

Milton's Quaker Clockmaker

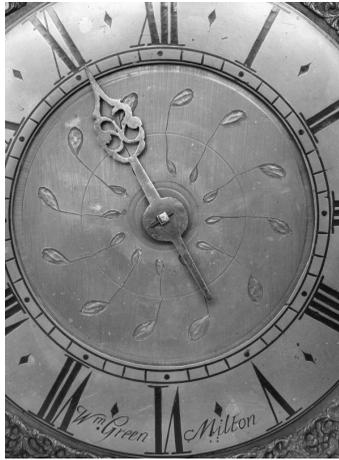
The history of Quakerism around Wychwood Forest is almost as long as Quakerism itself. The first Meeting House was built in 1681 in Milton-under-Wychwood. The same could almost be said about domestic clock-making which created a tradition that was to last throughout the eighteenth century.

William Green

William Green of Milton-under-Wychwood was born in 1722, the son of Isaac and Joan Green of Tadmarton. He was apprenticed at about the age of 14 to Thomas Gilkes of Sibford Gower. In 1752 he had moved to Milton and set up in business in his own right, marrying Mary White from the village in 1756. He combined a very successful clock-making business with a prominent role in the Milton Preparative and Witney Monthly Quaker Meetings.

William Green was one of the most prolific of all the North Oxfordshire Quaker Clockmakers, producing thirty hour iron posted hoop and spike clocks, one of the most iconic styles of English country clock-making, instantly recognisable to enthusiasts everywhere - the iron posted hoop and spike clock with the distinctive ring and zig zag engraved dials.

These clocks either hung from a hook in the backboard of a locally made longcase or hung directly on the wall. His iron-posted movements are usually larger than



Hoop and Spike clock dial with frond pattern engraving unique to William Green c1760s

those of his Quaker contemporaries, but share the same characteristics of heavily forged ironwork throughout. Typical points to look out for are the iron and brass winding pulley discs and integral iron spikes on the back posts.

Clock Club

The dials gradually changed throughout his working life, beginning with the ring and zig zag patterns of his earlier years, he then seemed to favour a frond pattern unique to himself, then

various designs composed of star bursts and geometrical segments - each type executed by the clockmaker himself (no doubt to save cost) using the most basic engraving tools; finishing up with painted dials bought from the Birmingham factory of James Wilson in the 1780s or 1790s.

John Kibble the Wychwood historian tells us that William Green had a clock club to help sell his work, presumably to maintain a steady flow of customers and income to match his output. The price of one of his brass face single handed wall hanging hoop and spike clocks would have been in the region of £2 5s. His name last appears in the Land Tax returns for Milton in 1802.

Tim Marshall

This extract is taken from Tim's book "The Quaker Clockmakers of North Oxfordshire", signed copies available from www.quakerclockmakers.co.uk