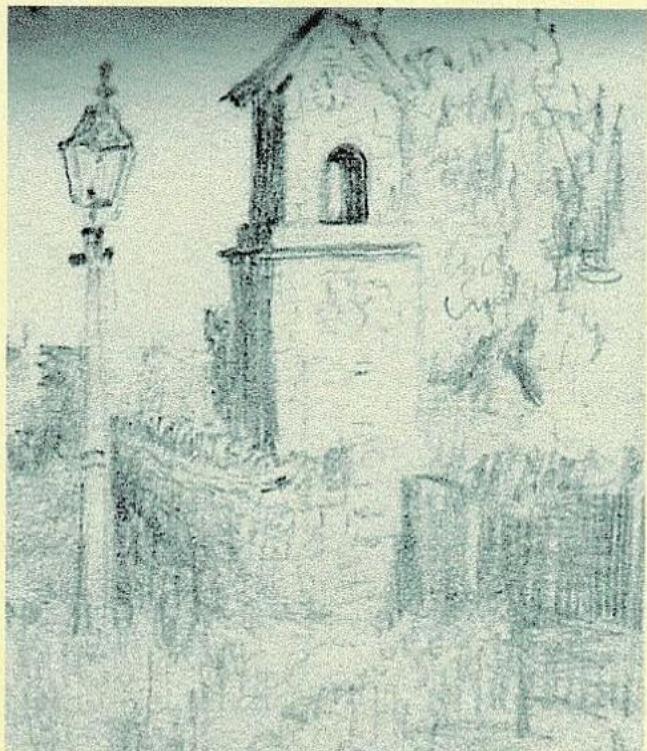


*Atworth*  
*A People's History*



The Jubilee Clock Tower

By Joan M. Cocozza



Sketch c. 1939 by  
Basil Watts 1893 – 1959



## *The Jubilee Clock Tower*

The Clock Tower was erected in 1897 to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reign of Queen Victoria. Built by a local builder/mason James Brown and mason Frederick Hayward.



We see from the sketch that the estimated cost for building the tower was £80 - £100. However, recorded in Kelly's Street Directory - "A clock tower was erected in 1897 in commemoration of Her late Majesty's Jubilee at a cost of £120, defrayed by public subscription." As the Parish has no record it may never be known if the total amount included the cost of the clock.

Some years later the Clock Tower became the village War Memorial, when a granite tablet was affixed to the North Wall to honour those from the parish who served in the Great War.

In 1948 another tablet was unveiled listing the names of those men and women who served in World War Two.

Each Remembrance Sunday a service is held around the Clock Tower. This is followed by a church service when on alternate years it is held in St. Michael & All Angels and Atworth Independent Church locally known as 'The Chapel'.

It has been ascertained that the parish holds no record about this building. Therefore, the history of the Clock Tower has been gathered from those who live or once lived in the village.



*My sincere thanks to those who contributed information,  
sketches and photographs*



Roland Clark, Ann Durham, Rodney Price, Norman Williams,  
David Webb, Richard Bill, Phyllis Hancock, Wynne Harris  
John Timbrell & Andrew Nicholls.

Photographs - the Wiltshire Times 1948  
courtesy of British Library Newspapers

Article Wiltshire Times  
Courtesy of Julie Davis  
Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre



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& Weather Vane.  
Courtesy of Richard Bill.



Neston Park  
Cotswold, Wilts  
14 June 1897

Ilmworth Jubilee Memorial.

Dear Sir,

It was decided at a Public Meeting held in the Ilmworth Elementary School that to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Her Most Gracious Majesty's prosperous and happy reign a Gurret Clock be erected in a central and suitable position in the village and that the names of the Subscribers be inscribed on parchment and kept amongst £80 to £100 the archives of the parish. As you are an owner of Property in the parish the Committee appointed to collect the necessary funds beg respectfully to solicit a subscription from you towards carrying out the above loyal object.

Yours faithfully

G. P. Fuller  
Chairman of Committee.

A copy of the original letter signed by George Pargiter Fuller from the papers of the late Wilfred Greenland kindly donated by his daughter Ann Durham.

*Neston Park*

*Corsham, Wilts*

*14 June 1897*

*Atworth Jubilee Memorial*

*Dear Sir,*

*It was decided at a Public meeting held in the Atworth Elementary School that to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Her Most Gracious Majesty's prosperous and Happy reign a Turret Clock be erected in a central and suitable position in the village and that the names of the Subscribers be engrossed in parchment and kept amongst the archives of the parish. As you are an Owner of Property in the parish the Committee appointed to collect the necessary funds beg respectfully to solicit a subscription from you towards carrying out the above loyal object.*

*Yours faithfully*

*G. P Fuller*

*Chairman of Committee.*

The signature of George Pargiter Fuller of Neston Park Estate.

## *The Builders*

It was early in 1850 when the Brown family, <sup>1</sup>*James*, Jane and their son Jesse, moved from Erlstoke to Atworth. The family occupied one of the two cottages at Waterloo Bottom.

A short distance away lived thirty-year-old Elizabeth Keen who worked as ‘House Servant’ for Stephen Barton of ‘Fair View House’, Leather Lane (later re-named Coronation Road). It was an earlier generation of the Barton family who sold a parcel of land on which the Meeting House -Atworth Congregational Church was built.

On July 26<sup>th</sup> 1858 Jesse, an agricultural labourer, married Elizabeth and in 1860 their only child <sup>2</sup>*James* was born in what was described as the “Cottage looking to Atworth”.



Cottages Waterloo Bottom

Photograph courtesy of David Webb

By the age of eleven, like his father, <sup>2</sup>*James* was working on the land. However, within the next decade he had changed his occupation and was employed as a ‘Mason’.

In the 1880’s <sup>2</sup>*James* married Louisa Freegard and the couple lived with *James*’s parents at Waterloo Bottom. Louisa gave birth to three daughters and five sons. Sadly, two sons born in 1886 and 1889, who

were both named Jesse, died before reaching their first birthday.

By the turn of the century the family had left Waterloo Bottom and moved across Bath Road to 'Cross Road Cottages' now known as 'The Barton'. The late Phyllis Hancock (née Brown), granddaughter of <sup>2</sup>James recalled - "My grandparent's window overlooked Greenland's Forge and when I used to visit I loved to watch the horses being shod."

It was during a conversation with Rodney Price that the name of <sup>2</sup>James Brown was mentioned and Rodney related that the builder of the Clock Tower was no other than his great grandfather <sup>2</sup>James Brown. Rodney and his brother Adrian are also descendants of Frederick Hayward who Rodney knew, according to family history, as the other mason who assisted <sup>2</sup>James with the building.

<sup>2</sup>James Brown died in Atworth in 1929 aged seventy. He was interred in the graveyard of The Chapel only yards from the Clock Tower.



'Atworth Chapel & Clock Tower'

Photograph courtesy of David Webb

*Frederick*, the son of Nehemiah and Mary Hayward, was christened on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1858. He began work as a 'Labourer' and by the age of twenty-three had become a skilled mason.

In the summer of 1878 *Frederick* married Leah May. The couple's first home was in Bath Road, then known as Main Street or Atworth Road. By the early 1890's the family were residing in one of four cottages known in those times as 'Cross Road Cottages' later known as 'The Barton'. Sometime during the following decade *Frederick* and family moved to a cottage in Bradford Road just two doors away from the Schoolhouse. It was about this time that the Brown family moved to Cross Road Cottages quite probably to the Hayward's former home.

Leah died in 1924 aged sixty-five. *Frederick* died January 18<sup>th</sup> 1938. He was ninety-years-old. They are buried in the churchyard of St. Michael & All Angels.

*Frederick*'s son, Hubert Frank, married <sup>2</sup>James Brown's daughter Edith. Frank and Edith were the grandparents of Rodney and Adrian Price.



•Victoria Regina 1837 – 1897•

Photograph courtesy of Richard Bill

## *Researching the History*

The reader will note that the letter of 14 June 1897 signed by George Pargiter Fuller states that – “... the names of the Subscribers be engrossed in parchment and kept amongst the archives of the parish. ...” However, there appears to be no such document or indeed any other information held by the Parish Council or the Wiltshire Record Office relating to Atworth’s landmark.

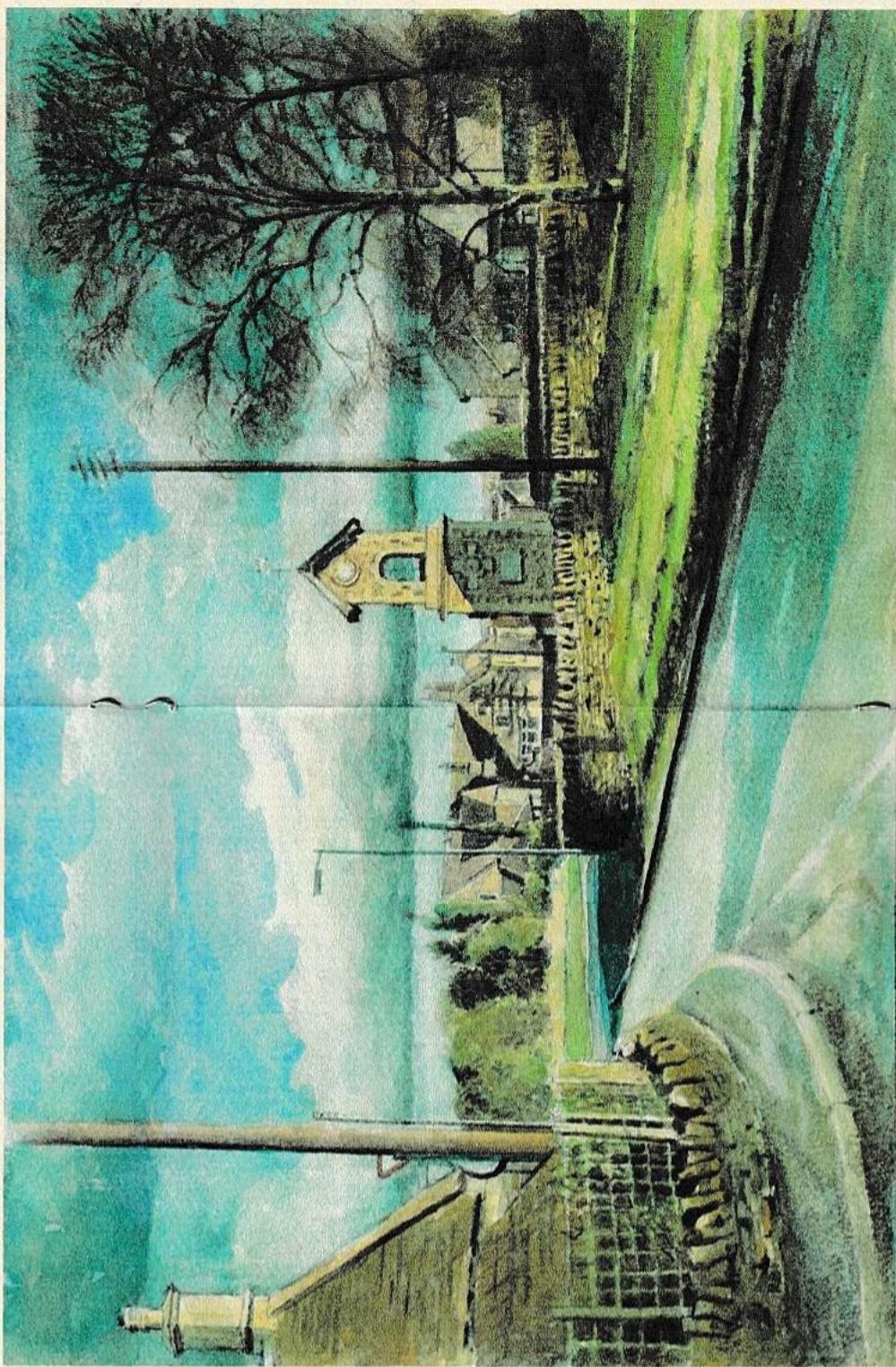
It has therefore only been possible to compile this history through contact with people who live or once lived in the village and who generously gave time in relating their memories.

What appears to be the only surviving document is that dated June 14<sup>th</sup> 1897 a copy of which Ann Durham kindly donated from the papers of her father the late Wilfred Greenland.

Norman Williams told that his father, *Sidney*, was the first to undertake the duty of winding the clock. *Sidney* lived at the Post Office, in Leather Lane, later re-named Coronation Road. He was able to obtain the correct time through the telegraph office. *Sidney* wound the clock for about seventeen years until enlisting in the army during the war of 1914 – 1918.

The next clock-winder was *Edward* Greenland. *Edward*, known as *Teddy*, came to the village about 1902 and worked as a blacksmith for Herbert Hampton of Hampton’s Forge in Bradford Road. About 1908 *Teddy* set up his own business - ‘Bath Road Forge’.

Following Edward his son *Wilfred* Greenland took on the role. Unfortunately the names of some have been lost through the passage of time. However, we know of Peter Chadwick and Nigel Smith but not the dates of their service. We now have added to our records the names of David Dack 1990 – 96. David now lives in Batheaston. And John Levden 1997 – 2001



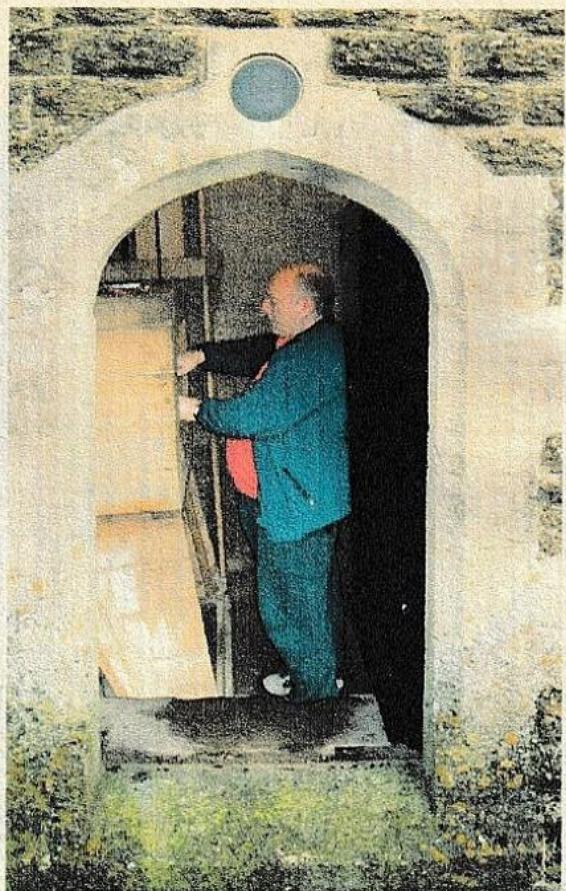
Watercolour by Richard Bill. Now in a private collection.

[www.richardbill.20m.com](http://www.richardbill.20m.com)

e:mail:- richardbill@hotmail.co.uk

In 2001 again the position became vacant and since that time the 'Keeper of the Clock' has been *Stephen* Clark. *Stephen*, the son of Walter and Iris Clark was born in the village at Denley Farm now Neston Farm Shop.

For a number of years a flag-pole was attached to the tower. It was the duty of the Clerk to the Parish Council, Mr. *George* Hillier, to raise the flag on important occasions. An ex-policeman *George* Hillier lived in Bradford Road and was correspondent for the Wiltshire Times



Photograph courtesy of Richard Bill

### *Roll of Honour*

Affixed to the tower are two plaques on which is inscribed the names of those who served in both World Wars.

In early summer of 2008 when *Roland* Clark was relating his childhood memories he recalled - "It was sometime between 1948 – 1950 when the World War 11 plaque was unveiled. All the people who marched in the parade formed up in Post Office Lane including the church choir in which I was a choirboy."

Throughout the years of research it was the first time this had been mentioned. More enquiries were made but neither the Parish Council nor the History Group had any record of the occasion.

Several weeks later during a meeting with Robert Wheller he produced a photograph of his grandmother laying a wreath on the plaque in memory of her son Charles. Charles Wheller was the only man from the village to have lost his life during that conflict.

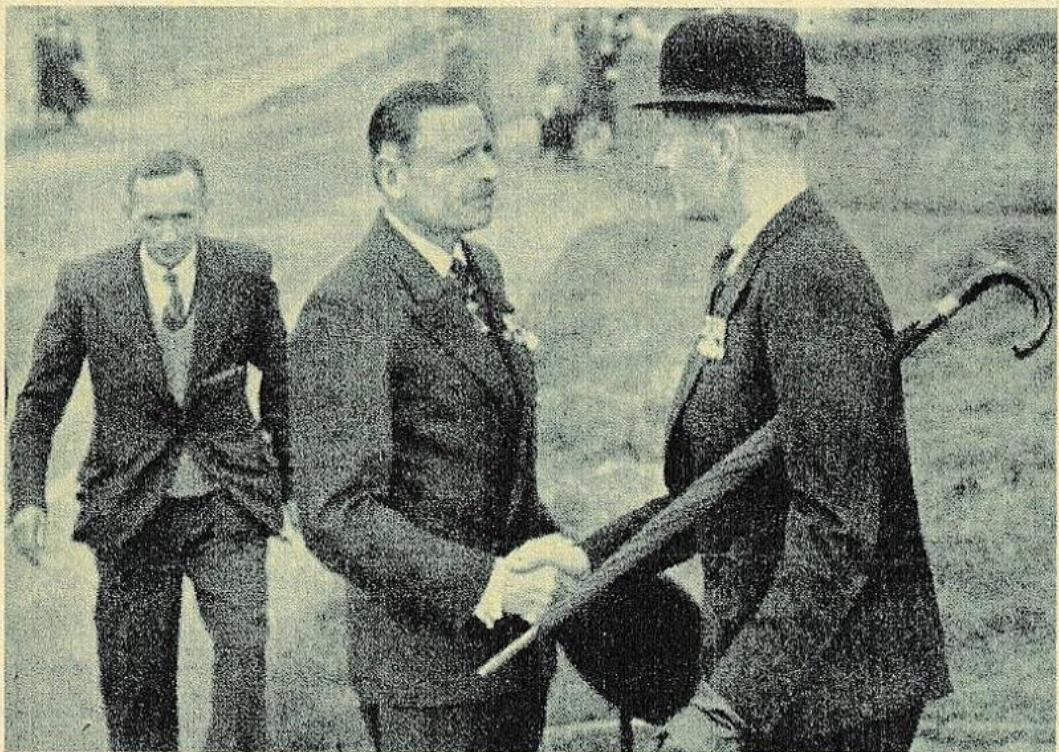
Further enquiries were made and the Wiltshire Record Office was able to provide an article published in the Wiltshire Times - 'Atworth War Memorial - Impressive Ceremony at Clock Tower'. Photographs of the event were obtained from the newspaper collection held by the British Library.

During this period of research Norman Williams then recalled the occasion - "As a member of the British Legion Atworth Branch I marched at the head of the parade between Frank Mitchell and Bernard Allen. The parade was assembled in Post Office Lane and marched to the band of Durham Light Infantry. Police closed the road and the entire village turned out. The choirmaster was Wilfred Greenland and the service took place around the clock tower. Lord Long accompanied by Sir Gerard Fuller inspected the parade and spoke to myself and several others."

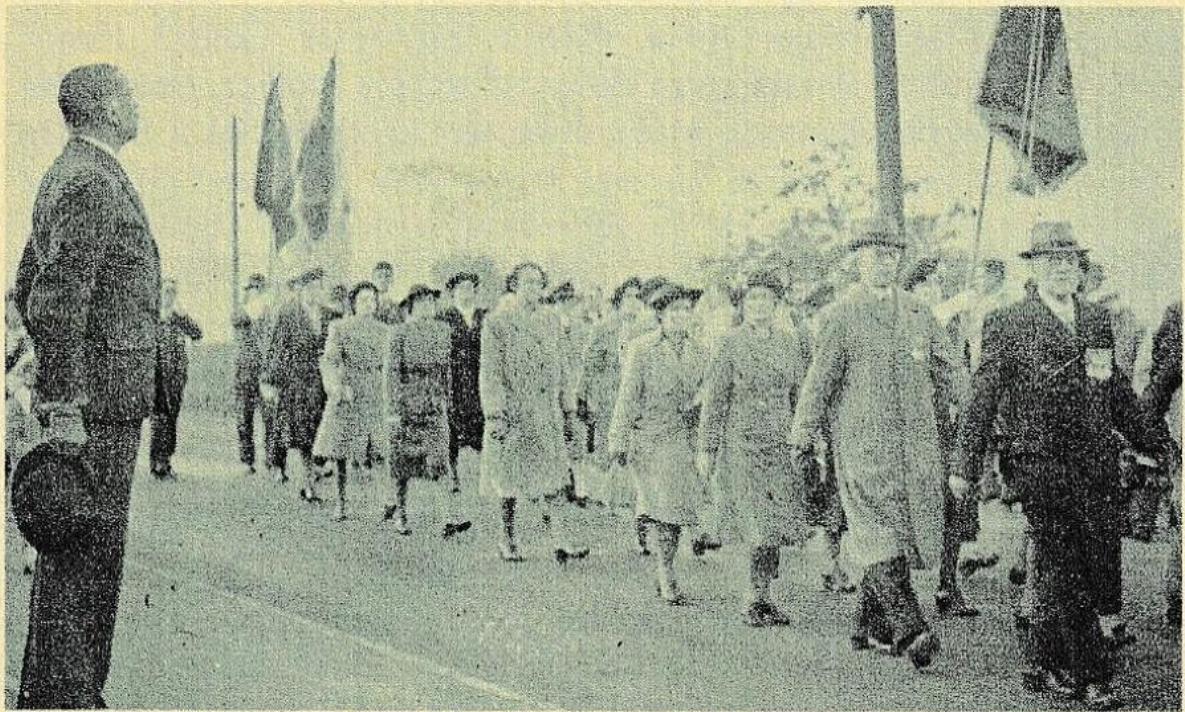
Another interesting snippet Norman related - "There were occasions when Major John (Major Sir John Gerard Henry Fleetwood Fuller) would come down to see my brother, Fred, who lived at Waterloo Bottom. Major John would call in on a friendly basis, sometimes bringing his son James with him, and talk over farming problems. Fred told my other brother, Ron, of Major John's concerns about the piece of land surrounding the Clock Tower. This had once been the Toll House garden but hadn't been sold along with the property in 1949. Therefore the land remained on the Neston Estate."

The final piece of the jig-saw fell into place when Rodney Price recollected - "I can confirm that it was Major John Fuller who dealt with selling the land through his agents, Cluttons. This was concluded in 1988. The cost of the land was a nominal amount but the Chapel had to pay both parties Surveyors and Solicitors fees."

## *Unveiling the Plaque*



Viscount Long of Wraxall being greeted by Major Sir Gerard Fuller  
and left of the photograph Mr. Frederick Ash.



Lord Long taking the salute.



Unveiling the plaque with the Reverend W. Brown.



Mrs. Lilian Wheller laying a wreath in memory of her son Charles who was killed in action in France on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1940 aged twenty-eight. He was the only man from the village to lose his life. Charles was one of four brothers who served in the Second World War.



Saturday November 6<sup>th</sup> 1948.

## ATWORTH WAR MEMORIAL

### Impressive Ceremony at Clock Tower

Viscount Long of Wraxall on Sunday afternoon unveiled a plaque affixed to the Clock Tower to commemorate the names of those who served in the 1939-45 War. The ceremony, simple and impressive, was preceded by a parade through the village by the British Legion branches of Atworth, Steeple Ashton, Neston, Melksham and Melksham Women, who were inspected by Lord Long in company with Major Sir Gerard Fuller (President of the Atworth branch), who was in charge of the parade, and Mr. F. E. Ash (Chairman of Atworth branch).

The parade was headed by the band of the Durham Light Infantry, under Bandmaster Mr. George F. Crowhurst, who also accompanied the singing of the hymns "O God, our help in ages past" and "Praise, my soul," during the ceremony.

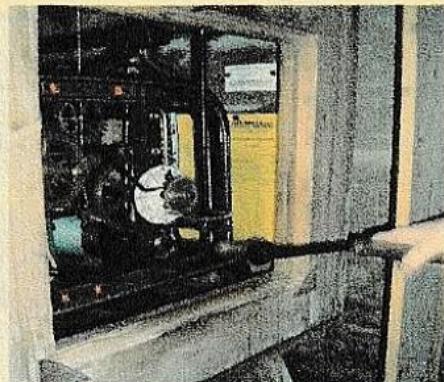
In his address Lord Long said "Do not let us look back upon the past ; do not let us mourn nor be sorrowful ; but let us look upon those who gave their lives for us with thanksgiving to Almighty God. To those who have lost their dear ones I would only say this : My wife and I share with you to the full the sorrow ; the handshake and the voice we hear no longer. But they knew what they were doing. They had a faith. They gave their all for us to win the victory. The torch that they have handed on to us must be carried higher and higher and after all, as they gave their lives to win the victory, surely it is up to us to carry on and win the peace, and with God's mercy keep it for our time, our children's time and our grandchildren's time. Let us take upon ourselves that faith that they died for."

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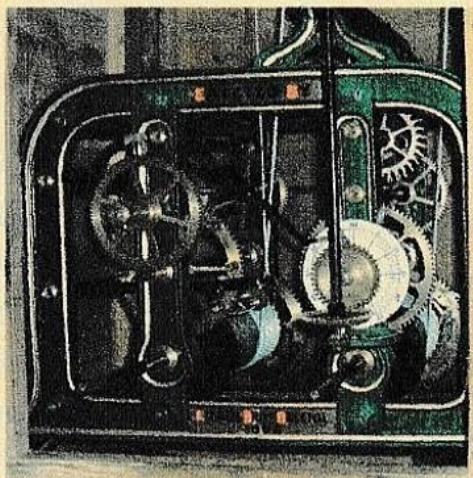
### *Atworth Clock Tower*

The Atworth clock tower is a free standing stone built structure with pitched roof. It was built to commemorate the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. The clock installed in the tower is a two-train plate & spacer type turret clock, designed to show the time on two exterior dials, and to strike the hours and half hours on a bell.

The clock movement is located in the base of the tower with easy access for winding. It is mounted on a cast iron frame, which is supported by wooden beams spanning the tower a few inches above the ground. The clock is enclosed in a wooden clock case with removable panels.



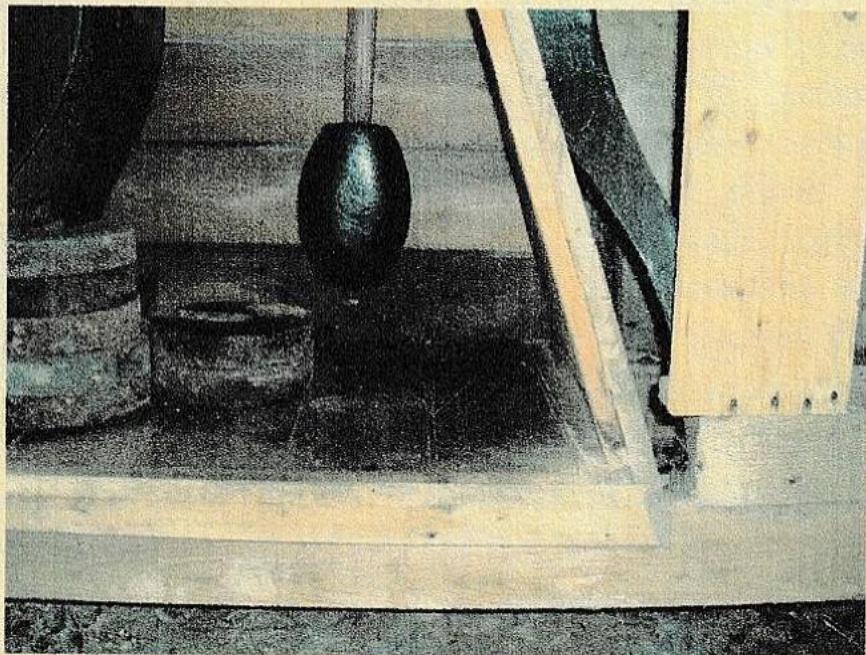
The clock has a cast iron plate & spacer frame of a type similar to clocks manufactured by Moore of Clerkenwell. Engraved brass plates on the frame denote that the clock was erected by Niehus Bros, Bristol 1897.



The wheels pivot in vertical train bars, which are secured to the main frame with threaded fasteners. The clock has four arbor trains with cast bronze wheels and lantern pinions throughout. It is driven by heavy weights, which descend on double pulley lines from the clock room ceiling into a pit below ground level.

The clock is manually wound once per week. A going ratchet maintainer is fitted to keep the clock running while being wound.

Timekeeping is controlled by a wood rod pendulum with cast iron lenticular bob beating seconds. The escapement is the Graham deadbeat type with solid, non-adjustable pallets. Beat adjustment is by moving the crutch on its arbor. A vertical leading off rod transmits the drive from the clock to the dials above. The time is shown on an enamelled setting dial at the front of the clock. The clock is set to time by means of a screw clutch. The striking control is cam and roller with countwheel, typical for clocks of this period. The countwheel is mounted on the front of the clock. It has a quick release mechanism for ease of setting the correct hour. The striking lever is operated by pins on the second wheel. The speed of striking is controlled by a rear mounted fly, or air brake.



The Pendulum

The dial motion works and bell hammer work are accessible from the third stage of the tower. There is no access from the clock room. Access to the second stage of the tower is via a ladder from outside, through the arch. Another ladder is needed to the third stage. The dials are cast iron skeleton type, glazed with opal glass. They are designed to be back illuminated. It was not possible to inspect the condition of the dial motion works. There is not thought to be any illumination equipment installed behind the dials.

The clock was going when inspected, but the striking was not working. The movement was found to be in generally good condition, albeit dirty with oxidised oil in the bushes and excess oil on the wheel teeth. This causes increased wear, and it is recommended that the clock be overhauled and cleaned to keep it in good condition. There are already grooves worn in the pallets. This is caused by abrasive dust sticking to the oil and wearing the surfaces.

The clock support frame was very rusty, and this contributes to abrasive dust around the movement. It is recommended that the rusty support be treated and repainted.

The striking was not working because the bell hammer had jammed. It will be necessary to gain access to the upper stages of the tower to correct this fault. It is recommended that the exposed hammerwork be overhauled and cleaned and the necessary repairs carried out.

The hour and minute hands on the dial were not synchronized, and it is likely that the motion works have not been correctly assembled following recent refurbishment of the dials. It may be possible to correct this from inside the tower and it is recommended that this be carried out.

To conclude, this is a well-built clock and worthy of proper conservation. It is recommended that it be overhauled and cleaned, and the necessary repairs carried out. Also, that access be gained to the upper part of the tower and the hammer work repaired and the hands correctly synchronized. It is also recommended that the clock subsequently be serviced on a regular basis. So treated, the clock can be expected to give many more years of useful service to the local community.



## *A Childhood Memory*

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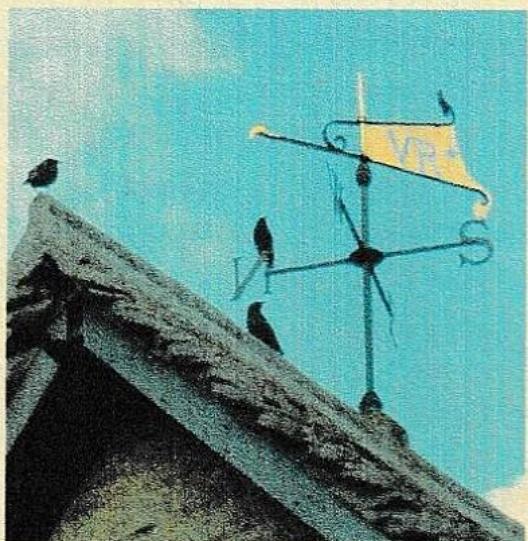
John, the son of Kennard and Louise Timbrell, was born in Atworth in 1936. For almost fifty years John has lived in Australia where he married Judith Helen Rablah and had four children.

When recalling his memories of Atworth John wrote – “As a child we used to ring the Clock Tower Bell with catapults then run like crazy. Once Teddy Greenland (the blacksmith who had his forge next door to us at Lion Place) who used to wind the clock caught us and threatened to tell our parents if he caught us again. There was a farm worker who used to work for Albert Clarke, who owned the dairy almost opposite the clock tower, who was another offender regularly ringing the bell.”

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*The Clock Tower was restored and a plaque commemorating the event was affixed to the tower*

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Photographs courtesy of Richard Bill

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