

TWO BLACK

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The two clocks described in this article came to me for repair because their owners didn't want them! This is all the more surprising because both of them are quite attractive and each of them is an interesting variation on the American black mantel clock theme.

Neither of them, however, was made in America. In a town which I visit once a month I was approached by a lady who told me that she had a heavy old black clock gathering dust in a shed. She asked me if I would have a look at it sometime to see if it was worth fixing as she had no use for it. On a later visit to the town she brought the clock with her for me to assess.

When I saw it for the first time I thought that it could be an American cast iron black mantel clock, possibly an Ansonia or a Waterbury, but when I saw the trademark, **figure 1**, on the dial, the clock was identified as a Seikosha, made in Tokyo, Japan. In the July 2006 issue of *CLOCKS* there is an article on p17 by Peter Gosnell entitled 'Precision Workshop', which is an interesting description of another of this firm's products and a summary of the firm's history.

A look inside the back of the case showed that the clock was complete with key and pendulum and that the movement, although dirty, seemed to be in reasonable condition. I told the owner that her clock seemed to have good repair prospects, and I took it with me.

When I took the movement out of the case it had the expected features typical of American-style mass-produced clocks: open mainsprings, lantern pinions, cut-out plates, countwheel striking and bent-strip pallets. Two repairs had been carried out in the past. A new bush had been fitted for the front pivot of the escape wheel arbor, and this had been done so neatly it was only visible to a person looking for it.

The other repair, however, was not properly done. Someone had tried to close up the wear in the hole supporting the front pivot of the second wheel arbor by punching around the hole. This had resulted in a bearing surface which had spot contact only with the pivot. Daylight could be seen through the hole in several places where the bearing

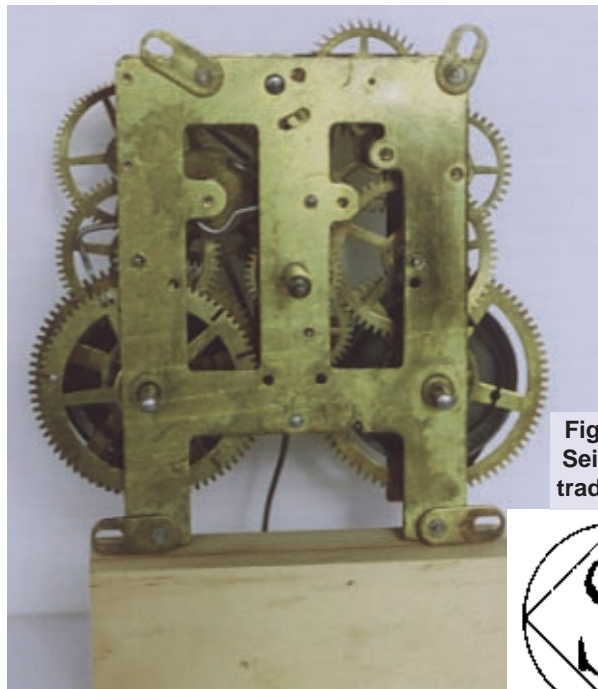


Figure 2. Front view of Seikosha movement.

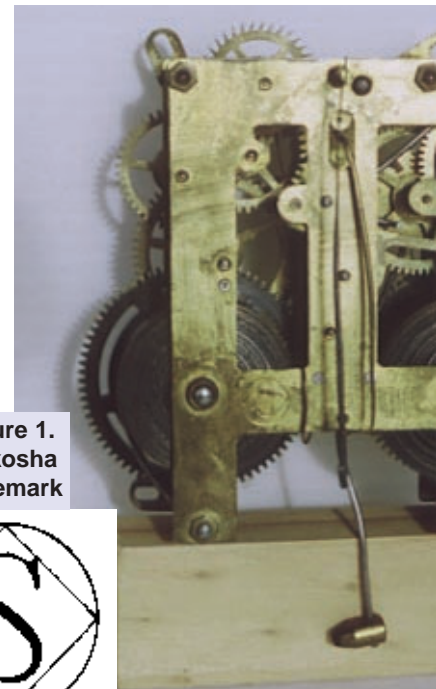


Figure 1. Seikosha trademark

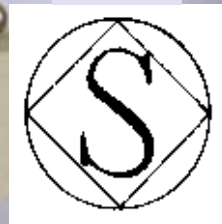


Figure 3. Seikosha trademark



From a small shop, with a single window front, Saunders have grown, until to-day they are the largest Jewellery Organisation in Australia.

Saunders Headquarters Railway Sq.

Figure 4. Saunders building in the early 1900s

surface did not meet the pivot!

After dismantling the movement and inspecting all parts and burnishing the pivots, I used a small round file to enlarge the hole in the front plate for the second wheel pivot, being careful to keep the hole concentric with the outer edge of the oil sink. As a further check on accuracy I also measured the co-ordinates of the corresponding hole in the back plate and compared these

measurements with my progress on the front plate. After broaching out the hole wide enough to accept the tapered portion of a Bergeon reamer appropriate to the bush chosen, and finishing the job with the Bergeon bushing tool, I succeeded in fitting a bush tightly in place. Some of the punch marks are still visible around the bush, but the pivot is now properly supported in a bearing that will last and work effectively. After

K MANTELS

Figure 4. Seikosha striking clock in cast-iron case.



Back view of movement.

a thick flat glass with a bevelled edge, as in a French clock. Hands are Breguet-style and the dial is enamel, in pristine condition. At the top of the dial are the letters 'S' and 'F' but there is no hole for an adjusting square, nor is there any Brocot-style adjustment mechanism at the top of the movement. This is a lovely clock, but when I took it back to the owner, she still didn't want it, so I took it to the local antique shop for her and it was put on sale!

The second unwanted clock was brought to me to be repaired and sold to raise funds for the local Mayflower Nursing Home, the owner saying that she didn't like the clock; she much preferred her Enfield striking clock. This unwanted clock was made by HAC of Wurttemberg, Germany, and has the familiar crossed-arrows trademark stamped into the back plate. On the dial is the retailer's name:

'A. Saunders, Sydney'

5. The building 1900s.

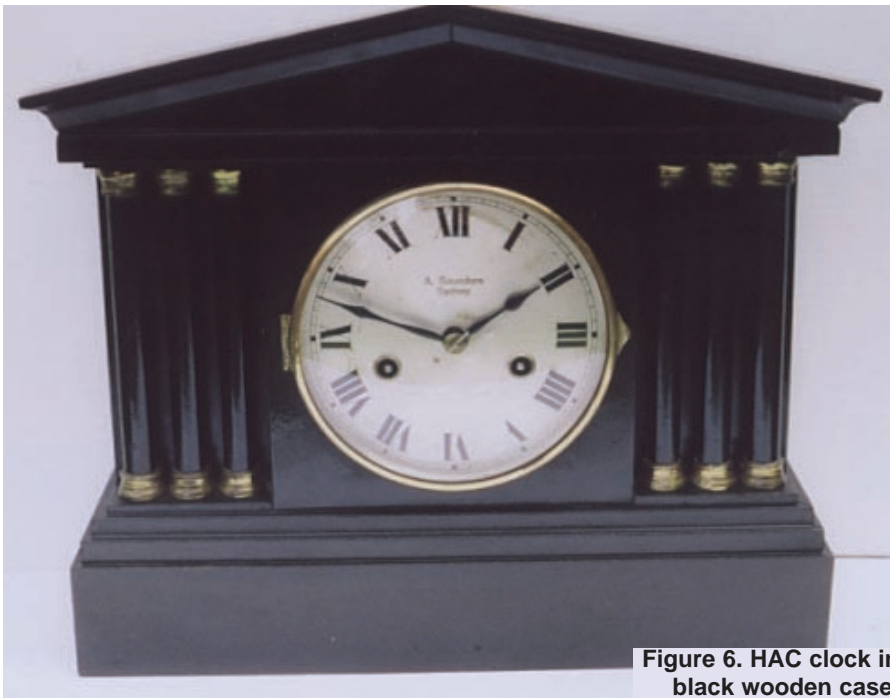



Figure 6. HAC clock in black wooden case.

Two small brass name plates are pinned to the case at the back. One gives the maker's name and address: 'H.A.C. Clock, made in Wurttemberg'. The other gives the retailer's name and address: 'A. Saunders, Sydney, opposite railway station'. **Figure 5** is a book illustration of the Saunders building as it was in the early years of last century.

When the lady gave this clock to me it was in a down-at-heel state. The glass was broken and the bezel hinge had broken away from where it had been soldered. The bezel was removed from the case for re-soldering, and the old soldered surfaces scraped clean. After positioning the hinge carefully, some flux was dabbed on to the surfaces to be soldered. Care was taken not to allow flux to go anywhere else. A large electric soldering iron was used to apply plenty of heat to the parts of the hinge to be soldered and solder was applied sparingly to those parts. The bezel was washed thoroughly when soldering had been completed. It is important to take care when soldering a bezel hinge as it is all too easy to solder one solid if too much flux and solder is applied! The broken glass was glued together and measured. A new convex glass of the correct size was purchased and fitted and the bezel was put back on the clock case.

Someone had attempted to lubricate the movement by spraying it with 

cleaning all parts, the movement was assembled and oiled. **Figures 2 and 3** show the overhauled movement.

A vacuum cleaner was used to clean the inside of the case. The outside was cleaned with soft brushes to remove dust, followed by rubbing with soft cloths moistened with water to revive the painted surfaces. I don't like to use any solvent that is more active than water to clean clocks like this one

because of the risk of damaging the original surfaces.

When the movement was put back in the case the clock performed well. **Figure 4** shows the clock in working order. The case has an architectural style with brass columns and brass ornaments in the gable and on the base.

I was impressed by the quality of the case. All the cast-iron components fit together neatly. The bezel is fitted with