

CLOCKMAKERS
AND
WATCHMAKERS OF WIGAN

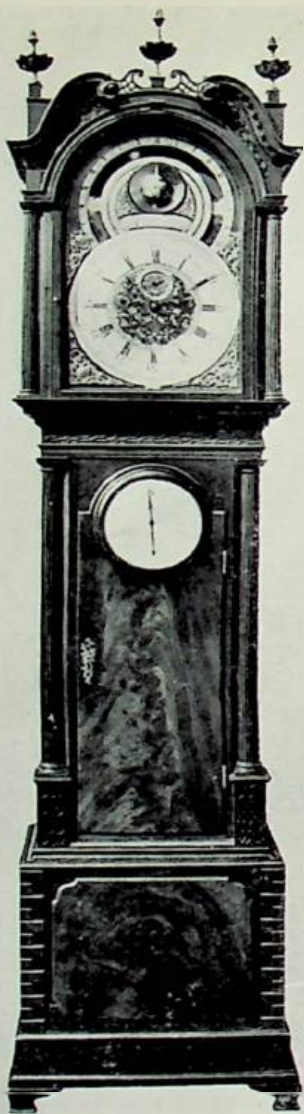


BY
ARTHUR J. HAWKES

THIS is an important and entirely original contribution to Wigan history and to the history of clockmaking generally. It is not a technical account of clock development, but a biographical account of Wigan clockmakers during two centuries, giving the dates they were at work, based on official records. Hitherto the dates of clocks by Wigan makers have been based largely on style, and in many cases these dates are far from accurate. The age of a clock by a Wigan maker can now be assessed with certainty, as well as his importance in his craft. More than 80 clockmakers are included in the survey. There is also **FOR THE FIRST TIME** an account of Wigan's first Parish Church Clock, which was in existence as early as 1650. Incidentally the book throws many sidelights on the local government of Wigan during the period concerned, and on the industrial history of the town. It will be a valuable addition to the shelves of the local antiquary, the collector of clocks and watches, and to the antique dealer, especially in Lancashire.

The author is a recognized authority on the history of Wigan.

THE CLOCKMAKERS
AND WATCHMAKERS
OF WIGAN 1650-1850



WILLIAM BARKER'S HOROLOGICAL MASTERPIECE ABOUT 1780.

By courtesy of R. H. Wade, Esq.

The Clockmakers
and
Watchmakers of Wigan

1650-1850

By

ARTHUR JOHN HAWKES, F.S.A.

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WIGAN :

Printed for the Author, and published by him at
"HAWKSNEST," 95 DICCONSON STREET WEST,

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January, 1950.

FOREWORD

I WANT to make it clear that this is not a technical work on clocks, but a biographical history of Wigan clock-makers. The principal purpose is to fix as far as can be done the exact dates of the Wigan makers, especially those who are well known to collectors; also to show the importance of the clock and watch-making industry in the past history of Wigan. Nevertheless, some technical descriptions and discussions are inevitable in such a work, and where these discursions are made they have been overlooked by an acknowledged expert, the Rev. N. V. Dinsdale of Ingleton, author of *The Old Clockmakers of Yorkshire*. I wish to tender my warmest thanks to him for his generous help and for the loan of three blocks. I also wish to thank my friend, Mr. William A. Cowen, Parish Clerk and Verger of Wigan, for his ever-willing assistance in searching the parish registers. Thanks are due also to Mr. E. L. Edwardes and Messrs. John Sherratt & Son, his publishers, for the loan of the block to illustrate Peter Fearnley's clock (plate IX) taken from *The Grandfather Clock*, 1949. The remaining photographs were taken by Mr. Eric Thursby, King Street, Wigan. Other friends have also given their help from time to time, and I trust they know well how much I appreciate their good will.

A. J. H.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH CLOCK AND THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

LONGCASE (or "grandfather") clocks are both useful and attractive, and the possession of at least one has long been regarded as an essential to a good home. Some people find them tremendously exciting and are not satisfied unless the clock they possess is "at least a hundred years old". The clocks themselves can be ingenious and they can be fittingly made the vehicle of the highest art in cabinet work, though a collector might equally be proud of the original plain oak case if well made and well proportioned, much as a collector of first editions prefers the original cloth to a sumptuous rebinding. Though makers put their names and their towns on their clocks from the early days of the industry they rarely added dates. Consequently many wild guesses as to age have been made.

The fact is that few clocks are as old as their owners think. Many connoisseurs and dealers tend to exaggerate age; even accepted authorities who profess to date clocks by recognized period styles often err on the side of age, frequently assessing a maker's period 20, 30, or 40 years too soon when considering 17th or 18th century examples of the clockmaker's art. The authority most usually accepted by collectors and dealers is F. J. Britten, whose book, *Old Clocks*, first appeared in 1899. He was certainly careful and on the whole is to be relied upon; but in the alphabetical list of makers appended to his book several early Wigan clockmakers are given dates much

too early. Another valuable guide is G. H. Baillic's *Watchmakers & Clockmakers of the World*; the enlarged second edition (1947) contains 35,000 names.

That Wigan-made clocks are numerous and wide-spread is evident from the many inquiries regarding old Wigan clockmakers received by the present writer from all parts of the country during the last thirty years. To answer these queries much search in Wigan records has been undertaken, and lately I have made a systematic examination of the Corporation archives and other local records to complete the spasmodic and piecemeal research conducted over a number of years. I am thus able to give accurate dates to most Wigan clockmakers and the full period of activity of the more important of them.

Watches had been known in England since the time of Henry VIII, but even in the Commonwealth period the cost restricted their possession to the well-to-do classes. £10 was a considerable sum of money in the middle of the 17th century, and that was the average price of a good watch. Nevertheless, they were fairly familiar to the people of Wigan and one of the earliest cases of "stealing by finding" found in the Wigan records concerns a watch.

In the Wigan Court of King's Pleas September, 1655, Alexander Greene, gentleman, sued John Hurst of Arley, yeoman, on account of a watch valued at £6. The plea relates that on 1 August, 1652, the said Alexander purchased a watch of the value of £6. On the last day of September, 1653, at Wigan "the said watch did casually slip forth of his hands" so that he lost it. "On the same day at Wigan it did by finding come into the hands of the said John Hurst who well knew the watch to be the goods of Alexander . . . but minding to defraud Alexander, John converted the said watch to his own use

and disposed of it for £10 to the damage of Alexander." It seems not unlikely that the watch was originally purchased in Wigan though it is not specifically stated. John Hurst knew its value and seems to have had little difficulty in re-selling it at a much enhanced price.

Clocks, too, were not unknown to Wiganers long before the invention of the "anchor escapement" and the introduction of the "grandfather", though it is unlikely that many private citizens possessed one. The one they were all familiar with was the Church Clock. When this clock, with its quarter-hour chimes, was first installed in the parish church is completely unknown. In the 17th century it was almost certainly in the tower, as now, since reference is frequently made to the "clock loft" or "clock house" and its association with the bells is very obvious.

Although there are many references to the church tower (or steeple, as it was then generally styled) in the documents dealing with the defence of Wigan at the beginning of the Civil Wars (1642) there is no hint of a clock. The steeple was a regular look-out post, it was used as a beacon, it was used as a fortress, the bells were "rung backwards" as a military alarm, yet not the slightest reference is made to a clock. Nevertheless, several months before the Battle of Wigan Lane (August, 1651) the church clock is mentioned as if it were a commonplace.

The earliest reference to the clock so far noticed is in the Corporation records under date 5 April, 1651. William Johnson, the parish clerk, requests ". . . that I may have my wages which is 2*li* for ringeing eight of the clocke [bell*] and tendinge the Clocke and Bells.

*This would appear to be the Curfew bell which was discontinued in Wigan in the following (18th) century; it may have been the morning market bell.

...” It is ordered to be paid to him out of the lays (taxes). The entry makes it clear that the clerk’s duty to tend the clock was not a new one, but had been in operation for some time. By 1690 the clerk was paid his 40s. a year simply for tending or winding the clock.

Unfortunately the Church records of the period were lost in the turmoil of the Civil Wars, and the earliest Churchwarden’s Accounts that survive are for the year Easter to Easter 1651–1652. Oddly enough one of the first items in that year confirms the impression that by that time the Church Clock is accepted as a matter of course. Soon after Easter, 1651, is the entry :

To William Harvie for mendinge y ^e quarter Whyle (? wheel)	15. od.
--	---------

Similarly in the following year :

To William Harvie for mendinge y ^e Chimes	4d.
--	-----

It does not follow from these entries that Harvey was a clockmaker ; or if he was a clockmaker that he was a Wiganer, for, as we shall see later on, when serious repairs to the clock were needed a clockmaker from outside Wigan was called in. However, there was in Wigan at this time a William Harvey who was a smith, and it is more than likely that this is the individual who effected these minor repairs. He occurs earlier than 1640 and in 1656 he was a Warden of the Blacksmiths’ Company.

There are a number of similar entries immediately following, and particularly “Oyle for the Clocke 2d” occurs two or three times every year. Sometimes it is a more comprehensive item as in the year 1654–55 :

To Robert Winstanley for oyle, wyrc, and candles for y ^e Bells, Chymes, and Clocke	4s. 6d.
Payd more for ironwork for Bells and Chymes	2s. 6d.

This early clock would have as its heart the curiously

named "foliot", a medieval escapement of Continental origin, of which the classic surviving example is the 14th century Dover Castle Clock now in the Science Museum, South Kensington. Sometimes called the "verge" escapement, essentially this consisted of a vertical spindle or "arbor" with two projections or "pallets" set at a wide angle to each other and separated by a distance equal to the diameter of the crown-wheel which was to drive them. As this crown-wheel revolved, driven by the falling clock-weight through a train of wheels, first the upper then the lower acting tooth pressed upon the face of its pallet, escaping at the end of its traverse to allow its partner to come into action. Thus the upright spindle was constantly being pushed first this way, then that. By itself this spindle would offer little resistance to this pressure, but it carried a cross bar or "foliot" each arm of which bore a weight. This made the whole a ponderous thing to push about and it assumed a natural "swing-period" which could be varied by moving the weights inwards or outwards as required.

This crude affair was only an approximate timekeeper, never a reliable one, though sufficiently marvellous in its day. Indeed, many of these early turret clocks had no dial at all, but contented themselves with sounding the appropriate number of strokes at each hour. If such a clock did sport a dial it carried but one hand which read off the time to the nearest quarter-hour; the rest was guesswork. Such, then, was the Wigan Church clock when Charles II returned to the throne. It had been repaired a number of times by "Peeter Asmall" (*i.e.* Peter Aspinall a local maker of clock parts), but by 1666 the original clock was either completely worn out or was regarded as obsolete, and a new clock had to be obtained.

Whatever the reason a new clock was installed in 1666. The most likely explanation is that the clock was considered obsolete, for by that date two remarkable new inventions had been introduced—the pendulum and the anchor escapement. The pendulum created a revolution. Here was a natural timekeeper of (for those days) almost incredible accuracy once its correct length for the mechanism had been achieved by adjustment. It is not surprising, therefore, that a new clock was thought desirable in the sixteen-sixties.

Christian Huygens introduced the pendulum in 1657, though it was not “written up” till the publication of his *Horologium Oscillatorium* in 1673. However, a London clockmaker of Dutch origin named Fromanteels visited Huygens in the 1650's and staying a year returned master of the new theory; Huygens himself visited England in 1660 and was admitted a Fellow of the newly founded Royal Society, so that his clock invention received an early boost in this country. The Rev. N. V. Dinsdale writes: “Huygens launched the pendulum on Europe in 1657 and at once every other clock, whatever its state of repair or disrepair, was obsolete. The next decade was one of feverish activity for clockmakers, converting to pendulum, scrapping, etc. At one stroke the whole picture was altered and Europe had stepped from medieval timekeeping to modern timekeeping, since the pendulum (supplemented in the middle sixteen-sixties by Robert Hooke's invention of the “anchor escapement”) has only been superseded for accuracy in the last few years by the quartz clock.” If this is the correct explanation of the new church clock of 1666 then the Wigan of the Restoration period can certainly be congratulated on its enterprise.

The new clock was purchased from a clockmaker named

John Lyon. The two entries in the 1666-67 Churchwardens' Accounts concerning this important transaction are simple enough :

Pd. John Lyon for the Clocke, Chymes, and Quarters	20li.	00s.	0d.
Pd. William Forth, Swordbearer, for John Lyon & his men, diat, and horse	2li.	00s.	0d.

It is obvious from the second entry that John Lyon came from another town as £2 had to be spent on food and lodging for his men and horses. Where did he come from? He is not mentioned in F. J. Britten's book, and I have to thank the Rev. N. V. Dinsdale for the information that Lyon was a Warrington clockmaker who became a freeman of the (London) Clockmakers' Company in 1685. The exact charge for the clock, £20, suggests a contract, but there is no previous entry in the Accounts recording an earlier visit by Lyon for the purpose of "viewing" and bargaining, so that this cost must have been defrayed from another source; the Churchwardens frequently went to Warrington on Visitation business and no doubt used the opportunity to interview Lyon. We may be certain that the new clock would be controlled by the pendulum.

As Huygen's pendulum of 1657 was a short one its application to turret clocks had to wait until Robert Hooke worked out his purely English "anchor escapement". This invention was undoubtedly available by 1660.* It is almost certain, therefore, that the Wigan clock of 1666 not only incorporated Huygen's pendulum, but was a long pendulum anchor escapement movement, thoroughly up-to-date, and notable for its accurate timekeeping. A thing of wonder to the citizens of Wigan.

*R. T. Gunther, *Early Science in Oxford*, vol. vi, p. 69

John Lyon came again to put the clock in order in the early part of 1669 and was paid 5s. "for his wages". And again in the year 1671-72 there are two items in the Accounts :

Pd. to John Lyon for comeinge to mend the Clock and chymes	5s.	od.
Pd. for work done in y ^e chyme loft etc.	6s.	od.

The words "comeinge to mend" confirm the inference that Lyon was called in from another town.

For ten years only minor repairs are recorded, but early in 1683 there was a serious breakdown which may have been due to a great storm, for we note the interesting items :

Spent on bargaining w th ye Slaters and one to mend the clock	1s.	6d.
For mending the Clock howse		9d.
For repairing the clock and chimes	7li.	00s. od.

No clockmaker's name is mentioned, but after Easter (1683) there appears the additional item :

Pd. to a man in Warrington who came to view the Clocke	9s.	od.
---	-----	-----

so it would seem the services of John Lyon were again requisitioned.

In the following year, however, the Churchwardens appear to have learnt that Wigan could now boast a clockmaker of reliability, and from 1684 to 1704 all repairs are performed by Thomas Martine who is invariably referred to by the respectful title of "Mr.". The specific references to him in the Accounts are quoted later under his name. Under Martine's care the Church Clock continued a placid and useful existence for many years, only small repairs done by Laurence Leicester, another Wigan clockmaker, being recorded from 1704 to 1710.

It was not till 1712 that extensive repairs again became necessary. In that year Thomas Walker, a local mechanic, was paid £4 "for repairing the Church Clock and setting the Chimes on foot". Then in 1718 it begins to give serious trouble again. On the 15th of April in that year a "Mr. Walley, clockmaker" "came to view the Clock", but where he came from is not stated, though he was doubtless the John Whalley of Bolton who was making clocks at this time. In any case no bargain was struck with him. Instead the Wigan clockmaker Thomas Bridge, and his workman or assistant Thomas Walker, secure the contract for putting the clock to rights. Bridge was paid £7 for providing new works and mending the old and Walker was paid a little over £2 for assisting in the repairs.

In 1726 another Wigan clockmaker is called in to remedy defects: Henry Hindley. He must have made substantial repairs for he was paid over £3. The record in the Churchwardens' Accounts is dated 16th May, 1726, and reads:

Pd. Henry Hindley for mending and altering
y^e Church Clocke etc. 3*li.* 9*s.* 0*d.*

A few years later (1733) Thomas Bridge was paid 1*li.* 2*s.* 6*d.* "for cleaning & putting new springs & Jacks & hammers & quarters to the clocke" and in 1737 he was again paid £2 "for repairing" it.

And there I propose to leave the early history of the Wigan Church Clock. The knowledge that Wigan possessed such a clock earlier than 1650 has not before been revealed, notwithstanding the many (and detailed) accounts of the Church which have been printed. An entirely new clock was installed by a local clockmaker, Peter Fearnley, in 1788, the story of which is told later on in the section on Fearnley. In its turn Fearnley's clock

was replaced in 1860, and this is substantially the clock which is so familiar to us all at the present day.

* * * * *

In the old days, as was usual in the ancient boroughs, only Burgesses and Freemen were permitted to trade within the Borough, and very strict watch was kept to prevent "foreigners" (as all outsiders were called) from transgressing against the privileges of the citizens. Burgesses were of three kinds: hereditary burgesses, the descendants of those who were granted the original "burgages" in 1246, or those to whom they were later assigned; elected in-burgesses who were elected by the Corporation from time to time, generally from the Freemen, either because they were substantial citizens or the sons of former burgesses; and out-burgesses, landed and other substantial people living in the neighbourhood, or distinguished persons who in some way or other had social or political connections with the Borough. All three groups rarely totalled more than 200 persons at any one time, and these and only these persons had the right of local government or of voting in parliamentary elections. Freemen formed the great body of the citizenry.

A person desiring to exercise his trade within the Borough presented a petition to the Corporation setting forth his qualifications and perhaps pointing out the need of his services. This petition was submitted to a jury of burgesses and if acceded to the candidate took the Freeman's Oath and paid his dues which varied from 40s. to £10 according to circumstances. Generally speaking a man was admitted a "freeman"—that is was made free to trade within the Borough—only if he had served his apprenticeship, normally seven years, in the borough or was born in the town and had gone elsewhere for his apprenticeship to secure the best tuition; but if

the trade of the petitioner was inadequately represented in the town qualified settlers from outside were welcome enough. Often, of course, tradesmen came into the town from the surrounding district and practised their calling, but they were constantly harassed and fined. Sometimes the trade they followed was so lucrative that the "foreigners" regularly paid the fines systematically levied upon them.

Wigan was an important centre for clockmaking throughout the 18th century. Most of the clockmakers were also (and in some cases primarily) gunsmiths. The industry began in Wigan at the Restoration, the earliest known craftsman being, as might be expected, a watchmaker rather than a clockmaker. The story begins with the petition of ROGER DARBYSHIRE in 1662 to be allowed to ply his trade in the town. It will be interesting to give the text of this document :

To the Worshipfull the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses
of the Burrowe of Wigan at this Leete Assembled
(Michaelmas, 1662).

The Petition of Roger Darbyshire.

Showeth that your Petitioner hath for some time past kept a Shoppe and wrought att his trade of watchmaker within this towne but lived himselfe and family in Pemberton where he intends to continue, but in regard he hath a desire only to keepe a shoppe within this town for the future to work in only and not to live or inhabit heere. And there being none of the said trade within the towne and that it may be some advantage to the said Markett.

He therefore prays that he may be admitted to take and keepe a shoppe within this towne for the using of the said trade only, and that he will not be nowise troublesome nor chargeable to the same, and he therefore further desires to be made a Freeman of the saide towne. And he will ever pray, etc.

Subscribed : We admitt the Petitioner to work at his trade until Michaelmas next upon his behaviour.

The claim that "there be none of the said trade within the towne" is to be noted. Wigan suffered severely during the Civil Wars, being seven times plundered, and the Corporation archives were looted and destroyed. Consequently only a few rolls survive from before 1650, but from then onwards the Corporation records are fairly representative and most of the Freeman's petitions are preserved. The evidence, therefore, that no watchmaker is recorded before 1662 is not decisive, but may, on the whole, be accepted as confirming the statement made in Darbyshire's petition.

Pemberton, although in the parish of Wigan, was a township separated from the Borough of Wigan by the River Douglas, but is now part of the Borough. Darbyshire's petition was not immediately granted, but he was allowed to pursue his trade in the town for one year subject to his good behaviour. During this interval he sued Adam Bancks mercer, in the Wigan Court of King's Pleas for 37s. 6d., the price of a watch. He was admitted a Freeman in 1664, and we can safely assume that he was the first to practise the mystery of watchmaking in Wigan. Little more is heard of him, however, and I do not know if any watches bearing his name survive. He died in 1690 possessed of a very small estate.

Darbyshire was soon followed by others and the next to come under notice is THOMAS MARTINE (or Martin) who was admitted a Freeman 1st January, 1675.* He is described in his petition as a "watchmaker", but a few years later he is described as a "clockmaker", and was so designated when he was elected a Burgess 10th August, 1686. It was about this time that he executed a number of minor repairs to the Church Clock. The entries which appear in the Churchwardens' Accounts are as follows :

* New Style ; 1674 Old Style. N.S. is used throughout.

1684.	Pd. Mr. Martin for Ropp for y ^o Chymes	1d.
1684.	Pd. Mr. Martin for mending y ^o Clock	5s. od.
1685.	Pd. Mr. Martin for fixing y ^o Clocke & Chimes after the new floure was layd	10s. od.
1689.	Pd. Mr. Martin for worke done about the Clocke	12s. od.
1698.	Pd. Mr. Martin for dressing y ^o Clock	1s. od.
1699.	Pd. Mr. Thomas Martin for mending the Church Clock severall times as by his Bill appears	<i>torn</i>
1700.	Pd. Mr. Martin for mending the Church Clocke	2s. od.

At least one watch made by him survives. Mr. G. H. Baillie records* that a watch with a one-hand movement of about 1680 signed on the backplate in a script style "Thō Martin, Wigan" is in the collection of Mr. C. A. Ilbert. Since this is the earliest known surviving relic of the Wigan industry a full description is justified and Mr. Ilbert has kindly supplied the details. It is a complete movement, but without case. The diameter of the dial is $1\frac{1}{8}$ ins. and the thickness of the movement from the tip of the hand square or peg to the tip of winding square at the back is exactly one inch. The watchcock is of a type usually found immediately after the introduction of the hair-spring (1670-1680). "The cock foot has a wavy edge conforming to the curve of the backplate. Tulip pillars. The silver dial is most interesting as it has no half or quarter hour divisions, simply the hour numerals, and outside them the hour is divided into four divisions of three (i.e. a total of 144 divisions, each indicating five minutes). The original single hand has a tail reaching to the beginning of the numerals; it is well shapcd, with an extension reading the 5-minute

* G. H. Baillie: *The Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World*, 2nd edn., N.A.G. Press, 1947.

divisions on the outside rim of the dial." This type of dial is extremely rare.

Thomas Martine was not only a successful business man, he was a good citizen and died about 65 years of age as a highly respected Alderman. He served as a "gate-waiter" (a sort of honorary constable) for the Market Stead (Market Place) 1675-6, became a Burgess 1686, elected Alderman at Easter 1695, and served as one of the two Overseers of the town mill in 1698-9. He was duly elected Mayor of the Borough at Michaelmas 1706 and thereafter served twice as a "Bencher" and as Senior Alderman. His place of business and residence was at all times in Standishgate. He died early in 1716, his will being proved at Chester later in the same year.

His son, THOMAS MARTINE II, baptised 20th March, 1688, continued the business, though the only specific reference to him in the trade is an entry in the Wigan parish register recording the burial of his daughter :

" 11 November 1725, Katherine daughter of Mr. Thomas Martine of Standishgate, watchmaker."

He occurs in the Corporation records over a number of years, but always with the prefix "Mr." and without any indication of his trade. He was elected a Burgess in 1738 and Alderman three years later. He never became Mayor and he last appears on the roll of Aldermen in 1744 ; I have not been able to trace his burial or his will.

Slightly earlier than Thomas Martine senior is EVAN HILTON, a local man, who was sued by John Traunter in 1667 in the Wigan Court of King's Pleas for wrongful detention of a "clockwatch" valued at £10. A clock-watch—a watch which strikes like a clock—must have

been an uncommon curiosity at this time in Wigan, as well as valuable. However, Hilton lived down this unsavoury incident for he was admitted a Freeman at Michaelmas, 1670. It is not stated with whom he served his apprenticeship. In his petition he styles himself "watchmaker" and he occurs in the records again in 1672 similarly designated; also at midsummer 1677 when he and his wife Elizabeth are listed as recusants and fined £10. He is not heard of again until his burial is recorded in the Wigan parish register 27th June, 1699.

Other names that are mentioned in the Wigan records at the earliest period are Peter Aspinall, George Liversay, John Newall, John Billinge, Oliver Platt, and Samuel Williamson. PETER ASPINALL of Ashton-in-Makerfield (near Wigan) described himself as a spurrier and maker of "gunneworke", "stone-bows", clock parts, etc. His petition to be admitted Freeman at Michaelmas, 1663, was rejected; nevertheless at the Leet of Michaelmas, 1664, "the late Mayor" was fined for swearing him as a Freeman without authority. Apparently his Freemanship remained valid for he continued to ply his trade in the town and there is no record of his having been "presented" for exercising his trade without being a Freeman. As early as 1666 he was paid 1s. 6d. for mending the chimes of the church clock and thereafter is continually employed about the Church for jobs requiring a skilled mechanic. The most extensive item in the Churchwardens' Accounts is for the year 1672:

Pd. Peeter Aspinall for making a spindle for the First Bell, for bindinge a Sumer, nayles & bands, 2 new gudgeons for the Chyme hammers and mendinge a Jack, ffor hooperinge a boderick (i.e. baldrick) and makeinge a new bolt for the same, & ffor a new key bridge wards & mendinge a lock, in all

6s. 3d.

But all this does not constitute Peter a clockmaker : he remains what he described himself in his petition " a spurrier and maker of clock parts, etc." He died probably in or before 1678 for in that year his name is replaced in the Churchwardens' Accounts with that of Emery Aspinall, most likely his son. The " Peter Aspinall, spurrier " who was imprisoned for debt in 1693 and 1696 may be another son.

At Michaelmas, 1666, GEORGE LIVERSAY, of Prescott, watchmaker, petitioned to be allowed to live and follow his trade in Wigan because " he had heard there was none of his trade there." This Liversay is no doubt the progenitor of the Bolton clockmakers of this surname mentioned by Britten for the years 1700-1730. The petition was not acceded to. At the same Court JOHN NEWALL, watchmaker, made a similar application for the same reason, which was also rejected. The fact that a month earlier he had been sued in the Wigan Court of King's Pleas for a small debt no doubt created prejudice against him. JOHN BILLINGE of Billinge (a village about four miles west from, but in, the parish of Wigan) was admitted a Freeman to carry on his trade of watchmaker in 1671. Nothing more is known of him.

Next comes OLIVER PLATT who served his apprenticeship with Roger Darbyshire above mentioned. Described as a " watchmaker " he was admitted a Freeman at Christmas, 1674, but his subsequent career is wrapped in mystery, for he does not make any later appearance in the records. As a youth, however, he did not escape notice. In October, 1661, he was presented to the Court Leet with several other young men for " Playinge atte Boules ", and again on 4th October, 1662, for a similar offence committed on September 3rd. Bowls is described

in the charge as an "unlawful game" and only occasionally is it specified that the game was being played on Sundays. Lancashire in the 17th century was notorious for its rigorous enforcement of the prohibitions against certain games and for illegally suppressing other customary recreations. At this time bowls was certainly discouraged in Wigan for there are many similar presentments on the records; likewise "Tennes" which was another of the "unlawful games" surreptitiously favoured by the youth of Wigan at this time. In June and October, 1664, Platt was presented for assaulting Ralph Brownlowe, who was judged equally at fault.

As we have seen, the first man to be described as "clockmaker" in Wigan was Thomas Martine. His apprentice SAMUEL WILLIAMSON was also so described when he applied for his Freedom at Easter, 1684. In view of this development the text of Williamson's petition is worth printing:

Easter Leet 1684.

To the Worshipfull the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses
(of the Borough of Wigan) at this present Leet assembled.
The humble Petition of Samuel Williamson, clockmaker,
sheweth

That whereas your Petitioner hath served Thomas Martine, clockmaker, as his apprentice for seven years last past and hath demeaned himselfe honestly and justly therein. And your Petitioner hath served five yeares as an apprentice under him in this Corporation. And your Petitioner hath also served the said Thomas Martine as a journeyman for the space of one yeare and a halfe and upward without disturbance. And your Petitioner hopes by his owne endeavour to maintain himselfe and to become noe ways chargeable or troublesome to this Towne. And your Petitioner being desirous to be a Freeman of this Corporation.

Therefore your Petitioner humbly prays your Worshippes will be pleased to admitt him to be sworne a Freeman of this Towne, and Your Petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray, etc.

(Noted at the foot—GRANTED)

Williamson, however, eventually left the town ; there is no record of his marriage in the Wigan register. He is probably the "Samuel Williamson of Cronton, watchmaker" who died in 1726. Cronton is about ten miles south of Wigan.

Another man also practised clockmaking in Wigan before the turn of the century. JONATHAN ERLING a clockmaker was presented at the Easter Leet, 1699, "for inhabiting in this Towne being a Foraigner." It is further stated that "Wee fine the said Jonathan Erling in 40s. unlesse he remove within one month after notice hercof and 40s. a month soe long as he continues." Apparently he removed since he did not again appear before the Court.

JAMES WINSTANLEY must also be noticed since he has several times been mentioned as an early Wigan clockmaker. The reason is the following entry in the Wigan Court Leet Roll for Michaelmas (12th October) 1700 :

Wee elect James Winstanley of Haigh a Burgess of this Towne hee the said James Winstanley ffurnishing y^e Dyall now sett up on the Townes Hall and settinge up a New Dyall on the most convenient part of the Church.

It will be noticed that "the said James" is not described as a clockmaker, and at no time is he so described. There is no evidence that there was ever a clock at the "Townes Hall", generally known as the Moot Hall. There was a clock at the Church, as we have already seen ; nevertheless, I am of the opinion that both these dials were

sundials. The Churchwardens' Accounts contain no reference to any expenditure for a dial of any sort. Both the dials "furnished" by James Winstanley were obviously gifts, for which reason he was rewarded by being elected a Burgess, notwithstanding that he lived just outside the Borough. Haigh was in the parish of Wigan and as there was no chapel there at this time the Wigan church was the church Winstanley would attend.

Having both a clock and a sundial sounds rather like a man wearing braces *and* belt, yet the Wigan church not only possessed both but had two sundials. The explanation is that sundials were necessary to keep the clocks to time since in those early days there were no time signals. Every clock with the duty of accuracy had to have its accompanying sundial, by which it was corrected from time to time.* In the Churchwardens' Accounts for 16th October, 1718, Mr. Runagar was paid 30s. "for gold and painting the sun diall over the Porch", and Henry Gore was paid 10s. "for setting out the said Diall" and re-erecting it. This was probably the dial which James Winstanley presented twenty years earlier. Another entry in the Accounts for the same year dated 30th November reads: Pd. to Wm. Wiggan and James Ascroft for a Diall Stone and setting it up, *1li. 2s. 11d.* This was probably a pillar sundial in the churchyard.

* The sundial, of course, recorded sun-time; clocks gave mean-time (nowadays called Greenwich mean-time). In order to arrive at mean-time there had to be a table showing the difference between sun-time and mean-time on every day of the year, for they coincided on two days in the year only. The sundial and the table, therefore, were necessary adjuncts to the clock. In Wigan there were at least two other public sundials in addition to the two at the church and the one on the Moot Hall. One known as "the stone dial" was set up in the open (market) space in Wallgate in front of what is now the General Post Office; and the other was on the centre of Scholes Bridge. The one mentioned above as "on the townes hall" would be visible in the market-place proper. See further pages 47-48.

Winstanley may have been the James Winstanley who in 1669 was paid 2d. by the Churchwardens "for making a Midfether for the Great Bell", but he certainly was not a clockmaker. Like many others of his time he probably made a hobby of "dialling". He remained on the Wigan Burgess Roll until Easter 1715, and met his death by an accident in August that year.

CHAPTER II

LEICESTER, BURGESS, AND BRIDGE

WITH the turn of the century clockmaking in Wigan developed rapidly and soon there were a number of craftsmen at work. It would seem, too, that there was a good demand for clocks. During the first year or two of the 18th century the only officially recognized clockmaker working in the town was Alderman Thomas Martine, and he was obviously doing very well, yet when LAURANCE LEICESTER, "clockmaker", petitioned at the Michaelmas Leet in 1703 to be admitted a Freeman to exercise his trade in the borough his application was refused. This, however, did not deter him from exercising his trade, for he was paid 9s. 2d. by the Churchwardens in 1704 "for mending the Church Clocke severall tymes". His place of residence and business is at all times given as Wallgate. He was duly presented at the Easter Leet 1705 for "Following his trade of Clockmaker not being a Freeman" and fined. He was subsequently presented at every Leet thereafter and fined. Clearly his business was sufficiently profitable to make it worth his while to submit to such systematic exaction. This situation eventually became obvious to the authorities so that in October, 1707, there is a change of heart. At the Michaelmas Leet in that year it is recorded among the presentments :

Laurence Leicester for using and exercising the trade and occupation of a clockmaker within this Corporation not being a Freeman thereof.

Wee fyne him 40s. and 40s. a month for soe long as he continueth.

This last sentence is all crossed out and replaced by :

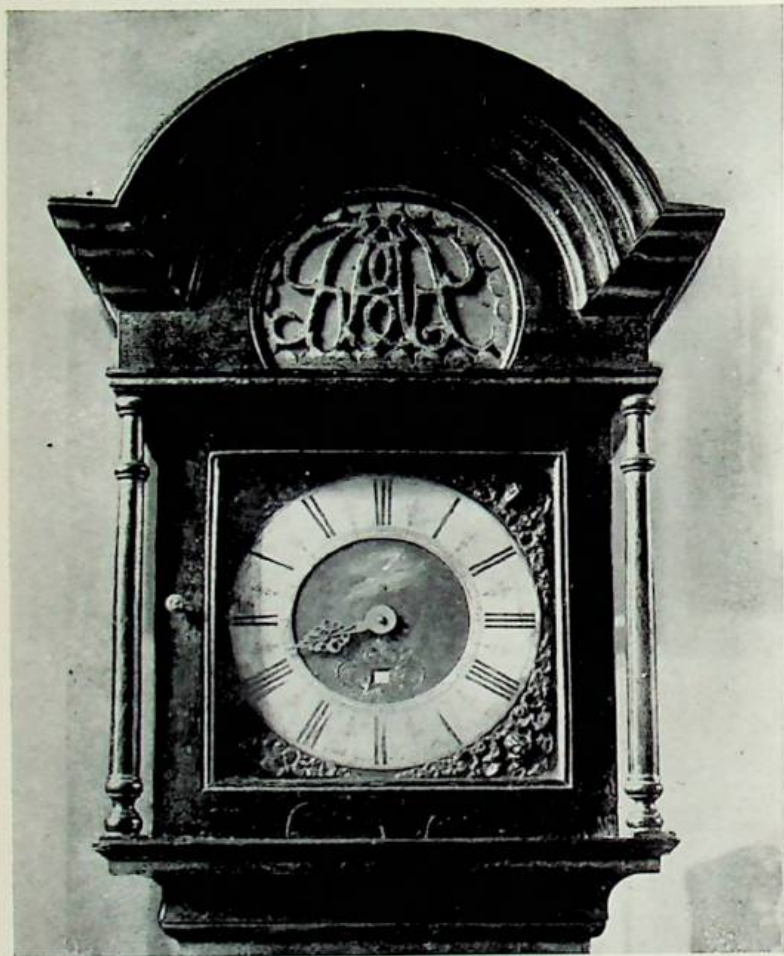
Wee elect him a Freeman paying 5*li*.

Apparently Leicester ignored this order and carried on

as before, so that at the Michaelmas Leet of 1709 he was fined £5 for contempt of the Court; and he was again presented and fined in the following year. As late as 10th April, 1710, he was employed by the Churchwardens to effect small repairs to the Church Clock, which has very much the air of cocking a snook at the Court. He died at the end of July, 1711, and was buried in Wigan 1st August without having been admitted a Freeman. His wife Mary predeceased him by a month being buried at Wigan 1st July, 1711.

In 1710 another "foreigner" entered the Borough: JOHN BURGES. This man belonged to an old Wigan family—the name appears frequently in the earliest Wigan registers—though obviously he had come in from outside, probably from somewhere quite near. Though Britten spells the name Burgess it is almost invariably spelt in the Wigan records with one final *s* only, as indeed are John's ancestors and descendants. On the other hand it would appear to be pronounced with a hard *g* because it is occasionally found spelled Burghous, Burgus, and Burgas. John Burges submitted a petition to be admitted Freeman to the Wigan Court Leet at Michaelmas 1711, the tenor of which is as follows:

The humble petition of John Burges, Clockmaker. Sheweth that your Petitioner upon the death of Laurence Leicester, clockmaker, was by several of this Corporation invited to come and follow his trade of clockmaking within this Towne, there being a great want of one of the said trade therein, whoe accordingly came and hath ever since lived within Borrough and fitted a great many therein with clockes and other work belonging to the trade of the Petitioner. And your Petitioner having received great encouragement therefore humbly desires to be a Freeman of the said Corporation paying such considerable sum of money as you shall think convenient. And your Petitioner will ever pray etc.



DIAL AND HOOD OF ONE-FINGER CLOCK BY JOHN BURGESS OF WIGAN,
ABOUT 1712.

(The hand, though contemporary, would not seem to be the original.)

This application was rejected, as was another petition presented to the next Easter Leet in almost identical terms, though the words "considerable sum of money" are altered to "reasonable sume". On the contrary, insult was added to injury at this Leet, for Burges was fined £5 "for following the trade of a clockmaker in this towne" being a foreigner. His address is given as Wallgate, no doubt the former residence of the late Laurence Leicester which was a little lower down than what is now Williams Deacon's Bank. However, another petition submitted in Michaelmas, 1712, was allowed and he was duly sworn a Freeman.

If Burges did not come to Wigan till *after* the death of Laurence Leicester, as he claims, he must have established himself very quickly. Leicester died at the end of July, 1711, and Burges was married in Wigan at the end of the following October, whilst he was actually employed to make repairs to the Church Clock as early as September. Indeed the entry in the Churchwardens' Accounts is the first we hear of him :

8 Oct. 1711—Pd John Burgas Clockmaker for
repairing the Church Clock as
per his bill, etc.

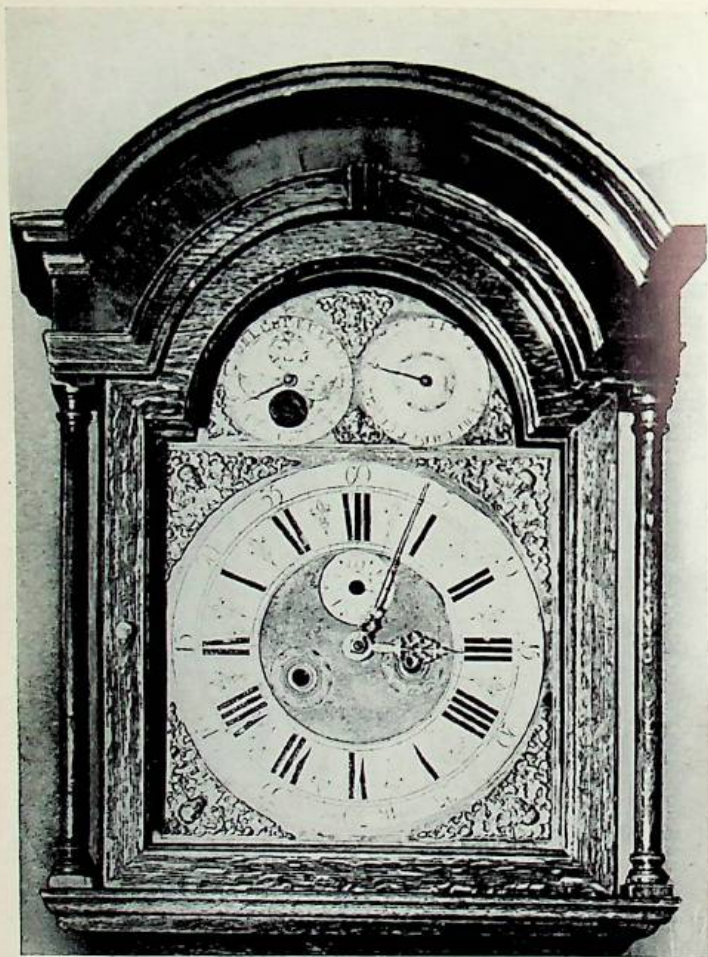
10s. 11½d.

A number of clocks by John Burges have survived, notably in Lancashire, and a one-fingered specimen is preserved in the Wigan Public Library, having been presented to the town by Mr. James Turner who purchased it at an auction sale in Preston in 1933. It is, of course, a thirty-hour clock wound by a rope pulley. It has a brass face with the figure circle silvered; the corners of the brass face are ornamented in relief in a style very creditable to the brass-founding industry in Wigan in the early 18th century. The clock has the hour hand

only, but has a striking apparatus, and just below the centre of the dial is a small "window" showing the day of the month; only the number of the day is given, no mechanism for naming the day or the month being provided. It is inscribed on the dial "John Burges—Wigan". The case is of a very simple design in oak, and whilst not a thing of beauty is pleasing in its simplicity. These facts indicate that it was made before 1720 and is an early specimen of Burges's work.

An eight-day Burges clock is owned by Mr. John T. Highton of Wigan which is signed at the base of the dial "JO'N BURGESS—WIGAN". The inner circle of the dial is of matted brass, with a seconds dial in silver in the upper half; the dexter winding hole (strike mechanism) is one inch lower than the other, and each is surrounded by a curious circular design of reversed semi-circles about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. across; the two hands are of solid brass. The raised outer circle or "chapter ring" giving the hours in black wax is of silver; the corners are decorated with embossed brass ornament having in the centre a bearded head wearing what looks like a rabbinical hat, flanked by eagles and castellated at the base. In the arch are two small revolving dials, the dexter showing the age (and phases) of the moon, and the sinister the day of the month, surrounded by a similar ornament as on the corners of the dials. The plain solid oak case is 7 ft. high, waist 1 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in., base and head 1 ft. 9 in.; rounded roof without pinnacles.

The existing clocks known to be made by John Burges show a gradual evolution in design. The earlier clocks have but one hand, the hour-hand. Later a mechanism for indicating the date was introduced, progressively more detailed; still later the phases of the moon. At an early stage a striking apparatus was included; at a later stage



DIAL AND HOOD OF LATER CLOCK BY JOHN BURGESS,
ABOUT 1720.

Facing page 33

a minute-hand was added, and in the course of time the dials became elaborate and ornate.

It should be noted that the dates given by Britten, 1690-1740 begin much too early, for 1690 was about the year John Burges was born, and he did not begin active work till 1710. He married on the last day of October, 1711, Margaret Winkley of Wigan, spinster. In the marriage bond at Chester dated 27th October he is described as "of Wigan, co. Lancs., Clockmaker". His bondman was John Markland of Wigan, shoemaker, and witnesses were Ellen Taylor and Anne Turner. His first-born son was christened John 1st September, 1712, when Burges was described as a "gunsmith"; but when his daughter Jane was christened, 13th September, 1713, he is described as "clockmaker" and is generally so called—as when a son was christened 3rd February, 1727. His place of business was first Wallgate, then Hallgate, and later the Market Stead (Place). On 12th February, 1737, he was married a second time to Margaret Beisley of Wigan, and a son was christened 17th September, 1738. John Burges continued actively in business till his death about the age of 65; he was buried at Wigan 31st March, 1754.

When the Corporation allowed Burges's petition 27th September, 1712, they made a complete change of front, for they not only admitted Burges but two other applicants, one of whom, like Burges, had been rejected at the previous Easter Leet. The second of these was JAMES ASPINWALL of Heaton (near Bolton). In his earlier rejected petition he spells his name Aspinall, but in other instances it is given Aspinwall. He describes himself as a clockmaker "being a young man, Unmarried, and of considerable Visible Estate." The second petition is subscribed: "Wee admitt him a Freeman of this Corporation paying five pounds in ten dayes to Bayliff

Langshawe and Bayliff Mather." A later note in this same Leet shows that Aspinwall promptly paid his £5 and was duly sworn. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that he figures in the Corporation records for a bare half-dozen years, his last appearance being at Michaelmas, 1717, when he is appointed for the second time to serve for one year as "Gatewaiter" for the Market Place. As there is no annual list of Freemen in the records as there is of Burgesses it is not possible to say how long he remained in the town after his appointment in October, 1717, possibly several years, but not longer. If he had died one would expect his will to be recorded at Chester, since he claimed to be a man of means, but there is no record of his death or marriage in Wigan. It is to be supposed, therefore, that he migrated to another town, and he may turn up elsewhere. He is not mentioned by Britten.

The third man who was admitted a Freeman in 1712 was THOMAS BRIDGE. As a number of clocks by this maker survive, and he is listed in Britten, it will be as well to correct the erroneous dates given to him by Britten : 1690-1720. It is doubtful if he was even born quite so soon as 1690, for in his petition to be admitted Freeman in 1712 he describes himself as a young man. Indeed, the petition is unusually interesting : after the usual preliminaries it reads :

The Humble Petition of Thomas Bridge, Clockmaker. Sheweth that your Petitioner is a young unmarried man and hath served a lawful Apprenticeship to his said calling and is now a master thereat and very seldome makes any Clocks but those that goes for the space of ten dayes at one winding upp, and having information that there is a great want in this Corporation of a good ingenious workeman . . . and being desirous to supply the said want and serve the Towne to the utmost of his power. Therefore your Petitioner, etc.,

This is subscribed : " Wee admitt him a Freeman paying five pounds to the Bayliffs of this Corporation in three weeks." One wonders if his success was due to the good conceit he had of himself, though it must be agreed that his surviving products prove his merits. Unfortunately he does not tell us where he came from, but there is good reason to believe that he came from Bolton, and that he was a son of " Thomas Bridge of Bolton, Clockmaker " who died with small estate in 1717.

Bridge employed a workman named Thomas Walker and with him made extensive repairs to the Church Clock in 1718. The entries in the Churchwardens' Accounts are :

1718				
May 16.	Spent upon Thomas Walker and Thos Bridge when they view'd the Clock	15.	2d.	
May 21.	Spent when we agreed with 'em about the Clock and taking it down	15.	6d.	
Nov. 30.	Spent on Thomas Walker and other workmen		10d.	
Nov. 30.	Pd. to Thomas Walker as per his Bill	1li.	14s.	5d.
Nov. 30.	Pd. to Mr. Bridge for additional works to the Clock and for mending the old works	7li.	0s.	0d.

It is clear from other entries that Walker was not a clockmaker, but a mechanic or smith, and he was frequently employed in effecting repairs to the church fabric and the bells as well as the clock, so that the second item under Nov. 30 may have included other work in addition to assisting in re-erecting the clock. The last time Bridge was employed to restore the Church Clock was early in 1733, when he was paid 1li. 2s. 6d. " for

cleaning & putting new springs & Jacks & Hammers & quarters" to it.

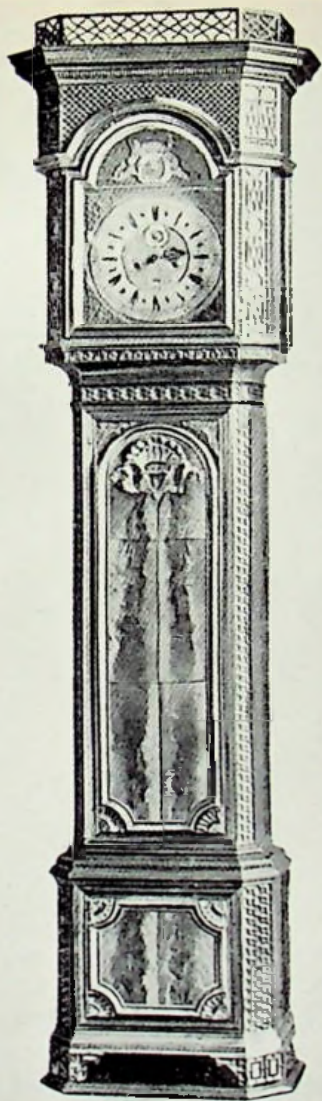
Bridge married Ellen Winstanley of Wigan in October, 1716; she was buried at Wigan 25th October, 1727, the entry in the register reading: "Ellen the wife of Thomas Bridge clockmaker of Standishgate". He may have married again, though I have not found the record, for under date 25th January, 1754, the burial is recorded of Mrs. Mary Bridge of Hallgate, Widow". Thomas Bridge continued his active career in Wigan till at least 1745, but I have not found the record of his death.

The evolution of his style and technique is very similar to that of John Burges who was his exact contemporary, except that eight-day or ten-day clocks are more usual. An early one-fingered thirty-hour clock inscribed "Thos. Bridge—Wigan" is described as "A brass face inlaid with enamel figuring, quarter-hour indicators, a changing date-wheel, and an oak case". A later example with both minute- and hour-hands is inscribed

Thomas Bridge
Wigan

"It still keeps excellent time." The cases generally are in solid oak, but rather plain. Nevertheless an unusual number of clocks by Thomas Bridge are found in exceptionally fine cases.

Mr. T. Ordish of Lancaster some years ago had an eight-day Bridge clock for sale, set in a superb Chippendale case in which the canopy (or hood) decoration was mostly fretwork of different patterns; the square top surmounted by a fretwork rail. The dial centre was of brass with a raised seconds dial of silver and, below, a small date window; the two keyholes encircled by a geometrical ornament; a raised chapter-ring of silver, and an hour-hand only; the embossed brass corner ornaments centre round a human mask; in the arch an embossed ornament



EARLY ONE-FINGER CLOCK BY THOMAS BRIDGE OF WIGAN,
ABOUT 1715, IN SUMPTUOUS CHIPPENDALE CASE.

[Facing page 36]

in imitation of a coat of arms with cherubs as supporters. The dial indicates an early Bridge clock which would bring it about 1715. The case cannot be contemporary with the clock, though it may well be 18th century, but a later owner recognizing a good clock felt that a fine case would be a fitting adornment. It is thought to have gone to America.

Another clock inscribed "Bridge de Wigan" in a "very handsome mahogany case" is in the possession of Mr. R. Fleetwood-Hesketh of Meols Hall. Yet another "very handsome long-case clock by Thos. Bridge of Wigan" is owned by Mr. Willard Clarke of Stockport. "The case is in black oak and is richly carved in an oriental design; it has an eight-day movement and is fitted with a very beautiful brass dial about twelve inches across, the corner pieces being in the form of two cherubs with crossed sceptres supporting a large crown; it has long lead weights." "I think," writes Mr. Clarke, "the design and workmanship of this clock is a credit to the maker, and it is still in excellent order." It is quite clear that Bridge was a good clockmaker and that his merits were as well recognized by his contemporaries as by 19th and 20th century collectors. The 19th century clockmaker who named his son "Thomas Bridge Winstanley" evidently regarded him as a master.

Finally, it is worth noting that Bridge is also recorded as being a "maker of astronomical instruments".

A contemporary of Burges and Bridge is HENRY HINDLEY. He is something of a mystery for at no time does he appear to have applied to be admitted a Freeman of Wigan, nor was he ever "presented" for carrying on his trade in the borough without being free. Indeed he makes no appearance in the Town records except the solitary entry in the Churchwardens' Accounts of May,

1726, already quoted, when he was paid £3 9s. for repairing the church clock. Yet several clocks signed by him are known to survive. There is one clock in the Virginia Museum signed "Hindley, Wigan" which is attributed to the period 1750-60, rather late for one who is known to have been working in 1726 or earlier. The best example, however, is a clock of the right period now owned by the Rev. J. F. Gerrard of Wigan. It is an excellent specimen and would be dated about 1720: the case is dated 1730. It is a one-fingered 30-hour clock with a strike movement: the centre of the square dial is of matted brass with a small date-window in the lower half (there is no seconds dial); the chapter-ring is also of brass with the hour figuring of black wax separated by fleur-de-lys; the embossed corner ornaments centre round a small mask; the case is of plain oak except for a narrow ribbon of inlay round the door and the base; the hood has plain side-pillars and a low rounded cornice which is removable and fits in a groove, two finials are missing; in the tympanum are the initials and date

H M

M

1730

inlaid in a yellow wood*—this piece of timber is very thin and has been broken where the inlay has cut too deeply, being repaired with a backing of modern three-ply. The measurements are: dial diameter 11 ins.; hood width 22 ins., waist 12½ ins., base 16½ ins., height to top of cornice 6 ft. 9 ins. The clock is signed "Hindley de Wigan", a style which dates it to about 1720.

If Henry Hindley actually lived in the borough of Wigan he must have been singularly unobtrusive. It is

* The initials signify the owner, not the maker—in this form usually a man and wife. The initials in the first line are the Christian names of the pair and the second M their joint surname. If a wedding present 1730 would be the year of their marriage.

more probable that he resided just outside yet near enough for the appellation "of Wigan" to be appropriate. It would be interesting to know the relation of the Henry Hindley, clockmaker of Wigan, to his namesake and contemporary, the celebrated clockmaker of York who specialized in church or tower clocks and installed a new clock in the Minster there in 1752. Hindley is a Wigan name (the township and manor of Hindley being within the parish of Wigan) and Henry Hindley of York became a freeman of that city in 1731 and died there in 1771. One supposes he must have been related to the Hindleys of Wigan to be carrying on the same trade. More documentary evidence about the Wigan Hindley would be most welcome.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM BARKER

THE Barker family started in business in Wigan as gunsmiths about 1740. Though there had been Barkers in Wigan much earlier and throughout the 18th century chiefly noted as weavers, there is no evidence of any connection between them and the clockmakers ; on the contrary, the evidence points to the clockmakers as being newcomers. The first of this family was THOMAS BARKER who was admitted a Freeman of Wigan in 1738. In his Petition he does not say what his trade is, but he certainly made clocks, probably as a side-line, for at least one clock signed by him has survived. He does not, however, seem to have developed an extensive business in this line. His petition is interesting and odd, it is dated January 21st, 1737 (N.S.) and the substance of it is as follows :

The humble petition of Thomas Barker. Humbly sheweth That your petitioner lives in Standish where he has a very good trade.* And has a tenement of fourtene pounds a yeare in Pemberton which hee holds under the Ryght honourable the Earle of Barrymore† for Life. And hee being sometime agoe chosen Sheriff's Bayliff which is a place of good profit to him. And his business chiefly lyeing within this Corporation that hee may bee neare the Gentlemen of the Lawe woud . . . rayther live amongst you than eyther in Standish or Pemberton.

Therefore your Petitioner humbly prays etc.

* The nature of the trade is not stated, but one assumes it was gunsmith or an allied craft.

† Mayor of Wigan 1725 and 1734.

This is subscribed " Wee elect the said Thos. Barker a Freeman he paying to the present Bayliffs in one month the sume of three pounds three shilling for the Townes use". How long he continued in Wigan is not known, but certainly not long.

It has been stated that WILLIAM BARKER who came to Wigan about the same time was the son of Thomas, but I have not discovered the evidence of this relationship. William Barker quickly established himself as a gunsmith and clockmaker. Ten years later he, too, petitioned to be admitted a Freeman in these trades. As he became Wigan's most notable clockmaker, with a national reputation, everything relating to him is of interest. I have, therefore, no hesitation in giving the substance of his petition to be made a Freeman; in contrast to most of these documents it is beautifully written, almost certainly by Barker himself:

To the Worshipfull Richard Holmes Esquire Mayor of the Borough of Wigan in the county of Lancaster, and to the Aldermen and the Gentlemen of the Jury assembled in the Court Leet held there . . . Saturday 11 March 1748. The Humble Petition of William Barker, gunsmith, Sheweth That your Petitioner having resided sometime in the Corporation and married a wife there, is desirous to obtain his Freedom and to exercise his trade therein, and humbly hopes he hath hitherto maintained a Fair and honest Character and shall always endeavour to promote the Trade and Interest of the Corporation, and to be an usefull Inhabitant thereof, and is willing to pay such reasonable Fine for the same as the Corporation shall think fit.

Your Petitioner therefore humbly prays that he may be admitted a Freeman of this Borough, . . .

(signed) Wm. BARKER.

This document is marked " to be continued ", *i.e.* carried

over. It was later again considered, and on April 6th, 1751, it is recorded " We admit William Barker a Freeman of this Borough he paying the Foreman the sum of five guineas ". Evidently Barker considered this fee extortionate for on the 5th October, 1754, it is reduced to two guineas if he pays promptly, which he did.

It will be noted that William states that he has lately taken a Wigan lady for wife, but the marriage entry cannot be traced in the Wigan register. There is a group in 1745 in which the bridegrooms' names are completely illegible, and as two of them married ladies named Ellen it seems likely to be one of these. His eldest son was born in 1747 and baptised in January, 1748, " son of William Barker of Standishgate and Ellen his wife ".

William Barker did not become a Freeman till the end of 1754, yet very soon he became active in trying to prevent newcomers from engaging in the same or related industries. In the years immediately following he is the prime mover in several petitions against the admission of rivals. There is a petition to the Leet dated 2nd October, 1756, in his handwriting which " Sheweth that your Petitioners are Freemen within this borough, some of them follow the Trade or Business of Watchmakers. . . . That your Petitioners are informed that Thomas Doncaster of Wigan aforesaid hath applied to this Corporation in order to be admitted Free . . . to follow the business of Watchmaker and Silversmith and that under colour thereof . . . intends to pursue the Business of Tinman and several other Branches of Business to which he hath served no Apprenticeship and actually employes William Williamson as a journeyman. . . ." This is signed by Jos. Rudd and Wm. Barker. On the back is a further list of 13 signatures, though none of them is known to be a watchmaker. Rudd was a Tinsmith.



BRACKET CLOCK BY WILLIAM BARKER OF WIGAN, ABOUT 1770.

Facing page 43]

Doncaster was several times fined for exercising his trade without being Free and he is usually described as a Tinsmith, though in his petitions of 1755 and 1757 (both of which were disallowed) he is described as Watchmaker and Silversmith. THOMAS DONCASTER was finally admitted as such 31st December, 1763.

A similar petition signed by several gunsmiths and clockmakers, William Barker being the principal, was submitted 6th October, 1759, against the admission of Archibald Coats, who, for a short time, had been a journeyman clockmaker in Barker's employment. Coats was a good artisan, and we shall make this clear later, for it is obvious Barker knew it only too well and did not want him as a competitor. On the other hand, it is surprising to find Barker so jealous of competitors since he was himself an exceptionally clever master gunsmith and mechanic, and rapidly established himself both as a gunsmith and clockmaker in Wigan. He was elected a Burgess of the Borough with ten others on 6th October, 1756.

Barker clocks are very well known in the auction rooms and are of every type: lantern clocks, table clocks, bracket clocks, and (especially) longcase clocks of an unusually large size. The present writer has examined a number of them and all are of the finest workmanship, both within and without, some of the cases being most handsome. Thomas Hatton, a famous 18th century London watchmaker and writer on clocks, in his "Introduction to the Mechanical Part of Clock and Watch Work" published in 1773 puts William Barker in the front rank. Like everyone else, he regards Thomas Tompion as the outstanding genius of clock development and mechanism, and on page 20 he states "Mr. Graham may be called Tompion's successor". "Next

to Graham may be placed the late Mr. John Ellicott," and then among the leading makers of the day "may be mentioned Mudge, Mathews, Hindley of York, Finny of Liverpool, and Barker of Wigan, Lancashire." Another tribute to his workmanship, this time as a gunsmith, was paid to Barker by Adam Walker the inventor, who made a tour from London to the Lakes in 1791 and published "Remarks made on a Tour . . ." in 1792. He deals with Wigan on pages 34-36 and records that "Mr. Barker of this place was for many years the only maker of steel cross-bows and also of the best fowling pieces in the Kingdom." Two specimens of Barker's cross-bows preserved in the Wigan library amply bear out this judgment.

Most early clocks by William Barker have the inscription "William Barker, Wigan" on the dial, but some of the smaller clocks are identified only with the name "William Barker" on the back-plate. A fine bracket clock has the name "William Barker" in a double cartouche on the upper part of the dial as well as on the back-plate. It is fitted with the Whittington chimes on six bells, which can be turned on or off by a lever in the arch above the dial. It also has an alarm mechanism wound up by a thin cord issuing from the top at one side, the alarm being set by turning a small circle round the axis of the hands to a fixed pointer.

Later clocks, when his sons had joined him in the business, say 1780, have the simple identification "Barker, Wigan". Some of Barker's longcase clocks are unusually broad, a type known as the Yorkshire style, and so long as the height is not less than seven feet six inches the effect is acceptable. The case work of these clocks is generally excellent.

Barker is rather fond of mottoes, such as "Time is Valuable", usually placed below the moon. The typical Barker dial is characterized by a simple diamond lattice design in the centre. "Barker—Wigan" at the base of the dial is the identification associated with this style. A typical Barker clock of his style is described by the owner: "The brass ground of the dial is matt with a trellis pattern, and the hour, month, and date rings are all on the chapter circle. The brass corner pieces are scrolls and the face measures 13 inches by 13 inches. The mahogany case is 7 ft. to the top of the square and 1 ft. 9 ins. in breadth. A strip of fret ornament is laid on at the top."

One rather handsome clock, some eight feet high and unusually broad, has three pinnacles surmounted by golden eagles, with a design of grapes and vine in the spandrels of the canopy. Barker also specialized in musical chiming clocks. An example of this type was formerly owned by a resident in Hardybutts, Wigan. It played tunes every three hours on twenty silver-toned bells. It was sold by auction at the owner's death and eventually went to America.

None of the clocks the writer has seen is dated, but it is not difficult to assign a date to William Barker's masterpiece as "about 1780". There is every justification for the claim that this clock is "one of the most remarkable clocks in England". The clock first came into general notice from an article in the *Connoisseur* for July, 1911, where an illustration of it is to be seen. It is a very handsome clock standing 108 inches high (nine feet), 25 inches across the hood, and 26 inches across the foot. The Chippendale style case is of oak completely encased in a beautiful mahogany veneer. In general the design is typical of the period 1770-1780, and in some

details corresponds to other Wigan clocks made by other makers. The "brickwork" base, for instance, is duplicated in a clock by Coats of Wigan of the same period, and the pediment is closely similar to other Wigan clocks. Consequently it may safely be assumed that the cabinet work is also a product of Wigan craftsmanship. The unusual breadth is well balanced by the height which is in splendid proportion and gives the clock a really magnificent appearance.

Nevertheless, it is the elaboration of its mechanism which makes the clock so remarkable, and I am entirely indebted to the Rev. N. V. Dinsdale for the minute description of it which now follows: "The dial is an elaborate and artistic piece of workmanship in brass and silver, beautifully proportioned. The inmost circle of the chapter ring is the calendar Old Style, and this is read off by a beautifully slender hand from the dial centre. So delicate is this hand that clumsy fingers would soon spoil it and it is adjusted not by hand but by means of a worm gear. It goes round the dial once in the year; it has other duties to perform and these will be detailed later. First, then, we have the calendar Old Style for the benefit of the conservative minded owner.*

* The reformed calendar, generally called New Style (N.S.), came into force in Great Britain in 1752. Till then the Julian Calendar which had been in use since the Council of Nice in 325 was still in vogue. But the Julian year was 11 minutes and a few seconds too long and by the 16th century there was an error of 10 days. Pope Gregory XIII ordered a revised calendar (since known as the Gregorian Calendar) to come into force on 1st March, 1582, but the Protestant countries at that time were too hostile to agree to anything the Papacy might recommend, and it was not till 1751 that an Act was passed authorizing its adoption in this country. It came into operation the following year and involved annulling 11 days, so that the day following 2nd September was the 14th September. This created much opposition, the ignorant classes feeling they were being cheated out of 11 days! Even many educated people for a time refused to acknowledge the reform. However, the opposition soon died down, but as there were still countries using Old Style a calendar recording it was a useful instrument.



DIAL AND HOOD OF WILLIAM BARKER'S HOROLOGICAL MASTERPIECE,
ABOUT 1780, SHOWING THE ELABORATE SCROLL DECORATION OF THE
INNER DIAL, AND SUBSIDIARY FEATURES.

“Next, working outwards, comes the chapter-ring proper, and this is read off by two hands in the usual way. Beyond this is the calendar New Style, read off by an extension of the incredibly slender hand used to read the first calendar. It will now be seen why this hand must be so slender; in order to reach the outer rings it has to cross the chapter-ring and there must be no confusion between it and the minute-hand. In leap-year an adjustment has to be made by hand to allow for the extra day. Now we come to the outermost ring. This is a separate piece of metal, movable by hand, but so beautifully lipped upon the parent ring that no join is apparent on superficial examination. This outer ring is an ecclesiastical calendar detailing the Sundays of the year and the principal feast days. Since the dates of these days vary with the date of Easter this calendar has to be adjusted every year. Again the same long slender hand does duty here on this the third ring to which it is related.

“Above these concentric rings is the ‘equation wand’, moving to and fro along its horizontal scale. To understand the purpose of this equation-work, as it is termed, we have to imagine ourselves back in the times when these early longcase clocks were coming new from the maker. We have bought a case-clock: how are we to know that it is keeping time? There is no wireless, no time-signal by telegraph, only the old dependable sun. We must either walk to the nearest public sundial to get sun-time or, in addition to our case-clock, take delivery of a sundial for garden or house wall to keep the clock right. As explained on an earlier page, sun-time has to be adjusted to mean-time, and a printed table, perhaps pasted inside the clock door, is necessary to give the amount of difference between sun-time and mean-time

for every day of the year. This is called the 'equation-table' for it gives the information needed in the form of an equation—'solar time plus (or it may be minus) x minutes = mean-time'. So the inevitable companions of the clock were (*a*) the sundial and (*b*) the equation-table.

"Then it occurred to someone (Williamson of London claimed the honour) that the equation-table could be cut out completely if a hand on the clock could be arranged so as to show the difference, its position altered every day by the mechanism of the clock itself. This is the mechanism we find in the Barker clock. A cam shaped like a kidney goes round once in a year, driven by a worm gear: the shape of the cam, nicely calculated, alters the position of the hand (or wand) each day so as to show the true relationship on that day between solar and mean time. The owner of the Barker clock would still need his sundial, but a glance at the equation scale would give him the correct equation to show mean-time on the dial.

"Above the equation scale there is a globular moon. A little thought will show the advantage of this arrangement over the usual flat plate with its painted moon-disk, for this at once gives a true picture of what the moon may be expected to look like in the night sky. One half the globe is black and half silver. Round the 'equator' there are two bands. The upper one is graduated in days, 1-29½ (= a lunar month). Thus the age of the moon in days is read off by the pointer neatly labelled 'age'. The lower band is graduated in hours. Since high-water at any port is governed by the age of the moon in relation to the latitude and longitude it is clear that the time of high-water will vary at different ports. Taking advantage of this Barker has arranged to show the times of high-water at four different ports, London, Liverpool,

Bristol, and Hull, and four pointers are neatly labelled with the names of these ports. The whole is set in a dished recess nicely silvered.

“Above this again an almost circular strip has been cut out of the dial and backed with blue steel, set back a little, to represent the day sky. A small gilded sun rises on the left from behind a painted shutter, climbs the heavens to noon and then sinks out of sight again behind a similar painted shutter on the right. These painted shutters rise and fall to show the correct times of sunrise and sunset respectively. The upper line of the shutters shows this time against the outer time scale. But mounted on these shutters is another pointer to read against the inner time scale, and these pointers, one to each shutter, show the times of dawn and true darkness as distinct from sunrise and sunset. They are also related to the inmost scales, which show the degrees of amplitude and declination north and south.

“Yet another refinement is found in the Barker clock. Owners of eight-day case-clocks know that winding-time necessarily involves the introduction of a time error, for the clock is not beating time for the duration of the winding. Indeed, sometimes the error may be doubled by the clock going backwards while the winding is going on. Barker has countered this by arranging ‘maintaining power’ in his clock. Before commencing to wind the owner opens the door and pulls a string hanging within. This lifts a small weight of an ounce or so, and this weight is then brought to bear on the Great Wheel of the going train. This weight will exhaust its fall in a few minutes : more than enough time for the winder to complete his work. During those minutes the clock will neither stop beating nor go backwards, and no error is introduced. It should be added that a compensated pendulum further

makes for the great accuracy in time-keeping which the clock displays.

"Finally the clock chimes the quarter-hours on seven bells, and provision is made for it to repeat the hour and quarter by pulling a repeater-string. Provision is also made for the chiming and striking mechanism to be silenced at will.

"Mr. Ernest L. Edwardes in his *The Grandfather Clock* (Altrincham: Sherratt & Son, 1949) has a description (and reproduction) of a dial made for another Wigan maker Peter Fearnley by the same man who made the dial of the Barker clock, and the dial centre appears to be a duplicate of this one as regards the filigree work superimposed upon the matted brass of the dial-plate. On these brass scrolls are the words :

The Man is yet Unborn that Duely Weighs an Hour
Mr. Edwardes states of the Fearnley clock that 'These silvered scrolls are backed by a brass plate having a facing of red plush-like material, the entire effect being unusually rich and handsome'. The red (or black) velvet technique was much used by the Dutch in the 17th century and they achieved interesting effects by contrast, but the practice did not spread, even tentatively, to England. It may be that Barker, who was nothing if not enterprising, revived that technique in this clock. If so the effect of the filigree work against the velvet must have been magnificent, but as yet there is insufficient evidence to prove its use in this clock."

A barometer is affixed to the door of the case. The clock, with all its "astronomical" gadgets, is in splendid working order and is reported to keep perfect time. It has just lately found a new owner in Huddersfield*. Some

* The present owner is R. H. Wade, Esq., 61 Park Road West, Crosland Moor, Huddersfield.

day, no doubt, it will find its way into the permanent keeping of a museum—it would be a great joy if some public spirited citizen of Wigan were to buy it and present it to the Corporation of the borough where it had its origin.

The baptisms of several children of William and Ellen Barker appear in the Wigan parish registers. The earliest of them is "Daye son of William Barker of Standishgate and Ellen his wife" christened on 7th January, 1747 (N.S. 1748); another was christened 5th July, 1755: "Thomas son of William and Ellen Barker of Standishgate"; in between there was a daughter. The eldest son **DAYE BARKER** joined his father in the business and was one of fourteen elected Burgesses 2nd January, 1773, he was then 26 years of age. The christian name Daye (often spelt Day in the records) is particularly interesting, as according to F. J. Britten there was a Daye Barker of London making clocks about the year 1710; significantly, perhaps, he followed a William Barker of London who was made a Freeman of the Clockmaker's Company in 1632. One supposes that there must have been a family connection between the early London Barkers and the later Wigan Barkers for such an odd Christian name to be repeated. Furthermore, it would seem to be highly probable that the first Daye Barker was a grandson of Robert Barker (died 1645), the King's printer, who married Rachel Daye the daughter of Bishop William Day(e), 1529-1596.

William Barker became very ill in July, 1786. This we learn from the Minute of the Wigan Parish Vestry. In May, 1786, it was decided that the church clock was no longer of any service, but on the advice of William Barker it was agreed that Barker should report upon it after a three months' trial, at a special Vestry meeting

to be held on the 6th August. It was then stated that Barker was unable to attend owing to sickness. At a subsequent meeting (1st October) it was agreed that Daye Barker supply a new clock and that it should be installed not later than the following Whitsun. Daye Barker did not perform his contract, but as no Vestry minutes dealing with the subject survive we are left to guess the reason. Quite obviously William Barker succumbed to his illness either late in 1786 or early 1787—he was not buried in Wigan—and the contract fell through.

When William Barker died Daye Barker carried on the clockmaking business, but only for a brief period. He is still on the Wigan Burgess Roll in 1834 when he was nearly 88; no doubt he died soon after* but there is no record of his burial in the Wigan parish register. However, he had long retired from business for he is not listed under Clockmakers in any Wigan directory after 1787. He seems to have left Wigan.

* It is more likely that he died some years earlier, but that his death was not notified to the Town Clerk of Wigan.

ARCHIBALD COATS AND SOME OTHERS

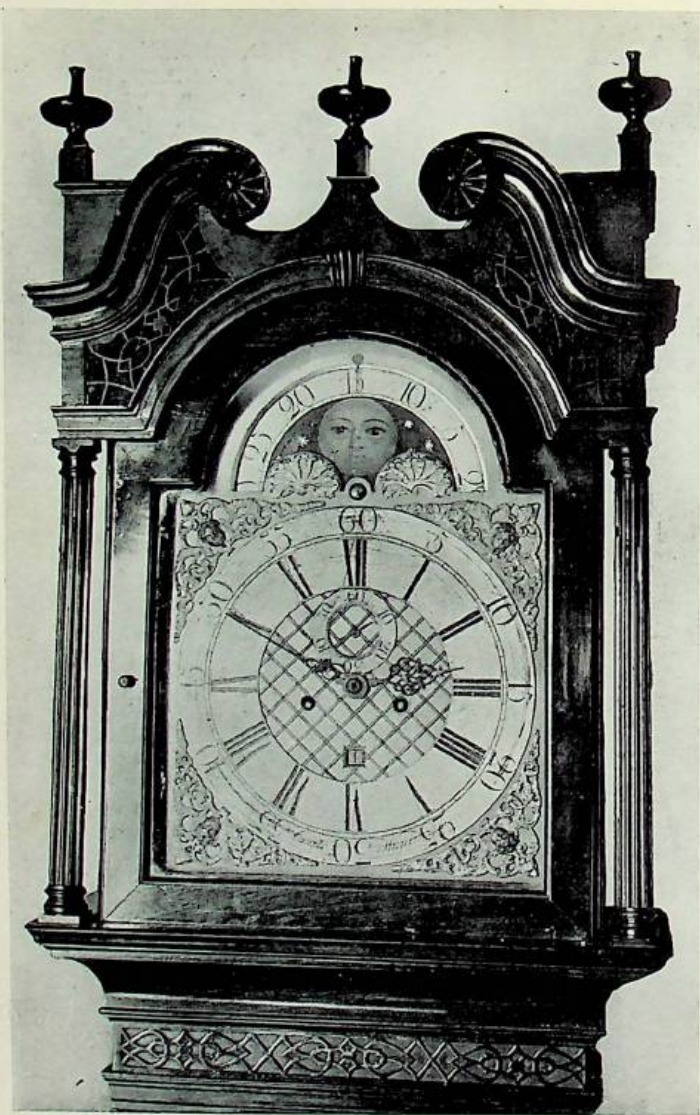
ARCHIBALD COATS (Coates) was the contemporary of William Barker and, as I have already mentioned, was a really good clockmaker. We first hear of him in 1759 when, at the Michaelmas Leet (6th October) he applied to be made a Freeman. This application was forestalled by a petition from William Barker and several other "gunsmiths" who protest "that Archibald Coates who for a short time had been a journeyman to William Barker in the Trade of clock-making" is "now exercising his trade as a master clockmaker without being Free or having served his apprenticeship in the Town." This move successfully defeated the application by Coats and a week later at the adjourned Michaelmas Leet he was duly presented for following his trade. The record reads: "We amerce Archibald Coats for that he not being free of this Corporation doth follow the Trade or Business of a Clockmaker, and we amerce him in the sum of thirty-nine shillings and eleven pence." Why he should be fined this curious sum instead of the usual 40s. is not clear. It is certain, however, that Coats paid his fine and went on with his work, like Laurence Leicester before him. He is mentioned as a Wigan clockmaker in the *Manchester Mercury* for 31st March, 1767.

In the end the Court got tired of dealing with his delinquencies, and with the constant appearance of others who followed his example, and at the Michaelmas Leet (5th October), 1771, it was ordered "That Hugh Gaskell,

John Plat, Richard Thompson, Charles Turner, and Archibald Coates, have notice given them to apply for their Freedom or they will be fined." Though I have failed to find the actual record Coats soon afterwards paid his dues and was sworn a Freeman, for it is not long before he is appointed a "Gatewaiter" for Wallgate where he resided. This was an unpaid and at one time an irksome duty, but towards the end of the 18th century became less exacting, which no doubt accounts for Coats serving as Gatewaiter in alternate years from 1786 to 1792. One of the duties of a gatewaiter was to search out those who offended against the rights of the Freemen and "present" them at the Court Leet, rather an invidious job for such a persistent former offender as Coats, but in the last two decades of the 18th century prosecutions for this misdemeanour were discontinued.

Archibald Coats became actively associated with the Wigan Presbyterian Church. This Church was founded by the Presbyterian dissenters of the parish church in the later 17th century, and towards the end of the 18th century was merely a church of liberal theology tending to Unitarianism. But because of the appellation "Presbyterian" Scotchmen resident in Wigan have long since made it their own. Coats is a Scotch name and his family's adherence to the Church suggests that our clockmaker may have hailed from over the Border. He was probably born about 1740-1745 for his eldest son, Archibald, was of age before 1795.

Clocks bearing the name of Coats or Archibald Coats frequently appear in auction rooms. Though none of them is in any way noteworthy they are generally very good clocks, most of them eight-day with the usual gadgets of date-wheels, striking apparatus, and moon phases. It has been said, however, that Coats was



DIAL AND HOOD OF CLOCK BY ARCHIBALD COATS, ABOUT 1780.
Facing page 55

addicted to the practice of boring two holes in the dial of a thirty-hour clock to suggest an eight-day movement.

In 1902 a St. Helens correspondent wrote "I am sorry to have to report that old Coates was a bit of a dodger. I was looking at one of his clocks yesterday, and seeing the two holes for winding in the painted dial, I thought it would be an eight-day movement, but to my surprise when I opened the door I found it had to be wound up with a rope daily." Actually the practice complained of was common throughout the country and was probably dictated by customers who wished to give the impression that the clock they sported was a more up-to-date and costly instrument than was the fact.

Moreover, in justice to Coats it should be mentioned that he produced an ingenious eight-day movement with sham winding holes and sham squares (winding-pegs), prompted probably by a spirit of enterprise at a time when London was very dull, and possibly by the poor quality of the gut lines in his day. This eight-day clock (owned by the Rev. N. V. Dinsdale) has the same winding principle as a chain 30-hour clock with one important qualification. The ordinary 30-hour arrangement provides maintaining power*: the ordinary eight-day does not. Thus Coats by adopting this arrangement provided a clock of greater over-all accuracy than the usual eight-day clock of the period.

The characteristic dial pattern associated with the inscription (at the foot of the dial) "Coats—Wigan" is a diamond lattice of double lines in the centre, with a date

* See *ante* page 49. The endless-rope (or chain) winding is another of Huygens's inventions and power is provided during the winding period in a very simple manner to keep the clock going and prevent the introduction of errors. In this way the simplest 30-hour clock has an advantage over the 8-day timepiece.

“window” in the lower segment. The ornamental brass work at the corners is surmounted by a human mask in the centre. Some Coats clocks are tall (about 7 ft. 6 ins. or more) and of good proportions. The cases are remarkably alike so that it is safe to assume they, too, were made in Wigan.

Two Coats clocks owned by Mr. John Highton of Wigan are not very dissimilar as far as the dial is concerned. Both have the name “Coats—Wigan” at the base of the dial and both have the inner circle of plain matted brass, though whether this is the original state it is not possible to say. What is probably the earlier has a seconds dial in the upper segment and a date disk partially exposed in an arc shaped window in the lower half; the outer circle or chapter ring giving the hours is of silver; the embossed brass ornaments in the corners have no figures; there is no arch. The clock was originally a thirty-hour chain-driven movement, but has been very neatly converted into an eight-day arrangement, the winding holes piercing the inner edge of the outer circle. The case of oak 7 ft. high, waist 1 ft. 3 ins., base 1 ft. 8½ ins. head 1 ft. 7 ins.; it has a square top surmounted by S-curve mouldings with brass rosettes and three wooden pinnacles; and an applied fret ornament above the door.

In the other the dial itself, which is 13 ins. across, is very like the one above, but the date is shown in a small square window, and the corners have the embossed ornament surmounted by a human mask. There is also an arch exposing a segment of the painted moon disk behind the usual screens giving the age and phases of the moon. The case is a handsome one of figured mahogany 7 ft. 8 ins. high, waist 1 ft. 3 ins., base and head 1 ft. 9 ins. It has the typical Coats rounded dome

with glazed spandrels, s-curves with brass rosettes, and three pinnacles ; fluted pillars at the sides.

An eight-day striking clock of the earlier period (probably 1760-1770) is signed at the base of the chapter-ring "ARCHIBALD COATS WIGAN". The dial is 12 ins. with centre of matted brass, a silver seconds dial in the upper half and a small date window in the lower half ; the silver chapter-ring (11 ins.) has Roman and Arabic figuring ; the embossed corner ornament has a vase as the central feature ; painted moon-disk in the arch. The case is of English walnut, 7 ft. 2 ins. to the top of the cornice.

Cescinsky and Webster in their book *English Domestic Clocks* (2nd edition, 1914, pages 209, 212) describe and illustrate an eight-day striking clock by Coats "in a fine example of a so-called Chippendale case by a Lancashire maker." The hood is especially noteworthy and "the frieze below the hood is enriched with an applied fret" which is frequently found in Wigan clocks of the period. The clock itself, remark the authors, "is of rather inferior quality as compared with the elaborate case, with its carefully selected veneers." The dial is 18½ ins. high (including the moon arch) and 13 ins. wide ; the height over all is 8 ft. 1 in. and the waist 1 ft. 4 ins.

As a citizen Archibald Coats was greatly esteemed, very fair in his dealings with all men. He died in 1797 and his remains lie in the churchyard of the Presbyterian Church ; his will was proved at Chester in the same year. The name "Abraham Coats—Wigan" is said to be found on a clock which may be ascribed to the period 1780, but I feel sure this is a mistaken reading for Archibald, unless, indeed, it is an error for Abraham Winstanley who flourished 1800-1815—see below. The name Abraham Coats is nowhere to be found in any public

record in Wigan, nor does it occur in the minutes of the Presbyterian Church.

The business was continued by ARCHIBALD COATS II, eldest son of the original Archibald. Clocks made by him can only be distinguished (if at all) by their later style. The business ceased about 1810, Archibald becoming a licensed victualler. He was licensee of "The Cock", Millgate, in 1811.

Two other sons of Archibald the first set up business independently of their brother. They were JAMES and ROBERT COATS, and clocks and watches of the late 18th century date are found signed "James & R. Coats, Wigan." Britten notes a watch bearing their name to which he ascribes the impossibly early date of 1780—1795 is much more likely. Their name appears in the Wigan directory for the first time in 1794 and the partnership was dissolved by the death of Robert in 1800. His will was proved at Chester. James Coats, however, carried on for a while and he occurs as "watchmaker, Wallgate" in the Census return for 1811, but he is not in the 1816 Wigan directory.

Clockmaking by the Coats family ceased altogether in the early years of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the family's connection with Wigan continued for many years in different occupations. Archibald's grandson, James, became a Deacon of the Presbyterian Church in 1865. Clocks that are simply inscribed "Coats—Wigan" (or Coates—Wigan) are probably not earlier than 1790. I am assured that the spelling "Coates" does occur, though it is "Coats" in all the examples I have examined. Archibald in his will spells his name "Coates", but Robert in the same circumstances spells his "Coats", and this is the form given in the Wigan directories.

We must now return to the middle of the 18th century and note a few other clockmakers or watchmakers who appear in the records. I have already mentioned THOMAS DONCASTER who petitioned in 1755 to be admitted Freeman as a "Watchmaker and Silversmith." He must then have been a very young man, probably just out of his apprenticeship, and perhaps for this reason his application was rejected. On 2nd January, 1756, he married at Wigan Hannah Rizley of Hindley, and both sign their names to the register with good signatures indicating an excellent education. In the following October he repeated his petition. On this occasion it was rejected through the active opposition of William Barker and a group of tinsmiths, who claimed that Doncaster was mainly concerned to prosecute this latter trade. There was obviously some foundation for this statement for when after several repeated applications he was admitted a Freeman 31st December, 1763, it was as a "Watchmaker, Silversmith, and Tinsmith".

Doncaster made solid progress gaining the respect of his fellow citizens and particularly the Aldermen, for at Michaelmas, 1788, he was elected a Burgess. In the following year (1789) he was elected one of the two Bailiffs, an important office. On 17th April, 1792, he married secondly, Ann Scott, a member of an influential Wigan family; it is interesting to note that Doncaster's signature on this occasion is finely written and is almost identical with his signature appended to the entry of his first marriage forty years previously. The Mayor, Robert Rowbottom, signs the register as witness. By this time his silversmith business had developed into something much more important and when Ann died (aged 51) 16th July, 1800 he was described as "banker". In 1795 he was elected Alderman and Mayor at the same Leet. He

was again elected Mayor in 1798, and he last appears on the roll of aldermen October, 1802, when he must have been about 70 years of age; though his death is not recorded in the Wigan parish register he must have died soon after. If any of his watches or clocks survive they have not attracted much notice, but Doncaster was a busy man in his day.

Still earlier we have a MATTHEW HOLT, watchmaker, who was presented before the Court Leet at Michaelmas, 1754, and fined for exercising his trade not being a Freeman. Notwithstanding this he advertised in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* 9 Feb. 1756. He does not appear to have been admitted a Freeman at any time, but he crops up in the records several times during the next two decades. He was married 1744 or earlier, a son being born 1745; perhaps as early as 1734 if William also is his son. He may have died about 1780, for his son Matthew is in business in 1782.

Holts were a numerous tribe in Lancashire at this time, particularly in the Rochdale area and in the Wigan district. In Wigan there was an important family of this name from the 16th century onwards whose members are designated "esquires" or "gentlemen". Matthew may have been connected with this family, but as two of them, Henry and Roger Holt, were in 1754 the Senior Burgesses, and another, Edward, was an Alderman, it is unlikely they would have allowed a close connection to be presented; they would have seen to it that he was admitted a Freeman.

Matthew Holt is followed by WILLIAM HOLT, watchmaker, possibly a son. He was born about 1735, but not in Wigan apparently. The only time he appears in the Corporation records so far as I have noted is when he was appointed "Surveyor of Flesh and Fish" for the year 1776-77. He must, therefore, have been a Freeman

of some years standing at that date, and he must be the William Holt who appears in the Wigan Window Tax Assessment book for 1768, with an address in the Market Place, but no trade given. He is mentioned as a Wigan watchmaker in the *Daily Advertiser* for 3rd July, 1775.

A watch signed in a script style on a small plate attached to the backplate "Wm. Holt, Wigan. No. 145" is preserved in the Wigan Public Library. An old established Wigan watchmaker describes it as one of the finest verge escapements of its period that he has seen. All the parts are well gilded and it is in a most excellent state of preservation. It has a finely cut watchcock with a delicate turn-down rim, whilst the foot is solid with a bevelled edge corresponding to the curve of the backplate; nicely ornamented. Square pedestal pillars. The inner and outer silver cases bear the Chester hall-mark for 1767. The white dial, just over $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in diameter, has the minutes on the outer rim in bold Arabic numerals. The thickness of the watch in its inner case is $\frac{7}{8}$ in. It contains the repair-label of Edward Winstanley, of Wallgate, Wigan, who supplied a new spring in Dec., 1809.

William Holt died of dropsy at the age of 45 in 1780; the burial entry in the parish register is dated 15th October and describes William Holt as "of Market Street, watchmaker". We can, therefore, give his dates as "flourished 1765 to 1780".

He is followed by MATTHEW HOLT II, also described as a watchmaker. He is the son of Matthew Holt I, born in 1745. The baptismal entry in the Wigan parish register dated 1st March, 1746, reads: "Mathew son of Mathew Holt of Standishgate and Isabel." He has an advertisement in the *Manchester Mercury* for 3rd September, 1782. He was admitted Freeman in 1789

and performed the usual duties of " Gatewaiter " for the Market Place in various years up to 1802. He died of consumption in 1805, aged 60, being buried at Wigan 16th July.

THOMAS SMITH, " clockmaker and chapman " was presented for following his trade of Clockmaker without being free 29th November, 1755. I find nothing more about him.

In the same period occurs WILLIAM RIGBY, " watch tool maker ". He was presented in 1752 for exercising his trade without being free and again at Michaelmas 1754, along with Matthew Holt I. He may have worked in association with Holt, but in November, 1755, he was again fined, this time along with Thomas Smith. However, his petition to be admitted Freeman was allowed 2nd October, 1756. He no doubt continued to follow his trade during the succeeding years, though he does not again appear in the Corporation records. It is to be noted, however, that he was not really a clockmaker.

JOHN LATHAM of Clifton, co. Westmorland, watchmaker, petitioned to be admitted Freeman, which was allowed 30th September, 1749. His career is not easy to trace since, like Thomas Smith and William Rigby above noticed, at least two other persons of the same name occur frequently in the Wigan records. However, our watchmaker appears again in 1757. He has an advertisement in *Adam's Weekly Courant* (Chester) but I have not traced the date of this. Several 30-hour clocks survive signed at the base of the chapter-ring (10 in. diameter) " Latham—Wigan ".

THOMAS KENNERDAL (or Kennedy), watchmaker, of Wigan, is said to have flourished in Wigan from 1754 to 1790. Though this surname in either form is practically unknown to the Wigan borough records there is no doubt

that he plied his trade here as stated. He was born in 1727, but he was certainly not a native of Wigan. Britten notes a watch made by him in 1759, and there are watches signed by him in the Buckley and Denham collections, both attributed to the period 1770. A Thomas Kennerday was presented as a "foreigner" before the Wigan Court Leet at Michaelmas, 1771: no trade is given, but in view of the rareness of the name this must be our watchmaker. As Thomas Kennerdal he is listed as a Wigan watchmaker residing in Wallgate in the *Universal British Directory* for 1797, so that he was still pursuing his trade notwithstanding his age. He died at the ripe age of 79 at the end of 1806, his burial being recorded in the parish register for 28th December, 1806: "Thomas Kennerdell of Wallgate, watchmaker". His son "Thomas Kennerdel junior of Scoles" was described as a weaver when his infant daughter Betty was buried 1st February, 1799.

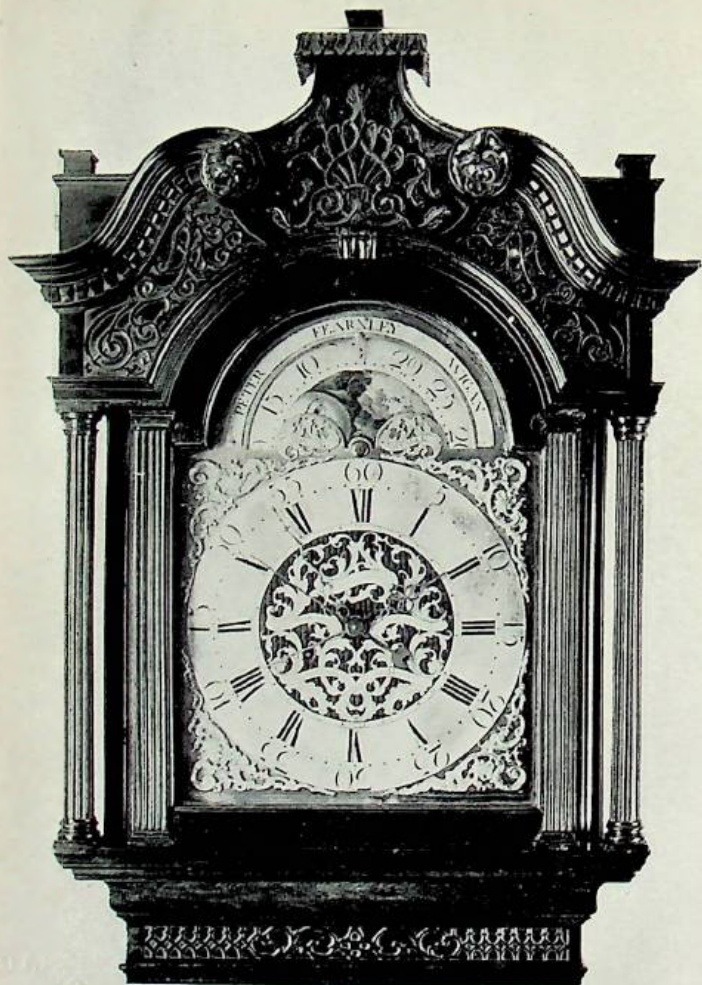
The Wigan parish register under date 24th July, 1776, records the burial of "JAMES LEIGHTON of Standishgate clockmaker". Notwithstanding the address given I feel sure he is the Warrington clockmaker of this name.

CHAPTER V

PETER FEARNLEY HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND SUCCESSORS

WITH the relaxation of the persecution of non-freemen in the later decades of the 18th century many clockmakers set up in business in the borough and the Coats family had many competitors. Of most of them only the names can be given and the dates when they are known to occur. Clocks signed by them are not uncommon and specimens of the work of nearly all of them have been brought to the writer's notice at different times.

PETER FEARNLEY is a clockmaker of importance. When he first started business in Wigan is not clear, but he is noticed in the Wigan parish register when his first child, Alice, was baptised 20th March, 1777. He married Ann the daughter of Henry and Ann Lawson in 1776, but not in Wigan apparently. He appears in the parish registers a number of times and he is invariably styled "clockmaker of Wallgate". His second daughter Ann was born 4th April, 1779 (buried 25th June, 1780); third daughter, also Ann, 13th May, 1781; first son, John, 2nd November, 1783 (buried 15th November, 1784); second son, also John, 28th November, 1785; fourth daughter, Ellen, 2nd December, 1787 (buried 31st July, 1789); third son, William Henry, 13th October 1790 (buried 23rd June, 1791); fifth daughter, Jane, 3rd June, 1792 (buried 8th February, 1794), and finally his fourth son, Peter, born 2nd December, 1794. He later had two daughters named Henrietta, the earlier



DIAL AND HOOD OF CLOCK BY PETER FEARNLEY, ABOUT 1790, SHOWING CENTRAL
 DIAL SCROLL DECORATION SIMILAR TO BARKER'S CLOCK. PLATE VII.
 By courtesy of John Sherratt & Son.

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died at 8 months 27th December, 1798, and the second at six months 17th November, 1801, by which date Peter Fearnley had removed to Standishgate.

He first came into prominence, however, in connection with the new church clock in 1788. I have already related how in 1785 William Barker was first consulted on this matter, and owing to his illness the business was transferred to his son Daye Barker, a contract being arranged with him. Then without any warning Daye Barker drops out, and after nearly two years' interval a new contract is made with Peter Fearnley. In view of the fact that Peter Fearnley employed the same dial maker as Barker there is good reason to believe that Fearnley took over the clockmaking business of the Barker family in 1787.

This inference may be drawn from the Vestry Minutes in connection with the clock and the sudden disappearance of Daye Barker from the Wigan scene.

The first Minute reads :

At a General Meeting of Gentlemen and other Inhabitants of the parish of Wigan held on Tuesday 18 April 1786 it was agreed that the Old Clock is useless and that a Good New Clock ought to be placed in the room thereof. That a special meeting of the Vestry of the Parish Church of Wigan be called on Sunday 7th of May next to take the same into consideration and receive estimates, etc.

Many signatures are appended to this resolution beginning with that of Guy Fairfax, the Rector. However, when the Vestry assembled on the 7th May a different course was proposed :

7 May 1786. It was agreed upon the evidence of William Barker, clockmaker, that the present Old Clock shall continue on Tryal under his sole care and management for three months from this day, and that another Special Vestry for the further consideration of the state of the Clock shall be held on Sunday the 6th day of August next.

The special meeting of the Vestry duly assembled 6th August and the following Minute is recorded :

. . . It was agreed that Mr. William Barker having been prevented by sickness from attending to the Clock and that the same shall be continued on Tryal for one month from this day and that another Special Vestry for the further consideration of the state thereof. . . Shall be held in the Vestry on Sunday the 3rd day of September next.
(signed by the Mayor and others)

At the Vestry meeting 3rd September, 1786

It was agreed that a Good New Clock with four faces to go eight days shall be placed in the Tower of the Parish Church of Wigan in lieu of the present Old Clock. And that another special meeting . . . be held the 1st day of October 1786 for the purposes of contracting with a person for making such New Clock or ordering Estimates to be delivered.

(signed by the Rector, Mayor, and many others.)

At a Special Meeting held in the Vestry of the Parish Church of Wigan on Sunday the 1st day of October 1786 It was agreed : That Mr. Day Barker is to make a very Good Substantial Church Clock with two copper hands, to be placed in the Room of the Old One upon the Tower of the Parish Church Steeple in Wigan aforesaid with four faces. The price to be left with Mr. Daye Barker, the sd. Clock to be finished by Whitsuntide next (1787) or as soon after as possible. The sd. Mr. D. Barker agreed to keep the sd. Clock in good and sufficient repair for seven years to come. The faces to be placed as high as the Steeple will admit of.

(signatures of the Rector, Mayor and others.)

This seemed to settle the business of the church clock, but Daye Barker, for some reason unknown, failed to perform his contract. No more special Vestries are held and no records or memoranda are written for eighteen

months—long after the new clock should have been erected. Clearly it devolved upon Daye Barker to settle his father's affairs, and in the course of these proceedings he suddenly decided to wind up the business and remove from the town. The inference is that Peter Fearnley purchased the business as a going concern. The hint is provided by the later developments in connection with the provision of the clock :

The next Vestry was held 25 March 1788

It was resolved at this meeting that public notice be given on Sunday next for a Vestry to be held in the Parish Church of Wigan on Sunday the 13th day of April to consider a proper person to make a Church Clock.

13th April 1788. It is this day agreed at a Vestry held this day in the Parish Church of Wigan that notice shall be given on Sunday 20th April for a Vestry to be held on Sunday the 11th day of May next immediately after Divine Service in the evening to receive Estimates for a New Clock to go eight days with four faces and two hands to each face. And then to contract for the same clock.

11th May 1788. At a Vestry held this day it is agreed that Peter Fearnley having brought in an estimate about the New Church Clock amounting to the sum of £171. 10s. od. shall provide a clock with four faces and two hands to each face, and if the aforesaid Peter Fearnley takes the Old Clock he is to allow £8. 8s. od. or the Parish may take it to themselves. The whole of the money to be pd. upon the fixing up of the New Clock and the sd. Peter Fearnley to Uphold it for seven years—except cleaning.

N.B. £5 to be deducted from the above sum for one finger instead of two. *signed* PETER FEARNLEY

The odd decision to save £5 by having only one finger on each face (or perhaps on the least conspicuous face) is a remarkable example of "spoiling the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar." However, two hands were fitted

at the time or very shortly afterwards as the earliest prints show the clock so equipped.

Fearnley carried out his contract, but he was not very promptly paid; there is yet one more Minute:

23 October 1789. A special Vestry held this day for providing for payment of balance of a sum of £75. 19s. 10d. which was then found due to Mr. Peter Fearnley on the New Church Clock Account . . . together with lawful interest from 29 October 1788 . . .

From which it is evident that the clock was duly installed before the end of October, 1788. Nevertheless, the bill was not finally settled for another six months. The entry in the Churchwardens' Accounts is dated 9th April, 1790, when Fearnley was paid two sums: £31 10s. 8d. and £78 1s. 1½d. There are subsequent records of minor repairs to the Clock beginning in 1794. Fearnley's clock was replaced by a new one made in Manchester in 1860—it only lasted just over 70 years as against the 100 years of Lyon's £20 clock.

Fearnley's wife Ann died 25th June, 1821, aged 67, and Peter himself lived another five years to reach the age of 77: he was buried at Wigan 22nd September, 1826. Many long-case clocks and other types made by him survive. The only one I have examined is in the possession of the Wigan Corporation, at present in the Master's house of the Frog Lane Institution. It is quite obviously an early example of his work and I should date it about 1785. The inner circle of the dial is of brass, lacquered, with simple incised ornament of scroll work in the lower half surrounding the date window; the seconds dial in the upper segment is merely engraved; the hours circle is also of brass superimposed with the figuring in black wax, and on the inner edge of this circle is given the day of the month indicated by a pointer

PLATE X



DIAL AND HOOD OF CLOCK BY PETER FEARNLEY, ABOUT 1785, SHOWING
RESEMBLANCE TO THE STEPHEN NELSON CLOCK, PLATE XIII.

[Facing page 68

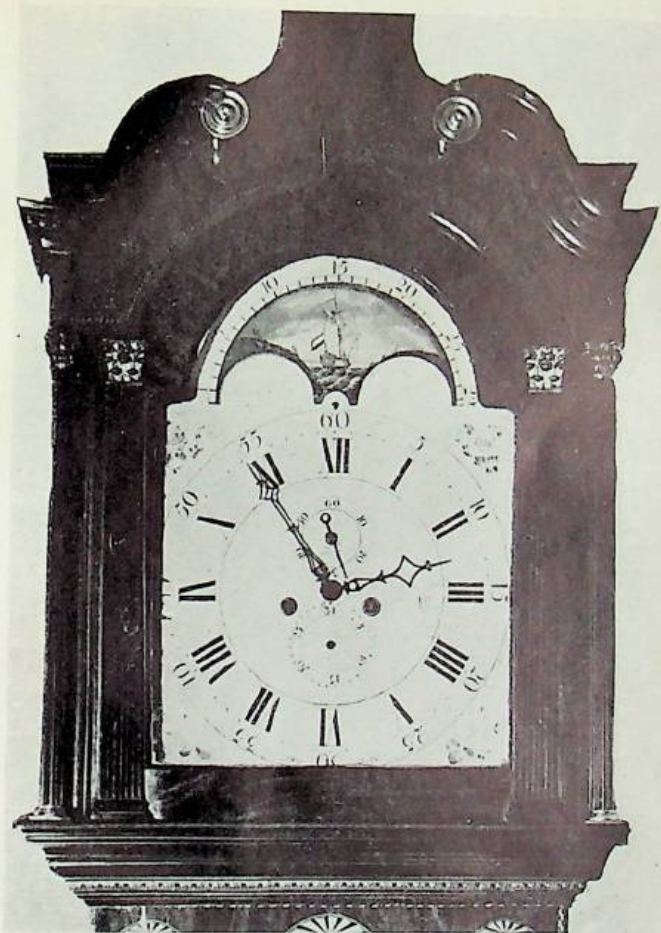
attached to the central hands axis. The four corners are decorated with simple embossed brass tracery. In the arch above the dial is the usual painted apparatus showing the age and phases of the moon. On the two moon screens are the words *TEMPUS FUGIT*, and on the semi-circular top strip at the top of the arch is "PETER FEARNLEY, WIGAN". The dial is 13 ins. across, and 18 ins. to the top of the arch. The case is of oak, rather plain but outlined with mahogany inlay; 7 ft. 6 ins. high, waist 1 ft. 4 ins., base 1 ft. 10 ins., and the head 1 ft. 9 ins.; the latter has fluted columns at the sides and the spandrels of decorated glass have been covered with mahogany; the s-curves of the cornice are surmounted with three pinnacles.

A late contemporary of Fearnley is JOHN ALKER. According to some authorities there was a John Alker, clockmaker, who flourished in Wigan from 1774 to 1814, quite distinct from the John Alker who first appears early in the 1790's, but I have found no trace of this early John Alker. It is possible he has been confused with John Alker a fustian manufacturer, or John Alker innkeeper of the Market Place, both of whom occur frequently in the Wigan records. From a Quarter Sessions case of 1813 I judge the clockmaker to be the son of John Alker of Ince since the sureties named are "John Alker the elder of Ince, labourer" and "John Alker of the Market Street, Wigan, clockmaker". A son James was baptised early in 1798, and buried, aged 8 months, 30th October, 1798; an infant daughter Ellen was buried 29th January, 1800. His wife Margaret died 19th December, 1808, at the age of 33 so that it is unlikely that John Alker the clockmaker was in business before 1790, probably not quite so soon. He appears under "Clockmakers" in the Wigan directory for 1797.

According to Mr. G. H. Baillie* John Alker became a member of the Clockmakers' Company (London), but the Clerk, Mr. W. S. Pennefather, who very kindly made a search, is unable to trace the record of his admission. He was certainly a good clockmaker and gained a wide reputation, but his preference for the newer fashion of painted dials instead of the earlier (and richer looking) brass and silver dial has obscured his merit from modern collectors. A number of his clocks survive, however, in handsome cases, and they frequently present features of special interest.

What is clearly an early example of his work is a clock owned by Mr. John Highton of Wigan. It has a white enamelled dial, all in one piece, with hours, etc., in black and the name "John Alker—Wigan" painted in black at the base. The seconds dial is in the upper half and a similar dial giving the date is in the lower segment. The painted moon disk exposed in the arch has a well painted rural scene in one half and an excellent seascape in the other. The central feature of the sea picture is a French man-o'-war wearing an admiral's pennant, with a tricolour prominently displayed, which seems to date the clock in the immediate post-Revolution period (1791+) and to reveal John Alker's youthful political sympathies. The rim over the arch gives the age of the moon. The dial is 14 ins. across and 20 ins. to the top of the arch. The mahogany case with Sheraton style inlaid ornament is 7 ft. 10 ins. high and has fluted pillars with brass capitals and bases; 2 ft. across the base, 18 ins. across the middle, and 1 ft. 11 ins. across the hood, glazed ornament in the spandrels with cornice of s-curve moulding terminating in brass rosettes above, and the usual three finials.

* *Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World*, 1929; 2nd edn., 1947.



DIAL AND HOOD OF CLOCK BY JOHN ALKER ABOUT 1794.
(Small calendar hand missing.)

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Like most of his English contemporaries John Alker soon shed his revolutionary sympathies which were replaced by admiration for the achievements of Nelson. A John Alker clock very similar to the foregoing is owned by Major A. T. R. Houghton of Preston. The brass rosettes which ornament the cornice mouldings are stamped or engraved with a trophy consisting of a pyramid surrounded by flags, cannons, and cannon-balls. In the apex of the pyramid is an anchor and below on the face is the inscription "Sac'r'd to Nelson". This inscription seems to date the clock soon after Nelson's death, say 1806, with recollections of the battles of the Nile and Trafalgar. The spandrels of the hood are decorated with gilt scrolls on a green or blue ground under glass; the pillars are fluted and the mahogany case is "inlaid rather nicely", but with a plain door. The moon disk exposed in the arch again has two scenes, excellently painted: one, a country house with a group showing a man in a red coat carrying a gun, with his wife and dog; the other depicting a waterfall under a broken bridge with (apparently) the same couple—which suggests some early work by Charles Towne, the famous Wigan-born animal and sporting painter.

An eight-day striking clock with an all-brass dial engraved "Alker—Wigan" across the centre survives at Aspull (Wigan). Like the Highton clock it has a seconds dial in the upper segment and a calendar dial in the lower half; the chapter ring, though raised, is also of brass and has a diameter of 13 ins.—14 ins. square, with no arch. The case is of oak with a strip of mahogany inlay, and heavy brass fittings to the door; about 7 ft. high to the top of the cornice, the base and hood are 20 ins. wide and the waist 16 ins.; the hood has plain pillars with brass capitals and bases; three finials; in place

of the usual strip of applied fret above the dial there is gilt scroll ornament on a green ground under glass. Though individually designed the case would appear to be from the same Wigan workshop as other Alker clocks. This clock is probably a product of Alker's later career.

John Alker made and installed the clock in the tower of the parish church of Ribchester in 1813. He is mainly responsible for the surviving clocks bearing his name. Some watches signed by him also survive. Because his address is at all times the Market Place (or Market Street as it is sometimes given) he has been wrongly identified with the John Alker who was licensee of the King's Head Inn in the Market Place at this time. In the Wigan election poll book for 1830 appears the name "John Alker the elder, Watchmaker", but he does not figure in the poll book for 1832, though "John Alker, watchmaker" does, from which one infers that the John Alker who figures under "Clockmakers" in the Wigan directory for 1854 is his son and successor. NICHOLAS ALKER is listed in the Wigan directories for 1830, 1838, and 1844; THOMAS ALKER in that of 1848; and "JAMES ALKER, clockmaker of Scholes" is in the Wigan election poll book of 1832.

RAMSAY LAWSON, clockmaker, in business in the Wiend, Wigan, married at Wigan 1st November, 1791, Betty Meadows, daughter of William and Rachel Meadows of Hindley. "Henry son of Ramsay Lawson of the Wiend, clockmaker" was born 8th August, 1792. The date 1770 assigned by Britten to a clock made by Lawson is obviously too early.

JAMES SKIRROW, clockmaker of Chapel Lane, is listed in the Wigan section of *Universal British Directory* for 1797, and in other Wigan directories down to 1830. He also

occurs twice in the Wigan Parish register, first when he buried his infant daughter Betty 16th August, 1797, when his name is given as James Scarrow, clockmaker, and again when he buried his wife Betty, aged 43, 3rd April, 1799, his name appearing as Skarrow. Assuming him to be of similar age to his wife he would be about 75 in 1830.

Before the end of the 18th century the following clock and watchmakers pursuing their trade in Wigan are met with : JOHN TAYLOR, said to have flourished 1772-1780, but concerning whom I have found no records ; RICHARD HOUGHTON, whose child Nancy died of smallpox aged one year and was buried 13th March, 1781 "daughter of Richard Houghton of Standishgate, clockmaker"—when his son Isaac aged 12 years was buried 13th May, 1806, he is described as "gunsmith" and he was then living in Hallgate ; PETER LEIGH, the only evidence for whom is likewise the entry in Wigan parish register "James son of Peter Leigh of Wallgate, clockmaker, and his wife Elizabeth daughter of William and Ann Atherton, born 13th January, 1792" ; similarly "ROBERT HAMPSON of Standishgate, clockmaker" whose 23 year old son Joseph was buried at Wigan 4th February, 1791* ; WILLIAM HOLGATE is credited by Britten with a clock attributed to 1770, but I only find him in the Wigan directory for 1816 ; HENRY HOWARD who mainly worked in Liverpool occurs in Wigan in 1796 ; and the Winstanleys.

"WILLIAM WINSTANLEY, clockmaker, of Standishgate" was presented before the Wigan Court Leet 6th October, 1781, with many other persons, for following his trade in Wigan not being a Freeman. He and the others were

* There is a clock in the Warrington Museum of about 1800 signed "Robert Hampson, Warrington", who may be identical with this Robert.

ordered to "purchase their Freedom before 25th December, 1781, or be fined four guineas." This suggests that William Winstanley had been operating in Wigan some years before 1781, say from 1770. The clocks of this period signed simply (at the base of the dial) "WINSTANLEY—WIGAN" are probably his.

One such clock is in the possession of Mr. John Highton of Wigan. The dial is 13 ins. across and 18 ins. to the top of the arch. The inner circle is of matted brass slightly ornamented with incised tracery about the date window—so closely similar to the Fearnley clock already described as to make it certain that it came from the same workshop. In the upper segment a silver seconds dial has been superimposed, the centre of which is engraved with a Tudor rose. The hours are in black on a raised silver ring, the corners are ornamented with simple embossed tracery. In the arch, instead of the usual moon disk, is a mounted silver circle engraved with a winged "Father Time" carrying hour-glass and scythe, flanked by ornament of simple embossed tracery. It has a plain oak case with squared sides 7 ft. high, waist 1 ft. 4 ins., base and head 1 ft. 8 ins. across. The spandrels of the hood are glazed ornament, the s-curves above being mounted with buttons enamelled in colours showing Cupid reading a document; central pinnacle only; fluted pillars.

How long William Winstanley continued his career I have not discovered, he is not in the 1797 directory, nor is it clear what his relationship was to the Winstanley clockmakers who succeeded him. Possibly there was no connection, Winstanley being a very common name in the locality; and there is the fact that whilst William's place of residence was Standishgate all the others had an address in Wallgate.



DIAL AND HOOD OF CLOCK BY WILLIAM WINSTANLEY ABOUT 1785.
(The hands appear to be replacements.)

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ALEXANDER WINSTANLEY is credited with a long-case clock which Britten attributes to the period about 1770, but I have not been able to identify a clockmaker of this name so early. There were several persons of the name in Wigan from 1780 to 1800, but none is described as a clockmaker. However, he was quite well established in 1800, when one William Pate, rope-maker, was charged before the Wigan Quarter Sessions "that he did threaten to kill and take away the life of Alexander Winstanley, of Wigan, clockmaker. . . ." 14th May, 1800. Pate was bound over. Alexander Winstanley appears in only one Wigan directory, that of 1824. His wife Margaret died at the age of 63 in 1809 (buried 5th March), so that if he was anything like the same age he would be nearly 80 in 1824. I should, therefore, place his period as 1790-1825.

EDWARD WINSTANLEY is listed as a clockmaker, of Wallgate, in the Wigan directories of 1816 and 1824, but he occurs in the parish register as early as 1806. Under date 15th September, 1806, there is an entry for the burial of a son: "Thomas Bridge Winstanley son of Edward Winstanley of Wallgate, watchmaker, aged 3 years, killed in an accident." Since the boy is named after the early Wigan clockmaker Thomas Bridge it is evident that Edward Winstanley was an ardent admirer of that exemplar of his trade at the time of the child's birth in 1803. A repair-label of Edward Winstanley survives dated Dec. 1809 and numbered 774. A 16-year old son, John, was buried 2nd April, 1812, and his widow, Jane, aged 68, was buried 22nd January, 1828. We can, therefore, give his period as "flourished 1800-1824". ABRAHAM WINSTANLEY, clockmaker, of Wallgate, only occurs in the Wigan census return for 1811.

JOSEPH STUBLER, clockmaker, occurs in the Wigan

The last clockmaker of importance who can be proved to have 18th century origins is ROBERT BOLTON. The earliest reference to him I have found is an entry in the burial register for 28th September, 1791: "William Bolton son of Robert Bolton of Market Street, clockmaker, aged 8 years." He occurs as Robert Boulton under Wigan clockmakers in the *Universal British Directory* (1797). If I have identified him correctly (and I admit there is some doubt) he was a substantial citizen and was one of the large number of Burgesses elected in 1800 to defeat the Portland hold over the Parliamentary borough. He was then described as a Brazier, and Boltons have controlled the brass foundry for a century-and-a-half, besides being butchers, ironmongers, and civil engineers. Nevertheless Robert Bolton's primary trade was that of gunsmith and he is so described in all other municipal documents from 1800 onwards and appears so designated in all Wigan directories from 1816 to 1848. He did not style himself a clockmaker in the later period, but I imagine like many other gunsmiths, regularly made clocks as a supplementary industry. Bolton was elected Alderman in 1810 and was Mayor in 1815. "Alice Bolton, wife of Robert Bolton, gunmaker, of Market Street, aged 44" was buried 9th April, 1811.

HENRY LAWSON who appears to describe himself as "clockmaker of Wigan" belonged to Hindley where he flourished from 1838 to 1854.

In this connection it should be mentioned that in the latter part of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century it was not uncommon for clockmakers to have workshops or agencies in neighbouring towns. To encourage local sales the secondary town was given as the place of business. Thus we get Henry Howard of Liverpool who also signed clocks as Henry Howard,

Wigan. John Taylor who signed clocks as of Wigan (1772-1780) was a freeman of Lancaster; and it is possible that James Leighton who in the Wigan Burial Register is described as "of Standishgate, clockmaker", merely had a secondary workshop in Warrington, though Warrington signed clocks are more frequently met with. Similarly Robert Hampson described in the Wigan Burial Register (1791) as "of Standishgate, clockmaker" is probably to be identified with the clocks signed "Robert Hampson, Warrington" of the same period. A clockmaker of the same name is recorded in Bury, 1787, and another worked in Manchester about 1810. Charles Leadbetter seems to have first settled in Hindley for a late 18th century watch inscribed "Charles Leadbetter Hindley" was examined by Mr. Francis Buckley in Bath. Others adopted the same method.

Omitting those already noted, the Wigan clockmakers and watchmakers of the 19th century (before 1850) can be extracted from the Wigan directories and one or two similar documents. They are as follows :

Alker family—see account above.

Barton & Esplin, Wallgate, 1838.

(Beavan, or Bevan, Wigan, fl. 1814-1825 ?).

Robert Bolton—see account above.

(John Edwards, Wigan, 1844.)

George Esplin, Wallgate, 1838, 1848+

William Green, Wallgate, 1844, 1848+

William Holgate, Wallgate, 1816.

Charles Johnson, Market Place, 1848+

Charles Leadbetter, Wallgate, 1824.

(There is a watch signed by him in the Buckley collection attributed to 1780.)

Timothy Leadbetter, Wallgate, 1830, 1848.

William Leadbetter, Market Place, 1844, 1848+

Joseph Lloyd (Loyd), Millgate, 1811, 1816, and his partner.

William Kingsley, Millgate, 1811.

Thomas Milner, Queen Street, 1848.

James Probert, Standishgate, 1816.

Henry Rose, Millgate, 1811, 1815, 1816.

("Elizabeth Rose wife of Henry Rose of Millgate, watchmaker, aged 38 years" was buried 28 November, 1809; Henry Rose died 1825 (buried 19 March) aged 66.)

Thomas Rose, senr., Millgate, 1815, 1824.

Thomas Rose, junr., Market Place, 1824.

"Thomas Rose of Wigan marr. Alice Simkin of Wigan (dau. of the gunsmith) 12 May 1811."

James Walker, Scholes, 1844.

Abraham, Alexander, and Edward Winstanley—see account above.

A final word of warning! Old clocks are not always what they seem or what they purport. Clocks are made in parts: it is comparatively easy to substitute one part for another, to add parts not originally belonging to it, and change the case; clock hands can be closely dated, but they may not have been originally used in the clock that now owns them. Clock faking is not by any means unknown in the Wigan area. I have seen a specimen where the moon disk above the dial (in the arch) has been added to the clock which did not previously possess it, and the whole movement transferred to a more suitable case. Advice should be sought from a clockmaker of experience.

COMPLETE ALPHABETICAL LIST OF WIGAN CLOCK AND WATCH MAKERS, 1650-1850

[b. = born or baptised ; bg. = elected burgess ; d. = died ; f. = admitted freeman or made first application to be admitted ; f.p.r. = freeman's petition rejected ; m. = married ; p. = presented before the Court Leet ; r. = removed from Wigan ; + = still known to be active ; * = date in Wigan directory or similar document ; † = probably not a clockmaker ; () round the date means estimated : no documentary evidence discovered.

	Flourished		Flourished
Alker, James - - -	1832*	Kingsley, William - - -	1811*
Alker, John I - - -	1790-1832d	Latham, John - - -	1749f-1757+
Alker, John II - - -	1825-1854*	Lawson, Henry, <i>of</i>	
Alker, Nicholas - - -	1830*-1844*	<i>Hindley</i> - - -	1838*-1854*
Alker, Thomas - - -	1832*	Lawson, Ramsay - - -	1791m-1792+
Aspinall, Peter - - -	1663f-1678d	Leadbetter, Charles - - -	c. 1800-1824*
Aspinwall, James - - -	1712f-1717+	Leadbetter, Timothy - - -	1830*-1848*
Barker, Daye - - -	1747b-1787r	Leadbetter, William - - -	1844*-1848*
Barker, Thomas - - -	1737f-1740	Leicester, Laurence - - -	1703f-1711d
Barker, William - - -	1745m-1786d	Leigh, Peter - - -	1793†+
Barton & Esplin - - -	1838*	Leighton, James, ? <i>of</i>	
Beavan or Bevan - - -	(1814-1825)	<i>Warrington</i> - - -	-1793d
Billinge, John - - -	1671p	Liversay, George, <i>of</i>	
Bolton, Robert - - -	1791-1848*	<i>Prescot</i> - - -	1666fpr
Bridge, Thomas - - -	1712f-1745+	Lloyd, Joseph - - -	1811*-1816*
Burges, John - - -	1710f-1754d	Martine, Thomas I - - -	1675f-1716d
Coats, Archibald I - - -	1759f-1797d	Martine, Thomas II - - -	1688b-1744d
Coats, Archibald II - - -	1790-1805	Milner, Thomas - - -	1848*
Coats, James - - -	1790-1811*	Nelson, Stephen - - -	1729b-1807d
Coats, Robert - - -	1790-1803d	Newall, John - - -	1666fpr
Darbyshire, Roger - - -	1662f-1690d	Platt, Oliver - - -	1674f-
Doncaster, Thomas - - -	1755f-1803d	Probert, James - - -	1816*
Edwards, John - - -	(1844)	Rigby, William - - -	1752f-1756+
Erling, Jonathan - - -	1699p	Rose, Henry - - -	1809-1816*
Esplin, George - - -	1838*-1848*	Rose, Thomas I - - -	1815*-1824*
Fearnley, Peter - - -	1776m-1826d	Rose, Thomas II - - -	1811m-1824*
Green, William - - -	1844*-1848*	Skirrow, James - - -	1797*-1830*
Hampson, Robert - - -	1791†+	Smith, Thomas - - -	1755p
Harvie, William† - - -	1640-1656+	Stubler, Joseph, ? <i>of</i>	
Hilton, Evan - - -	1670f-1699d	<i>Manchester</i> , 1808 - - -	1799+
Hindley, Henry - - -	1726+	Taylor, John - - -	(1772-1780)
Holgate, William - - -	1816*	Walker, James - - -	1844*
Holt, Matthew I - - -	1744-c. 1780	Walker, Thomas† - - -	1712-1720
Holt, Matthew II - - -	1745b-1805d	Williamson, Samuel - - -	1684f-1726d
Holt, William - - -	1735b-1780d	Winstanley, Abraham - - -	-1811*
Houghton, Richard - - -	1784-1806+	Winstanley, Alexander - - -	1790-1824*
Howard, Henry, <i>of</i>		Winstanley, Edward - - -	1800-1824*
<i>Liverpool</i> - - -	1796	Winstanley, James, <i>of</i>	
Johnson, Charles - - -	1848*	<i>Haigh</i> † - - -	1700bg-1715d
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1604-1640

Sir Roger Bradshaigh of Haigh,
1628-1684

Lancashire Printed Books to 1800

Wigan Grammar School, 1596-1936

And many articles on Local
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