

The Doorknob Collector



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A Nonprofit Organization Devoted to the Study and Preservation of Ornamental Hardware

METALLIC COMPRESSION CASTING IN ENGLAND

BY ALLEN S. JOSLYN

Our indefatigable connoisseur of fine hardware, Patty Ramey, found a fascinating article in the May, 1872 issue of The Art Journal (Vol. XI, p. 164) published in London which announced the arrival of Metallic Compression Casting. It can be compared with a later Court decision in Massachusetts to set the record straight.

“IMPROVEMENTS IN MINOR BRITISH INDUSTRIES

METALLIC COMPRESSION CASTING

“The patent of the Metallic Compression Casting Company is an American property, which under a company is about to be worked in this country. Its operations embrace a numerous class of utilities, representing a large and very important section in the hard-ware business, and, in respect of the cost and beauty of the products, offering extraordinary advantages over the results of the methods of manufacture now commonly in use. We know that castings in bronze and other metals are never presentable in commerce until they have been dressed and trimmed with the chisel, but one remarkable advantage in castings by this process is that the most delicate tracteries require no after-treatment; and of this the best evidence is, that woodcuts and the most minute stereotypes leave the mold in a state so perfect that in working them immediately not the slightest imperfection is perceptible. Among the examples shown are bookbinders’ ornaments, dies for paper-hangings, all kinds of plates for printing, small bas-reliefs in iron, and other metals. When examining the moulds we are struck by the exquisite delicacy with which the lines are taken and repeated; the finest woodcut is, in reproduction, a marvel of exactitude; but it must be observed that the mould is formed, not of sand, but of fine potter’s clay, and what is remarkable is, that for each cast a new mould is necessary. But it appears that these moulds are produced in quantity with great rapidity, and, of course, ease; a fact referring to extensive commercial transactions, rather than any limited and special supply; and in such case the objects are classed and priced, not according to richness of pattern, but by weight. The rationale of the invention may be described in a few words, as the injection of the molten metal into the mould under great pressure, by means of a piston moving in a cylinder; and hence will be understood the office and responsibilities of the mould; which, itself, must really be a work of Art; for no mould repeats a form so complete as to be independent of dressing. If Arabesque and florid design be rendered with an accuracy so minute, the process being, as we believe, purely mechanical, Fine Art compositions will be translated with an equal nicety; and so it

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is, for those that are submitted for inspection have the appearance, not of copies, but of that kind of solid work which usually characterizes an original design rather than a reproduction. It is impossible to consider the results of this invention without reference to the products of other means of obtaining relief-compositions in metal, such as those of *repoussé* and electro-metallurgy; but in placing it in comparison with these, certainly as far as flat and panel-designs are concerned, there cannot be a pretence of competition. The development of the invention is as yet only in progress, but enough of its capabilities is shown to justify us in all we say of it. We are told that the patentees are about producing forms in the round; these are vases, statuettes, and other objects, independent of background; if this can really be effected with all the minuteness of finish which they carry into their flat compositions, and, at the same time, supposing such a reduction of cost, as we have a right to assume from the prices of domestic fittings and commercial articles, the invention will open up a line of business in the direction of commercial statuette and figure-composition, which will greatly affect the demand for French bronze-castings, which are now in increasing request in this country. We are assured that works in the round can be produced, and considering the evidences of the genius and enterprise submitted for inspection, this cannot be doubted. As regards the popularity of the products, the only question is the cost. In such works, either in the flat or in the round, one of the primary qualities is that solidity which is found in a cast of bronze, or any other metal effected by ordinary means; and in evidence of this quality, indispensable for objects of every-day use, may be cited a *tazza*, containing in the centre, a classic profile, with four figures of Cupids, differently disposed, on its outer band. In substance this work did not resemble either *repoussé* or electro-, metallurgy; when removed from the mould it was perfect, and required no finishing or backing-up.

“On inquiry as to the commercial staple of the patentees we are shown the design of ‘an extra heavy burglar-proof front-door mortise lock,’ the front of which is bronze, bearing a Greek design. With this is grouped a variety of other locks similarly ornamented. Many of the lock-escutcheons and finger-plates are very beautiful in design; these are principally in bronze, and those plated with nickel never tarnish. It may be considered that it was scarcely a matter of interest to ornament a door-knob so as to render questionable the taste of its composition; but the productions here have attained to a degree of great elegance. The form of the article is round, presenting on the face a round central band, with small studs, and encircling a florid design – the whole encircled by outer band, also of very chaste design. Of the same group are other door-knobs and escutcheons, some of the upmost severity of classical composition, and others different in character; on some are profile heads in bas-relief, while others are ornamented with leaves and flowers.

“The works of the Company are established at Birmingham; in London reference is made to Mr. F. Sabel, No. 3, Sherborne Lane. The factories are fitted up with engines and all necessary machinery, and a stock of patterns and designs have been provided for working the invention to the extent of its capabilities. The cheapness of the goods arises in great measure from the fact that for general production no skilled labour is necessary; this is only employed in special cases. Indeed the moulding is so simple as to be effected even by children.”

So, according to The Art Journal, by May, 1872, the MCCC patent for compression casting was going into production in Birmingham, and was about to bring forth a great variety of beautiful and detailed castings.

Unfortunately, that is not the story which emerged from litigation in Massachusetts, which found its way to that State’s Supreme Court, Smith v. Moore, 129 Mass. 222 (1880). As the opinion recounts, a new company was organized to hold the patents and defendants were dispatched to Europe [to] introduce the process into England. Three dry years followed without any sales, and in May, 1872 it was decided to sell the patents. Within a few months the patents were sold for less than 1/10th of the initial asking price. The dispute, which gave rise to the litigation, was who was entitled to the proceeds. Excerpts from that decision follow.

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“In 1869 the plaintiff Smith and his brother, Michael Smith, held certain letters patent for the United States ‘for improvements in casting metals under pressure.’ Michael assigned to the plaintiff Locke his right and interest in the inventions so far as European countries were concerned. The two plaintiffs, thus having control of the inventions for the countries of Europe, formed an association called ‘The American Compression Casting Association’ for the purpose of introducing the inventions in Europe and obtaining patents therefore .”

On May 13, 1869 the parties executed a declaration of trust governing how the Association would function, and on the same day an agreement was executed between the plaintiffs and the defendants (one Ira Moore and Gustavus Dows) that defendants “should proceed to introduce the inventions into England and other European countries, and obtain letters patent and sell rights and licenses”.

“The defendants did not succeed in making any sales . . . and at a meeting of the [Association’s] executive committee held on May 20, 1872 the plaintiff Smith was authorized to go to Europe and sell the patents for not less than £ 9000.”

“A meeting of the association was held on July 25, 1872 at which it was voted that Smith, who was then in Europe, be authorized to sell the patents and property of the association in and for the territory of Europe for such sum as in his discretion he may think best for the interest of all concerned.”

“On September 7, 1872 the said Smith, then in England, made a sale of the English letters patent to one Mackintire for eight hundred pounds sterling...”

That is the extent of our knowledge. We do not know what, if anything, Mackintire did with the patents or whether he ever worked them. But it is pretty clear that the rosy picture painted by The Art Journal did not correspond to reality but probably was part of a last, desperate effort to sell the patents for something.

WE HAVE WON WITH WIN

by Vicky Berol

Win Applegate - #110

Carol Applegate - #310

Win joined ADCA March 1987. The first Convention that he attended was in Des Moines, Iowa. For some newer members of ADCA, the name Win Applegate may not be familiar, but as you read further you will become aware of the impact he has made over the years. From his first appearance at the 1987 Convention, Win made his mark on the ADCA. He is reputed to have gone out and bought extra suitcases to haul his loot home from that Convention. He was elected to the Board the same year, and has continued as a Board member to this day. He was elected as Vice-President in 1989 and in 1991 was elected President. He continued as President until 1999, when he passed the gavel to Rhett Butler.



In 1994 Win joined Len Blumin, the author of the original *Victorian Decorative Art* (VDA), to update and expand the book. He took on the primary responsibility of editing, publishing, photographing, printing and proof-reading the publication. Finally after five years, the new edition (VDA II) was released as a 3-ring binder, with close to 1,000 doorknobs identified, categorized and classified. More recently he edited VDA III, a supplement of another 100 knobs.

Ever giving, Win wrote a regular column for the TDC titled "Bits & Pieces", entered and often won The Best Of Show display awards, and chaired the doorknob display contest at the Connecticut Convention. In 2001, Win, Maud Eastwood, Len Blumin, Rhett Butler and Richard Perris formed a panel on the techniques for producing fine reproduction hardware. The audience learned how to identify a reproduction piece from vintage hardware.

Win was responsible for the Convention Auction, which has become a much anticipated event at Conventions, and designed a sophisticated computer program for it. The program, which he donated to the Club, has been used ever since.

To recognize Win's accomplishments and guidance, in 2005 he became the third recipient of the coveted ARNIE AWARD, named after Arnie Fredrick, a key founder of ADCA. The Award, established in 1999, exemplifies those who have given back to ADCA above and beyond. Other awardees were Maud Eastwood (2000); Len Blumin (2002); Loretta and Ray Nemecek (2009) and Faye and Rich Kennedy (2012).

The Applegates, Win, Carol and Hilary are truly a family of giving. Carol served as Board Secretary in 1995 and Hilary was always an important part of the annual auction. In 1999 the Applegates became Life Members.

He states that he has a few superb specimens in his collection that were purchased for less than \$40 each; then, of course, there are always a few that are valued below the purchase price (sound familiar?).

A man of many talents, as I stated in my opening paragraph, Win Applegate has had a huge impact on the health of ADCA. He spent his career in computers and information processing. He is a manager, organizer, and motivator. So, thank you Win for the many years of leadership. We would do well to follow in your footsteps.

Report From Our President

By Allen S. Joslyn

Kudos to our Members

- The major item of interest at the Annual Meeting was, of course, **Rhett Butler's** announcement that the Archives have gone digital. But I also wanted to thank, in addition to Rhett, some of other volunteers who make the club run.
- **Bo Sullivan** took over preparation of this year's Brochure, which is chock-a-block full of information on Pittsburgh hardware, and very beautifully done.
- **Steve Hannum**, in addition to assuming Win Applegate's editorship of *Victorian Decorative Art*, also wrote two definitive articles for TDC this year, one on Mallory Wheeler's "Arabic" hardware and the other on using the method of attaching a doorknob to its spindle to identify the manufacturer.
- **Steve Rowe** also told us all we probably need to know about cleaning and restoring hardware.
- And of course, we owe a wonderful Convention to **Jeff and Nancy Orman**

Next Conventions

We now have the line-up for Conventions in the next three years:

- 2014 will be in Austin, Texas, July 23-26, 2014, hosted by Susanne Kittel.
- 2015, Liz Gordon will be hosting in Pasadena.
- 2016 Rhett Butler will host in the Boston area.
- Any volunteers for 2017, or is that too far in the future to think about now?

New Member on the ADCA Board

Paul Woodfin, a guy with encyclopedic knowledge of emblematic knobs and a lot else, was elected to the Board, whose composition otherwise remains the same: Win Applegate, Vicky Berol, Jessie Brooks, Rhett Butler, Nick Doto, Steve Hannum, Allen Joslyn, Faye Kennedy, Rich Kennedy, John Roberts, and Steve Rowe. Maude Eastwood and Len Blumin are lifetime members of the Board.

Display Winners for 2013

The contest winners were:

For **Most Original** and **Best Theme Display**, Carol Meermans (note the man shoveling coal in the center; the coal is black beans. The wrought iron background shows off the glass and iron doorknobs.)

For **Best in show**, Steve Hannum and his display of doorknob attachments (see TDC 180), and

For **“The Ugly”**, Steve Menchhofer, Congratulations all!



Most Original and Best Theme



Best in Show



This just goes to show there really were not any outstandingly ugly knobs at the show.

“The Ugly”

Welcome to Our Most Northward New Member

Our Canadian membership has been slowly expanding, but the member farthest North is now Susan Switch in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, Canada. This is a Territory created in 1999, which is the most northward in Canada, and has no road or rail connections to the mainland. It is huge and very lightly populated—32,000 people in an area equal to Western Europe (or one person every 20 square miles, as I calculate it). Rankin Inlet, the second largest city in the Territory, has a population of about 2300 people. There is a fascinating article on the area in Wikipedia. And, yes, it is cold; a weather station in the Territory has the lowest annual temperature of any weather station in Canada.

Ms. Switch is a family law attorney who learned of the ADCA by picking up one of our flyers at Liz’s Hardware in Los Angeles. While there is not much in the way of antique hardware presently in Rankin Inlet, there is in her house in Western Ontario.

Our Westernmost member is Stephanie Ishikawa of Honolulu, Hawaii. The Easternmost member is Justin Helm of Amherst, Nova Scotia. Will the Southernmost member please stand up?

Bo Sullivan!

So further on the subject of our members, Bo Sullivan, who did the 2013 Convention brochure and hosted the 2010 Convention in Portland, Oregon and who is a frequent contributor to *The Old House Journal* on architectural history matters, has a long article in its most recent issue (October 2013) entitled “Game of Thrones, Everything You Need to Know About The Most Important Seat In The House” (that would be the toilet). He has also just recently opened his new gallery in Portland, Bolling & Co., where he deals in rare original antique Victorian and Arts & Crafts wallpapers. Check it out, www.bollingco.com.

The Doorknob Exchange

Members are reminded that your dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade, or wanted at no charge. Business owners who would like a permanent ad and link to their business website should become business members and the ad would be on the last page of the newsletter.

Wanted: The knob is inscribed “The Port of New York Authority Inland Terminal #1” This is all that I know about it. See photo.

Howard Kidorf (#914)

email: kidorf@yahoo.com



The Jefferson Doorknob

By Debbie Fellenz

Several ADCA members have a knob in their collection of a profile of Thomas Jefferson [A-323]. Ever wonder where it came from, other than “someplace in St. Louis?”

Thomas Jefferson was instrumental in acquiring the Louisiana Purchase. Missouri was part of that acquisition and the World’s Fair was held in St. Louis in 1904. The Jefferson Memorial Building was built in 1913 to honor our second president using profits from the fair. It now houses the Missouri History Museum and features a huge stone statue of Jefferson in the atrium.

I have fond memories of the Jefferson Memorial. Many years ago longtime ADCA members Lee and Jim Kaiser visited St. Louis so, of course, we had to go on a doorknob tour. It was dark when we arrived at the Jefferson Memorial, but Jim was determined to see one of those doorknobs. He had a flashlight with him and was looking at one of the exterior knobs. As luck would have it a police car was going by at the time, stopped, and the police asked Jim what he was doing. The three of us (Lee Kaiser, Dolores Fellenz, and myself) in “the getaway car” were laughingly wondering what Jim was telling the police. He must have been convincing since he was released and we resumed our doorknob tour, a bit more cautiously.

At one time, the gift shop in the museum sold metal paperweights similar to the doorknob image. I no longer have a Jefferson knob in my meager collection, but do have one of the paperweights to remind me of that special time.

[Visit the following websites to see two views of the museum.

<http://explorestlouis.com/visit-explore/see-do/see-do-member/?mid=147&member=Missouri+History+Museum&c=75>

and <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/149269>]



Notes from the Convention

By Faye Kennedy

In addition to the buying and selling of hardware, there is also the fellowship of a convention, something you cannot get over the internet. If you have never been to a convention you are missing a wonderful experience.

Our tours on Thursday took us to see the opulence of the Frick mansion. Each room was designed to impress

visitors. The wall coverings looked like hammered leather. We enjoyed the music machine in the entrance hall that played multiple tunes by changing the player rolls, but it not only played like a music box, but also included drums, triangles, and other instruments that you could see as they added to the musical enjoyment.

We went on to the Cathedral of Learning, a class room building at the University of Pittsburgh. Various ethnic groups put forth their ideas for decorating a room to represent the traditions of their culture. We visited several, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Italian, British, etc. Each is unique and acts as a classroom for students.

We also went to the Frick Chapel just across the lawn from the Cathedral. There we were given the chance to sit and listen to the magnificent organ. The stain glass windows give a history lesson; one of which depicted Lincoln freeing the slaves. The chapel is not used for church services, however it is a very busy wedding venue. However, having a wedding in this beautiful space requires connections to the University.

Jay W. Hawkins, author of *Glasshouses & Glass Manufacturers of the Pittsburgh Region, 1795-1910* was our dinner speaker. He told us about the historic glass industry in Pittsburgh. We found out why soda is called "pop" in this area; it has to do with the sound made when the early bottles were opened. Each bottle and glass item he showed us had a story. He is hooked on antique glass bottles and we all enjoyed hearing about them and the influence of glass on the region.

Archives Go Digital

By Rhett Butler

At long last, the Club's archives have been digitized. Well, almost - we are now officially at 80% completion of the original offering (many catalogs still need to be proofread, and missing or damaged pages need to be re-scanned, which is quite labor intensive). What this means is that you will be able to purchase digital versions of catalogs in the Archives rather than having to deal with reams of paper. Instead of purchasing a copy of a copy (and sometimes of a third copy), you will now be getting (with a few exceptions) a full-color high-resolution image of the original catalog or other publication. We were able to do this at a reasonable cost by hiring a company with a Google-style high-speed scanner, which automatically turns pages with puffs of air. The improvement is striking. In a number of cases, the ADCA Archives' versions were supplemented with items from E. R. Butler & Co.'s own collection. We expect to double the offering of catalogs by next year's Convention.

Catalogs can be downloaded by members, who can then copy them onto any medium they wish – hard drive, thumb drive, or DVD. We will no longer offer hard copy versions, thereby avoiding time-consuming order processing, printing and expensive postage. The new order form will be posted on our website in the near future. Until then, please bear with us.

It is important to note that the digital version can not only be installed onto your home computer and printed out in its entirety if one so chooses, but also in selected pages, single pages, as well as close-ups of individual pieces. Different pages and articles from different catalogs and brochures may be combined to build specific targeted material, whether for writing an article for the TDC or for building a hunting list of pieces in which you have a special interest. The digital archives will also support those who may want to upload the data onto their smartphones, tablets, laptops and cloud-based services. The expansion of ones ability to search for information will provide an endless opportunity for discovery.

A very special thank you to Dale Sponaule for his purchase of the original master copies of the Archives, and to Allen Joslyn and Liz Gordon for their support in purchasing complete sets of the new digital archive for the special price of \$ 2,500 (a discount of over 50% from the individual catalogues), comprising a 100% donation to the ADCA Archives to help reimburse the extraordinary costs associated with the digitization of the original catalogues.

The Archives will continue to offer this special introductory purchase until December 31st: a complete full-color high-resolution digital library of all catalogs currently offered (26,346 pages) for \$2,500.

The ADCA Archives very much appreciates the support of our members. Thank you.

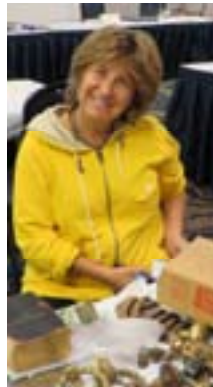
Convention 2013—Friends and Fellowship



Dale Sponaugle, Steve Menchhofer



David Sherk



Liz Gordon



Betty Madison and Jackie Rode



Shelia Menchhofer



Rhett Butler



Yvonne Laddusaw and Nyla Novotny



Sandra Stern & President, Allen Joslyn



Hosts, Nancy & Jeff Orman



Rich & Faye Kennedy



Paul Woodfin



Marshall & Vicky Berol with California wine



John Roberts



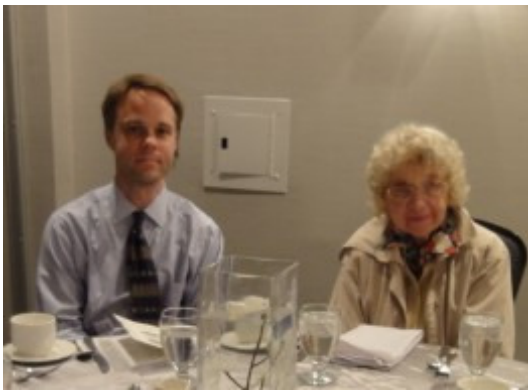
Tom and Andree Dulac



Frick Knob



Nick and Jean Doto



Andrew and Carol Meermans



Steve Rowe



Frick Mansion



Above are three beautifully framed displays; the first two belong to Steve Menchhofer. Far left is a display of iron knobs; middle are samples of P & F Corbin hardware. The third belongs to Allen Joslyn and contains a Mallory Wheeler grape pattern shown in its 1876 catalogue, page 326. .

The doorknob is the knob on some of the doors in the Frick home. The fleur-de-lis pattern was also seen on the floor tiles in the main entrance.

Thanks go out to Nancy Hoker, Faye Kennedy, Nyla Novotny, and Steve Rowe for the photographs from the convention.

Our Business Members

These are paid advertisements. The ADCA assumes no responsibility. For further information about these businesses see the Resource section on our website: www.AntiqueDoorknobs.org.

<p>Materials Unlimited Owner: Reynold Lowe 2 W. Michigan Ave. Ypsalanti, MI 49197 Phone: 800-299-9462 Web Site: MaterialsUnlimited.com Email: Materials@MaterialsUnlimited.com</p>	<p>Antique Door Hardware Collector Owner: Tom Iannucci 16624 Frederick Rd. Mount Airy, MD 21771 Phone: 240-595-1115 Web Site: antiquedoorhardwarecollector.com Email: antiquehardware@verizon.net</p>	<p>Architectural Salvage, Inc. Owner: Elizabeth Werhane 5001 N. Colorado Blvd. Denver, CO 80216 Phone: (303) 321-0200 Web Site: savagelady.com/</p>
<p>Discovery Architectural Antiques Owner: Suzanne Kittel 409 St. Francis Gonzales, TX 78629 Phone: 830-672-2428 Fax: 830-672-3701 Web Site: Discoveryys.net Email: swk@discoveryys.net</p>	<p>The Brass Knob Owners: Donetta George 2311 18th St. N.W. Washington, DC Phone: 202-332-3370 Fax: 202-332-5594 Web Site: theBrassKnob.com Email: BK@theBrassKnob.com</p>	<p>Aurora Mills Architectural Salvage Owner: Mike Byrnes 14971 First St NE Aurora, OR 97002 Phone: 503-678-6083 Fax: 503-678-3299 Web Site: auroramills.com Email: auroramills@centurytel.net</p>
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<p>Albion Doors & Windows Owner: Larry Sawyer PO Box 220 Albion, CA 95410 Phone: 707-937-0078 Fax: (call first) 707-937-0078 Web Site: knobsession.com Email: bysawyer@mcn.org</p>	<p>House of Antique Hardware Owner: Roy Prange 3439 NE Sandy Blvd./PMB 106 Portland, OR 97214 Phone: 888-223-2545 Fax: 503-231-1312 Web Site: HouseofAntiqueHardware.com Email: Sales@HouseofAntiqueHardware.com</p>	<p>Bill's Key & Lock Shop Owner: Andy Streenz 127 E. Beaufort St. Normal, IL 61761or 401 N. Main St. Bloomington, IL 61701 Phone: 309-827-5522 Web Site: billskeyandlockshop.com Email: locksmith@billskeyandlockshop.com</p>

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