

ART. IV.—*Westmorland church bells*. By B. L. THOMPSON, F.S.A.

Read at Kendal, April 4th, 1970.

OUR local antiquaries have paid much more attention to church bells in Cumberland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands than they have to those in Westmorland. It is true that Robert Godfrey wrote a short paper, *Westmorland Bells*, which was published in CWI vi 83-85 (1881), but it is limited in its scope and not entirely accurate. Nevertheless, it is the only article specifically on Westmorland bells to be published by our Society during its existence of over a hundred years. In the nineteen-thirties, however, the county had the good fortune to be surveyed by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, and the resultant "Westmorland" volume, published in 1936, includes brief descriptions of all the historic bells, "historic" being regarded by the Commission as before 1715. A section of the introduction is devoted to bells and bell-founders, and in the index the bells are conveniently listed under their periods. Consequently the book is the best source of information in print, but it is not concerned with bells of 1715 and later, nor with former bells which have disappeared.

On the particular subject of Kendal Parish Church bells there is a booklet by F. M. Wilson, E. Jennings and W. H. F. Fussel, published in 1934. Mr Jennings was a leading Kendal bell-ringer and also interested in local history, with the result that this contains unusual information not found elsewhere.

During the last five years the present writer has seen most of the Westmorland church bells and has collected a good deal of information about them, but

it is to be hoped that a full and detailed study may be made eventually by more expert hands. At least it is now possible to record how many bells there are in the county, and to say of each church whether its bells are ancient or modern. Altogether, counting everything (even "tubes"¹ which are not, strictly speaking, bells) there are 260 at 88 churches; 21 are medieval bells at 15 churches; 100 can be more or less confidently dated between 1550 and 1850; and the remaining 139 can be classified as "modern".

It is in the thirty-two ancient parish churches of the county that one would naturally look for ancient bells. It transpires, however, that by and large, they tend to have survived only at the smaller parish churches, such as Crosby Garrett where the two bells are both pre-Reformation. The larger parish churches, like Kirkby Lonsdale and Kirkby Stephen, developed a taste for change-ringing, increased the number of their bells, and when they bought new ones usually scrapped the old. Sometimes the metal of the old bells was used in casting the new ring, and occasionally the former inscriptions were reproduced, but bells re-cast in this way lose their antiquity and have to be counted as new at the date of the re-casting. When medieval, or even 17th-century, bells have been re-cast, this often gives rise to traditions in parishes that bells are older than they are.

The three oldest bells in Westmorland, probably *13th century*, are: the treble at Appleby, St Michael (Bongate); the treble at Crosby Garrett; and the solitary bell at Mallerstang. All three are "blank", without inscriptions. Only the Mallerstang one is still used.

Appleby, St Michael, and Crosby Garrett also have bells of the *14th century*. The tenor at St Michael's is inscribed CAMPANA SANCTI MICHAELIS and

¹ 8 at Appleby, St Michael: 6 at Holme.

the tenor at Crosby Garrett CAMPANA SANCTI ANDREE. At Crook, an ancient chapelry in the parish of Kendal, there survives in a Victorian church (1887) a late 14th-century bell inscribed SANCTA MARIA ORA PRO NOBIS and this bell bears a Royal Arms on its waist, which helps to confirm the date. The largest of the three bells at Long Marton (diameter 35½ in.) is attributed to about 1400 and is inscribed SANCTE THOMA ORA PRO NOBIS. All these inscriptions are in Lombardic capitals.

When we come to the 15th century there are eight bells to be noticed, and rather more is known about them. Burneside's 19th-century church (which the Royal Commission describes under the name of the civil parish, Strickland Ketel) has a medieval bell, "probably 15th century", inscribed SANCTE GREGORI ORA PRO NOBIS. Because Burneside church is dedicated to St Oswald, and because there is a St Gregory's well close to the church at Preston Patrick, it has been suggested² that this bell was "spirited away" from Preston Patrick to Burneside a long time ago (it was already at Burneside in 1692). But the dedication of a bell need have no connection with the dedication of the church where it hangs.

Kirkby Thore has a handsome bell, "Great Tom", which used to be considered "the loudest in the county", but since 1901 the tenor at Ambleside has spoiled this boast. All the same it is of much interest. Probably cast at York c. 1450, its diameter is 41 in. and it is inscribed in black-letter O TRENI IHC TAS UNUS DEUS MISERERE NOBIS. It is still capable of being "rung up". It is believed, with some plausibility, to have have been brought from Shap Abbey at the Dissolution.³ Other places — Bampton, Kendal, Orton and Ravenstonedale — tell similar

² CWI vi 85.

³ CWI xi 315-316.

stories about their bells, and they can scarcely all be true, but the Kirkby Thore tradition seems likely, because the last Abbot, Richard Evenwode, was rector of the parish.

The small church at Musgrave, hidden out of sight from its village, surprisingly has two 15th-century bells in its narrow 1845 tower. The treble is inscribed OCE PETRE ORA PRO (NO)BIS and the tenor AVE GRA. PLENA DNS. TECU, both in black-letter, but they are difficult of access. Ormside has no less than three 15th-century bells, though one of them, called Paul, anciently belonged to the neighbouring church, Asby, and was given to Ormside only about 1900.⁴ Nicolson and Burn record "two little bells" at Ormside in 1777 and "three bells" at Asby (which today has two bells of 1865). The bells at Ormside are: no. 1 inscribed simply PAULUS, no. 2 AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA, and no. 3 ROBERTUS T(AR)-DIUS ME FECIT FIERI. The first hangs and is used; the other two are cracked and recline on the belfry floor. The inscriptions are all in Lombardic capitals.

The bells of Orton have a confusing history, partly because "the first bell" is referred to in ancient records and evidently means the tenor. This practice is sometimes found elsewhere and obviously leads to confusion, as "the first bell" nowadays is invariably the treble. Orton has one medieval bell, now pensioned off and preserved with a couple of 17th-century bells in the north aisle of the church. It has been attributed by the Royal Commission to the 15th century but may well be 16th century, and therefore will be mentioned later.

Patterdale church houses in its vestry an "alphabet bell": it has a series of letters, A to K, in Lombardic capitals, but no proper inscription. It is the only

⁴ CW2 i 165.

alphabet bell in Westmorland and thus something of a curiosity, although there is another at Renwick in Cumberland. In 1853, when the church was rebuilt, the bell was apparently rejected and somehow got to Greystoke and then to Newcastle upon Tyne, whence it was rescued in 1862⁵ and, in due course, returned to Patterdale. The bell is cracked. Also in the vestry is a blank bell which is older than the present church but not supposed to be very ancient. Ravenstonedale has three bells and the middle one is 15th century and inscribed SCE. MICHAEL, it also bears a shield, the founder's stamp. This is the bell which, according to local tradition, may have come from Shap Abbey. H. B. Walters thought it was cast at Nottingham.

Coming to the 16th century, there is a bell at Brough-under-Stainmore which the Royal Commission calls "probably 15th century" but which, as will appear, it is safer to assign to the 16th. One of four bells, it is the tenor and has a black-letter inscription which is "corrupt" and uninformative. However, Nicolson & Burn say the tower was built about 1513 and four bells were given at that time by a parishioner. The story is so delightful it is worth repeating.⁶

The Church at Brough is a pretty large handsome ancient building. The *steeple* is not so old; having been built about the year 1513, under the direction of Thomas Blenkinsop of Helbeck esquire. There are in it four excellent bells, by much the largest in the county, except the great bell at Kirkby Thore. Concerning these bells at Brough, there is a tradition, that they were given by one *Brunskill*, who lived upon Stanemore, in the remotest part of the parish, and had a great many cattle. One time it happened that his bull fell a bellowing, which in the dialect of the country is called *cruning* (this being the genuine Saxon word to denote that vociferation). Whereupon he said to one of his neighbours, Hearst thou how loud this bull crunes? If these cattle should all crune together, might they not be heard from Brough hither? He answered, Yea. Well then, says Brunskill,

⁵ CW1 xi 151; CW2 vii 306.

⁶ N. & B. i 571. For a metrical version see "Brough Bells" by Robert Southey, written at Keswick in 1828.

I'll make them all crune together. And he sold them all; and with the price thereof he bought the said bells: (or perhaps he might get the old bells new cast and made larger). There is a monument in the body of the church, in the south wall, between the highest and second windows; under which it is said the said Brunskill was the last that was interred.

One of Brunskill's bells appears to have been re-cast in 1687, and two others in 1880 and 1887, thus leaving just the original tenor bell.

A bell of about 1500 is to be found at Long Marton, this is no. 2 and is inscribed in black-letter SANCTA MARIA O. IHC. R.; no. 3, as we have seen, is earlier; and no. 1 is blank but could be ancient, we only know that it was already here in 1714. All three hang in a 17th-century bell-frame.

The oldest bell at Orton is not now used although it is apparently sound; it was pensioned off in 1917 and placed in the north aisle where it can easily be seen. It is inscribed OMNIU SANCTORU, and Nicolson & Burn say it was cast at Nottingham about 1530. Dr Burn was vicar of the parish for forty-nine years (1736-1785) and surely must have seen the original papers about its purchase, but they are no longer amongst the parish documents today.⁷ He says

The *church* is a large old building, with a tower steeple, and four pretty large bells. They were cast at Nottingham, by John Woolley bell-founder, in 21 Hen. 8. For which he had (carriage included) £76, by the hands of Thomas Blenkinsop, Lancelot Lancaster, Lancelot Lowther, esquires, John Thornborrow, Rowland Thornborrow, and Oliver Crosby, yeomen, in the name of all the parishioners. The base bell to be like in sound to the third bell of the abbey of Shap, and the other three solemn and sweet consonant thereunto. As appears by an indenture bearing date the fourth of April in that year. But the bells have all or most of them been since re-cast.⁸

Five other ancient bells remain to be recorded. Brougham Chapel has two blank bells which might

⁷ In the Record Office, County Hall, Kendal.

⁸ N. & B. i 484-485.



Martindale Old Church.



Kirkby Thore.

be medieval. Kendal, Holy Trinity, has a sanctus bell, uninscribed, now in the tower but known to have been moved in 1804 from a turret at the north-east corner of the Bellingham Chapel. This used to be called "the Parson's Bell" or "the Tinkler".⁹ The old church at Martindale has a small bell, 12½ in. in diameter, with an inscription badly worn and unintelligible, but it was examined in 1969, when the church was being repaired, and is probably 15th century. The plain church of Thrimby (1814) has a bell, "perhaps medieval" according to the Royal Commission, but it bears the initials $\begin{matrix} R & B \\ W \end{matrix}$ and is almost certainly early 19th century. It is likely that the single bell at Underbarrow is late 16th century or early 17th, but it is a blank one and can no longer be seen, having been encased when the spirelet was under repair in 1966-1967.

There is quite a good selection of 17th-century bells, the majority bearing dates from 1670 onwards, but a large one at Burneside¹⁰ (40 in. in diameter) is dated 1607, and five bells belong to the sixteen-thirties. The two largest bells at Kendal Parish Church, no. 9 and no. 10, are dated 1631. They each have an inscription, and the Royal Arms of the period, and although they lack the founder's name, initials or stamp, they are believed to be by Thomas Stafford of Penrith who in the same year cast a bell for Kirkby Stephen (since re-cast).¹¹ It is tempting to think he may also have cast Troutbeck's oldest bell, now the clock bell, as this is likewise dated 1631 and inscribed JESUS BE OUR SPEED. At Orton there are two fine bells (retired at

⁹ J. F. Curwen, *Kirkbie-Kendall* (1900), 254.

¹⁰ Believed to be by Brend of Norwich and to have been bought second-hand for Burneside about 1881.

¹¹ Stafford made a bell for Ingleton in 1630 (*Yorks. Arch. Journal*, xvii 207), re-cast the Cartmel tenor the same year (Stockdale, *Annals of Cartmel* (1872), 61) and cast the Kirkby Stephen treble in 1631 (CW1 iv 239).

the same time as the old tenor), dated 1637; one of these bears the same JESUS BE OUR SPEED and the other SOLI DEO GLORIA. They are still in their frame and still have their clappers, but hang motionless in the church, having been displaced by more modern bells.

The later bells of the 17th century are as follows: One at Barton inscribed SAINT MICHAELL FOR BARTON, 1672; a pair at Bolton by W. Scott of Wigan, 1693; one at Brough-under-Stainmore with the initials of the vicar and churchwardens, 1687; the bell at Brougham, inscribed NINEKIRKES ANNO 1695 R.A.; and the treble at Dufton, 1673. The bell at Lowther, by William Eldridge of Chertsey, 1687, is in a detached building in the churchyard, not in the church tower; the treble at Morland which is stated by the RCHM to be by Lancelot Smith of Penrith, 1687, bears the stamp of William Seller of York and is inscribed GOD SAVE THE CHURCH OF MORLAND; and the tenor at Ravenstonedale carries the couplet:

ALL YOU THAT HEAR THIS MOURNFUL SOUND
 REPENT BEFORE YOU LYE IN THE GROUND.
 CHRISTO HODSON M.E.F.E.C.I.T. 1694.¹²

Finally, so far as the 17th century is concerned, there are the three bells at Witherslack, by William Seller of York, the tenor dated 1669 and the other two 1670, all three no doubt part of the benefaction of Dean Barwick under which the present church was built in 1668 or 1669, although it was not consecrated until 1671.¹³ The Royal Commission mentions two other bells as being "probably 17th century", at Soulby and Winster. However, Soulby's bell was cast in 1889

¹² Christopher Hodson was a London bell-founder. He re-cast the eight bells of Durham Cathedral in 1693 (Proc. Soc. of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, iv 123-124).

¹³ CW2 lxv 253.

by Warner. Winster's has the initials $\begin{matrix} R & B \\ & W \end{matrix}$ which are the same as on the bell at Thrimby and on the bell formerly at Mardale (now at Carlisle, St Barnabas), and this bears the date 1825, so the Winster bell is likely to be of approximately the same period. Thus the existing 17th-century bells of Westmorland would seem to number seventeen. It is known from various records that there were others, for example at Windermere, which have been lost or re-cast.

Passing on to the *18th century*, the Royal Commission, because its inventory stops short at 1715, lists only five bells at three churches: the 3rd at Bampton, which is blank, but probably contemporary with the 4th and 5th (and this last has 1778 on its waist); the two at Killington by Abraham Rudhall (one of them inscribed GOD SAVE QUEEN ANN); and the two at Milburn, both dated 1703, by R. Ashton. To these should be added the tenor at Orton, again by Rudhall, 1711. The bells by Rudhall are specially interesting because he or one of his men evidently came up from Gloucester to use the bell-house in the churchyard at Kendal, and cast or re-cast bells for various churches in our region.

If we continue beyond 1715 we find the following bells of the 18th century. Bampton: 1st and 2nd inscribed respectively DEO GLORIA and POPULUM VOCO, by E. Seller II, 1729; the churchwardens' accounts¹⁴ show that these two bells were bought in 1779 (and therefore second-hand) from Henry Harrison of Barton-on-Humber. Beetham: the tenor, by A. Rudhall, 1748. This had been cast at Gloucester originally and was "burst" so it was sent there again, apparently by sea from Milnthorpe to Chepstow, to be returned in due course.¹⁵ Clifton: a single bell, 1795.

¹⁴ In the Record Office, County Hall, Kendal.

¹⁵ R. Hilton, Beetham Parish Church, 1933, 13.

Grasmere: the 2nd and 3rd, re-cast by E. Seller, II, 1731; according to tradition they were brought into the valley by sledge.¹⁶ Grayrigg: a bell probably by Ashton, dated 1716. "Hugill or Ings", as the parish is officially called, has three bells inscribed ROBERT BATEMAN MERCHANT IN LEGHORN and dated 1743; they are contemporary with the church which was "begun to be rebuilt" by Bateman and finished by his executors. It has been suggested by Canon Trevor Jones¹⁷ that the bells, like the marble for the communion table, came from Italy, but they look very English. New Hutton: one bell only, 1768. Kendal, Holy Trinity: the 5th, 6th and 8th dated 1774, and the 3rd and 4th dated 1775, all by Pack & Chapman.

At Kirkby Stephen the 7th has the inscription CUM SONO BUSTA MORI CUM PULPITA VIVERE DISCE and the names of the Minister and churchwardens, by E. Seller, II, 1749. Apropos the hanging of this bell there is the following grim anecdote in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1754:

The church of *Kirkby Stephen* is low, and the porch looks but like a hole in a hermit's cell; the steeple is square, about 18 yards high, and has four bells of a considerable size, but not well proportioned to each other; the oldest bears date 1631, and the newest, which is also much the largest, 1749; the carpenter that new fram'd them when this was put up, having made his bargain for the old frame, it happened that as he was throwing down the last piece a nail which he had not perceived caught hold of his clothes, and the piece of timber, being heavy, drew him after it from a window 15 yards high, and dash'd his brains out against some of the pieces he had thrown out before, an accident which was the more regretted as it happened on a *Saturday* night, when the man had just completed his job and was in haste to return with the money to his wife and children at *Appleby*.¹⁸

Next we have Middleton: a bell inscribed VOVO

¹⁶ M. L. Armitt, *The Church of Grasmere* (1912), 142.

¹⁷ The Will of Robert Bateman, 1965, 15.

¹⁸ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxiv 230.

VENI PRECARE and dated 1723, probably by Samuel Smith of York; the same inscription is found at several places in the West Riding¹⁹ where the bells are stamped EBOR.
SS. Morland: the 2nd, 1726, and 3rd, 1764, the latter being by Lester & Pack.²⁰ Newbiggin: the larger of the two bells, dated 1773. Ravenstonedale, the 2nd, 1743.

The 19th-century bells can be dealt with rather more summarily. Appleby, St Lawrence, has a ring of six bells, 1833, by Mears, said to consist of 5 old bells re-cast and one new bell added. Asby's two are by Murphy of Dublin, 1865, displacing two if not three earlier bells. Barbon has four Victorian bells by Taylor (1893 and 1897) whilst Beetham has, in addition to the old tenor, 2 bells re-cast by Taylor in 1880 and 3 more added by Mears & Stainbank in 1890. These last, curiously, are dated 1887, 1888 and 1889, which must be intended to fox the antiquaries of the future. Brough-under-Stainmore has two re-cast bells of 1880 and 1887, the latter was originally given in 1670 by "The Rt: Hon: Ann Countess of Pembrok". Casterton's bells are chimed, not rung; Mears provided a set of six in 1845, but 3 of them were re-cast in 1907. Crosby Ravensworth has long had three bells, at any rate since 1703; the present tenor is dated 1815, the other two 1823, all by Mears.

Crosthwaite also used to have three — one 15th or 16th century, one 1695, one 1861 — but six bells by Warner replaced them in 1885. The old bells seem to have been passed on from Kendal in 1773; two of them had identical inscriptions and had been made for Kendal by Christopher Hodson, but in 1860 one was "accidentally burst" and was re-cast by Mears

¹⁹ *Yorks. Arch. Journal*, xviii (1904).

²⁰ The tower ladders giving access to the Morland bells are known to be late 17th century.

the following year.²¹ The treble at Grasmere was re-cast in 1809; its predecessor, according to Miss Armitt,²² was cast by John Langshaw, of Carlisle, about 1660. (J. & W. Langshaw made the Carlisle Cathedral tenor in 1657 and two bells for Kirkby Stephen in 1658, but these last no longer exist.)²³ Heversham, noted for its ringing, has six bells by Warner given in 1870, but previously, like so many local churches, this had only three bells and Nicolson & Burn record that they were dated 1605, 1669 and 1662.²⁴

Kendal Parish Church's great ring of ten bells includes 3 of 1816: the treble and no. 2 — called "the Nelson" and "the Wellington" — which were brought to the town by canal, and no. 7 — "the Wedding bell" — (so named because of its inscription) — apparently an older bell re-cast by Mears. This firm also provided the bell for Kendal's daughter church St Thomas (1837) and maybe for the other daughter church St George (1841), but the bell at the latter is virtually inaccessible. Kirkby Lonsdale had "three large bells" in Machell's time, but the number had been increased to six by 1724, and these bells were re-cast by the ubiquitous Mears, dated 1825, and hung in 1826.²⁵ Kirkby Stephen's eight bells, with the exception of no. 7 (1749), date from 1877, four of them being new in that year, and nos. 4, 5 and 6 being bells of 1631, 1693 and 1658 re-cast by Warner. The old inscriptions have been repeated.²⁶

There are Victorian bells at various places: Langdale (6), Levens (4, including 3 steel bells from Milnthorpe in a frame in the churchyard), Long-

²¹ CWI vi 84.

²² *The Church of Grasmere*, 138.

²³ CWI viii 521.

²⁴ N. & B. i 195-196.

²⁵ For former inscriptions and weights see CWI i 198-199, also A. Pearson, *Annals of Kirkby Lonsdale* (1930), 106.

²⁶ CWI iv 239-240.

sleddale, Mansergh, Natland and Preston Patrick. Rydal's bell, 1824, is notable only for being from an unknown foundry, signified by $\begin{matrix} B \& W \\ W \end{matrix}$. Shap formerly possessed three bells (a medieval one amongst them), but in 1864 Taylors supplied a new ring of five, and a treble was added in 1882; also at Shap there is a small bell of unknown age from the now demolished church of Swindale; it is rung for early communion and for week-day services. There are Victorian bells at Soulby and at Stainmore. Staveley has a bell of 1822 by Mears and a 1711 Rudhall bell, re-cast in 1868, by Taylor (with its old inscription). The bell at Tebay is 1880, Temple Sowerby 1807, Warcop (2 bells) 1830, Windermere, St Martin (8 bells, replacing 3 old ones, probably 17th century)²⁷ by Warner, and Windermere, St Mary (8), 1882, by Gillett & Bland. These last are mechanically rung.

Some of the other bells are scarcely worth mentioning, either because they are of doubtful origin or because they are too modern to take their place in an antiquarian paper. In the "doubtful" class is Kentmere, a likely enough place for an ancient bell, though it is said to be modern and looks as if it may have been given when the tower was rebuilt in 1866. The "modern" bells include the great ring at Ambleside, consisting of eight bells by Taylor, 1901, the tenor being the heaviest bell in Westmorland. This bell, on which the hours boom out from the Gilbert Scott tower, weighs 32-2-2 and is 4 ft. 9 in. in diameter. The six bells at Burton were re-cast in 1907 by Taylors who also cast six for Milnthorpe (1912), cast or re-cast 7 of Orton's 8 (1917), and provided 8 bells, which can only be chimed, for Patterdale (1958), and 6 (of which the same is true) for Troutbeck (1920).

The bell-founders who have supplied bells for

²⁷ CW2 xxxiv 33.

Westmorland churches add up to about two dozen. Usually the medieval founders are unnamed, but the tenor at Appleby, St Michael, is assigned by the Royal Commission to William of Norwich; "Great Tom" at Kirkby Thore is believed to have been cast at York;²⁸ and the oldest bell at Orton is said, on the authority of Dr Burn himself, to have been the work of John Wolley of Nottingham, 21 Hen. 8. It is a constant surprise to discover that bells, which are unwieldy objects to move around, were brought from various distant parts of the country, making slow journeys over bad roads or, in appropriate cases, being shipped by sea. The old North of England foundries at York and Wigan were fairly regularly used, and at one time there was a foundry at Penrith. The bell-house in the churchyard at Kendal has been mentioned already. This was probably used in 1684 to cast a bell for Beetham;²⁹ in or about 1695 by Christopher Hodson (who apparently rented it for three years) to cast bells for Ravenstonedale and Kendal itself;³⁰ and in 1711 by Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester to cast bells for Kendal, Killington, Orton, Staveley and elsewhere in these parts, including Brigham in Cumberland and Aldingham and Urswick in North Lancashire.

In the late 18th century, Pack & Chapman supplied a good many bells for Westmorland, and the firm, afterwards as Mears & Stainbank, and now as the Whitechapel Foundry, has continued to do so down to recent years. In the 19th century, Warners were quite prolific, and there are about thirty of their bells in the county, but unfortunately this firm has ceased to function. Finally, John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough have repeatedly cast or re-cast bells for Westmorland in the last hundred years, and are still operating.

²⁸ H. B. Walters.

²⁹ Hutton's Beetham Repository, 114.

³⁰ J. F. Curwen, *Kirkbie-Kendall* (1900), 255.

There are records of several medieval, or seemingly medieval, bells that no longer exist.

Bampton. In 1725-1726, when the church was taken down and rebuilt, the little bell was inscribed BEATA MARIA and the great bell SANC PATRIG "in bell-founder's Latin and very old characters".³¹

Crosthwaite. The church is said to have had a "late 15th- or early 16th-century" bell inscribed ME BENEDICTE TUUM SONITUM BENEDICTE VOCITATUM.³² This was seen by Godfrey in 1881, but new bells were presented in 1885.

Kendal. Machell wrote: "the greatest bell is called St Michael's".³³ It was one of five bells in the tower at that time and weighed 35 cwt.; after being broken for 70 years it was re-cast by Rudhall in 1711.

Kirkby Stephen. Godfrey said there was a bell inscribed S. HUGO ORA PRO NOBIS, but this is doubtful as the dates of the old bells before 1877 are known and none seems to have been medieval.

Orton. In 1530 four bells were ordered from Wolley of Nottingham, but only one of them survives.

Ravenstonedale. There was a saint's bell, or sanctus, in Bishop Nicolson's time, 1703.

Shap. One of the three bells taken down in 1863 was, the Rev. J. Whiteside surmised, inscribed AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS TECUM.³⁴

Staveley. Machell, in 1692, records that one of the bells had this inscription: MARGRETAM CON-CREPAT ILLAM DIVAM VOCE SONORAM.

Windermere, St Martin. There was a saint's bell, probably until 1872.

³¹ M. E. Noble, *History of the Parish of Bampton* (1901), 216.

³² CWI vi 84.

³³ *Antiquary on Horseback*, 5.

³⁴ *Shap in Bygone Days* (1904), 11.

The curfew was rung at Kendal at seven o'clock in the morning and seven o'clock in the evening until 1877, and at Kirkby Stephen at eight o'clock in the evening until 1957. The latter was known as "the Taggy bell", the same name as at Penrith. Kirkby Stephen also used to ring, within living memory, "the Kale bell" after morning service as the congregation was going home to dinner. Much farther back, in 1682, Kirkby Lonsdale rang a bell at "seven o'clock in the evening and four in the morning".³⁵ In many places there are records of ringing to commemorate public occasions of all sorts, and it was very usual to ring on the fifth of November.

A paragraph must be added about change-ringing. In the 17th century there were very few towers in the county with more than three bells. Kendal had five. Brough-under-Stainmore, Kirkby Stephen and Orton had four. It was not until the end of the following century that Kendal and Kirkby Lonsdale had six. So the opportunities for change-ringing were limited. In Westmorland, Kendal has always taken the lead in this peculiarly English practice, and some early records were unearthed by Mr E. Jennings, himself a notable ringer. The earliest description of change-ringing at Kendal Parish Church is in 1765 when there were six bells, and the tenor, as we have seen, weighed 35 cwt., and took two men to "ring it up": "The first 120 of half-pull changes was rung on these bells for the first time". In 1796, by which time there were 8 bells, a peal of Grandshire Triples (5,040 changes) was rung, the first in Westmorland. In 1819, when there were 10 bells (the present number), there was "a great performance, a record in the North of England" when the ringers achieved a peal of 5,147 Caters. This was done again in 1898. Mr Jennings concludes his notes with this picture of things in Kendal over

³⁵ CWI i 202.

sixty years ago: "Up to this time (1905) great interest was taken in the ringing by the residents of the town, and after a peal was rung the ringers, followed by the crowd, used to go down to the ford on the river to have a wash."

On a board in the ringing chamber at Kirkby Lonsdale Church is the following:

*If to ring you do come here
 You must ring well with hand and ear,
 Keep stroke, and time, and go not out,
 Or else you'll forfeit without doubt.
 He that a bell doth overthrow
 Must pay his groat before he go.
 He that rings with his hat on
 Must pay his groat and so begone.
 He that rings with spur on heel,
 The same penalty he must feel.
 If an oath you chance to swear
 You forfeit each two quarts of beer.
 These lines are old, they are not new
 Therefore the ringers must have their due.*

N.B. Any ringer entering a peal of six pays his shilling.

Dates and Weights of Tenor Bells over 10 cwt.

1901	Ambleside	.	32 - 2 - 2
1631	Kendal, Holy Trinity	.	23 - 3 - 3
1877	Kirkby Stephen	.	15 - 3 - 4
1870	Heversham	.	14 - 1 - 26
1882	Windermere, St Mary	.	13 - 3 - 13
c. 1450	Kirkby Thore	.	13 - 0 - 0 approx.
1711	Orton	.	12 - 3 - 13
1826	Kirkby Lonsdale	.	12 - 0 - 0
1872	Windermere, St Martin	.	12 - 0 - 0
1907	Burton	.	11 - 0 - 17
1912	Milnthorpe	.	11 - 0 - 14
1607	Burneside	.	11 - 0 - 0 approx.
1731	Grasmere	.	11 - 0 - 0 approx.
1748	Beetham	.	11 - 0 - 0 approx.
1885	Crosthwaite	.	10 - 3 - 0
1833	Appleby, St Lawrence	.	10 - 0 - 0

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