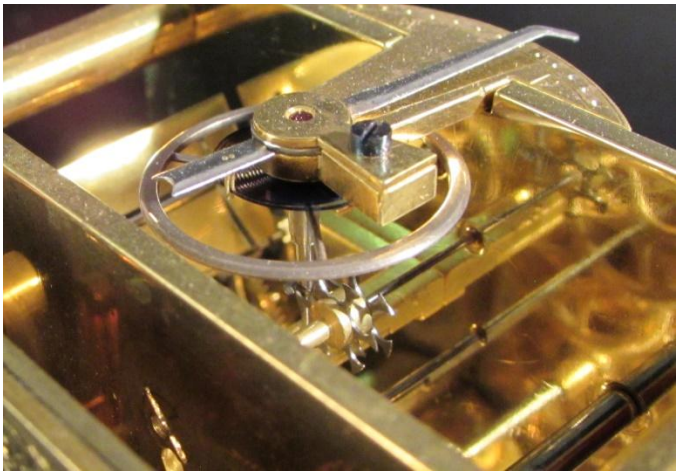
# Paul Garnier, Paris

## An un-signed but signed Carriage Clock

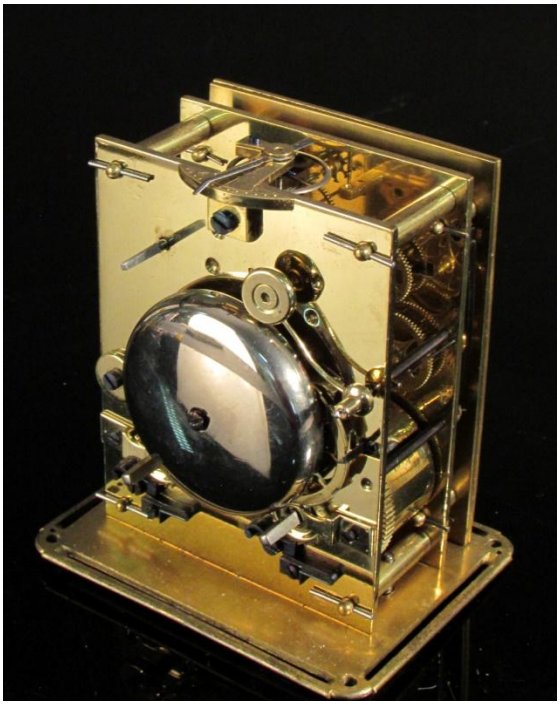
Leigh Extence

In a previous article written in 2020, I set out to show how an unsigned carriage clock, serial number 1649, could safely be attributed to the workshops of Paul Garnier with a movement supplied by the *blanc roulant* making family Holingue who, from the early years of production, supplied Garnier with the majority of his movements.

Earlier this year I came upon another seemingly unmarked carriage clock, a series I clock with an engraved case and an engraved mask to the dial. This example is numbered 1719 and signed on the dial for the well-known retailer *A. Demeur à Bruxells, her. de la Cour.* This name has appeared on two other Series I carriage clocks I have examined that were also supplied by the Garnier workshops being number 2054 sold at Morphetts Auctioneers, UK in 2020, and number 2026, sold at Sotheby's auctioneers in 1997. Both, as with the example being discussed here, are fitted with the Garnier *chaff-cutter* escapement.

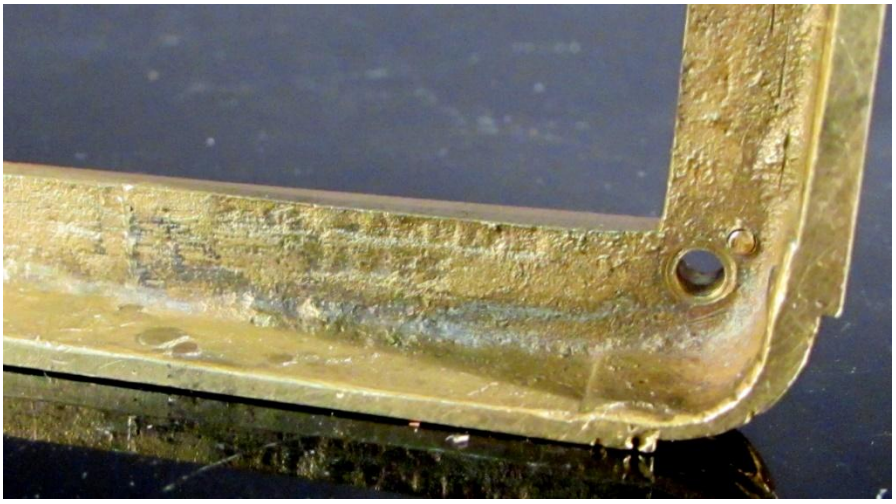


1719 is fitted with a typical Garnier eight-day duration movement which strikes the hours and half-hours on a bell but unusually for Garnier utilises an outside countwheel for the strike work rather than the internal rack which he favoured.

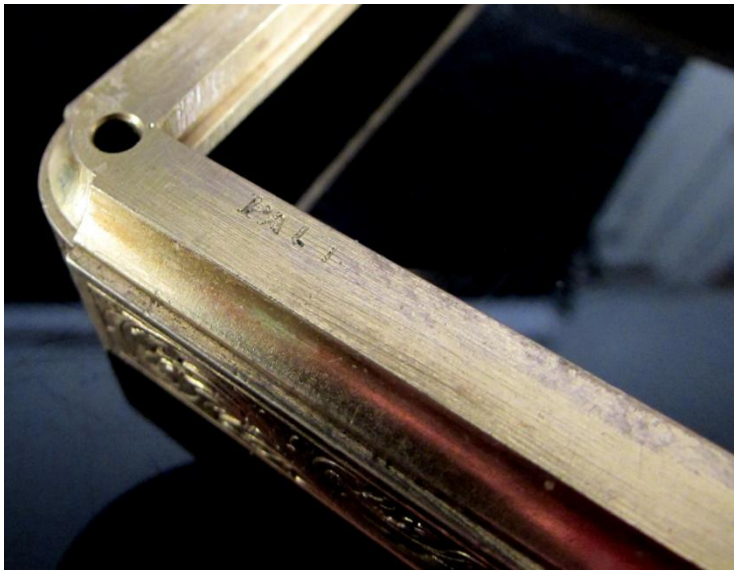


The trefoil hands and blue Roman numerals are also typical of Garnier clocks at this period. The serial number 1719 is stamped on the backplate and case and would date the clock to circa 1840/41. The dating is fairly accurate as when we took 1649 apart for restoration the mainspring was scratched with the spring makers name Borel Jeune and dated June 1840. This is also a fairly important milestone year as shall be seen when discussing the Holingue family of movement makers.

Nowhere on the movement or dial is there any signs of a Paul Garnier signature and so therefore it is a clock that, although obviously a Garnier, would on first inspection need to be described as *attributed to.* Except this clock held a most unusual surprise in that the underside of the baseplate has cast into it, at three different places, *Paul Garnier, Paris.*



I have been fortunate to have been allowed access to the database of Paul Garnier clocks formed over many years by Christopher Hurrion, a past master of the Clockmakers Company and considered the world's leading authority on Garnier. In combining both his and my listings of Garnier serial numbers and clock details, numbering over 250, none other is known with the name *Paul Garnier, Paris* embossed to the case as in this example. It also has the beginnings of the name, although just *Paul,* further stamped to the top of the base only visible when the clock is taken apart.



My research confirms that from serial number 1855, made circa 1840, movements used by Garnier were supplied to them by Holingue Frères, older brother Frederic alongside Louis, having their H.L. stamp to the frontplate. Prior to this the movements were near-identical but not stamped which would suggest that these pre-1840 movements were also supplied by the Holingue workshop in Saint-Nicolas-d'Aliermont but attributable to their father Jean-Baptiste, working from circa 1825, who was latterly working alongside Frederic. This relationship is further emphasised as I have recorded several *blancs-roulants* supplied to other makers stamped for Holingue that are fitted with the Garnier chaff-cutter escapement, patented in 1830, but with no sign of the Garnier name.

We see a similar situation when comparing the movements Holingue supplied to the carriage clock maker Athanase Bourdin of Rue de la Paix, Paris pre- and post-1840 with H.L. stamped *blancs roulants* being near-identical to those unstamped examples Holingue supplied to Bourdin prior to this year.

2054 as mentioned earlier does have an H.L. stamped movement but is an early example without a *blanc roulant* number.

So, what of the movement having a countwheel for the strikework set on the backplate, rather than the usual internal rack as seen on most other clocks signed or attributed to Garnier?


It is known that, apart from the early ‘exhibition’ clocks that Garnier produced, being those with round *pendules* visible under a dome, Garnier preferred the use of the internal rack for his striking movements, even in the 1820s when most other makers were still utilising the countwheel. The relationship between Garnier, Holingue and the famed Drocourt carriage clock-making family gives us some clue as to how a number of countwheel movements came to be used by Garnier.

My research into the carriage clock makers Pierre & Alfred Drocourt identifies the father Pierre as starting his business in 1853 at 3, Coutures-St-Gervais, Paris with Alfred taking over the workshops, now situated in Rue Debelleyme (previously known as Rue Limoges), in circa 1872. It is known that they were also supplied with Holingue movements. Indeed, in 1875 Alfred took over the Holingue workshops in Saint Nicolas d’Aliermont and continued to use the original Holingue machinery with just a few small refinements. I have studied over 1,500 carriage clocks signed for Drocourt, both in the real and with the use of images, and all those that strike have a rack mounted to the front plate. Except one.

I have in my collection Drocourt serial number 543, made in circa 1858, with an H.L. stamped Holingue Frères movement and a countwheel set on the backplate. This is the only Drocourt example of over one-and-a-half thousand that I have examined to have a countwheel for the strike rather than internal rack. This even though my research shows that Holingue manufactured *blancs-roulants* fitted with both the Garnier *chaff-cutter* escapement and a countwheel for other makers.

Further examination of the Hurrion database indicates that Garnier used the internal rack until serial number 1117, made circa 1838, and then for a short period fitted a small percentage of movements with a countwheel, until serial number 2879. Therefore 1719 sits well within this listing and is an interesting example of a Paul Garnier carriage clock of the period having as it does several unusual features. One example I own at present is an inkwell desk clock with a typical carriage clock movement, made circa 1858. This was supplied to Georges Moser, a contemporary of Pierre Drocourt, and incorporates a chaff-cutter escapement and countwheel. It is stamped H.L. for Holingue Frères although with no mention of the Garnier breveté on the movement which had expired well before this time.

Note: One other carriage clock has passed through my hands that ties all the above together. It is signed on the dial for *A. Demeur à Bruxelles, Hor du Roi* and stamped H.L. to the movement front plate along with the serial number 1188 to the backplate and *blanc* roulant number 10962 between the plates, dating it to circa 1862. It doesn't have another maker's name to it and so was supplied complete by Holingue.