

St Nicholas' Church Clock

Ever wondered how the church clock works? No, me neither!!

However, according to Kellys Directory of Huntingdonshire (1928) "a clock striking the hour was placed in the tower in 1885 at a cost of £50, defrayed by subscriptions".

The clock is a "30 hour Two-Train Turret Clock Movement". These trains are called a "Going Train" which keeps time and drives the hands of the clock, and a "Striking Train" that synchronises the chime with the clock and powers the mechanism to the bell hammer one floor up in the belfry. The clock is thought to be at least 250 years old and when originally installed needed winding every 30 hours. There is a small plate on the clock that tells us that James Dann, clockmaker in Wisbech, reconstructed the clock from a 30 hour into an eight day. The clock at this time was manually wound every week and the effect of gravity on a complex set up of weights kept the clock going. Previous to this modification the clock would have needed winding every day. Sometime after the second world war, an automatic electrically powered winding mechanism was installed to wind the clock and the chime.

Last year Paul Winter took over from Ian Buckingham as Glatton "Keeper of the Clock" and Paul checks the clock about once every three weeks. Each visit he checks all is well, the chimes are correct and put the clock right. It tends to lose about 3 minutes between visits. Periodically Paul wipes and dusts some parts with an oily cloth, hoovering around the assembly and greasing the winding chains and fully inspect all moving parts.

The chimes are silenced by an electrical timer so they do not chime between 8 pm in the evening and 8 am in the morning. Traditionally, the clock keeper has signed/inscribed the wooden casing that protects the mechanism. One of the photos shows Ian Buckingham's signature.

So now you know!

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