

Deacon, Samuel - English Sterling Silver Pair 18 Size Case - Incredible hand-made fusee movement with a very RARE personalized dial - (Circa 1795)



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Case: Pair Case - the outer case and inner case are marked with the English (Birmingham) silver hallmarks of the X, Anchor and Lion which dates this piece to 1795.

Dial: The most interesting feature of this pocket watch is its dial which is marked SAM . BRADFORD (instead of Arabic or Roman numerals.)

Movement: The fusee movement is of meticulous workmanship and is marked Deacon, Barton, [and serial number] 2853. it is still working and responds with only one turn of the key.

Comments: Previous owners of this pocket watch contacted various sources regarding the name on the dial, but no records could be located. It could be a

personalized dial that was a special order, a presentation piece, or perhaps it was a tribute to a fallen comrade (the mystery of its purpose makes an interesting story.)

Brian Loomes' book "Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World Volume 2" notes that Samuel Deacon was born in Ratby, England in 1746 and set up his own workshop in Barton-on-the-Beans, Leicestershire, England in 1771. He died in 1816. He was a jeweler and engraver and made both clocks and watches. He was a highly skilled craftsman of many talents as he made tools, verge watches, church turret clocks and musical boxes. His workshop was kept by his family and in 1953 it was moved into a building in Leicester City hub. It is England's only fully intact 18th century clockmaker's and watch maker's workshop. The workshop is currently housed in the Newarke Houses Museum, Leicester, England.

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THE DEACON FAMILY OF LEICESTERSHIRE CLOCKMAKERS – Part 1- by
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A Biography of Samuel Deacon

Introduction

In 1771, a young journeyman clockmaker I called Samuel Deacon set up in business on his own account at a small hamlet called Barton-In-The-Beans in North West Leicestershire. The business venture proved successful and the small firm, known as Deacon - Barton, continued through several generations of the family until 1951, when the last of the Deacon clockmaking line retired. At that time, Mr. John Daniell, of the (then) Leicester City Museums visited Barton and discovered the Deacon clockmakers workshop exactly as set up by Samuel Deacon in 1771, together with many of the business records which had survived over the years. The Leicester Museum acquired the contents of the workshop (now on permanent display) and the remaining records were preserved by I the Leicestershire Record office. Although Samuel Deacon was a comparatively late-comer in terms of clockmaking history, his records and details of his life provide information not only about 18th and 19th Century clockmaking but with the various changes that took place in the history of this trade onwards until the middle

of the 20th Century. Researching the Deacon records has not proved an easy task. Of course the whole of the records have not survived. On account of the high cost of paper in the 18th century and early 19th Centuries, Samuel Deacon and his successors re-used the books after they became full, and took advantage of any available space, or back of page to write notes, records, or copy letters, thus there are long periods with no chronological sequence, and much searching and combing has been necessary. Certain of the records are so faint and the writing faded that they were impossible to read - even with a magnifier. The exercise has proved a frustrating and time-consuming task and I am aware there are areas where it has been impossible for me to cover fully. To add to the confusion, and responsible for certain previous misunderstandings, there were TWO Samuel Deacons working together as clock and watchmakers (circa 1785-1816). However, I am confident I have identified and isolated both of the above. As readers will observe, the main subject of the surviving Deacon records relate to longcase clocks. I am disappointed not to have discovered fuller details of watchmaking and turret clocks.

Background

In order to fully understand the life of the clockmaker, Samuel Deacon, of Leicestershire, it is helpful to have details of his ancestors. John Deacon (or Deakin) was the grandfather of Samuel the clockmaker. The earliest reference to the Deacons in Leicestershire begins with John Deacon, who in the early part of his life had been a soldier, fighting under William III at the battle of the Boyne in 1690, when James II was defeated and returned to France. John Deacon, on leaving the army settled in the village of Normanton-le-Heath, in North West Leicestershire. He worked here as a farm labourer, later becoming Church Warden and Parish Clerk. He married, had four sons and three daughters. John Deacon was buried at Normanton on 20th March 1722. Samuel Deacon (1714-1812). Later known as Samuel Deacon Senior, or the Aged (he lived to be 98) was the youngest of John Deacon's four sons. He also was a farm labourer and moved about the Northern part of Leicestershire, working for several well-known land-owning families. He managed to save some money and eventually settled in the village of Ratby, six miles North West of Leicester, where he purchased a small property about 1741. He was deeply involved with the Established Church and was a bell ringer, but in the Summer of 1741 an outdoor preacher, David Taylor, visited Ratby, and his sermon made a deep and lasting impression on Samuel Deacon Snr. who later severed his connection with the Established Church, became a preacher himself, and eventually Baptist Minister at Ratby. He married in 1742, (there is no record of the name of his wife). There were three children, Elizabeth, Samuel and

William. The first and last of the children died in infancy. Samuel survived, eventually becoming the Clockmaker of Barton. In addition to his duties as Baptist Minister at Ratby, Samuel Deacon Snr. was given charge of the chapel at Barton-in-the-Beans, a small hamlet nine miles West of Ratby. He moved to Barton in 1782 and rented a house there from his son Samuel the Clockmaker, at £2 per year. In 1806, there is a record that he owned four cottages in Ratby, let to tenants, the rent income of the four was £8 per year.