

HOROLOGICAL TIMESTM

SETTING SERVICE STANDARDS AND EDUCATING THE HOROLOGICAL COMMUNITY

May 2018

*Servicing Lathe
Cone Bearing
Spindles*



AMERICAN WATCHMAKERS -
CLOCKMAKERS INSTITUTE

The Archie Perkins Mobile Classroom
Adjusting the Regula Cuckoo Clock Movement

From the Workshop

By Jack Kurdzionak, CW21, FAWCI

Close One Door and Another Opens

Terry and I recently returned from a trip to Switzerland during which we visited Baselworld 2018, the Technical Watchmaker Show in La Chaux-de-Fonds, and some Swiss tourist attractions. In addition, we met with some longtime watch industry friends to round out a very busy week. Jet lag was not much of a problem for us leaving Boston for Zurich. After one day spent adjusting to the five-hour time difference, we were ready to attend the Technical Show at La Chaux-de-Fonds. For the past several years the number of companies that supply machinery and equipment to watchmakers and watch manufacturers exhibiting at Baselworld has steadily declined. Last year, Baselworld's management decided that there would be no technical suppliers exhibiting at Baselworld 2018. Once that decision had been finalized, a group of 10 technical suppliers located in La Chaux-de-Fonds organized their own technical exhibition to run concurrently with Baselworld.

The companies opened their showrooms and warmly welcomed visitors and clients. Because La Chaux-de-Fonds is an old city with limited parking, the group of companies provided a shuttle service from the train station parking lot to all the participating businesses. Light lunches and refreshments provided by some of the companies helped make the event a success.

Our first stop was at Bergeon to see its new headquarters building that combines sales, manufacturing, and distribution in one location. Previously Bergeon had operated out of several smaller locations, including their old flagship building in Le Locle. Upon our arrival we were warmly greeted by their sales team that includes Gianni Pavone, Deb Wicki, and Guillaume Böttger. Gianni escorted us throughout the entire facility, beginning with the showroom where many Bergeon products are on display. After viewing the sales and administration departments, we went into a large storeroom with floor-to-ceiling shelves supporting a vast number of storage bins, each containing a separate product. Gianni explained to us that the lower shelves

contained the most frequently ordered tools while the upper shelves, reachable with an electric lift, held items ordered less frequently. Next stop on the Bergeon tour was their state-of-the-art machine shop where many Bergeon tools are fabricated in-house. During our visit, Gianni reminded us that according to Swiss law, any new watch that claims to be Swiss made must have a minimum percentage of its value originating in Switzerland. He then emphasized that a Bergeon tool bearing the label Swiss made is 100%

Swiss made. Bergeon makes about 30% of its tools in-house with most of the remaining 70% being made by local specialists. A visit to the laser engraving department was next on the tour. Not only does Bergeon engrave each tool with a reference number and trademark here in this room, but they also custom engrave tools made specifically for watch companies. In addition, they will customize tools and equipment with labels and trademarks for their customers. Next, we visited the packing department where small items

are automatically fed into plastic envelopes made in-house by Bergeon. Some packaging, especially for small production runs, is still done manually.

Bergeon is an interesting company in that it still maintains many items in its product line. Some products are in great demand while others are ordered far less frequently, and Bergeon does its best to keep all in active inventory. This is a comprehensive supply house, not only for watch manufacturers but also for watchmakers. If a manufacturer or watchmaker needs a specific tool, most likely Bergeon will have it. Tradition is alive and well at Bergeon and we wish them all the best in their new facility.



Gianni Pavone, a member of Bergeon's sales team.





Machine shop at Bergeon where many tools are manufactured.



Employee building screwdrivers at Bergeon.



Laser engraved Bergeon items.

Our next visit was with Horotec at their headquarters, which is adjacent to the main train station in downtown La Chaux-de-Fonds. Our host was Jean Marie Bobbe, a member of their sales staff. Horotec is an important supplier of tools, spare parts, and equipment to watchmakers around the world. Their spacious facility with its large showroom is an excellent venue to meet with clients. While there, it was great to see Bill Esslinger (Esslinger Company in Minneapolis) and Charlie and Andrew Oh (Star Time in Texas) among the other visitors from several countries. Horotec manufactures some of its tools, but sales, administration, and shipping are done at the Horotec headquarters.

This year's sponsors of the Technical Watchmaker Show hope to expand the show next year to include other companies located outside of La Chaux-de-Fonds. They will lease an additional space in the city in which the companies can set up their own vendor booths. This space would become an additional stop for the shuttle bus and broaden the scope of this technical show to help make it an alternate destination during Baselworld. The sponsors have made a five-year commitment for this technical show. I do not expect them to return to Baselworld during this time even if space is again offered to them. One door has closed in Basel. Another door opened in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

More Open Doors

June 12-15, 2018, are the dates for the Geneva EPHJ-EPMT-SMT (Professional Environment Horology and Jewelry, Professional Environment Micro Technology, and Swiss Medical Technology). This triple-faceted venue is the most important professional show held annually in Switzerland, featuring companies in high-precision industries embracing jewelry and watchmaking, microtechnologies, and medical technologies. I had been told numerous times by various vendors that the Geneva show would be very interesting for me, but I declined to attend because Baselworld had offered its own technical section until this year. The Geneva show features hundreds of technical vendors who are high-precision specialists from four distinct industries. I am looking forward to the multitude of possibilities to utilize specialty items from these vendors and adapt them to the watchmaker's workshop.