

ST. GILES' PARISH CHURCH

West Bridgford, Nottingham

NOTES ON
THE BELLS

by

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Rector



PRICE SIXPENCE

(Any profit will be devoted to the Bell Fund)



“Ring out the Old,
Ring in the New,
Ring out the False.
Ring in the True.”

The tower was built about 1500, and three bells were hung in it. This was the usual number for a village church. In those days each bell had a special use. In 1553 the Commissioners of Church Goods reported that there were “three bells of one accorde, hanging in ye steeple of ye same church.” Two of these bells remained in the tower for more than 450 years, until they were taken down in 1955.

The inscriptions were :-

- (1) *Celorum Christe placeat tibi rex sonus iste.*
(May this sound please Thee, O Christ, King of Heaven.” (2) (3)
- (2) *J. & E. Smith & Co., Chesterfield, 1813. GLORIA DEO.*
(Glory to God).
- (3) *AVE MARIA.* (1)

The bells were cast by Richard Mellers, Mayor of Nottingham, in 1499, and bear marks, which he used, and are frequently found on bells in the Midland Counties, a cross and a shield with the letter R and a bell. The first bell would be the daily service bell. Similar bells can be seen at Shelford, Screveton, and Kelham, with the same inscription in small black letter. This bell is now preserved in the church and weighs about 3-cwt.

Ancient inscriptions always began with a cross (3) often of beautiful design.

The second bell when seen by Mr. Stretton in 1808 also had the Mellers shield (2), but no inscription. It must have been cracked with long use, and recast in 1813.

The third bell was the Angelus bell, or daily call to prayer at sunrise and sunset, rung in every church in mediaeval times. The inscription is in Gothic capitals, and is now in the church. The shield (1), with a small cross is found on several bells in Lincolnshire. When they heard the bell, people repeated these words and the Lord’s Prayer.

On the top of each bell can be seen the ancient loops or “cannons,” by which the bell was hung on a wooden headstock with metal straps.



(1)

(2)

(3)



(3)



(1)



(2)

The clappers were hung by a leather band or "baldrick" from iron staples cast in the crown of the bell.

Richard Mellers was succeeded by his son Robert, also Mayor and bell founder. His widow Dame Agnes founded the "Free School," now the Nottingham High School, in 1513. The foundry was in Bell Founders Yard at the back of Long Row, and continued until 1791, when the last bell was cast for a cotton mill. This bell was hung in St. James' Church in 1809.

When the bells were taken down, the frame and beams were found to be very decayed and unsafe, and they had not been rung for about thirty years.

The second bell was recast by Smith of Chesterfield, who also made a bell for Parwich about that time. Probably it was conveyed by water.

In the Church Account Book which begins in 1759, we find :-

1813	June 3rd	Bell taking down	9/6
		Bell taking to Nottingham	1/-
	Nov. 5th	Carriage of New Bell from Nottingham	7/-
		Gill Handley for assisting with old and new bell	5/6
1814	April 9th	New Bell	£29-9-0

The bell weighed about 5-cwt. and would cost about £200 to-day, being made of copper and tin, which are now very expensive.

Other entries are :-

1771	Nov. 5th	Paid ye Ringers	1/6
	Dec. 25th		1/-
		New Years' Day	1/-
		A new bell rope	2/-
		A Singing Feast	5/3
		Paid ye clerk his wages for a year	£1-1-0

The bells are hung in two tiers, four bells in each frame of cast-iron resting on steel girders. The steel headstocks are set in ball-bearings which only need attention once in twelve years. A new ringing gallery has been erected in the tower. The total weight of the bells is two tons.

The bells are a light peal of eight of fine clear tone, and six have been cast by the well-known firm of John Taylor and Co. of Loughborough. The other two came from Perlethorpe in Thoresby Park, where a peal of six was given to the new church by the 3rd Earl Manvers in 1876. Five of these bells were purchased, as they could not be rung any more, and three have been re-cast in order to secure the right musical notes.

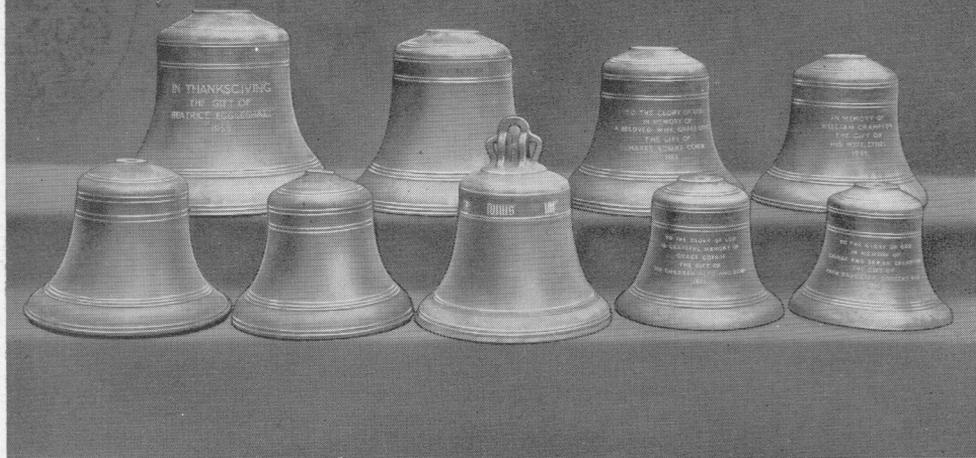
The firm of John Taylor and Co. have cast many of the largest bells, and heaviest ringing peals in the world, including St. Pauls', York Minster, and "Little John" in the Council House, which weighs 10 tons.

At the Dedication Service the ringers were members of the Southwell Diocesan Guild of Change Ringers.

Change-ringing began on five bells about 1640 in London and Cambridge, and "Grandsire Triples" was rung by the College Youths on seven bells in 1684. Soon after Bob Major was rung on eight bells, and about 1720 changes were rung on ten and twelve bells at St. Bride's, Fleet Street. A complete peal on bells is 5,000 or more changes.

The "Ancient Society of College Youths," is the oldest of all Ringing Societies, and they have the privilege of ringing at St. Paul's. It was founded in 1637.

WEST BRIDGEFORD PARISH CHURCH



THE NEW PEAL OF EIGHT BELLS

with the Old Bell (Centre) cast by Richard Mellers, Mayor of Nottingham in 1499

TREBLE — — G Sharp 3½-cwt.

*To the Glory of God
In Memory of
George and Sarah Crampton
The Gift of Their
Daughter, Dorothy Rosa.
1955.*

2nd — — — G 3½-cwt.

*To the Glory of God
In Grateful Memory of
Grace Cobbin
The Gift of
Her Children, Alec and Dora.
1955.*

3rd — — 1876 F 4-cwt.

4th — — 1876 D Sharp 4½-cwt.

5th — — C Sharp 5-cwt.

*To the Glory of God
In Memory of
William Crampton
The Gift of
His Wife, Ethel.
1955.*

6th — — — C 5½-cwt.

*To the Glory of God
In Memory of
A Beloved Wife,
Grace Cobbin.
The Gift of
Harry Robert Cobbin
1955.
Canon R. F. Wilkinson,
M.A., F.S.A., Rector.*

7th — — A Sharp 7-cwt.

*To the Glory of God
In Memory of
George and Kate Graham.
The Gift of their Daughters,
Ada and Beatrice.
1955.*

TENOR — G Sharp 9½-cwt.

*In Thanksgiving
The Gift of
Beatrice Eccleshall
1955.*

*To the Glory of God.
Part of the cost of this Peal
of Bells was given by
The Barron Bell Trust.*

*Emma Barron, Founder.
H. W. Eldred
K. C. Walrond
E. R. Pennell } Trustees
1955.*