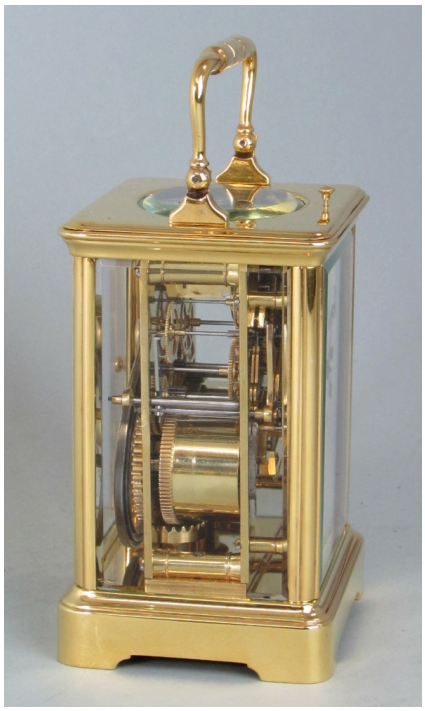
Margaine: A Rare Bottom-Wind Clock

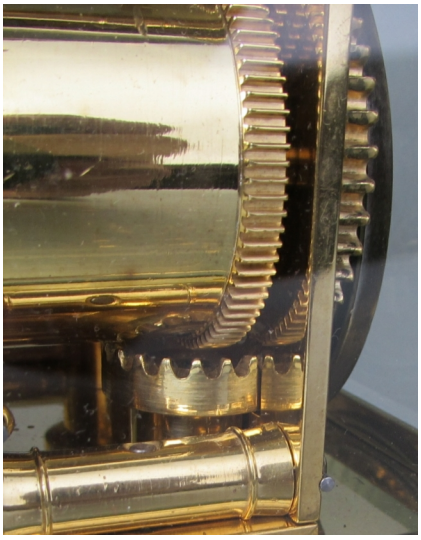
Leigh Extence (UK)

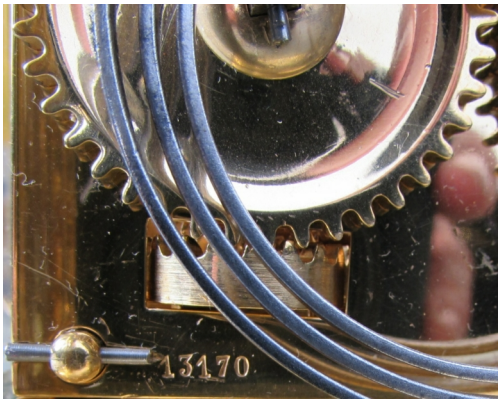
The example discussed here in this short article is a Corniche style carriage clock with a rare form of bottom-winding, also referred to as underside winding, and is reminiscent of that used by Le Roy on several of his clocks but with a number of differences. Although unsigned as such, this clock was made in the *Arsené Margaine* workshops as can be seen from the style of winding arrow, the type of regulation index engraving, and the font used for the wording *Aiguilles*, being French for *Hands*.

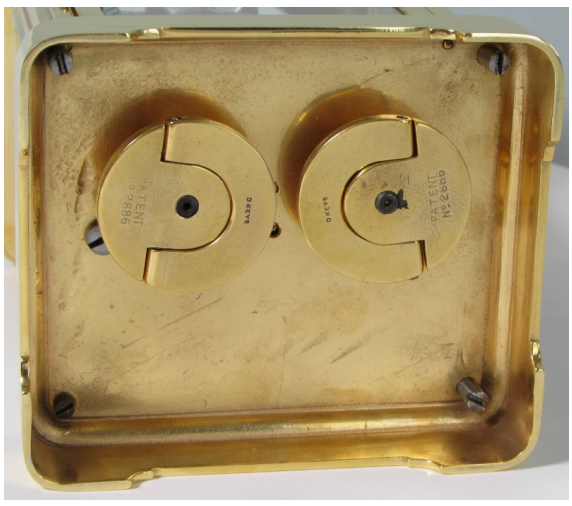
The eight-day duration movement strikes the hours and half-hours on a gong with a push button repeat of the last hour at will with the backplate stamped with the serial number *13170.* The winding arbors have attached large toothed wheels which connect through the base to two butterfly wheels set to the underside of the case which fold open to create a semi-circular handle. These wind both the going and striking trains alleviating the need to open the rear door or use a key. Both winders are stamped with the number *70,* along with *Patent No. 2886, DKEYS*. The white enamel dial has black Roman numerals and blued steel moon hands. The Corniche case is of a style typical of Margaine, with relatively bold three-bale handle and slightly softer corners.

Another almost identical Corniche example, numbered *12931,* is in the collection of a friend in Australia, but with the addition of the *Margaine* trademark to the backplate. Interestingly 12931 is signed on the dial for *David Keys, 91 Piccadilly, London* which, as will be seen, conforms to the patent holder of the winding system. To avoid confusion the dial is also signed *Paris Made.* 12931 has the same dial and hands, as well as all the same style of backplate markings as 13170 confirming that these were indeed from the Margaine workshops.









13170 showing the various aspects of the underwind work

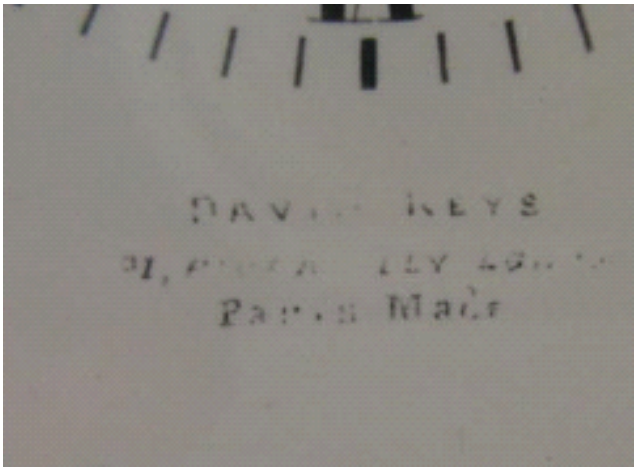
David Keys, born 1813, is known to have been working at 14 Craven Street, London in 1858 and then number 15 from circa 1873 until at least 1887, the year of his death. By this year they had retail premises at 91, Piccadilly, the business having been taken over by his son William. A maker of fine watches it was in December 1861 that David Keys took out a patent, numbered 3160, alongside John Chalfont of Islington, for keyless winding of fusee watches, and another in September 1865 numbered 2330. It may well be an adaption of this system that is used on this clock.

Keys are recorded as making deck watches for the Admiralty between 1892 and 1897 and used Eiffe's auxiliary and Airy's compensation balances. William died in 1899 at the age of forty.

View of winder to underside of clock 13170 stamped *D Keys* and *Patent No. 2886*

For Comparison: Margaine number 12931

with Keys Underside Winding



Dial signed *David Keys, 91 Piccadilly, London. Paris Made.*

Backplate showing the serial number *12931* underneath the Margaine trademark beehive.

Winders stamped *D Keys* along with *Patent No. 2886*

Note the slightly different form to the winders as compared to those on clock serial number 13170

A.D. 1861, 17th DECEMBER. N° 3160.

Winding-up Fusee Watches, &c.

(*This Invention received Provisional Protection only.*)

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION left by John William Chalfont and David Keys at the Office of the Commissioners of Patents, with their Petition, on the 17th December 1861.

We, JOHN WILLIAM CHALFONT, of No. 7, Denmark Grove, in the Parish of Islington, in the County of Middlesex, Watch Maker, and DAVID KEYS, of No. 15, Craven Street, Strand, in the County of Middlesex, Watch Maker, do hereby declare the nature of the said Invention for "IMPROVEMENTS IN THE METHOD OF AND APPARATUS FOR WINDING UP FUSEE WATCHES AND POCKET CHRONOMETERS, AND SETTING THE HANDS WITHOUT KEY," to be as follows:—

This Invention relates to an improvement in the mode of winding and setting hands without the aid of a key to fusee watches and pocket chronometers at the pendant. Our plan is as follows:—On the axis of the fusee either top or bottom is fixed a wheel, into which acts another attached to a ratchet; over the ratchet runs a wheel in gear with a contrate wheel, the arbour of which goes through the pendant, that may be turned by a small knob, which is also in action with a click spring, this spring is fastened in a box that is detained by another spring, so that when the wheel in action with the click is turned, it brings the click in action with the ratchet, and thereby the watch is wound up. When the detaining spring is pushed away by a piece projecting from the side of the case, it leaves the click free of the ratchet, at the same time taking an intermediate wheel into gear with the minute wheel, thereby enabling the hands to be set either way.

LONDON:
Printed by GEORGE EDWARD EYRE and WILLIAM SPOTTISWOODE,
Printers to the Queen's most Excellent Majesty. 1862.

A.D. 1865. Sep. 11, Nº 2330,
KEY'S' SPECIFICATION.

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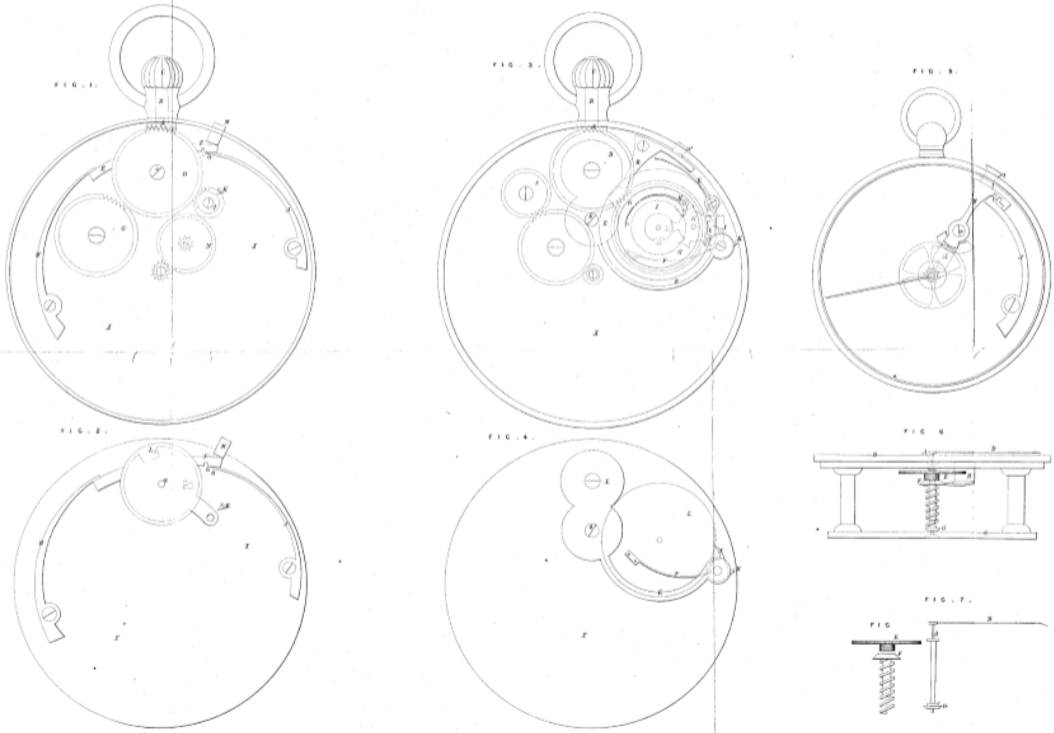

The filed drawing is not coloured.

Drawn on Stone by Malby & Sons.

LONDON: Printed by GEORGE EDWARD EYRE and WILLIAM SPOTTISWOODE,
Printers to the Queen's most Excellent Majesty. 1865.