

FULCRUM

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FULCRUM is the newsletter of ISASC(E), the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors (Europe). It is published in February, May, August and November. Contributions should be sent to the Editor, John Knights.

Autumn Meeting

The annual meeting took place at the Yew Tree Hotel at Kegworth on Sunday 8th October.

Attendance was disappointing and we were not even able to hold an Annual General Meeting as we did not have sufficient members in attendance for a quorum.

It unfortunately appears that this meeting is no longer required by the members, who have hitherto attended, so any future such gatherings are unlikely.

We are left with the problem of how we hold the AGM and this is under consideration by the Committee.

Our good friend John Wintour has offered to continue to invite members to meet at his premises and this may present an opportunity for the business meeting to be held.

The date for the next such gathering will be Sunday 15th July 2018.

The day had its highlight however as Barry Oliver gave an amusing and interesting talk about the so called Beale balance, credited as being the very first 'balance' made by Oertlings in 1847. Although not strictly a balance, the device is an important instrument of great historical significance and it was nice to make its acquaintance.

We had been expecting the presence of Andrew Lound who had promised an update on the collection previously housed in the Avery Historical Museum (AHM). In the event Andrew was unable to make it to the meeting because of another commitment but he has since provided a piece to provide the membership with the latest information on the subject. This is shown below.

EVERY HISTORICAL MUSEUM UPDATE

As ISAC members are aware the Avery Historical Museum (AHM) closed its doors for the last time in November 2014 after eighty-seven years of telling the history of weighing. As the last curator of the museum I have remained in contact with Avery Weigh-Tronix (ITW) to try and ensure a positive future for the collection and to uphold the trust placed in me as curator. The major museums in the West Midlands had been invited to take on the collection. Only Birmingham Museums Trust showed an interest and they have taken but a few items: Islamic weights, three diamond scales and two platform scales (as examples of Birmingham manufacture).

The bulk of the collection therefore remains in store. I can, however, inform ISASC (Europe) that serious discussions are underway with a major museum for taking the remainder of the collection in its entirety. Representatives of the museum have been in discussions with Avery Weigh-Tronix, and through 2017 and into 2018 great efforts are

being made to secure the collection for future generations. The collection will not be sold off.

The paper archive of the museum contains a unique collection of documents covering the history of Averys and weighing in general. I have been in discussion with the Library of Birmingham Archives to take the AHM paper material, especially considering that the Library has an Avery collection already. I am pleased to inform ISASC that I paid for the removal and delivery of the paper archive of the museum to the Library of Birmingham. There were a number of items mainly books, and some records that neither the Library nor Avery Weigh-Tronix wanted. These items I have retained to ensure that they are not destroyed. A number of records, notably the Soho Trust books, and a variety of records relating to Oertling and other weighing companies have been retained by Avery Weigh-Tronix. I was able to scan these records before leaving and thus have an archival record of them.

The Card Index of weighing scale companies prepared by W.A. Benton is in my possession and will be scanned in due course. I have also scanned a large number of photographs.

I have negotiated with Avery Weigh-Tronix an agreement regarding publications based on material from the archive. This agreement was required as the name 'Avery' relating to weights and measures remains a trademark which is now owned by ITW.

The following publications are being planned over the next few years, it is likely that some of them will be available by subscription due to the subject matter being of limited interest:

'The Power of Balance - W&T Avery in the First World War' by Andrew P.B. Lound

'Keeping History in Balance – The story of the Avery Historical Museum 1927-2014' by Andrew P.B. Lound. A history of the Museum from its conception which will include a biography of its founder and first curator W.A. Benton.

'Benton's History of Weighing' by W.A. Benton prepared by Andrew P.B. Lound. W.A. Benton's life work which was about completed before his sudden death.

I have also prepared a number of presentations relating to Avery's and Soho Foundry, details of which can be found on my website www.andrewlound.com

I remain in contact with Avery Weigh-Tronix and I will keep ISASC (Europe) informed of developments regarding the collection, which looks far more hopeful now than in 2014.

Andrew Lound

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Herbert Lion Scale

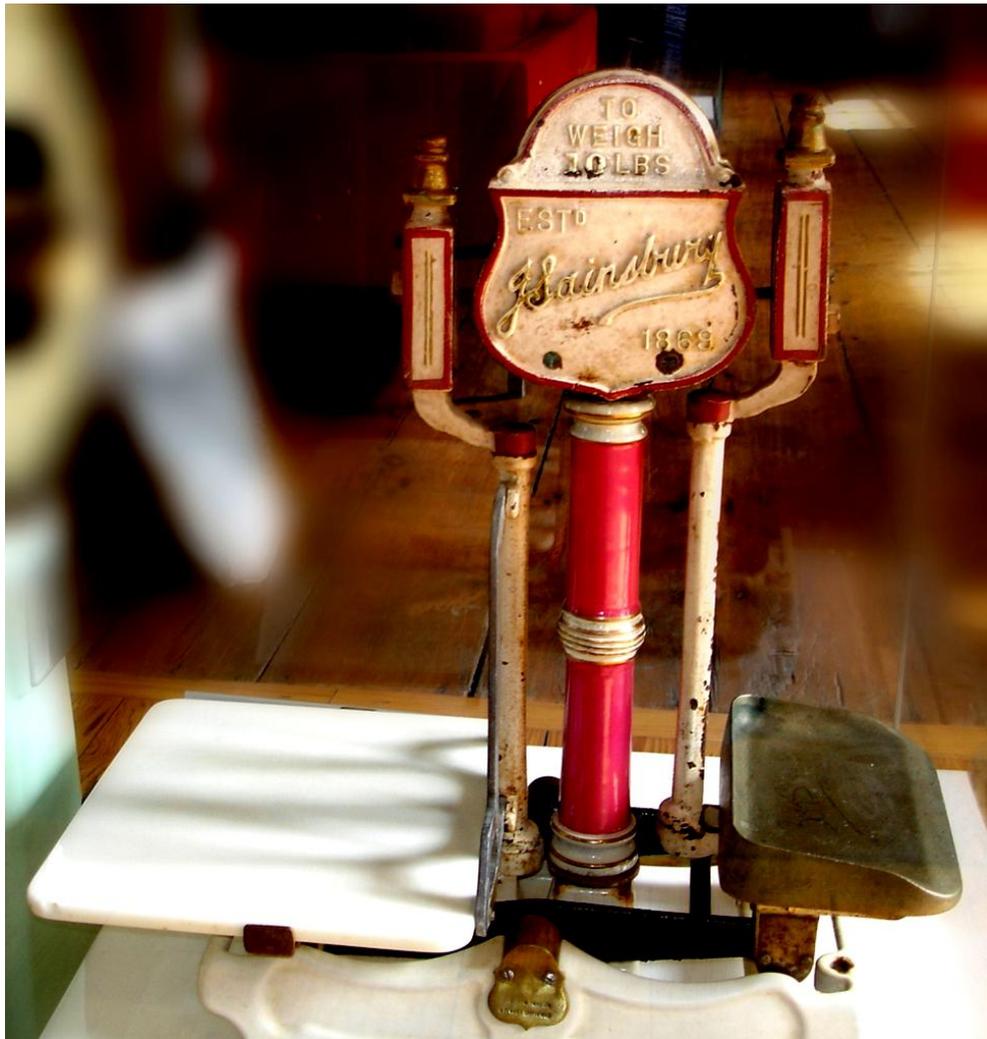
In the last edition we featured the Herbert Lion Scale and its use in some of

the higher-class grocery establishments.

We know from the Herbert website that some of the extremely posh retailers had this model branded with their own name so as to give an enhanced image of exclusivity.

These included Harrods, Selfridges and Sainsburys.

In the Sainsbury gallery of the Museum of London at Canary Wharf in London there is a very nice example of such a scale personalised for that retailer.



As previously stated, it does seem a bit of a mystery that this model survived for so long given the proliferation of self-indicating machines that were quicker and easier to use.

Those were however more leisurely times and speed of operation was not

necessarily always valued as highly as now. Elegance and style could still be considered worth standing around a few minutes for, especially when buying Italian alba truffle in Harrods.

The Herbert website tells us that whilst the Lion Scale was lauded for its 'Quick Action' to rival the self-indicator, it was more valued for its sensitivity (particularly important perhaps when buying that alba truffle).

We also find out from the Herbert website that, over the years, the scale was adapted for various customised uses. One of the weirdest was weighing our canine chums at the

1935 Crufts Dog Show. Having witnessed the struggles encountered by the vet trying to weigh our recalcitrant cat on a modern scale, that's definitely something I would like to have seen.

Facebook

Below is reproduced a message sent by Carol Hayden from the US Chapter of ISASC drawing attention to their recently re- launched Facebook page. You may like to have a look as it contains some interesting bits and pieces.

I know your autumn meeting is coming up soon on October 8th. I wanted to ask you if you would spread the word. Back in early March, we decided to "re-launch" our Facebook page. Shirley Schmidt, our Membership Chair, had initially set it up several years ago, but was, and is, quite honest in that she doesn't "do" FB and doesn't want to be involved in keeping it active. We couldn't find anyone who was interested in maintaining it, so it sort of "meandered" around in cyberspace with an occasional post.

Then early this year, the committee that is working on the ISASC Museum felt we should have more presence on FB for exposure for the Society in general and a possible source of new members. As our website editor, I slowly, and admittedly somewhat reluctantly, became involved since some of the postings are linked back to our website. However, it has actually turned out to be fun and I have learned some things about certain scales that I didn't previously know.

I remember being contacted some time ago by Frances Simmons who was going to try and get a FB page for the European Chapter up and running. I don't know if that ever happened. I haven't found it on FB. I see where info on your Autumn meeting is posted on the Simmons Gallery page.

Anyway, where this is all going is: I would like to ask you at the Autumn meeting to tell your membership about our Facebook page and ask them to Like Us. Also, it is a closed site, but if they have photos of scales or scale sightings that they would like to share, or to send them to me. I am assuming that like our group only a limited number of your members "do" FB, but we wanted to get the word out to any who might be interested. Here is the link to our page.

<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalSocietyOfAntiqueScaleCollectorsisasc/>

I noted in your Fulcrum August edition you made a plea for articles for EQM. Thank you! I think Jan is covered for August and November issues, but there is always the next one after that, as you know.

Enjoy your meeting, and any pitch you can make for our FB page, we would appreciate it.

Warm regards, Carol

Speaking of Facebook and websites I also received the following from a Dutch gentleman called **Willie Reiss** who has produced a publication that may interest some of you.

I come from Netherlands and I am a collector of the artefacts called 'Opium Weights' !

These so called 'Opium Weights' are the Royal Animal Weight System from Myanmar and Lan Na.

From these Myanmar/Lan Na weights I made a book.

The book is ready and made/printed in the Netherlands.

The book contains 300 pages, 600 pictures on glossy paper, Hard cover.

Selling price is Euro 83,-- and for members of 'weight clubs' Euro 55,-- incl. sending.

It is a history/culture book and I have the copyright on it.

Already my book will be mentioned in the December issue from Meten & Wegen (Netherlands).

You can on my Face-book account. Here I put some pictures of pages of the book.



<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010594094985>

[Willie Reiss](#)

www.facebook.com

National Treasure

Scales rarely feature prominently in museum collections. When they appear they are usually as a bit of set dressing in a recreation of a Georgian shop premise or a 19th century dock yard.

One truly unique item however is the barge weighing machine that stood for nearly 50 years in the top lock at the Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum in Northamptonshire (below).

Whilst it was very much part of the Stoke Bruerne collection it was actually in completely the wrong place for all those years. It had absolutely nothing to do with the Grand Junction Canal and had only been ‘dumped’ at Stoke Bruerne because it was the one place where it could go to avoid the attentions of the scrap merchant.

The machine had actually been used on the canals of Wales in the mid 19th century and in 2013 the opportunity came to repatriate it and display it in a more appropriate location.



It was taken to the Waterfront Museum in Swansea where it has been refurbished and reassembled on the site (below). I don't think the re-siting is particularly sympathetic as the use of brick pillars gives no sense of its original use or its proper context. However we must be grateful that its significance is being recognised and it is back where it belongs. (They should also reinstate the weight pan which seems to have gone missing.)

