

# **The MIH Watch.**

The Projects.

Musée International d'Horlogerie



## **The MIH Watch: facilitator of MIH projects**

A portion of the revenues generated by sales of the MIH Watch is earmarked for the MIH International Horological Museum itself, which uses the income to fund a small number of the museum's own projects; these can be participated in by purchasers of the watch as well as by visitors to the museum. Here is an outline of current and completed projects.



## **Monumental astronomical clock by Daniel Vachey**

Breton clockmaker Daniel Vachey (1904-1991) was, like so many in his profession, a soul driven to pursue his ideas with a zealous resolve. His magnum opus was a monumental clock in the shape of a Gothic cathedral fashioned out of wood and designed to sit in his shop window to attract attention. In addition to telling the time, he intended it to possess every conceivable calendar and astronomical indication, as well as automatons and striking mechanisms. He spent thirty years of his life, between 1938 and 1968, working on his masterpiece, the functions of which he calculated, designed and built himself. The 150 cm tall clock was acquired by the MIH in 2002 with the help of the Friends of the MIH, the aim being to put it on display in a fully functioning state. In 2005 the museum secured the services of archaeologist and clockmaker Peter Maria Verhoeven to analyse and restore the timepiece. His work, namely the meticulous documentation and renovation of this monumental timepiece, was the first project to receive funding from revenues generated by sales of the MIH Watch. Verhoeven's five-year endeavour are recorded in a four-volume published by 'L'Homme et le Temps', while the clock itself can be admired in all its functioning glory at the MIH. Also available is an interactive screen presentation showing the functions and history of this unique artefact of modern times.



## **The astronomical clock given the cold shoulder**

Watchmaker Aurélie Michaud laboured from 2010 to 2012 on restoring and documenting a long-case clock in the possession of the MIH. This project was also funded through sales of the MIH Watch. Bearing the signature of clockmaker Joseph Haim from Aussee, Austria, this 240 cm tall pendulum clock featuring astronomical indications ranks amongst the key attractions of the museum. Haim completed the timepiece around 1860, in all probability with a view to selling it to the respected Kremsmünster Observatory. It would appear that his plan came to nought, since the clock seems never to have stood in Kremsmünster. He may have been asking too much for it – how else to explain the observatory passing up on what would undoubtedly have been a real asset to the facility? Haim based all his calculations for indications, e.g. sunrise and sunset, on a specific location, namely Kremsmünster, which is why he would probably not have been able to sell it elsewhere. Another unique feature is the three-dimensional display of the sun and moon trajectories above the horizon as seen from Kremsmünster; this indication is portrayed as a painted stage fashioned in card and surmounted by the silhouette of the observatory tower. The sun and the moon do not rotate about the same axis, but rise and fall independently courtesy of a sophisticated mechanism according to the seasons. The moon has both a light and a dark side. As it rotates about its own axis over the course of a month, it indicates all of the phases between two new moons. Aurélie Michaud has evident enthusiasm for the project: „The mechanism testifies to the ingenuity of the creator and his extraordinary sense of the aesthetic. Although the clock arrived at the MIH in excellent condition, restoration was necessary. This presented the ideal opportunity to study the masterpiece and document it in detail.“ The information logged by Aurélie Michaud formed the basis for a description of the clock and its functions couched in layman’s terms. The data will also help future generations of experts help to understand the details of the mechanism.



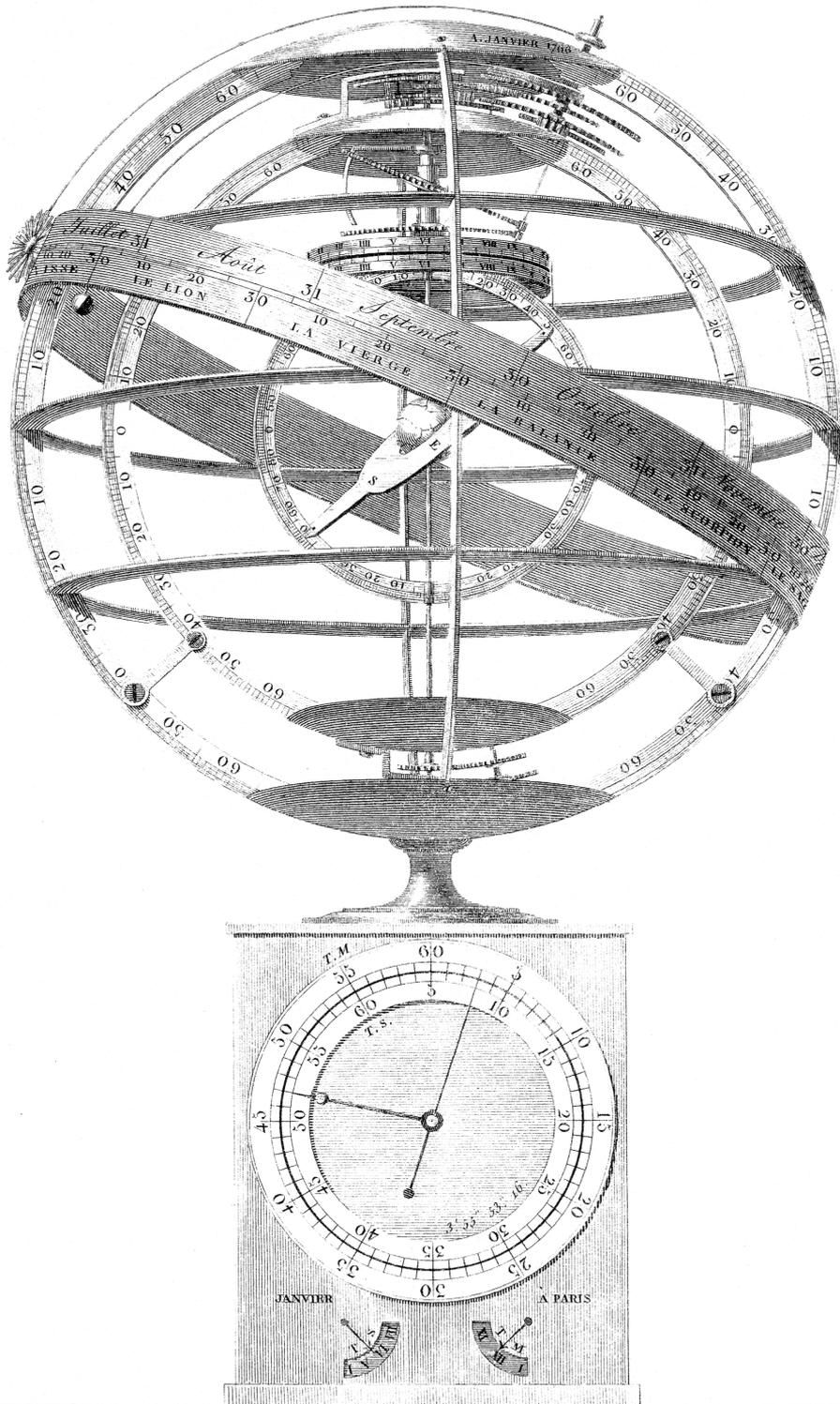
## **Building a pocket watch just like in the old days**

The Japanese clockmaker and specialist in restoration and complex mechanisms, Masaki Kanazawa, received a bursary from Bank Julius Baer in 2011 in recognition of his watchmaking expertise. The funding allowed him to do something that had long been in his sights: to build a pocket watch with complications using old components, some of them incomplete. He based his work on boxes of loose parts and unfinished movements supplied by watchmakers Ulysse Nardin. The parts chosen by Kanazawa formed the basis for a ‚savonette‘ pocket watch with protective lid, minute repeating and ‚grande sonnerie‘ striking system. His quest was to complete the timepiece using the means at the disposal of watchmakers of the 1900s, and to log every step of the process for future generations. The unfinished movement or ‚ebauche‘, picked out by Kanazawa as the basis of his work, lacked a number of key parts, which he had to make from scratch having analysed a complete pocket watch of the same type found in the MIH’s collection. The trickiest phase of the process was recreating the entire escapement mechanism, the most complex component of a mechanical movement. Kanazawa worked on his watch for ten months, the first six of which were financed directly by the bank’s bursary. The latter part of the project was subsidised from sales of the MIH Watch. „His“ movement is now fully functional, and his notes are contained in two volumes.



## **Classifying and preserving**

The MIH receives a steady stream of bequests and assets of a horological nature from private individuals and commercial enterprises. Many are of immediate interest, others could be of importance at some point in the future. It is a fact, though, that they cannot all be dealt with and evaluated on receipt. Items received in this way are entered into a separate part of the MIH collection. To make it easier to find them at a later stage and ensure that they are stored correctly, the museum starts by having them professionally inventoried and described. Canadian archivist Françoise Beltrami has been working for the MIH since 2001. She began documenting and archiving items gifted to the museum in 2003. Despite the number and sheer variety of items and documents received, the Sisyphus-like nature of the work has in no way dimmed her enthusiasm for her role. She beavers away untiringly through photographs, handwritten notes, corporate publications, instruments and their accompanying paperwork. Moving personal correspondence, dry-as-a-bone bookkeeping, everything is clearly identified and labelled alphanumerically to allow swift and straightforward retrieval when necessary. Françoise Beltrami also transfers the information and the location of the items to a dedicated computer program for online access by other museums. Finally, she ensures that the documents and items are stored in such a way as to ensure their longevity. The single day a week she spends at the MIH is funded from sales of the MIH Watch.



### **The incomplete replica**

Clockmaker Antide Janvier was a major contemporary of Abraham-Louis Breguet. Both influenced each other, and at times Janvier even worked for Breguet. The MIH possesses a replica of the first pendulum clock made by Janvier when he was just fifteen years of age. This replica was never finished; on its acquisition by the MIH, clockmaker Pascal Kunz was given the task in 2012 of studying the mechanism and deciding whether it could be made to work in the form presented. On the whole, replicas of historical watches have the advantage that they, unlike the originals, can be kept running quite safely for the benefit of the visiting public. The work carried out on this clock, its documentation and the creation of a 3D animation of its functions are being financed from proceeds of sales of the MIH Watch.

## Sales

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