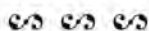


# LONGCASE CLOCKS FROM THE NORTH OF ENGLAND



by *John A. Robey*

THERE is probably a wider range of longcase clocks from the North of England than from any other comparable region of the British Isles. In particular there are wide differences in the styles of cases and dials from all the major regions and cities in the North: longcase clocks from Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Hull or Lancaster, for instance, all have their own regional variations and each deserves a detailed consideration in its own right. Also there are simple, sometimes crudely made country clocks, as well as very sophisticated astronomical pieces equal – and in many cases superior – to any made in London. The range is too wide to consider in a single article, hence the discussion here is confined to about twenty examples of clocks originating from north of a line stretching from the River Humber to just south of the River Mersey.

Some are 30-hour, some 8-day, some grand, others more humble, but each is interesting in some way. Some include all aspects of the clock – case, dial and movement – others just the movement and/or dial, others just the case. Most have either passed through my workshop or I have examined personally, with just a few with images supplied by others to illustrate a particular point.

To make the subject more manageable the discussion is limited to brass-dial clocks, but it must not be forgotten that some very high quality painted dials were made in Manchester, Liverpool and Halifax, and that not all painted dials came from Birmingham.

There were some very interesting clocks made in the North of England in the seventeenth century. For instance there was a school of lantern-clock makers in southern Lancashire whose clocks are distinctly different, both technically and stylistically, from other regions, including the only known seventeenth-century lantern clock with rack striking. Otherwise, as might be expected, clockmaking

was not as advanced in the early years as in the capital.

After these initial years clockmaking in the North of England developed rapidly in the early eighteenth century, particularly as the Industrial Revolution created a new generation of entrepreneurs who owned woollen and cotton mills, mines, ironworks and engineering factories as well as the associated merchants, lawyers and other professionals. They all had 'new money' to spend and a 'must have' item of the day was an impressive longcase clock to grace the hallway of their new houses. This aspiration for a longcase clock trickled down the social scale, so that clocks were made to suite different pockets. In the rural areas the landed gentry with its 'old money' and prosperous farmers would continue to be customers for clocks, the former buying fashionable 8-day clocks, the latter more modest 30-hour ones. Nevertheless even the simplest timepiece would be out of the range of both the mill worker and agricultural labourer.

Initially styles of both case and dial followed that of the capital and there are many examples that are London clocks in all but the name on the dial. Even when signed by a clockmaker who trained in London and then moved back to the North, it is highly likely that at least the dials and cases were supplied from the capital. With increasing industrial prosperity and confidence there was a rapid development of a northern style that was quite distinct from its London counterpart. Soon local engravers and cabinetmakers produced identifiably different styles from town to town and region to region, so that a longcase clock from Lancashire is readily differentiated from one from Yorkshire. Nor was quality compromised and movement makers, engravers and cabinetmakers could produce work that was unrivalled anywhere.

In general, whereas clocks from London and the South of England rely on simplicity of form – flat or arch-topped trunk doors and dials with the minimum of decorative engraving – to

produce an elegant clock, those from the North of England are busier – usually with shaped tops to trunk doors, often with dentil mouldings and/or blind fretwork, the dials having elaborate half-hour markers and the centres often filled with scrollwork or pictorial engraving.

Case timbers were only very rarely marquetry (but see below for an exception), walnut was sometimes used for quality clocks, but once mahogany was imported (Liverpool and Lancaster became important ports for its importation, hence the rise of major cabinetmaking firms there) it became the favoured timber for quality furniture, including clock cases. Whereas London clock cases, with only a few exceptions, have an oak carcass veneered with either marquetry, walnut or mahogany, many northern cases, even ones of 'middling' quality are of oak, often with mahogany cross-banding. Although country clocks from the south are usually of oak, those from the capital rarely are. (Like most things in horology there are exceptions and cases were made in London for country clockmakers in oak, but identical in design to their mahogany counterparts.)

After about 1720 the arched dial was widely used by London clockmakers – apart from a few conservative ones such as George Graham who preferred the square dial (except for some special clocks) – with the hood being either domed, flat-topped or with a pagoda. In the North the square dial continued for those customers who wanted a more modest clock or whose house could not accommodate the extra height that the arch required, but northern arch-dial clocks very often had a swan-necked pediment, which is only very rarely found on London cases. The London dial arch usually contained either a name boss or very often a strike/silent, but less frequently a moon phase, either a 'penny' moon or 'rolling' moon. Northern clocks often had a moon phase of either type in the arch or a penny moon on a square dial, but a strike/silent in the arch is unusual.

Some single-sheet arched silvered brass dials were made, but they were never as popular as further south. Likewise northern round dials are known, but they are mainly a feature from the North Midlands, centred on Derbyshire. In general London clocks were stylish and elegant, but rather formulaic, those from the North being bolder, brasher and designed to impress, with a much greater diversity of styles.

Not only was dial design different, but so was dial construction. Southern dial sheets were cast as a solid plate of thin brass, whereas those outside the area of easy access to London were cast with gaps at the back of the chapter ring. Likewise movements differed, with sturdy plates that rarely needed more than four pillars, although a similar style of finned pillar was used on early clocks and the simpler knopped pillar on later clocks. Apart from an early group of clockmakers from Wigton, Cumberland, 30-hour clocks had plated frames rather than the posted frames found in southern England and East Anglia.

In London the design of longcase clocks began to stagnate during the latter half of the eighteenth century in favour of bracket clocks, so that in the nineteenth century production was largely limited to regulators and 'library' clocks and the painted-dial clock never really gained favour. In the North the situation was reversed, with relatively few bracket clocks (and many of these were bought in from specialist London makers) while the longcase increased in popularity until its ultimate demise towards the end of the Victorian era. They became ever larger and brasher with wide trunks, short doors, covered in inlay and with colourful painted dials, and although despised by the purist horological collector they are still liked by many members of the general public.

The first and earliest clock discussed here (Figs 1-8) is an attempt to emulate London work, but is clearly made in the North and shows how local clockmakers were beginning to impose their own ideas on southern style. It is signed in the Latinised form: 'Johannes Taylor de Dukenfeild'. John Taylor worked in Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, about 7 miles east of the centre of Manchester, but also signed some clocks at nearby Dukinfield, Cheshire, just over the county boundary. Many have no place name, while some are dated. He was a clockmaker when he married in 1709. In 1724 he took out a patent for pumping water from mines, which was a major problem at the time and a fertile ground for many men with mechanical skills and inventive minds, including some clockmakers. He died in 1744.

The case in particular is emulating a London marquetry case of about 1710, but here is probably a little later. The proportions of the hood (Fig. 1), its fret and the barley-twist pillars





Fig. 1. Hood of a marquetry clock by John Taylor of Dukinfield, about 1710.

reveal its northern origin, while the sides of both the hood, trunk and base (Fig. 2) are of unveneered oak with just simple stringing – a London marquetry clock would always have the sides veneered, usually in walnut or olive wood, although with panels of marquetry on only the finest and most expensive cases.

In contrast to the unveneered sides all of the front is covered in marquetry, including the hood door, the mouldings at the top and bottom of the trunk and the surround to the trunk door. The marquetry panels on the trunk door and the base are possibly unique. Not only are they of good quality but they have been cut from a single sheet of veneer, rather than the usual stack of different timbers with the pattern made up of a mixture of several different coloured woods. On the Taylor case the cut-out flowers have been separated from the background which has been stained, while parts of the petals have been scorched in hot sand to give shading, before reassembly into a single sheet. Close examination of Fig. 3 shows that the grain of the timber passes through both the background and the flowers. As it is not practical to cut a single sheet of veneer it is likely that just one sheet



Fig. 2. The oak sides are not veneered, apart from the large concave moulding at the top and bottom of the trunk.



Fig. 3. Detail of the marquetry on the trunk door. The grain passes through flowers, leaves, stems and background, showing that it is made from just one sheet of veneer.





Fig. 4. Dial signed 'Johannes Taylor de Dukenfeild', with very large rings around the winding holes, and filling the seconds dial.

was selected from the normal multiple layers of different coloured woods. No other single-sheet marquetry has been recorded on any clock case, or any other piece of furniture.

Marquetry, like lacquer or japanning, was very much a southern fashion and there would have been insufficient demand to justify learning the requisite skills in the Manchester region. It is likely that the pre-cut sheet was bought from London and applied to a locally made case.

The dial (Fig. 4) has very large rings around the three winding holes and filling the centre of the seconds dial, herringbone engraving round the edge and is signed on the lower edge of the dial sheet. There are large cherub-and-crown spandrels and there is a fine hour hand. The chapter ring has small minute numbers and half-hour markers that by the middle of the eighteenth century developed into a distinctive

Manchester 'twisted leaf' design. The dial plate and spandrels have been gilded in recent times.

The three-train movement (Figs 5 & 6) striking ting-tang quarters on two vertically mounted bells is also very interesting. The 12-hour wheel to drive the calendar wheel has been divided incorrectly so the teeth have been turned down and pins substituted. There has also been a change of plan with the position of the bell stands, which were originally fixed on the opposite plates to their present location.

Both hour and quarter strikes are controlled by countwheels, the hour lifting-piece being activated, as usual, by a pin on the quarter countwheel. But there is no warning on the hour, since the quarter countwheel moves fast enough so that the hour lever is lifted and dropped before the start of the second





Fig. 5. Front of the Taylor three-train movement. Note how the incorrectly divided 12-hour wheel has been corrected by using pins to drive the 24-hour calendar wheel. The bells were planned to be on the opposite plates to their current location.



Fig. 6. Movement rear showing the pin on the small external quarter countwheel that trips a pivoted lever to unlock the hour strike. There is no warning before the hour.

hour strike. Warning is only needed because the lifting pin on a two-train clock moves so slowly that once unlocked the strike would continue for a considerable period with no



Fig. 7. The Taylor movement has adjustable tension for both the two ting-tang hammers (seen here) and the hour hammer.



Fig. 8. The lower ting-tang hammer arbor is supported on an iron bracket to clear the great wheel and is engraved with a face.

means of controlling the number of strikes. John Taylor's arrangement might prove troublesome if the quarter train became very sluggish due to gummed up oil for instance, but the clock would be due for servicing then anyway.

The movement has four latched pillars and some interesting refinements, including adjustable tension for all three hammers (Fig. 7). The lower quarter hammer arbor would foul the great wheel so one end is pivoted in an iron bracket, which has been engraved with a face (Fig. 8).





Fig. 9. Dial signed 'Johannes Taylor Fecit 1720' with a penny moon in the centre.

Figure 9 shows a later 8-day clock by John Taylor, signed in the same Latinised way, but on the chapter ring, without a place and dated 1720. The minute numbers and half-hour markers are larger, the ringed winding-holes smaller and there is a penny moon instead of a seconds dial. The centre has scroll engraving over the matting, a very typical feature of northern dials. Large cherub spandrels.

John Bancroft was a contemporary of Taylor, or maybe a few years earlier, working at nearby Stockport, Cheshire. He numbered his clocks and signed them without a first name (Fig. 10). The dial has herringbone engraving round the edge, large crown-and-cherub spandrels, matted centre with engraving surrounding the calendar, ringed winding holes and a narrow seconds ring. The chapter ring has large minute numbers with a line between the double numbers, also large London-style half-hour and half-quarter markers, but engraved locally.

The movement is individualistic, with no bridge for the hour wheel (Fig. 11), a system sometimes used by Joseph Knibb and at least one of his apprentices. The barrels are grooved for only a few turns (Fig. 12) and the slip washer for setting the hour hand is on the front of the very large hand boss, rather than behind the hour wheel. The back plate is engraved with a simple geometric design (Fig. 13).

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Fig. 10. Dial signed 'Bancroft Stockport' and numbered 115. Note the slip washer for setting the hour hand in front of the hand rather than behind the hour wheel.



Fig. 11. The Bancroft movement has no bridge for the hour wheel.

William Shephard was a clockmaker working in Millom, Cumberland, from about 1730 until he died in 1777. The dial in Fig. 14 is extremely busy and has a penny moon and lunar calendar in the arch. The dial centre and the centre of



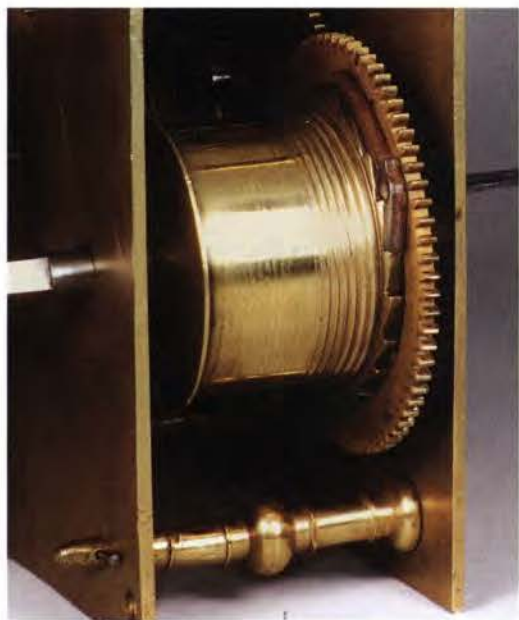
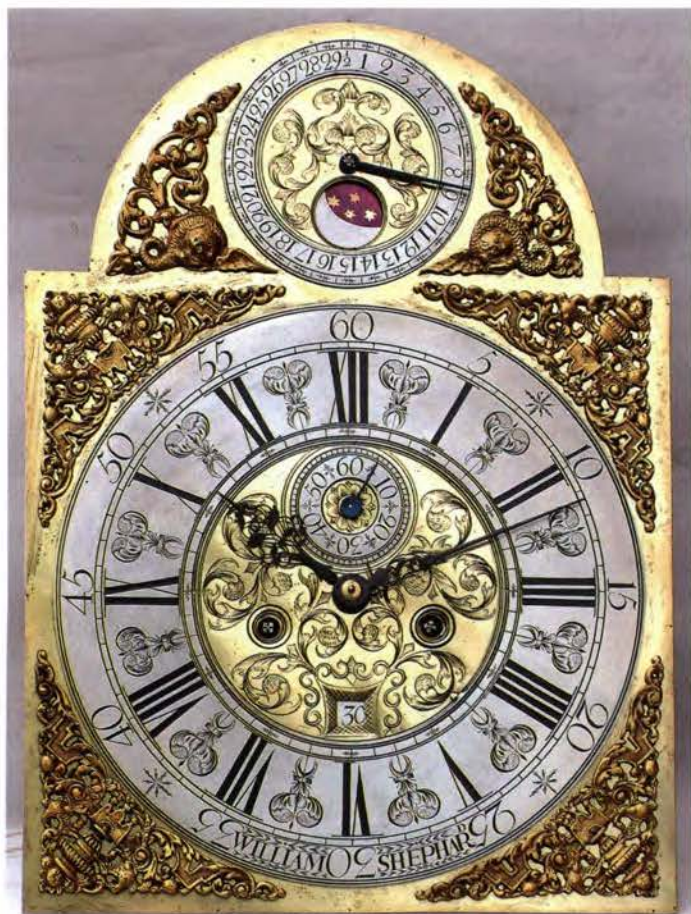


Fig. 12. Bancroft's winding barrels are only partially grooved.



Fig. 13. The rear plate is engraved with decorative lines and semicircles.



the arch are filled with acanthus scroll engraving, this time on a polished ground. The chapter ring has extremely large and unusual half-hour markers. The maker's name, in capitals and without a place name, is at the bottom sandwiched between two narrow strips of herringbone engraving. To fit all of his name into the space available the final letter has had to be placed above the others. There is lavish use of double lines on the chapter ring, lunar date ring and recessed seconds dial.

The moon drive was missing with the back of the dial having just one empty screw hole and a small iron bracket with a vertical hole. The movement, with internal countwheel again, had two empty screw holes for missing posts for two 24-hour wheels to advance the calendar and the penny moon. The system devised to move the

Fig. 14. Very busy dial by William Shephard, Millom, with a penny moon in the arch and very large half-hour markers.





Fig. 15. Restored moon operating mechanism. The hook on the end of a wire pulls the moon twice a day and is returned by a counterweight.

moon disc was a vertical wire with a hook at the top end to pull the moon (normally they are pushed) with a simple lever pivoted in the centre. The pull wire was returned by a counterweight at the opposite end of the lever (there being no sign of where any possible return springs might have been fixed), while the wire could flex enough to allow the hook to slip back over the teeth without the need for a spring-loaded tip.

Another Cumberland clockmaker was Joseph Wilkinson of Wigton, who was born in 1710 and died in 1790. His dial in Fig. 16 has a fearsome engraved moon face in the arch with a very bold starry sky. As well as the usual lunar date the Roman numerals show the times of high tide for two different ports, indicated by two (restored) pointers.

Fig. 16. Dial by Joseph Wilkinson of Wigton, about 1760, with a rolling moon in the arch also indicating the times of high tide at two ports.

The chapter ring has an arcaded ('Dutch') minute band and very large minute numbers, but no half-hour markers. The maker's name is engraved in a large cartouche-shaped reserve, the centre filled with acanthus engraving on a coarse punch-matted ground. The seconds dial is recessed.

The rack-striking movement (Fig. 17) has the rack hook pivoted on the right, deep-tooth locking, with locking and warning on the same pin on the warning wheel. This is an excellent arrangement that is often used in northwest England. The moon and calendar drive is a restoration, the 24-hour wheel sitting on a pipe concentric with the seconds arbor. This wheel carries two flags to advance the moon twice a day and a longer one to knock on the calendar once a day (Fig. 18). The heights of the flags must be such that the calendar flag clears the teeth on the moon.





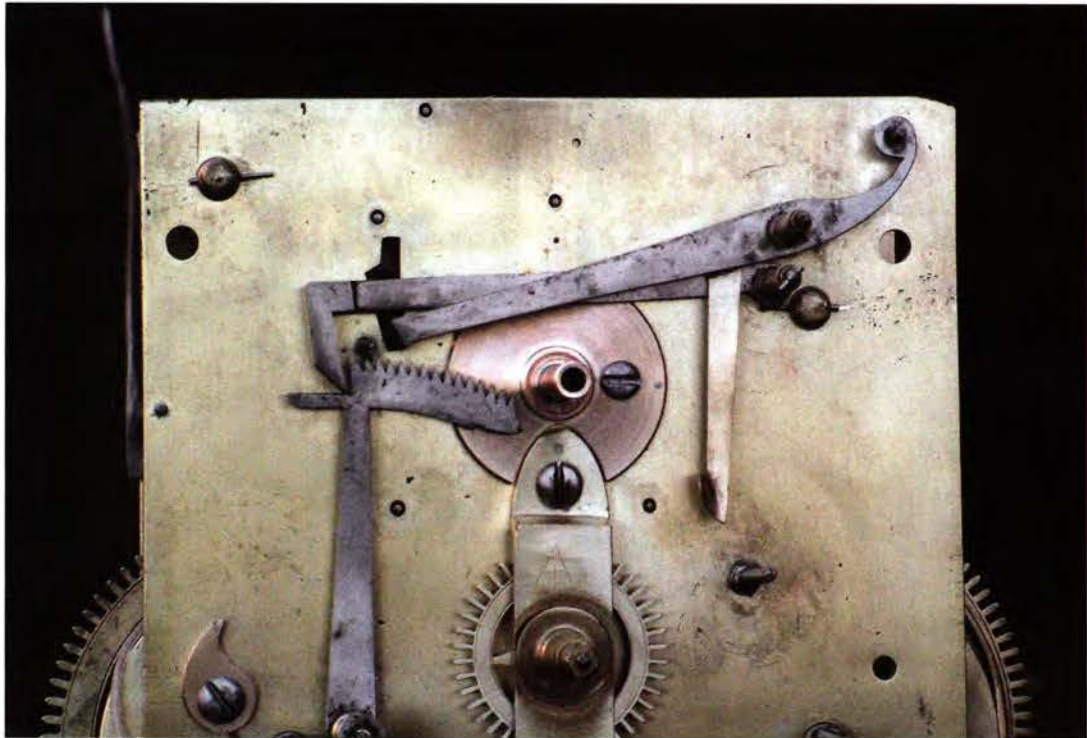


Fig. 17. Wilkinson rack-striking movement with the rack hook pivoted on the right. Locking and warning are on the same pin. Restored pipe to carry the 24-hour wheel to operate both the moon and calendar.

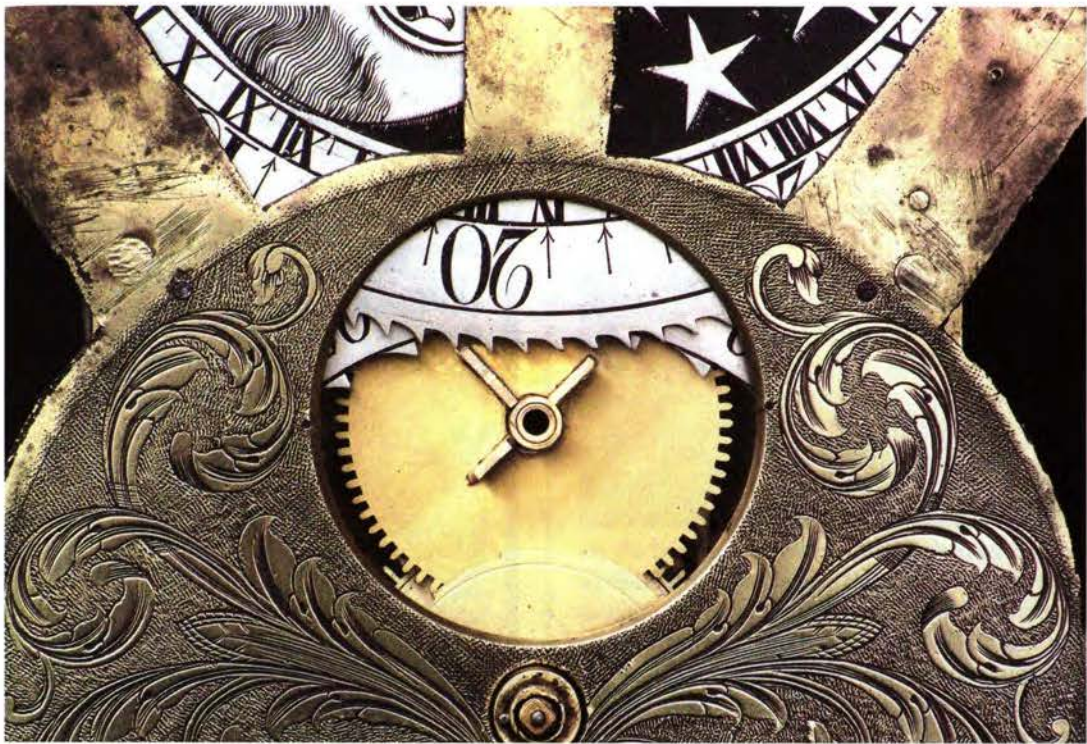


Fig. 18. Moon and calendar advanced by different flags on the same restored 24-hour wheel. Note the engraved acanthus scrolls with a coarse punch-matted ground.





Fig. 19. Dial by John Oliver Manchester, about 1740-50. One moon face has its eyes closed, the other open.

The clock by John Oliver (born 1682-died 1766) has a typical mid-century Manchester dial (Fig. 19), with the maker's name engraved in large capital letters on a silver plate around the arch. There is narrow herringbone engraving round the dial edge and ringed winding holes – both features that were long out of fashion on London dials. The moon faces are painted on a black starry background, one face having open eyes, on the other face the eyes are closed.

The dome-topped case (Fig. 20) is of a dark unfigured timber said to be padouk. The frieze above the arch is now filled with a lighter wood, but would probably have had a reverse painted glass panel, typical of good cases from southern Lancashire. The top of the trunk door has a very accentuated shape.

The dial in Fig. 21 signed for James Sandiford (born 1725, died 1775) is typical of more modest Manchester dials, with engraved scrolls on a matted centre, no ringed winding holes or decorative border. The name is finely engraved and the half-hour markers are now the fully formed 'twisted leaf' design characteristic of a prolific, but as yet unidentified, Manchester engraver. His work can also be recognised on the dials of John Owen of Llanrwst in North Wales.



Fig. 20. The Oliver case of padouk with an exaggerated shape to the top of the trunk door. The light wood infill in the frieze would originally have been a reverse-painted glass panel.



Fig. 21. Dial by James Sandiford of Manchester, about 1760. 'Twisted leaf' half-hour markers that were used by an unidentified Manchester engraver.





Fig. 22. Sandiford's movement has countwheel striking with the type of lifting/warning piece that was used on racking clocks.

Like all the clocks from the Manchester area illustrated so far, striking employs an internal countwheel, which was sometimes used into the nineteenth century in the northwest. The curved slots indicate that it has pin locking rather than using a hoop wheel. Unlike earlier movements the lifting/warning piece is pivoted on a post on the right and is identical to that used with conventional rack striking (Fig. 22).

The modest case (Fig. 23) is of oak, crossbanded with mahogany, concave corners to the top of the trunk door, free-standing hood pillars (as usual on most northern cases) and surmounted by a caddy top.

This hybrid striking system was used by a number of clockmakers from the Manchester area, including William Barlow of Ashton-under-Lyne, Cheshire (born 1748, working to 1794). The square dial in Fig. 24 has abandoned the use of half-hour markers and matting, the centre being engraved on a silvered ground. The spandrels are one of several large cherub head designs that are specifically northern, whereas earlier the same designs that were in general use throughout the country were employed.



Fig. 23. Sandiford case in oak with mahogany cross-banding and a caddy top.



Fig. 24. Dial by William Barlow, Ashton-under-Lyne, about 1770, with a '12 o'clock' rolling moon, photograph: J. Webster.

Instead of a seconds dial there is a small rolling moon, often called a '12 o'clock moon'. This type of moon is mainly seen on clocks from the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire. Usually these moon discs have two full moon faces, but





Fig. 25. Moon of the Barlow dial with a full moon and a blue new moon, photograph: J. Webster.

occasionally there is a full moon and a new moon, here shown as a blue moon (Fig. 25).

In 1770 William Barlow 'engraver and clockmaker' advertised for 'an apprentice to the business of clock-maker and engraver'. Similar designs of engraved dials are known, signed for various members of the Barlow family and other local clockmakers (see Samuel Stansfield dial, Fig. 36), with the same very ruddy-cheeked painted moon faces and they were no doubt the work of William Barlow.

The single-handed 30-hour dial in Fig. 26 with its plain finely-matted centre and lack of decoration, could at first glance be from Sussex or one of the other southern counties, but it is signed 'Brownless Staindrop'. It is not clear which of the several Brownless clockmakers this refers to; probably it was the product of the family business. Staindrop is approximately halfway between Barnard Castle and Bishop Auckland in County Durham.

The reverse of the dial (Fig. 27) reveals its northern origins. Not only are there the typical northern gaps cast into the dial plate behind the chapter ring, but the calendar is of a specifically northern type. From the front it appears to be conventional, with the numerals on a ring indexed once a day so that the date appears from left to right. This type involves an additional wheel – the 24-hour wheel – to reduce the twice daily rotation of the hour wheel to once a day. The northern version (sometimes called a 'Westmorland calendar', despite it also being used elsewhere, as here) has an externally toothed



Fig. 26. Southern-style 30-hour dial, but signed for Brownless, Staindrop, County Durham. Original single hand.



Fig. 27. The reverse shows the typical northern cast gaps behind the chapter ring and the twice a day 'vertical' calendar, simulating a more expensive daily calendar.

disk offset to one side so that the date appears from top to bottom. The date is advanced directly from the hour pipe twice a day, so avoiding the need for an additional wheel. This is arranged to occur about 6 am and 6 pm, so the date is shown correctly during most of the day, but is ambiguous during the hours from early evening to early morning. This type of calendar is usually only found on 30-hour clocks as the crossings can obscure the winding squares of an 8-day clock, but exceptions are known.

An 8-day chiming clock with a large penny moon in the arch in a fine burr walnut case





Fig. 28. Thirty-hour dial by Leonard Weatherhead, Kirkby Lonsdale with an off-centre vertical calendar. Course matting done vertically and horizontally. Restored hands of a pattern used by this maker.



Fig. 29. Thirty-hour dial signed for Jonas Barber of Winster, with four-seasons spandrels, a penny moon and a vertical calendar. Restored hands of a pattern used by this maker.

is known signed by Brownless. This almost certainly came from London so the family had contacts in the capital. Could this northern type of dial plate and calendar disc have been sent to London for engraving in the southern style?

The dial by Leonard Wetherhead of Kirkby Lonsdale, Westmorland, also has the 'vertical' calendar but the circular aperture is curiously off-centre, which with a little thought could have been easily corrected (Fig. 28). Decoration is limited to engraving around the calendar and a simple star above the centre. The matting has been done in vertical and horizontal directions rather than randomly. Large half-hour markers.

Another example of the vertical calendar is shown in Fig. 29 by the well known clockmaker Jonas Barber of Winster, Westmorland, whose movements, particularly 8-day ones, are well made and interesting. This 30-hour dial has four-season spandrels, used in the 1740s and 1750s, a penny moon and coarse circular matting. The high quality engraving is of a style that is readily recognisable on clocks from the Kendal area up to at least the 1760s.

The dial by John Holding of Kendal, Westmorland (Fig. 30), is clearly by the same engraver and has identical spandrels. It has the lunette type of disc calendar, widely used on both 30-hour and 8-day clocks from the Midlands and North of England. He made



Fig. 30. Similar dial by John Holding, Kendal, but with a lunette calendar aperture. Restored hands.

a number of interesting clocks, some quite complex, which are variously signed Holding, Houlden, Holden and Houlding. In 1739 he advertised: 'John Houlden, at the Spring Clock, Highgate [Kendal], Engraves coats of Arms, Crests, Cyphers, Epitaphs ....' The initial reaction was that he was the engraver of the later Jonas Barber dials and those of other local clockmakers, but the discovery that he died in 1741 discounts this idea as this style of engraving continues for at least another 20 years.



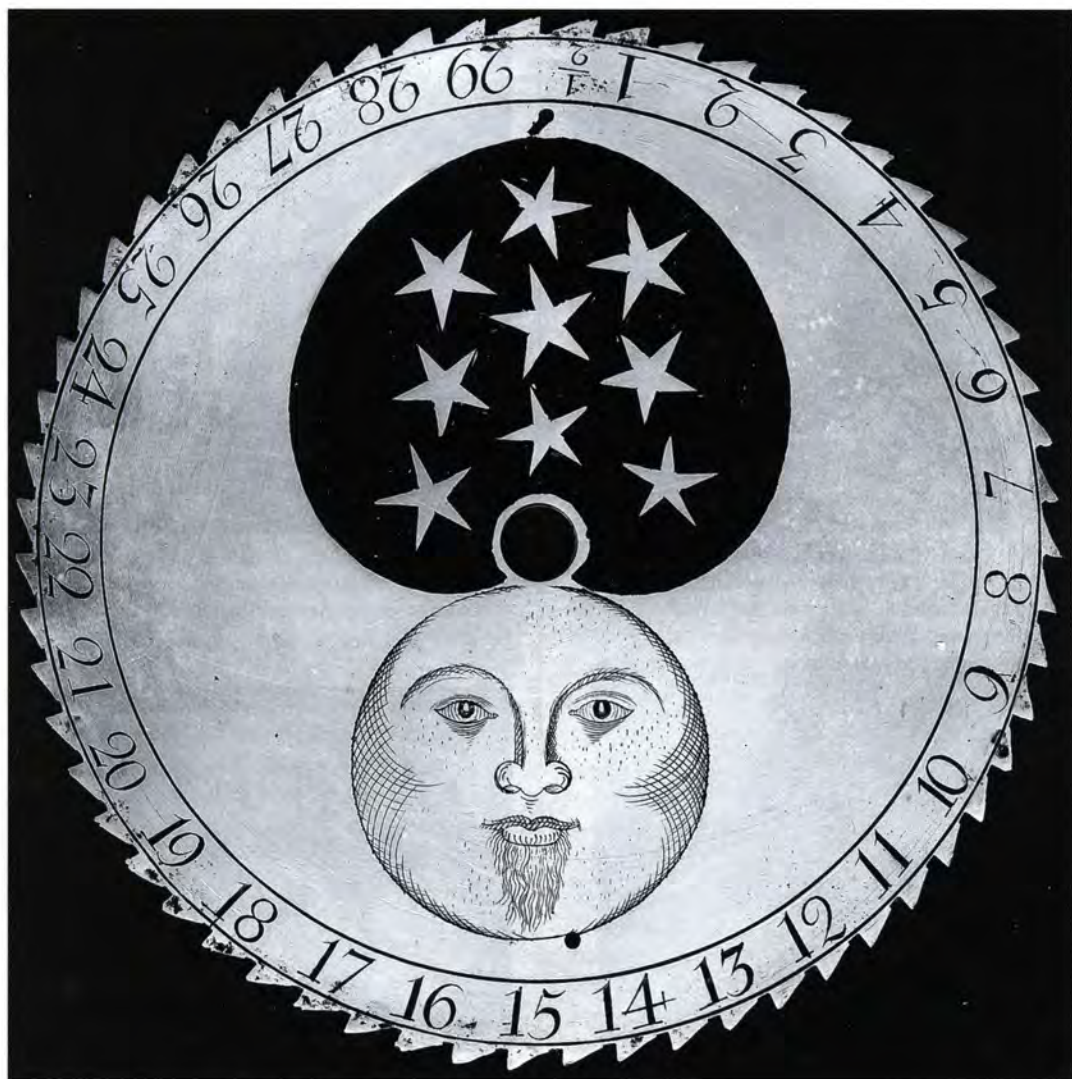


Fig. 31. Moon disc with a very finely engraved face.

He died intestate and the administration on 17 March 1741 of 'John Houlden, late of Kendal, clockmaker, deceased', mentions 'Elizabeth Houlden widow and mother'. Hence he was not the son of the engraver of the same name and he is likely to have been unmarried with no legitimate son to continue the business. No other biographical details have been discovered, so the identity of the engraver of these fine dials remains to be discovered. Maybe John Houlden did not actually engrave himself but passed the work onto a specialist, just as a local retail jeweller would today.

Close examination of the signature, half-hour markers and moon shows that work is very fine and detailed – even the stubble is

shown on the cheeks of the bearded moon face (Fig. 31), the latter being almost identical to the Barber dial.

The dial in Fig. 32 by Samuel Wright of Northwich, whose only known date is 'c.1757', is not only full of engraving but also has an unusual type of moon known on some other North Cheshire clocks. The twisted leaf half-hour marker (which are rarely exactly identical from clock to clock) identify it as the work of the same Manchester engraver as in Fig. 21. The herringbone engraving is continuous across the top of the square of the dial and in a broad band round the arch.

The moon only partially fills the arch, leaving space for two cast-brass mounts (not strictly





Fig. 32. Dial with a small rolling moon in the arch. Engraved in Manchester for Samuel Wright of Northwich.

spandrels as this term should be restricted to items that fill a corner). They have been called 'boys on eagles', but are actually representations of the young Jupiter astride an eagle holding a thunderbolt in his hand. This leaves a rather large area of polished brass in the arch, while the spaces between the moon faces is likewise plain,

in contrast to the centre of the dial. Either side of the seconds dial are cast brass mounts of the type used on the much smaller arched dials of bracket clocks.

Fig. 33 shows a later clock, by Obadiah Brandreth of nearby Middlewich, with a similar type of small rolling moon in the arch. Here the





Fig. 33. Centre-seconds clock by Obadiah Brandreth of Middlewich with a painted moon in the arch and a painted background. Gilded dial plate and spandrels with a separated silvered centre.

arch has a separate painted background with the moon disc also painted and with a silvered outer ring with the lunar date engraved round the edge. This gives the more naturalistic effect of the moon rising from behind a clump of trees

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and setting behind a similar clump. The moon faces had been painted opposite the 5s on the lunar date ring instead of the correct position opposite the 15s. This was rectified, not by repainting the moon faces, but by overlaying



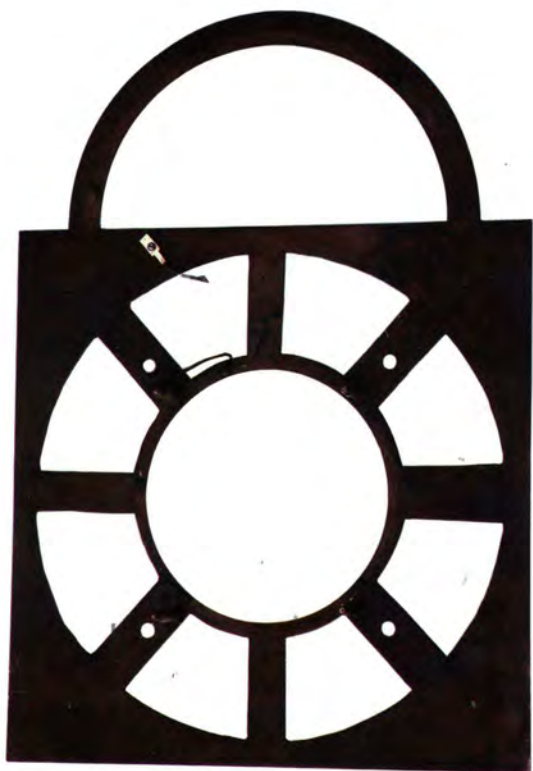


Fig. 34. The Brandreth dial plate is more gap than dial.

another ring of lunar dates, held with four small pinned feet. The opportunity was also taken to change the markers from a track to dots.

The dial has a separate engraved and silvered centre, also held with pinned feet. The dial sheet and spandrels have been gilded (only done on special clocks) so that the centre is framed by a gilded ring. In total, including spandrels, this dial has eleven separate components. The dial sheet is more gap than brass (Fig. 34) and if all the gaps were cast in place (as those behind the chapter ring usually were) it is a tribute to the skill of the brass-founder.

The centre-seconds rack-striking movement has a dead-beat escapement, but is otherwise unremarkable.

This clock is housed in a fine flame-mahogany case (Fig. 35) from South Lancashire or North Cheshire – not all such cases came from Manchester, there are a number of similar cases signed by cabinetmakers from Weaverham near Northwich for instance. The top of the trunk has blind fretwork and dentil mouldings while



Fig. 35. Brandreth clock in a fine mahogany case of North Cheshire or South Lancashire style.





Fig 36. Dial signed for Samuel Stansfield of Stalybridge. The moon face and the style of engraving indicate that it was the work of William Barlow.

the door has a shaped top. The swan-necked pediment has a filled-in centre and box-shaped platforms at each side. There are eagle and ball finials, with a larger eagle on an urn in the centre. There is a reverse-painted glass in the frieze.

The rack-striking clock by Samuel Stansfield of 'Stealy-Bridge' [Stalybridge], east of Manchester shows the continued use of the silvered dial centre (Fig. 36). Stansfield was not born until 1756 and worked until 1810, so this clock is unlikely to be before 1775-80, by which time painted dials were readily available.

The dial was almost certainly engraved by William Barlow – it has similar wispy birds amid rococo scrolls found on dials signed for other members of the Barlow family and has the same ruddy-cheeked moon face as in Figs 24-25. Below the lunette calendar is a scene of a man shooting a bird – puffs of smoke can be seen issuing from the breach and barrel of his gun, the bird being hit and a dog running to retrieve it. The spandrels are one of a number of rococo designs suitable for large dials.

It is currently housed in a fine flame-mahogany case (Fig. 37) that once contained a clock by John Kent of Manchester (born 1743-1810), as recorded on a label inside the trunk door, hence it is from the correct region and of the right period or maybe only slightly earlier. It has many of the same regional features as the Brandreth case, except that the swan-necks are more open and the hood door has an ogee moulding rather than being flat. The latter feature is typical of some clock cases from southern Lancashire and was also used by the noted cabinetmakers Gillows of Lancaster.

The dial in Fig. 38 is by Thomas Crofts of Leeds (recorded 1752-63), again with an engraved and silvered centre. Unusually the



Fig 37. Fine mahogany Manchester case originally housing a clock by John Kent.



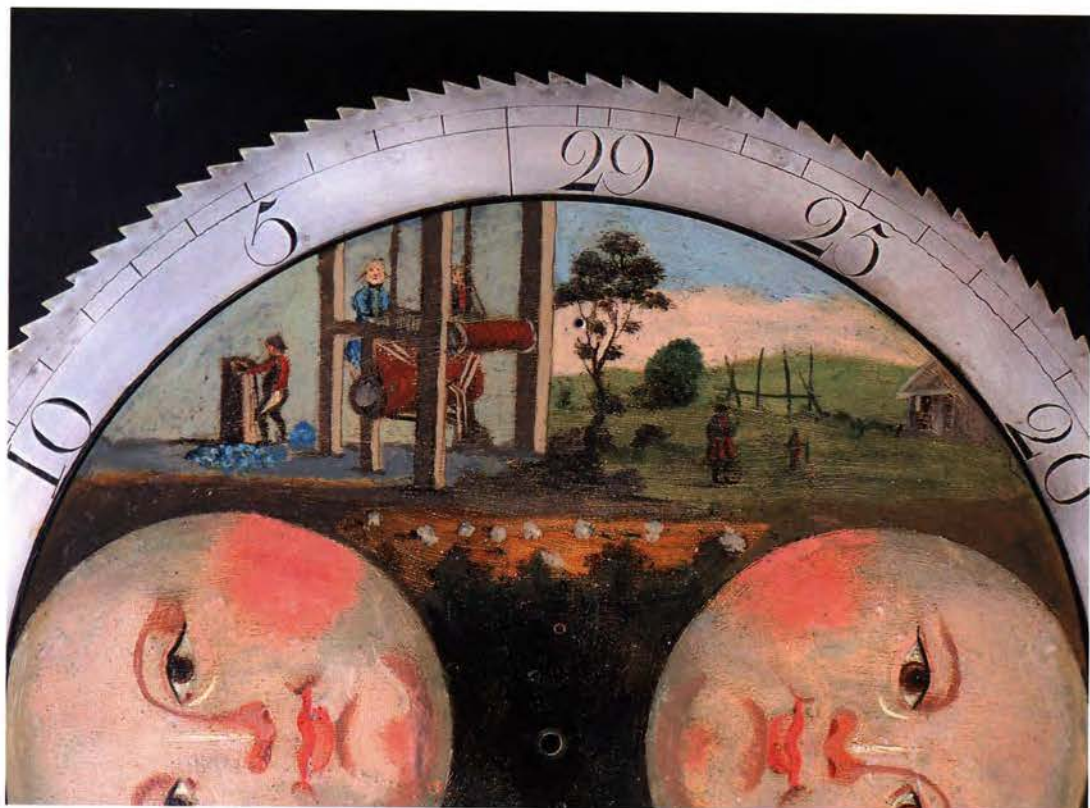


Fig 38. Dial by Thomas Crofts, Leeds, with an engraved and silvered centre and an unusual calendar aperture.

calendar is in the form of a double lunette, while the edge of the chapter ring is decorated to give the effect of detailed scalloping. Both the moon disc, which is of particular interest here, and the calendar disc are made of particularly thin

beaten brass. Painted in the areas between the two moon faces are industrial scenes showing the production of woollen cloth, but set in unrealistic idyllic rural landscapes (Figs 39 & 40). One shows a large wooden loom weaving red cloth.





Figs 39 & 40. The moon disc shows different stages in the preparation of woollen cloth.



On the ground are white bundles, possibly fleeces, while to the left a man is performing an operation (possibly dyeing) on similar blue bundles. The other scene shows a tenter bank with red cloth (probably for the uniforms of army red-coats) stretched on a tenter frame to dry, with a romantic ruined abbey on the left. These scenes show some the production stages from the fleece to the finished woollen cloth and the clock is likely to have been commissioned specially for a Leeds woollen merchant or mill owner. A Newcastle clock is known with a simple automaton in the arch showing the rocking beam of a steam engine for pumping water from a coal mine and almost certainly made for a colliery owner.

Figure 41 shows an imposing flame-mahogany case of about 1780-90, with similar blind fretwork, dentil moulding, shaped top to the trunk door and reverse-painted glass panels beneath the swan-necked pediments as the previous cases from the Manchester area. This has the typical Liverpool feature of free-standing fluted pillars at both the front and back of the hood and fluted pilasters on the hood door. The dial is very special, having a globe moon in



Fig 41. Astronomical clock by Barry of Leigh in a mahogany Liverpool case. The globe moon rotates on its axis and also moves across the arch once a day.





Fig 42. Arched brass dial by Williams of Preston with a painted centre, a type of dial found specifically in Lancashire.

the arch that not only rotates about its own axis to show the phase, but also moves across the arch once a day to give a very approximate indication of its position in the sky. There are hands for centre-seconds and a centre annual-calendar as well as smaller hands showing the times of sunrise and sunset and the age of the moon. The dial is signed 'Barry Leigh', Leigh being about seven miles south-east of Wigan, Lancashire. This is thought to be Thomas Barry who mainly worked in Ormskirk, making unusual clocks, including a very complex three-dial astronomical and musical table clock, now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Figure 42 show a type of longcase dial that is specific to central Lancashire. It is a typical late eighteenth-century arched-dial with separate chapter and seconds rings, but with a painted centre. The scene is of a country house near the coast with figures strolling in the park and a coach proceeding along the drive. A fountain

plays from above the calendar aperture. The dial is signed 'Williams Preston'. This is Thomas Williams, whose is only known as working c.1750-71, but this clock is much later, being made towards the end of the century. It has previously been thought that these conventional brass dials with painted centres were precursors of the true painted dial made of iron, which were first advertised in 1772. It is now thought that they were made after the painted dial had been established for conservative customers who wanted a traditional type of clock dial, but with some of the features of the new colourful dials that were becoming the latest fashion. This may be confirmed once a similar dial is discovered signed by a clockmaker whose dates are more precisely defined. Unfortunately the paint on these dials has poor adhesion to the brass and it often flakes off. A Lancashire dial with a polished centre, or one that has later (often very weak or amateurish) engraving, is likely to have originally had a painted centre.

The last clock discussed was by George Goodall of Micklethwaite, just east of Leeds, Yorkshire. It is a musical clock that formerly had rise and fall shutters to indicate sunrise and sunset. The arrangement of these shutters and the very ingenious arrangement for their operation is part of an on-going restoration project and will be reported on fully in due course.

The clocks discussed and illustrated here only touch the surface, but give a flavour of brass-dial longcase clocks from the North of England. They show the very diverse range that was made, from simple single-handed 30-hour cottage clocks to very grand astronomical clocks. While there are many features that clearly indicate that a particular clock has its origin in the North of England, there is no universal northern style but many regional variations.

All illustrations are by the author, unless otherwise acknowledged.

#### NOTE

This paper is based on a lecture given at the Antiquarian Horological Society's 2008 Conference held at Liverpool University.