

Turret Clocks in Suffolk

The annual Ipswich Branch turret clock tour around Suffolk villages was a great success once more. A good attendance of enthusiasts viewed a well chosen range of clocks, illustrating the differences between rich and poor parishes as well as features of horological interest.

Haughley with its 13th century tower, revealed a SMITH OF DERBY movement with a pin wheel escapement, dating from 1903 and a very decorative cast iron dial, **1**. Rattlesden has a double 3-legged gravity escapement in its GILLET & CO. movement of 1887, **2**.

The next three churches all had older, 'bird cage' movements. The fine church of St Mary's, Woolpit, **3**, has a solidly made 2-train movement, **4**, with dead-beat escapement, **5**. An unusual feature here is the dial with incised Arabic numerals, **6**. The date of 1850 on the setting dial is almost certainly too late. Around 1780 would seem to be a more accurate.

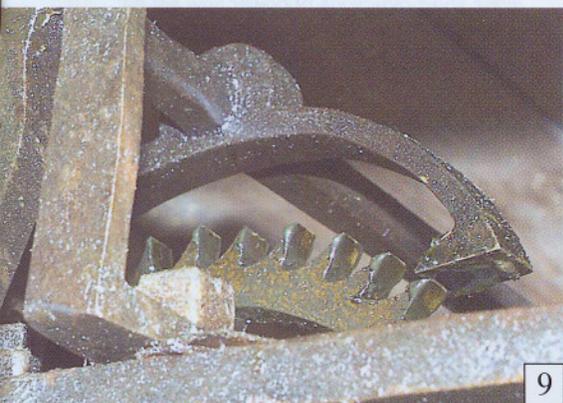
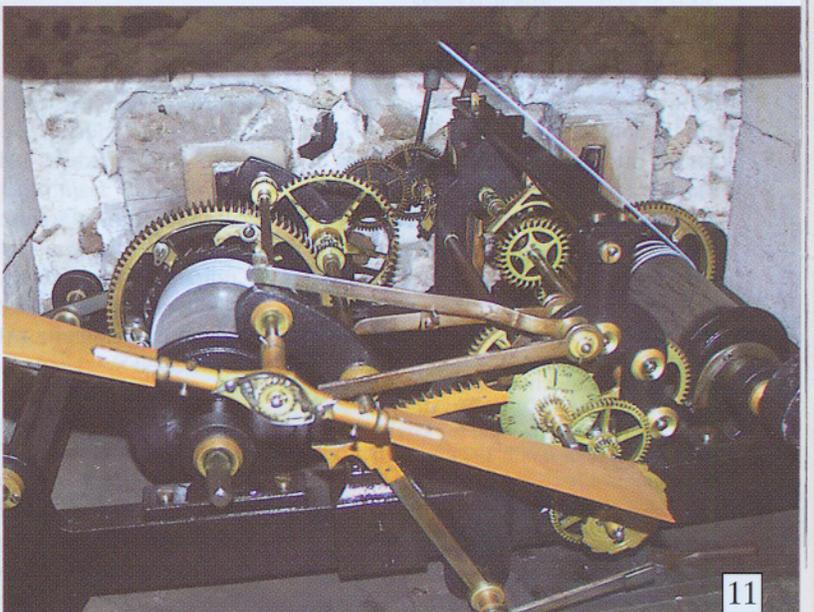
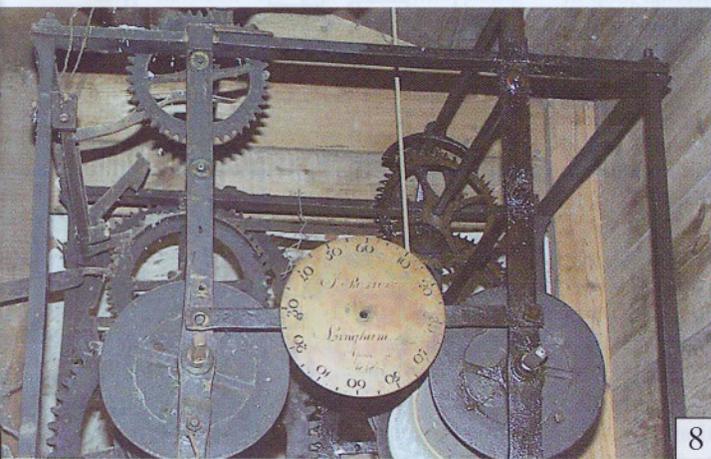
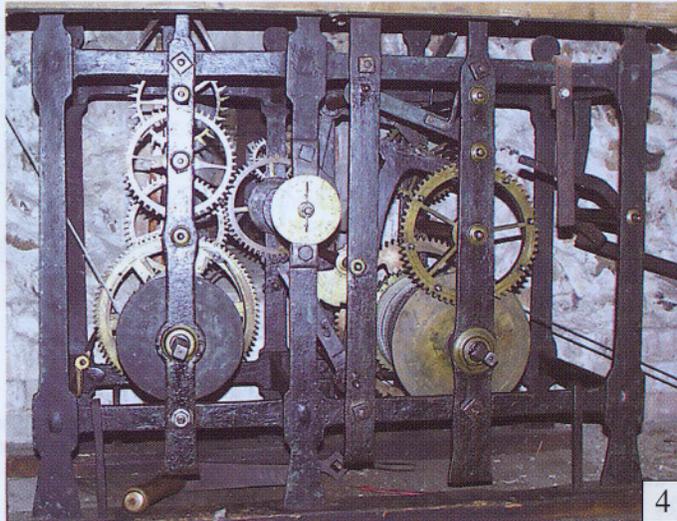
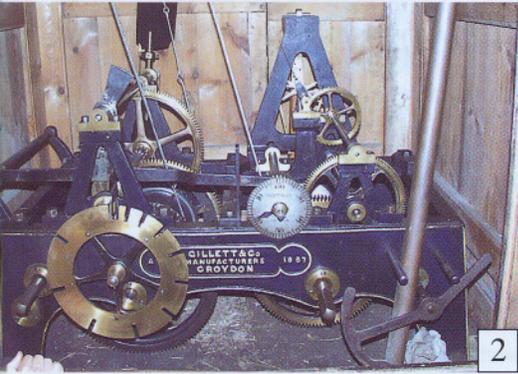
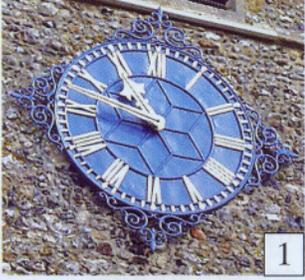
Stowlangtoft boasts a rather similar movement with anchor escapement, dating from around 1700 with pretty continental style crossings on one of the wheels, **7**. Sadly the striking train is disabled, although the mechanism remains in place and could easily be restored. Since the dial is invisible from almost anywhere in the village, the clock seems to serve little purpose without its strike!

Badwell Ash is an example of a clock (and a church) badly in need of some tender loving care. It also has a birdcage movement in a sadly dilapidated condition, **8**, with anchor escapement, **9**. The striking train, with its internally cut count wheel, **10**, is disabled. The engraving on the setting dial suggests a date of 1838, although it looks older.

By contrast, the 1900-ish BENSON dead-beat, rack-striking movement in St. Peter's, Hepworth, had been well restored to good order, **11**.

A rich diversity of organs, bells, rook's nests, carvings, flower festivals and other interesting distractions completed the enjoyment of an excellent day.

Ian Coote



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