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OF THE  
**Cambridge Antiquarian Society,**

OCTOBER 1925—MAY 1926

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**Communications**  
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CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
PROCEEDINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

## NOTE

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
Report of the Council for 1925 . . . . .	1
Summary of Accounts for 1925 . . . . .	5
Photographic Record of Cambridgeshire . . . . .	8
<i>Ordinary Meetings with Communications:</i>	
Cromwell's Stuart Descent. Sir HENRY STEWARD . . . . .	9
A Wall-painting recently discovered at Bartlow Church. H. H. BRINDLEY, M.A., F.S.A. . . . .	9
New Acquisitions to the Museum. L. C. G. CLARKE, M.A., F.S.A. . . . .	9
Windows inserted in the tower of St Benet's Church, Cambridge, in 1586. L. COBBETT, M.D., F.R.C.S. . . . .	9
Two objects illustrating passages in Shakespeare. Sir WILLIAM RIDGEWAY, Sc.D., F.B.A. . . . .	9
The Stone Monuments of Carnac. Prof. J. STANLEY GARDINER, M.A., F.R.S. . . . .	10
Seal Matrices in the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. H. S. KINGSFORD, M.A. . . . .	10
Antiquities of the Island of Gorgona, off the Coast of Columbia. JAMES HORNELL, F.L.S., F.R.A.I. . . . .	10
A Bell-foundry in Cambridge. Rev. CANON STOKES, LL.D., Litt.D., F.S.A. . . . .	11
The Arms of Magdalene College. Prof. NUTTALL, M.D., Sc.D., F.R.S. . . . .	11
Cambridge and the Gunpowder Plot. E. A. B. BARNARD, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S. . . . .	11
The Society's Collection of Rubbings of Monumental Brasses. RALPH GRIFFIN, Sec.S.A. . . . .	11
<i>Eighty-Sixth Annual General Meeting:</i>	
<i>Adoption of Annual Report and Summary of Accounts . . . . .</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Election of New Officers and Members of Council for 1926-27. . . . .</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Appointment of Director of Excavations for 1926-27 . . . . .</i>	<i>12</i>
The King's Government, as administered by the Greater Abbots of East Anglia. Miss H. M. CAM, M.A.London . . . . .	12
The Russian Icon. E. H. MINNS, Litt.D., F.B.A., F.S.A. . . . .	13
Recent Excavations at Burwell and Little Wilbraham. T. C. LETHBRIDGE, B.A. . . . .	13
Report on Skeletons found at Burwell. W. L. H. DUCKWORTH, M.D., Sc.D. . . . .	13
A Skull with a healed cut in the Nasal Bones, possibly that of Laurence Sterne. W. L. H. DUCKWORTH, M.D., Sc.D. . . . .	13

	PAGE
New Officers for the year 1926-27 . . . . .	14
Complete list of Officers for 1926-27 . . . . .	15
 <i>Printed Papers:</i>	
Argentine's Manor, Melbourn. W. M. PALMER, M.D., F.S.A. . . . .	16
A recently discovered Mural Painting in Bartlow Church, Cambs. H. H. BRINDLEY, M.A., F.S.A. . . . .	80
Windows inserted in the Tower of St Benet's Church, Cambridge, in 1586. L. COBBETT, M.D., F.R.C.S. . . . .	83
A Cambridge Bell-foundry. The Rev. CANON STOKES, LL.D., Litt.D., F.S.A. . . . .	93
The Arms of Thomas Lord Audley of Walden (1488-1544), Founder of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Prof. GEORGE H. F. NUTTALL, M.D., Sc.D., F.R.S. . . . .	101
The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Burwell, Cambs. Part II. T. C. LETH- BRIDGE, B.A. . . . .	116
Report on Human Bones from the Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Burwell. W. L. H. DUCKWORTH, M.D., Sc.D. . . . .	124
The Chapel of St Mary Magdalene at Sturbridge, Cambridge. CHESTER H. JONES. . . . .	126
Index . . . . .	151

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Argentine's Manor, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire:</i>	PAGE
Plan no. 1. Part of Baker's Map of Cambridgeshire, 1829 . . . . .	17
The dry Moat behind the Granary . . . . .	facing 20
East side of Lordship Farm, Melbourn . . . . .	" 20
Plan no. 2. After Ordnance Survey . . . . .	23
West side of Moat forming Mill Dam . . . . .	facing 24
Mill Cut . . . . .	" 24
Coat of Arms of Argentine, drawn by John Layer from a window in Melbourn Church . . . . .	29
The Hall of Sir John de Argentine . . . . .	facing 40
Lumber Attic: doorway into further attic partly cut through cambered beam . . . . .	facing 40
Attic looking East . . . . .	facing 46
Attic looking West . . . . .	" 46
<i>A recently discovered mural painting in Bartlow Church, Cambs:</i>	
Mural painting on north wall (sketch and photograph, 1925) between 80 and 81	between 80 and 81
Plate in <i>The Gentleman's Magazine</i> , 1822, and sketch of the mural painting of St Christopher, 1921 . . . . .	between 80 and 81
<i>Windows inserted in the Tower of St Benet's Church, Cambridge, in 1586:</i>	
St Benet's Tower, West face. Showing the date 1586 and initials R and P on the head of the right-hand window . . . . .	facing 84
St Benet's Tower, East face. Only one round opening remaining. One window-head of Weldon stone lost . . . . .	facing 86
Interior of bell-chamber, showing alterations in masonry . . . . .	facing 90
<i>The Arms of Thomas Lord Audley of Walden (1488-1544), founder of Magdalene College, Cambridge:</i>	
Earlier Arms of Audley of Essex . . . . .	103
Arms as figured on the original Grant of Arms to Thomas Lord Audley . . . . .	104
Arms of Thomas Lord Audley as outlined on his Garter Plate, 1541 . . . . .	106
Arms of Thomas Lord Audley and the inscription on the headstone to his altar-tomb . . . . .	facing 107
Banner and Supporter of Thomas Lord Audley as recorded at the College of Arms . . . . .	109

Arms inscribed as of "Lord Audeley of Safron Walden Lord Chan- cellor of England" . . . . .	PAGE 110
Arms of Lord Audley as they should be represented . . . . .	facing 112

*The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Burwell, Cambs. Part II:*

Plan of the Excavations . . . . .	between 116 and 117
Silver Pendant, Bronze Boss, Bronze Buckle . . . . .	117
Coloured plate of Ring and Bead from Grave no. 26 . . . . .	facing 118
Bone Comb, Necklace of Beads with Silver Rings . . . . .	facing 121

*The Chapel of St Mary Magdalene at Sturbridge, Cambridge:*

South-east view of the Chapel, from Cotman . . . . .	facing 128
North-west view, from Cotman . . . . .	„ 132
Interior, looking east, from Cotman . . . . .	„ 134
The Ground Plan . . . . .	„ 138
Exterior of South Chancel Window . . . . .	„ 140
The South Doorway . . . . .	„ 144
View from the south-east . . . . .	„ 146
A Corbel from the Nave . . . . .	148

## A CAMBRIDGE BELL-FOUNDRY.

By THE REV. CANON STOKES, LL.D., Litt.D., F.S.A.

Hon. Fellow of Corpus Christi College.

(Read 8 February, 1926.)

This paper deals with the entrance yard to the New University Lecture Room in Bene't Street.

Nos. 12 and 13 Bene't Street are separated from the Church of St Benedict by Free School Lane. These two houses (now occupied by a coffee house called the Friar House and the bookshop of Messrs Tomlin) have lately been bought by Mr Charles Armstrong, of the Grove, Huntingdon Road. That gentleman was good enough a while back to come over to my rectory with a large number of documents and deeds, relating to the property and going back to the time of Queen Elizabeth.

These houses stand at the N.W. corner of what was formerly the monastery of the Augustinian Friars; though it is not certain that they were actually within the bounds of the convent. Yet at the Dissolution they seem to have passed with the rest of the property to William Keinsham; as recorded in a paper read before this Society (in conjunction with Dr Cranage). They are, however, said in the first of our deeds to have been "parcell of the said Friars."

Keinsham sold the estate to John Hatcher, M.A., M.D., sometime Regius Professor of Physic in the University. "By his will, in default of issue male of his grandsons and nephews, he devised the site and circuit of the late Austin Friars to the Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of this University, to be employed as a Hall for Students, and to be called Hatcher's Hall." This is one of "the might-have-beens" of Cambridge; for his descendants survived to inherit and transmit the property; his grandson, Sir John Hatcher, succeeding him. This gentleman, in 1612, sold the estate to William Beck, of Caius, who married the sister of Stephen Perse, the well-

known Cambridge benefactor. Mr Beck died in 1614, and Dr Perse, who had acquired the property, only survived his brother-in-law one year. By his will he left much of the estate to his sister, Mrs Catherine Beck.

We must limit ourselves at present to Nos. 12 and 13 Bene't Street.

The first of our deeds (dated 1612), relating to the former of these houses, describes it as "all that messuage...parcell of the said Augustine Friers...betweene the Lane comonlie called Lothburgh Lane on the one side and the tenement and yard parcell of the said Friers in the occupation of William Ashby tailor on the other side, one hed thereof abutteth on a tenement late in the occupation of John Trene carpenter towards the south and the other hed abutteth on the streete towards the north."

We must not follow in detail the descent of this house. But it may be stated that in 1652, it passed to John Welborne, a relation of Alderman Samuel Newton, whose diary our Society has published. It went afterwards to the Pettits mentioned in the same volume. Dr (afterwards Sir) John Ellis had a mortgage on it in 1696. In the last century Gilbert Ives, whose picture hangs in St Bene't's vestry, was the owner.

Turning to No. 13, we have in 1612 an indenture of sale, whereby William Beck, of the Middle Temple, London, Esquire, sells to Robert Pillay, of Cambridge, yeoman, for £35 "all that messuage or tenement with a yard thereunto adioyning now in the occupation of William Ashby tailor; being parte parcell or member of the scite or circuite of the late Augustine Friers; situate in the parish of St Edwardes in Cambridge aforesaid, between the tenemente and ground of Andrew Johnson, Cooke, on the one parte, and a piece of ground called the bell-yard, heretofore used by the bell founders on the other side; one hedd thereof abbuttes on the streete; and the other hedd abbuttes on the ground of Perseuall Aunger musician."

Four years later, the eastern abuttal is said to be "a piece of ground of Jeremy Davers gent. called the Bell yard or used heretofore for a Bell yard."

In 1635 the ground just mentioned was in the occupation of Ann Knights, a daughter of the well-known Thomas Hobson.

In 1648, the house had passed to the Pikes, a family often mentioned in Newton's Diary. Later on it was occupied by Christopher Green, a carrier.

It had been previously known as "The Three Tuns," in 1659; while a century later it was called "The Admiral Vernon," at least during the popularity of that naval officer.

To complete the succession, for several generations and down till quite lately, it was used as a place of business by various butchers—the last being those named Robinson.

It may be added that it was rebuilt towards the end of the last century.

It is now occupied by Mr Tomlin, the bookseller.

[Attention may be drawn to the curious outbuildings, and to the still more curious structure next to and back of, those still forming No. 2 Free School Lane.]

Before we pass to the consideration of the garden, above called the Bell Founder's Yard, we may turn to the two or three houses to the east—now Nos. 14, 15 and 16.

These have been for many years the property of the Mortlock family. The deeds relating to them are in the hands of Barclays Bank; and by the courtesy of Mr E. H. Parker, the present writer has been allowed to inspect them.

Again, with regard to No. 14, the first deed is from William Beck, Esquire, of The Middle Temple, and is dated 1610, and two years later he grants the house to Henry Goudge. It was called "the Cock" or "the Fessant Cock," and is described as "lieing and being in Cambridge aforesaid betwene a pece of ground called 'ye bell yard' on thone side, and a garden late in the occupation of John Baxter one of the esquire bedles of the University of Cambridge."

Passing to the year 1662, the house is still called "the ffeazant Cock," and is still connected with the Goudge family. It is described as "next the garden belonging to the Chancellor and Fellows of the University of Cambridge, now in the occupation of Mary Bainbridge on the West, and next the houses and grounds of Edward Stoyte, Doctor of Physick

on the East; the King's Way on the North, and the garden ground of Thomas Buck, esquire bedle, in the occupation of Richard Pyke, gent. on the South."

The Mortlock deeds contain a long list of names down to that of John Lee, which still remains cut in bold letters outside the office now occupied by his successor. The shop is known as "the globe."

Nos. 15 and 16 now form the mansion which was built by a Mr Finch; a description of the erection of it, quoted from Wm Cole's account in the British Museum, may be seen in the writer's remarks on those houses already alluded to.

There also may be seen the references to the old gate of the Augustinian Monastery which stood in this neighbourhood.

Again, before we return to the Bell Founder's Yard, we must refer to a well-known house, No. 3, on the north side of Bene't Street: viz. the Bath Hotel, which is the property of the University.

In the Registry may be seen an immense number of deeds relating to this property, going back to the middle of the XIV century. The late Registry courteously allowed the writer to go through these documents. Many well-known Cambridge names occur in the list of those connected with this estate—such as William son of Henry Gogging, Adam Leverington, Thomas Hierman, Walter Smyth and Thomas Cosyn, and John Puregold.

Here it should be remarked that the reason for referring to No. 3 Bene't Street is that for many a long year there had been attached to this house the garden opposite, that which has been noted above as the *Bell Founder's Yard*.

Certainly, when in 1542 John Mere, the celebrated Registry and Esquire Bedell, occupied the house (No. 3) with which we are dealing, he was the proud owner of the Augustine Priory Garden across the road. This University benefactor not only owned two houses on the north side of the street, but also he had "for a terme of yeeeres certen garden growndes with the howsyes and chambers thereon buylded by Indenture of John Hatchet doctor in phisike, late parcell of the Fryers Augustynes lying over against his said ij tenementes."

These tenements, and the unexpired lease of the garden opposite, John Mere bequeathed to the University in connection with the sermon called after his name. The garden which Mere leased had a summerhouse and a sundial.

It may be noted that the house on the west of Mere's property was owned by Nicholas Spearing, the printer.

John Baxter, another Esquire Bedell, was the occupier of No. 3 in the year when Shakespeare was born.

Later on, Sir Henry Cromwell put forward a claim to the Mere property.

### THE BELL FOUNDRY.

We may now return to the Garden or Bell-Foundry to which we have been leading up. We have already several times alluded to it, in giving the abuttals of the neighbouring houses.

The first description of this plot of ground is given in one of the University deeds, where it is stated to be bounded on the N. by the street, on the S. by the prior's garden, on the E. by the house of Agnes Cheke<sup>1</sup> widow, and on the W. by the property of John Hatcher. This document is dated 38 Henry VIII (1546); not long after the Dissolution of the Augustinian Friary.

At the date just mentioned the garden was hired by the well-known Esquire Bedell, John Mere, who lived in the

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Agnes Cheke was the widow of Peter Cheke, one of the Esquire Bedells of the University, and the mother of the celebrated Sir John Cheke and of Mary wife of William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley. Mrs Mary Cecil's only child was Thomas Cecil, afterwards Earl of Exeter; she died 22 February, 1543.

Mrs Agnes Cheke's will, dated 23 December, 1548, is an interesting document. She left property in Cambridge and in Wilbraham to John Pyckerell, her son by a former husband, also an Esquire Bedell. The following extract from her will is of special interest, now that the terms of Shakespeare's will are being discussed: "Allso I bequeyeth to Thomas Sysell my new Fether Bed with the Bowlster to be fylled with fethers and one pelow, one pelowbere, one payre of Shettis and my coverynge of polam worke, the colours thereof, red, blew and yelow, and a sparver frynged with sylke. And I wyll all the foreseyde things to be kepte safely in the hands of my executors untill the sayd Thomas shall come to Schole to Cambrigg, and then immediately to be delivered unto the said Thomas. Allso I gyve and bequeythe to Alys Alington my second Fether Bed, etc."

house (or houses) on the N. side of Bene't Street, now No. 3 (the Bath Hotel).

The garden is said to have been 11 yards or thereabouts by 19 yards or thereabouts.

We have already alluded to the summerhouse and the sundial erected by John Mere; and have noted that the lease of the plot was bequeathed by that benefactor to the University.

This "garden, place, or parcel of ground," the ownership of which had passed to Dr Stephen Perse, another well-known benefactor, was sold for £40, on 8 September, 1613, to Jeremy (or Jerome) Davers, of Clare College (B.A. 1571, M.A. 1575).

In 1625, his widow, Alice Davers, conveyed it to Samuel Ward, D.D., then Lady Margaret Reader, and his successors. In the conveyance it is described as "all that gardine, place, or parcell of grounde, situate and being in the parishe of St Edward's in Cambridge aforesaid betweene the mesuage or tenement called the Phesant Cock nowe or late in the tenure of Henry Gooche on the East, and a mesuage or tenement nowe or late in the tenure of Robert Pillay or of his assignee or assignees on the west, the north head therof abutting on the common streete leading from St Benedict's Church towards the Peaze market hill in Cambridge aforesaid, and the south head therof abutting on a parcell of a tenement late in the occupation of Anne Ellwyn widoe or of her assignee or assignees, which said gardine, place or parcell of ground conteyneth from east to west eleven yards or thereabouts, and from north to south nineteen yards or thereabouts."

We may here repeat that when William Beck sold the house, now No. 13, to Robert Pillay in 1612, the east abuttal is said to have been "a piece of ground called *the bell yard, heretofore used by bell-founders*"; and so when Robert Pillay sold this house in 1616, the same eastern boundary, then in the possession of Jeremy Danvers, is called "the Bell yard, used *heretofore for a bellyard*." Again, in the year 1635, when the house was sold to Thomas James, "traventer<sup>1</sup>," one plot

<sup>1</sup> *Traventer*: query, a collateral form of *tranter*, or *traunter*, a carrier. See Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, and Wright's *Dialect Dictionary*.

on the east, then in the occupation of Ann Knights, daughter of Thomas Hobson, the celebrated carrier, is spoken of as “*heretofore called the Bellyard.*”

In the year 1662, the garden is said to belong to the Chancellor and Fellows of the University of Cambridge, and to be in the occupation of Mary Bainbridge. Mrs Bainbridge was the widow of Dr Thomas Bainbridge, Master of Christ’s College from 1622 to 1646; she was the owner of No. 12 in 1658; and died on 25 February, 1671, being “buried in St Edward’s Chancel on Tewsday night between 8 and 9 of the Clock.”

As we have said, the garden remained in the possession of the Lady Margaret’s Professor, in right of his Professorship from 1625 onwards; and allusions are made in various documents to these owners—such, for instance, as Dr John Newcome, Master of St John’s, who held the office from 1727 to 1765.

When the University acquired a site to the south of the garden from Messrs Mortlock in 1896, it was thought desirable to acquire this plot for providing convenient access to the new Lecture Rooms, and Dr Inge, who then held the Professorship, consented to sell the property to the University in 1908.

#### BELLS MADE IN CAMBRIDGE.

We have dealt with “a Cambridge Bell Foundry” and its site. But what of the Bell Founders? what of those who cast the bells?

It will, of course, be remembered that Cambridge has at least three great connections with the History of Bells.

1. Henry VI; magnificent plans of his College included the erection of a lofty bell-tower to the S.W. of the splendid King’s Chapel. The latter was fortunately carried out; but though the design of the former exists, it was never carried into effect. A splendid peal of bells was, however, presented to the College.

2. The celebrated campanologist, Fabian Stedman, was connected with St Bene’t’s, Cambridge; and the changes and variations recorded in his *Tintinnalogia* have been copied in all subsequent works on Campanology.

3. The far-famed Cambridge chimes still sound from the tower of Great St Mary's Church and from many another church tower or hall in England.

Turning to bells, here and there in our town and county and neighbourhood there are bells bearing the inscription "made in Cambridge." The treble bell at Great Shelford, for instance, was made in our town by Richard Nicholson in the year 1590; and the fourth bell at Bottisham was cast by the same bell founder; who, by the bye, was a member of Christ's College. The Saint's bell at Great St Mary's was the work of John Warren in 1607.

Richard Oldfield (or Holdfield) and his successor, William Hawsly, did work which is described in Raven's well-known book. This was at the end of the XVI or the beginning of the XVII century. The silver bell at St John's College, and the clock bell at Trinity may be noted.

Later on we meet with the work of Thomas Newman, who cast bells at Cambridge in the XVIII century; and of Thomas Safford in the early part of the last century.

But all these names are cut out of our consideration by the one word "heretofore" used in the first deed in Mr Armstrong's collection, where, it will be remembered, we read that the eastern abuttal of No. 13 Bene't Street was "a piece of ground called the Bell Yard, heretofore used by Bell Founders." This is dated 1612. But, as we have seen, for at least 70 years before, the yard had been used as a garden. So that we are not able to give an actual date when the plot of ground was "a bell foundry."

We can only state that its employment for that industry must have been before the middle of the XVI century. We must leave it at that.

# CONTENTS

## OF PROCEEDINGS,

VOL. XXVIII, 1925-26.

	PAGE
Report of the Council for 1925 . . . . .	1
Summary of Accounts for 1925 . . . . .	5
Photographic Record of Cambridgeshire . . . . .	8
Ordinary Meetings with Communications . . . . .	9
Eighty-Sixth Annual General Meeting . . . . .	12
New Officers for 1926-27 . . . . .	14
Complete List of Officers for 1926-27 . . . . .	15
 <i>Printed Papers:</i>	
Argentine's Manor, Melbourn. W. M. PALMER, M.D., F.S.A. . . . .	16
A recently discovered Mural Painting in Bartlow Church, Cambs. H. H. BRINDLEY, M.A., F.S.A. . . . .	80
Windows inserted in the Tower of St Benet's Church, Cambridge, in 1586. L. COBBETT, M.D., F.R.C.S. . . . .	83
A Cambridge Bell-foundry. The Rev. Canon STOKES, LL.D., Litt.D., F.S.A. . . . .	93
The Arms of Thomas Lord Audley of Walden (1488-1544), Founder of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Prof. GEORGE H. F. NUTTALL, M.D., Sc.D., F.R.S. . . . .	101
The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Burwell, Cambs. Part II. T. C. LETHBRIDGE, B.A. . . . .	116
Report on Human Bones from the Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Burwell. W. L. H. DUCKWORTH, M.D., Sc.D. . . . .	124
The Chapel of St Mary Magdalene at Sturbridge, Cambridge. CHESTER H. JONES. . . . .	126
Index . . . . .	151