

Samuel Chatwood

By Michael Stuart ... 2019

While I am NOT a safe collector, I do very much appreciate the locking mechanisms and engineering that goes into them. Long ago, I also realized that many of the more renowned safe and bank lock manufacturers of the 1800's manufactured more than only the high-end physical security items. We all know this to be true of Yale, Chubb, Hobbs, and others. Examples of safes, door locks, bank locks, padlocks, and cabinet locks can be found with relative ease. However, with some of the smaller, more-focused manufacturers of the time, finding these secondary items can be a challenge, if they can be found at all.

Featured here is a well-built, brass lever padlock from Samuel Chatwood, renowned safe-maker, and participant in the illustrious "Battle of the Safes" at the 1867 Paris Universal Exposition, which pitted a Chatwood Safe against a Silas Herring Safe. The contest quickly moved from the fine art of picking the mechanism (as was previously common in mid-19th century Europe) to a contest of brute force destruction using sledgehammers, drills, frames, and wedges.

History ... compiled and summarized from various online and print resources:
Samuel Chatwood: Born 1833, Died 1909.

Although best known as a maker of safes, he was an engineer of wide knowledge and experience, and in his earlier years was recognized as an inventor in many fields of engineering. While devoting most of his time to his business, he found time to produce improvements in steam-hammers, engines, boilers, mechanical stokers, mining and colliery plant. He also invented a hydraulic balance for direct-acting lifts, which, in a modified form, was very widely used.

He was an associate member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, and of several other scientific bodies.

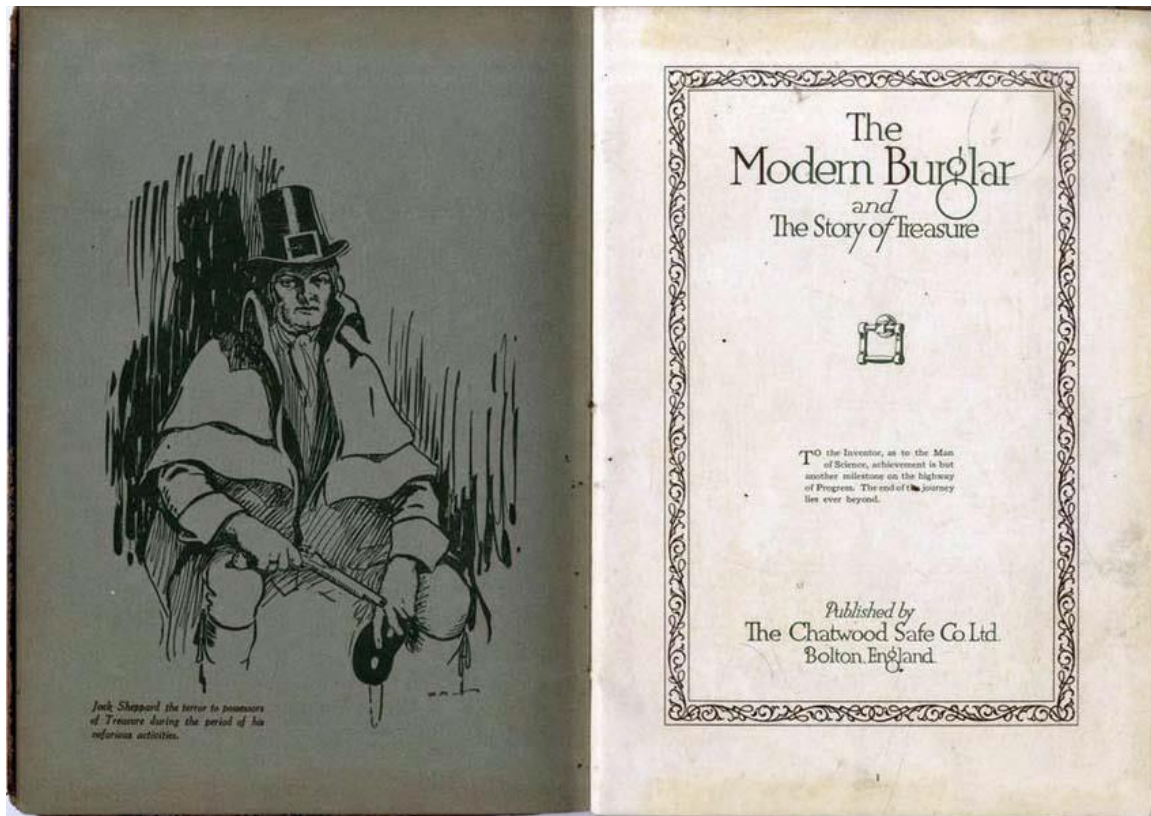
The Chatwood & Dawes Company was established in 1861 by Samuel Chatwood, at the age of 28, together with a partner William Dawes who was a civil/Mechanical engineer. They were manufacturers of iron safes, locks, and sewing machines. The factory was in Bolton, Lancaster, UK. The partnership didn't last long, Dawes left in 1862 joining George Price of Wolverhampton, another renowned safe maker. Samuel Chatwood, carried on the firm on his own afterward as the Chatwood Safe Company, and officially had it registered in 1864.

Samuel Chatwood never considered himself a locksmith or safe maker, but instead a "banker's engineer". He took his craft seriously, and was a prolific inventor in many other areas. Although Chatwood built the "Rolls Royce" of safes all over the world, he went bankrupt in 1874 after dabbling unsuccessfully in the tin crushing business in Cornwall. Following up on

another invention or two the company, though, survived and expanded. It eventually merged with Milners in the late 1950's, and then was acquired by Chubb.

Chatwood's Patent Safe and Lock Co, of the Lancashire Safe and Lock Works of Bolton, of 120 Cannon Street, London.

One can still find Chatwood-branded safes and safe deposit boxes spanning over a century of production, but this is the first brass padlock that I have run across.



Samuel Chatwood
 Founder of the Firm in 1858



A PIONEER whose standard for a definite ideal was so high that no achievement, however remarkable, caused him to relax one what his life-long researches into materials and methods which might turn "letter" into "best."



The New Era
 Chapter 4



It was in 1858 that the history of safe-making may be said to have begun, as it was in that year that Mr. Samuel Chatwood set himself to accomplish what no other man had attempted to do, and this was to build a safe which rightly could be claimed to be SAFE, for such a thing was then quite unknown.

Indeed, universal as is the use of safes, even now the proportion of them which can substantiate their claim to afford complete security is still very small.

It was a difficult matter in the conservative days of 60 years ago to interest the public in such matters, for it was a departure from the semi-security with which they had for so long been content.

That is, perhaps, not extraordinary. What is more extraordinary is the fact that semi-security is still enough for some people.

Even to-day, in this twentieth century, after all the progress that the world has made in the interval, one still finds that the most astute and successful business men will purchase a safe and will entrust in it valuable documents, business records, precious stones, without

making the slightest enquiry as to what degree of security it will give in case of fire or attack by burglars.

Grandfathers and grandsons alike have been slow to recognise that "safe" is a term of degree and that the description of a receptacle as "fire-proof and thief-resisting" is vague and has no definite significance.



Key used by King Edward VII. to open Bolton Town Hall in June, 1871.

In considering the problem of housing treasure, it is of the utmost importance to define certain standards, and to understand them.

1. The minimum degree of security necessary to entitle an article to be described as a "safe."
2. The maximum resistance required from safes to contain large amounts of negotiable securities, cash, jewellery or precious stones, which may reasonably be expected to invite most carefully planned attacks by burglars of exceptional skill equipped with perfect appliances and working perhaps from Saturday to Monday.

It is hoped that the relation in these pages of the work accomplished by Mr. Samuel Chatwood, and of its results, will give a clearer idea to many people of what these standards mean, and what a "Safe" really is.



This photograph shows The Chatwood Safe which successfully withstood the severe ordeal recorded on the opposite page. Except for the small hole on the left-hand side, the burglars' attempt proved futile. This is one of the incidents which prove that protection can be given to those who have valuables to protect against every weapon known to science.

Daring Jewel Robbery in London
 Burglars' Elaborate Outfit

Between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning a daring attempt was made to open a safe containing £70,000 worth of diamonds and pearls at the office of Mark Etkin, jewel merchant, St. Andrew's House, Holborn Viaduct, London.

It is believed that one of the burglars was secreted on the premises before the doors were locked, and was, therefore, enabled to admit his confederates, for the arrangements which they had made in connexion with this daring attack had been carried out with the greatest possible attention to detail.

The office, which was on the third floor, overlooked Holborn Viaduct, and in order that they should not be seen, the burglars erected a tent of dark green American cloth, which was stretched across the whole length of the room to a height of 6 ft., and then carried towards the back of the apartment, so as to form a false roof about 3 ft. below the ceiling. The tent was securely fastened by wires to the walls of the room, and supported by bamboo poles.

The severity of the attack may be estimated by the amount and quality of the apparatus which they brought with them, and left behind, which included—

- (1) 20 cylinders of oxygen gas, each weighing 1 cwt.
- (2) Large pump, 18-in. long.
- (3) A number of jammers, saws, drills, and blowpipes.
- (4) An indicator to show the pressure of the gas.
- (5) A screen 2 ft. by 18 in., in the centre of which was a frame of wire, to protect the burglars from the intense heat of the oxy-acetylene gas during their operations.
- (6) A complete outfit for generating acetylene gas, and numerous other tools.

They had even provided themselves with a bottle of acid drops to counteract the irritating effect on the throat by the fumes of the burning gas.

The Chatwood safe measured 40 in. in height and had a depth and width of 27 inches, weighing 13 tons. The burglars appear to have located the panel at the side and scraped it off with a chisel, then subjected this spot to the oxy-acetylene blowpipe for no less than six hours, according to the estimate of experts, but the only effect was to make a small hole in the outer plate of the safe, and they were unable to get at the £70,000 of pearls, which lay immediately behind the spot where they wished to make a hole.

The safe withstood all the effects of the blowpipe, who abandoned their attempt and also their costly outfit. They also left in the feet four pairs of rubber gloves and four pairs of carpet boots, and a mass of Mr. Etkin's cigars as they had not been able to smoke during their weary and disappointing vigil.

THE BATTLE OF THE SAFES, FOR 30,000 FRANCS

PARIS EXHIBITION, 1867.

THE AMERICAN SAFE-

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THE ENGLISH SAFE-



Afterwards, the English safe-breakers, they built around the safe a very complicated and strong apparatus for the "rocking," and managed to drill the front door with a view to forcing it open; and, after numerous drills had been broken, the English safe-breakers gave up the attempt as a lost cause, and consequently returned with their pickets and clubs to their own country, and the American safe was found to be invulnerable.

CHATWOOD'S
PATENT SAFE AND LOCK COMPANY LIMITED,
(SAMUEL CHATWOOD, Managing Director,)
120 CANNON STREET, LONDON, E.C.
Lancashire Safe and Lock Works, BOLTON.

TWO GOLD MEDALS,
PARIS, 1878.

**CHATWOOD'S "INVINCIBLE"
SAFES**
HIGHEST AWARDS ALL EXHIBITIONS
GOLD MEDALS, PARIS 1878. SPECIAL FIRST SIDNEY 1880. FIRST MELBOURNE 1881.
LANCASHIRE SAFE & LOCK WORKS, BOLTON ENGLAND. LONDON ADDRESS 120 CANNON ST. E.C.

THREE FIRST AWARDS,
MELBOURNE, 1881.

STEAM ORE STAMP.

DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED BY MESSRS. CHATWOOD, STURGEON, AND CO., ENGINEERS, BRITANNIA
WORKS, BOLTON.

FRONT ELEVATION

ENLARGED
SECTION OF PISTON
WITH VALVE

