

# John Wyke

John Wyke was born in 1720 in Sutton, near Prescot. His father Nehemiah was a watch spring maker. John's father died in 1733 and it is likely that John was taken into the watch making trade the same year, becoming an apprentice at 13 years old.



Wyke watch movement

John Wyke's apprenticeship ended around 1740, and over the next few years he became well established in Prescot, building up his businesses, acquiring land and taking on four apprentices. In 1758 Wyke set up a business in Liverpool, moving there the following year after selling his shop in Market Place, described as 'a very commodious, pleasant and well situated Dwelling House and Shop.'

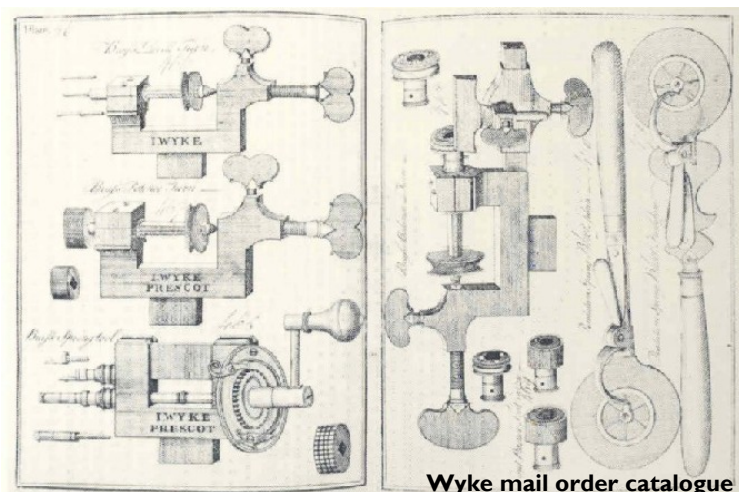
Sometime before he moved to Liverpool, the talented clock, watch and tool maker began to produce the first mail order catalogue with illustrations and descriptions of his stock. This was the time of the Industrial Revolution and Wyke's innovations were in keeping with the advances of the time. Wyke also had dealings with other major industrialists such as potter Josiah Wedgwood, and steam engine builder James Watt, designing and supplying them with the tools needed for their trades.



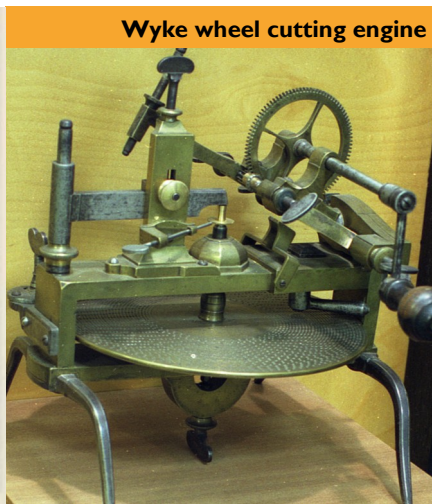
Wyke had a keen interest in local government and supported the reform of the Court Leet in Prescot. He took on the unpopular role of Constable, with its dangerous responsibilities such as arresting criminals and transporting them to court. He was appointed as a trustee of the Liverpool to Warrington turnpike road. Although Wyke had moved to Liverpool he continued his involvement in Prescot's administration, in 1767 he supported a court order concerning an area known as 'The Moss', and in 1769 he approved the new rules governing the Grammar School. He is remembered today for his great contributions to the clock and watch making trade, both locally and nationally.

<http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/things-to-see-and-do/galleries-and-museum.aspx>

John Wyke died in 1787. Although he married three times, he had no children and left much of his wealth to the poor of Prescot. He was buried in Prescot Parish Church yard. His friend, the famous Liverpool antiquarian William Roscoe, composed his epitaph which read: 'A Man of Great Abilities, Industry and a Patroniser of the Arts.'



Wyke mail order catalogue

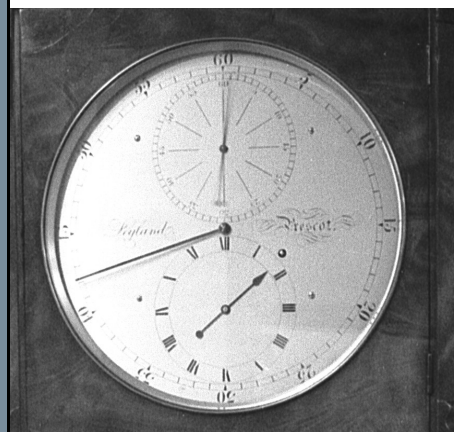


Wyke wheel cutting engine

# Thomas Leyland

Clock maker Thomas Leyland was born in about 1790, into the already well established tradition of clock and watch making in Prescot.

He is believed to have been apprenticed to a toolmaker called Jones.



Detail of a Leyland regulator

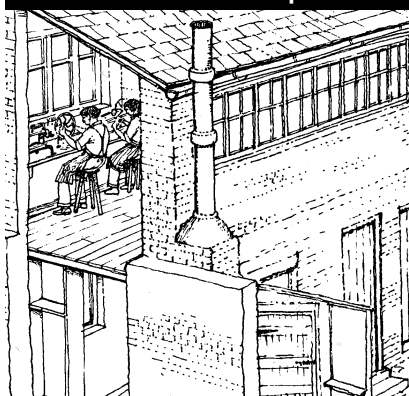
Thomas Leyland was known as the finest of the precision clock makers and came to public attention in 1820 when, aged 30, he was employed by chronometer maker William Hardy of London to make movements for some observatory clocks fitted with a special escapement. Hardy wrote about him in the 'Transactions for the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce' (now the Royal Society of Arts).

Leyland made many fine clocks that were sold with other people's names on them, but the style and quality of the work makes them easy to identify. He charged £50 for the movements, but the finished clock would cost over £100 when sold by the 'maker' who signed it. This was at a time when most people earned less than £1 per week.

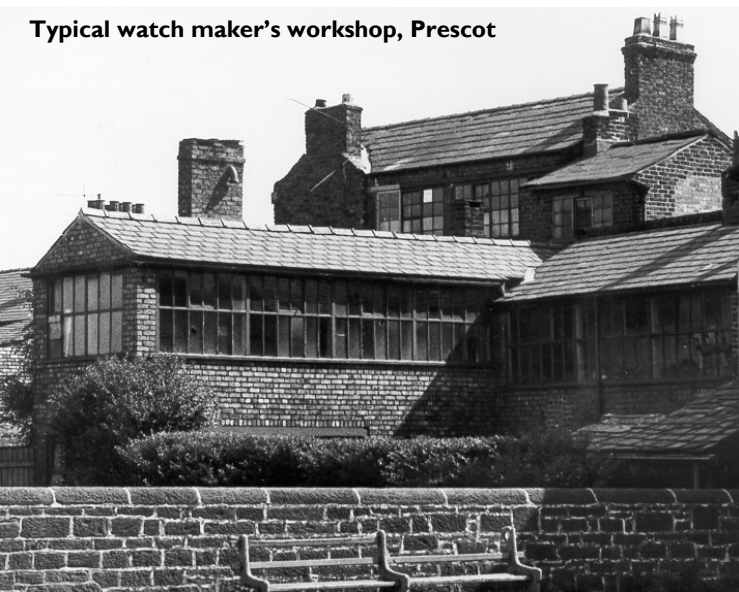
Leyland had his workshop behind Atherton Street in Prescot and on the 1869 map of Prescot it is clearly marked 'Clock and Tool Manufactory'. Leyland also made clock and watch making tools, but he always signed his tools 'Thos Leyland, Clockmaker'. A lathe made by Leyland is in Prescot Museum's collection and one of his regulators can be seen on display here.

Thomas Leyland died in 1861 and his business was continued by his three sons, William, John and Thomas. They sold the premises in 1870 to Robert Atherton who was a watch material dealer.

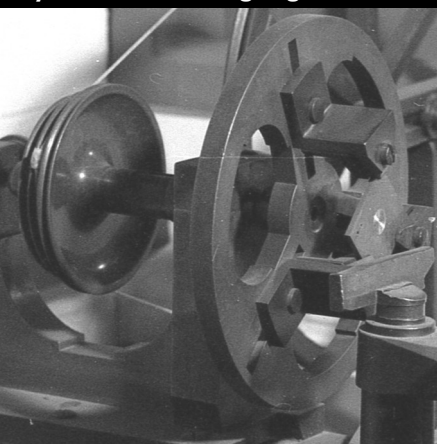
Illustration of a workshop



Typical watch maker's workshop, Prescot



Leyland wheel cutting engine



Thomas Leyland is known to have had six children; Thomas in 1808, William 1813, Mary 1814, John 1816, Elizabeth 1821, Ellen 1825 and Jane Alice 1823.

Elizabeth married James Case a watchmaker in 1844.