

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

This modest but elegant 30 hour longcase clock has the maker's name on the face "Tobias Clouting, THORNHAM".

Tobias was born in Eye in 1777 into an old East Suffolk family of free-thinking farmers and tradesmen. In 1797, after apprenticeship to a watchmaker in Saxmundham, he took over his uncle's shop in Eye as a watchmaker, ironmonger and agent for the *Bury & Norwich Post* newspaper.

From 1803 Tobias was a Common Councilman in Eye, taking the Reform side which put him in conflict with the Kerrisons, who ruled the very rotten borough of Eye with its two MPs and cowed electorate. Matters came to a head with the Reform Act of 1832 which expanded the electorate and removed one of the MPs, although the remaining MP was still Sir Edward Kerrison.

In 1818 Tobias gave up his business in order to become a farmer, signing a 14 year lease with the Rt Hon John Lord Henniker for Street Farm, Thornham Magna.

By 1835 he was back in Eye and was Postmaster for six years before retiring to Shipdham in Norfolk, where his son was Surgeon and Registrar. He died in 1850. *The Gentleman's Magazine* reported: "Jan 7 at Shipdham aged 72, greatly respected, Tobias Clouting, gent, late of Eye, Suffolk".

His clock is still in Thornham and was likely made during Tobias's years farming here. Back in his apprentice days clockmakers made their clocks from scratch, but the world had changed by the 1820s and the components would have been factory-made. The delicate painted face probably came from Birmingham as perhaps did the mechanism. The oak case would have been made by a local cabinet maker.

I would love to hear if you know of any other Clouting clocks.

✳ All Notes from Thornham are now on www.thornhams.org

OCTOBER EVENTS IN THE THORNHAMS

● **Sunday 6th:** Walled Garden, Apple Day, 11-3, free ● **Friday 25th:** Parish Hall film, Sandy Johnson will introduce his *Defrosting the fridge* (1989), £5, booking essential 07858 934440



Tobias Clouting,
THORNHAM