

## Henri Jacot

A time of transition and change following the death of Henri Jacot and the succession by his nephew

by Leigh Extence



Henri Jacot 297: Period II made circa 1855



Jacot Period III: 14193 made circa 1890

When I started in the antique clock business in the early 1980's the names of a number of carriage clock makers were always to the forefront; amongst them Paul Garnier, Abraham Louis Brequet, Arsené Margaine, the Drocourt family and of course Henri Jacot and his nephew. Whilst both running my own business and during my years working alongside the renowned dealer and horological author Derek Roberts, I was able to handle a fair few clocks by these makers and others, especially as Derek was putting together the manuscript for one of his books *Carriage & Other Travelling Clocks* whilst I was with him in Kent.

Some years later, whilst putting together my 2013 exhibition of some fifty Jacot carriage clocks, followed the next year by a similar exhibition dedicated to Drocourt, it became apparent that very little was recorded about these clockmakers, their working practices or their families, with a fair bit of that which was written incorrect or based on assumptions. Wanting to learn more I decided to undertake my own research, using only source material, which included a number of visits to France where hours were spent studying documents and publications in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. I have also examined and recorded as many clocks as possible by both makers leading to a database of collated information documenting well over two thousand examples and rising.

In this article it should be recognised that *Jacot* generally refers to the business as dating from circa 1865, a few years before the death of Henri Jacot in 1868. From then on the *Henri Jacot* concern was being run by his brother Julien Jacot who was succeeded in 1874 by his son, and Henri's nephew, Albert Jacot who took sole charge until circa 1914.

I have now identified three clear periods of Jacot carriage clock production which I've labelled Periods I, II and III and which are described as a footnote.



Most collectors and dealers associate the carriage clocks of *Henri Jacot* as those stamped on the backplate with the well-known trademark, the initials H.J. either side of a parrot on a perch, with the movements also stamped within the plates with an oval poinçon giving various dates of awards given to Jacot at the expositions at which they featured, although in actual neither were used during Henri Jacot's time.

The poinçon mark first appeared in circa 1865 with Henri Jacot himself now a relatively elderly man in the last few years of his life and with less involvement in the running of the business, whilst the parrot mark appeared circa 1880 some twelve years after his death.

Henri had been a highly rated carriage clock maker who would be eulogised in his obituary written by Claudius Saunier for the *Revue*

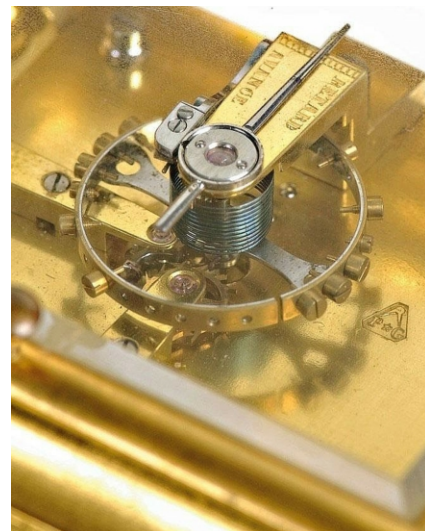
*Chronométrique* of August 1868 as an *horloger* who has *the whole of Parisian horology in debt to him. It was he that developed the splendid carriage clock industry which provides a livelihood to a large number of families.* Many of his peers obtained their *blancs roulants* from Henri Jacot to use when constructing their own specialist clocks, among them the renowned horological inventor Celestin Gontard who was working on improvements to both the lever and detent escapement in the mid-1800s. Contemporary records suggest that Gontard would only use Henri Jacot movements onto which to fit his escapements, one mention being in the *Revue* of 1869 where, following an examination of a Jacot/Gontard movement, Saunier writes that *the Gontard escapement gave excellent results, but it was executed by the inventor himself whilst the movement came from the hand of Henri Jacot; therefore two great elements of success that are not within the reach of everyone. Moreover, the price of the escapement alone could not have been less than 50 francs.*

Furthermore, Saunier's *Treatise on Modern Horology in Theory and Practice*, first published in 1861, gave a description of the Gontard escapement that states, *Many years' experience seems to show that when carefully made it gives good results; Monsieur Henri Jacot, one of our best makers of carriage clocks, has assured us of this fact.*



An Henri Jacot carriage clock circa 1860 fitted with a Gontard detent escapement.

Note how the use of this platform allowed for a seconds hand at XII. o'clock.





Despite being a maker with such a strong reputation, very few carriage clocks produced during the earlier periods of Henri Jacot's working life, following his arrival from Le Locle, Switzerland in 1820, are signed or marked in any way with his name. I do have one example from circa 1855, the start of Period II, engraved on the backplate *Henri Jacot, Paris* the purchase of which has allowed me to make comparisons with several anonymous movements from the same period that I had believed came from Henri Jacot's workshops and which I could now finally attribute to him.

That Henri Jacot himself was a maker of fine carriage clocks and movements is without doubt, even though so few are actually marked, but it has become apparent through my research that he was also a maker of clock cases, confirmed whilst I was in Paris where I came across literature that stated he was the *inventeur* of the *boite cannelée*; the *cannelée case*. This is interesting and fairly significant as today we call this style *Gorge* and what was known as *Gorge* we now call *Cannelée*, the two having been mixed up by previous authors and with the mistake copied and repeated by others down the years.



Henri Jacot 519: Period II

Solid ebony carriage clock, made circa 1857.

Note the Trefoil hands used extensively by Henri Jacot throughout this period.



Jacot 997: Period III

Engraved gorge case with a 'Baveux' movement, made circa 1867.



Advertising by Jacot in the *Didot-Bottin Almanach* of 1898 states that they obtained their *blancs-roulants* from workshops in the town of Saint-Nicolas d'Alhiermont, situated a few miles outside of Dieppe on the northern French coast and a major centre for carriage clock manufacture. But until now nothing was recorded of the actual detail of this arrangement and how it may've worked, nor whether it was just Henri Jacot's successors or also Henri himself, in earlier times, that obtained their *blancs roulants* from the town.

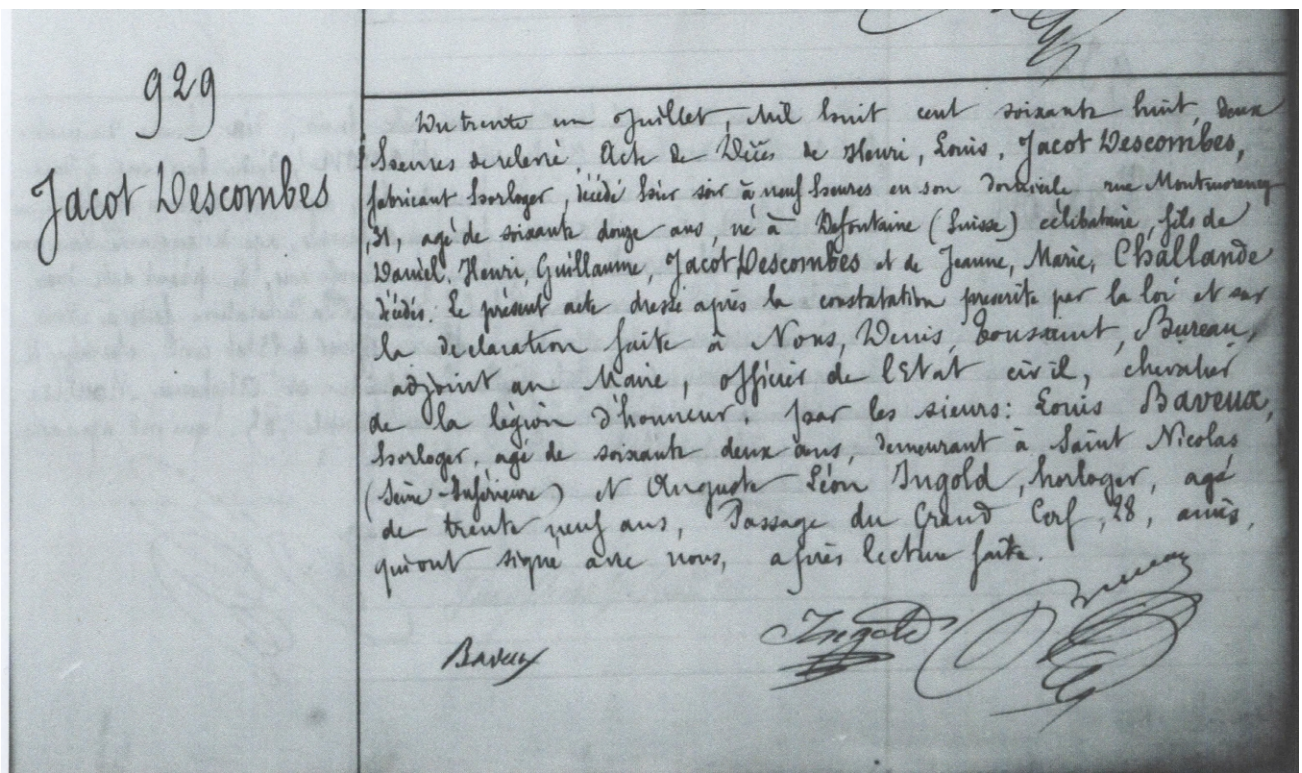
We know that from at least 1833 Henri Jacot had a workshop in Paris at Rue de Montmorency 25, renumbered 31 in 1851, as mentioned in the *Annuaire Général du Commerce* as published by *Chez Firmin Didot frères* of that year. Workshops that were used to finish the rough movements, case them up and then distribute them to retailers.

So where did the *blancs roulants* he use come from? Did he have his own workshops elsewhere? It was only when trawling through the Saint-Nicolas d'Alhiermont archives that I came across a little-known annual directory that listed the various businesses in the town and from studying these I was able to finally establish that Henri Jacot was indeed known there as an *horloger* from at least 1854 until 1864 or possibly 1865. It may well be that his brother Julien was running the Saint-Nicolas concern as the Guitrancourt census of 1856, a village where Julien had his main residence outside of Paris, records his profession as an *horloger* and interestingly he is now calling himself Julien *Henri* Jacot, not just his given name Julien Jacot as on all previous records. Then in 1866 when he had now taken on running the Jacot business, the Guitrancourt census records him as just *Henri Jacot*, without his true name Julien, therefore taking his brother's name and not that which he was christened with. This is an interesting development as it would appear that whilst Julien kept the business name as *Henri Jacot*, in doing so he identifies himself, if only for a short period, as *Henri*.

122	Jacot	Henri	horloger
123	Jeanrenault Jacot	Wile	sa femme

Julien Jacot identifies himself as *Henri Jacot* in his village census of 1866, just as he was taking over the running of the Henri Jacot business.





When I finally unearthed Henri Jacot's death certificate one of the witnesses who signed the document was Louis Baveux. His name is highly significant as in 1866, just as Henri disappeared from the Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont business directory, so Louis Baveux appeared as an *horloger*, and not just an *ouvrier* but a business owner. It must be that Louis Baveux had been involved with Henri Jacot in the Saint-Nicolas workshops and when Henri decided to slow down his involvement so Baveux was to take on the Jacot property and business. This becomes more apparent when it is noted that in later years Louis's son Alfred continued to supply Henri's successor, his nephew Albert, with carriage clocks, as then do Alfred's own sons Louis-Alphonse-Edouard and Alfred-Raoul having themselves taken over the workshops following the death of their father in 1894, with the business renamed Baveux frères.



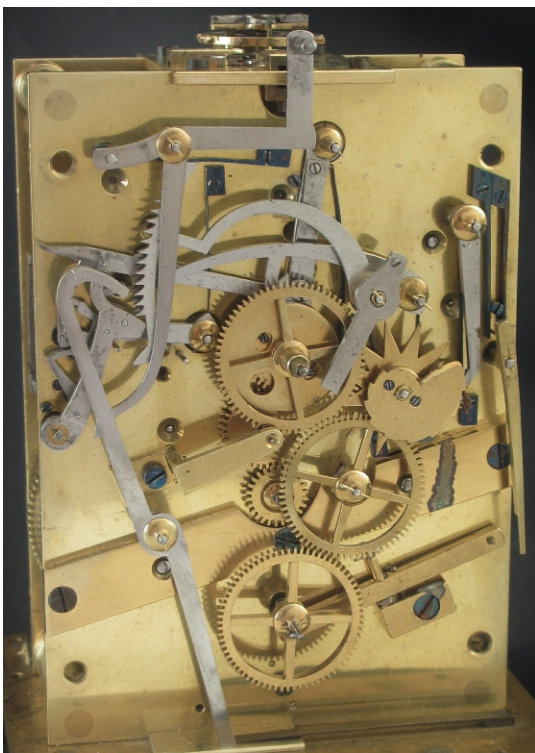
The Henri Jacot house and workshops in Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont as then taken over by Louis Baveux and his family

One of the most interesting periods of the Henri Jacot business are the ten to fifteen years following the death of Henri in 1868 as Julien and Albert made major changes to their work practices. This shift to a more commercial set-up may well have become a necessity considering that Henri, who died *célibataire*, a single man without dependents, was described in his obituary as *an artist prepared to forgo even material gains for the success of his work*, with a further report suggesting that *it then merely remained for his successors to exploit this success*.

Julien Jacot retired in 1874, moving back to his home in Guitrancourt, whereupon Albert, having married Louis-Desirée Hubert, returned to rue Montmorency from his home at 62 Rue Turenne. It was he who adopted the use of the HJ *parrot* trademark which was used alongside the poinçon stamp as first established by Julien. This parrot mark was to define the later Period III Jacot carriage clocks, indeed it has been suggested by several collectors and dealers that without this mark a carriage clock can't be considered a *Jacot*, which is obviously quite false as during the earlier two periods, 1820 to 1855 and 1856 to 1865 this mark is unknown. Indeed, it is not seen until serial number 2189 in circa 1879 nearly sixty years after the founding of the Jacot business. There is also a period between 1882 and 1886 when over two-thirds of Jacot

movements examined have the inner poinçon but not the parrot mark.

At the start of this third period in circa 1866 the majority of carriage clocks made were a continuation in both style and quality to those made in the latter years of Henri's time, with close examination showing that Louis Baveux was obviously using the same machinery as had Henri Jacot, thus giving weight to the assumption that the Baveux family did indeed take over the Jacot premises. Those movements with further complications such as *grande-sonnerie* or *quarter striking* were made with the addition of steel strike-work to the front-plate, double-finned pillars to the dial-plate and often fitted with platforms utilising a *Breguet* overcoil to the hairspring and were manufactured in this way throughout the Jacot production.

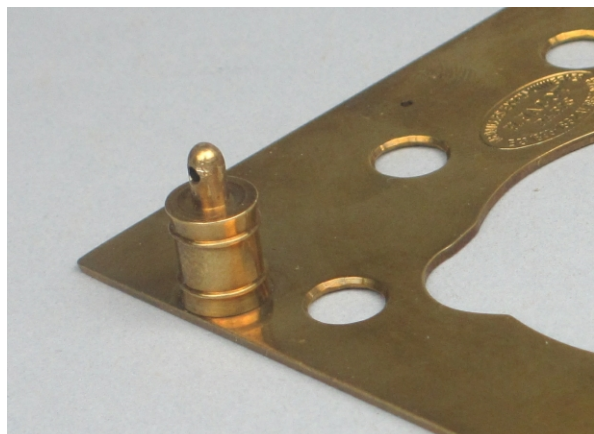


Baveux for Jacot

Above: Frontplate showing the steel work.

Right: Double-finned dial pillar.

Typical of movements coming from the Saint-Nicolas d'Algermont workshops of both Jacot and Baveux, and also Delépine-Barrois when they supplied Jacot.





The changes brought in by Julien and Albert were to see the Jacot output increase five-fold and therefore there would be a need to increase production to match demand. My research has brought to light a further supplier of *blancs roulants* who stepped in for several years and who may have actually also helped in the finishing of some Baveux movements supplied to Jacot. Following a close study of signed Jacot movements I noticed many had remarkably different markings on the backplate than would be expected on their carriage clocks, especially the representation of the hand direction 'arrow', the style of script for the wording 'Hands' and the initials 'S & F' as stamped either side of the platform for regulation. But it was a style of backplate that I had seen before on other carriage clocks, being those signed with the *Pons* roundel trademark being manufactured at workshops a few yards across the road from Baveux in Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont. This was the trademark for the maker of *pendules de voyage* Delépine-Barrois, previously Delépine-Canchy. Charles Baromé Delépine and Charles Canchy took over the *Honoré Pons* business, complete with workshops and house in circa 1847 and continued to use the Pons trade-mark for a considerable period of their production. Charles Canchy died in 1857 at which time Delépine took on another partner, Barrois.



Jacot 1949 with half-hour sonnerie strike.

A typical Baveux movement but with a Delépine-Barrois style arrow, although this example is slightly different to others in that it has the block Jacot font for 'Hands' rather than the more flowing Delépine design as seen above. Note also how when producing clocks for Jacot the arrow is placed below the hand arbor so as to comply with the standard Jacot layout.

To add to the intrigue, certain elements of these Delépine-Barrois movements are identical to those seen on Baveux clocks; the double-finned dial pillars, steel strike-work to the front-plate and the unique wheel layout, features not seen used by any other makers. It is obvious having examined these clocks that the two workshops were indeed working closely together throughout these years, although studying other Delépine-Barrois clocks shows they weren't just making for Jacot at this time.



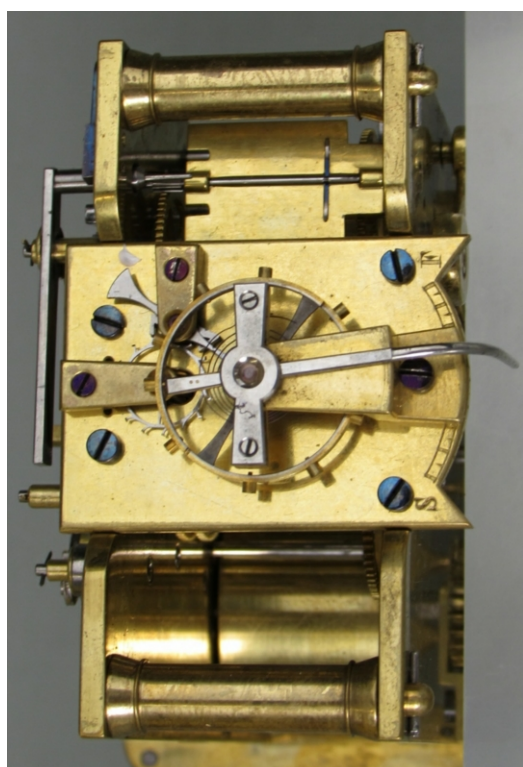
An Ottoman style carriage or mantel clock with an anonymous movement attributable to Delépine-Barrois and being identical to those seen stamped with the *Pons* trademark as used by them. The design is also near-identical to those movements supplied to Jacot including the arrow





Jacot 798, as discussed on the next page, with all the attributes of a Period II clock from circa 1864, but coming at the end of that period and with the first recorded with a most interesting and unrecorded trademark to the backplate suggesting it may well have been finished a few years later in Period III.

The 'arrow' mark is typical of the earlier period.



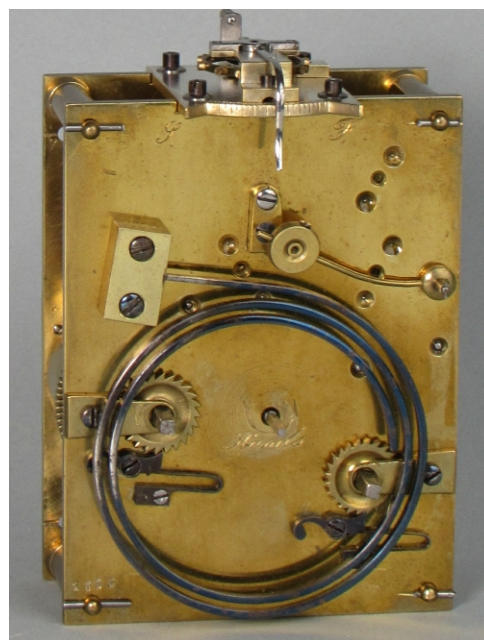




Jacot 798: being the first number recorded with the HJ initials being used.

It was whilst examining these Delépine-Barrois-era clocks that I came across an unrecorded trademark for Henri Jacot, one used well before the parrot mark made an appearance. When clock number 798, illustrated left, first came into my possession I noticed it was stamped with the just the initials HJ on the top of the backplate, being in the same font as used later with the parrot mark. Furthermore, a close examination of another Delépine-Barrois supplied clock with Jacot poinçon that I had just acquired, serial number 1333, provided a further surprise. I found the same H.J. initials, but they were actually well hidden on the backplate beneath the going side ratchet work. And then a further example with the hidden initials came to light, number 2193, which held a secret that was to tie much of the research together. Hidden between the plates was a trademark not previously noted on a Jacot clock; a rectangle within which

are stamped the initials *A.B. & D.* So a carriage clock with a known Baveux style movement, typical Delépine-Barrois markings and signed H.J. for Henri Jacot.



Jacot 1333 with the hidden H.J. mark.

Note the backplate markings which are pure *Delépine-Barrois*: the style of arrow, the wording for Hands and the S/F index.





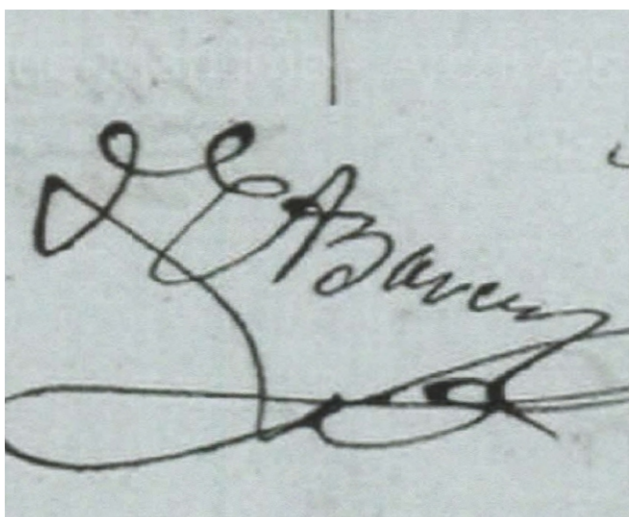


Did the *A.B. & D.* stand for *Alfred Baveux and Delépine*?

That this was a short-lived mark is apparent by the fact that I have studied many Jacot and/or Baveux clocks around this period and this is only one of two found stamped as such. Added to which within just over fifty clocks later serial number 2248 appears in circa 1880 which is stamped with the first recorded stylised *AB* mark to the front-plate, a mark that I have now been able to prove is that of Alfred Baveux. 2248 continues to have all the usual *Delépine-Barrois* markings, as do all the *AB* stamped clocks that I have recorded until at least number 3083 made in circa 1881. Examination of known *AB*

marked clocks after this date, starting with number 3224 to the last on my database, number 5320 made in circa 1883, show these Baveux movements to now be stamped with the normal Jacot arrow and markings. It would appear therefore that by circa 1882 this collaboration between Jacot/Baveux and Delépine-Barrois had come to an end.

Although previously hinted at, it was never actually proven that this *AB* mark seen on the dial-plate was for Alfred Baveux. When trying to establish this I came across a birth certificate for his niece Marguerite Albertine, dated 1876, which Alfred signed as a witness, and there staring at me was the exact same representation of the *AB* as seen on the plates. The mark was a direct facsimile of his true signature which finally confirmed that Alfred Baveux was *AB*.



But what was the reasoning for this ‘partnership’ between the Baveux and Delépine-Barrois workshops? At first I thought this collaboration to be a little odd until I delved further into the clockmaking families of the town and came upon a relationship that would show this arrangement to make sense.

Louis Baveux had a sister Clémence Aldérque Baveux, born in 1821, who was also an *horloger* in Saint-Nicolas d’Aliermont and who it must be assumed was working in the family workshops. She married Francois-Joachim Delépine in 1842, also an horloger in the town, being a brother to Charles-Boromé Delépine, founder of carriage clock makers Delépine-Canchy which became Delépine-Barrois in 1857. The Delépine workshops were situated just a few yards from that of Baveux directly across the main road that ran through Saint-Nicolas d’Aliermont and where Joachim was known to be working alongside his brothers. As such, husband and wife were both instrumental in the running of these two carriage clock making concerns, thus giving us an extremely strong reason why the two families should work together. This further cements the idea touched on earlier that the rarely seen and short-lived trademark with the initials *A.B. & D* is for *Alfred Baveux and Delépine*.

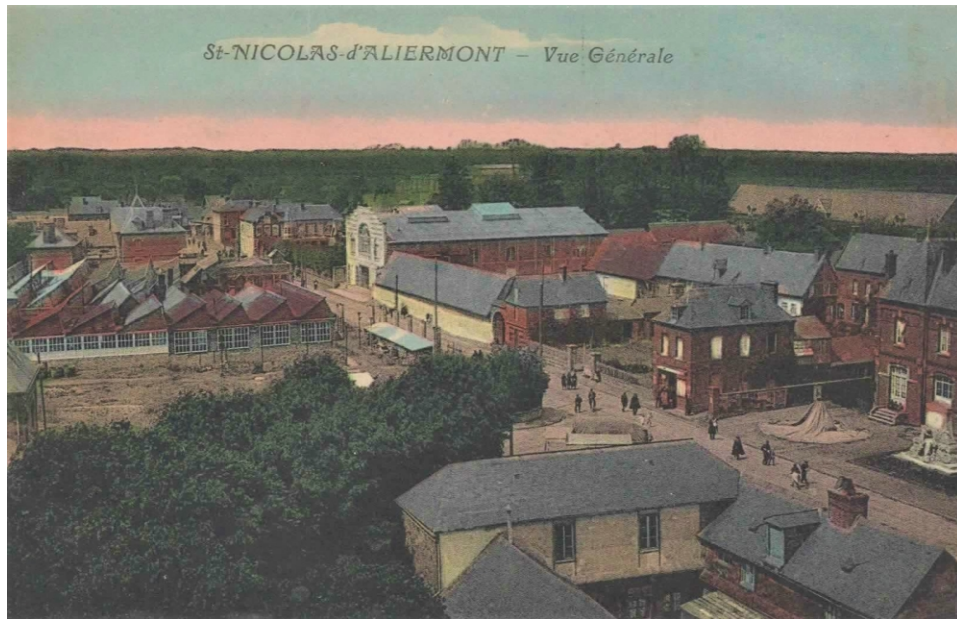


Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont looking over the Baveux house and workshops just beyond the trees in the foreground, with the Couailliet frères workshops being the pale buildings beyond the Baveux workshop roof and the Delépine-Barrois house and workshops to the right immediately above the pair of tall Baveux house chimney pots. Note the tall smelting chimney for reference.





In 1917 a major fire destroyed the Baveux house and workshops with the brothers moving to Dieppe having sold the site, along with the remaining stock and equipment, to Armand Couaillet of the clockmakers Couaillet frères, part of whose workshops backed onto the Baveux grounds. Couaillet frères were expanding rapidly and had already taken over the Delépine-Barrois business in 1912, coincidentally following a fire that destroyed their own workshops next to Baveux, and so their main premises were now situated across the road utilising the original Honoré Pons buildings. To complete the circle, in 1925 Couaillet frères were declared bankrupt and sold the business... to the Baveux brothers.



Saint-Nicolas d'Alhiermont 1918: The Baveux house and workshops now gone following the fire of 1917 and giving a clear view of the remaining Couaillet workshops that were rebuilt following their fire of 1912



A wonderful photograph showing rue Montmorency 31 in circa 1900 with the proprietors and staff of the three businesses situated there including Albert Jacot.

The brass plaque situated on the angle beside the grilled door reads: *H. Jacot, Horlogerie et Magasin*

## Henri Jacot Periods and a Summary of Markings

**Period I:** 1820 – 1854: Rue Montmorency, Paris

Few known signed or marked clocks nor any known number sequence.

**Period II:** 1854 – 1865: Rue de Montmorency, Paris with workshops in Saint-Nicolas d’Aliermont.

**Recorded serial number sequence:** 270 – 873.

No markings to movements. A very small number of clocks examined are signed *Henri Jacot, Paris* on the backplate and dial.

**Period III:** 1866 – 1914: Rue de Montmorency, Paris. 1868 Death of Henri Jacot.

**Recorded serial number sequence:** 21 – 19713. Being a new numbering sequence introduced by Julien Jacot.

All movements now have the Jacot poinçon on both the rear of the dial-plate and the front-plate updated with the awards received at various exhibition awards.

**H.J. initials without parrot, with these initials either hidden or visible on backplate:** Serial numbers 1333 to 2522, none thereafter. Not many movements between these sequence numbers actually have the H.J. initials, just the hidden poinçon. Note that 798 is stamped with the H.J. initials but has many features to suggest an earlier clock. This is quite possibly an example that started as a *blanc roulant* in Period II but was then finished in Period III.

**H.J. initials now with the parrot trademark:** Serial numbers 2378-19713.

Between recorded serial numbers 5216 and 8204, made circa 1882-1890, seventy-five percent examined do not have the parrot trademark, just the poinçon.

A further in-depth analysis of most of the carriage clocks mentioned in this article, along with a summary of the research undertaken so far is published in my 2013 Henri Jacot Exhibition catalogue, as well as the 2014 Drocourt Exhibition catalogue, being available to view on my website [www.extence.co.uk](http://www.extence.co.uk)

For a further information on the Jacot family and their working practices see an article written by my good friend Larry Fabian, using much of my research material, *Le Locle by the Seine* as published in the NAWCC Bulletin, October 2018 and available to view via my website.