

Turret Clock Tour

by Ian Coote MBHI

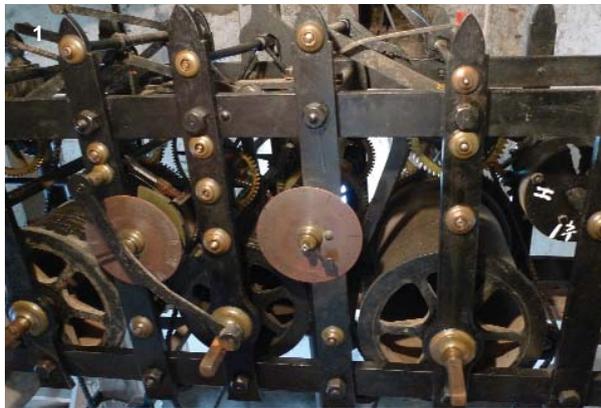
Snails, pulpits, carillons, beat plates, finials, pinwheels and deadbeats, organs, pews, reredos, were among the subjects discussed during the 2010 Ipswich Branch turret clock tour around the corner of Suffolk bordering Essex and Cambridgeshire.

All except one of the clocks were Victorian or later, but the distinctiveness of each led to some interesting observations and comparisons.

Deadbeats

The clocks at Cavendish and Sudbury both have deadbeat escapements, but they are very different in other ways.

The cast iron framed movement at Cavendish, topped with acorn finials, must have been rather old-fashioned when it was installed in 1871, most makers having moved to some kind of flat-bed by that time 1.



It does boast the then-fashionable Westminster chimes and a long pendulum, beating 34 per minute. The pallets are not properly shaped, so there is considerable recoil on the escapement, 2.



The name on the setting dial is William Downs & Son, Long Melford, but we considered it more likely to have been made in London, possibly by Moore of Clerkenwell.

The Sudbury movement bears the name of Bennett, Cheapside and is a decorative variant on the flat bed/ A-frame arrangement 3.

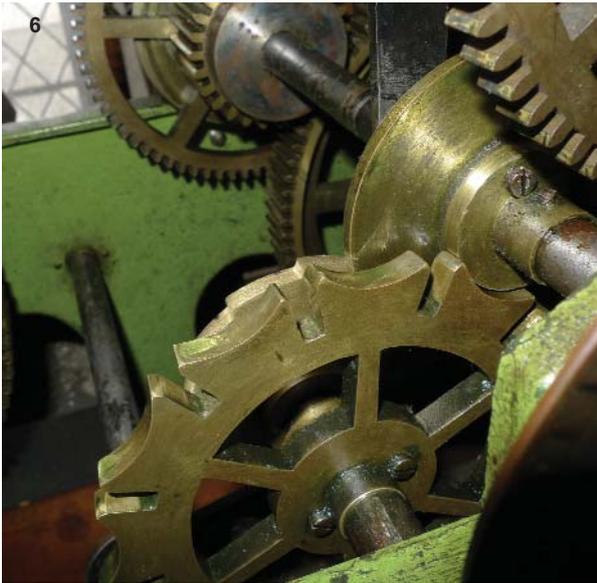
Its properly set up deadbeat escapement has replaceable pallets screwed to the frame, 4.

It does not chime, but there is a simple carillon to allow tunes to be played manually on the 8 bells, 5.

Both of these clocks have rack striking, but the Bennett at Sudbury has a very unusual arrangement to advance the snail, reminiscent of Maltese cross stopwork. None of us had



Sudbury, All Saints	Bennett, Cheapside,	c1890,	Deadbeat
Lawshall, All Saints	Dent, Strand & Royal Exchange	1921	Pinwheel
Cavendish, St Mary	Downs, Long Melford	1871	Deadbeat
Hundon, All Saints	Smith, Derby	1916	Pinwheel
Kedington, SS Peter & Paul	Fordham, Braintree	1729	Anchor



seen such a device before – it seems like a sound idea to ensure correspondence between hands and striking, **6**. Sudbury also possesses a beat plate for the pendulum. I cannot think of another, **7**.

Pinwheels

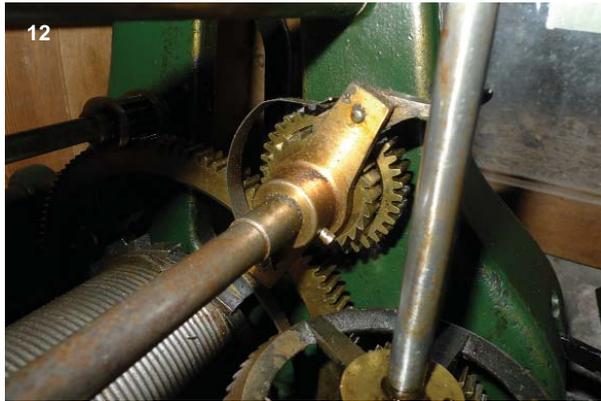
The two clocks with pinwheel escapements were both made well into the 20th century and installed for well-defined reasons. Both have the same basic layout as the Sudbury clock, but with a more utilitarian look.

Hundon All Saints suffered a catastrophic fire in 1914, and was restored in 1916 with a new clock by Smith of Derby(**9**). The Dent at Lawshall (**8**) was a gift to the parish in 1921 as a memorial to those who fell in the Great War. Of the two pinwheel escapements, the Dent has a finely made 60 pin 'escape wheel, while the Hundon example possesses 30 pins with a completely different arrangement of the pallets, **10 & 11**.

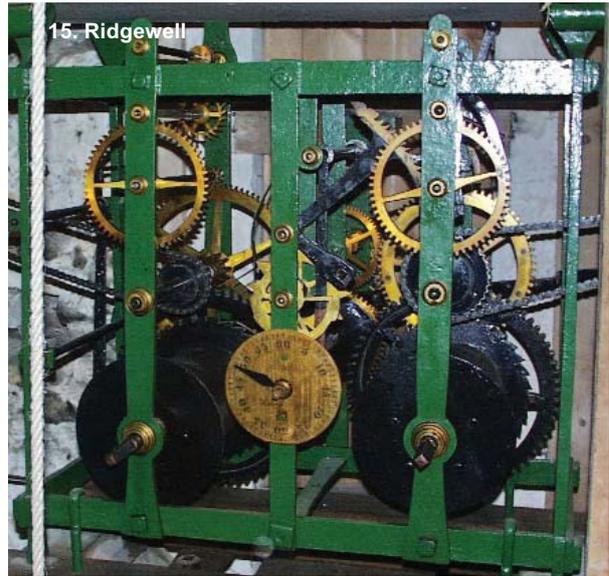


The ratchet and pinion maintaining power on the Dent looks like a good arrangement, although all of the four later clocks are now electrically wound and have no need of maintaining power, **12**.

Hundon and Sudbury have Smith of Derby winding systems; Lawshall's is by Colin Watson, and Cavendish by Haward Horological.



12



15. Ridgewell



13. Kedlington



16



14. Ridgewell

We spent some time at Hundon attempting to reset the autowind to allow the clock to run, only to find that the fault was in the electricity supply.

Anchor

Our last visit was to Kedington, which has little in common with the other clocks. This is a wrought-iron framed clock credited to Joseph Fordham of Braintree with the words "Josephus Fordham de Braintree in Com Essixcie Horologicus 1729", which I take to mean "Joseph Fordham of Braintree in the county of Essex, Clockmaker, 1729". I would appreciate correction from anyone better versed in Latin, **13**.

A curious feature of this movement is that the striking third wheel and pinion are missing, and the fly arbor has been

moved down into that position. The strike weight is large, with a 3-line pulley system, presumably to allow it to be wound at the same intervals as the going train. A new mobile might have been a better arrangement, but it works satisfactorily. The most striking feature, especially to anyone who has followed our recent tours, must be the very distinctive scroll finials, almost identical to those at Ridgewell, not many miles away, that we visited in 2007. Surely these two clocks originated in the same workshop, **13 & 15**. The Kedington clock has been recently restored and a new dial plate fitted **16**.

And other things

As I hinted above, there were many non-horological points of interest on the tour. Sudbury has a carved pulpit said to date from the 14th century, but still in pristine condition having been covered by panels for many years. The reredos in Cavendish (which I inexplicably failed to photograph) is a rare mediaeval survival. The organ at Hundon is a rare and fine house organ, while Kedington holds a wealth of historical interest with many memorials and a 16th century rood screen converted into a family pew still bearing some of its original paint.

Fascinating artefacts, lively conversation and a convivial pub lunch made a day to remember. Thanks are due to Ken Cobb and Stella Haward for organising the tour, and to all the Church representatives who made us so welcome.