



J E Allnutt & Son Limited MBHI  
Sales & Restoration of Vintage Watches

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## Watch & Clock Making in Midhurst 1700 - Present



## Introduction

Watch and Clockmaking has a long history. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, English horologists were seen as the best in the world. Few people made a clock or a watch from start to finish, rather dividing the labour and skill set up. Many of the names we see on dials from the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries are the retailers names rather than those who made the movements.

However, those retailers were usually apprenticed and trained in the repair of watches and clocks, which could take up to 7 years to learn. Most towns and cities had more than one person skilled in the craft and Midhurst is no exception. We have been tracing the names of watch and clockmakers back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and this book tells stories of those who lived and worked here over the last 250 years.

### Clockmakers in Midhurst

Watch and clockmakers tended to congregate in certain areas of Midhurst. West Street and Rumbolds Hill were the most popular locations, additional areas included North Street and Station Road now Bepton Road.

Most of the watch and clockmakers were found in West Street and we know, or believe, they mainly worked from the premises known as St Johns which is now occupied by J E Allnutt and Son.

If anyone knows of further watch or clock makers, or can provide more detailed information about those on the list at the back of this booklet, we would be very grateful to hear from you.

Please contact Su Fullwood on 01730 812786 or Geoff Allnutt on 01730 813495 during shop hours. Alternatively come in and talk to us, either at Grange Road or West Street.

Sone Stedman and Son	Rumbolds Hill	1870s – 1918
Richard Streeton	Unknown Location	1743
W.P. Tyrell	Rumbolds Hill	ongoing
Charles Wrapson I	Red Lion St & West Street	c1800 - 1842
Mary Wrapson	West Street	1842 - 1867
Charles Wrapson II	West Street	c1850s - 1876
William Wrapson	Rumbolds Hill	1850s

## Acknowledgements

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Joe Smith

Smith of Derby

The Antiquarian Horological Society

The Midhurst Museum

The Midhurst Society

The West Sussex Record Office

## Watch & Clockmakers

John Allnutt	West Street	1981 – 2005
Geoff Allnutt	West Street & Grange Rd	1981 - ongoing
S. H. Adams	Rumbolds Hill	1911 - 1930s
James Alliston	Rumbolds Hill	1970—1980s
Ernest Charles Bannister	West Street	1917 – 1942
Jimmy and Doris Bannister	West Street	1942 - 1981
A. Braitch	Rumbolds Hill	1850s
A. Bridge	Rumbolds Hill	1850s
Aldred Bucknell	North Street	1870's
Henry Churchill		1911
Richard H Grant	West Street	1891
J. Hicks	Location unknown	pre 1821
Job Hurst	Bepton Road	1918 – 1930s
Samuel Jemmett (I)		1722-1769
Samuel Jemmett (II)		1769-1795
Samuel Jemmett (III)		1795-1900s
Joseph Charles Ketterer	West Street	c1894 – 1914
Edward Kilpin	Location unknown	1828
Mary Ann Lawrence	West Street	1876 – c1894
Brian Lloyd	Bepton Road	1960s
George London	Wool Lane	1901
William Manley	Market Place	1871
James Martin	North Street	1839 – 1845
Richard Roe	Rumbolds Hill	1750s
William Roe	Rumbolds Hill & West St	1792 – 1862
William Selby	West Street	1881
William Charles Shorto	Station Road	1871 – 1903

## The Jemmetts

So far the earliest reference we can find to a watch or clockmaker is Samuel Jemmett in West Street, who was born in Eastbourne in 1693. In 1712, when he was 19, he was apprenticed to Samuel Hammond of Battle, East Sussex.



Following this he moved to Catsfield (E. Sussex) and then came to Midhurst in 1722. He died in 1769, leaving his business in the hands of his son Samuel (II). In turn his son, also called Samuel (III), took over the business in around 1795, although it is likely he worked alongside his father before that.



## The Roes

At around the same time as Samuel II & III were working The Roe family also appear in the records. Unusually for our Midhurst clockmakers who tended to live above their shops, it seems that they lived in Rumbolds Hill but their workshop was in West Street. Richard was there in the late 1700s according to Brian Loomes in his book "Watchmakers and Clockmaker's of the World".



The local directories tell us that William Roe was working from at least 1839 if not earlier, until 1866. At 27 years this is the longest stint for a single clockmaker to have been continuously working in West Street, if it is indeed, the same man. We are constantly finding more evidence to add to our knowledge of names, dates and places.



## Patrick Woodward



Patrick approached Geoff in November 2017, after reading an article about Jacob's success in the local press, regarding the possibility of an apprenticeship with J E Allnutt & Son. He initially came in on a trial basis one day a week whilst also continuing for several months with his full time employment in micro electronics.

Geoff saw great potential in Patrick and offered him a full time apprenticeship in watchmaking in April 2018.

The process of training an apprentice is a long term commitment for any employer, in both time and expense, especially for a small business. Therefore Geoff approached several charities and educational trusts to secure the funding for full time training, watchmaking tools and the courses which Patrick would have to complete through the British Horological Institute.

Following intensive applications and interviews we are delighted to announce that Patrick has been accepted for sponsorship by the prestigious George Daniels Educational Trust, QEST (Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust) and has also received funding from a local charity, The Betty Martin Foundation in Midhurst.



### Martin Stapeley MBHI

Martin's horological experience started at the age of 14 years old, working from his bedroom mending alarm clocks. He then joined his father in the family business from the age of 16 in 1971 serving his apprenticeships and qualifying in 1976. He became a Craft Member of the BHI and continued to work alongside his father, taking over the

business in 1996 until the business was sold in 2006. In 2007 he joined Pressleys Jewellers in Worthing for 4 years before being accredited by Rolex in 2008. He became self employed and continued to specialise in the repair of vintage watches before joining J E Allnutt & Son in 2011.



### Jacob Russell FBHI

Jacob was apprenticed to Geoff for five years from the age of 16 and progressed to pass his British Horological Exams with merit together with the highest mark for his portfolio.

At this time he became the youngest ever fellow of the British Horological Society.

Now as a fully qualified watchmaker he specialises in the restoration of antique pocket watches, working to an extremely high standard of craftsmanship and care.

## The Wrapsons

The next clockmaking family in West Street, presumably in the same premises, was that of Charles Wrapson and his wife Mary. Directories place them first in Red Lion Street, Midhurst in 1839 but by 1851 they had moved to West Street. One of their sons William, set up as a watch and clockmaker at 28 Rumbolds Hill, very close to William Roe's house at number 31. One of their other sons Charles (II) stayed living and working with them in West Street. When Charles senior died it was his widow Mary who became the business head. We can see this in several directory entries until her death in 1866 where the business is under the name Mary Wrapson.

Although we know Charles was a skilled watch and clockmaker, and will have shared the workload, Mary is sited as the "Head" of the household in the 1861 census. Her profession is recorded as watchmaker - so it is likely she also undertook horological repairs and sales. A longcase clock signed Charles Wrapson can be seen on display in the gallery of Midhurst Museum too! Why not go and have a look.

Parish or Township of		Ecclesiastical District of		Civil Parish of		Town of		Village of	
Midhurst		Midhurst		Midhurst		Midhurst		Midhurst	
Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of such Person who sleeps in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1861	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of Male Person	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Married	Whether Single	Whether Widowed
41 West Street	William Mills	Head	M	57	Ex. Police	Sturton, Yorks			
	Mary Mills	Wife	F	56		" " " "			
	Mary Ann Mills	Daughter	U	22	Quadrant maker	" " " "			
	John Mills	Son	U	20	Miner	Cover, Cheshire			
	Frank Mills	Son	U	17	Butcher	" " " "			
	Edith Mills	Son	U	14	Quadrant maker	" " " "			
	Robt Mills	Son	U	12	Blacksmith	" " " "			
	Henry Mills	Son	U	9	"	" " " "			
42 West Street	Maria Glover	Head	U	70	Governess	Midhurst, Sussex			
	Ann Carter	Wife	F	68	Butcher's wife	Sturton, Yorks			
	Jacob Taylor	Wife	F	65	Annuitant	Midhurst, Sussex			
43 West Street	Mary Wrapson	Head	M	52	Watch maker	Sturton, Yorks			
	Edith Wrapson	Son	U	20	"	" " " "			
	Wm. Wrapson	Son	U	18	"	" " " "			
	Edith Wrapson	Wife	F	21	"	" " " "			

[SUSSEX.] MOUNTFIELD.

2094

[POST OFFICE]

Wilson Charles, shoe maker, Market place  
 Wilson William, baker, Rumbold's hill  
 Wolferstan & Son, chemists & druggists, North street  
 Woods Daniel, pork butcher  
 Wrapson Mary (Mrs.), watch maker, West street



## Mary Ann Lawrence

Charles (II) continued the business until his death in 1876. By this time he had a couple boarding with him called George and Mary Ann Lawrence. Our research suggests that Mary Ann was Charles's sister so she grew up in a watchmaking family. Her husband, George was a coach painter and while he was alive Mary Ann was only referred to as his wife. However he died in 1871 and following this, evidence emerges that suggest she was also trained in watchmaking. She inherited the business from Charles in 1876 and continued working in West Street until sometime after 1891, when she was 72. Throughout her time running the business Mary Ann seemed keen to emphasise her roles as head of the household, the mistress of the business and the watchmaker.

The census states that she employed other watchmakers over the decades but they were recorded as "assistant" or "jobbing", suggesting that she was the main watchmaker on the premises. Our research about Mary Ann is an on-going part of wider work about women in horology in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. If anyone has any information about Mary Ann Lawrence, watchmaker of West Street, we would be very pleased to speak to you.

Mary Ann died in Easebourne in 1900, but by this time a new proprietor in West Street, with another story, was emerging.

**Langridge Thomas Benjamin, chemist & druggist, Church street**  
**Lawrence Mary Ann (Mrs.), watch maker, West street**  
**Lewis Alfred, brewer & beer retailer, West street**

## Tim Hughes MBHI

An antique clock restorer who graduated from the distinguished West Dean College in West Sussex, attaining the West Dean Diploma, BADA and the West Dean Professional Development Diploma.



He is also a Craft Scholar from the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) which funds the education of talented craftspeople through traditional college courses, apprenticeships or one-on-one training with masters.

Tim is now a tutor at West Dean.



## Cameron McNaughton MBHI

A watch and clockmaker responsible for the restoration of antique, vintage and contemporary watches. Cameron graduated from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1993, following a five year apprenticeship at Canterbury Clocks in Melbourne under the tutelage of Ken Payne.

He went onto complete, and graduate as the top student, on the WOSTEP course in Neuchatel in 1993, again studying under the Master Watchmaker Antoine Simonin, before joining Asprey's in London and SWICO in Surrey. He is now an independent watchmaker.

## The Team

### Su Fullwood



Su Fullwood graduated in Classics and Archaeology first working for various Archaeology Units before going on to study for the Museum Diploma, while working in the Museum profession. In a career spanning 30 years she has since worked for The Roman Baths in Bath, Bath Industrial Heritage Centre, Fishbourne Roman Palace, West Sussex Museums Council, Chichester Museum (as Principal Curator and Director) and West Dean College. More recently, work has included projects with The Novium Museum, Arundel Castle, The Museum of Bath at Work, Antiquarian Horological Society in London and Goodwood House.

As well as these organisations and working with Geoff, she also works with a variety of other individuals including artists, curators, collectors and conservators, in community and related projects across the country. These projects are based around both contemporary and historic collections.

## J C Ketterer

Joseph Charles Ketterer is first recorded being in the premises at West Street in 1899. We don't know what brought him to Midhurst but he may have been an assistant, a business colleague or a long time family acquaintance of the Wrapsons or Mary Ann.

Whatever the relationship, Mary Ann dies in 1900 in Easeborne, leaving all her belongings to her niece, while Joseph acts as her executor. Joseph's father was from Germany, but his mother was English. They settled in Frome, Somerset together and this is where Joseph was born. At 15 in 1881 he was still living with them but by 1891 he had moved to Chichester (Caledonian Road) and had married Fanny Millyard in 1890.

He was practising as a watchmaker there at this time. It seemed they came to Midhurst in approximately 1894 and it is likely then that he took over the premises in West Street possibly, but not conclusively, from Mary Ann.

Joseph quickly became a stalwart of the town community. He held offices of responsibility as a member of the Parish Council and he was a director of the Midhurst Gas Company. He was a trustee of several local charities and a member of The Midhurst Town Trust. It seems he was also very well respected and well liked.

As well as a watchmaker he was also an optician and jeweller and his work was highly regarded. Sadly this was not to last. With the beginning of World War 1 in July 1914, Joseph felt there was a change in attitude towards him due to his German parentage.

At this time evidence suggests that Ketterer was under a lot of stress due to several problems both professional and personal. Tragically Joseph committed suicide in October 1914.

### Transcript of Article from West Sussex Gazette 5<sup>th</sup> November 1914 Midhurst War Worry And Tittle Tattle

Worry brought on by the war and tittle tattle in the town about his being German were reasons given at the inquest on Joseph Charles Ketterer (49) a well known jeweller of West Street, on Tuesday afternoon, for his committing suicide.

The wife Mrs Fanny Ketterer said that on Sunday evening her husband, who had come over all "shaky" while out for a walk, asked her on their return to take the dogs out. She did so, and on reaching home again found her husband hanging from a beam in the scullery. P.S. (?) Stenning, who was outside came to her assistance.

Deceased had been low spirited lately, owing to the war and to people saying he was a German. That had worried him very much indeed. He had also been worried owing to an alteration in the terms of the lease of his house. On

Sunday he threatened to throw himself under a train

P.S (?) Stenning spoke to finding deceased hanging by a clock line, and to his trying artificial respiration after cutting him down, without success. . Dr Chas B Field said deceased came to see him shortly after the outbreak of the war, and had been under his care since. He suffered from sleeplessness and had referred to "ending it all" by jumping into the river or throwing himself under a train, but latterly such ideas had left him, and he spoke of the wrong it would be to his wife to do such a thing. His greatest trouble recently arose from him thinking that people avoided him, and made remarks about him being a German. No one could convince him that people were not avoiding him . He was over – sensitive and in a condition of constant worry.

A brother of the deceased asked if it was a fact that his brother was continually being "chipped" in the town about his being a German. Witness: On several occasions. Latterly that was his principal trouble. The brother also denied that one or two of the "big houses" in the locality had countermanded their orders, and said it seemed that tittle tattle had been the cause of the tragedy.

Deceased was born at Frome, his mother being an Englishwoman. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane" and expressed sympathy with the relatives. Deceased had been in business in Midhurst for upwards of 20 years. He was highly esteemed and respected by all whom he came in contact. He had been a member of the Parish Council for several years, was a director of the Midhurst Gas Company, and was a trustee of several local charities and a member of The Midhurst Town Trust. The internment took place at the Midhurst Cemetery yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon.

As well as a long horological career, Geoff also has a large collection of horology related items. This ranges from historic tools to ephemera and promotional merchandise. The latter encompasses a wide variety of objects such as watch part packaging from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, enamel advertising signs and watch keys. In 2016 Su Fullwood joined the team to help organise, catalogue and interpret the collection, to make it more generally accessible. This is an on going job.



The collection also includes several pocket watches with women's names engraved on the movement. Interested by this, Geoff had begun listing the number of women working in horological related businesses from the 18<sup>th</sup> century through to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Su continued with this research and the next exhibitions and short booklet in this series will be about Women in Horology during those centuries. This is currently still a relatively under represented subject. The booklet covers all aspects of the work from watch and clockmakers to dial painters and women in the fusee chain industry. It also includes those women who took over businesses from their fathers and husbands and ran them successfully until their own retirement.



## Geoff Allnutt MBHI

Geoff Allnutt MBHI started his watchmaking career working alongside his father, John when he was 14. At 16 he left Midhurst and studied horology in London for three years at Hackney Technical College passing the final grade of the British Horological Institute exams with merit in 1985. He then embarked on the famous WOSTEP (Watchmakers of Switzerland Training and Education Program) course in Neuchatel, Switzerland studying under master watchmaker Antoine Simonin. Upon his return to the UK he re-joined the family business and for the past thirty years he has successfully developed the vintage watch restoration and sales side of the company, littlecogs.com. Geoff's sister, joined in 1992 and continues to manage the jewellery section, a mixture of contemporary, vintage and antique 18ct gold and silver pieces.



Following John's retirement, Geoff took over the running of the business and refurbished the shop. He is an advisor to tutors and students on the clocks programme at near by West Dean College, ([westdean.org.uk](http://westdean.org.uk)). Despite there still being a demand for skilled watch and clockmakers, this profession has been highlighted as one of our "endangered crafts" by the Heritage Crafts Association ([heritagecrafts.org.uk/the-radcliffe-red-list-of-endangered-crafts](http://heritagecrafts.org.uk/the-radcliffe-red-list-of-endangered-crafts)). Therefore Geoff is also working with others in the field to establish a formal Watchmaker's Apprenticeship Scheme to ensure the knowledge and technical skills are passed on.

In October 2017 he began a dedicated Clock and Scientific Instruments shop ([geoffallnuttclocks.com](http://geoffallnuttclocks.com)) He is now employing a team of 6.



## The Bannisters



Despite these exceptionally difficult circumstances Joseph's wife Fanny carried on looking after their daughter (who had an unspecified disability) and running the business. She managed to extend the lease on the premises for another 7 years until 1917 when Ernest Charles Bannister purchased the stock and lease for "St John's Court House Midhurst and the Goodwill of Watchmaker and Jeweller's Business".

Moving from London Road, Burgess Hill, East Sussex Ernest Charles Bannister held the qualification: 'Fellow of the British Horological Institute' (F.B.H.I.) His two sons Charles Joseph and Ernest James (known as Jimmy) both became qualified horologists both studying the B.H.I. syllabus under their father. By the 1930s the business was being run under the name E.C. Bannister and Son. Charles Joseph married in 1932 and moved to Petersfield where he ran a watchmaker jewellers with his wife. When Ernest Charles died in 1948 Jimmy took over the business in West Street working until his death in 1956.



His wife Doris continued to run the business until 1981. Although she concentrated on the retail side of the business, she did employ two watchmakers, Thomas Smith (Smithy or Ticker) from 1949 and James Alliston during the 1970s.

## The Allnutts

At the start of the 1980s, Doris sold the business to John Edward Allnutt from London. John had left school at 14 years old and briefly worked in a plastics factory. In the early 1950s, responding to an advert he became an apprentice to watchmaker Joe Murray at 20 London Road, Tooting Junction. Following his training both during the job and at night school he became manager of Joe's second shop in Addiscombe Road, Croydon for several years until moving on to work at J. W. Benson as a self-employed watchmaker. This was quite a tough environment earning money through piece work but taught John many new skills. Wanting a change and a different experience John once again responded to an advert to work with Kingsway Stores in Nigeria on a temporary contract. This was followed by a job in Ghana before he had saved up enough to buy his first timing machine and enough watchmaker's tools to set up his own workshop. This was situated over Lambert's Jewellers in Tooting (near The Castle Pub). In 1965 he became a Craft Member of the British Horological Institute CMBHI. Eventually in the late 1960s he opened up his own shop in 13A Upper Tooting Road, Tooting Beck. When the lease came to an end, a sales rep mentioned there was another leasehold available in the Sussex town of Midhurst. John arrived with his family in 1981 taking over from the long established Bannister and Son.



He worked here until his retirement in 2001 building on the work of his predecessors selling clocks and watches and doing the horological repairs whilst living above the premises.

