



# Pocklington Town Clock Restoration

## CLOCK RE-FURBISHMENT COMPLETED SEPTEMBER 2003

*Repainting of the clock faces • Electrification of the winding mechanism  
Re-installation of the quarter hour chimes • Night silencing*

### Committee

*Chairman: Bryan Myerscough  
Secretary: Richard Wood  
Treasurer: Brian Penter  
Laurie Nicholson*

*Cllr. Maureen Wilkinson  
Cllr. John Cox  
Rev. Chris Simmons*

### Contributors to the Appeal

*Mrs J. M. Barker  
Pocklington WI  
R.B. & C. A. Wills  
Mel Doran  
The Huffington Family  
C. & H. Beckett  
Lund YCA  
H. E. Baxter  
E. Barker  
R. M. Burton 1998 Charitable Trust  
J. G. Fielder & Son  
Moonlight Bedrooms  
Pocklington Boiler Services  
B. J. Fennell Ltd.  
J. S. & E. C. Rymer Charitable Trust  
Paul Holmes  
Pocklington PCC  
Rotary Club of Pocklington  
& Market Weighton  
Regent Street Dental Practice  
Mr & Mrs N. Clements  
Pocklington School  
Halifax Property Services  
Mrs M. Dennis  
Burton the Butchers*

*Carols with the Mayor  
(Pocklington Tow Council)  
Pocklington Town Council  
F. A. Oldfield  
Pocklington Tangle Club  
Beacon Lodge of Freemasons  
R. D. Cook  
Mrs E. L. Hopwood  
Wilberfoss Over 55's Club  
Churches Together in Pocklington  
P. & D. Shepherd Charitable Trust  
Pocklington Vaudeville Theatre  
Chameleon  
Mrs L. E. Sillicks  
Pocklington Chamber of Trade  
& Commerce  
Countryside Agency  
Don Bramley  
Wren  
Mr Cook  
Mr Robinson  
Civic Society  
Martin Kettlewell  
Don Ogram  
Rev. Chris Simmons*



*The Pocklington Town Clock Restoration Committee was formed in August 2002 to restore the clock on the tower of All Saints' Parish church.*

*The clock required £15,000 to re-paint the dials, electrify the mechanism, restore the quarter hour chimes and fit night silencing equipment.*

*Local fundraising took place with The Heritage Lottery fund and Wren making major contributions. The work which necessitated taking down the four dials was carried out in the summer of 2003.*

*Two open days were held in September 2003 and a thanksgiving service held in October 2003.*



*Here Mel Doran a local clockmaker is explaining the workings of the clock to visitors.*



Pocklington's town clock situated on the tower of All Saints Church was manufactured in 1846 by a mechanic and clock maker called Charles Brown from Selby.

The restoration committee wanted to find out more information about the maker of the clock and made an appeal for information through the local newspaper. Mel Doran a retired clockmaker now living at Fangfoss contacted the committee with important information. He produced a copy of Loomes 'Yorkshire Clockmakers' which contains the following passage:

*Brown, Charles Selby 1834-1846 Turret clockmaker at Finkle Street 1834 - 1846. Advert of 1846 reads: "Charles Brown, Turret Clock and Chime Maker, etc. Finkle Street, Selby. Feels it is his duty to return his grateful thanks for the continued patronage he has received during the last ten years, and has much pleasure in announcing to the public that he has invented a double escapement turret clock which measures accurate time and capable of working hands for any number of dials of any size and cannot be acted upon by irregular motion of the atmosphere. Its excellence and durability may fearlessly challenge competition". "A specimen, which has been going upwards of three years, maybe seen in Selby Church".*

Records show £208.1s 2d was paid to Charles Brown for the clock. (The equivalent of £12,324 today). Charles Brown had been making turret clocks for twelve years from premises in Finkle Street and was highly regarded for his engineering skills. Unfortunately Charles Brown together with his wife & child tragically died of Cholera in an epidemic which hit the town in 1848 when over 100 people died. A special mass burial plot was used adjacent to Selby Abbey and is commemorated with a recently erected plaque.

The committee wanted to trace other clocks made by Charles Brown to find out more about his work and thus provide interesting background information.

Another Charles Brown clock was traced to Riccall church and there is another at Crowle. An enquiry at Selby Abbey revealed they had a Smith of Derby clock which had been fitted in 1909. So where had the Charles Brown clock gone - was it now at Pocklington? At first historians at Selby said this was not so because the Brown clock had been sold to Caswood Church. Enquiries there however revealed this to be a single faced Potts of Leeds clock. Mel Doran and Keith Scobie-Young the owner of the Cumbria Clock Company felt the Pocklington clock was likely to be the one first fitted to Selby Abbey because of its size and grandure. (In 1902 the upper portion of Selby Abbey's tower had been removed because of subsidence problems and a Potts of Leeds Clock installed. This clock was destroyed in a fire at the Abbey in 1906 being subsequently replaced by the current Smith of Derby clock installed in 1909).

Church records at the Borthwick Institute in York have been examined but no record of the sale of the clock to Pocklington can be found. Another interesting feature of the clock is the double escapement it was originally fitted with. This has been replaced but it is thought this was subsequently copied and used in the mechanism of 'Big Ben' in the Palace of Westminster. Lord Grimthorpe (who it is believed took his name from nearby Grimthorpe Manor two miles north of Pocklington) was involved in fitting 'Big Ben'. Did he know about our clocks special double escapement and copy it?

The committee formed to restore the clock consisted of Parochial Church Council members and Pocklington Town Councillors. Although the Town Council had maintained the clock since 1964 the £15,000 required for the refurbishment was difficult to fund. Fund raising in the community soon raised several thousand pounds with substantial donations coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund and WREN the waste tax operator. The Cumbria Clock Company was contracted to carry out the work which took place during the summer of 2003.

The clock faces were taken down and repainted and regilded. The chiming mechanism was re-instated.

Electrification of the winding of the clock was carried out. A Night silencing mechanism was fitted.

As part of the work two open days were organised for the public to view the mechanism; a floral clock was planted in the grounds of the church which received special mention in the 2003 'Yorkshire in Bloom' competition and a service of dedication was held to commemorate the projects completion.

Those who contributed to the fund are acknowledged on a plaque which has been fitted to the bell tower near to the clock mechanism a copy of which is shown overleaf.



Ken Squirrell planting out the floral clock in the grounds of the churchyard