

AHS London Lecture Thursday 18 July 2013

Clare Woodward

‘Bahne Bonniksen and the Karrusel Watch Revisited’

Bahne Bonniksen (1859-1935) made one of the most successful inventions in watchmaking in the second half of the nineteenth century – the Karrusel watch. These watches incorporated a revolving carriage, the karrusel, which offsets changes in rate when the watch was moved. This made their time-keeping very precise and as a result the watches became a huge success story for both Bahne Bonniksen and more importantly the English watch trade. For over a decade karrusel watches achieved phenomenal success at the all important watch trials. These successes made Bonniksen one of the most influential figures in the English watchmaking industry at the turn of the twentieth century.



Dr Clare Woodward has been a keen amateur horologist for many years, and has done much research into the Coventry watch trade. She had an article published in *Antiquarian Horology* about Queen Caroline's Watch in June 2002 and has given a previous lecture to the society about Bahne Bonniksen in 2006.



In 1903, Bonniksen's 34-minute centre seconds watch No. 57006 came first in the deck watch trial at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich with a trial number of 20.4. It was purchased by the Admiralty in April 1904 for £22 and its service included HMS *Montagu*. It is now on permanent loan at the Royal Museums Greenwich.

Bahne Bonniksen is primarily known for his invention of the karrusel watch. However, this represents only a small part of his inventive genius and his enthusiasm and commitment led him into many other related fields. Throughout his life he strove to preserve the industry by improving the education and training of young watchmakers. The aim of the talk is to provide a further insight into his life and career and how his horological achievements played an important part in promoting and preserving the precision watchmaking industry in Coventry.

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