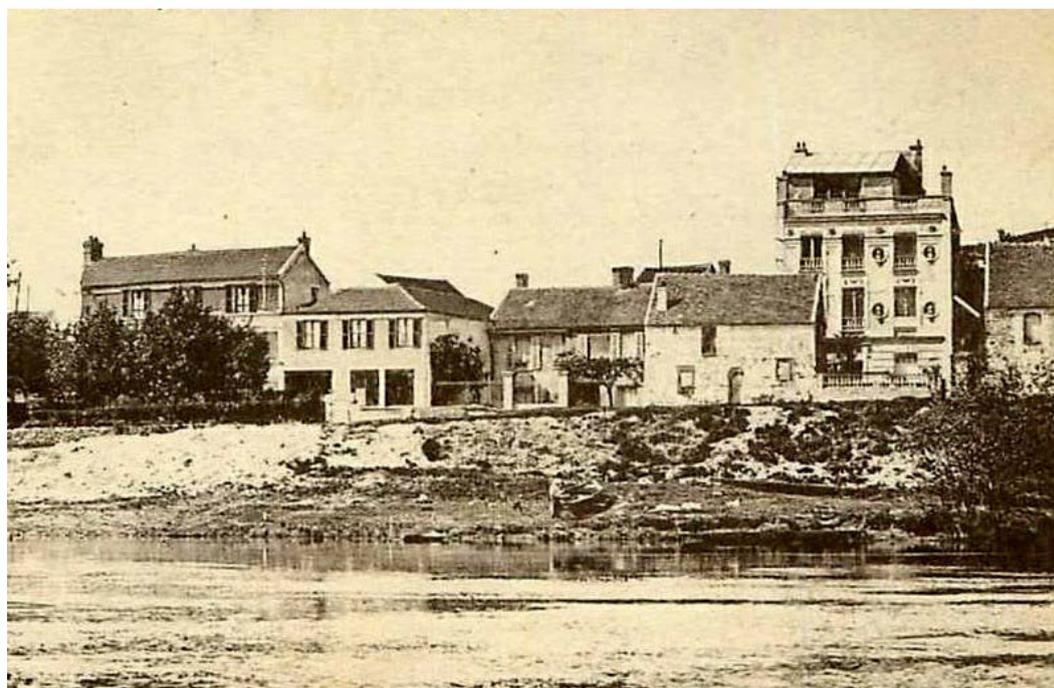
also supplying a basic *blanc roulant* as seen with Drocourt number 2. I then took off the dial and signed in ink on the rear were the initials AP for the dial-maker Aimé Petremand. Although having died in 1843 this mark was still used by his widow Phillipine Sandoz, followed by his daughter Lise-Olympe Petremand and her husband Adolphe Mojon, who had married in 1844; this being the same Mojon who just a few years later was to supply both Drocourt and Jacot with dials. The majority of dials made at this time, and for a period after, often had written in ink on the rear the name of the dial *émailleur* and painter the *peintre de cadrans* along with an indication as to whom the dial was being supplied to. For instance, one often sees dials inscribed on the rear *Jt: a Jacot*; being by Émile Jeannet for Jacot. But the excitement with this dial came with the inscription written below the AP; the initials *M. D<sup>2</sup>*; indicating a dial destined for *Monsieur Drocourt*.



Left to right: *Henri Jacot 489*; *Jacot for C.J. Dent*; *Jacot for Drocourt 2, with Drocourt's amendments as noted* .

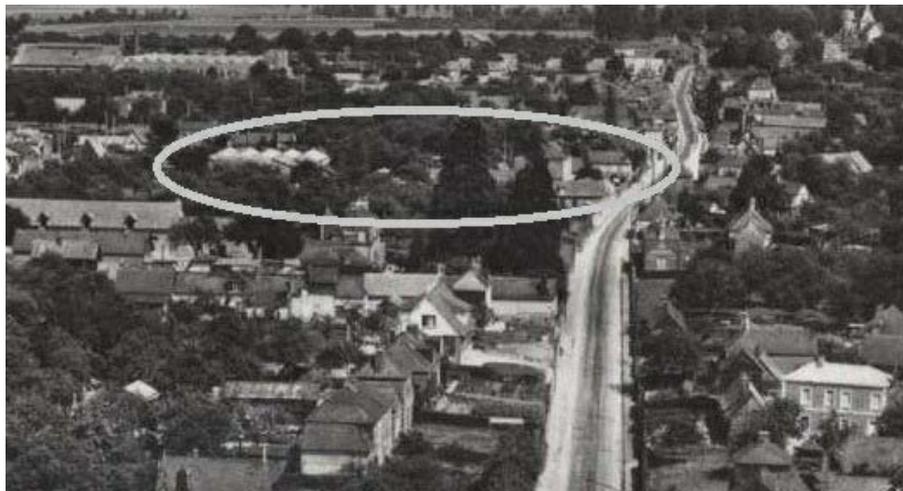
As previously deduced, I knew that Drocourt started making carriage clocks in 1855 and I knew from my studies that Henri Jacot was making this style of movement in his new workshops in Saint-Nicolas-d'Alhiermont from at least 1854 with my early Jacot numbered 489 made around this time. It is therefore probable that number 2 is only the second carriage clock that Pierre Drocourt had so far made, having moved to Limoges 8 in 1855, and that he obtained the *blanc roulant* from Henri Jacot before making a few of his own alterations to the layout. The relationship between these two makers, previously unrecorded, was beginning to take on some importance.

In 1870 the business name changed to *Drocourt et Fils* before reverting back to *Drocourt*, Pierre having gone into semi-retirement in 1872, moving to a house on the quay at Rangiport, being the part of Gargenville that sits on the banks of the Seine.



*The quay at Rangiport with Pierre Drocourt's house being the tall one in which he lived until his death in February 1892*

Alfred Drocourt took over the reins with some vigour and began to move the business forward, becoming very much a part of the horological world in Paris and Saint-Nicolas-d'Alhiermont. By now he was obtaining *blanc roulants* from Jean-Francois and Louis Hologue, known as Hologue Frères, and took a far more commercial outlook very much in line with what Albert Jacot was now doing with the Henri Jacot concern, producing quality carriage clocks in increasing numbers for both the home market and the burgeoning export market. Alfred ended up buying the Hologue business in 1875, and therefore having everything for carriage clock production *in-house*, placing his Paris manager Auguste Lechevallier in charge as *Directeur de Maison Drocourt*. They continued in this famous horological town for many years before Drocourt put his house and workshops, set within 12 acres of land, up for sale in 1904.



*The house and workshops belonging to Alfred Drocourt in Saint-Nicolas-d'Alhiermont as seen in an early 1900s aerial shot. When put up for sale in 1904 the buildings were described as recently built.*

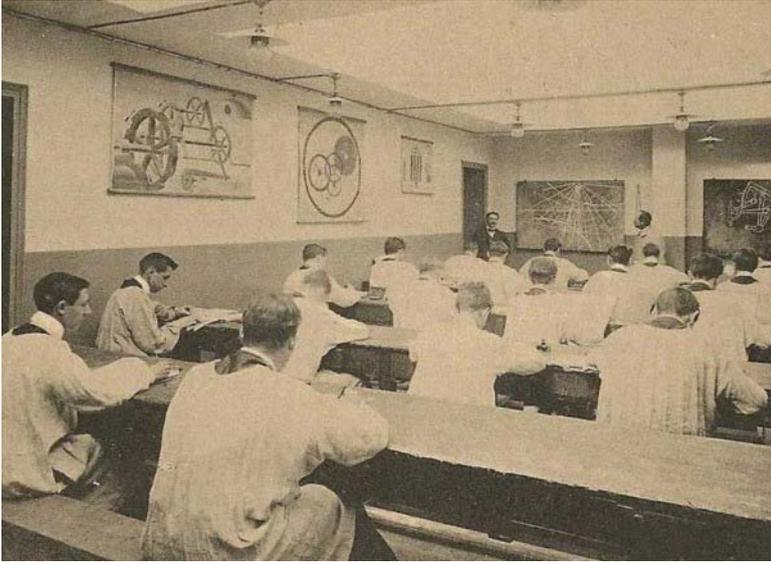
The Paris workshops, at the now re-named rue Debelleye 28, continued until 1907 when the premises were taken over by the authorities to build a girls school and Alfred was forced to move a few yards up the street to number 31, the back of which coincidentally sits adjacent to Saintonge 8, his birthplace. These smaller premises were to prove problematic with the volume of clocks being produced falling dramatically, and by 1910 the horologist Louis Chazel had moved into thirty-one; the last recorded Drocourt clock numbered 36340.



*Drocourt number 28978, signed on the ivory dial with the address as 28 rue Debelleye whilst the original travelling box has the address as number 31 embossed within.*

Alfred Drocourt had been a mainstay of the Parisian horological world; he was one of the twenty-one founder council members of the *Chambre Syndicale de l'Horlogerie de Paris* set-up in 1873; *Tresorier of Conseil d'Administration*, of the *L'Ecole d'Horlogerie* in 1887/88 and vice-president in 1897. He is also known to have given prizes in the form of medals and money for those apprentices and workers who it was deemed by the council were deserving, including a *récompenser* of 25 francs in July 1905.

In 1882, along with A.H. Rodanet, the President of the *Chambre Syndicale*, Drocourt was on the editorial committee of the *Revue Chronométrique* which was now being published by the *Chambre* itself. He was also a member on the board of the horological jury for the 1900 Paris Exposition.



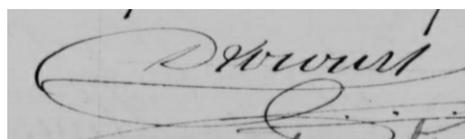
*Alfred Drocourt stands in the doorway overlooking a class of students at the Paris School of Horology*



*Drocourt's stand at the Paris Exposition of 1900 for which he was awarded a Hors Concours. As a jury member for the horological section he was unable to receive an actual exhibitors award as presented to others.*

The main role of this article was to bring to light the previously unknown early relationship between these two well-known carriage clock makers and to shed light on how Pierre Drocourt came to be an horologist influenced no doubt by Henri and Julien Jacot. It is just a small precis of the research I have so far undertaken which also encompasses other families associated with both Jacot and Drocourt. For further information, along with a summary of my research, please refer to the two catalogues produced for the exhibitions I ran for Jacot and Drocourt, in 2013 and 2014 respectively, and which are available to read in the *Exhibition* section of my website at [www.extence.co.uk](http://www.extence.co.uk).

I welcome any questions or comments about the article and can be contacted at [leigh@extence.co.uk](mailto:leigh@extence.co.uk)



## **Breguet and Tiffany Carriage Clocks, Circ. 1900-1905: Emulation is the Highest Form of Flattery. Richard Perlman (USA)**

An article I authored in the February 2006 BULLETIN, “The Basilisk Myth—A French Carriage Clock circa 1880-90,” discussed two carriage clocks that are closely related in style. One illustrates the Basilisk Myth and the other Gulliver’s Travels. Powerful themes of political satire are reflected in the elaborate engraving and raised work of both remarkable clocks.

The Gulliver’s Travels clock was featured in *A Century of Fine Carriage Clocks*, published in 1987. I presumed that, when the book was published, the Gulliver’s clock was believed to be unique.

The discovery of the Basilisk example suggested these clocks are probably not unique, and perhaps there are other related clocks yet undiscovered. Shortly after my article appeared, a second identical example of the Gulliver clock was brought to my attention, confirming that the documented clock was not unique.

Here I present a similar example of a carriage clock, believed to be a unique Breguet product made between 1890 and 1905 that apparently was also sold by Tiffany.

### **Portable Time**

When French carriage clocks first appeared at the start of the nineteenth century, they represented an innovation, a reliable portable clock, the rich immediately wanted. In the early twentieth century they had become a type of clock almost anyone could afford. The earliest carriage clocks were the product of the great watch and clockmaker A. L. Breguet (1747-1823). By the 1830s clockmakers in France (Paul Garnier and others) would essentially standardise the carriage clock form.

For the next hundred years (1830-1930) carriage clocks were essentially unchanged. The development of the French carriage clock industry is thoroughly discussed in Charles Allix’s excellent book, *Carriage Clocks: Their History and Development*. Allix notes that basic unfinished movements (*blanc-roulants*) were readily available in an assortment of sizes and quality from manufacturers in St. Nicolas d’Aliermont, near Dieppe, or from those in the Franche-Comte, the frontier between France and Switzerland. Paris finishers obtained blanc-roulants, completed and cased them, and brought a wide array of clocks to market, predominantly through retailers.

### **What’s in a Name?**

Many very good quality carriage clocks are completely unmarked. Others are profusely marked. This circumstance encourages speculation about attribution

The practice of buying-in various components or whole movements to assemble and sell complete clocks was practiced from an early date. This practice is vividly described in Daniels’ *The Art of Breguet* and reflects the fact that in a center of a complex industry almost anything is possible because specialists were available to meet demand. This was particularly true in the carriage clock industry.

Indications of names or other marks on carriage clocks can be confusing. There are marks on cases and movements that are often thought to be that of the clockmaker. To be clear, the marks found on carriage clocks can be those of manufacturers (clockmakers), finishers (firms that finished and cased movements bought-in from manufacturers), case makers, specialist makers of particular parts, or of retailers.

Retailers presented the best that Paris finishers had to offer, and their names most often appear on dials of carriage clocks.

Finisher “marks” are found on the backplate of movements, often in a logo, usually but not always incorporating their initials. These include the “marks” of well-known firms, such as Jacot, Drocourt, Margaine, and many others. Manufacturers and finishers infrequently retailed clocks themselves.

Retailers might have their name engraved on the backplates of movements along with marks of a manufacturer finisher and their number. In some instances two different numbers might appear on the backplates: one of the finisher and the other of the retailer.

I have seen four different marks on the same carriage clock: Henri Jacot, whose mark is stamped onto the dial support plate, and whose initials are hidden under a click wheel; FD on the gong stand; AB in a distinctive script ligature (believed to be Alfred Baveaux, who was associated with Jacot) stamped three times between the plates or otherwise hidden; and Klastenberger Paris, on the dial and engraved onto the edge of the movement plate, clearly the retailer. Klastenberger was vice-president of the British Horological Institute. All these marks are on one very high-grade, engraved, Gorge-cased, grand sonnerie carriage clock. Marks for setting hands, winding, alarm-set, along with names of retailers and finishers, are found on the backplates of carriage clocks. Earlier, high-quality clocks often had these marks hand-engraved, with the finisher mark and clock number generally die stamped. On later clocks almost all these marks are die stamped. Retailers' dial signatures were generally applied onto dials after they were made. The method of application is quite fragile, and one pass of a cleaning cloth can cause a signature to disappear. Infrequently, retailers had their names permanently fired onto enamel dials when they were manufactured. Occasionally, a known finisher's name (other than repair marks) can be found scratched onto a clock part. I have seen this on the back of brass dial parts and on other parts. Attributing a carriage clock to a specific maker or finisher because certain features are present is problematic.

There are some, including Allix, who have suggested that the type of arrows used to indicate winding, hand- set, or alarm-set direction on French carriage clocks helps to indicate a specific maker/finisher, and while generally true, this is not consistent. I have seen three very high-quality Margaine clocks each with very different directional arrows. What these Margaine clocks all had in common was the Margaine "beehive" mark and an engraved scale on the very top of the backplate, directly under the platform plate, to calibrate fast/slow adjustment. Finding similarities other than a bonafied mark may be helpful, but not always conclusive.

## **Marketing and Distribution**

Carriage clocks are portable and were easily shipped to the four corners of the earth. As styles changed, or came back into fashion, over the 100 years carriage clocks dominated the scene (1830-1930), competitors freely borrowed from each other.

The carriage clock industry parallels the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century; developments that shaped the future during this period also shaped this unique industry.

The legendary firms of Breguet, Tiffany, Aspary, and other retailers and wholesalers around the world sought to meet the appetites of the market. This was particularly true as the nineteenth century closed. Marketing and distribution became more and more the critical link in the clock trade. Retailers and wholesalers might represent any number of manufacturers and finishers and could carry a broad line to please the public's taste and pocketbook (See Allix, Appendix C- The activities of Maurice Pitcher are the substance of Appendix C in Allix. Pitcher and his father were carriage clock wholesalers.

## **Breguet and Tiffany**

The clocks discussed in this article suggest that firms could and would "borrow" from, or even replicate, the work of their top competitors.

The three Breguet clocks discussed here were apparently made by the best Paris finishers for Breguet, or the Breguet firm supervised the finishing themselves. The name Breguet and number were placed on the clock movement. The Breguet name is often also found on the dial, and they meticulously maintained a record of their numbered clocks. There is also a similar record for Tiffany, but only under the name "Tiffany & Company Makers" along with a number. The Tiffany & Company Makers record, preserved in a ledger in the collection of the New York Historical Society, covers a brief period of production starting in 1879, when Tiffany was producing their finest and most original clocks.

These Tiffany & Company Makers clocks range from carriage to grandfather, and beyond. Many are extraordinary, and some are unique. Tiffany had other business associations in the clock trade. This is reflected in the names found on carriage clock dials (i.e., Tiffany Reed et Cie Paris).

With the preceding in mind, when I came across the Tiffany & Company New York carriage clock, shown in Figures 1A-1G, which dates about 1905, in a form which I believed to be an exclusive Breguet product, I was to say the least not surprised.

## The Devil is in the Details

The cast dore bronze case of the Tiffany clock is identical to Breguet No.5096 illustrated on p. 39 in Derek Roberts book *Carriage and Other Traveling Clocks* and here as Figure 2. This same Breguet clock also appears as lot No. 142 in the 1991 Habsburg/Antiquorum sale *The Art of Breguet*. The decorative hard-stone panels are different from the Tiffany clock, as are all panels of the several related examples discussed here. The hands of both clocks appear to be identical. The dials are probably the same size, but there is a slight difference in that Breguet No. 5096 has Arabic and Roman numerals at every five- minute mark, whereas the Tiffany has Arabic and Roman numerals, but Arabic only on the quarter hours. The dial of the Tiffany clock, however, is identical to Breguet No. 4594, as are the hands (see Figure 3). The dial bezels all seem to be identical.

The three similar, but clearly not identical, signed Breguet carriage clocks within this group were made about 1890-1905. The design is reminiscent of early Breguet carriage and other small clocks. Some of these are shown in Daniels' *The Art of Breguet*.

The signed and numbered Breguet clocks of this group have somewhat similar case castings, but none are identical. All have different hard-stone decorative panels: Breguet No. 586 has lapis lazuli panels (this example may be earlier than the others, ca. 1890, and is referred to as *Retour d'Egypte* style in the Antiquorum archive) (see Figure 4); Breguet No. 4594 (see Figure 3) has green marble panels, and Breguet No. 5096 (see Figure 2) has jasper panels. I have not seen other Breguets of this type. Although the case handles are all similar, they are not identical. It would seem that this "family" was unique to the Breguet firm and perhaps thought to be one-of-a-kind. The Tiffany example clearly brings this assumption into question.

In Christie's November 1998 sale, "The Dr. Eugene and Rose Antelis Collection of Important French Carriage Clocks," lot No. 107 appears to be very similar to Breguet No. 586. Lot No. 107 was retailed by Henry Capt Geneve (No. 13732) and has alabaster panels (see Figure 5). This clock is quarter striking with alarm. The enamel alarm dial is inside the case.

The Tiffany example panels are an ocher-colored marble. See Figures 1A-1G. The case, dial plate, and movement bear the marks and name of Ed. (Edouard) Chartier. This is stamped on the case and movement in several places and is numbered No. 12837 (see Figures 1D and 1E). Chartier was apparently the finisher of the movement and perhaps the case maker. If Chartier made this case, did he make the case for Breguet No. 5096 also and perhaps the others?

Allix describes a similarly signed fine carriage clock by Ed. Chartier, ca. 1900, which is shown in Allix on p. 112, Plate V/11. The photo shows Chartier's very finely cased clock No. 13393 (see Figure 6), with the distinctive, similar, but not identical handle to Breguet No. 5096 (see Figure 2). No. 13393 also has similar feet and castings to other Breguet clocks in this group.

In Allix, on pages 107-109, the experiences of M. Pitou, a Paris carriage clock finisher, are described. M. Pitou in 1970, at age 80, was finishing carriage clocks from old stock of the best makers, among them Henri Jacot. It is noted that M. Pitou was apprenticed to one of two Chartiers working in Paris, when he was probably 12-14, about 1902 or later. I would have loved to talk with M. Pitou, but I presume he is no longer with us.

The movement of Breguet No. 5096, as described in Roberts, is a petite sonnerie with alarm and repeat. The enamel alarm dial is inside the case on the back- plate. It strikes on two gongs, with a strike/silent lever in the base. The Tiffany movement is hour and half- hour strike with repeat and alarm. The enamel alarm dial is inside the case on the backplate. I would not be surprised to find that both alarm dials are identical.

The movement of the Tiffany is quite small, 6 x 8 cm, and sits on a decorative rectangular bracket within the case. The lever platform escape wheel is club-tooth, with compensated, notched, bimetallic balance with flat hairspring. The cadrature of this movement, while of very good quality, made about 1900, shows a brass rack. Earlier clocks would have had steel racks, which are more expensive and time consuming to make.

All five carriage clocks discussed are about 5" tall, all with the same size and type of dial and bezel, all with five decorative hard-stone panels (no two clocks have the same panels), all but No. 586 with gilt bronze ornaments applied to the hard-stone panels. The only two cases that are completely identical are the Breguet No.5096 and the Tiffany No.12837.

## Emulation Is the Highest Form of Flattery

There are carriage clocks that are unique. These are most likely early nineteenth-century French or English clocks that were made to order and generally of very high quality. As the capacity for production (the industrial revolution), marketing, and distribution grew, it was less likely that uniqueness was sustained. Perhaps the Breguet firm did not offer exact duplicates, so customers would feel each and every clock was unique, as indeed they may have been, up to a point beyond Breguet's control.

World War I, technological change, the advent of the wristwatch, and the inexpensive folding Swiss travel clocks relegated traditional carriage clocks obsolete, except as collectibles.

The testament here, in finding this Tiffany version of what was believed to be a unique Breguet design, is that in 1905, about the time these clocks were made, the demand for *qualite soignée* was quite alive.

Perhaps other examples will be found and shed more light on this subject.

These are unusual, beautiful, and very special clocks that reflect the changing times and a dedication to quality that has always been a hallmark of the Breguet firm. Emulation is the highest form of flattery.

## References:

- Allix, Charles. *Carriage Clocks: Their History and Development*. Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors Club, 1974.
- Daniels, George. *The Art of Breguet*. New York, NY: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1974.
- Fanelli, Joseph. *A Century of Fine Carriage Clocks*. Bronxville, NY: Clock Trade Enterprises, 1987.
- Roberts, Derek. *Carriage and Other Travelling Clocks*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 1993.
- Christie's Auction Catalogue. *The Dr. Eugene and Rose Antelis Collection of Important French Carriage Clocks*. Lot.107: November 1998.

Appendix of Figures:



Figure 1A. Tiffany No. 12837.



Figure 1B. Rear view of case.



Figure 1C. Right side view of case



Figure 1D. Case Stamping.



Figure 1E. Case Stamping.



Figure 1F.  
Movement Stamp showing 'E.C. PARIS'

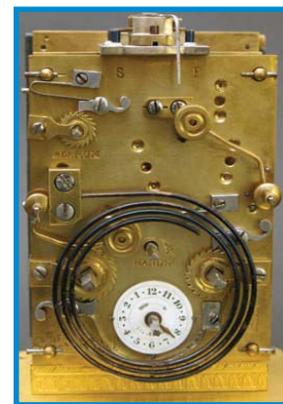


Figure 1G.  
Movement from Tiffany & Co. Clock.



Figure 2. Breguet No.5096.

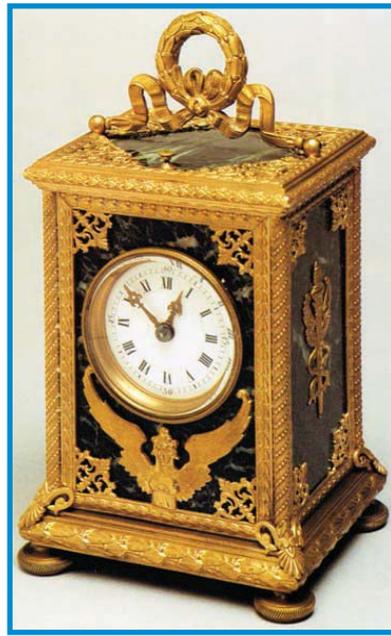


Figure 3. Breguet No.4594.



Figure 4. Breguet No.586

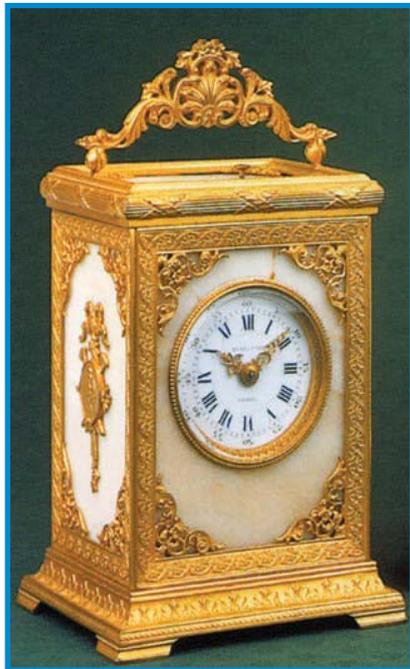


Figure 5. Henry Capt Geneve No.13732



Figure 6. Ed. Chartier No.13393

## Further Emulation of Breguet No.4594

Stan Boyatzis (Aust.)

A case style and movement emulating Breguet No.4594 was made for H&H and signed on the back plate. H&H is Harris & Harrington an 19th Century US importer of clocks from the Saint-Nicholas-D'Aliermont, an area near Dieppe, France. The hands and dial are identical. The side panels are different. Breguet No. 4594 has green marble panels while the H&H clock has blue painted enamel panels.



H&H No.27



Breguet No. 4594



Right side view



Front view



Left side view



Back View



Back door open to show movement



H&H on the back plate

# Do you own a carriage clock?

If so, you may have questions about your clock.

Such as - - - -

1. When was it made and by whom if it is not signed by a maker.

Many carriage clocks are marked by retailers, such as “Tiffany”. Many times the maker is not identified. However the maker can often be identified by the construction style and other tell-tell signs found on the movement.

2. Should I clean the case, or not?
3. And the greatest question of all, what is it's value.

This is the hardest question to answer because of the many variables, such as condition of movement and case, the name and standing of the clockmaker, & the quality and rarity of the clock. We are not licensed appraisers. We can only advise you where to look for comparable clocks so you can make your own "best guess" as to the actual value, always remembering the oldest approach to a value is "Willing Buyer, Willing Seller".

Members of our chapter have many years of experience collecting, researching and restoring carriage clocks. Many are willing to help you answer some of these questions.

This free service is for NAWCC members only.

Email questions and pictures of your carriage clock (one clock at a time, please) to:

**Ken Hogwood:** (USA) [kenhogwood@aol.com](mailto:kenhogwood@aol.com)

**Doug Minty:** (Australia) [dminty@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dminty@optusnet.com.au)

## Link to the Online Galleries website

[www.onlinegalleries.com/art-and-antiques/antique-clocks/carriage-clocks](http://www.onlinegalleries.com/art-and-antiques/antique-clocks/carriage-clocks)