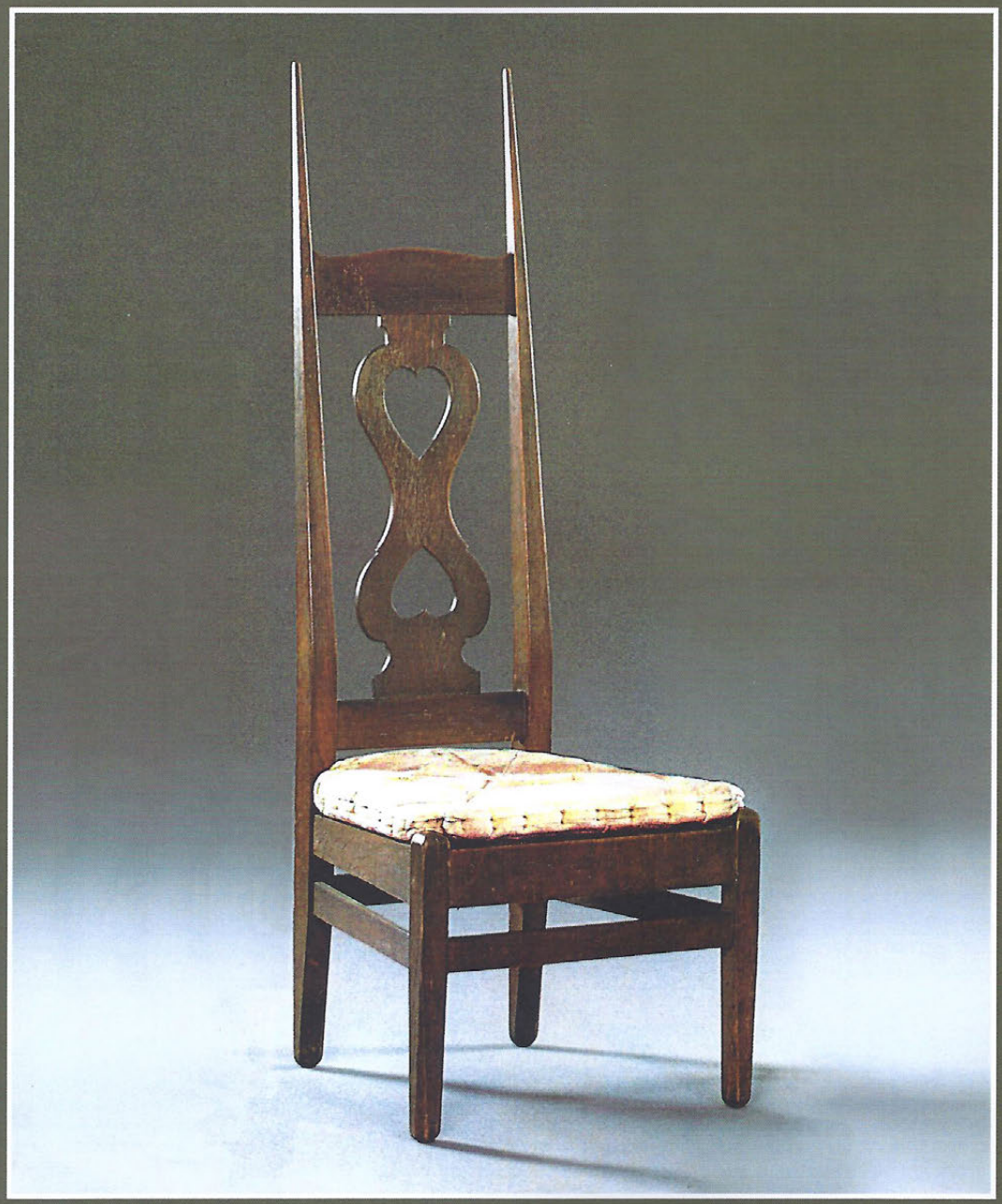
THE ORCHARD



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Voysey's aluminium clocks

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This article should be seen as an addendum to Dr Ian Hamerton's more comprehensive article covering all of Voysey's architectural clocks and published in the Voysey Society Journal, *The Orchard*, Number Three, Autumn 2014. This article focuses solely on Voysey's sand cast aluminium clocks and, in particular, the provenance and manufacture of these clocks.

An early draft of this article informed both the recent Fine Art Society Catalogue, Volume 8 "Architect Designers" and, in turn, the latest book on Voysey as a designer, edited by Karen Livingstone, both of which give extensive coverage to this version of the clock. In the author's view the clock warrants this special focus as a significant, radical, example of Voysey's industrial modernist design, with an exceptional exhibition pedigree.

It is thought that three Voysey clocks were made[1] in aluminium, with the design and manufacture dated to 1902. The design is clearly taken from Voysey's renowned painted clock that dates to around 1896, an example of which is shown in figure 1. The overall architectural form of that clock is thought to be taken from a 1896 Voysey design for a gatehouse at Greyfriars, Puttenham, for J Sturges, shown in figure 2.

The three known aluminium clocks

Set out over leaf are the images of the two known Voysey clocks showing the subtle differences between each. Figures 3a-c show the clock held at the V&A (Ref CIRC 519-1962); figures 4a-c show the clock previously in the John Scott collection. A third privately held clock is known to exist to the same design but it has not been possible to reproduce it here.

A comparison of the two clocks overall shows them to be very similar. The dimensions of each are the same, being 49.5cm tall, 26.7cm width, and 17.8cm deep. The construction of each clock is the same as are the dials and fittings to the rear door. The clear impression is that they were cast and made at the same time. Small differences are, however, instructive.

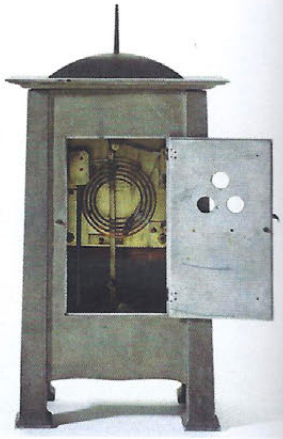
The V&A clock has a pendulum movement by Kamerer Kuss & Co. It also has three holes bored in the back, presumably to release the clock's chimes. The John Scott clock has a period French carriage movement and no such holes, resulting in the clock's chimes being rather muffled. It would seem, based on this, and the rather disjointed appearance created by the holes in the reverse of the V&A clock, that the need to create vents to allow the escape of the chimes was an afterthought and rectified post casting.

Finally the John Scott clock has a cover to the face, though this is readily pulled off to reveal a dial almost identical to the V & A's. It seems

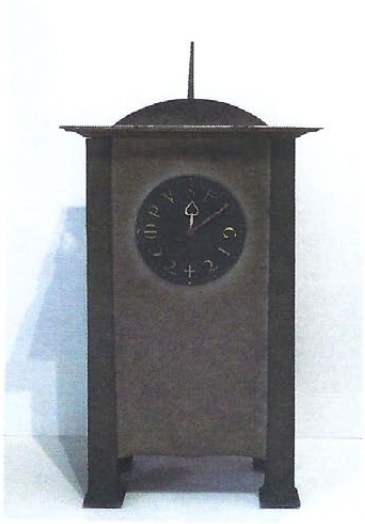
1
Based on there being only three known to exist today

Figure 1 – Voysey painted clock

Figure 2 – Greyfriars Gate House



Figures 3a,b,c – "V&A" clock



Figures 4a,b,c – "John Scott" clock

Figure 3d – "V&A" dial

Figure 4d – "John Scott" dial

Figure 4e – "Scott" clock, glass cover (right)

the cover may not be part of the original design, though it is certainly old. Significantly, the dials differ very slightly in the style of the letters spelling "Tempus Fugit".[2] Most clearly, the "2's" are slightly different, the V&A's showing a sharper, longer up-turn to the tail of the number.[3]

The illustration to the right shows what appears to be a studio shot of one of Voysey's aluminium clocks reproduced in 1904 in *Der Moderne Stil*, Volume VI, plate 59, figure 5. It is neither the V&A's clock (not front winding) nor the "John Scott" clock (up tick to the tail of the two on the dial) and so is believed to represent the third clock currently in private hands; it has unfortunately not been possible to obtain images for this article.

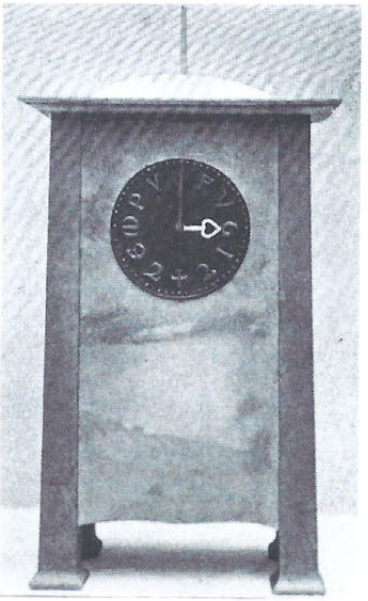


Figure 5 – Voysey's "third" aluminium clock, Der Moderne Stil

Exhibition history and provenance

Voysey's aluminium clocks have a strong exhibition pedigree and, fortunately for today's researchers, were much photographed and published at the time. Eight different published contemporary photos of the clock have been identified in the period 1902-1907, all of which are illustrated here.

The first record we have of a Voysey aluminium clock is at the English section of the prestigious Turin 1902 International Exhibition (figure 6). A photo of the clock was published in *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration* Vol 11, 5th February 1903, page 235. The same clock was also published in *Dekorative Kunst* Volume 10, Issue 11th August 1902, page 417 as part of its coverage of the Exhibition.[4]

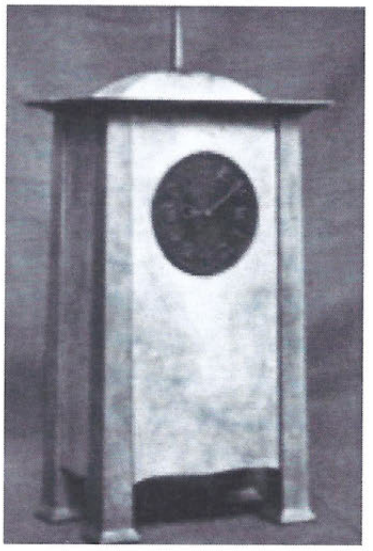


Figure 6 – Turin Exhibition 1902 (Dekorative Kunst)

The original photo from Dekorative Kunst is sufficiently clear to show that the dial is not front winding and has the numeral "2" the same as that on the clock in Der Moderne Stil (figure 5), and unlike that on the "John Scott" clock.

An aluminium clock was also exhibited in the London 1903 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (ACES) where it was exhibit 394c listed as being designed by Voysey and executed by W H Tingey. *The Studio* (Volume 28 Issue 119, February 1903, page 27) commenting on the Exhibition wrote:

"Mr Voysey also shows a clock in a plain aluminium case with a clear and legible dial..."

The photo on the following page shows the clock published in a German journal of the period (not traced). The clock can be seen in the far left centre of the photograph, standing on a cabinet.

The catalogue entry for the ACES exhibition describes the clock as having a pendulum movement, while the original photos of the clock shows that it is not front winding. This rules out it being either the V&A clock (front winding) or the "John Scott" clock (carriage movement), so most likely is the third known clock, held in private hands..

2
Tempus Fugit is Latin for "time flies". For a further discussion on Voysey's dial design, which is not specific to his aluminium clocks, see Dr Ian Hamerton's article in Number III of *The Orchard*

3
Other differences in the dial may be more likely relative differences in condition, the Scott clock being protected by the glass cover

Figure 7 – New Zealand International Exhibition 1906-07

A wonderful survival regarding this clock at the ACES Exhibition exists within the V&A's archives.[5] An original ACES catalogue with annotations of sales shows that the clock was sold for £10 10s 0d[6] to a B Schlesinger of Palace Court. A surviving letter from B Schlesinger to Voysey dated 17th April 1903 suggests the sale may not in fact have been completed. B Schlesinger was an affluent banker working for the then leading merchant bank A Keyser & Co. He wrote:

"I have received your card for the Aluminium Striking Clock. I regret the price is £10 10s 0d as I did not intend giving more than £7 or £8 for it."

A Voysey aluminium clock, also ascribing W H Tingey as maker, was shown in the 1906-07 New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch. A large arts and crafts gallery was put together by Walter Crane and Alfred Longden[7] and the photo shown as figure 7 just captures Voysey's clock (see extreme left of photo) alongside the stained glass exhibits. It has not been possible to identify which of the three clocks travelled to New Zealand.

Outside of the coverage of the major exhibitions of the period, and the photo in *Der Moderne Stil*, two other photographs are known of the clocks. One in Voysey's own office is shown as figure 9. Given that the V&A clock was a gift from Voysey's daughter, it seems likely it is the same clock as that photographed.

Finally, an aluminium clock can be seen in a photo of the interiors of the drawing room at Hollymount, built by Voysey for C T Burke around 1905; the photo of the completed interior was taken in 1907 (figure 10a). By enlarging the image of the clock (figure 10b) it can be seen not to be front winding and to have the number "2" on the dial seen only in the "John Scott" clock. It is possible Voysey only dressed the interior of Hollymount for the photographs, but equally likely it seems this clock may have been a permanent part of the Hollymount interiors.[8]

4
The clock was erroneously described as being by Charles Ashbee

5
I am indebted to Max Donnelly of the V&A for showing me this material

6
This seems quite cheap when you consider that tiny Liberty & Co silver Cymric clocks were priced at about £8 at this time

7
See Sir Isodore Spielman's "The British Government exhibit at the New Zealand International Exhibition", British Art Section

Figure 8 – ACES 1903 (German Journal)

Figure 9 – Voysey's office c1910

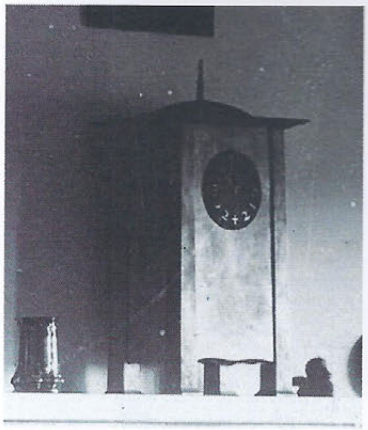


Figure 10a – Hollymount interior enlarged to show clock (above)

Figure 10b – Hollymount interior 1907 (right)

Figure 11 – Voysey writing desk with Tingey hinge, 1896

William Harold Tingey

The manufacturer of the clock is a particular focus of this article. The 1903 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society and the New Zealand 1906 Exhibition catalogues both state that the respective clocks exhibited were executed by W H Tingey. Tingey is also identified in *The Studio Year Book of Decorative Arts* Volume 1, 1906, page 182, as executing a Voysey pierced metal hinge which can be seen on a Voysey 1896 cabinet made for W Ward Higgs held in the V&A.[9]

In fact it seems unlikely Tingey executed the clock for Voysey directly, or at least not as typically understood as a craftsman. William Harold Tingey was a wealthy patron of Voysey and quite possibly a family friend. Born in Kent around 1869, he built up a highly successful cement and quarrying business around Medway in Kent.

An academic man, he went to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he was a founding member of the college's Aula club. He rapidly built the family quarry business into a major enterprise. In 1900 he merged the business with several others to form The Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers, of which he was a director, and seems to have effectively retired from executive duties from this point. He was clearly interested in science, being a fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society and, from 1899, a member of the British Astronomical Association. He died in August 1917. Below is Tingey's obituary published shortly after his death in the February 1918 *Astronomical Society Journal.*

"William Harold Tingey was born in 1868 at Rochester, where his family has resided for many years, owning a cement works, which have now been acquired by another company. He was educated at Brighton College and Trinity Hall Cambridge where he studied law, being subsequently called to the Bar; he did not, however, practise as a barrister.

8
The New Zealand International Exhibition finished in April 1907 and the passage back to the UK would have taken around 40 days. It seems plausible, having got a spare clock back from that exhibition, Voysey sold it to Burke as part of his wider commission for Hollymount

9
See V&A collections, reference W6-1953. The manufacture of the entire cabinet was originally and erroneously attributed to Tingey. An image of the same or similar cabinet is also published in The Studio Volume 7 Issue 38, May 1896 p217

He married about 1892 Miss M Tovey, daughter of Colonel Tovey, R.E. She survives him with two sons, the elder of whom is a Captain in the R.E and an expert in wireless telegraphy.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society on 10th February 1899, and was also a Fellow of the Meteorological Society.

Besides his interest in astronomy, Mr Tingey followed many other scientific pursuits, and was well known as an amateur actor.

He died on 3rd August 1917 in a nursing home as a result of an operation. He was sincerely respected, and his death is deplored by a large circle of friends."

Tingey's links to Voysey are numerous. Voysey's "white" and "black" books list Voysey as decorating the drawing room and designing furniture for Rede Court in 1897/8, Tingey's main residence in Strood; and between 1901 and 1904 conducting "alterations and decorations" for Tingey on 53 Campden House Court, Gloucester Walk, Kensington (a new mansion block of the period not by Voysey). The culmination of Tingey's patronage came in 1914 when he comissioned a large house in Berkshire near Thatcham and Cold Ash, for which the designs are held in RIBA. The house was never built, presumably due to the onset of war.

In addition, in the 1901 census Arthur Voysey, Charles' brother and an electrical engineer, is listed as staying at Tingey's Surrey home as a visitor. Of note is that in September 1902 Arthur Voysey and Tingey jointly applied for a patent covering a device for time lapse photography (application number GBD190220071) which included using a clock within a complex mechanism.[10]

A reference in Voysey's indexed address book held at RIBA (RIBA Ref VoC/2/2) seems to resolve the mystery of who actually cast the clocks' aluminium cases. This reference is illustrated in figure 12 and shows that alongside Harold Tingey's address for Rede Court, Rochester, Voysey has written:

"....founder for castings of clock. W.C. Barker, Strood, Kent"

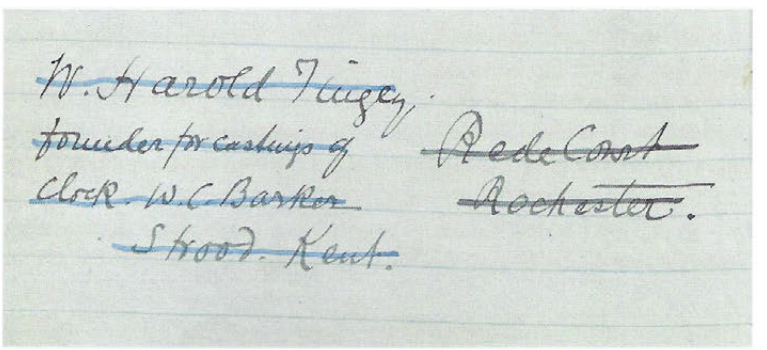


Figure 12 – Extract from Voysey's address book (Copyright RIBA Library Drawings & Archives Collections)

It seems from this that Tingey provided Voysey with a foundry to make the clocks and perhaps, given Tingey's apparent expertise in this area, we might assume he then oversaw the clocks' overall manufacture and assembly.

The foundry referenced is almost certainly W C Barker of Gun Lane, Strood. The foundry was established by William Cobbett Barker (1817-1902) and continued by his son and grandson of the same name. Whilst no direct link has been found between the foundry and Tingey, it seems highly likely there would have been close connections between the two firms and owners. Tingey's principal residence until around 1900 was Rede Court, just a mile from the foundry. The Cobbett Barkers also lived in Strood, were active in local social and political circles and would almost certainly therefore have known Tingey, himself an eminent local figure.

Quite who inspired the choice of aluminium is unknown. It may well of course have been Voysey, but perhaps Tingey himself, the inventor industrialist, also played a role. We can certainly assume Voysey was happy with the outcome, given the decision to display versions of the clock at three major international exhibitions.

Conclusion

We cannot be sure of the exact provenance specific to each aluminium clock but this article does allow some progress in this area. The three dials show slight but sufficient differences to allow specific attributions using contemporary photographs.

Assuming only three clocks were ever made, then the clock featured in *Der Moderne Stil* (figure 5) was exhibited at Turin in 1902 and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in London in 1903. Which clock was exhibited in Christchurch 1906 has not been established.[11]

In terms of ownership, it seems very likely that one clock stayed with Voysey and was ultimately donated by his daughter to the V&A. It seems reasonable to assume that one clock would have been retained by Tingey himself – perhaps for the new flat in Campden Hill Court for which Voysey was commissioned to do the interior. Quite possibly the third clock formed part of the interiors of the Hollymount and was owned by C T Burke.

All three clocks appear to be have been made and cast from the same source, the W C Barker foundry close to W H Tingey's home in Strood. Since Tingey, not the foundry, is twice cited in Exhibition catalogues as having manufactured the clock, we can assume he oversaw the overall production. It is possible the clocks were assembled at slightly different dates. There is a greater refinement observable in the dial of the "John Scott" clock, and possibly also that featured in *Der Moderne Stil* (and now in private hands), that may suggest they were made slightly after Voysey's own clock, now in the V&A.

10
In July 1899 Tingey also applied for a patent for a device to improve measurement of speed of rotation notably for anemometers. This also included a complex mechanism integrating a clock

11
In more recent times the "John Scott" clock has been exhibited at Tokyo Sezon Museum of Art, Birth of Modern Design Exhibition, 1990 and the Pittsburgh Carnegie Museum of Art, Aluminium by Design, Jewellery to Jets, 2000-1. The V&A clock was exhibited in the V&A's Exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts, 1952, Cat no S.17

As Dr Ian Hamerton's article identifies, these Voysey aluminium clocks are quite striking in their design. The oxidisation of aluminium is rapid so the dull surface we see today would have been contemporary, as is clear from photographs of the period. So unique and innovative is this clock that there is really very little in the decorative arts of the period, or after, that draws close comparison. The clocks can perhaps be seen as a forerunner of the use of aluminium in the decorative arts in the inter war period, but these pieces tended to demonstrate the light weight, flexible and lustrous qualities of aluminium, in total contrast to Voysey's clock.

The clock's appearance most closely resembles Voysey's own architectural finish to his homes and the gatehouse on which the clock design is based. In this regard the clock has a modernity that is nearest in style to the austere concrete or cement finishes seen in post-war modernist architecture. For the author therefore, this clock can be seen as a radical piece of design and one which perfectly epitomises the bridge between the arts and crafts movement and modern industrial design.

Acknowledgements

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