

MIH ACQUISITIONS IN 2020, CONTINUING IN SPITE OF THE PANDEMIC

Although it was necessary to cancel its public inauguration as part of the traditional ceremony of donations and acquisitions following the general assembly of "amisMIH" (Friends of MIH), the *New acquisitions* exhibition shall be on show at the MIH from Friday 19 March. Alongside precision military instruments, the acquisitions made during 2020 are mostly technical pocket watches and ladies' timepieces. The new issue of the *Le Carillon* magazine, the annual bulletin edited jointly by the MIH and Friends of MIH, shall also be released on the same day.

Three Franco-German military timepieces from the 20th century

A chronometer from the German Navy signed Franz Lidecke No. 496, dating from circa 1916, in excellent condition, has been added to the MIH collections, thanks to a donation by the daughter of the British officer, writer and politician Stephen King-Hall (1893-1966), who obtained the piece himself from a German officer at the end of the war.

This chronometer sits alongside another clock from the German Air Force signed Pintsch, Berlin. This curious piece from the inter-war period, produced by the company Telefunken, was used by communications troops to send Morse code. The signals were sent to aid aircraft navigation, specifically for the approach to landing. The cast iron case is suspended from a tubular frame using eight robust springs.

The final addition to this collection is an electric marine chronometer by Leroy, used by the Naval Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service of the French Navy in the 1960s.

Musical watch

A musical watch stamped "Piguet et Meylan", established in Geneva between 1811 and 1828, has also been added to the collection thanks to the support of Friends of MIH. Developed as a result of the collaboration between Isaac Daniel Piguet and Philippe Samuel Meylan, its calibre is of technical interest and beautifully showcases the expertise involved in musical watches. The quarter-hour repetition chiming on two gongs can be unlocked using a trigger-piece on the edge of the case. Every hour on the hour, the chime plays a sweet melody created with the vibration of 26 blades arranged in a fan shape around a disc, equipped with pins and powered by a circular movement. This melody can be silenced or triggered on demand.

Sun dial signed François Ducommun

The MIH has also successfully added to its extraordinary collection of pieces by François Ducommun with the acquisition of an equinoctial sun dial dating from the first quarter of the 19th century. Alongside the MIH's great orrery, several *telluria* and a painted portrait of the watchmaker, the equinoctial ring joins this fine collection of items showcasing the work of one of the most renowned watchmakers of the 19th century.

Tribute to Fridolin Wiget, former curator of the MIH

With the acquisition of three pocket watches linked to Fridolin Wiget, former deputy director of the La Chaux-de-Fonds watchmaking school and curator of the museum, the MIH is paying tribute to his great dedication to watchmaking and vocational education. He is credited with designing several calibres, particularly the 65-mm calibre, which each student technician produces by hand for submission to the Observatory competition.

Le Carillon

Le Carillon, the annual bulletin of the MIH and Friends of MIH, will be published to mark the occasion. This 47th issue, prefaced by anthropologist Ellen Hertz, emphasises the role of the MIH in preserving the 'craftsmanship of mechanical watchmaking and art mechanics', which was included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage on 16th December 2020, and celebrated in a temporary exhibition entitled "*Transmissions. Picturing the Intangible*", which can be visited until 7th November, as a complementary exhibition at both the MIH and the Besançon Museum of Time. Le Carillon is available from the MIH or by request at amismih@ne.ch.

La Chaux-de-Fonds, 16th March 2021

Photos HD https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nxWK2V4SFRBI0w_8v5IATswT-1kFf3V8?usp=sharing



German Air Force signalling clock by Julius Pintsch, circa 1935 © MIH, V. Savanyu



German Navy chronometer signed Franz Lidecke No. 496, circa 1916 © MIH, V. Savanyu



Chronostat III No. 2012 by L. Leroy & Cie, Paris, circa 1970 © MIH, V. Savanyu



Musical pocket watch chiming on the hour and on demand, with quarter-hour repetition, Pignet & Meylan, circa 1820 © MIH, V. Savanyu



Equinoctial sun dial by François Ducommun, La Chaux-de-Fonds, circa 1825 © MIH, V. Savanyu