



The Church Bells of Berkshire.

No. 6.

WANTAGE.

In 1892, the peal of six bells in this Church was increased to eight, by the addition of two lighter ones ; and, at the same time, the tenor and 4th (now the 6th) were re-cast, but the original inscriptions retained.

1st. Mears & Stainbank : Whitechapel Foundry, London,
1892.

H. D. de Vitre, } Churchwardens.
W. Jackson,

2nd. Mears & Stainbank : Whitechapel Foundry, London,
1892.

H. D. de Vitre, } Churchwardens.
W. Jackson,

3rd. William Gully. Henry Keepe. C. W.

¹H ⌘ K 1669.

4th. Cast by John Warner & Sons, London.

Royal Arms.

Patent.

5th. The Rev.^d I : V : Button, M.A. R : Cowper :

H : Baverstock : C. Wardens.

W. & J. Taylor, Founders, 1843.

6th. John Penner ∴ Iaferly Masemore ∴ Church ∴.

Wardens ∴ 1660. Bell. W. P.²

H. D. de Vitre, } Churchwardens.
W. Jackson,

Mears & Stainbank : Whitechapel Foundry, London,
1892.

7th. Lester & Pack, of London, 1764. Wm. Lawrence &
Jno. Kirby, Ch. Wardens.

1. These Initials stand for Henry Knight, of Reading.

2. W. P. is William Purdue, a Bell-Founder of Salisbury.

8th. Lester & Pack, of London, fecit. Wm. Lawrence &
Jno. Kirby, Ch. Wardens, 1764.

H. D. de Vitre, }
W. Jackson, } Churchwardens.

Re-cast by Mears & Stainbank,
Whitechapel Foundry,

Weight of Tenor, 22 ^{cwt}. London. 1892.

Small Bell. This bell was made 1609. E. ∴ C W. ∴ S

One of the Bells at East Ilsley bears the Inscription "this bell was made 1022." Although it has been claimed that this date is the right one, and that, if the bell has been re-cast since, the original date was preserved, there is no doubt whatever that the cypher is a mistake for 1622, and, judging from the letters, it came from the same foundry as the Small Bell at Wantage and the one at Denchworth, with a similar inscription, mentioned in the *Journal* for the last quarter.

It is interesting to note that two old Bell Customs still survive at Wantage. The Curfew Bell is rung every evening at 8 o'clock for about ten minutes, from Sept. 29th to March 25th, and what is called the 5 o'clock Bell, for the same length of time at that hour, from Nov. 6th to Feb. 2nd. Land is left for this purpose, the rent of which is for paying the Sexton for the work. Traditionally it is said the purpose was, for the guidance of travellers in the neighbourhood, but no authentic record exists. Another ancient custom is the Shriving Bell, which in Pre-Reformation days summoned the people to Confession on Shrove Tuesday. This is still rung for twenty minutes, from 10.40 until 11. It is now known as the Pancake Bell. The bell used for all these purposes is the same, the 5th or 6th.

W. H. HALLAM.

EAST LOCKINGE.

(*To be continued.*)

