

Steve and Darlah Thomas

'WILLIAM LEIGH OF NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS, CLOCKMAKER 1763-1824 : PART 1'

Antiquarian Horology, Volume 33, No. 3 (March 2012), pp. 311-334

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ANTIQUARIAN HOROLOGY

NUMBER THREE VOLUME THIRTY-THREE MARCH 2012



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WILLIAM LEIGH OF NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS, CLOCKMAKER 1763-1824 : PART 1

Steve and Darlah Thomas*

William Leigh (1763-1824) worked as a clockmaker in Newton-le-Willows, a small market town in Northwest England. The first and longest part of this article discusses turret clocks which he made for churches and country houses in the region. The second part will discuss four other products signed by him, three longcase clocks and a kaleidoscope.

INTRODUCTION

William Leigh, whose turret clocks were built to last for centuries, is largely forgotten. He was born too early to be caught by civil registration or the censuses, but too late to have his father's name, residence and occupation recorded when he became an apprentice. His name is too common in South Lancashire to be easily traced in parish registers, many of which have lost sections, leaving frustrating gaps in the record. His working period came to an end just before the first trade directories included other artisans in his locality and if he made a will, it has not survived. He proudly engraved the name of his hometown onto every clock, yet today he is virtually unknown to local historians in that place. He did not make it into Britten's *Old Clocks & Watches & their Makers*,¹ but has an entry in Brian Loomes' update of *Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World*.² Another tantalising fact is that the name of his

most influential patrons, the Legh family of Lyme Park, shares the same pronunciation and roots as his own name, Leigh. This article is our attempt to widen recognition of his talents.

WILLIAM LEIGH'S EARLY LIFE

William Leigh was born around 1763.³ We have searched for his baptism record within the area bounded by Wigan to the north and Warrington to the south. The Leigh surname is common in this area of south Lancashire, maybe originating from the nearby town of Leigh, now part of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan. The registers of Atherton, in the parish of Leigh, include the baptism of a William, son of William Leigh, on 17 January 1763. This could be our man.⁴

The first definitive date relating to William Leigh, was his apprenticeship dated 1 January 1776. William's record states that he was indentured for a period of seven years to clockmaker William Lawson⁵ of Newton-le-

**Steve and Darlah Thomas (darlahthomas@hotmail.com) are amateur horologists. They became interested in turret clocks when they bought a Cheshire-made example in a local auction room. This led to the compilation of a turret clock record which continues to take them all over the country. The interest in William Leigh began when a friend asked them to research the history of the clock at St Mary's Church, Beaumaris.*

1. Britten's *Old Clocks & Watches & their Makers*. Eighth edition by Cecil Clutton, GH Bailie and CA Ilbert (Eyre Methuen, 1973)
2. Brian Loomes, *Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World* (N.A.G. Press, 2006)
3. We know he was aged sixty-one when he was buried on 2 April 1824.
4. We also searched the parish registers of Newton-le-Willows, Winwick, Lowton and Leigh. There were no other boys with the same name baptised in 1763-4.
5. Brian Loomes, *Clockmakers of Northern England* (Mayfield Books, 1997), pp. 159-160: 'William Lawson of Newton-le-Willows, Lancashire, was born in 1738 and was making clocks from about 1760 till his death in 1805. A dozen or more longcase clocks have been noted by him, with brass and painted dials, usually signed 'Lawson - Newton-le-Willows', sometimes 'Lawson - Newton'. These are mostly arched-dial eight-day examples, the brass dials often having fine engraving and rolling moons and were usually housed in grand mahogany 'Lancashire-style' cases. At least one of his cases has the name 'Atherton' punched into it in two places.' John Robey, *The Longcase Clock Reference Book* (Mayfield Books 2005), Vol 2 p. 723 mentions a clock by Lawson: 'A few miniature tall case clocks were made in America and even fewer in England (a month-going clock by Lawson of Newton-le-Willows, in a miniature Liverpool mahogany case is known'. A watch by William Lawson is in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.

Willows on payment of the sum of £12.⁶ After his apprenticeship, William Leigh maintained links with his master. The average age of marriage of apprentice clockmakers in south west Lancashire was twenty-seven,⁷ indicating that many delayed marriage until they had gained economic independence. Thus William Leigh's marriage was dated 8 December 1789 – six years after completion of his apprenticeship.⁸

William Leigh's bride was Ruth Lawson,⁹ thought to be the daughter of his master. The Lawson/Leigh master/apprentice relationship was mutually supportive; not only do William Leigh's early clocks bear a close resemblance to those of his master, but the young clockmaker was not forced to move away from his master's location for fear of competition, as many were; both had their own business concurrently in the same small town,¹⁰ providing more credence to the belief that Ruth was William Lawson's daughter.

The marriage of William Leigh and Ruth Lawson took place in St Oswald's Church, Winwick, the parish within which Newton-le-Willows was then located. This ancient parish was enormous, spreading over 26,000 acres. The living of Winwick was one of the best in the land, indeed in the reign of Henry VIII it was said to be the very best, at £100 per annum. There had been a clock in the church

at Winwick for many years before the current Cooke of York clock was installed in 1876. The Cooke predecessor was wound and maintained by William Lawson from 1777. The records indicate that he was paid intermittently, 'his usual [*annual*] salary' of £0-15-0. William Leigh does not appear to have taken over the care of the clock after William Lawson's death in 1805.¹¹

William and Ruth Leigh had six children, but lost two soon after birth. Of the surviving four, three were girls.¹²

William's wife Ruth died and was buried at St Peter's, Newton-le-Willows on 1 April 1807. The parish clerk did not include her age in his records, nor the cause of her death.¹³

William Leigh's own burial was recorded in the same register seventeen years later, on 2 April 1824. He was sixty-one years old.¹⁴ There were no local newspapers covering the area at that time, so there is no obituary.

Of his surviving children, Francis appears to have followed his father into the trade. However, the only reference to him so far found was the baptism of two of his sons, William and John, on 14 October 1821,¹⁵ when Francis was recorded as a clockmaker. Our attempts to trace clocks made by him or of the family further into the nineteenth century have so far failed to find any further links to clockmaking.

6. Dennis Moore, *British Clockmakers and Watchmakers Apprenticeship Records 1710-1810* (Mayfield Books, 2003), p. 205. The records survive because a tax of 6d/£1 was payable by masters on the sum received for taking on an apprentice. This was collected locally and the information recorded in Apprenticeship Books 1710 to 1811. These are in the National Archives, Kew.

7. Moore, *Apprentice Records*, p. 3.

8. Moore, *Apprentice Records*, p. 205.

9. Parish register of St Oswald, Winwick. Newton-le-Willows was within the parish of Winwick. Both bride and groom were 'of the parish of Winwick'. In common with many clockmakers, William Leigh and Ruth Lawson were married by licence. The bond states that sadler Edward Berry and William Leigh agreed to a bond of £100. Cheshire Record Office: Marriage Bond ref m/f 243/76. It has not yet been possible to locate the details of Ruth's birth. She is not listed in the transcriptions of baptisms of Newton, Winwick, Lowton or Leigh, nor are any other children of William Lawson. A wider search is required.

10. The population of Newton-le-Willows in 1801 was 1,455. The small town was an ancient borough, sending two members to parliament.

11. Churchwardens' Accounts Winwick Parish mf 235/17, Chester and Cheshire Archives Service.

12. Register of St Peter, Newton: 7 Oct 1790 an unnamed child buried, 22 Jan 1792 Elizabeth baptised, 15 June 1794 Frances [sic] (this was a male child) baptised, 20 Nov 1796 Jane baptised, 13 Sept 1798 an unnamed child buried, 2 Dec 1798 Alice baptised. Records of St Peter's Newton-le-Willows, seen at St Helens Local History and Archives Library.

13. St Peter's Church, Newton-le-Willows Registers, viewed as above.

14. St Peter's Church, Newton-le-Willows Registers, viewed as above.

15. Baptism of William and John on 14 Oct 1821. Sons 'of Francis and Jane Leigh, clockmaker'. Baptism records of St Peter's Newton-le-Willows, viewed as above.

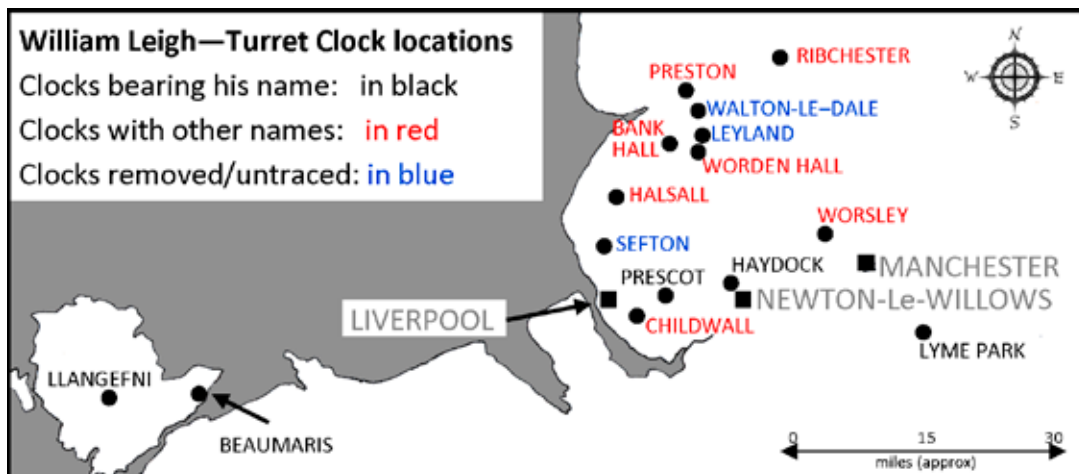


Fig. 1. Map showing locations of turret clocks by William Leigh discussed in this article.

TURRET CLOCKS

Most of the turret clocks so far traced made/signed by William Leigh were located in buildings within a thirty mile radius of Newton-le-Willows (Fig. 1). Transport infrastructure had developed early in this locality; the nearby Sankey Canal had opened in the mid-eighteenth century and was extended throughout William Leigh's lifetime, providing efficient links to the River Mersey and Liverpool. The Bridgewater Canal, a few miles away led into Manchester, and the Leeds-Liverpool canal gave access towards Preston. Locations out of reach of the canal system would have been reached by horse and cart along what were still very rough roads. Leigh's death pre-dated by six years the most significant transportation development. The Liverpool and Manchester railway, which opened in 1830, passed through Newton-le-Willows and enabled new industries to be located in the town.

Haydock Lodge, 1795-97

During the early years of his marriage, William Leigh acquired a very influential client, Colonel Thomas Peter Legh. The Legh family, of Lyme Park, Cheshire, had another home named Haydock Lodge near Newton-le-Willows, where the family had coal mining interests. William Leigh was commissioned to build a clock for installation in the belfry above the stables. This is the earliest known turret clock signed by William Leigh; it bears the date 1797 and the names of both the colonel



Fig. 2. St Peter's Church, Newton-le-Willows c. 1830s showing the clock from Haydock Lodge re-housed in the church. © Steven Dowd.



Fig. 3. Haydock Lodge - the outbuildings, including the belfry and the reinstated clock, on an early-twentieth century photograph. © Steven Dowd.

and the clockmaker. Sometime around 1808, following the death of the colonel, the Lodge ceased to be a residence of the Legh family and the clock was removed (probably by its maker) and presented to St Peter's Church, Newton-le-Willows (Fig. 2). It remained there



Fig. 4. Haydock Lodge – the clock photographed in 2009 at Combe Mill, Oxfordshire.

until restoration of the church at the end of the nineteenth century when it was replaced by a new chiming clock. The old clock was then returned to the Lodge where ‘in its old home, it chimed the first hour of the present century’ (Fig. 3).¹⁶

Its subsequent location remained a mystery until 2009.

In May 2001, the AHS Turret Clock Group visited Combe Mill Museum.¹⁷ The building was the power house of the Blenheim Estate Timber Mill and workshops. It then housed a collection of steam powered machinery, a blacksmith’s forge and three turret clocks. Two of the clocks were from churches in the locality, but the third was something of a mystery. The Turret Clock Group report mentioned that it may have been made by *William Leigh of Warrington*.

Our initial contact with Combe Mill in September 2009 produced a photograph of a chairframe clock of ‘unknown provenance’. It bore so many features associated with Leigh,

it could have been made by no other. Tony Simmons and Clive Brimson were able to unearth a series of emails which provided clarification.

We visited Combe Mill on one of its open days in October 2009. The clock (Fig. 4) was missing its name plate, but was undoubtedly by Leigh. It is of a similar size to other two-train clocks by him and has the same layout. Small differences were apparent, but as this clock was built relatively early in Leigh’s career, his favoured style would have been evolving.

The setting dial was incomplete, but bore a very close resemblance to later dials. Not only did its central star similarly have twelve points, but the style of the numbers, especially the 3 and 5 was very similar, and the construction of the dial, its fixings and position on the movement were virtually identical to those on Leigh’s later clocks. Maintaining power was absent, although its associated bearing holes were evident in the clock’s frame. The construction of the frame of this clock is wedged as is usual for Leigh

16. C. Cole, ‘A History of Newton-in-Makerfield’, *Earlestown Guardian*, 19 July 1912.

17. *Antiquarian Horology* 26/3 (September 2001), p. 303: Report of Turret Clock Group tour.



Fig. 5. Haydock Lodge - the dial, originally located in the outbuildings, now displayed in the gardens of the Holiday Inn, Haydock. It bears the name of Colonel Thomas Leigh who commissioned the clock, and the year 1795 - confusingly, two years earlier than that on the clock.



Fig. 6. Haydock Lodge – the clock after restoration, showing the restored two-handed setting dial, maintaining power and William Leigh's brass name plaque.



Fig. 7. Haydock Lodge – the name plate.

clocks, but the top frame sections use an unusual method of wedging.

Tony and Clive then produced the emails which confirmed our thoughts. These showed that when Haydock Lodge was being developed by Trust House Forte,¹⁸ an old Bradford steam engine (which drove machinery in the laundry) along with the clock movement, had been dismantled and both were about to be scrapped. The THF Development Manager spotted the two items and took them to a place of safety. On a subsequent visit to Combe Mill, he enquired whether the steam engine might be of interest to the museum.¹⁹ When collection was arranged, it was made clear that there was an additional item (the clock), which the museum would have to take — it was the two items, or none! Both are now at the museum and are run on Open Days. The limestone dial bearing the date 1795 was retained by Trust House Forte and is displayed in the hotel gardens at Haydock (Fig. 5).

In November 2010 the setting dial and maintaining power were re-constructed to Leigh's design²⁰ by Clive Brimson, following a visit to turret clock specialist, Phil Irvine (Fig. 6). During the process, the clock's original signature plate was found, fortunately, recording: *Willm Leigh NEWTON 1797* (Fig. 7). It has now been reunited with the clock. This is the oldest turret clock signed by William Leigh, though the clocks from the old Preston Town Hall and at St Mark's Church, Worsley may pre-date it.

18. The clock was handed over to the Combe Mill Preservation Society in 1976, see www.combemill.org. The hotel is now The Holiday Inn, Haydock.

19. Information from Combe Mill. Our contacts were Tony Simmons and Clive Brimson.

20. With the help of the authors and Phil Irvine, Clive Brimson was able to make the parts necessary and to reinstate the setting dial and maintaining power.

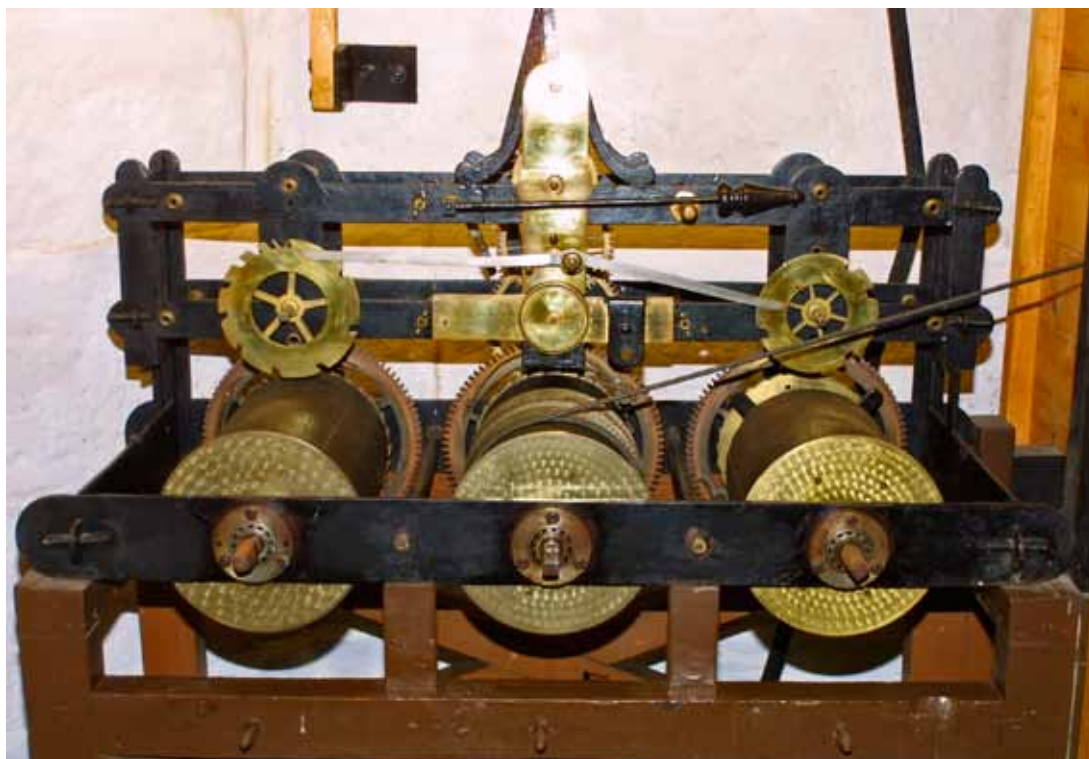


Fig. 8. St Mary's, Prescott – the three train movement, behind which part of its rhomboidal pendulum is visible.



Fig. 9. St Mary's, Prescott - the lateral wheel escapement.



Fig. 10. St Mary's, Prescott - the name plate.

St. Mary's, Prescott, 1806

William Leigh was commissioned by the church wardens of St Mary's, Prescott to make a new turret clock for their church. This was to be a three train, ting-tang quarter chiming clock to be positioned beneath the new spire, replacing an old and unreliable single handed clock.

The Leigh clock was relatively expensive, built to be more accurate by having temperature compensation provided by a rhomboidal pendulum. It cost the churchwardens £157-15-0,

the equivalent of more than £5,000 in current value. The clock is signed and dated *Will^m Leigh Newton Dec^{br} 22nd 1806* (Figs 8-10).

In 1883, the ting-tang apparatus was replaced by a full quarter chiming mechanism. A hundred years later, in 1987, the clock was removed from the tower to allow re-building of the structure and a thorough overhaul of the clock movement. It was returned to its home (Fig. 11) on Christmas Day 1993, 187 years to the day since its pendulum had first swung in the tower.



Fig. 11. St Mary's, Prescott.

Lyme Park, Cheshire, 1814

Sixteen years after the purchase of the clock for Haydock Lodge, Sir Thomas Legh, successor to Colonel Thomas Peter Legh, commissioned Lewis Wyatt to restore and alter the main home, Lyme Park, in Cheshire.²¹ As part of the restorations, William Leigh was asked to make a turret clock for the north front of the house.

The clock, is signed and dated *W^m Leigh NEWTON May 14th 1814*. The movement is on view to visitors on a corridor on the second floor. It drives the hands on the dial which is positioned on the outside wall immediately behind the movement. This is a two train clock, striking the hours on a single bell, built to be an accurate timekeeper by the addition of a rhomboidal pendulum which can be seen behind the cabinet (Figs 12–16).



Fig. 12. Lyme Park – the name plate



Fig. 13. Lyme Park, Disley, Stockport. The north front. The clock dial is located two floors above the entrance archway.

21. The National Trust booklet *Lyme Park*. Lyme Park is managed by the National Trust with support from Stockport MBC. Thanks to Amy Carney for permission to use our photos of the clock.

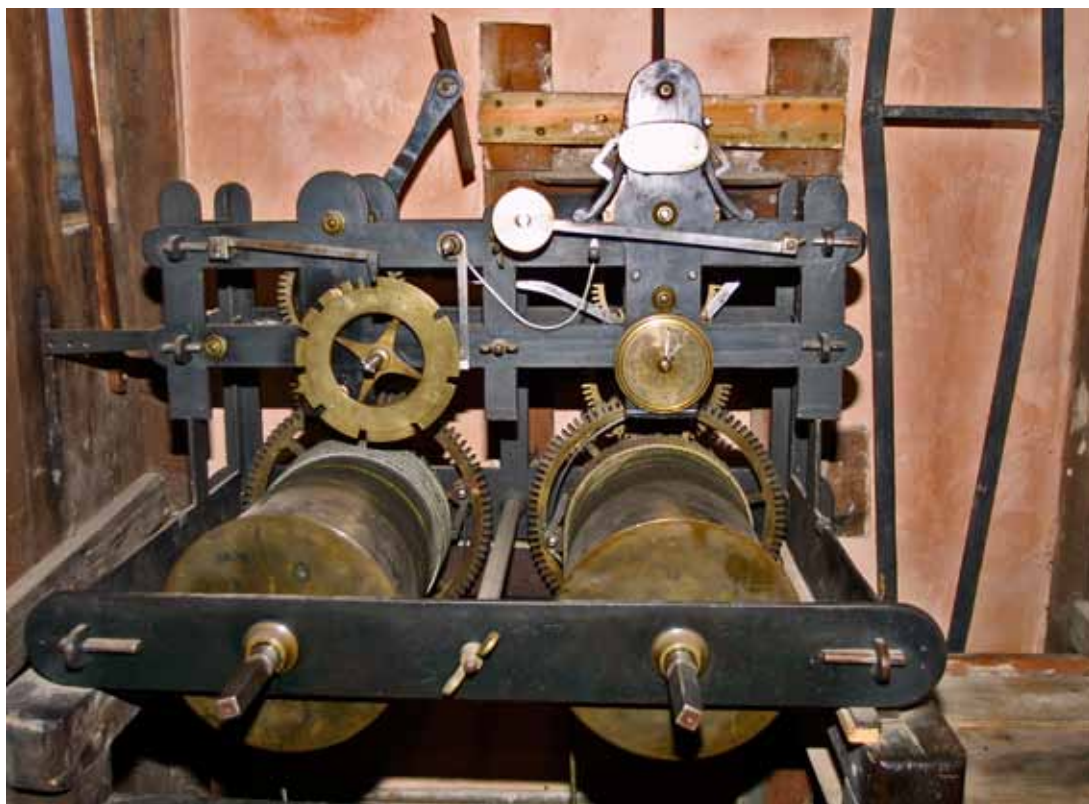


Fig. 14. Lyme Park – The two train movement with its rhomboidal pendulum.



Fig. 15. Lyme Park – the dial.



Fig. 16. Lyme Park – the two handed setting dial.



Fig. 17. St Mary and St Nicholas, Beaumaris – the three train movement with its missing ting-tang barrel.

St. Mary and St Nicholas, Beaumaris 1819

The Bulkeley family of Beaumaris were historically linked to the Cheadle area of Cheshire (now part of the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport, Greater Manchester, within which Lyme Park is also located.) One can imagine Viscount Bulkeley (Fig. 19) visiting Thomas Legh at Lyme Park to see his restorations, including the new clock, and being advised that he should commission William Leigh to make the clock which was planned as a gift for Beaumaris parish church (Fig 18).

The clock at Beaumaris (Figs 17 and 20-22) is similar to that at Prescott – it is a three train clock with ting-tang quarter chiming and strikes the hours on a tenor bell. It is dated May 17th, 1819. (The ting-tang chiming train barrel has been removed to quieten the clock, but the parts have been retained to enable reinstatement in the future should there be a demand for it.) This was again a costly clock with a rhomboidal pendulum; it was the best quality available at the time.

The installation of the clock at Beaumaris



Fig. 18. St Mary and St Nicholas, Beaumaris.

was part of a larger gift to the church. The *North Wales Gazette* of 30 September 1819 included:

Last week, the town of Beaumaris was enlivened by the merry Peal of six most excellent Bells, presented by his Lordship, and placed at his expense in the church tower. While his Lordship has given the *dulce*, the *utile* has not been forgotten, for with the bells, is presented an exceedingly good clock, calculated to strike the quarters.



Fig. 19. St Mary and St Nicholas, Beaumaris – the benefactor, Lord Viscount Bulkeley.



Fig. 20. St Mary and St Nicholas, Beaumaris – the name plate reads 'W. LEIGH. NEWTON in the Willows Lancashire FECIT May 17th 1819'.

Two hundred years ago, the one hundred mile journey by road and ferry from Newton-le-Willows to Beaumaris to deliver the clock would have been long and dangerous. It is most likely



Fig. 21. St Mary and St Nicholas, Beaumaris – the rhomboidal pendulum is offset to the right of the movement.

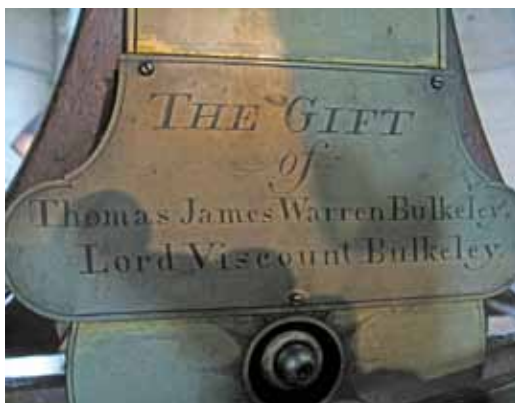


Fig. 22. St Mary and St Nicholas, Beaumaris – the plate reads 'THE GIFT of Thomas James Warren Bulkeley, Lord Viscount Bulkeley'.

that William Leigh and his clock boarded a boat on the nearby Sankey Navigation to travel to Widnes, then onto the Mersey and to Liverpool to join one of the freight services to Beaumaris.

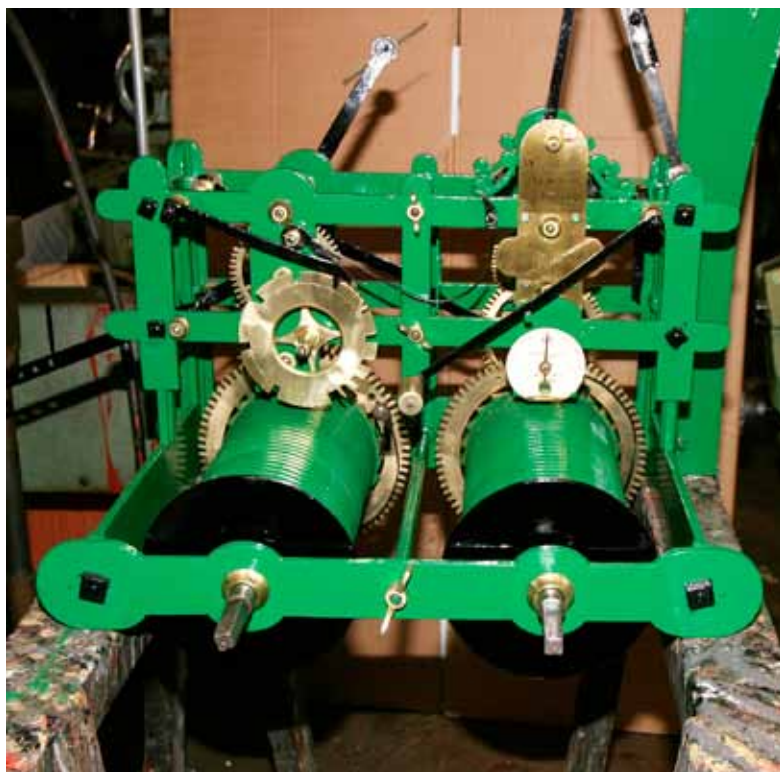


Fig 23. St Cyngar's, Llangefni – the two train movement after restoration in 2009.

Fig. 25 (below) St Cyngar's, Llangefni - the plate recording '1822 W.^M LEIGH NEWTON in the WILLOWS Lancashire The Gift of Tho.^s Ja.^s Warren Bulkeley Lord Vis.^t Bulkeley'.



Fig. 24. St Cyngar's, Llangefni.

St. Cyngar's, Llangefni, 1822

The Viscount must have been pleased with his purchase at Beaumaris, for only three years later, he gifted another clock by William Leigh, this time to St Cyngar's Parish Church, Llangefni, which was being re-built at the time (Fig. 24).

Llangefni's clock (Figs. 23 and 25) has a two train movement, driving one dial and striking the hours, and has a conventional pendulum. This is the latest of William Leigh's clocks which is dated, to have been discovered.





Fig. 26. The old Town Hall, Preston – the movement closely resembles that at Lyme Park.

ANONYMOUS TURRET CLOCKS AND THOSE BEARING THE NAMES OF OTHER CLOCKMAKERS/REPAIRERS, PROBABLY MADE BY WILLIAM LEIGH

It is thought that William Leigh made several other turret clocks which have been replaced, altered or repaired during the intervening years. When a clock movement was replaced, some items, like clock hands and motion works were often retained. Although unsigned, those made by William Leigh have their own stylistic signature.²²

It is more than likely, that William Leigh also made the following clocks, though ‘final fettling’ and/or installation may have been carried out by others:

The old Town Hall, Preston, c. 1792

The ‘old’ Town Hall Preston was opened in 1792. It had a clock from that time or a little later, until the building was partly destroyed by fire and subsequently demolished in 1862. At that time, salvaged items from the building were sold off and the clock was acquired by one of the councillors. The clock has been installed at Beech Grove Farm, Greenhalgh, Kirkham, Lancashire ever since (Fig. 27). Stylistically, this clock closely resembles others by William Leigh, but this one bears the name: Lawson, Hindley. There was a clockmaker named Henry Lawson, of Hindley, born 1806, who worked with his son, William c 1841; they may have been relatives of William Lawson, master of William Leigh. The clock (Figs 26 and 28) is certainly in the style of William Leigh and may be by him, and subsequently repaired or altered by the Lawsons.²³

22. For example the items associated with The Corn Exchange, Preston clock, which follow later in this sequence, were shown to us by Phil Irvine.

23. See also *Antiquarian Horology* 31/5 (September 2009), 703. Information on the Lawsons of Hindley is taken from Edmund Davies, *Greater Manchester Clocks and Clockmakers* (Mayfield Books, 2007), p. 202. Our thanks to the Penswick family and Stewart Whillis for access to the clock.



Fig. 27. The old Town Hall, Preston - the clock's current location at Beech Grove Farm.

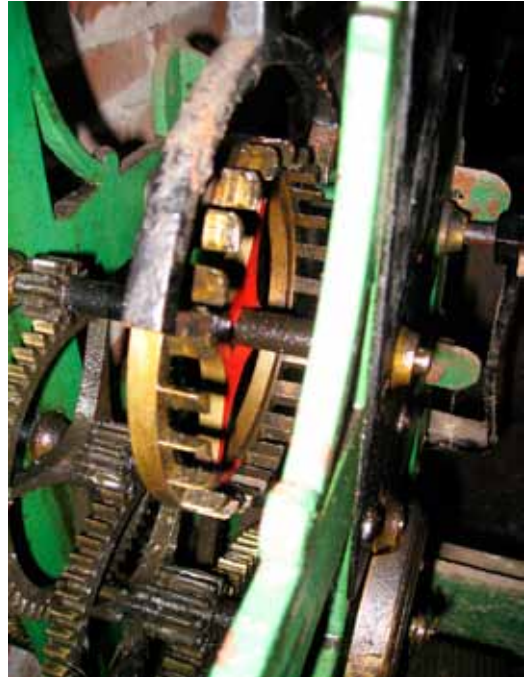


Fig. 28. The old Town Hall, Preston - dead beat escapement – lateral tooth wheel.

All Saints', Childwall, Liverpool. 1811

This clock is signed 'Thomas Green, Liverpool fecit' but exhibits features similar to clocks

signed by William Leigh. This clock was installed 1811. Thomas Green ceased trading about the same year.²⁴ (Figs. 29–33)



Fig. 29. All Saints', Childwall – the parish church.



Fig. 30. All Saint's, Childwall - the dial.

24. John Wyke, a successful Liverpool clockmaker in the mid eighteenth century, married several times. His third wife was Jane Green, probably a relative of the Thomas Green who became his business partner in about 1771. John Wyke famously published a *Catalogue of Tools*, c.1760, which shows the implements that were commercially available for clock and watchmakers in the eighteenth century, and is the earliest known representation of horological tools in catalogue form. Thomas Green may have had a business relationship with William Leigh. This is suggested by the Childwall clock. A bracket clock and a watch by Thomas Green are in Liverpool Museum.

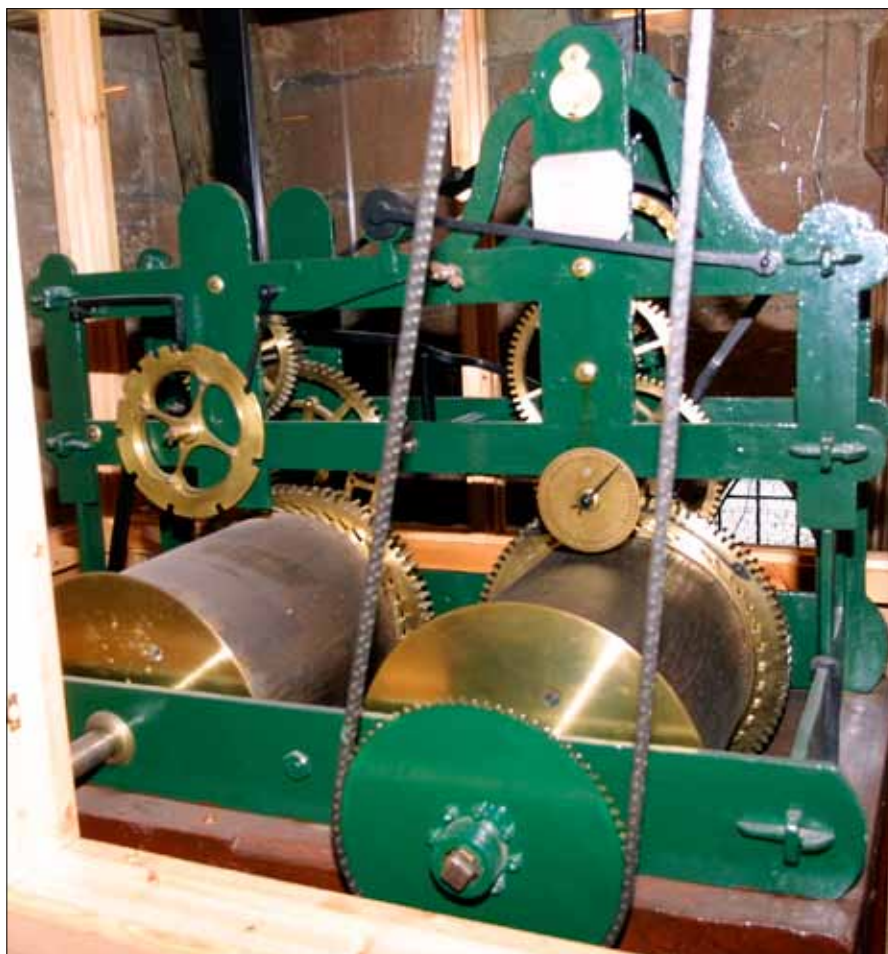


Fig. 31. All Saints',
Childwall –
the movement.



Fig. 32. All Saints', Childwall – the clock has a dead beat
escapement – lateral tooth wheel.

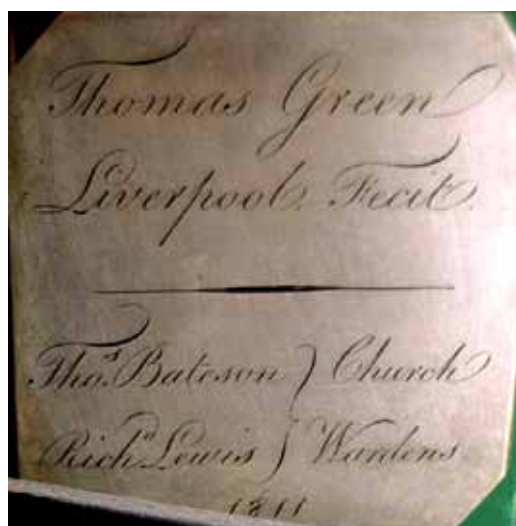


Fig. 33. All Saints', Childwall – the clock is signed by
Thomas Green of Liverpool, but closely resembles those
signed by William Leigh.



Fig. 34. St Wilfred's, Ribchester – the movement and (seen on the inset lower right) its rhomboidal pendulum.

St. Wilfred's, Ribchester, 1813

The church history leaflet attributes this clock to J Alker of Wigan, with a date of 1813. Alker's name does not appear to be on the clock. The single handed setting dial has the name R Westmore, Preston. It is thought he was the retailer and perhaps the installer. This clock has a two second rhomboidal pendulum offset to the left of the clock (Fig. 36). In layout the movement is very similar to those of William Leigh.

Worden Hall, Leyland, Lancashire, 1815

A clock (Fig. 35) was installed here in 1815 in a turret between the Old Corn Mill and the Derby Wing (Fig. 36). The clock movement is typical of William Leigh's style, but does not bear his name. Instead there is a remnant of the metal label of a Wigan clockmaker. This could have been applied at the time of a repair or alteration (Fig. 37).

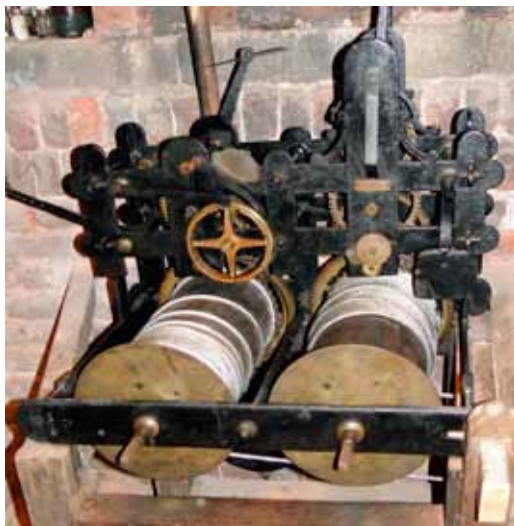


Fig. 35. Worden Hall, Leyland – the movement.



Fig. 36. Worden Hall, Leyland – the main hall no longer exists, but some outbuildings remain including the turret, housing the clock.



Fig. 37. Worden Hall, Leyland – fragment of a maker's plate. It reads '.... WIGAN 1815'.

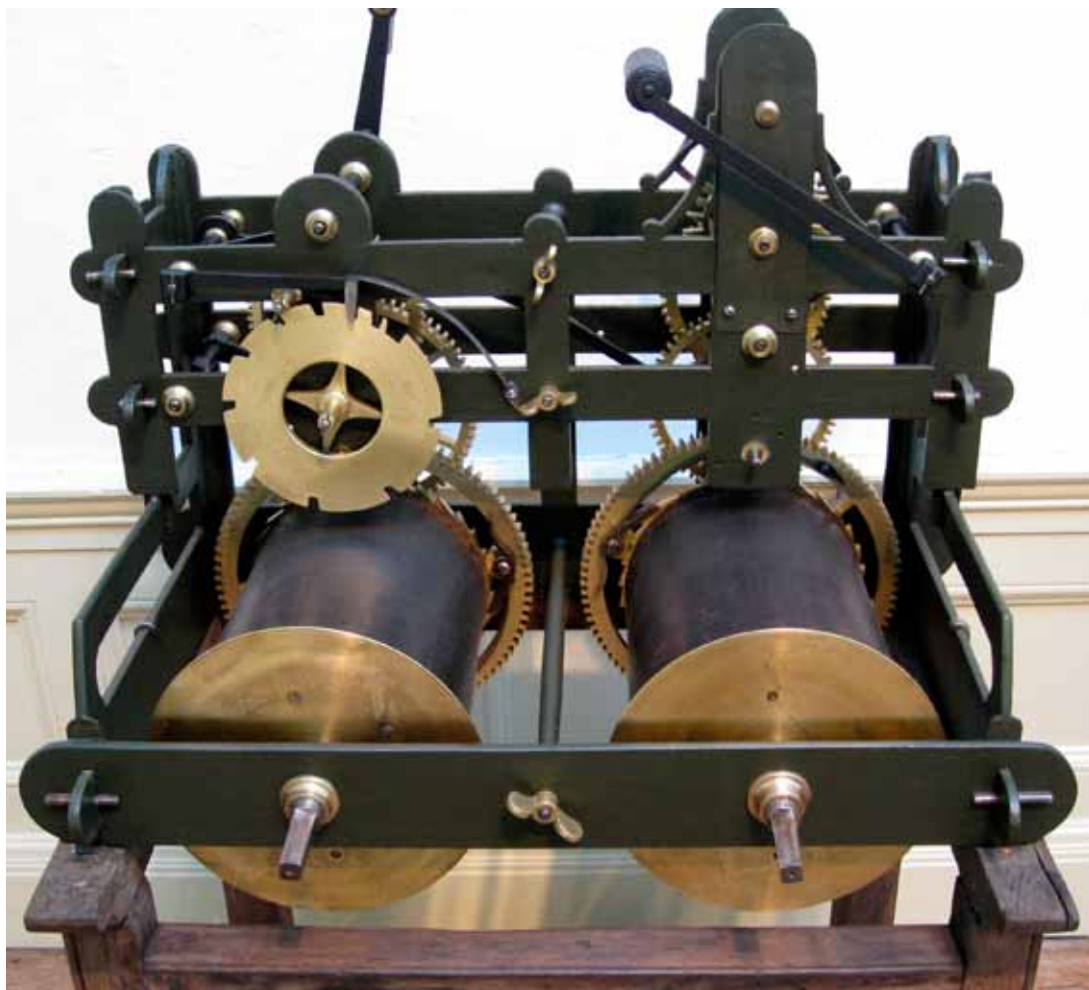


Fig. 38. The Corn Exchange, Preston – the movement without its weights and rhomboidal pendulum.

The Corn Exchange, Preston, c. 1824

A few years after the Lyme Park commission, William Leigh made a virtually identical clock to be installed into the new Corn Exchange being built at Preston. The building opened in August 1824, shortly after Leigh's death, and survived until late in the twentieth century when it was partly demolished and the clock was rescued. At the time of its rescue by Phil Irvine, it had already lost its setting dial and the name and date details.

A careful comparison with Lyme, reveals the close similarity between the two clocks and illustrates William Leigh's signature style. The old wooden stand of the Corn Exchange clock was infested with woodworm and in a very delicate state, so a new one has been constructed. This clock also has a rhomboidal pendulum. In our photos, which were taken while the clock was on display in the 'Your Time' Exhibition 2008, the clock is without its weights and its 1.5 seconds rhomboidal pendulum.²⁶ (Figs. 38-41)

26. The clock is described on p. 78 of the AHS exhibition catalogue *Your Time* (2008), but is not illustrated.



Fig. 39. The Corn Exchange, Preston - typical William Leigh hands.



Fig. 40. The Corn Exchange, Preston – the hands as viewed on the dial.



Fig. 41. The Corn Exchange, Preston – motion works connecting piece – unique William Leigh design.



Fig. 42. St Cuthbert's, Halsall – the two train movement.

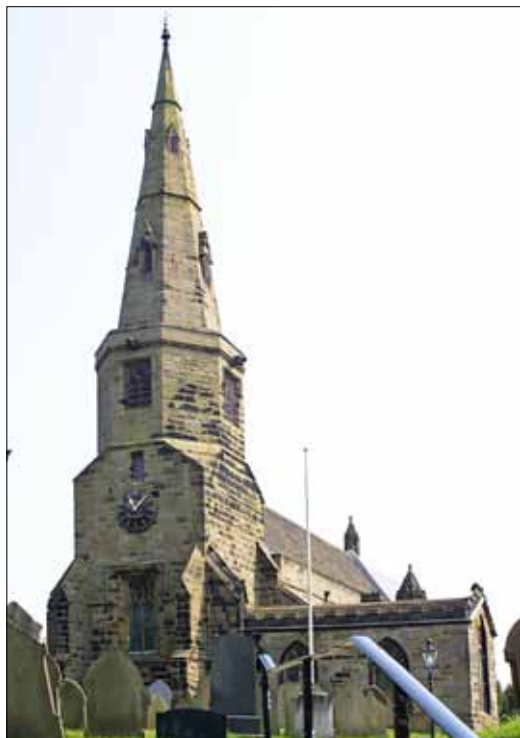


Fig. 43. St Cuthbert's, Halsall



Fig. 44. St Cuthbert's, Halsall – name plate recording, 'G & J Wignall FECIT 1827'.

St. Cuthbert's, Halsall, 1827

This clock bears the name G&J Wignall of Ormskirk. The clock is much altered and it is now electrically wound. In 1931 it had a carillon added by Gillet & Johnson. The clock has a rhomboidal pendulum, part of which can be seen near the clock. This has led to the possible

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Fig. 45. St Cuthbert's, Halsall – part of the rhomboidal pendulum is visible.

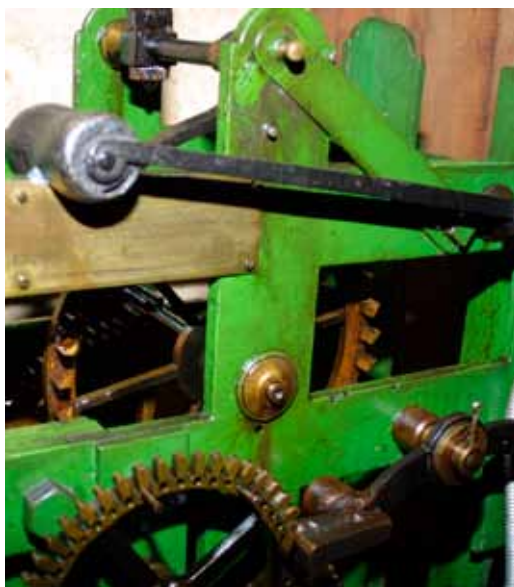


Fig. 46. St Cuthbert's, Halsall – maintaining power.

attribution to William Leigh, although George Wignall, who was working at nearby Ormskirk both before and after the date which appears on the clock, may have made the clock to a design he had seen by William Leigh. Alternatively, he may have installed a pre-existing Leigh clock into this church. (Figs. 42–46)



Fig. 47. St Helen's Church, Sefton, photographed in 2011.

St. Helen's, Sefton (Fig. 47)

Only the motion works of a turret clock and the hands of an internal dial by William Leigh remain.



Fig. 48. St Leonard's, Walton-le-Dale – the dial.

St. Leonard's, Walton-le-Dale

The hands, still to be seen today, are undoubtedly attributable to William Leigh. Unfortunately the mechanical clock has long since disappeared and has been replaced by a synchronous electric motor. Historically, the manor of Walton le Dale belonged to the Haydock family, passed on to the Leghs of Lyme, and was under the ownership of Peter Legh at the time of the first Leigh clock commissions. The church had two periods of restoration in William Leigh's time, in 1796 and 1816. (Figs. 48–49)



Fig. 49. St Leonard's, Walton-le-Dale – close up of hands. (photo rotated for spatial reasons)

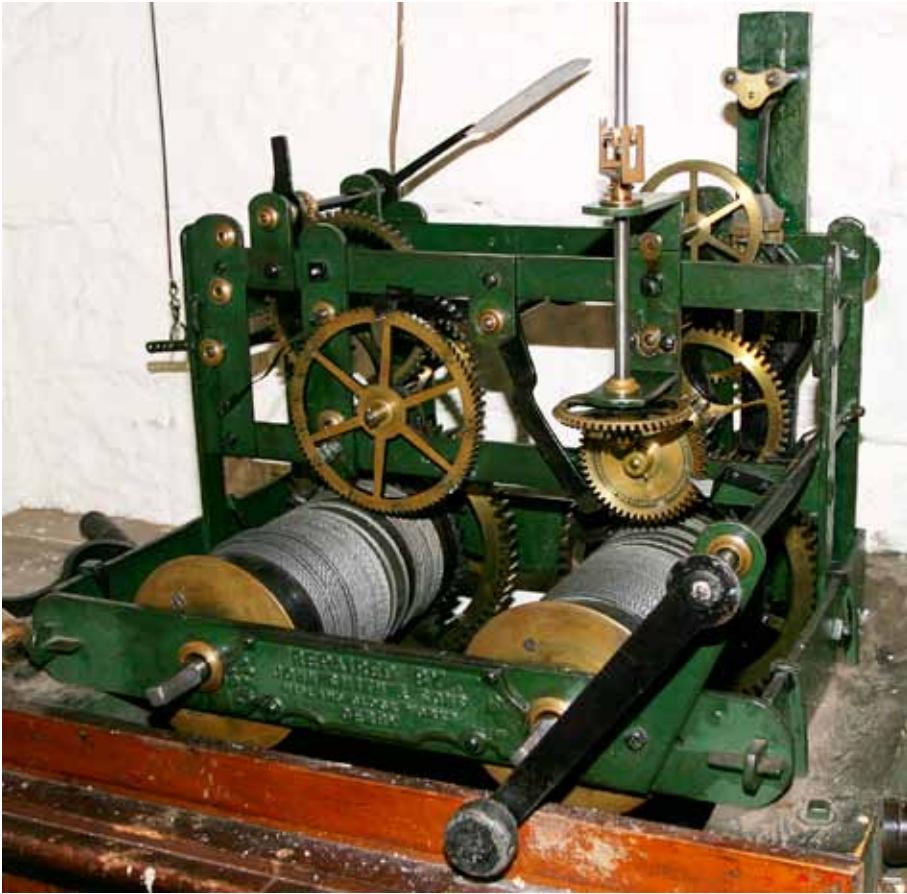


Fig. 50. St Mark's Church, Worsley – the movement has had at least four homes and is much altered as a result.

St Mark's Church, Worsley, c. 1789

The clock in the tower at St Mark's Church was not made for the church; it is much altered and is in its fourth location. It has a fascinating history which parallels the rise and fall of the Bridgewater Canal nearby. This had been constructed to carry coal from the Duke of Bridgewater's coal mines in Worsley to the markets in Manchester and was completed in 1761. Subsequently, workshops and an industrial works yard grew rapidly at Worsley. In the centre of these a tower was built in 1789, to house the 'Bridgewater Clock'. This was financed by the Duke for the benefit of his workers at the yard.

There is a well known legend that the Duke witnessed his workers returning late after a lunch break.²⁷ On asking them why they were late, the men complained that they could not hear the clock strike one above the noise of the yard. The Duke then promptly asked a local clockmaker to alter the clock so that it would strike thirteen at one o'clock. The bell in the tower is dated 1789, the same year as the tower was completed and the clock's manufacture also dates to this time. The alteration must have been carried out between this date and the Duke's death in 1803. Davies²⁸ stated that the clock was made by John Collier of Eccles (born in 1773). However, the only other item on record for this maker is a pair cased watch; we now believe that it was John

27. The legend appears in most histories of the area. The earliest we found was in the *Manchester Evening News* dated 25 June 1936 which ran an article in its 'Uncle Peter's Children's Hour' section entitled 'The Dinner Signal – A True Tale of how a famous Duke made a Clock strike Thirteen'. Thanks to Ian Johnston of Salford University Archives.

28. Davies, *Greater Manchester Clocks and Clockmakers*, pp 143, 325.



Fig. 51. St Mark's Church, Worsley.

Collier who was employed to alter the striking mechanism.²⁹ The current pinned countwheel

Preston and Lyme Park. The anchor escapement was replaced by Smiths with a pinwheel and if it ever had a two handed setting dial, it has been replaced by a Smiths set of bevels

is in a Leigh position, but now is a Smith of Derby component which still strikes thirteen at one o'clock.

The clock remained in the tower at the Works Yard until the site was demolished in 1903 and was installed in the gatehouse of Worsley New Hall nearby.³⁰ It remained there until 1923, when the fourth Earl sold the Worsley estates. It was not included in the sale, so was taken to his London home,³¹ and stored in the cellar. It was returned to Worsley in 1946 by the Earl of Ellesmere, when St Mark's Church celebrated its centenary, and has been striking the hours there, including thirteen, ever since.³² Its installation in the tower is recorded on a plaque fixed to the frame of the clock stating, *'REPAIRED BY JOHN SMITH AND SONS, MIDLAND CLOCK WORKS, DERBY'*. The clock has no original maker's name, but in size and layout it resembles the two train clocks made for the Corn Exchange,

29. We spoke to Edmund Davies about this clock. He told us that John Collier's name was the only one he had traced which was connected with the clock. He had thought Collier was the maker, but agreed that he may well have only done the alteration to the strike.

30. Soon after his arrival in Worsley, in 1837, Lord Francis Egerton decided that the Old Hall was inadequate for his needs. He commissioned architect Sir Edward Blore, and built a Victorian Gothic style mansion which was completed in 1846, the year Lord Francis became First Earl of Ellesmere. After use as a billet during World War II, the building was demolished in 1949. Perversely, the inadequate Worsley Old Hall still remains and is now a pub.

31. The London home of the Duke's family was then known as Cleveland House. It is located at 14 Cleveland Row, Westminster and has been known as Bridgewater House since 1854.

32. The present church was built by the first Earl of Ellesmere.



Fig. 52. St Mark's Church, Worsley – motion works.



Fig. 53. St Mark's Church, Worsley – the pinwheel escapement was installed by Smiths of Derby.

providing the vertical drive to the dials. Both the escapement and the bevels replacing the setting dial are of Leigh proportions and remain in Leigh locations on the movement. The frame, which has wedges but is bolted together in some places, lacks design flourishes and has just simply curved ends. The twenty-two inch diameter bell has stayed with the clock and was cast with the details: 'GEORGE AINSWORTH WARRINGTON 1789'; Ainsworth is known to



Fig. 54. St Mark's Church, Worsley – dial.

have made parts for clocks signed by William Leigh.³³ The presence of the Ainsworth name on the bell, could be interpreted as an indication of the clock's maker, as one turret clock signed by Ainsworth is still extant, but we feel the absence of an Ainsworth name cast into the actual frame, and other features of the design, negate this possibility.³⁴

At this stage, we are only able to say that it is possible that the clock at St Mark's Church was manufactured by William Leigh; it may well have been his first turret clock, which means that the comments we made in the section on the Haydock Lodge clock, concerning the evolution of his turret clock designs, would also apply here. It was made during the decade which included the completion of his apprenticeship and his marriage and would have been a significant commission for the young clockmaker. If this is the first turret clock made by William Leigh (1789) it may explain the subsequent commissions for Haydock Lodge and Lyme Park via the relationship between the Duke of Bridgewater and Peter Legh, particularly in respect of the land deals between the two.³⁵ Much further research is required to discover the truth.

33. See the 1810 longcase, discussed in the second part of this article.

34. See the AHS exhibition catalogue *Your Time* (2008), p. 80. The Ainsworth clock has a similar layout to those made by Leigh. The heavy frame is bolted, not wedged and has some design embellishments to the front of the chair frame. However, Ainsworth's name is heavily cast into the frame, a feature Leigh clocks do not share. His name is also engraved on the countwheel. He seems to have cast his name into almost every item he made, including longcase clock bells and longcase movement plates.

35. The Bulkeley commissions could also have resulted in a similar way, for example Samuel and Lewis Wyatt, architects, both worked for all three families (Egerton [family name of the Duke of Bridgewater], Legh and Bulkeley). The Duke had bought land at Lymm from Peter Legh during the period 1765–1772.



Fig. 55. St Andrew's Church, Leyland. The south side of the church photographed in 2011.

St Andrew's Church, Leyland

The only link with William Leigh at this church is to be found in an old photograph of the church, showing typical William Leigh hands.



Fig. 56. St Andrew's Church, Leyland. Detail from a photo, of unknown date, showing the tower when the church still had its mechanical clock. Photo provided by Stewart Whillis.

The hands now on the clock are of a different design and the clock itself is run by an electric motor.



Fig. 57. St Andrew's Church, Leyland. Close-up from the photo shown in Fig. 56.



Fig. 58. Bank Hall. The clock frame and barrels.
Fig. 60 (below) Bank Hall. The clock tower photographed before the William Leigh style hands were removed by vandals. Photo courtesy of the Bank Hall Action Group.

Bank Hall, Bretherton

This is a Jacobean mansion house south of Preston, which, during William Leigh's lifetime, was in the ownership of the Legh family. The building is now in ruins, but its fine clock tower still stands. Fears for the tower's stability led to the clock being removed, but it was subsequently vandalised. Most of the wheelwork was stolen which makes it more difficult to confirm the clock's maker. Parts of the hands were found in the overgrown gardens, after another attack by vandals, and resemble those on clocks made by William Leigh. The Bank Hall Action group has plans to restore the hall and to conserve what remains of the clock movement.



Fig. 59. Bank Hall. The scaffolding around the tower unfortunately provided easy access for vandals to remove the clock hands.

Fig. 61 (right). Bank Hall. Part of one of the hands was found in the undergrowth.

