

WILLIAM RAYNES

The York years

by Brian Loomes, UK

William Raynes's York work is known through two lantern clocks (just possibly three) and three longcases. One lantern clock is a re-converted verge with the pendulum set between the trains (what we usually call

Figure 8. Lantern clock by William Raynes of York, made in the late 1670s or early 1680s with experimental anchor escapement, the only one known with anchor escapement by him or by any York clockmaker.

a centre verge). This is probably the one that came through auction at Sothebys in 1978 and was sold again in the trade in 2008. The other is the anchor escapement example pictured here, which is a clock I sold many years ago and re-purchased recently.

Figure 9. Detail of the engraved dial centre, a pattern known on at least four York clocks of this period. Note the unusual 'angry' dolphin in the frets have teeth.



PART 2 of 2

This clock was the subject of an article in *CLOCKS* in April 1983 describing the experimental nature of the anchor escapement, written by Mike Kennedy and John Ballinger. The latter took up clock dealing after retiring from the RAF and ran Pinfold Antiques in Lincolnshire, where the clock was said to be on view but not for sale. Obviously it was sold, passed through my hands and was then for many years in the collection of the late Dr J E S ('Stuart') Walker of Hornsea, who was a keen clock

Figure 10. This dial centre from a verge pendulum clock by Thomas Cruttenden of York is identical, even down to the 'angry' dolphin frets.

enthusiast and was instrumental in founding Hornsea Museum.

Each clock has a virtually identical engraved dial centre which, interestingly enough, carries the same pattern and was probably engraved by the same hand as a centre verge lantern clock by Thomas Cruttenden of York sold by Bonhams





Figure 11. The Raynes movement shows minimal filed decoration on the hammer stop.

Auctioneers in 2008.

I know of only three longcase clocks by William Raynes, all from his York period. I noted one in the late 1970s signed 'William Rayns, York' but with no other details. A plated-movement 30-hour example signed 'Will. Raynes in Yorke', was sold at Dreweatt Neate's auction in Newbury in 2011. They believed it to be one of the earliest York longcases and therefore one of the earliest anchor escapements there and I think they were right. That clock is illustrated here. A third, being a marquetry eight-day example with some alterations signed 'Will. Raynes Yorke Fecit', was sold by Bonhams in 2014.

The calendar on the longcase is not done with a calendar ring as in London clocks but by means of an offset engraved disc, which later became a regular method in North Country 30-hour clocks.

It is interesting that William Raynes used the plated form of 30-hour longcase

on his York clocks, whereas Lawrence Debnam used the posted form, the same constructional form as a lantern clock. That was despite the fact that Raynes had obviously been brought up in the London school of lantern clockmaking (posted movements obviously) and still made a few, though very few, when he moved to York. Why this was we can only guess.

The lantern clock was never very popular in the north of England, nor was its relative the posted-movement 30-hour longcase. We can only speculate why and my thought is that by the time domestic clocks began to be made in the north, the lantern clock was already becoming thought of as old-fashioned. But this is a complicated subject and not one we can divert into here.

There are several reasons why we can be pretty sure that William Raynes was not an engraver, even though he would probably have learned this aspect of clockmaking during his apprenticeship. Firstly, his

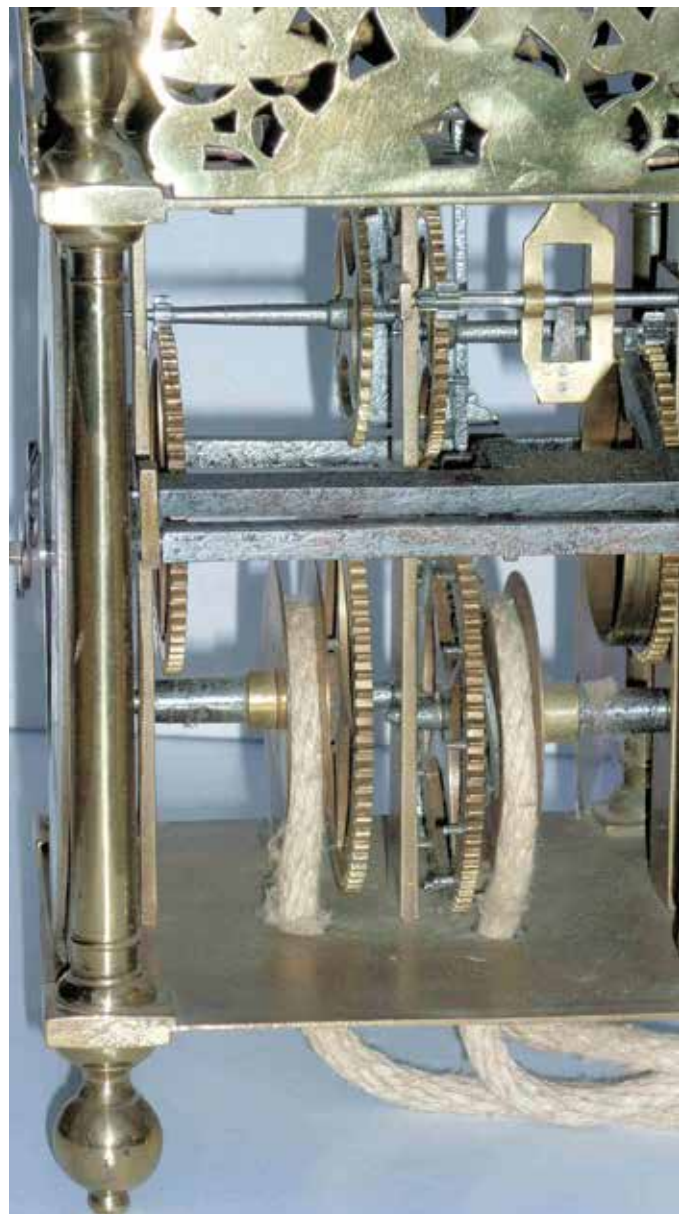


Figure 12. This view shows the early form of 'integral' wheel collets, turned down from the arbor as found in the earliest London lantern clocks.

London clock engraving is different from that on his York clocks, different in pattern but also different in the execution. Secondly, the clock in **figure 8** has the identical dial and fret engraving, not only to his other York lantern clock, but also to those in at least one, and probably two, by Thomas Cruttenden of York. This would have been possible if he had engraved for Cruttenden, or vice versa, but I think it far more likely that both of these master clockmakers had their engraving work done by an outside worker.

Both were master clockmakers. The word 'master' has two meanings. Firstly, it means they were experts, 'master craftsmen' having mastered their craft. One confirmation of such a title was the successful completion of an apprenticeship and ultimate 'freedom' to practice the craft. Both these men were trained by superb London masters—Raynes by



Figure 13. The top view shows the extraordinary use of a longcase pendulum back cock adapted to make it fit on to the top plate. Evidence of experimentation?

William Almond and Cruttenden by John Fromanteel, son of Ahasuerus Fromanteel, who introduced the pendulum into English clockwork.

But they were also masters in the sense of being prosperous businessmen, masters in the sense of being employers supervising the work of other craftsmen, either in-house or otherwise. Both were gentlemen clockmakers. I don't imagine they spent their days hunched over a dimly-lit workbench with a file in hand. The irony was that the more successful a skilled craftsman became, the less time he spent at his bench and the more as a director of the work of others.

Very few lantern clocks are known from northern England and surprisingly few from the city of York. In the absence of illustrations, counting them can be awkward because of the risk of counting the same clock twice. Two (maybe three) are known by Thomas Cruttenden (free at York in 1679, died 1698), one by Mark Hodgson (free at 1676, died 1710) and one by Quaker Thomas Etherington (free 1684,

died 1728). This makes a total of only six seventeenth-century lantern clocks (just possibly seven) known to be of York origin.

The four clockmakers named above are the only ones known to have made lantern clocks in York in the seventeenth century. Yet at that time York was the second largest city outside London, supposedly having with around seven thousand households—Norwich was fractionally larger. Bristol was next with only slightly fewer inhabitants. Yet many lantern clocks survive from Bristol, which at that time had over 20 clockmakers.

All of these York lantern clocks are believed to have been made with a verge pendulum except the example pictured here by Raynes in **figure 8**. This clock is the only seventeenth-century anchor-escapement lantern clock known from the city of York and perhaps the earliest anchor escapement known there on any clock, longcases included. It has some odd features, which are perhaps indicative of its early nature.

We know Raynes was familiar with lantern clockmaking from his London and

other York example(s). But his lantern clock experience was confined to those with balance wheel and short pendulum. In this example it looks as if he is experimenting on a long pendulum version, as he does things which were not regular practice, then or later—experimenting because the system was new to him.


The anchor arbor is held at the back by a back cock, from which the pendulum suspends, as with a longcase clock. Instead of using a laterally-attached anchor-escapement back cock (as normally used by those who *did* make anchor-escapement lantern clocks or who converted earlier escapements to anchor), he has actually used a back cock designed for a plated-movement longcase clock, which in fact will not fit on to a lantern clock. To make it fit he has attached it to an angled bracket in order to provide the vertical surface needed to screw it to. At first sight this looks like an amateurish repair, but close inspection shows that the clock was actually made this way. The bracket sits much further into the top plate than the normal type would, 



Figure 14. Back view of the clock showing the experimental back cock and crutch fitting.



Figures 15 and 16. A 30-hour two-handed longcase signed 'Will. Raynes in Yorke' made in the late 1670s or early 1680s. The case of ebonised pine is believed original. The octagonal lenticle glass is found on a few very early clock cases. The hood detail shows the case to be finely made, probably in London, or, if not, then copied from a London pattern. It was made London-fashion, as a rising hood, converted later to slide forward (perhaps because of low ceilings). Photograph courtesy of Dreweatts 1759 Bloomsbury Auctions.

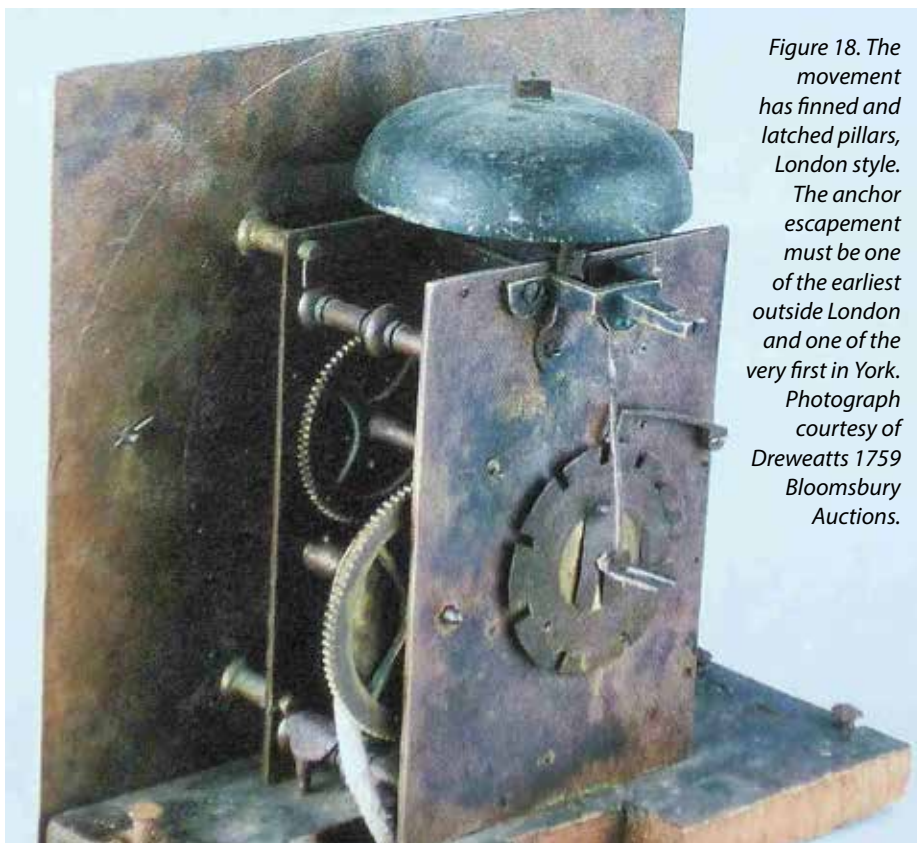


Figure 18. The movement has finned and latched pillars, London style. The anchor escapement must be one of the earliest outside London and one of the very first in York. Photograph courtesy of Dreweatts 1759 Bloomsbury Auctions.

and there are no signs of any previous fitting further back.

Why on earth would he make do with the wrong fitting? Was it because he had none of the right type of castings to hand, or because he was unaware of them? Either way he would probably have had to order them as rough castings from London. The fact that he had access to an anchor-escapement back cock for a longcase clock indicates that he was already familiar with that type of relatively new escapement. Is this one indicator that he is making his first anchor escapement on a lantern clock?

But the back cock itself is interesting, as it has a casting fault at its back right corner. This identifies the casting as being from a particular London brass founder, whose name is unknown, but whose castings with this same recognisable fault are known on half a dozen very early anchor-escapement longcase clocks. The clocks are mostly unsigned, but one is known on a clock by Abraham Fromanteel and another on the 30-hour longcase clock pictured here by William Raynes of York. Amazingly I had examined the clock a number of times



Figure 17. The dial of the 30-hour longcase clock is finely engraved with the London theme of entwined flowers, but was probably done in York. Photograph courtesy of Dreweatts 1759 Bloomsbury Auctions.

before I noticed this small fault. When I did, I exchanged notes with a couple of fellow devotees. I can understand why some wives doubt the sanity of their husbands, who find excitement in such trivia! But some of us delight in them just the same.

The pendulum is unusually long, whether a $1\frac{1}{4}$ seconds or $1\frac{1}{8}$ seconds I cannot say. By 1680 very very few makers of longcase clocks in London were using the anchor escapement—they used the verge pendulum. It may be pertinent that the earliest London-made longcase clocks which did use the anchor escapement also had over-length pendulums, perhaps to reduce the swing.

This lantern clock has iron wheel collets, made integrally from the arbor as it was turned down. This was traditionally the way it was done on the earliest London lantern clocks, but is unusual by the time lantern clocks reached the provinces.

The strikework fly is set to one side, pivoted on extension arms riveted to the upright middle and rear movement bars. This looks like an afterthought, as Raynes presumably planned to pivot his fly arbor between the main bars themselves, as was normal. Was it that his wheels are so

large they left him inadequate space, or was it that he was avoiding having the fly pierce the top plate, maybe to keep out dust? A fly piercing the top plate was normal practice with most lantern clocks, but then they had verge pendulum or balance control and these were not troubled by dust, whereas the anchor was still untested in that respect.

These eccentricities from a clockmaker trained since his youth in lantern clockmaking are puzzling, unless perhaps they are an indication that he is struggling or experimenting in adapting the new anchor escapement to the lantern clock. The clock dates from the late 1670s or early 1680s. Could it be that here he is making his first lantern clock with anchor escapement, the first and only one known by him and, as far as we can see, the only one known at this period by any York clockmaker? 🍷

Figure 19. An eight-day longcase clock by William Raynes of York in a marquetry case. Some alterations. Photograph courtesy of Messrs Bonhams Auctioneers, London.

