

# Master Clock Maker

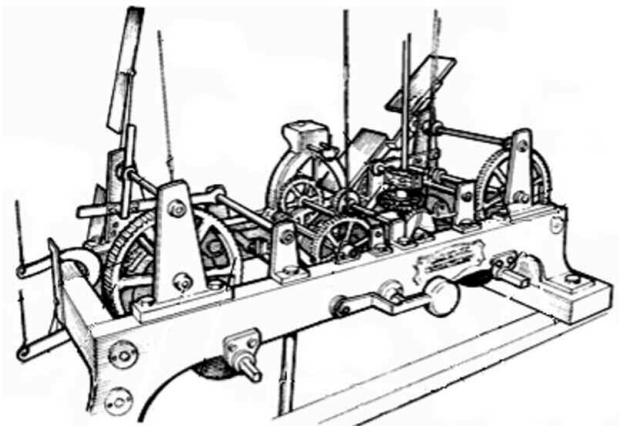
The St Mary's Church clock was built by E.J. Dent & Co of 61 The Strand, London, and installed in the tower in 1877.

Edward John Dent (1790-1853) was well known in his day as a clockmaker and watchmaker. He was particularly well known for the precision of his clocks and more specifically for the accuracy of his chronometers - highly precise timepieces used especially in navigation.

Dent learned his trade from Richard Rippon and the quality of his work between 1815-29 earned him prestigious commissions from both the Admiralty and the East India Company.

During 1826-1829 Dent took part in chronometer trials at the Royal Greenwich Observatory and in 1829 cemented his growing reputation with the creation of a chronometer action able to reduce timing errors caused by temperature fluctuation. For the next ten years he partnered John Roger Arnold making clocks and watches and in 1840 founded his own firm, E.J.Dent & Co.

Dent opened three clock shops in London and was soon chosen by the then Astronomer Royal, Sir George Airy, to build the clock for the tower of the new Royal Exchange. Dent worked on this timepiece in a new workshop established in the Savoy and the clock was installed in 1844.



In 1852 Dent began building the clock for the Houses of Parliament, 'Big Ben'. However, he died in 1853 and the firm continued under the proprietorship of Frederick and Richard Rippon Dent, the sons of Richard Rippon whose widow Dent had married on his death. The work on Big Ben was finished by Frederick Rippon Dent in 1854.

It is likely that our turret clock at St Mary's was made from one of E.J.Dent's own designs, even though it was completed (1877) after his death. Many of E.J. Dent's designs continued to be used throughout the 19th century by his company.