

BIRMINGHAM DIALMAKERS — Part IV

Some Other 19th- Century Dialmakers

by John A. Robey

This article discusses the activities of some of the other Birmingham dialmakers operating in the nineteenth century. They were mainly smaller concerns than those discussed in Parts I -III, but some, particularly in the later period, were quite prolific. After about 1830 there was an increasing tendency to produce dials that have no means of identifying the maker. Some of these dials may have been made by the same manufacturers who earlier had used named falseplates, while others were produced by makers who are only known by their regular entries in trade directories.

John Wilkes and Wilkes & Baker

The Wilkes family were important Birmingham dialmakers, the earliest being John Wilkes, who was born in 1755 and died in 1835. He was working as a clock-dial manufacturer in Hospital Street in 1808-15, but so far no reliable records are known of any Wilkes dials made as early as this. It is not known what he was doing before his earliest directory entry in 1808, perhaps he was working for one of the long-established dialmakers. It may be significant that he is first recorded as a dialmaker just before the death of James Wilson in 1809, and if John Wilkes had been an employee of Wilson the latter's failing health may have prompted Wilkes to start his own business.

By 1815 John Wilkes was in partnership with Samuel Baker as clock-dial manufacturers in Whittall Street (opposite St Mary's Church in what became known as the Gun Quarter and close to where the Osborne Manufactory had been). Yet in the same directory¹ Wilkes is listed as still working independently as a clock-dial maker in Hospital Street. Trade directories are not noted for their accuracy, and it may be that his entry had not been updated.

Only a few dials are known with Wilkes & Baker cast-iron falseplates. The partnership was dissolved in March 1819, with John Wilkes continuing to make clock dials at the Whittall Street premises and Samuel Baker forming his own business in Slaney Street.

Wilkes & Son and Samuel Wilkes

John Wilkes had seven children, but the only son to

survive into adulthood was Samuel, born about 1799. They traded together as Wilkes & Son and in January 1820 issued a trade price list of 'Japanned Clock Dials'. The firm does not appear in Birmingham trade directories under this name, but is listed in the 1823 directory as S. & J. Wilkes, clock-dial makers at 13 Whittall Street.²

The partnership of John and Samuel Wilkes was dissolved by mutual consent in December 1828, no doubt due to John Wilkes's advancing years (he would have been 73 years old), and it was probably Samuel who had been actually running the business at 13 Whittall Street.³ All debts were to be paid by Samuel Wilkes, who was to continue the business.

In January 1836, six months after the death of his father, Samuel acquired the substantial clock-dial business of Walker & Hughes from the executors of the late Thomas Hughes, who had continued the business after the death of George Glover Walker.⁴ Samuel Wilkes acquired 'all the Stock, Patterns, Tools, &c.', but did not take over the former Walker & Hughes premises in Fisher Street, instead he retained 13 Whittall Street as his clock-dial manufactory. In December of that year he advertised: 'WANTED Men in every branch of the Clock Dial Business.... None but god workmen will be employed.'

As well as expanding his clock-dial business he also became involved in acquiring residential property in a fairly serious way. In May 1830 'about one and a half miles from the centre of Birmingham a genteel FAMILY RESIDENCE, containing seven sleeping-rooms and dressing room, dining, drawing, and sitting room, and kitchen, stabling, carriage house ... outbuildings, walled Gardens, with 2½ Acres of Grass Land' was advertised to let, with no vendor named, but enquires

² *Wrightsons' Triennial Directory of Birmingham*, 1823. This directory also lists a John Wilkes, japanner, in Bath Street, but this is probably a different man.

³ The address of 13 Weaman Street in the 1829-30 edition of *Wrightsons' Triennial Directory* is almost certainly a compiler's error, as is Samuel Walker of 13 Whittall Street in the classified section of the 1833 edition.

⁴ *Birmingham Gazette*, 18 Jan 1836.

¹ *Wrightsons' Triennial Directory of Birmingham*, 1815.

were to be directed to 13 Whittall Street.⁵ Five months later what is probably the same property, described as ‘a House suitable for a family of the first respectability’ at Lozells was to let, and this time enquiries were to be directed to Samuel Wilkes at 13 Whittall Street.⁶ Lozells was being built up about this period with good quality artisan housing and it is likely that he bought this property, and others later, with the intention of earning rental income, and only later living there himself. Certainly by the time of the 1841 Census he was living with his wife Maria and their seven children in Lozells Road, His occupation is given as clockmaker, but this is almost certainly an enumerator’s error for clock-dial maker.

In December 1840 he extended his upward social mobility by being elected as a bailiff of the Hemlingford Hundred Court.⁷ This was an ancient court that dealt with minor civil disputes in northern Warwickshire, including Birmingham, he being one of only three officers from the town. By this date its function was largely ceremonial and it was abolished in 1852.

By the end of 1841 Samuel Wilkes, clock-dial maker of Whittall Street owned ten brick and tile cottages, all adjacent, in Lozells Lane, Aston, called Bratts Buildings, in the tenure of Jackson and others, which he insured with the Sun Life insurance company for £10 each.⁸

About 1843 he bought Birchfield House in Handsworth, like Lozells a couple of miles north of the centre of Birmingham, but further to the east. At that time it was a respectable and desirable area for a businessman to live. When Birchfield House had earlier been for sale in 1833 it was described as comprising:

seven bed-rooms, library, dining-room 21 feet by feet 10 inches, drawing-room 24 feet by 16 feet, small parlour, best and cooking kitchens, laundry, &c. coach house, barn, four-stall stable, and other requisite outbuildings, walled-in garden, hot-house, shrubberies, pleasure grounds, and large lawn front, containing together nearly seven acres.⁹

In 1838, and probably for some while before this date, the house had been occupied by a George Joseph Green, but it was not advertised for sale after he died

5 *Birmingham Gazette*, 24 May 1830.

6 *Birmingham Gazette*, 8 November 1830.

7 *Birmingham Journal*, 12 December 1840.

8 From the transcription by R. F. Carrington of the London Metropolitan Archives Fire Insurance Records, indexed and copied by the Antiquarian Horological Society.

9 *Birmingham Gazette*, 11 March 1833.

in 1839. The most logical explanation is that Wilkes had bought Birchfield House in 1833 to obtain rental income from it, with Green as the tenant.

The earliest record of Samuel Wilkes’s involvement in this property is in July 1843 when he advertised for sale or let

BIRCHFIELD HOUSE ... contains dining and drawing-rooms, each 26 ft. square by 13 ft. high, spacious sitting-room and parlour, with large bulk windows, breakfast-room and spacious kitchen, china-closet 25 feet by 7, and eight bedrooms; entrance and servants-hall, large Coach-yard, Stables, Carriage-house, and all requisite Outbuildings, with large walled Garden, and Green-house and Vinery, with choice Vines in full bearing; Pleasure Garden, containing about five thousand square yards; circular Carriage-drive, enclosed with Forest Trees, Evergreens, &c. &c.¹⁰

The rooms are of a different size to those quoted ten years earlier, so it appears that the house had been remodelled to make it into a grander residence.

There were no buyers and five months later Samuel Wilkes again advertised both the Lozells and Birchfield properties.¹¹ While this was only a modest advertisement, with little of the previous gushing descriptions, and may have only been to test the market, its wording is quite revealing. It was headed ‘TO CAPITALISTS VALUABLE INVESTMENT’, implying that this had also been Samuel Wilkes’s main motive in acquiring the properties. The house at Lozells was currently being tenanted, while Birchfield House had been ‘lately occupied by G. J. Green, Esq.’, but any sale was to be by private treaty, confirming that Wilkes owned the properties and they were, or had been, let to tenants. Enquires were to be directed to his business address at 13 Whittall Street.

He was probably living in Birchfield House at this date, and he certainly was by 1849 when his directory entry lists him at Whittall Street but living at Birchfield.¹² In June of that year the Handsworth and Lozells Floral and Horticultural Society, ‘under patronage of the neighbouring nobility and gentry’ held its second exhibition in the grounds of Birchfield House, where ‘Samuel Wilkes, Esq., very kindly threw open his garden and private grounds for the gratification of

10 *Birmingham Gazette*, 10 July 1843.

11 *Birmingham Gazette*, 13 Nov 1843.

12 White, F., *History and General Directory of the Borough of Birmingham ...* (1849)

the visitors'. As well as numerous floral displays and competitions, visitors were entertained by a promenade band from Leamington.¹³

Samuel Wilkes was acting the part of a prosperous industrialist and moving up the social scale. He had acquired numerous other properties in the Lozells and Aston areas, as well as a collection of Old Master paintings (see later), but his his life of living like a lord was soon to come crashing down.

In January 1850 a notice appeared in the local newspaper that:

the FACTORING TRADE carried on by Mr. SAMUEL WILKES, in Whittall-street, in this town, is now relinquished in favour of Messrs. Alfred and Henry Wilkes, and no orders in future will be issued in his name, but that of the firm named.

Should there be any orders now in course of execution in his name, such orders are to be considered cancelled after this notice.

SAMUEL WILKES.

P.S. Messrs. Alfred and Henry Wilkes inform their Friends that they still continue the Business at No. 12, Whittall-street.¹⁴

Alfred and Henry Wilkes were sons of Samuel, Alfred being a clockmaker in the 1851 Census and Henry a watchmaker employing four men, even though he was only 19 years old. This arrangement may have only applied to the factoring side of Samuel's business and not the making of clock dials. There is no evidence that his sons continued the dialmaking business and their acceptance of all future orders may have been a legal ploy to avoid further debts being accrued by their father. Although 12 Whittall Street is given as their address (as well as that of Samuel Wilkes in the 1839 directory¹⁵), number 13 is always quoted in later advertisements. In the 1851 Census, when dialmaking had ceased and number 13 was occupied by a wire worker, there was no number 12. It is likely that numbers 12 and 13 had been combined as one property, possibly after the acquisition of the Walker & Hughes business.

In April 1850 Samuel Wilkes made a deed of assignment in favour of his creditors,¹⁶ and the following month, described as a 'Clock-dial Maker and Factor', he was declared bankrupt. There followed numerous

advertisements over the next year in an attempt to sell his property.¹⁷ Not content with buying extensive properties, Samuel Wilkes had also built another house at Birchfields, possibly for himself and his family, but it was a luxury that they were never to enjoy. One of these advertisements included:

Also a large newly-built HOUSE (nearly finished), erected at one end of Birchfield House, containing a noble entrance-hall, splendid dining and drawing-rooms, breakfast-room, six bed-rooms, and two dressing-rooms, large kitchen, china and butler's pantries, and good cellarage.¹⁸

These property sales were all 'by order of the Mortgagee', which indicates that he had taken out substantial loans to finance his failed property investments.

In addition to his considerable property holdings, Samuel Wilkes had also amassed a collection of important Old Master paintings. These were described as 'comprising important Galley and Cabinet Works' by Bartolomé Murillo, Bartolomeo Schidone, Anthony van Dyck, Correggio (Antonio Allegri), Nicolas Poussin, Frans Floris, Jacob De Wit, Casper Netscher, Philip Wouvermans, Domenichino and Abraham Storck.¹⁹

The sale of his assets enabled a dividend of just 1s ³/₄d in the pound to be paid in 1852 and 1856, the latter for those creditors who had not made an earlier claim.

The bankruptcy of Samuel Wilkes, given that he must have taken out large mortgages to finance his property speculation, with income relying on rentals and the profits from his clock-dial manufactory, was inevitable. Unfortunately it is not known how many workers he employed in the dial manufactory, but if the meagre evidence of other dialmakers is a guide, then it was probably not very many. The profits can never have been very large, certainly not enough to support the lifestyle of a seemingly affluent businessman living in a large house with extensive grounds and gardens and with an expensive taste in Old Master paintings, not to mention the construction of a new house. The fashion for longcase clocks with painted dials was past its peak and his business would have been struggling. It was the plain white dials for fusee wall clocks that

13 *Birmingham Gazette*, 18 and 25 June 1849.

14 *Birmingham Gazette*, 28 Jan 1850.

15 *Wrightsons' Triennial Directory of Birmingham*, 1839.

16 *Birmingham Gazette*, 22 April 1850.

17 *Birmingham Gazette*, 17 June 1850, 1, 8, 22 July 1850, 21, 28 April 1851. A very detailed advertisement appeared in 26 Aug.-23 Sept 1850, listing extensive property and land in seven lots.

18 *Birmingham Gazette*, 22 July 1850.

19 *Birmingham Gazette*, 12 Aug 1850.

were now in demand, and there were plenty of others who were only too keen to supply the demand.

Samuel Wilkes has not been located in the 1851 Census,²⁰ but his wife and their unmarried children were living in Aston Road. Although he lived for another twenty years his career after his bankruptcy is rather vague. He was still listed in directories in 1852-3, now at Great Hampton Row, but he had effectively ceased making clock dials. When his son Henry married in 1862, both father and son gave their profession as metal dealers.²¹ Samuel Wilkes died in 1871 in the Birmingham Registration District, aged 72.

Samuel Wilkes was one of the most prolific of the nineteenth-century Birmingham dialmakers, probably second only to Walker & Hughes and William Finmore. Wilkes dials are commonly found, fitted with a variety of falseplates, both in cast iron and also many later ones made of sheet iron. Names on them include 'Wilkes & Son' and 'Wilkes & Co'. One unusual cast-iron falseplate is marked 'S. Wilkes, Whittall St'. The backs of some dials were stamped with their name, including 'W & S' for Wilkes & Son.²²

Samuel Baker and his Successors

Samuel Baker had been in partnership with John Wilkes from before 1815 to March 1820, and by 1823 he had started his own business at 76 Slaney Street. It is significant that only two price lists are known from any dialmaker: one by Wilkes & Son dated January 1820 and an undated one by Samuel Baker.²³ Apart from the different names and the lack of a printer's name on the Baker one, they are identical, offering exactly the same sizes and styles of dials at the same prices. Were they published to emphasize the independence of the two former partners, or do the identical specifications and prices indicate a cartel at work?

Samuel Baker was born about 1766 and so was about nine years younger than his former partner John Wilkes. His sons were Samuel junior born about 1807 and Richard born about 1816. In June 1845 Samuel junior's wife died 'at her residence, Hays-hill [an error for Keys Hill], Hockley, after a long and painful

illness, which she bore with christian fortitude, Sarah, the beloved wife of Mr. Samuel Baker, clock-dial manufacturer, of this town'.²⁴ Samuel senior died in December 1847:

at his residence, Key Hill, Hockley, after a short but painful illness, deeply lamented by his family and friends, and respected by all who knew him, in his 71st year, Mr. Samuel Baker, for more than forty years a clock-dial manufacturer in this town.

If the latter statement can be relied on it implies that he had been a dialmaker before his association with John Wilkes — perhaps he had started his career with one of the established firms before the end of the eighteenth century as an apprentice or employee.

After the death of Samuel senior it was announced in December 1849 that the business would be continued by the second son, also Samuel, who traded as Samuel Baker & Son. Samuel junior was still alive in the 1881 Census, aged 74 and a 'retired clock dial maker'.

Samuel junior's brother Richard worked independently in Suffolk Street in 1841-52, but in 1853 he was back at the Slaney Street address. There are no dials that can be attributed to him.

The Baker family continued to make dials until 1859 when the premises were taken over by Samuel Bagley & Son, who had previously been in Great Hampton Street. He is first recorded in the 1851 Census, aged 62, born at Bilston, with his son Samuel Dudley Bagley, aged 25,²⁵ both clock-dial makers and employing three men. Some time in the 1850s Samuel Bagley junior formed a partnership with a John Buckley as clock-dial makers, still at Slaney Street, which was dissolved in February 1862. Nothing further is known about John Buckley, and in 1881 Samuel Bagley junior was an artist engraver aged 54, living in Guest Street. No dials are known that can be positively attributed to either Samuel Bagley or Bagley & Buckley.

By 1867 the dial works at 76 Slaney Street was occupied by Prince & Forrest who advertised for a clock-dial writer and again in 1869.²⁶ In 1868 they advertised: 'WANTED, a good CLOCK DIAL POL-

20 There is no mention in the *London Gazette* of him having been committed to Warwick or Stafford Gaols for debt, and he was not in either of these prisons during the census.

21 Information from Charles Eldridge, a direct descendant.

22 Not Whitaker & Shreeve, dialmakers of Halifax, as sometimes stated.

23 *Antiquarian Horology*, Winter 1978, p200; Watson, H. F., 2008, *Keeping Time ... in Grantham*, p26.

24 *Birmingham Gazette*, 23 June 1845.

25 The 1851 Census records the son as Samuel H. Bagley born in Wolverhampton, but he was actually Samuel Dudley Bagley, christened on 17 April 1826 at Bilson, about 3 miles southeast of Wolverhampton.

26 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 12 Nov 1867, and 1 Feb 1869.

ISHER; also a Lad to learn the Trade.²⁷ After the ground coats had been applied and dried in a stove, the surface was polished, this being particularly important with white fusee dials where there was no decoration apart from the clockmaker's name. They were at this address until 1870.

In 1871 Henry Prince was working at 216 Moseley Street and in 1873 he advertised for a clock-dial writer.²⁸

check Henry Prince

Hipkiss & Harold

Hipkiss & Harold (or Harrold) of Suffolk Street, Birmingham, are listed in directories from 1797 to 1807 as japanners and papier mâché makers. They also made clock dials with named falseplates. As usual the directories were a little out of date as the partnership between Richard Hipkiss, William Harrold and William Francis was dissolved in April 1806, with the trade to be continued by Richard Hipkiss. This is the earliest mention of William Francis, who would have been aged 30 and was to become a significant maker of clock dials in his own right (see later). William Harrold was a merchant whose next venture was even shorter lived than his attempts at selling clock dials. He teamed up with Thomas Prosser a merchant in Philadelphia and traded as Harrold & Prosser in Britain and Prosser & Harrold in America, but the partnership was dissolved in April 1809. Although Thomas Prosser is listed in Philadelphia directories in 1807-10,²⁹ neither partnership is recorded in either Birmingham or Philadelphia. It may have been the firm's intention to sell Birmingham clock dials in America, but there is no evidence that this ever occurred. In 1819 Belles & Harrold bought clock pinions and tools from Peter Stubs, who had sold pinions to James Belles in 1809-15. This partnership was dissolved in August 1824, and it is interesting to note that William Harrold still had his sights across the Atlantic as the firm was known as Harrold & Belles when trading in America.

It is significant that a John Hipkiss was listed in Birmingham trade directories as a painter in 1755-76, a japanner from 1777 until he died in 1797. He is likely to have been the father of Richard Hipkiss and he might also have made clock dials, although, like Richard, this is not specifically stated in his directory entries.³⁰

27 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 13 Aug 1868.

28 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 25 Mar 1873. The proprietor is not named, but it is the same address.

29 Information from P. Foley

30 John Hipkiss is first listed as a japanner in the 1777 directory, as is Thomas Ashwin, while two other clock-

An arched Hipkiss & Harold moon dial is known with the same hemisphere maps as those on a dial of about 1810 by Edward Owen, who may have acquired the printing plates after the firm closed.

Richard Hipkiss

Richard Hipkiss and William Francis continued to work in Suffolk Street, Birmingham, and again the latter's name was not included in the firm's trading name, presumably as he was a junior partner. The firm was not to last long as the partnership of Richard Hipkiss and William Francis, factors and japanners, was dissolved on 1 January 1809. Then, in less than two years, Richard Hipkiss, japanner, dealer and chapman, was declared bankrupt on 2 July 1811. Although Hipkiss & Harold, and later Richard Hipkiss, were in business for a relatively short period, quite a number of interesting dials were made. Many, though not all, have cryptic numbers in red on the back. Once the system is deciphered it could reveal much about working practices in the clock-dial trade. Richard Hipkiss was another of those considered here who joined the Loyal Birmingham Volunteer Infantry, becoming a lieutenant in 1803.

After leaving the clock-dial trade Richard Hipkiss has a very interesting career, which is worth recording here. What he was doing for the next dozen years is not recorded, but by 1823 he was in partnership with Thomas Small as 'japanners and platers in general' at 28 Paradise Street. Small had been a button maker in Suffolk Street in 1796-1801 and also at Bristol Street (which in 1829-30 was stated to be his residence). In 1818 Hipkiss was also in Paradise Street, but no trade is stated, until in 1823 he was working at 28 Paradise Street as Small & Hipkiss. This was a relatively short-lived venture, for in September 1826 the partnership between Thomas Small the elder, Thomas Small the younger and Richard Hipkiss, japanners was dissolved. Small & Son continued until 1839 as japanners, paper (papier mâché) tray and snuff box manufacturers.

Richard Hipkiss no longer appeared in the Birmingham trade directories as he became a farmer at near-by Yardley. As the japanning trade moved into recession in the 1820s he was drawn into the Birmingham Political Union until October 1831, but soon afterwards he emigrated to Australia, arriving at Sydney with his wife in May 1832. There he became a noted botanical painter, as well as a social reformer and was deeply

dial makers (who did not identify their dials) also first appear in the same year. It is an interesting speculation that they might have been former employees of Osborne & Wilson whose partnership was dissolved in that year.

involved in politics as well as lecturing and writing on agriculture. This versatile man died in April 1853 at the advanced age of 82.³¹

Thomas Keeling

In 1791 Thomas Keeling, japanner, provided a surety during the administration of the estate of the murdered Thomas Ashwin, and he may have been a former Ashwin employee. In 1791 he took as an apprentice for five years Samuel Lines, who became one of Birmingham's most noted artists, designers and art teachers.³² Lines founded the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists and the Birmingham School of Art. He was a significant figure in the development of art in Birmingham during its rapid growth in the early nineteenth century when the town was producing all manner of decorative items.

By 1797 Thomas Keeling was working in Great Hampton Street, and traded there as a japanner and clock-dial maker until 1825. Although he worked for quite a long time, very few dials that can be definitely attributed to him survive. He may have made many unidentified thirty-hour dials, or perhaps he also produced other types of lacquered ware. Like many others he began by following James Wilson's style of clock dial. He is likely to have been the man who was buried at Edgbaston in 1837, aged 72.

Figs ??-?? show a Keeling dial made for H. Baker of Appleby. This is Henry Baker of Appleby Magna in Leicestershire, not Appleby in Westmorland (now Cumbria), nor Appleby in north Lincolnshire. Interestingly the the ends of the calendar aperture are almost completely circular as found on some dials by Francis Byrne. Since Byrne continued the Ashwin business after Thomas Ashwin's murder, did Keeling retain a connection with the firm, or perhaps obtained some of his dial plates from Byrne.

Josiah Hayes

Another Birmingham dialmaker for whom even fewer dials are known is Josiah Hayes, japanner and clock-dial maker, listed in directories at 118 Snow Hill in 1800-30, and also at 78 Weaman Street in 1818 and Water Street in 1818-22, (some of these addresses probably being a residence separate from his place of work. He then traded as Josiah Hayes & Son in 1835-7 in Weaman Street and Stacy Street. He was baptised in

31 McEvoy, R., *Antiquarian Horology*, March 2011, p674, footnote 35. Further details of his life in Australia may be found in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1966, pp541-2, available at www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010499b.htm; also www.daa0.org.au/bio/richard-hipkiss/#artist_biography.

32 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 23 Nov 1863, obituary of Samuel Lines.

January 1766 and married in 1802 at Edgbaston and had several children between 1803-9. He was buried in August 1836, aged 70.³³ He used a marked cast-iron falseplate on his dials, but despite nearly forty years of trading only a few dials are known that can be attributed to him. He was probably primarily a japanner of tea trays and the like.

Dugmore & Foster

John Dugmore was a painter in Weaman Street in 1777-81, and a japanner on Constitutional Hill in 1800-1. His son Edward Wheeler Dugmore was christened in June 1769 and married in 1801. In 1815 Edward Dugmore was a japanner and victualler at the Nag's Head, Lichfield Street, and in 1818 just a japanner, still in Lichfield Street. In 1816 he was in partnership with Richard Foster in Weaman Street, but this was very short lived for in May 1818 Edward Wheeler Dugmore, 'Clock-Dial-Maker and Japanner' was an insolvent debtor in Warwick Goal. How long he remained in prison is not known, but he is included in the 1823 directory as a painter in Newton Street. A meeting of his creditors was arranged for 24 September 1828, when he was described as 'discharged from Warwick goal, insolvent debtor'. This probably refers to a much earlier release and he is unlikely to have been imprisoned for the previous ten years. Meetings of his creditors were still being held in 1830 and he died in August 1832, aged 61.

Very little is known about Richard Foster who was in Suffolk Street in 1810-20 and died in 1831, aged 67. Although Edward Dugmore is listed as a clock-dial maker no examples are known that can be credited to either him, his father or Dugmore & Foster. However, Richard Foster did produce some clock dials as a very scarce falseplate is known marked 'Foster, Birmingham'.

Eli Felton and Kempson & Felton

In 1808 Eli Felton worked in Weaman Street as a 'clock dial and copper and brass button shank maker', which emphasises how specialized some of Birmingham's trades could be. In 1809-12 his directory entries had dropped the reference to clock dials, but sometime prior to December 1811 he had joined up with John Kempson, trading as Kempson & Felton, clock-dial makers. Their dials have marked cast-iron falseplates and their own unique hemisphere map transfers, which are not known on dials by any other Birmingham dialmaker. Their name is also stamped on rear of their

33 Brian Loomes, 'Puzzling Clock', *Clocks*, June 2020, pp9-14.

moon and calendar discs. As such stamped names are not known on dials sold by factors this confirms that they were actual manufacturers and not just middlemen. The firm only appears in directories in 1812 as 'clock dial manufacturers' in Weaman Street, but, as ever, events had overtaken them as the partnership had been dissolved in December 1811. Kempson & Felton dials are by no means common, although not as scarce as dials with falseplates by some of the other small manufacturers.

Intriguingly the hemisphere maps found on Kempson & Felton moon dials were also used on dial confidently attributed to William Jones working in Philadelphia, USA, from 1824 to his death in 1845.³⁴ Jones had almost certainly been trained by and worked for James Harden, who had come from Belfast in 1816. Harden had originated in Birmingham, but in 1806 traded as Harden & Ryding, clock-dial manufacturers in Belfast. (John Harden and John Riding, listed separately as dialmakers in Birmingham in 1816 are probably related or connected.) There is the possibility that Harden bought the printing plates from Kempson & Felton when they ceased trading in 1811, and took them with him to Philadelphia where they were subsequently inherited by William Jones. As Harden was working in Belfast at the appropriate period he must have maintained close links with Birmingham to have been able to acquire Kempson & Felton's printing plates.

Eli Felton was primarily a maker of metal parts for gilt buttons, and it is likely that he teamed up with John Kempson to exploit the growing demand for clock dials. There were eight button makers named Kempson at various addresses in Birmingham in 1767-1801, but the only John Kempson in the early nineteenth century was a surveyor.³⁵

By 1815 Eli Felton again appears in directories as a 'clock dial maker' in addition to what was probably his main occupation. By 1818 the reference to clock dials had disappeared and he was again a button shank manufacturer as well as a 'glass toy manufacturer'.³⁶ This side of his business gradually took over, probably due to changing fashions, and in 1829 he was a 'glass button, bead, toy, chandelier and lustre ornament

maker', and his last directory entry in 1839 lists him as a 'lustres and chandelier furniture maker'. On the evidence of known clock dials with Felton falseplates, he was making them up to about 1825 even though there is no mention of this in his directory entries, but it had probably become only a small part of his business. He died in 1845, aged 72.

W. H. Price

W. H. Price is listed as a watchmaker working in Great Charles Street, Birmingham, in 1790-1810, who also supplied clock dials with his own cast-iron falseplate and stamped date dial. Although these dials are rarely seen and were not made by Price, who only acted as a factor, he is included here rather than Part V dealing with dial factors due to his connections with dialmaker Edward Owen. As Price worked on the same street as the dialmaker James Wilson it would have been very convenient for Price to obtain his clock dials from Wilson before his partnership with Edward Owen, but further dials need to be discovered before this can be confirmed.

Owen & Price and Edward Owen

Edward Owen must have been making dials for several years before his earliest directory entry in 1800 (as Owen & Price), as a thirty-hour dial is known with a calendar disc stamped 'E. Owen Birm^m' made for a clockmaker who died in 1798 [Luckman, Bickenhill masonic 30-r]. Owen was then in partnership with William H. Price as 'Landscape Time-piece makers and Japanners' in Lower Priory, Birmingham. They were in business for only two years during 1800-2, producing clock dials with falseplates marked 'Owen & Price'.

Edward Owen apparently left the partnership with William H. Price to form his own very successful firm, and he is listed in 1803-20 as a 'clock dial, landscape timepiece maker and japanner'. This firm produced a lot of dials, some of which were very well painted.

Despite not being listed in trade directories, at some period Edward Owen formed a partnership with John Blissett as 'Japanners and Clock-Dial Manufacturers' which was dissolved in December 1814. No dials are known by this partnership. John Blissett then formed other short-lived partnerships as japanners with: Charles Docker (dissolved July 1808), Thomas Eglinton (formed 1815, dissolved August 1820) and Thomas Lander (dissolved February 1823). John Blissett is listed as a japanner and factor in 1815-29, but none of these partnerships are included in directories, nor is he known to have made any clock dials.

Some early Owen dials, presumably made soon after the start of the firm, are still in the Wilson style

34 Foley, P. J., *NAWCC Watch & Clock Bulletin*, Jan/ Feb 2014, pp3-11, 'James Harden & William Jones Philadelphia Painted Tall Case Dials: 1816-1845'.

35 The supposition in Tennant, M. F., 2009 *The Art of the Painted Clock Dial*, p267, that Eli Felton's partner was Peter Kempson, is now known to be incorrect.

36 Toys were small decorative metal items, not children's playthings.

and he may have been one of Wilson's artists, which might explain the style of some of the dials made or supplied by W. H. Price and Owen & Price. After the Wilson-like phase a great variety of dials were made by Owen in all different styles, and the quality of the fully painted dials is very noticeable. He used two styles of falseplate and also stamped his name on moon and calendar discs.

Baldwin & Munslow

A dial of about 1815-20 is known with the very scarce falseplate marked 'Baldwin & Munslow, Birmingham'.³⁷ In December 1803 a partnership between James Munslow, Edward Armfield, Anthony Baldwin and William Baldwin, trading as Baldwin & Munslow, japanners, was dissolved, the firm to be continued as Baldwins & Munslow. A decorative list of Birmingham japanners includes Armfield, Munslow & Edwards, a firm no doubt formed by some of these partners. This list is not dated, but as it includes James Wilson and Hipkiss & Harrold it must date from before April 1806, when the later partnership broke up. In the directories Baldwin & Co appear as japanners, Anthony and William Baldwin as button makers, Edward Armfield as a button maker and James Munslow as a japanner, from 1815 to the early 1830s.³⁸ It is difficult to follow the complexities of the various firms based on the sparse facts given by trade directories, but it is clear that some of these people, trading as Baldwin & Munslow, made clock dials for a short period before confining themselves to producing other forms of japanned ware. This must have occurred with a number of other firms of japanners, keen to exploit the growing market for painted clock dials, before finding out that it was a very competitive market where only the best could succeed.

William Francis

As discussed above, William Francis was a partner in the Hipkiss & Harrold firm from an unknown date until April 1806, then as a partner with Richard Hipkiss until January 1809. He was then in business on his own until he died in 1833, aged 57, after which his wife, Sarah, continued until 1843. He had three different addresses in Birmingham, but the last one was at 11 Smallbrook Street, near to William Nicholas who was

at number 6 then number 9 of the same street. William Francis supplied at least some of the dials marketed by the Nicholas family after the demise of Francis Byrne, and he may well have also supplied some of the other factors who sold clock dials. The quality of Francis dials varied. Samuel Deacon of Barton, in a letter of 1820 to D. Anderson, a Birmingham factor, wrote that because the dials were not Walker's (Walker & Hughes) and as they were by W. Francis, he would not pay as much. Usually the earlier dials, before 1820, tend to be better made and the painting is of a higher quality, but this is not always the case. Three styles of falseplate were used.

Christopher W. Wright

The earliest reference to Christopher Wright is on 2 November 1829 when the following notice appeared in the *Birmingham Gazette*:

TO MERCHANTS AND FACTORS

WRIGHT and BIRD most respectfully inform the Merchants and Factors, that they have opened a CLOCK DIAL MANUFACTORY, No. 130 Summer-lane, near the Hospital, Birmingham.

W. and B. earnestly solicit attention to their Dials, as a long experience and ample preparation give them the opportunity of offering an improved article, of first quality, at very low terms.

How long before this the firm had been operating is not known, but within three months the partnership between Christopher Wright and Joseph Bird was dissolved in January 1830. Nothing further is known about Joseph Bird, who does not appear in trade directories or the 1841 and 1851 Censuses in Birmingham. Given the very short life of this business it is not surprising that only one falseplate by 'Wright & Bird, 130 Summer Lane, Birmingham' has been reported.³⁹

Christopher W. Wright was a clock-dial maker at 386 Summer Lane in 1833-4 and 130 Summer Lane in 1835-45, but this was not a move to another building, rather the renting of additional premises, which are likely to have included a showroom to display his range of clock-dial designs. In November 1844 the ground rents for 'The substantial Double House, No 385 [sic] Summer Lane, with private Yard, Offices, small Manufactory ... now in the occupation of Mr. Christopher Wright, Clock-dial Manufacturer, at 25/- per annum' were advertised for sale. The following year, on the death of the owner, the property itself was offered for sale.⁴⁰ Then in March 1846 a 'House and

37 Tennant, M. F., 1995 *Longcase Painted Dials*, p159

38 To add to the complexity yet another firm, Tomlinson, Bickley & Baldwin (earlier Tomlinson, Bickley & Co in 1809-15) bought clock pinions from Peter Stubs in 1815. The partnership of Sampson Tomlinson and George Baldwin was dissolved in 1824 on the death of Tomlinson.

39 Information from Brian Loomes.

40 *Birmingham Gazette*, 28 April & 12 May 1845.

'Shopping' were advertised 'to be Let In Summer Lane, close to Snow-hill, a respectable House with soft water and small Manufactory suitable for any light trade ... Apply to Mr. C. Wright, Clock-dial Manufactory, 386 Summer Lane'.⁴¹ The 'Shopping' was probably a showroom. Since no house number is stated it is not clear which building this referred to, but as number 386 was a substantial double house with a yard and offices, while the later advertisements refers to just a respectable house, it might have been number 130, rather than number 386.⁴² This advertisement shows that Christopher Wright was still at number 386 in March 1846, which was probably the main dial manufactory and warehouse. As no-one took on the property, a similar advertisement appeared 9 months later, with enquires to be made 'at the Clock-dial Warehouse, 386 Summer Lane, leading to the Hospital'.⁴³ This later advertisement does not give the name of the proprietor of the clock-dial warehouse, which by then may have been John Wright Fletcher, who was probably a relative, as sometime during that year the business was transferred to him.

Christopher Wright has proved particularly difficult to trace and details of his birth and death have not yet been found, nor his exact relationship with John Fletcher. In the 1841 Census he was a clock dial maker, aged 35, unmarried and living with his widowed mother in Great Charles Street. After relinquishing the clock-dial business he may have been the man who was aged 49, unmarried, 'Proprietor of Houses' in 1851.

Sheet-iron falseplates were used, stamped 'Wright Birm^m', as well as many unmarked ones. An unusual one is known stamped 'C. W. Wright, 130 Summer Lane, Birmingham'. Some dials were stamped 'Wright, Birm' on the back. He should not be confused with a much earlier factor who sold dials in 1803-18 with cast-iron falseplates marked 'B. Wright & Co, Birmingham' (see Part V). While it could be said that Christopher Wright's dials are indistinguishable from many others made at this period, some are just a little different.

John Wright Fletcher

John Wright Fletcher was born in 1812 in Walsall and by 1841 he was making clock dials in Hampton Street, Birmingham. In the 1841 Census he was aged 25, a 'Clerk of Works', implying that he was in charge of a manufactory that was not his own (probably Christopher Wright's). In 1846 he took over the clock-dial

business at 386 Summer Lane from Wright, who was almost certainly a relative, and was there until 1851. He then moved to 25 Barr Street, Hockley, and in 1854-5 is listed at 173 Hockley Hill.

Not much else is known about this firm except that Fletcher had a couple of other addresses in Birmingham until his final directory entry in 1855. He appears to be the last dialmaker to mark his wares, although many of his dials were probably never marked.

In February 1862 a small advertisement appeared:

A CLOCK DIAL BUSINESS to be DISPOSED OF. To anyone with a small capital, this would be a good opportunity. For every information apply at 32, Hockley Hill.⁴⁴

No proprietor is given and no other clock-dial maker is known on Hockley Hill apart from John Fletcher, but at present it is not confirmed that it was Fletcher's business for sale.

One of Christopher Wright and John Fletcher's apprentices is of interest as he later achieved fame as America's premier coach painter. John Burgum was born in Birmingham in 1826 and when aged 14 in about 1840 he was apprenticed to Christopher Wright. When he still had about a year to go before the completion of his apprenticeship the firm was taken over by John Fletcher. Burgum's training continued under the new ownership and on its completion Fletcher wrote that he was a steady, honest and respectable young man.

After a further three years working as a dial painter, presumably for Fletcher, he emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts. Here he was employed ornamenting wagons and carriages. Within a year he had moved to Concord, New Hampshire, to join America's premier coach manufacturer. His talent was such that he quickly became their leading decorator of stage coaches, including the famous Deadwood Stage. These coaches were painted with landscape scenes, for which Burgum's training as a clock-dial painter was invaluable.

Burgum was also an artist, painting landscapes, coaching scenes and portraits, including one of a leading politician, which was hung in the State House in Concord. Later he devised a wide variety of domestic inventions. He died in 1907, aged 81.⁴⁵

A later apprentice of John Fletcher's did not have such an exemplary character.

AN INCORRIGIBLE APPRENTICE

41 *Birmingham Gazette*, 2 March 1846.

42 130 Summer Lane, being a lower number, would have been at the town end and hence fit the description of being close to Snow Hill.

43 *Birmingham Gazette*, 7 Dec 1846.

44 *Birmingham Daily Post*, 17 Feb 1862.

45 T. Spittler, 'The Deadwood Stage', *Clocks*, May 2004, pp25, 39.

A youth named James Hands was brought up. on the charge of neglecting his work, he being an apprentice of Mr. Fletcher. clock-dial maker, of Summer Lane. ... The Prisoner had left the services of his master in September last, however, he was brought up at the Public Office, on a charge of felony, and Mr. Fletcher having made enquiries regarding him at the Police Station, was astonished to find that he was well known there, and had been on several occasions charged with felony, although he generally escaped committal by some means or another, as he had in the present instance. The father of the prisoner wished him to be committed to Warwick Goal, and while there to receive a flogging; but Mr. Fletcher expressed a wish rather to have the indentures cancelled and have nothing more to do with him, the Bench thought this course of action the best, and accordingly carried into effect. After an admonition as to his future conduct, the prisoner was discharged.⁴⁶

But within three weeks

Thomas & Edwin Hitchens

When the 25 Barr Street premises occupied by John W. Fletcher in 1852 were advertised to let in 1856, they were described as 'now occupied by the Proprietor as a Clock Dial Manufactory', but unfortunately he is not named.⁴⁷ Making clock dials continued here, for in 1857-77 Thomas Hitchens worked at this address. In June 1847, when he would have been only 15 years of age he was a clock-dial painter of the Navigation Inn, Parade, and possibly working for Fletcher, along with two labourers, was charged with assaulting a policeman during a riot in Snow Hill when the windows of Mr Parker's flour mill were broken. However, since the policeman could not identify any of them and since 'They all received most excellent characters from respected persons' they were discharged with a warning. In the 1851 Census Thomas Hitchens was a 19-year-old apprentice painter, so he would have been only about 24 years old when he started up on his own. In 1871-4 he traded with his younger brother as Thomas & Edwin Hitchens. No painted dials are known by this firm and after this type of clock dial went out of fashion the brothers reverted back to making brass and silvered dials.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Birmingham Gazette*, 11 December 1847.

⁴⁷ *Birmingham Gazette*, 23 June-7 July 1856.

⁴⁸ McKenna, J., *2002 Clockmakers & Watchmakers of Central England*, p33

William Field

Although he is included in the 1854 directory as a clock-dial maker, he may have been an employee, but he is included here for completeness. In 1841 he was a printer aged 27 and in 1851 a clock-dial printer, aged 35. In June 1854 he was in Warwick Prison for debt. It was stated that for the previous three years he had been a news and general agent, for a year before a general dealer and clock-dial painter, and for a year before then he had been in Manchester as a clock-dial painter. He is probably typical of a dial painter trying to eke out a meagre living by also working outside the trade, just as George Finnemore had tried to do a couple of years earlier, and with as little success.

Howell & Cooke

This was a very late firm of dialmakers whose products have not been recognised as no marked falseplates or dials are known. They were working after the height of popularity of the longcase clock and probably concentrated on undecorated white dials for fusee wall clocks, which were produced in their thousands. In the 1841 Census Edwin Howell was a journeyman dial painter, aged 35, but who he worked for is not known. Ten years later he had become a clock and dial manufacturer, probably in partnership with James Cooke, as they are recorded in directories in 1845-61 in Smallbrook Street and in 1852-67 in Wrentham Street, which implies that they had two workshops. The partnership was dissolved in June 1867 with the business being continued by James Cooke alone. Despite being listed in directories as a partner in Howell & Cooke, James Cook also had his own separate entries as a dial maker and maker of steam gauges, telegraph and timepieces in George Street, Balsall Heath, in 1858-67. In 1867 he advertised for several good clock-dial writers,⁴⁹ which emphasises that he was making fusee dials with no decoration other than the clockmaker's or retailer's name. He was at 8 Wrentham Street in 1867-70, then at Pershore Street in 1871. He was still in business in 1873 when his name had been forged on a promissory note.⁵⁰ In the 1881 Census he was a clock-dial maker, aged sixty, born in Birmingham, and employing twenty people. While being one of the largest manufacturers of clock dials in Birmingham they would have been primarily for fusee clocks, steam gauges and the like. Consequently few are known that can be attributed to him.

See Oxford Clocks Figs 4.227-4.229 for H&C dial.

⁴⁹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 4-9 Nov 1867.

⁵⁰ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 1 Mar 1873 .

Robert Winn

Robert Winn advertised himself as a clock-dial manufacturer, and although no finished dials are known that can be identified as being made by him, he was an important part of the trade. Among Birmingham's many industries japanning played a significant role, with items such as trays, boxes, dumb waiters, as well as clock dials, being decorated in this manner. Waiters were portable serving stands or tables with movable or revolving shelves. They were usually made of sheet iron or papier mâché (often referred to as just 'paper') and the production of the blanks for decoration by the actual japanners was an important trade. Robert Winn is one of the few blank tray makers who specifically include clock dials in their directory entries, but others are also likely to have manufactured dial sheets ready for decorating. In an early advertisement he declares himself to be a 'Blank Tray, Waiter, and Clock Dial Manufacturer' (Fig ??). This is rather ambiguous and could be interpreted as either a maker of blank trays, blank waiters and blank clock dials, or a maker of blank trays and blank waiters, and also a maker of clock dials. He only included the term 'japanner' when he took over a papier mâché business, so his main business was stamping out dial blanks for the actual dialmakers to decorate and retail to clockmakers, wholesalers and factors.

Dialmakers and japanners would not normally have the facilities to make and fit the brass dial feet for attachment of the dial to either a falseplate or directly to the clock movement, and this was probably also done by Winn. He may have also had facilities to cut the teeth on calendar and moon discs, but it is more likely that this was sub-contracted to a specialist wheel cutter, but none have been identified.

Some dials are known stamped 'R·W' in a corner on the rear, and this presumably identifies them as being supplied by Robert Winn. One is known on a dial of about 1830 by the prolific dialmaker William Finnemore. As this dial, supplied to William Slater of Steyning, Sussex, has a rocking ship in the arch, a firm like Winn's would have been fully equipped to stamp out the complex shape to the aperture.

In 1812-14 a Mrs Winn appears in directories as a papier mâché tray maker in Thorp Street, with no mention of clock dials. She cannot have been the wife of the Robert Winn who made blank clock dials, who would have been only about 14 years old, but may have been his mother. In 1815 Robert Winn was a 'blank waiter, tray and clock dial manufacturer' in Thorpe Street. He married Mary Ann Adshead at Stafford in May 1817 and they were to have thirteen children, most of whom survived into adulthood. By the next year he had moved

to Lichfield Street and by 1823 he was at 76 Lichfield Street and West Parade, Bristol Road, Edgbaston, still including clock dials in the range of products that were manufactured.

The business was greatly expanded in 1832, as this typically effusive advertisement explains:⁵¹

*To Merchants, Factors, Japanners, Dealers,
and others.*

ROBERT WINN most respectfully informs his Friends and the Public, that he has purchased the Good-will, with all modern Patterns, of the Patent Papier Machee [*sic*] Tea Tray, Waiter, Inkstand, Cruet and Miniature Frame Trades, so long carried on by Messrs. CHOPPING & SONS, and more recently by Mr. Thomas Chopping, at 25, Henrietta-street, and that the said Trades in all their various branches will be continued on those premises, where R. W. respectfully solicits a continuance of the support and patronage which have so long been enjoyed by his predecessors. N. B. Every variety of Table-tops, Cabinets, Ladies' Dressing, Toilette, Work and Card Boxes, Pole and Hand Screens, Chimney Ornaments, Quadrille Pools, Tea Chests, Caddies, Snuff Boxes, &c. &c.

Henrietta-street, Oct. 5, 1832.

R. WINN takes this opportunity of returning his thanks to his numerous Friends in the Japan Trade, who have for a series of years honoured him with their support in the Blank Tray, Waiter and Clock Dial Trades, and informs them he still carries on the same as heretofore at his Manufactory, Singer's-hill, where he respectfully solicits their continued favours.

This advertisement emphasises the wide range of items that were made in papier mâché in the nineteenth century. Robert Winn was now making a very similar range of items to those that he had previously made of sheet iron, but now of papier mâché — except clock dials of course. The manufacture of iron blanks was now at Singer's Hill, Blucher Street, to the west of Suffolk Street. This expanded business is reflected in his next directory entry in 1833, which list a similar range of goods being made at Singer's Hill and Henrietta Street. Significantly there is no mention of blank clock dials, so this side of the business may not have been as important as earlier. At this period there was still a significant demand for painted clock dials, but increased competition resulted in a general decline in

⁵¹ *Birmingham Gazette*, 8 Oct 1832.

standards. Robert Winn may have decided that it was more profitable to concentrate on the papier mâché trade.

Within three years the owner of the Henrietta Street property put it up for sale in 1835. It was described as a 'well built House, Warehouse, and extensive Manufactory, with excellent Japanners' Stoves, &c. fronting Henrietta-street, Birmingham, in the occupation of Mr. Robert Winn, at the yearly rent of £50', along with an adjoining plot of land.⁵² It was advertised for almost six months and then again in 1838.⁵³ Eventually Robert Winn may have bought the property himself, for in 1844 the building plot was for sale by Robert Winn,⁵⁴ indicating a need to capitalize on some of his assets as his business was in financial trouble.

Robert Winn was not in Birmingham at the time of the 1841 Census, but his wife, Mary Ann Winn, aged about 40, blank tray maker, was still living in Blucher Street (ie Singer's Hill) with their ten surviving children, including a baby daughter only 10 months old, and a female servant. To add to Robert's business problems his wife died in December 1847, aged 49, and within six months the blank tray and clock dial business had to be put up for sale:

TO be DISPOSED OF by private contract a well established BLANK TRAY, WAITER AND CLOCK DIAL TRADES, consisting of large and powerful stamps, dies, presses, annealing ovens, hearths, setters, vices and every description of tools used in the said trades (and in general iron and tin-plate work), which have been successfully carried on by the present proprietor for more than forty years.

To treat for purchase apply to Mr. Robert Winn os Singer's Hill ...⁵⁵

This indicates the range of heavy fly presses that were essential to produce iron clock dials and other items of sheets metalware. Square dials would simply be cut out using large shears or a guillotine, but an arch would be cut out either with a die in a large fly press or 'nibbled' out with a smaller press. Apertures for hands, winding, calendars and moons would be stamped out with dies using a fly press. Most painted clock dials were flat, but from the 1820s costs were reduced when convex centres were used. This enabled thinner iron sheets to be used while the curvature maintained stiff-

ness. The dished centre would be pressed out with dies, a technique that had been a feature of tea trays since their inception, and Winn would have possessed the necessary equipment.

By October 1849 Robert Winn was in Warwick Goal and his family was forced to take lodgings in Francis Street, Edgbaston. When his case for bankruptcy was heard at the County Court in Warwick, he was described as:

Robert Winn, late lodging at Duddleston-lane, Aston, out of business, previously lodging in Francis-street, Edgbaston, and formerly of Singers-hill in the Borough of Birmingham, Blank Traymaker, also carrying on trade in Henrietta Street, as a Japanner, Papier Machie [*sic*] Manufacturer, and Brassfounder.

He was declared bankrupt in December 1849. In the 1851 Census he was still lodging in Aston, aged 55, annuitant, but the source of his income is not known. Six of his children, all unmarried, were still living in Francis Street, Edgbaston, with Robert junior, aged 26, clerk, head of the household. His elder sister was described as a 'Lady', but it is not clear why she should have been given this status. In January 1852 Robert Winn senior married again, but he died less than a couple of years later in November 1852, aged 60. He left a will and despite having been bankrupt only a few years earlier it mentions leasehold properties, although in general terms and none are specifically named so this might be just a legal catch-all to cover every eventuality, and he is described as 'gentleman'.⁵⁶

Charles Winn, younger brother of Robert, was also a blank tray maker, working at Colmore Row, as well as being a victualler at the Swan Inn, Snow Hill. He was bankrupt in 1834, although he appears in the 1839 directory and the 1841 Census as a blank-tray maker, aged 40. There is no indication that he made the iron blanks for clock dials.

William Higgins

There is only one other firm that are definitely known to have made iron clock-dial blanks, although there must have been many more who did so. In 1849 the executors of the late Mr William Higgins advertised the disposal of

the old established IRON BLANK TRAY and CLOCK DIAL BUSINESS, which has been successfully carried on by the family for the

52 *Birmingham Gazette*, 16 Feb-27 July 1835.

53 *Birmingham Gazette*, 28 May 1838.

54 *Birmingham Gazette*, 1-15 April 1844.

55 *Birmingham Gazette*, 15 May 1848.

56 National Archives, available online.

last seventy years, formerly in Park-street, now at the Dartmouth Works, in Dartmouth Street, Birmingham.

The Connections are numerous and respectable. Returns very considerable.

The Purchaser will be required to take to the Stamps, Presses, Tools, and Machinery, at a fair appraisement, which will not exceed £250.