

The clock location

Our clock was advertised and sold as 'Westminster' quarter chimes, No. 2 size. It is gravity driven by three weights with a fall of 18 metres which until 2021 were wound by a hand-cranked handle twice a week. This was demanding work, requiring an agile person to climb the 42 narrow, steep spiral stone steps, worn thin by thousands of feet, to the clock chamber.

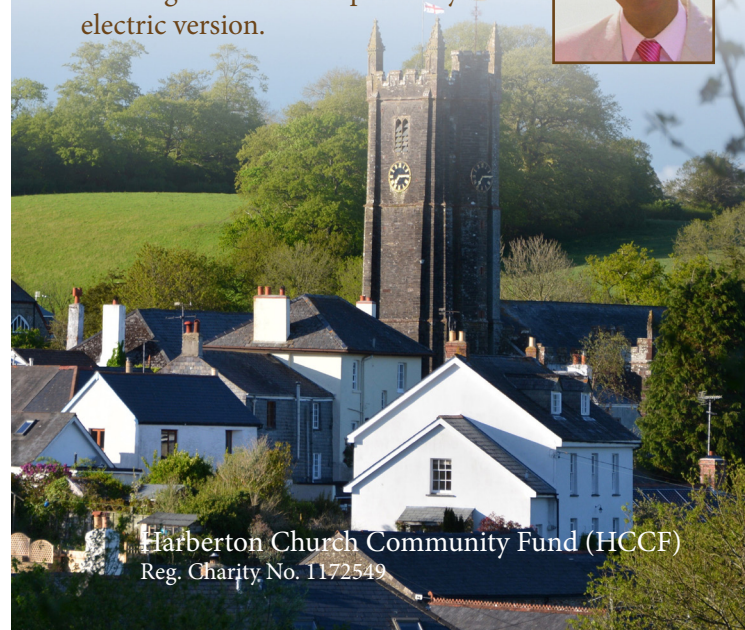


The mechanism

There are three winding shafts, for the going train, the quarter chimes and the hour chimes. The flat-bed frame mechanism is housed in a glazed cupboard in the room below the bell chamber.



Thanks to a very generous legacy from David White who, with his wife Mary, were well-loved residents of Harberton, the clock was completely repaired by the Cumbrian Clock Company in 2021, and the manual winding mechanism replaced by an electric version.



Harberton Church Community Fund (HCCF)
Reg. Charity No. 1172549

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, HARBERTON

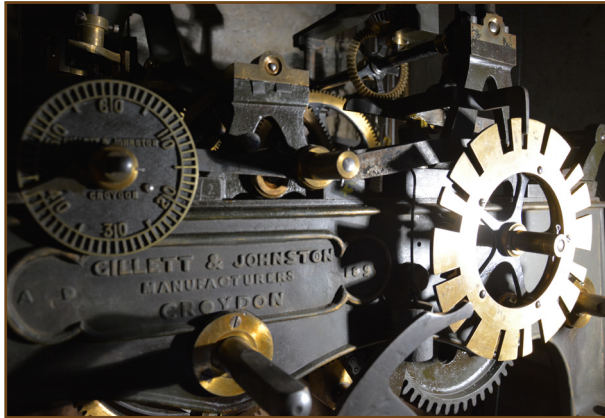


A CHIMING CLOCK MARKING TIME FOR A VILLAGE

Once upon a time... although we think of a clock as a key feature of any English church, that could be a modern myth. St Andrew's had no clock for the first 500 years of its life. The clock you see today was put up in 1897, donated by Sir Robert Harvey to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. And maybe his own 50th birthday the same year. The clock cost £200 then (equivalent to £27,000 today) and he set aside £100 for its maintenance in perpetuity.

The clock

It's quite a special clock and part of the Grade 1 listed building. It was built by Gillett and Johnston, of Croydon, a family firm which started making clocks in 1844. In their first 100 years they made over 10,000 tower clocks. They also made bells, but not the ones in our church, which date from 1762! They have made clocks for important places all over the world, including our own Royal Courts of Justice, Windsor Castle, Exeter Cathedral and in countries as far away as Canada and Australia. We are in good company.

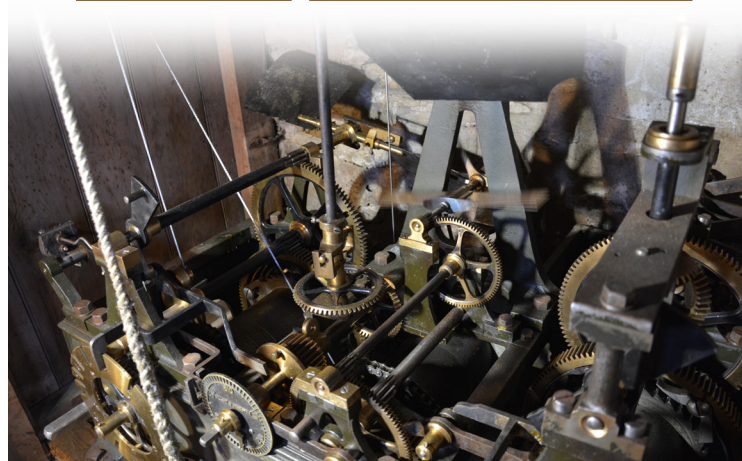


The winders

A number of men and women of the village have regularly wound the clock over the years – and some recall how peaceful and quiet the clock chamber could be (other than on the quarter hour chimes!). One of these men met a Gillett and Johnston engineer who had helped maintain the clock over many years and he pointed out that in order to look in proportion and aesthetically correct, all church clocks should be one tenth the height of the tower.

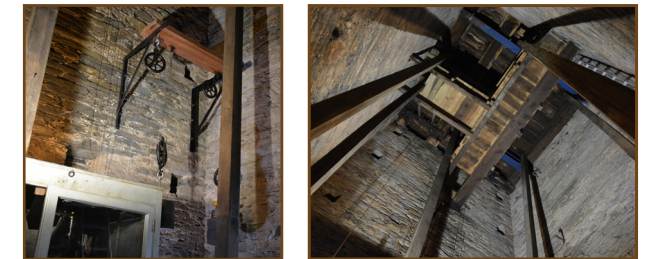


The clock did stop occasionally, especially during harvest, when the farmers who wound the clock were away in their fields.



The Harvey Family connection

The bell clappers were cast for the quarters with the names of Sir Robert Harvey's four children: the trebles for 'Lilita', 'Emile', 'Alfred' and the tenor 'For Tito' (who had recently died in 1895 at the too-young age of 11). There are only clock faces on the South and West sides of the tower as, by local legend, Sir Robert gave the clock on the condition that no dials were visible from Tristford House to the north, since he was in dispute with its owner. The Harvey family lived close by, in Dundry House, and some of their descendants still live locally and are valued members of the church community. The church itself also contains a number of donations and memorials associated with the family.



With thanks to Jonathan Bean, Pat Blight, Jim and Geraldine Hoddinott, Edwina Hookway, Stanley Oldfield, Kevin Sanders, Matt White and Alex Williams for clock care, information, photographs and production.