

**Tony Beck - Lock Collector, Derby**

**A Brief History of Chubb,  
Lock & Safe Makers**

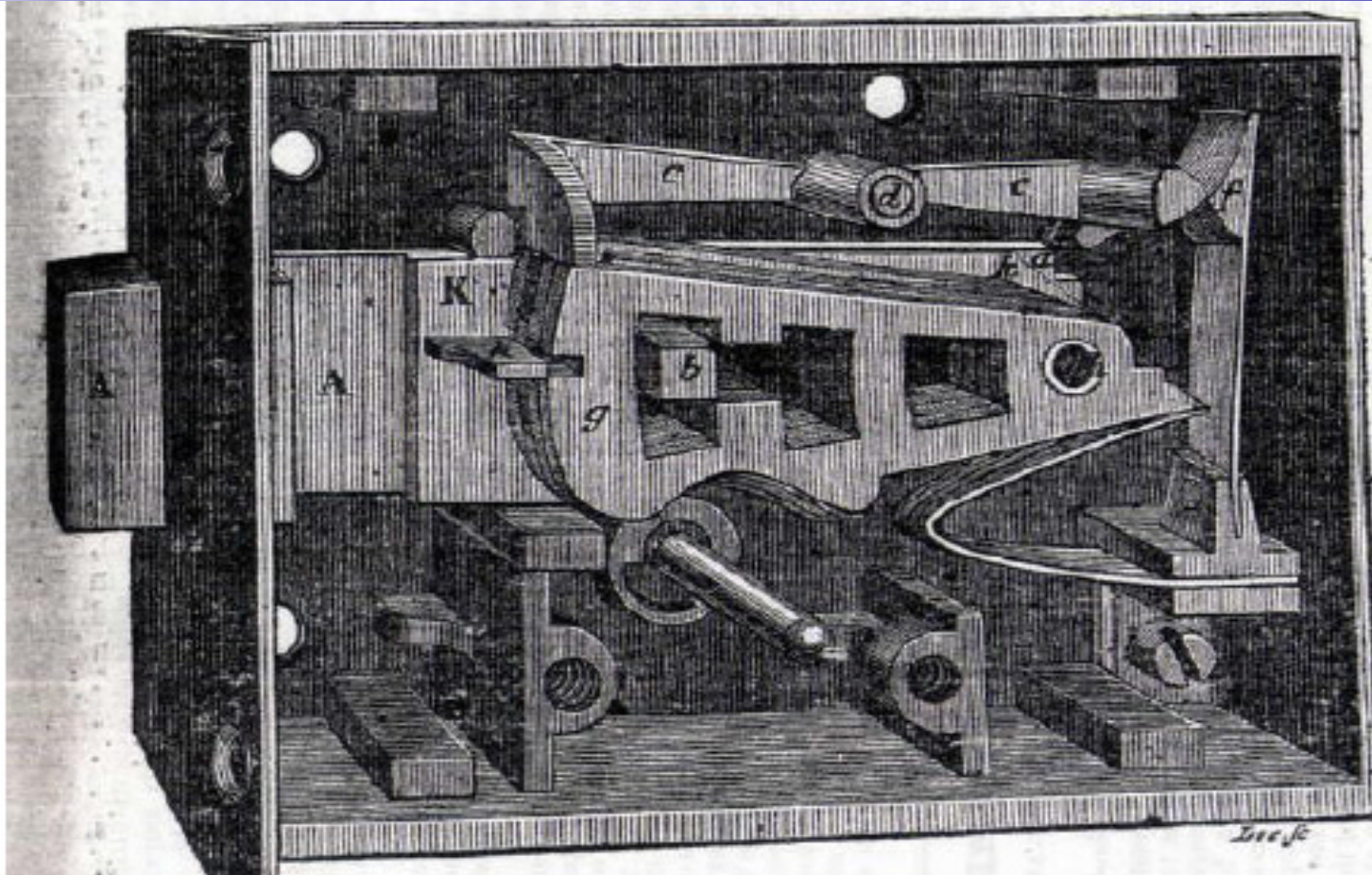
With particular attention to their lock invention  
and the choice of Wolverhampton to start  
manufacture.

# How did Chubb Succeed?

- **Brothers, Charles (b. 1779) & Jeremiah (b. 1793) started as Blacksmiths**
- **Developed an interest in locks**
- **Invented a revolutionary 'Detector' lock that would immobilise the bolt and inform the Owner if an incorrect key is used.**
- **It was unique and greatly increased security**

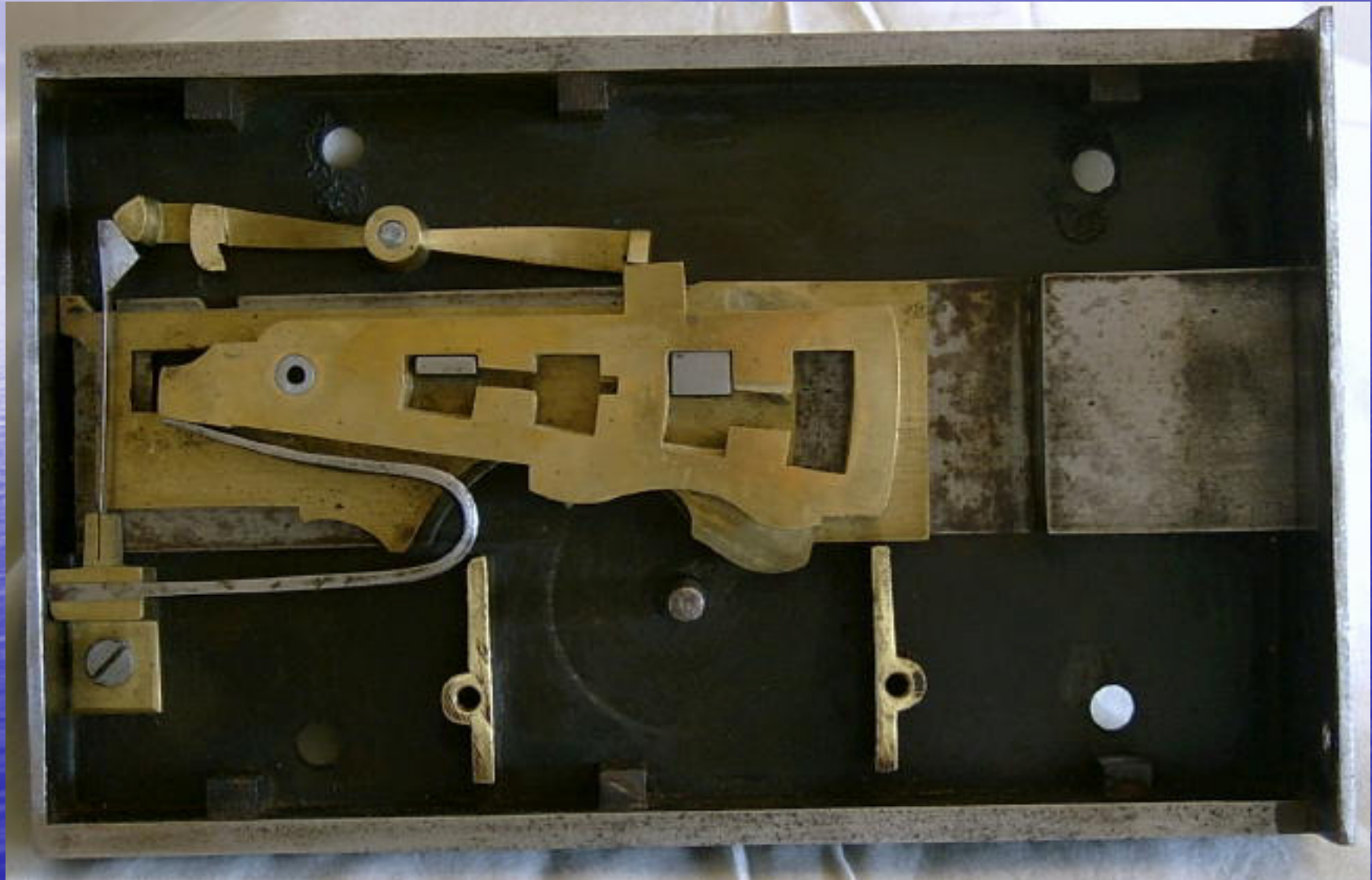


# Chubbs Original Patent Lock (1818). - a Rare Engraving, 1823.



This is the 1818 *original patent* lock. An over-lifted lever causes the see-saw detector "C" to move up, and the spring "F" hooks it into the notch "a" of the bolt, which is then immobilised. Turning the proper key restores the levers to their *regulating combination* and admits a stub on the regulating slider "K" into the lever end grooves. Then the bevelled end of the slider is pressed against the spring to unhook the detector from the bolt notch.

**Chubb's improved patent lock invented June 1824**  
(Omits the use of a separate Regulating Key, the levers are changed & slider bolt is removed, but broadly similar).





# **Why Choose Wolverhampton to Expand?**

- **Historically established as the centre of lock making**
- **Lockmaking was its chief trade in 1680 and in 1732 Wolverhampton's locksmiths were "reckoned the most expert in England"**
- **Availability of expert skills in lock manufacture & reputation for quality**
- **Plentiful supply of experienced labour**
- **Local availability of production materials, coal, coke and iron.**

# The Temple Street factory (1820 to 1836)

- as it appeared a good number of years after Chubb's departure



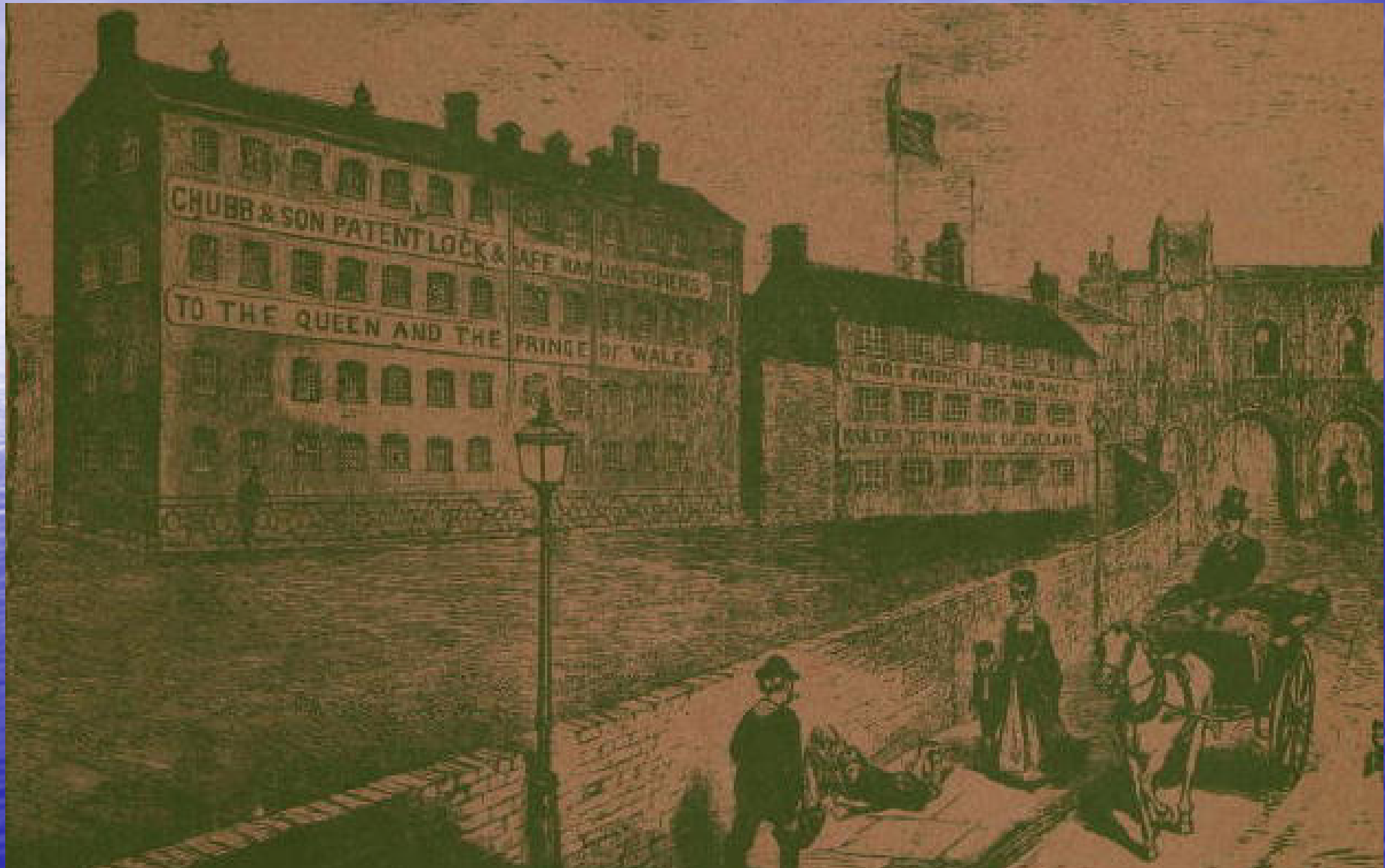
# **Their early Public Recognition**

- 1823 Secured a Navy Board Contract to supply a “considerable” number of locks for Admiralty use - (as reported in the Mechanics Magazine: November 1823).
- That year they also obtained a Special Licence as Suppliers to the Royal Household of King George IV (equivalent to Queen Victoria’s Royal Warrant).
- Chubb’s Products are bought by the Duke of Wellington and the Bank of England.



# Chubb's Horseley Fields factory (1839 to 1882)

- a former Workhouse built in 1700 & print taken around 1850





# Horseley Fields factory. How it looked in 1913 (30 Years after Chubb had vacated).

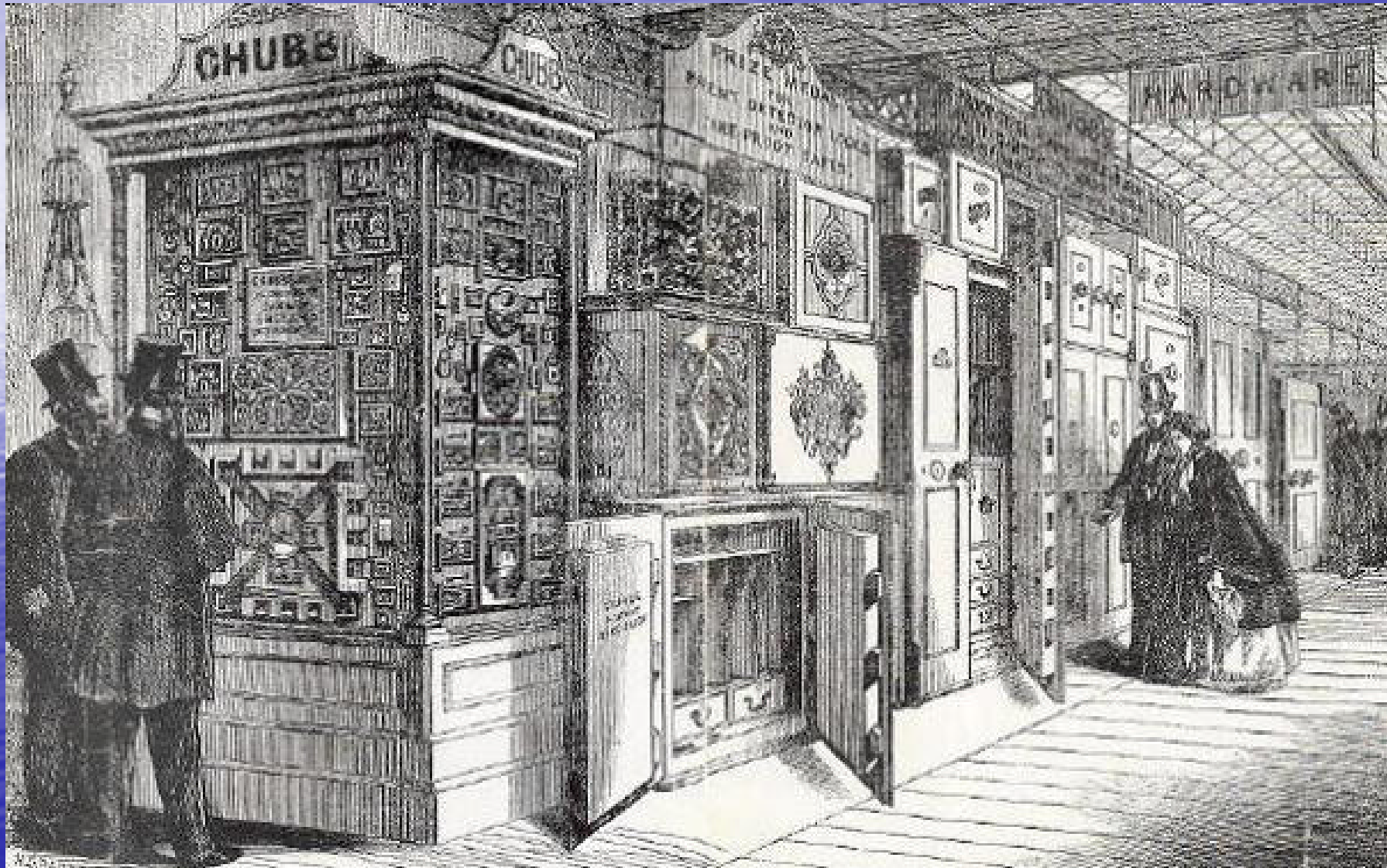


# 1851. What Happened Then?

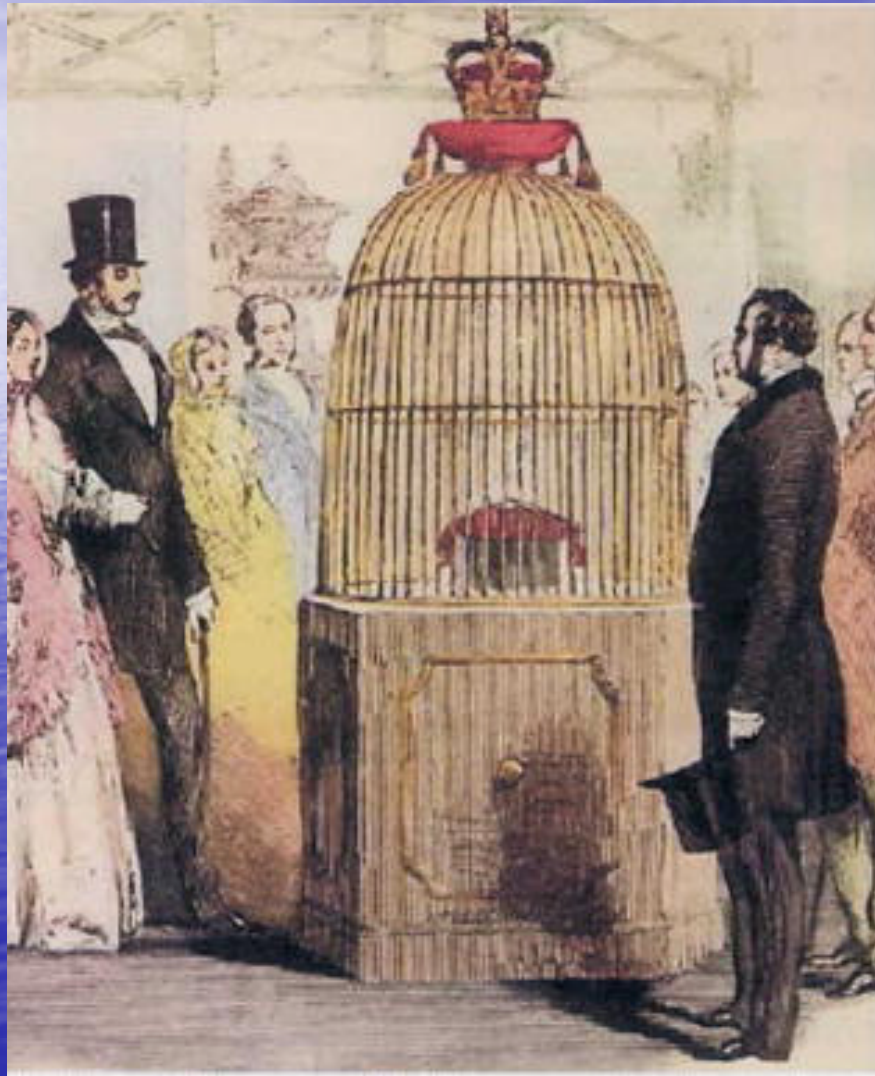
- The year of the *Great Exhibition* where Chubb had a Stand to display their goods to the World.
- Chubb entrusted to protect the Kohinoor diamond
- Aubin's four tier 'Wedding Cake' of locks now owned by Chubb was first displayed at the Exhibition
- The American, A. C. Hobbs unpicks a Chubb lock. Caused great concern and a need to take swift protective measures
- Chubb chosen to provide locks for the first ever Post Office street letter box, and continued to provide these locks.



# Chubb's Stand at the Great Exhibition



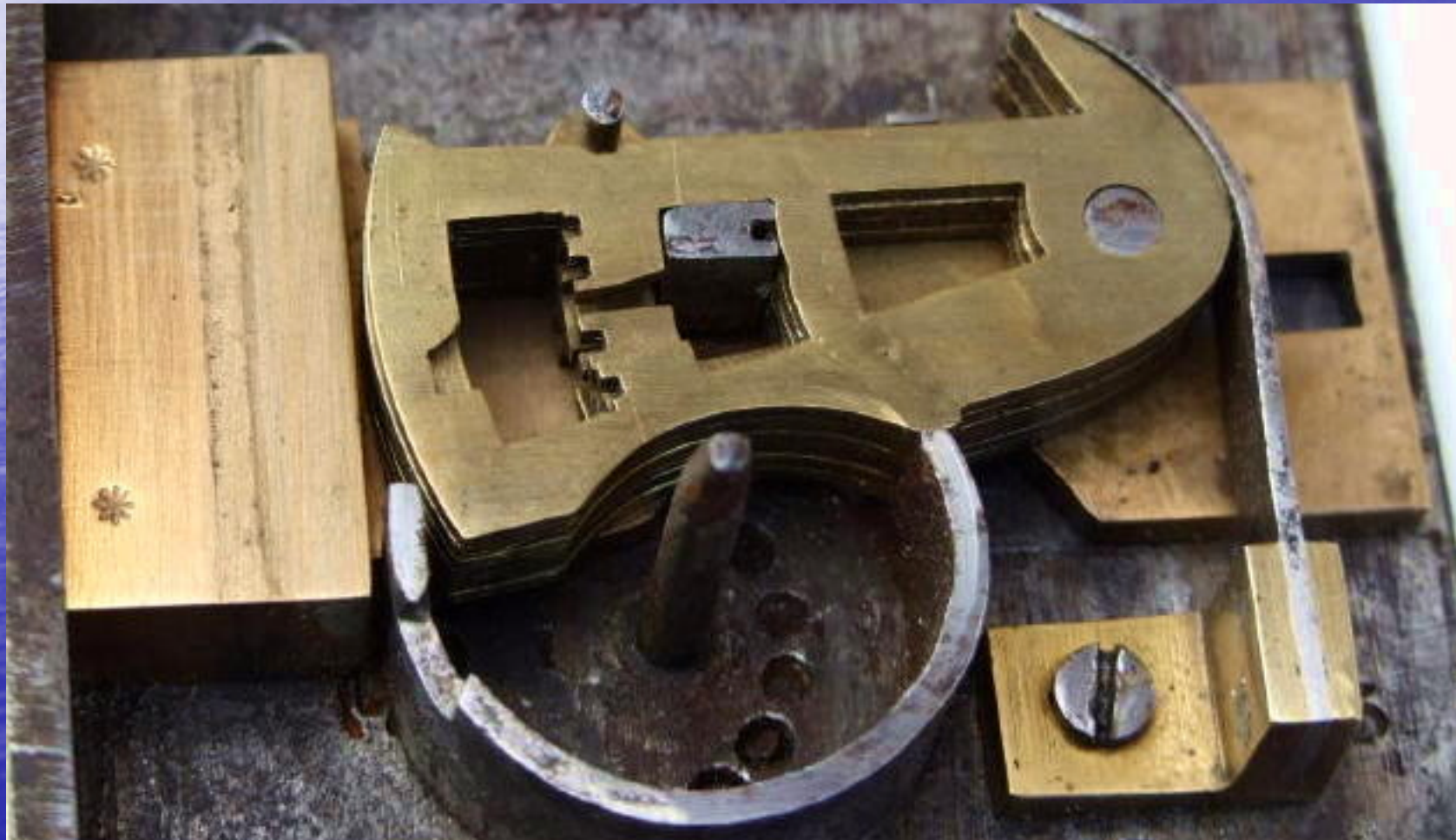
# The Great Exhibition of 1851: (1) Chubb's 'well' safe that protected the Kohinoor diamond, and 2) Aubin's 'Wedding Cake' of Locks:



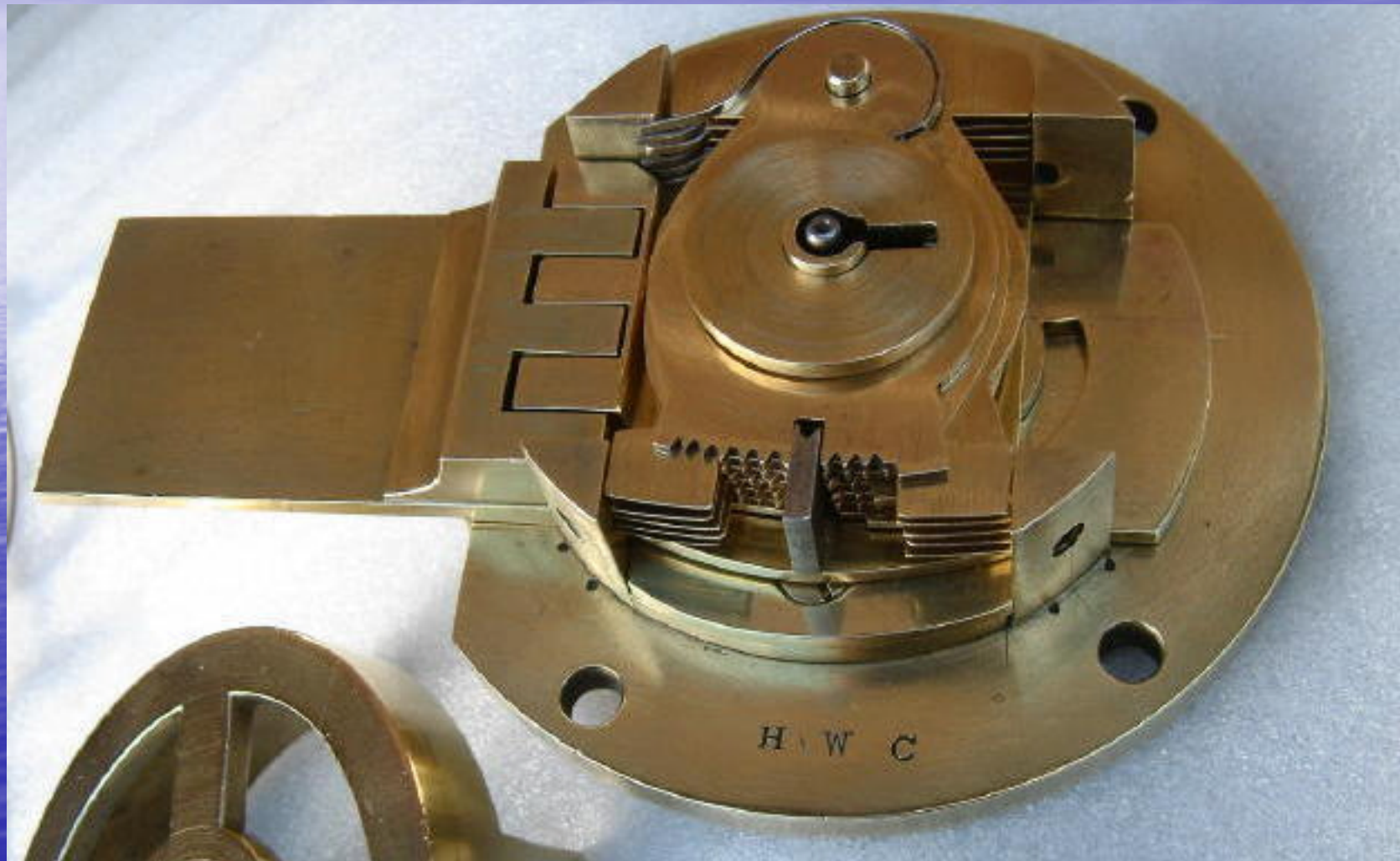


## Chubbs Protective action against Lock Picking:

- \* False notches on the levers hooks the bolt stub
- \* Metal guard around the key access
- \* Oval disc/pipe 'curtain' around the key pin (not shown; illustrated in next slide)
- \* Weakened blow- out hole against gun powder



**John Chubb died 1872. 3 Sons Succeeded and maintained 'Family' Attitude & 'Hands on' style.  
Harry Withers Chubb lock below (14.10. 1892):**





# 1899, The New Railway Street Works

- built to accommodate 350 Locksmiths.

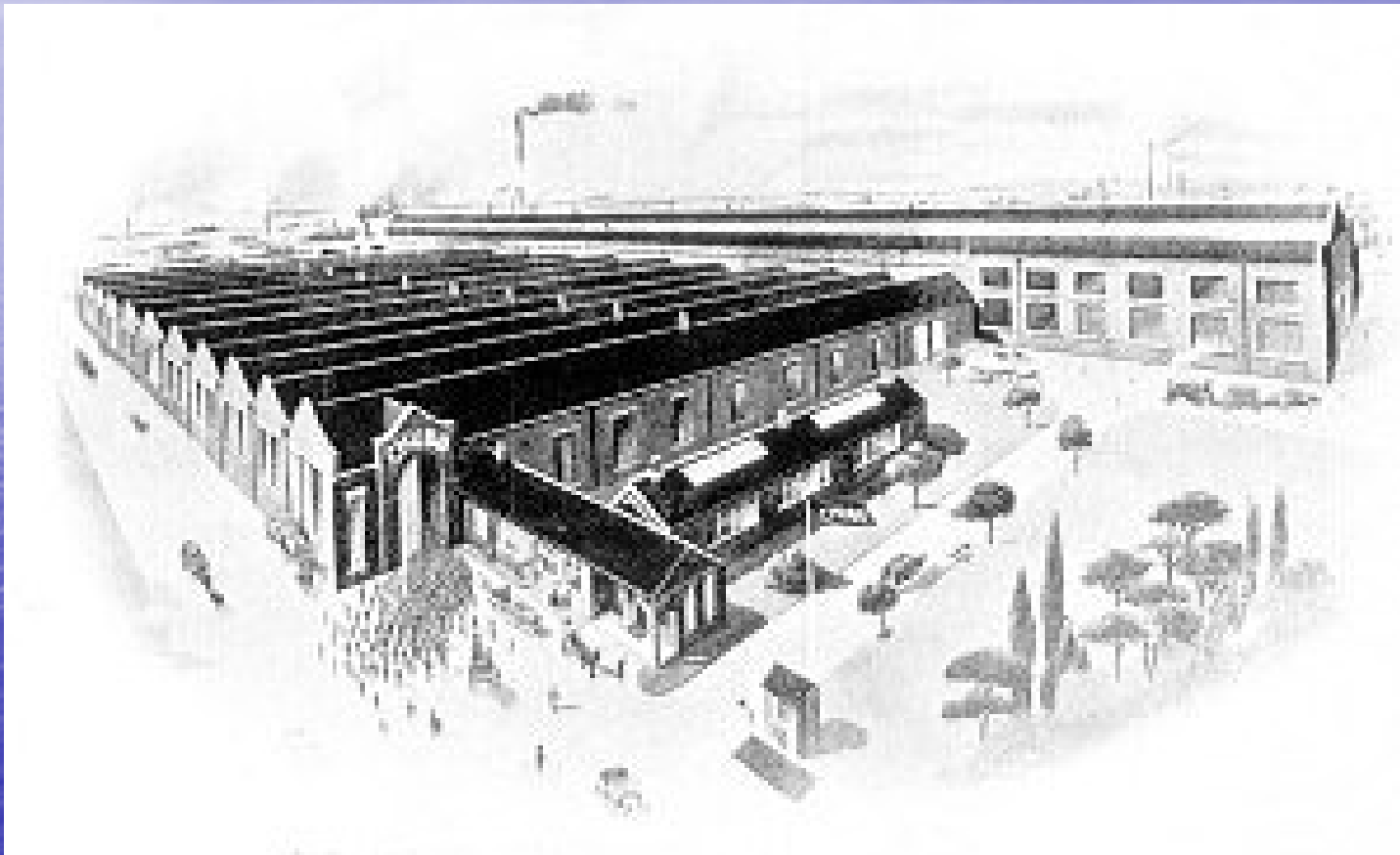


# Some of the Employees at Work:



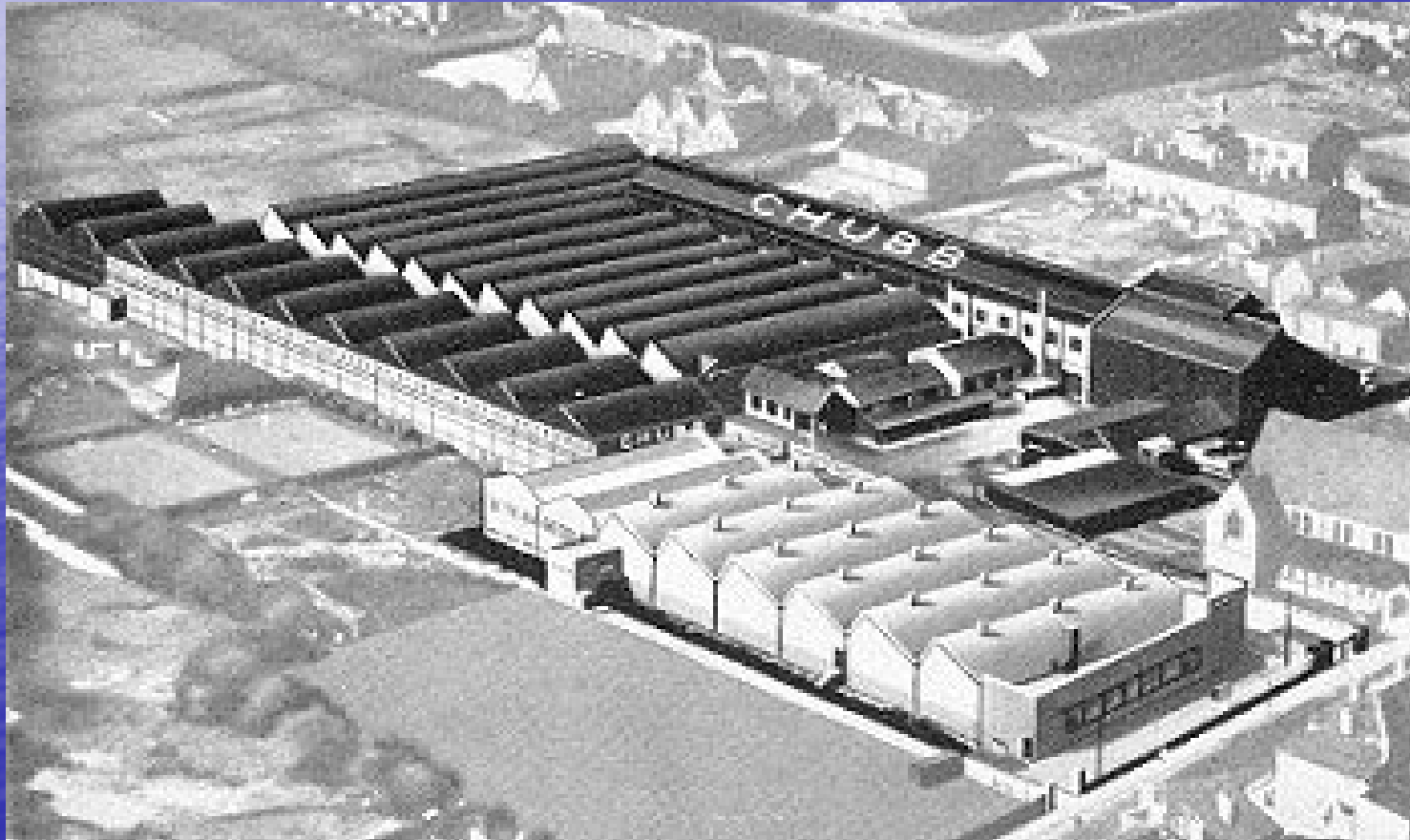
MAKING THE LOCKS AT CHUBBS

1908, The new Safe Works at Wednesfield Road  
to accommodate 350 safe making workers





**1938. The new Lock Works at Wednesfield Road, replacing the Railway Street Works (The 1908 Safe Works development can be seen at the rear marked "Chubb" with the eleven bay building in front). Pictured in 1948.**



# **Chubb's Multi-National Business was recently split up:**

- **In 2000. The Safes Group was sold to Sweden's global security giant Gunnebo.**
- **August 2000. The Lock Security Group was bought by another Swedish based firm, Assa Abloy.**
- **In 2003 Chubb's Electronic Security & Fire Protective Division was sold off to another massive organisation, the USA based United Technologies Corporation**

**A Modern Chubb lock incorporating much of the mechanism originating in Victorian times:**





# Lock Collecting today:

- A live worldwide hobby with around 2000 items appearing for sale on U.K/USA eBay most days
- European Lock Collectors meet each year, and in September 2007 at Rouen Lock Museum
- U.K has the Lock Collectors Association. Its new web site [www.lockcollectors.eu](http://www.lockcollectors.eu) will shortly be available to the public. With [www.lockcollecting.eu](http://www.lockcollecting.eu) for members use.

# **A Dedicated Lock Museum in the U.K.?**

- **Willenhall's Lock Museum is closed**
- **Britain led the world in Lock invention and has no Lock Museum!**
- **Many Countries have at least one, e.g.: France, Italy, Holland, Germany, USA .**
- **Funding: Chubb may be willing to help, plus Lottery and other grant aid.**
- **Would the Wolverhampton & District public (so much involved with lock making for many years) be willing to support such a project? Even if initially on a small scale?**



**Thanks for listening, I hope  
you found the presentation  
interesting.**

I will place a copy of my illustrated  
discussion notes on our Lock  
Collector's Association web site  
[www.lockcollectors.eu](http://www.lockcollectors.eu)