

# SCOTTISH DRUM with Harlow mo

by **John Robey**, UK

Figure 1 (left). Drum head clock retailed by John Macbeth of Glasgow, about 1850.

Figure 2 (below). The all-white dial of the Macbeth clock without gilding.



While researching movements made by the Harlow Works in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, there were images of an interesting drumhead clock that I had serviced some time ago, and since they have rarely been mentioned in *CLOCKS* magazine, I decided it would make an interesting article on a type of longcase

clock often ignored. This was published as Part 1 in the February issue describing a clock signed for Alexander Galloway.

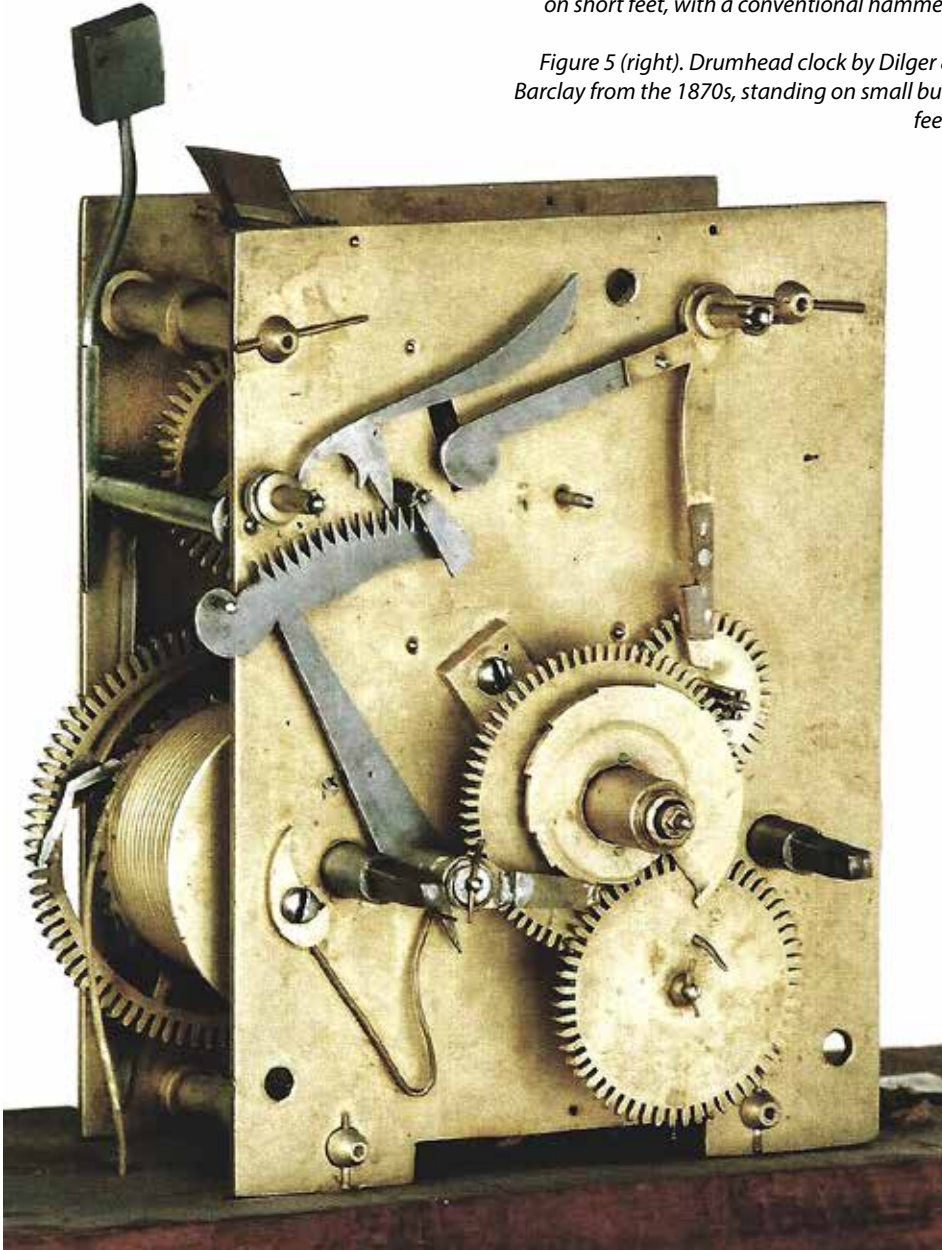
My bulging file of clocks with Harlow movements also included images of a fine drumhead clock that had been sent to me by Paul Foley, a highly respected American horologist who has written

# WHEEL HEAD CLOCKS

## Movements. Part 2

*Figure 3 (below). Movement of the Macbeth clock with typical Harlow strikework, standing on short feet, with a conventional hammer.*

*Figure 5 (right). Drumhead clock by Dilger & Barclay from the 1870s, standing on small bun feet.*



acclaimed books on banjo clocks and other Willard timepieces. And while preparing this article he has provided images of another drumhead clock with a Harlow movement.

The second drumhead clock with a Harlow movement is housed in an attractive mahogany case, figure 1.

The hood has a narrow surround to the circular glazed door, with a restrained and finely carved cresting. The tapered trunk and the base are similar to the Galloway clock, apart from the lack of pilasters either side of the bow-fronted trunk door.

The dial, which has not been restored,

is signed 'J Macbeth Glasgow' and though the initial is rather faint, it is John Macbeth. The dial is white all over, figure 2, without any gilding, while the hands are slightly different to those on the Galloway clock: The hour and minute hands are of a simple spade shape, with the seconds and date hands being of the so-called 'Breguet' design.

The movement has the characteristic Harlow rack hook with a C-curve and a double hook, as well as the usual other Harlow strikework features, figure 3.

horizontal hammer shaft, figure 4.

John Macbeth is recorded in Donald Whyte's book *CLOCKMAKERS & WATCHMAKERS OF SCOTLAND* as being born in Glasgow about 1818. He was admitted as a burgess and guild brother in January 1849 and in March 1860 to the Incorporation of Hammermen, which was the guild for all those who worked in the metal trades, from blacksmiths to jewellers, including clockmakers and watchmakers. He traded as a watchmaker and jeweller at various

the bow-fronted trunk door is more curvaceous. The surround to the hood door is wider and the carved cresting is larger than on the Macbeth case, figure 5. It sits on small bun feet, whereas the bases of other two clocks sit directly on the floor, though it cannot be ascertained if any feet originally there have been removed to reduce the height. There is a very good chance that all three cases, as well as many other Scottish longcase clocks with arched dials, were all made in the same Glasgow workshop.

Figure 6. The dial signed 'Dilger & Barclay Glasgow', with gilt chapter, seconds and calendar rings.



The right-hand end of the rack hook is pointed rather than one of the more usual variants in the form of a scimitar. The main difference between this movement and the one on the Galloway clock, is that the Macbeth clock strikes on a conventional bell with a vertical hammer shaft, not on a gong with a

addresses in Glasgow from 1850 to 1892. The drumhead clock shown here probably dates from the 1860s.

The third drumhead clock with a Harlow movement has a very similar mahogany trunk to the Macbeth clock, also without pilasters, though the applied decoration above and below

The dial, figure 6, is very similar to the Galloway dial, with a white centre and gilt chapter, seconds and calendar rings. It is signed 'Dilger & Marclay Glasgow'. The hour and minute hands are of a typical nineteenth-century longcase design. It is likely that all three circular dials were made by the same anonymous Glasgow

dialmaker.

The movement, figure 7, exhibits the usual Harlow characteristics, though the rack hook has a vertical edge to the C-curve. This style of rack hook is associated with the Davenports, who bought the Harlow business in 1851. The right-hand end of the rack hook exhibits another variant, this one having a curved scimitar shape. There is no hammer poking out between the top of the plates, as there was a coiled gong fixed to the back board and a horizontal hammer at

Augustine and his brother Leopold Dilger and their brother-in-law Severin Barclay, watchmakers originally in East Kilbride before 1870 and then Glasgow. They were all born in the Black Forest region of Germany: Augustine in 1837, Leopold in 1849, and Severin in 1841. Dilger & Barclay were bankrupt in 1890. These dates indicate that their drumhead clock is another late example from the 1870s, when the Harlow works was in the hands of George Davenport.

This article began as a straightforward

sold to the Davenport family. These late dates are confirmed by the use of a coiled steel gong, which are regarded as being popular in the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

While this two-part article discussed just three Scottish drumhead clocks that have movements made by the Harlow/Davenport manufactory in Ashbourne, there will be many others, as well as arched-dial Scottish longcase clocks, that have not been identified or recorded with similar movements. Since



*Figure 7. The movement on the Dilger & Barclay clock, standing on short feet and a horizontal hammer to strike on a gong.*

the rear, as seen on the Galloway clock in Part 1. As a small detail, both movements shown here stand on small feet to improve stability, which differs from the movement on the Galloway clock.

Dilger & Barclay is recorded in *Clockmakers & Watchmakers of Scotland* as a partnership between

discussion on a Scottish drumhead clock, but as soon as the retailer was investigated it appeared to be almost 30 years later than the accepted latest dates for these clocks. Then images of another one were found to be almost as late. Both of their movements were made long after the Harlow works had been

Ashbourne is 277 miles (445km) south of Glasgow, this emphasises that retailers and their customers were prepared to pay the extra cost of transporting movements to get one of high quality and reliability.

All the illustrations in Part 2 are courtesy of Paul Foley. 📷