

THE RINGING WORLD

CENTRAL COUNCIL REPORT
(SECTION 1)

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THE CENTRAL COUNCIL
OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

15p Weekly

S Giles', West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire

The Church

Communications in the south of Nottinghamshire are dominated by the River Trent. The two main roads from Loughborough and Leicester to Nottingham join in West Bridgford before crossing Trent Bridge, by the cricket ground, and passing into the city. The community which grew up at this focal point in communications has been served by the present church for more than seven centuries, but during that period the actual building has undergone a large number of alterations, restorations and additions. The main enlargement took place at the turn of the present century, when the church was transformed from a small village church to one capable of serving the large and populous suburb which West Bridgford had become. Today, S Giles', assisted by our two daughter churches of S Luke and S Paul, serves an area embracing a population of well over 20,000 people.

The old village church comprised the south side of the present building and the tower. The oldest remaining part is the lower half of the south wall of the chancel of the old church, now the Lady Chapel. A small priest's door in the wall dates from about 1250 and the rest of the old church dates from the rebuilding carried out in the 14th and 15th centuries. The three east windows have an unusual arrangement and date back to the same period, still containing some of the original tracery. There is a fine wooden screen in the old church which was originally erected in about 1380, although it has since been restored and additions made.

The central part of the present church and chancel were consecrated in 1898, the north aisle and chapel being added in 1911-12. The foundation stone for this last undertaking was laid on the coronation day of George V and Royal permission was granted for the name "George Chapel." In the chapel is a low canopied 14th century arch which was removed from the old chancel, where it



was a sepulchre. Underneath lies the "Stone Man," an effigy dating from the same period as the rebuilding of the old church. The stone man was dug up by a local farmer in about 1800 and spent nearly a century in a field before being moved to the church. The form of the figure is a mutilated effigy of a knight with crossed legs. The George Chapel also contains the organ, which was rebuilt and enlarged by Henry Willis in 1952 and is now a three-manual organ with 40 stops and 2,000 pipes.

The church is dedicated to the patron saint of cripples and wayfarers, S Giles', who lived in the 7th century in the south of France and was reputed to have become the first Abbot of the famous Abbey of S Giles', near Arles. The legend that he lived as a hermit with a pet fawn, which he saved from a huntsman's arrow, is illustrated in one of the east windows in the Lady Chapel.

The Tower and Bells

The tower was erected towards the end of the 14th century and its proportions are in keeping with the old church, being small compared with the present structure. On the outside of the tower there is an inscription in old English—"Christ the Stone of Help."

Until 1956, there were only three bells, but largely through the efforts of the late Canon R F Wilkinson, then the rector and the chairman of the Southwell Diocesan Guild, the old bells were

replaced by the present ring of eight. The following details of the old three bells were kindly supplied by Mr G A Dawson:

- Treble:** AVE MARIA 3-3-15
Cast by John Woolley, a Nottingham bell founder from 1520 to 1535, approximately. The inscription band is preserved in the church.
- Second:** J. & E. SMITH & CO./CHESTERFIELD/1813 5-0-0
In about 1810, R Stretton, the Nottingham architect and amateur historian, stated in his manuscripts that the second was by Mellors, bore his mark but had no inscription band.
- Third:** CELORUM XTE PLACEAT TIBI REX SONUS ISTE [RM] 5-2-6
Cast by Richard Mellors, reputedly in 1499. This fine example of his work is preserved on display.

These three bells were hung for ringing but the frame and fittings had become derelict.

The new ring of eight was dedicated on 22 March 1956 (see 'Ringing World 1956,' p218). The small size of the tower resulted in the bells being hung in two tiers of four. The ringing chamber is best described as intimate and takes the form of an open gallery extending into the church. Despite the disappointing rope circle, the bells are a delight to ring and the provision of good sound control has allowed both practice and peal ringing to proceed without disturbance to the residents of the close-lying houses. Recently an estate agent started an advertisement with the words: "Quietly situated next to S Giles' Church . . ." and was

West Bridgford (continued)

using less than the normal licence. At the time of writing, 27 peals (times ranging from 3 hours to 2 hours 26 minutes) and 72 quarter peals have been rung.

The bells have been maintained in their "as new" condition over the last 20 years, thanks largely to the devotion of our oldest ringer, Mr W L Ratcliffe. Wilf decided to retire this year, after 54 years of ringing, but the present condition of the tower and bells is a constant reminder of the work he has done. How many churches have carpet on the tower stairs extending all the way to the bells?

The details of the present bells are:

Treble: i/b + JOHN TAYLOR & CO + FOUNDERS + LOUGHBOROUGH + 23 3/4" 3-0-2 TO THE GLORY OF GOD/IN MEMORY OF/GEORGE AND SARAH CRAMPTON/ THE GIFT OF/THEIR DAUGHTER DOROTHY ROSE/1955

Second: i/b As treble 24 1/4" 3-1-2 TO THE GLORY OF GOD/IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF/GRACE COBBIN/ THE GIFT OF HER CHILDREN ALEC AND DORA/1955

Third: i/b MEARS AND STAINBANK FOUNDERS 1876 26" 3-2-2

Fourth: i/b As third 27 1/4" 3-3-19
The third and fourth were two of the bells removed from Perlethorpe, Notts when that tower became unsafe. Their notes were successfully raised a semitone, changing their weights from 3-3-2 and 4-0-23. The other bells were melted down with the original treble and second.

Fifth: i/b As treble 29" 4-3-3 IN MEMORY OF/WILLIAM CRAMPTON/ THE GIFT OF/HIS WIFE/ETHEL/1955

Sixth: i/b As treble 30 1/2" 5-2-1
front: CANON R. F. WILKINSON, M.A., F.S.A./ RECTOR

reverse: TO THE GLORY OF GOD/IN MEMORY OF /A BELOVED WIFE/ THE GIFT OF/HENRY ROBERT COBBIN/1955

Seventh: i/b + JOHN TAYLOR & CO + FOUNDERS + LOUGHBOROUGH + 1955 + 33 1/2" 7-0-12

Tenor: i/b As treble 37 1/2" 9-1-16 (G sharp)
front: IN THANKSGIVING/ THE GIFT OF/ BEATRICE ECCLESHALL/1955

reverse: 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 } TRUSTEES
K. C. WALROND }
E. R. PENNELL }

The Ringers

Twenty years is too short a time to produce the long list of ringing characters to which some towers are able to lay claim. This is particularly the case at West Bridgford where the band has always contained a majority of young people (14 to 18 years). West Bridgford has a constantly changing population, but light and easy to ring bells means that we can recruit ringers at an early age and it is not difficult to find young people who wish to serve the church. We rarely fail to ring all eight bells every Sunday, which is a source of great satisfaction to the older ringers. **We ring three times on Sunday (9.15, 10.30 and 5.45) and practice every Tuesday at 7.30. Visitors to the area are always welcome to join us on these occasions.** CB

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Photo of some of the students and tutors at the Lincoln Guild's weekend school at Brant Broughton, 1976. Brant Broughton Church in the background. Back row: John Spowage, Tony Walker, Paul Needham, Giles Thompson, Peter Minchin, David Bains, Ray Brockett, Denis Bayles. Front row: Wilfrid Moreton, Lynne Buttifant, Elizabeth Bains, Alison Hill, Angela Brockett, Barbara Clipsham, Jacky Brockett, Carol Chambers, Christine Daubney. Sitting: Leslie Boyle.

HEMINGFORD GREY OUTING

On 22 April, nearly 30 ringers and friends from Hemingford Grey, Cambridgeshire and a few surrounding towers visited Loughborough. Most of the Hemingford ringers are pupils at S Ivo Comprehensive School, S Ives, and the weekday outing was possible during the school holidays. The first stop was the excellent six at Langham where justice was unfortunately not done to the bells partly due to the inexperience of the ringers and the strangeness of ringing in a new tower. Mr Clayton was waiting for the party at the Foundry and gave a most interesting tour answering many questions. This was followed by a short ring on the Foundry bells and lunch at the College of Education.

During a visit to the War Memorial Carillon Tower, Dr P J Stratfold—the carillonneur) gave a most interesting talk, and a short recital.

The return journey was via Leicester to Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire and here an hour was spent exploring what was one of the great houses of England but is now partially in ruins. Picnic tea, then a short stop made at nearby Deene for a ring on the easy-going six in the church adjacent to Deene Park House. The church has an idyllic setting with the house and small village, surrounded by fields, trees and a small reservoir. Hemingford Grey was reached just after 7.30pm after a most enjoyable day. MVW

Derby DA**ONE NEW MEMBER**

On 22 May the Chesterfield District held its monthly meeting at Old Whittington and Staveley. Afternoon ringing was at Old Whittington where tea and a business meeting were held. The meeting was chaired by Mr N Bagguley and thanks were given by Mr A Dowell. During the meeting one new member was enrolled: Dawn Waterhouse (Old Whittington).

Evening ringing was at Staveley and thanks go to all involved with the day's arrangements. AD

25 YEARS AGO

**Taken from 'The Ringing World' for
29 June 1951**

The main news story this week dealt with the loss of the Marlborough bells at the former Church of S Helen, Worcester, and their sale to one of our leading bellfounders as scrap. Their bells were cast in 1706 to commemorate the victories of John, Duke of Marlborough, during the reign of Queen Anne. When it was known that the bells were to be removed, a group of enthusiasts rang a peal of Plain Bob Major on them, the first peal for 21 years, and, sad to relate, the last. Harold G Cashmore and Frederick W Brinklow rang their 200th peal of Surprise together.

40 YEARS AGO

26 June 1936

Eight churchwardens, from eight different parishes in the Diocese of Lincoln, rang a peal together at Barton-on-Humber.

The first peal of Spliced Surprise Major on the bells, and by the Ancient Society in the City of London, was rung at S Andrew, Holborn.

In connection with the annual meeting of the Ladies' Guild at Bath, the Great Western Railway announced that they would issue tickets for a party of eight or more at 13s 5d return from London.

The Earl of Shaftsbury, an active member of the Salisbury Diocesan Guild, accepted the invitation to become an honorary member of the Central Council.

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