

BANK HALL

BRETHERTON

*

THE CLOCK PROJECT

Bank Hall Action Group

March, 2008

(Revised June 2011)



This picture shows the clock mechanism that we wish to restore as part of this project. The metal parts are not substantially corroded but the wooden drums that carry the wires, the two rollers on the right hand side and the stand itself are now in a very poor condition.

*Bank Hall Action Group is affiliated to
The Heritage Trust for the North West (Registered Charity No 508300)*

BANK HALL at BRETHERTON

INTRODUCTION

Since 1995 the Bank Hall Action Group have been raising funds and have been driving forward a project to save this Hall. With the aid of Lottery funding the project is in its final stages before restoration work can commence. Internally there will be a conversion to Apartments etc. but as part of this project the Main Entrance Hall, Main Hall and Clock Tower will also be restored internally and will remain open for the public to visit.

Originally the home of the Banastre (Bannister) Family, this Mansion was built in 1608 and replaced an earlier dwelling. The Clock Tower was added mid 17th Century and it is important because of its open-well cantilever staircase. The 1608 building was remodeled in 1832 and at this time some additional rooms and other features were added. More recently in the ownership of the Lilford family, they last occupied the Hall at the end of the 19th Century after which it was rented out. It was used by the military in the second World War after which it was again rented out. Part of the building was used as an estate office until 1972 and also the Northwest wing of the hall was briefly occupied in 1971 after which the Hall was empty and has fallen into disrepair.

The Bank Hall Action Group are also identifying complimentary projects connected to the Hall and within the 18 acre site to enhance both the restoration program and to return the grounds to be more in keeping with those of a Manorial Hall. Substantial funds will be required for these additional projects and they will all take many years to complete. For this purpose the group is always trying to encourage new and younger members to join in their efforts.

One of the projects identified by the Group is the restoration of the Clock faces and the preservation of what remains of the Clock mechanism and this booklet/leaflet details what is proposed.

The estimated overall cost of this project is in the region of £10,000

Lionel Taylor
Group Archivist/Secretary

Where was "The Clock"

At the top of the Jacobean Tower there was a Clock that had a mechanism that was operated, we believe, by weekly winding. The weights for this mechanism would fall through much of the length of the Tower suspended on steel wire. These would be in the centre of the Tower with the staircase circling around it. At this stage little is known about the clock except that it is believed that it was added to the Tower at the time of the remodeling in 1832 and that it was made by "John Alker" - a Wigan Clockmaker. It is also thought to be of a similar type to those in Ribchester Church and at Worden Hall in Leyland. The main mechanism was of course at the top of the Tower and operated the fingers on two faces on the North and South sides.

The Clock Project and The Clock Faces

Sadly, it is unlikely that the original mechanism can be restored to working order as many of the brass fittings have been stolen. The Project is two-fold:-

- 1) The Group need to ensure that the Clock faces are restored.
- 2) That the remains of the existing clock mechanism are preserved.

Currently, the clock face on the South facing side is still intact except that in spring 2007, vandals climbed the scaffolding and ripped off the clock fingers. One of the fingers was dropped and was subsequently recovered albeit in a damaged state and that is now with the Groups Artifacts. The face on the North side fell when the North side of the Tower collapsed.

The Clock faces are constructed in a diamond shape using 4 pieces of stone. At each corner there is another large piece of Sandstone faced on the front with a Fleur-De-Lys. One of the Fleur-De-Lys stones on the North face was still on the Tower but fell down in Summer 2009. Another one in slightly better condition has been recovered and is with the Groups Artifacts but is also deteriorating. A third has been located within the Hall but is in very poor condition and the fourth is missing.

The four pieces of stone that comprise the clock face have all been located amongst other stone work and brick material in the Hall but unfortunately they are too large to move to inspect without some mechanical assistance. It is

thought that they may be undamaged but this will not be known until they can be inspected.

The first part of the project is split into two elements:

- The first element of this part of the project is to replace the four Fleur-De-Lys with new stone work if necessary which will of course have to be sourced, cut and faced to the same specification as the former ones.
- The second element of this part of the project will be to repair and, if necessary, replace the sections of the clock face if they are found to be damaged or the facing is found to have deteriorated.

The second part of the project is to replace the Clock fingers for both faces of the Clock and to preserve what remains of the Clock mechanism

The Clock Mechanism

Part of the mechanism is at present outside the Hall on the hard standing on the East side of the Hall. This part of the mechanism has been robbed of all brass-work but contains the wooden drums on which the steel weight cables were wound. The wooden stand needs to be replaced as it is rotting away as do the wooden drums. Since the picture on the front page was taken, vandals have pushed the stand over and it has had to be dismantled. The remaining metal work needs to be preserved and a new stand constructed. Other parts of the clock are within the Hall and need to be located and preserved.

This picture is from the earlier part of the 20th Century, and is of the rear of the Hall which faces south. The Clock face can clearly be seen at the top of the Tower. The face that is shown is still in-situ on the Tower except for the loss of the two fingers.



The left hand picture below is of the Fleur-De-Lys which is above the top corner of the clock face. The right hand picture is of one of the Fleur-De-Lys from the North facing clock face. This item is currently with the Group's artifacts. Pictures were taken June 2008 and August 2007.



(Picture by Graham Moreton Photography)



This picture shows the existing clock face as it appears - October, 2007, on the south facing side of the tower.



If you are interested in supporting our **"Moment in Time"** project please go to the Moment in Time leaflet.