

A jubilee

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A JUBILEE.

The great Swiss watchmaking factory, LeCoultre & Cie., founded by Antoine LeCoultre in 1833 (manufacturers of Jaeger-LeCoultre timepieces), has celebrated its 125th birthday.

The official celebration took place at the factory in Le Sentier in June of this year, whilst the London commemoration of this event was held with a reception and special exhibition of watches and clocks, on 30th September, at the May Fair Hotel in the presence of the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Armin Daeniker.

* * *

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, Antoine LeCoultre, a Swiss visionary who lived in the little village of Le Sentier at the Western end of the Joux Valley, opened a small workshop for the manufacture of watches. He knew that the solitude of this valley, situated at an altitude of over 4,000 feet in the very heart of the Jura mountains, was ideal for his purpose as it afforded the peace and quiet so necessary to the way of life of every watchmaker.

LeCoultre realised, too, that the only natural resources of the valley — timber, mountain trout and scanty grazing — were not enough to provide a good standard of living for its inhabitants. So, when he introduced his machines and instruments, he did more than anyone else had ever done before to bring prosperity to the district.

Peasant farmers and their sons and daughters, who had just managed to exist, came to the LeCoultre workshop to learn a new trade. At last, to them, the worries and anxiety attending every long snow-bound winter looked as though they might be a thing of the past.

It was not long before the business began to flourish, for the reputation of the fine watches the LeCoultre's craftsmen were manufacturing soon spread far beyond the borders of Switzerland. To-day, thanks to Antoine LeCoultre's vision, the Joux Valley is one of the most prosperous places in Switzerland and its inhabitants enjoy an extremely high standard of living.

Throughout the 125 years of the factory's existence its tradition of making only the highest precision timepieces has remained unchanged. Thus, the watches and clocks designed in the factory at present still bear the imprint of two of LeCoultre's principal characteristics: inventiveness and an ardent concern for the finest possible quality of workmanship.

In recent years some of the watches and clocks made at Le Sentier have been revolutionary. There is for instance the smallest watch in the world — so tiny that its face is completely covered by the head of a match! Yet, it enjoys a record of accurate time-keeping that is little short of miraculous. Some while ago the Atmos clock appeared on the market — a horological miracle that needs neither winding nor batteries, since it will run indefinitely on room temperature changes.

Amongst other watches made only by LeCoultre are a self-winding wrist alarm that appeared on the market two years ago and a self-winding watch without a winding crown.

An outstanding speciality of the House is the perpetual calander watch. This masterpiece of craftsmanship not only tells the time of day and the date, but also "remembers" whether a month has thirty-one, thirty, or twenty-eight days. Embodied in the

movement of these watches is a disc that turns once in every four years and adds an extra day to February during leap year! Naturally this is essentially a collector's item for only a very small quantity is produced.

Many interesting watches, including the new geophysic chronometer, were on show and one part of the display comprised some particularly lovely models for women. Jaeger-LeCoultre have always been famous for the beautiful designs they create, and it is fitting that on the occasion of their anniversary they have brought out some of the most exquisite watches ever to be seen.

Mr. Leon Constantin, Sales Manager of Jaeger-LeCoultre from Geneva, was present at the exhibition and explained all the technical points in the various watches and gave the fullest information about them.

We join the many well-wishers of this well-known firm in presenting our best congratulations on this their 125th birthday.

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