

History on Your Doorstep

Tameside Inventors & Inventions

Lawrence Earnshaw 1707 - 1767 'The Ingenious man of Mottram'

- Born 1707 in Wednescough in the Parish of Mottram.

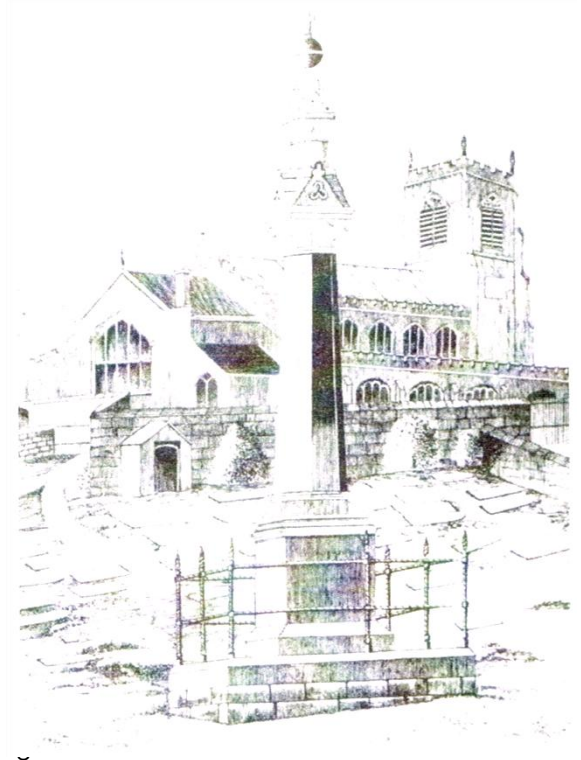


- Received a very poor education but was always interested in clocks
- Lawrence became an apprentice clothier and tailor but later reverted to his childhood interest in horology spending a month in employment of a Stockport clockmaker.
- Decided to become an inventor and set to work on the production of many varied and ingenious machines and clocks. Most of his work was executed in the attic of his home in Mottram.
- He was a master tradesman. A list of his talents include: engraver, painter, guild, stainglass and foil mirrors, blacksmith, coppersmith, gun-smith, bell founder and coffin maker.
- In 1753 he invented a remarkable machine which spun and reeled cotton in one operation, 14 years before a similar invention by Arkwright.
- Lawrence all the time continued to produce clocks but his most outstanding achievement was his astronomical clock.



The astronomical clock invented by Lawrence Earnshaw

- All the complicated astronomical and mechanical calculations were performed by Lawrence and also the complete execution of its manufacture including the production of all metal parts and adornments etc.
- This clock seems to have been Earnshaw's greatest project as seven years was spent on its manufacture but he was much delayed in his work by financial and family troubles.
- The clock was sold for the sum £150.00 to Earl of Bute.
- He died in 1767 in poverty and was buried at St Michael's Mottram in an unmarked grave
- However the monument below was erected to Lawrence Earnshaw on 10 March 1868 from the money raised by local subscription.



Sketch of the Lawrence Earnshaw Memorial St Michael's Mottram



'By his skill in Geometry and acquirements as a mechanician he designed and constructed an astronomical clock registering the revolutions of the heavenly bodies and flow of the tides.'