

English Cuckoo Clock



This came from a local auction as it was lotted with another item which I wanted. It was catalogued as "An English cuckoo clock." and was one of those things whose low quality gave it a certain charm and it seemed worth fettling up.

A couple of faults were obvious: the chain had managed to get through the cuckoo's hole and wrecked one of the bellows and there was no pendulum. Also, instead of having carved wooden decoration it has a plaster casting which was broken and had obviously been repaired in the past too.

Making a pendulum was easy enough but after putting that on it refused to run.



It responded very well to a blast of WD40. This is a big horological no-no but was an easy way of seeing if it was worth going on with.

I took the movement out and washed it in kerosene and then set about the casting. I mended the break with epoxy and tidied up the old repairs with PolyFilla and some judicious carving. The white plaster/filler coloured in nicely with wood stain.

This only left the bellows. Originally they were made of kid leather and I hadn't been able to find anything else which would do. A chum gave me is a type of paper meant for the job and using that made it dead easy. After putting it back together I found it was cuck and oo-ing at the same time and while sorting that out I bust what had been the good bellows so I had to fix that one too. At least they both match now.



The cuckoo bird then decided to fall to bits. It was some sort of plastic and already had big cracks in, in fact I'd been surprised that it had held together when I washed it. It was so brittle that when holding the bits together to glue they were breaking into ever smaller pieces. Rather than drive myself nuts I grabbed a bit of wood and carved a new one.

After putting it all back together it ran very nicely, though will never be a prime example of the horologist's art.



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