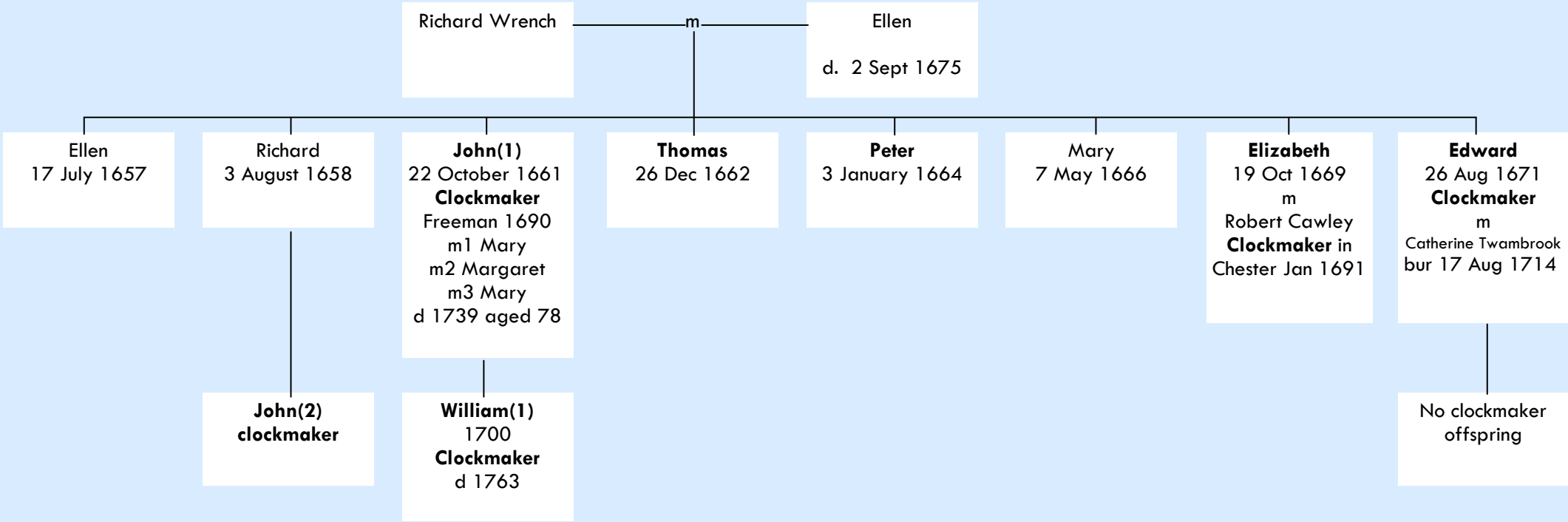


The Wrench Family of Clockmakers

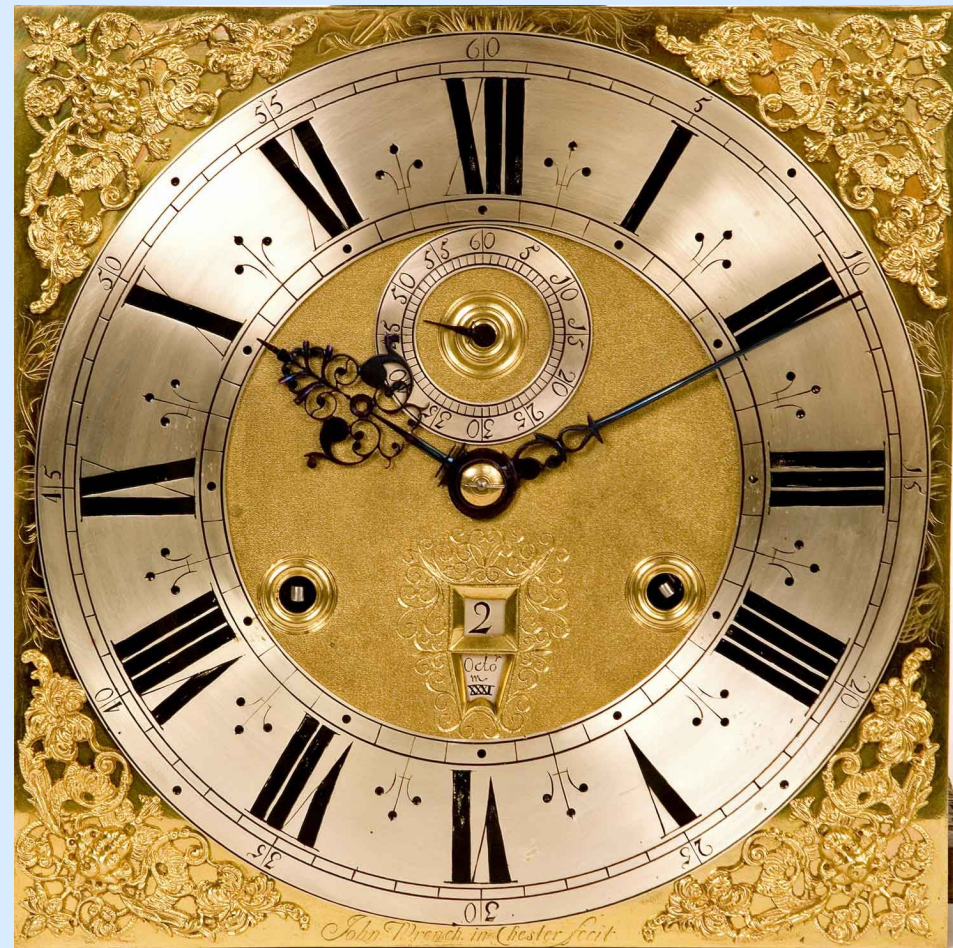
Parish of Davenham, Cheshire. Children of Richard and Ellen Wrench

Those known to have lived in Chester as adults are in **bold**.
Subsequent marriages, baptisms and burials of the clockmakers were in Chester

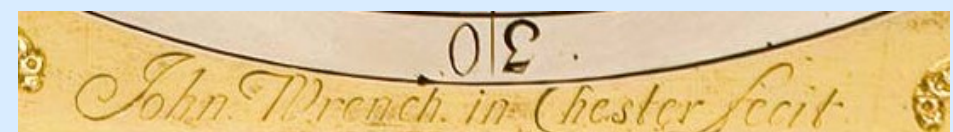


John Wrench(1) c. 1690

Very fine month going longcase with a walnut and marquetry case by John Wrench(1) made about 1690.



Month going longcase clock by John Wrench(1) G/S 01	
Approx. Date	1690
Movement	Month going. Six finned and latched pillars. Count wheel strike.
Dial	11 inch dial Matted centre Simple fleurs-de-lis, dots for half quarter marks, very narrow minute band Spandrels: fine, early design Hands: fine early style Engraved date and month apertures Signed below chapter ring 'John Wrench in Chester fecit'
Case	Walnut with floral marquetry, 203cm tall Rising hood Lenticle in long trunk door Barley twist columns



John Wrench(1) c. 1700



Mahogany cased longcase clock by John Wrench(1) made in about 1700.

Note the very narrow minute ring and the fine spandrels.

This clock was sold at auction in Denmark in 2012. Someone must have loved it to take it so far from Chester.

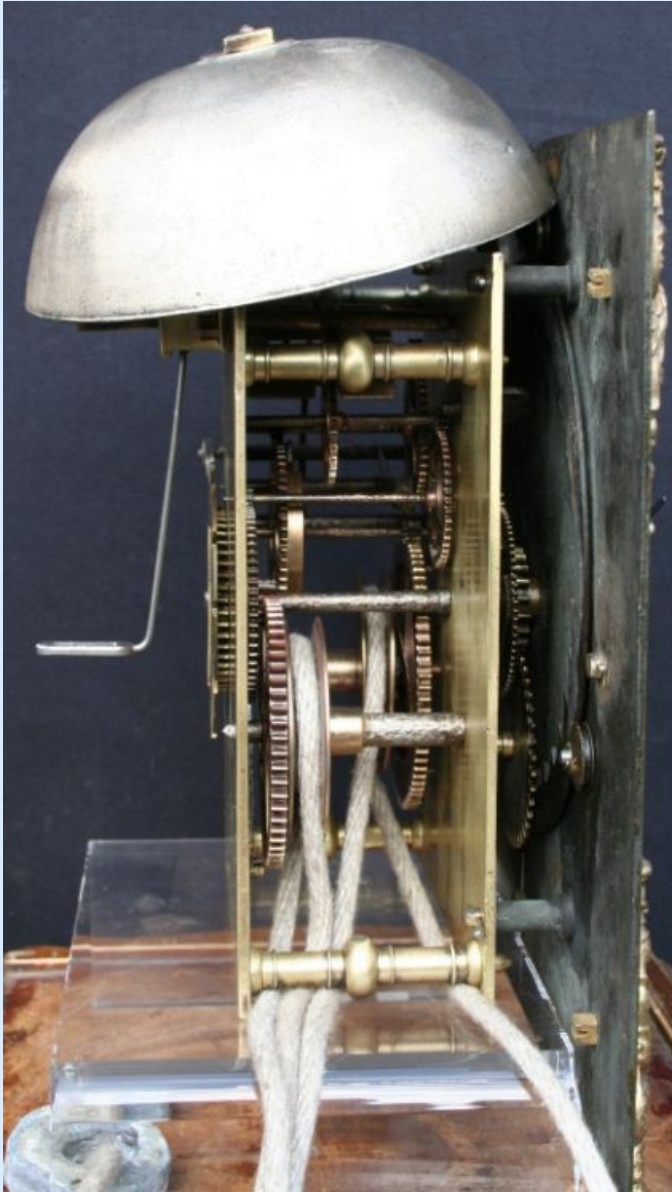


John Wrench(1) c. 1700 Thirty hour longcase clock

The fine quality John Wrench was famed for was not limited to his top of the range clocks.

This thirty hour example has the same fine spandrels as the last clock and the same style of engraving in the dial centre.

It is housed in a country oak case with barley twist pilasters which requires some restoration.



John Wrench(1) < 1720

This clock also appears on our Tidal clocks page.

It is a three train musical clock playing your choice of one of four tunes when chime is selected.

This clock gives lunar information—the face in the penny moon, left, is for full moon on day 15 of the moon's cycle. As the month progresses, one of the quarter moons and a new moon will appear.

The small opening below the ring, giving the moon's 'age', left, has an indicator pointing to just after XI—this means high water in Chester was just after 11 o'clock on a day when there was a full moon. The times would change as the month progressed until it was back to full moon again.

The images on the right show the moon at different times during its cycle and indicate different times for high water at Chester.

This clock was probably made between 1700 and 1720.



New moon



First quarter



Full moon



Second quarter



John Wrench(1)

In September 1690 John Wrench was made a freeman of the city on payment of £10 and during the same year he became a church warden of St Mary's; thereafter he was named as 'Mr John Wrench' in the church registers. His name first appeared in the records of the Company of Goldsmiths and Watchmakers in 1700.

Using the usual term for an apprenticeship of seven years, coupled with two years to build journeyman experience, John Wrench's arrival in Chester in 1684 at the age of 23 meant that he was fully trained to set up in business as a clockmaker.

The earliest clocks by John that are known were two lantern clocks. These were mentioned in a series of short articles published in the journal, 'Cheshire Sheaf'. The earlier clock, dated to the 1680s bears the inscription 'John Wrench in Chester', the second, just 'John Wranch' [*sic*]. We have not seen either clock and are not aware of their whereabouts.

John Wrench and his wife had four surviving children by the end of the century. In March 1700, his name appeared for the first time in the Guild of Goldsmiths and Watchmakers' minute book. He held the post of warden in the company in 1703, (and again in 1705, 1708, 1713-15 and 1720-23.)

Apprentices of John Wrench(1)		
Name	Date of apprenticeship	Date of freedom
Joshua Yoxon	2 May 1702	5 th October 1704 This was either a very short apprenticeship or the date quoted for his indenture is incorrect.
William Wrench (son)	c 1705/6	8 th April 1716
Robert Cawley (nephew)	19 Nov 1720 £20 for 7 years	1727-8 (no month given)
George Crookes	2 Jan 1726	9 th August 1732
John Wrench(2) (son of Richard Wrench, ie grandson of John Wrench(1))		14 th Sept 1732

Shortly after taking on his first apprentice, John was elected a councilman on the Assembly. He appears to have remained in this role until his death.

The city's new Exchange building was erected between 1695 and 1698 at the corporation's expense but with contributions from William III. The building was grand and highly decorated. What it needed was a clock and John Wrench was the man to provide it. History does not tell us the type of clock. It could have been a turret clock as there wasn't one in the immediate vicinity, but it is more likely that this was a clock for the decorative interior. There is a record quoted by Appleby that on 21st December 1705, Mr John Wrench was waiting to be paid £20 for the clock.

John Wrench's wife Mary died in 1707 and shortly afterwards a marriage licence was issued to John Wrench watchmaker and spinster Margaret Sheen of St Martin's Parish. Around this time Mr & Mrs Wrench left Gloverstone. However, John was soon widowed again., but was married for a third time in June 1712 to widow, Mary Brown [*or Bacon*] of the parish of St Peter.

In 1716-7, John's son William gained his freedom. He joined the guild on 1st April and their records state that he had served seven years apprenticeship under his father and had been in London for three years 'for his better improvement in workmanship in the said trade'. No records have yet been found which indicate the supplier of this 'improvement'. William was admitted to the guild on payment of £2 10s 0d in lieu of a feast.

In 1720, John made the first turret clock for the Bluecoat School. This had been built between 1714 and 1717 as a charity school for poor boys of the city.

John Wrench(1) died in 1739, aged 78 years; he had not been a wealthy man and apparently left no will. The Assembly records state that in August 1739, John Page, Stationer, was elected councilman 'instead of John Wrench deceased.