

# Bridgwater Clockmakers through the ages.

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## Joseph Abraham.

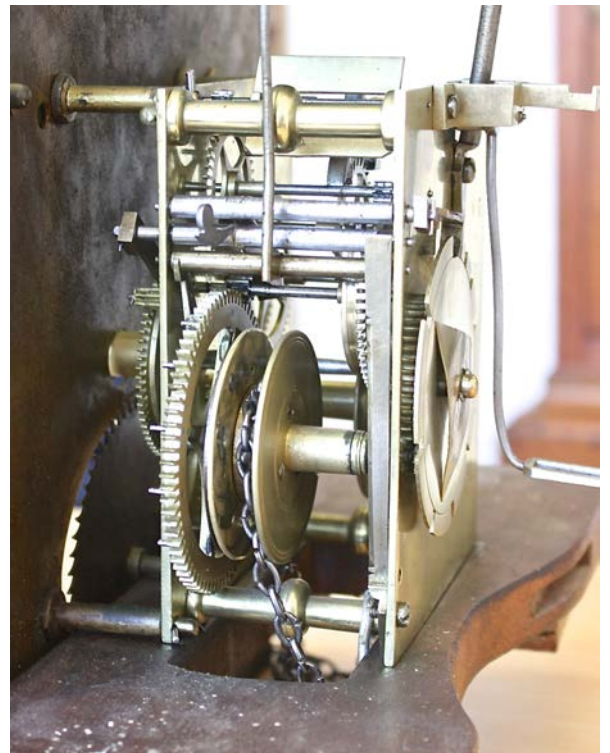
Known for Silvered and painted dialled longcase clocks. A silver pocket watch H/M for 1824 is known by this maker. There was a family of clockmakers named Abraham in Taunton, Frome & Bridgwater in the 18th & 19th C.

## John Ashley.

Little is known of the work of this maker but in the mid 19thC he was in St. Mary Street in partnership with Fehrenbach a German immigrant.

## James Osmond Band

Was an apprentice in the 18thC to Thomas Pyke, but later formed a braziers & ironmongers partnership with James Hine. The partnership was dissolved in 1772 with Hine relocating to Exeter. Band died young but a Longcase clock by him is known. Much information about J.O.Band can be found in James Moore's book *The Clockmakers of Somerset* and *The Thistle Clockmakers* by N & D Woodford.



## **A Bawden.**

Little is known about this maker but he was probably part of the same family of clockmakers who frequented Weston Super Mare & Weston Zoyland.

## **John Bayley.**

A maker of 30 hour & 8 day clocks & a prolific founder and maker of Church bells and chandeliers. A magnificent chandelier by him dated 1732 hangs in St.Andrews Church, Stogursey. A John Bayley was buried in St.Mary's Church Bridgwater in 1755.

## **Thomas Bayley.**

Probably a relation of John Bayley. Thomas was a maker of 30hour & 8 day clocks in the 18thC. A prolific bell founder & in the mid 18thC was in partnership with Robert Street at the foundry in Dampiet Street, Bridgwater on the corner of St.Mary Street. Several local churches in the area house chandeliers by him, including one dated 1773 hanging in the Church at Kingston St. Mary. It is thought that he died in 1773 or thereabouts. Much information can be found in *The Clockmakers of Somerset etc.* by James Moore and *The Thistle Clockmakers of Somerset etc.* by N & D Woodford.

## **William Blackford**

Is known in Fore Street in 1830. One 30hour clock is known. The square painted dial marked "Blackford Bridgewater" with churches in the four corners was attached to a movement which did not start life together. A fake, though the dial was original.

## **Tristram Brimble**

An interesting clockmaker to research. Known in Bridgwater in the early & mid 18thC, travelling to Somerset Churches at Drayton, Curry Rivel, Langport, Martock, East Coker, Yeovil etc, undertaking turret

clock repair. Tristram jnr & William (probably sons) engaged in similar work. Two longcase clocks are known by him.

### **Charles Burroughs**

3 longcase clocks are known by this maker. He repaired the Town Hall clock, Bridgwater in the mid 18thC.

### **Francis Capon**

Born in Taunton in 1745 & married in 1767. Worked as a clock & watch maker @ The White Swan, East Street, Taunton. Moved to Bridgwater about 1790 & appears in Bridgwater electors lists and trade gazettes of the time. Probably a brother, William was a clockmaker @ Wells. A beautiful silver pocket watch is known, H/M London 1767 engraved Fra. Capon, Taunton. Probably London made & possibly a wedding or 21st birthday present.

He is known for a single sheet brass dialled longcase clock engraved Francis Capon Taunton. Also, a painted dialled longcase clock by “Capon Bridgewater” c.1790 is known.





## Henry Chaple

Probably one of Bridgwater's earliest clockmakers. He is known for a 17thC single hand lantern clock illustrated on P.302 of *Lantern Clocks* by Sir George White. Below is one of the rarest "Bridgwater" made clocks.



## Henry Chaple Cont



## Benjamin Cockings

During the late 18thC & early 19thC is known for the care and repair of turret clocks in the Bridgwater area at Cossington & West Huntspill. A Cockings clock is housed in the Blake Museum, Bridgwater.

Illustrated is a small single brass sheet wall hanging alarm clock c.1800





by Benjamin Cockings. Probably sons Richard, Spenser & William were involved in the clockmaking activities in Bridgwater in the mid 19thC. Benjamin appears in Bridgwater Electors List 1807.

### **John Criddle**

Was apprenticed to Wiveliscombe clockmaker Charles Price in 1795 for 5 years & became a prolific Bridgwater maker of mainly painted dial longcase clocks. Is known for turret clock repair in the Bridgwater area, including Churches @ Enmore, Goathurst & Cossington.





### **James Hadfield or Hatfield**

A 1770s longcase clock made in Bridgwater is known by him.

However, his skills, when he wasn't in prison in Bridgwater for debt, lay in the engraving of brass clock dials. He worked for the Thomas Pyke foundry from time to time & was associated for a time with John Roucklieffe a Bridgwater clockmaker.

### **Charles Halliday**

Charles & Richard were working in Fore Street in the mid 19thC.

Charles is known for 3 painted dial longcase clocks.

### **John Hunt**

In the 1720s & 1730s John Hunt is known for turret clock repair at churches in Weston Zoyland & Bridgwater. He is recorded as making the church clocks at Weston Zoyland 1730 & Goathurst 1734. A brass dialled long case clock by him is also recorded.

### **Michael Isaac**

Although little is known of his activities, in 1808 he had an insurance policy with Sun Life insuring the contents of his dwelling etc for £100. His stock, tools etc as a watchmaker was insured for the sum of £900 !!

### **William Murray**

He is recorded as cleaning the church clock at Bridgwater in 1786 and making repairing or supplying parts for the clock. A brass dialled longcase clock with his name engraved on the dial survives.

### **Samuel Nixon**

Active in the early years of the 19thC several of his painted and brass dialled longcase clocks have survived.



## **John Pine**

An educated man of many talents. He is believed to have been apprenticed to John Rouckcliffe, a clockmaker, in November 1760. A portrait of the man is housed in the Blake Museum, Bridgwater. Several 18thC longcase clocks by him are known, the dial of one is engraved "The old rustic bridge by the mill". Also engraved on the dial is the old mill house, rustic bridge by a river, with a boat on the water.

## **William Podger**

He is known to have been in the High Street in 1842. An 8 day clock is recorded with a 'rocking ship' in the arch and signed by him.

## **William Preddy**

It is believed that William was born in Taunton. As a clockmaker/watchmaker he seems to have moved from town to town always in the vicinity of Taunton/Bridgwater. He appears to have worked in Langport from 1822 until his relocation to the High Street, Bridgwater in 1839. The major part of his extensive clockmaking appears to have been conducted in Langport. By 1842 he appears in Ilminster. He was the maker of painted dialled clocks often with a feature in the arch of arched dialled clocks.

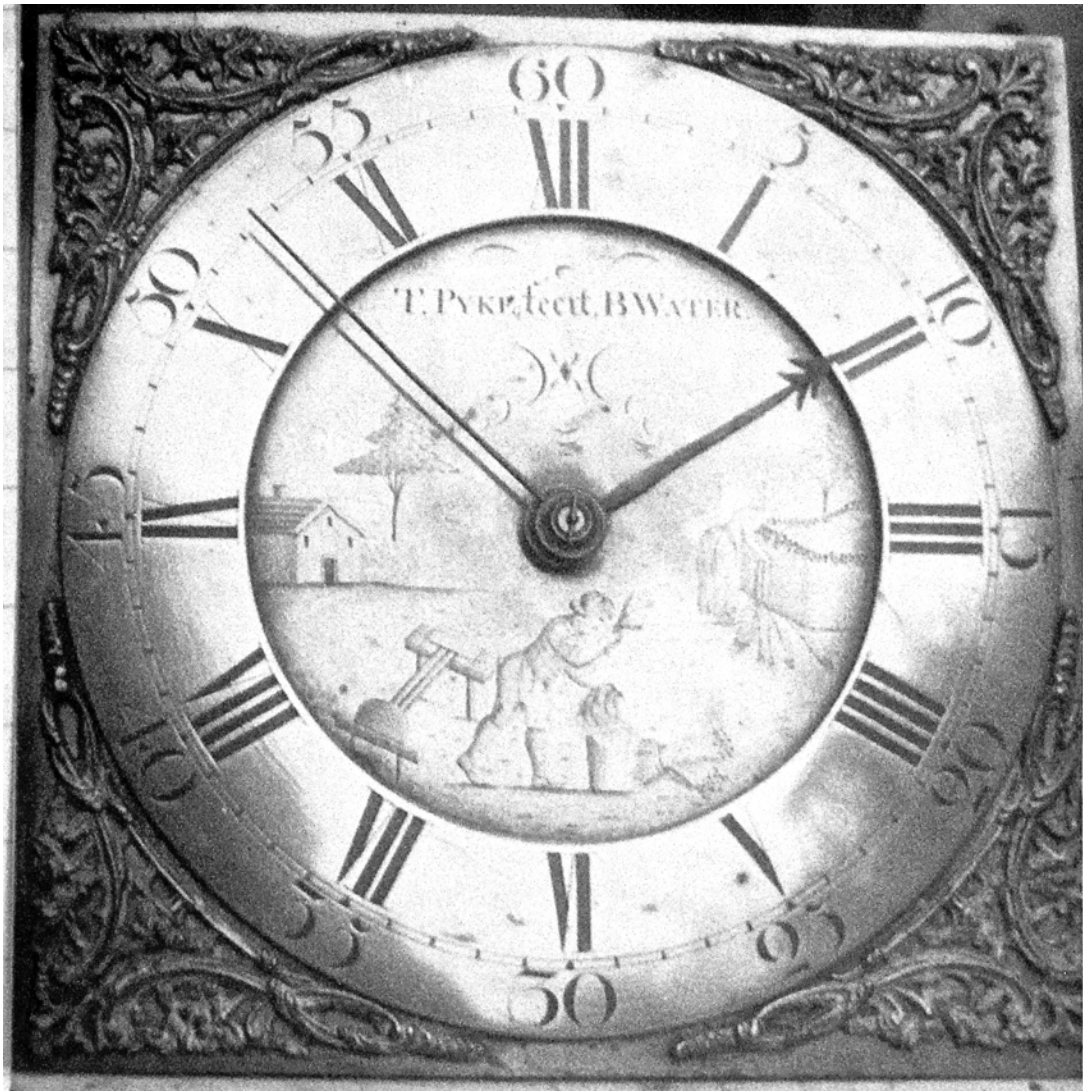


## Thomas Pyke

A well researched subject. Born in 1740 and died 1829. Mayor of Bridgwater on two occasions. Banker, Brazier, bell founder, guinea weight & rocker manufacturer, clockmaker & painted and brass dial maker, brass chandelier maker, cannon maker, etc.etc. Bankrupted 1815. Information - *The Clockmakers of Somerset 1650-1900* by A.J. Moore; *The Thistle Clockmakers of Somerset 1765-1899 including the Dial makers Thomas Pyke of Bridgwater & Cox of Taunton* by N.& D Woodford; *Thomas Pyke of Bridgwater Somerset England an 18th Century Innovator clock dial maker & Industrialist* by N & D Woodford. The group of six Pyke dials including four painted, of which three are of the pewter enhanced versions which have not previously been published. A rare unrestored pewter enhanced painted dial c1800 made by Thomas Pyke for the Dartmouth, Devon clockmaker John Mortimore.







This brass chandelier hanging from the roof of Exeter Guild-hall was manufactured at Thomas Pyke's foundry in Bridgwater in 1789.





Thomas Pyke restored painted arched dial with fans in the corners. The cut off moon humps in the arch area appear unrestored. This shows the naive maps which are common to many Pyke dials. Following the bankruptcy of the foundry it is thought that the engraved copper plates were acquired by Cox of Taunton.



Thomas Pyke unrestored square painted dial. Dial is of the domed variety. Painted roses in the spandrel areas bordered by pewter. The name of the clockmaker has been rubbed & obscured over time. The dial, for an 8 day movement, has a cast iron false plate marked T.PYKE attached to the rear.





A rare unrestored pewter enhanced painted dial c1800 made by Thomas Pyke for the Dartmouth, Devon clockmaker John Mortimore. Painted roses bordered by engraved pewter in the spandrel areas. Arched dial housed in Blake Museum.





Rare unrestored painted pewter enhanced arched dial made by Thomas Pyke, Bridgwater for the Christchurch, Dorset/Hampshire clockmaker Caleb Butler c.1800. Engraved pewter urn in the arch & engraved star bursts in the spandrels. Dial in Blake Museum.



## **James Raworth**

Probably working as a clockmaker at the end of the 18thC. Records indicate that he repaired the church clocks at Mark (1812/13) & Chedzoy (1820). He was engaged to clean the Cossington church clock in 1827 & 1830. A mahogany longcase clock with a brass dial and 8 day movement is known to have been made by him.

Somerset Directory Bridgwater 1822, & Bridgwater Electors list 1826 & 1831.

## **Abraham Rich**

Appears in the Bridgwater Electors List 1831. It is suggested that he died on 25th April 1835. He made longcase clocks, a few of which have survived.





### Andrew Rich

A well known Bridgwater maker. Believed to have been in Fore Street 1822-1831. Church Turret clock repairs performed at West Huntspill in (1819), Fiddington & Chedzoy (1824). He is known for several silvered brass dialled and painted dialled longcase clocks. He died in 1831, his wife Rebecca carrying on the business.





On Saturday se'nnight as the ship Nelly, of Salcots, John Syms, master, was coming up Bridgwater River, one of the crew unfortunately fell overboard, and was drowned, leaving a wife and seven children to lament his loss.

An alteration is about to take place in the mode of exhibiting the Burnham Light, with a view to make it easily and clearly distinguishable from that on the Holmes, viz. by obscuring the light every alternate half minute, by an ingenious piece of mechanism, the invention of Mr. A. Rich, watchmaker, of Bridgwater.


A. Rich watchmaker.

Notice in Taunton Courier 1816.









**REBECCA RICH,**  
 [WIDOW OF THE LATE ANDREW RICH, DECEASED,]  
**Clock and Watch Maker,**  
*Inventor and Manufacturer of the much-admired*  
**PATENT TAVERN TOBACCO BOX,**  
**BRASS FOUNDER, &c.**  
**FORE STREET, BRIDGWATER,**

**M**OST respectfully returns her grateful thanks for the very liberal and decided share of public support received by her late husband, and she humbly solicits a continuance of those favours to enable her to bring up her numerous Orphans now left dependant on her own exertions.

R. R. takes this opportunity of informing her numerous Friends and the Public in general, that she continues the business in every Branch, employs the same experienced Workmen as were employed by her late Husband during his long and trying illness, and that it will ever be her study to engage skilful and attentive Men, and by every means in her power, to give perfect satisfaction to those Ladies and Gentlemen who may kindly and generously honour her with their assistance.

Fore Street, Bridgwater, 12th April, 1831.

## George Rossiter

Recorded as being born in Bristol in 1807. At Fore Street, Bridgwater in 1839, Cornhill 1842, Fore Street 1852-61. Longcase clocks are recorded by this maker. Joined by his nephew Henry in 1851. The Rossiters were a long lived family of clockmakers/jewellers in Weston Super Mare & Bridgwater, businesses surviving through the 19th & 20th century. The Rossiters Jewellers shop in Fore Street, Bridgwater finally closed its doors in the early 21st century. Similar to many long-lived clockmaking enterprises in the 19th century they were forced to change direction. Cheap factory made clocks & watches

imported from America, Germany, & Switzerland forced English clockmakers and watchmakers to become jewellers, clock & watch repairers & dealers in precious metals. The situation hasn't changed!

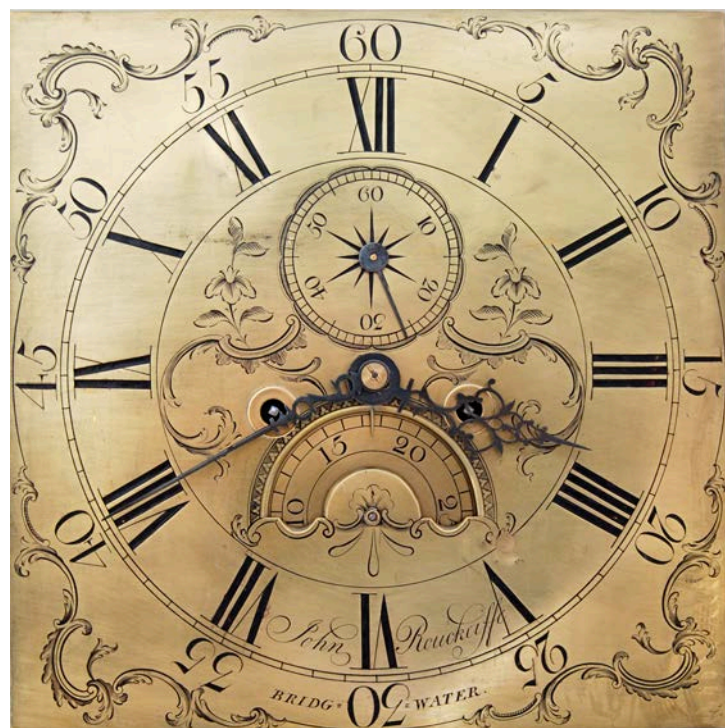
### **John Roucklieffe**

An influential & respected 18th century Bridgwater clockmaker. He was apprenticed to the renowned Devon clockmaker William Stumbels of Totnes in 1740. In 1762 he was assessed for Poor Rate on a house in Totnes. The Bridgwater baptismal records in the mid 1750s show that he & his wife Ann were blessed with several children. However, in 1760 he took on the Bridgwater clockmaker apprentice John Pine. John Roucklieffe is known for much church turret clock work over a long period in the 18th century in the villages of Pawlett, Goathurst, Chedzoy, & Middlezoy. In the 1770s in collusion with James Hadfield, engraver and James Osmond Band he manufactured engraved clock dials. His longcase clocks were exceptionally well made to a very high standard. John Roucklieffe died in Bridgwater in 1784. A longcase clock by his hand is housed in Blake Museum, Bridgwater. Another rests in Bridgwater Town Hall. Longcase clocks by John Roucklieffe had movements that were attached to brass dials. Some dials showed Adam & Eve as a feature in the arch area. Also surviving are a number of painted dialled longcase clocks by John Roucklieffe. One such was sold in Tamlyns Auction, Bridgwater in the 21st century making about £1000.

Portion of John Roucklieffe dial showing seascape. A Typical subject engraved on dials made in the 1770/80s period.











This John Roucklieffe clock has been transported to New Zealand !! A brass dialled clock with sweep calendar and cut out quadrant to show the days of the week. Adam & Eve in the arch. All housed in a mahogany Bristol case.





## Richard Sainsbury

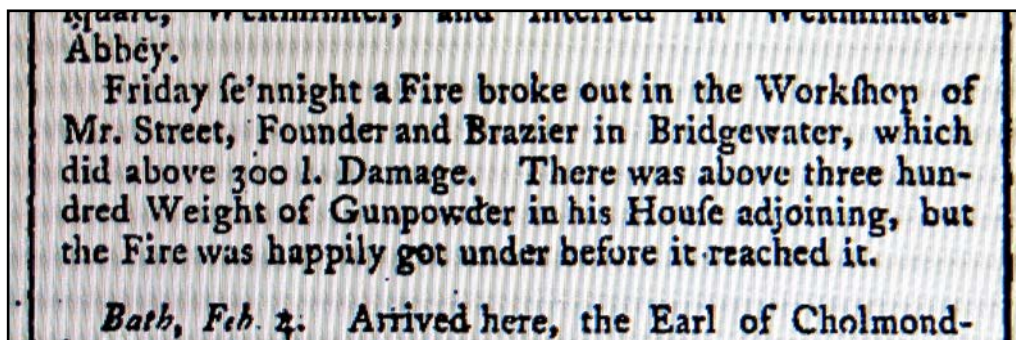
Active in the 18th century. An 8 day quality clock with shell inlay in a mahogany case is recorded.

## James Sanders

1775-1851. A later James Sanders, probably related traded as a watchmaker/jeweller in Eastover in about 1845. A John Sanders also probably related traded in Fore Street 1852 & Eastover 1861-1875

## Robert Street & Thomas Pyke

The partnership between Robert Street & Thomas Pyke in 1765/68 is well documented in *The Thistle Clockmakers of Somerset etc.etc* by N & D Woodford. Unpublished & subsequent to the Thistle tome is a fragment of information concerning a fire at the foundry. Reports of the fire, which is often referred to in Street & Pyke documents, do not give any details. Below is a 1760 newspaper report sent to us by an Australia contact. A number of brass dialled longcase clocks signed Street & Pyke are known, they would have been manufactured by clockmakers in their employ.



A newspaper report of 1777 advertising spinning jenny manufacture shortly before the time that Robert Street departed the business (1778).



## Henry, Michael & William Wakely

Information concerning the Wakelys is quite scarce. It is recorded that they were responsible for one longcase clock.



A bell metal skillet signed Wakely is housed in the Blake Museum.

A newspaper announcement of Sept 1816 in the local press gives details of the sale of bankruptcy stock assigned by Henry, Michael & William Wakely.

It is conjectured that the stock advertised may well have been in whole or part of bankrupt stock from the Thomas Pyke foundry which failed in 1815.

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BRIDGWATER.  
**REMARKABLY CHEAP BARGAINS,**  
IN  
**IRONMONGERY,**  
**BRAZIERY, AND JAPANNED GOODS,**  
**NOW SELLING,**  
(At the Shop lately occupied by Mr. NICHOLLS, in Fore-street,) under a Statute of Bankruptcy, by order of the Assignees of **HENRY, MICHAEL, and WILLIAM WAKELY,**  
**A**LL the Remaining Stock of **IRONMONGERY, BRAZIERY, and JAPANNED GOODS,** removed for the convenience of sale, besides a variety of other Articles: The Goods are as follow:—  
A large quantity of common Tea Trays, at remarkably low prices; new and second hand Tea and Coffee Urns; a large assortment of Paper Trays and Bottle Stands, with Gold Borders; Paper Snuffer Pans and Waiters; Ladies' and Gentlemen's Japan Dressing Cases; Japan Plate Warmers; Iron and Wire Fenders; Tin Ditto, varnished; Iron Coal Scoops, and Copper Ditto; Copper globe Tea Kettles, warranted not to leak; Ditto oval ditto, and Copper Warming Pans; Copper Furnaces; Securing Varnish, and Black-do.; Charcoal, Oils, and Colours; a large assortment of Iron Wire; Japan Tea Waiters, Caddies, and Canisters; elegant Stove Grates, with Brass Mountings; Common Ditto; Iron Cinder Shovels; Rush and Rope Mats; a large quantity of ornamented Clock Dials; Brass and Copper Scales and Weights, of all sizes; Ditto and Prince's Metal Candlesticks; Locks, Hinges, and Bolts; House Bells, with modern Cranks; Pewter Measures, and a variety of other Wares; Lancashire Files; Carpenters' Tools, of every description; Metal and Iron Spoons; Braziers' and Tinmen's Stakes, Hammers; Guns and Gun Furniture, &c. &c.  
The above Stock, consisting of a very extensive assortment, and comprising articles of the most requisite domestic description, is now offered to the Public, at prices so uncommonly low, as precludes the possibility of their ever being obtained on equally advantageous terms. The opportunity now presented to families of furnishing themselves with goods in this line, will be restricted to a very few weeks, when the whole stock remaining undisposed of will be removed to Bristol.  
••• Bills of two and three months will be taken of responsible persons making large purchases.  
N. B. A large quantity of Wood Blocks, Benches, Shelving, &c. for sale.  
Dated September 17, 1816.