

The Church Bells of Berkshire.

By FREDERICK SHARPE.

PART III.

56. COMPTON BEAUCHAMP.

St. Swithin.

One bell ; $24\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, note F, weighing approximately 3 cwt., inscribed

✱ € m W m A a I A

A facsimile drawing of the inscription is given in Fig. G on page 36.

There appears to be no sense in the first part of the inscription, by which we may conclude that either the founder, or his employee, was illiterate.¹ This is further evidenced by another large **W** having been placed very near the letter R and to some extent obliterated, while other impressions in the mould have been defaced both near the letter I and after the initial cross. The letter E is very indistinct in the casting and may be A, or even H. The lettering, which is decidedly Gothic in form, is in three different sizes, showing that the founder possessed at least three alphabets as part of his stock-in-trade. The initial cross and the letter R are from the smallest set ; the W is from the largest and may be the founder's initial. This lettering is not known to occur elsewhere but both the cross and the letter A bear a marked resemblance to those used by Richard de Wymbish early in the XIVth century. The sizes however are not identical.²

An illustration of the bell in its frame is given in Fig. H., where it will be seen that the inscription occurs in the lower of two inscription bands below the shoulder angle. The upper band bears traces of a narrow, flat, raised band between the moulding wires ; a feature of London XIVth century founding.

On the evidence of the lettering, moulding, shape, and tuning, this bell may safely be assigned to the first half of the XIVth century, but the founder's name and locality are unknown.³

¹ In order to save haulage a founder would sometimes send an assistant to a remote country parish to recast a bell on the spot. The assistant would be given sufficient moulding stamps to form some popular inscription such as AVE MARIA, or SANCTA — ORA PRO NOBIS, together with the founder's crest or initial, and if he were illiterate, the result would often be a jumbled collection of letters.

² Two sets of Richard de Wymbish's lettering are illustrated in Figs. 185 and 284, Walters' *Church Bells of England*. For R. Wymbish's smallest lettering see *Cholsey*, and Fig. E., but here the cross is of a different type.

³ Mr. H. B. Walters is of the opinion that this bell is by some itinerant, or local founder.



Fig. 50. Lettering used by Ellis Knight I.

Figs. 51-62. FOUNDERS' MARKS.

- Fig. 60. Unknown XIIIth century. Figs. 51-53. London, XVth century.
 Fig. 59. Wokingham, XVth century. Fig. 58. Norwich, XVth century.
 Fig. 55. Reading, XVIth century. Fig. 61. Salisbury, XVIIth century.
 Fig. 57. Longford, XVIIIth century. Fig. 62. Aldbourne, XVIIIth century.
 Figs. 54 & 56. Oxford, XIXth century.

The hangings also are extremely interesting. The headstock is of elm and may even be as old as the bell. At any rate it is not later than the XVth century. The bell was formerly secured to it by means of nailed straps,¹ the plug holes of which may still be seen. The unique-shaped wheel was originally a XVth century type half-wheel, to which in the XVIIth century a second half was added.² On account of its unusual design this wheel must have been assembled *in situ* before the bell was hung. The bell is now secured to the headstock by means of XVIIth century wrought iron slotted pins and iron keys. Medieval-type drive-in gudgeons are fitted to the headstock, each being secured by means of an iron stock-hoop in the same manner as that in which a wheelwright fixes the gudgeon in a wheelbarrow.

The clapper is of the medieval type with stirrup-shaped head and an iron baldrick-copse lined with leather. There is evidence that a hardwood pad and wrought iron splint were at some time fitted, but these have now disappeared.

The oak frame is constructed to take two bells, and that there were two in the XVIIth century is proved by the existence of two sets of ground-rollers of that date.

Visited :

F.S. 18th Nov. 1939, and 24th Feb. 1940.

57. COMPTON PARVA.

St. Nicholas.

Ring of Six Bells ; tenor 36 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter, in A flat, and a Sanctus Bell.

| Bell. | Inscription. | Weight. | | |
|---------|--|---------|------|------|
| | | Cwts. | Qrs. | lbs. |
| Treble. | I MEAN TO MAKE IT UNDERSTOOD. THAT THO' I'M LITTLE YET I'M GOOD [Fig. 37.] :::::::::: / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1775 | 4 | 1 | 0# |
| Second. | [Same as treble, but with four loops after "GOOD"] | 4 | 3 | 0# |
| Third. | PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1775 :::::::::: | 5 | 3 | 0# |
| Fourth. | SUCH WONDROUS POW'R TO MUSIC'S GIVEN IT ELEVATES THE SOUL TO HEAVEN :::::::::: / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1775 | 6 | 0 | 0# |

¹ See Boxford and South Hinksey.

² See Fig. H on page 37.

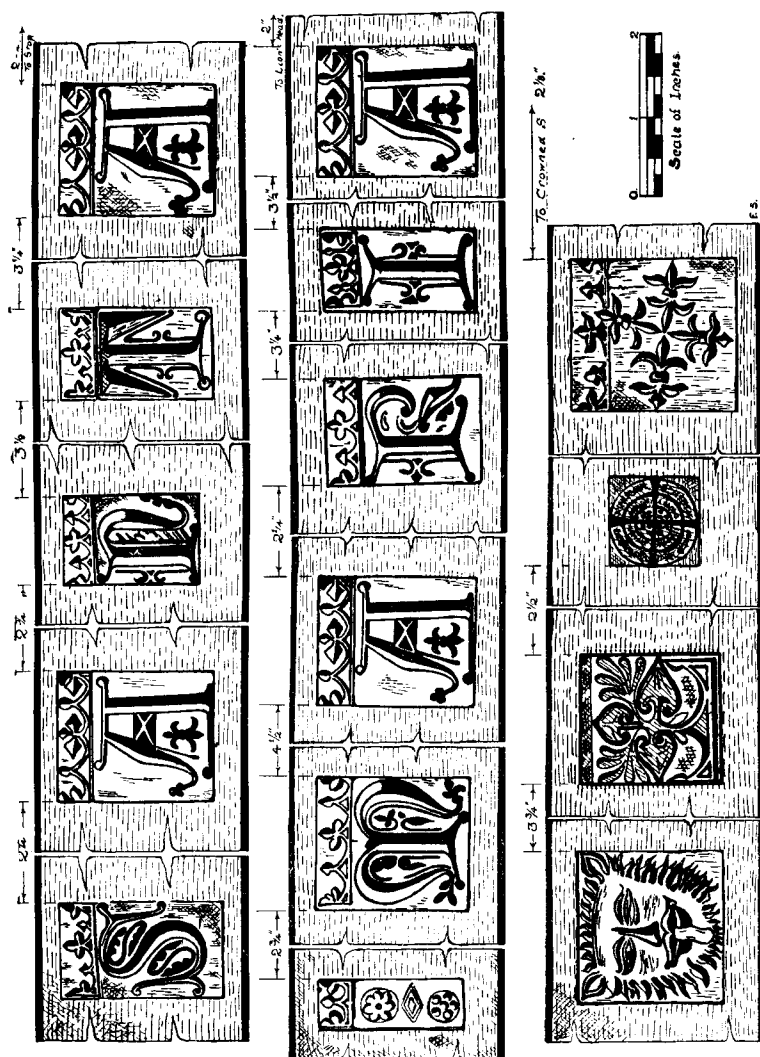


FIG. 63.

Inscription on fourth bell of the ring of five at North Moreton. A XIVth century bell from the Wokingham foundry.

| <i>Bell.</i> | <i>Inscription.</i> | <i>Weight</i> | | |
|--------------|---|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cwts.</i> | <i>Qrs.</i> | <i>lbs.</i> |
| Fifth. | YE PEOPLE ALL WHO HEAR US RING BE FAITHFUL TO YOUR GOD & KING / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1775 | 7 | 0 | 0# |
| Tenor. | YE RINGERS ALL THAT PRIZE YOUR HEALTH & HAPPINESS BE SOBER MERRY WISE & YOU'LL THE SAME POSSESS / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1775 | 9 | 0 | 0# |
| Sanctus. | R : WELLS : OF : ALDBOURNE : FECIT : 1767 : | 2 | 0 | 0# |

A complete ring of six from the Whitechapel¹ foundry, 1775. The treble has a high crown, and the 2nd and 3rd have been sharpened. One canon of the tenor is broken, and the bell is secured to its headstock by means of bolts passing through the crown. All other bells have canons remaining, and have been quarter-turned. Incised on the waist of the 3rd in badly-formed letters is:—W M L I.

The bells hang in a good oak frame of late XIXth century date, and are fitted with traditional-type wheels, stays, and sliders; elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, and brass bearings.

The inscription on the Sanctus occurs above the sound-bow, and round the shoulder of the bell are seven moulding wires, placed in the traditional Aldbourne style. It is hung for chiming only.

Visited :

T.A.T., 19th September 1892.

F.S., 17th June 1939.

58.

COOKHAM.

The Holy Trinity.

Ring of Six Bells; tenor 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter, in E; and a Sanctus Bell.

| <i>Bell.</i> | <i>Inscription.</i> | <i>Weight.</i> | | |
|--------------|---|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cwts.</i> | <i>Qrs.</i> | <i>lbs.</i> |
| Treble. | RECAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1913. / THE REV ^D . DR. GEORGE BERKELEY MINISTER. JN ^O . ALDRIDGE RICH ^D POURTON CH. WARDENS. / I MEAN TO MAKE IT UNDERSTOOD THAT THO I AM LITTLE YET I AM GOOD / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1777. | 5 | 2 | 8 |

¹ It is unusual at this date to find the Aldbourne Foundry eclipsed by London in this part of the county.

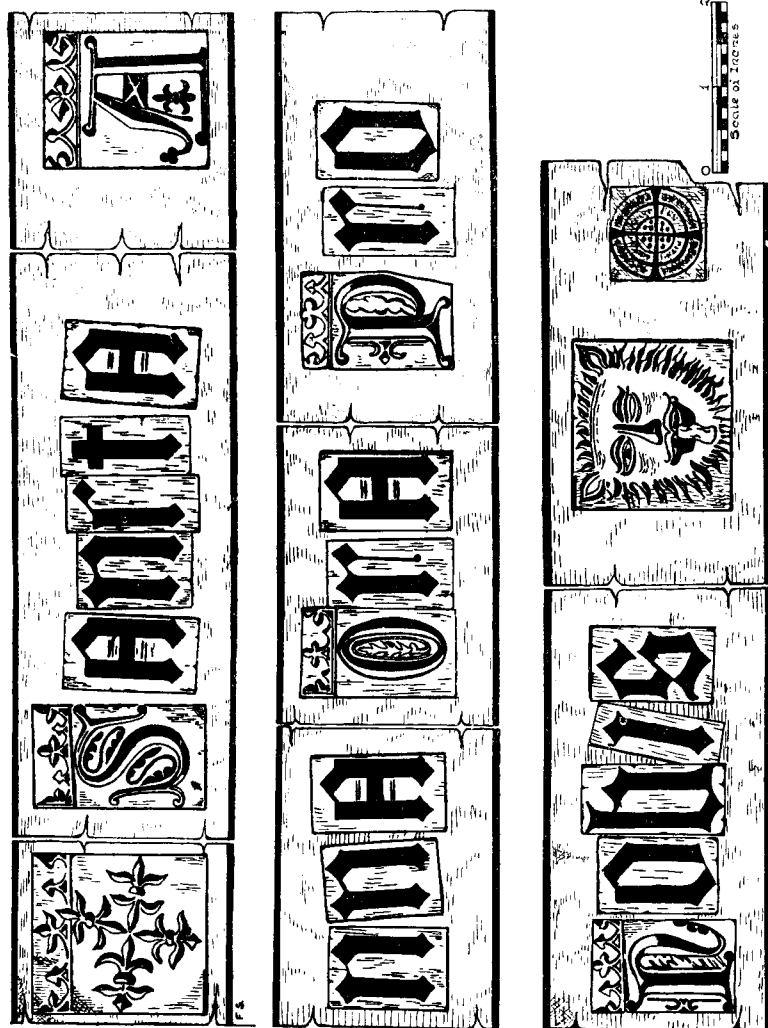


FIG. 64.

Inscription on tenor bell at Farnborough. A XVth century bell from the Wokingham foundry. The XIVth century founders' marks and capitals are here used with the XVth century smalls.

| <i>Bell.</i> | <i>Inscription.</i> | <i>Weight</i> | | |
|--------------|--|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cwts.</i> | <i>Qrs.</i> | <i>lbs.</i> |
| Second. | FEARE GOD X638 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| Third. | HOPE XN GOD X638 | 7 | 2 | 22 |
| Fourth. | RECAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1913. / BRYANUS ELDRIDGE ME FECIT 1650 RL. RS. | 8 | 3 | 5 |
| Fifth. | LOVE GOD 1639 | 11 | 0 | 2 |
| Tenor. | JOHN BALY MA VICAR RICH ^d BROWNE GYLES REE CHURCH WARDENS RICHARD PHELPS MADE ME 1717 | 14 | 1 | 23 |
| Sanctus. | T . S W ✕ W 1669 H ✕ K | 1 | 0 | 0# |

The treble and 4th bells were recast in 1913 by Messrs. Warner, of London, who also installed a new iron frame and fittings and rehung the complete ring.

The former treble was by Pack and Chapman, of Whitechapel, inscribed as indicated in the last three lines of the inscription on the present bell. The former 4th was by Bryan Eldridge, of Chertsey, inscribed

BRYANVS ELDRIDGE ME FECIT 1650 R L R S

The tenor, a fine-toned bell by Phelps, is also from the Whitechapel foundry, and the remainder were cast at Reading. The saunce is by Henry Knight II, and the 2nd, 3rd and 5th by Ellis Knight I. The lettering on the 2nd and 3rd is as Fig. 50, and that on the 5th as Fig. 13.

The ringing chamber here rivals Burghfield as one of the best kept in the county.

Thanks are due to Mr. T. J. Fowler, Captain of Ringers.

Visited :

T. A. T., 8th July 1880.

F.S., 5th April 1938.

59. COXWELL, GREAT.

St. Giles.

Ring of Five Bells; tenor 40½ inches diameter in G, and a Sanctus Bell.

| <i>Bell.</i> | <i>Inscription.</i> | <i>Weight.</i> | | |
|--------------|--|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cwts.</i> | <i>Qrs.</i> | <i>lbs.</i> |
| Treble. | CANTATE :: DOMINO :: CANTUM :: NOVUM :: HENRY : ROBERTS : THOMAS : IONES : C : W : H B 1738. | 5 | 1 | 0# |

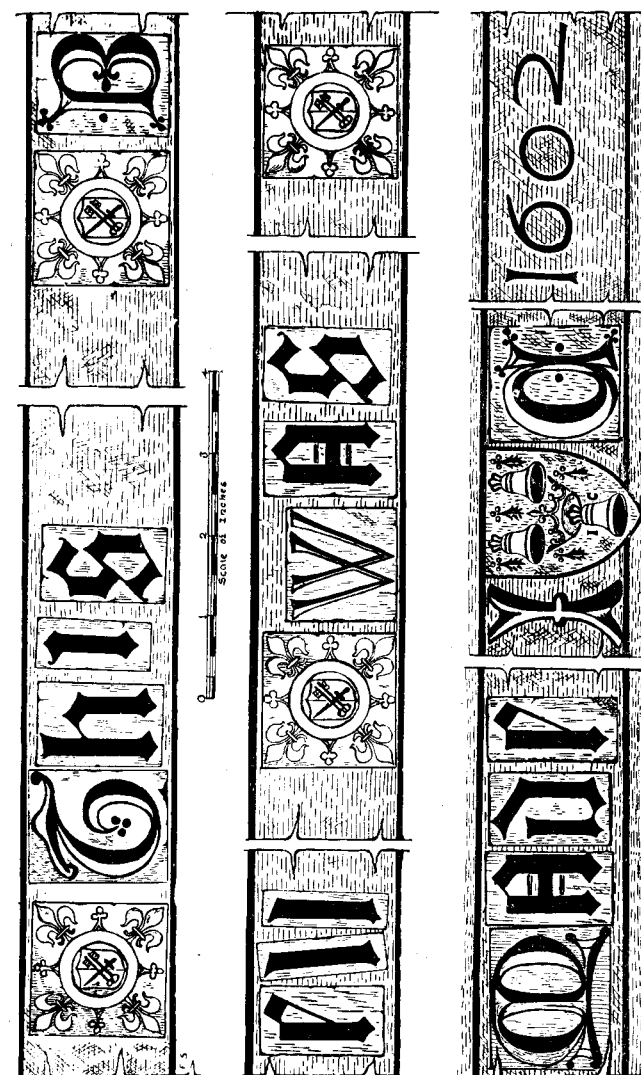


FIG. 65.

Inscription on third bell of the ring of eight at Hagbourne. The Arms of Chertsey Abbey and the capitals are those formerly used by John Sanders; see PLATE IV. The smalls are the XVth century Wokingham set; see Fig. 64. The founder's crest and date figures are those of Joseph Carter, of Reading.

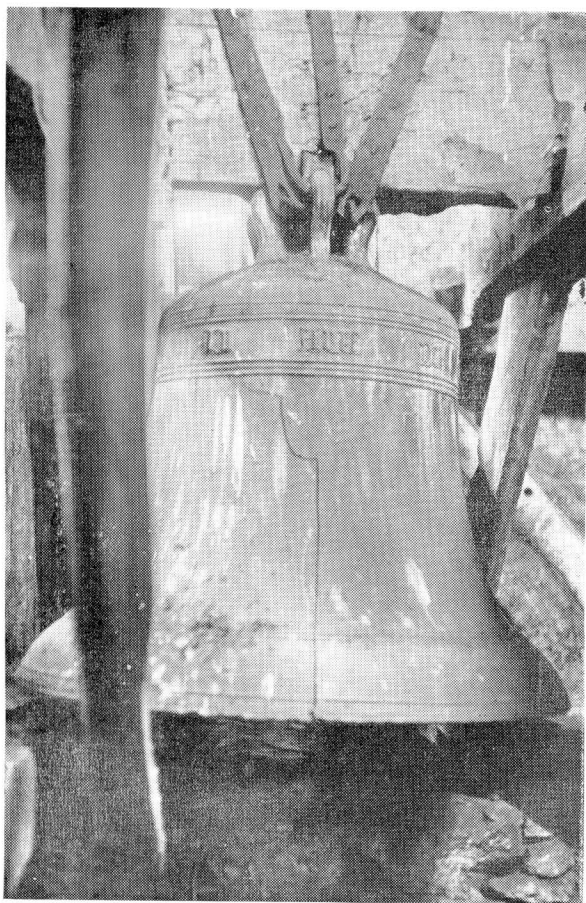


Photo by Rev. C. Elliott Wigg.

PLATE VI.

The treble bell of the ring of three at South Hinksey.
A XVth century London bell.

THE CHURCH BELLS OF BERKSHIRE



Photo by Rev. C. Elliott Wigg.

PLATE VII.

The treble of the ring of four at Ferry Hinksey, cast by Richard Keene of Woodstock. The bell was "rung up" (*i.e.* inverted) and "set" in the "hand-stroke" position in order to get it clear of the framework.

| <i>Bell.</i> | <i>Inscription.</i> | <i>Weight</i> | | |
|--------------|---|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cwts.</i> | <i>Qrs.</i> | <i>lbs.</i> |
| Second. | JAMES FEREMAN & WM GERRING CH WARDENS JAS. WELLS ALDBOURNE FECIT 1824 .: | 5 | 3 | 0# |
| Third. | HENRY : ROBERTS : THOMAS : IONES : CHURCH : WARDENS : H : B : IOHN : ANNS :: J738 ::::: | 7 | 0 | 0# |
| Fourth. | HENRY · ROBERTS : THOMAS · IONES : CHVRCHWARDENS : HENRY BAGLEY MADE MEE J738 ::: | 8 | 2 | 0# |
| Tenor. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. (M) / GLORIA IN EXCELS S DEO. / ME RESONARE JUBENT PIETAS MORS ATQUE VOLUPTAS. / R. C. ST LO AUBER, VICAR. / A. GERRING, T. K. BUTLER, CHURCHWARDENS. / 1911. | 11 | 1 | 26 |
| Sanctus. | REV ^D J. F. CLEAVER VICAR / J: FEREMAN, W: GERRING, CHURCH WARDENS / 1839 / TAYLORS FOUNDERS OXFORD | 1 | 0 | 0# |

These bells hang in an oak frame consisting of top and bottom cills, braces, and end posts. They are fitted with elm headstocks, brass bearings and traditional-type wheels. Strap gudgeons are fitted to the three largest bells, and plate gudgeons to the treble and 2nd. The first four have canons of the normal-type and have been quarter-turned. The tenor has a "Doncaster-type" head.

The treble, 3rd, and 4th were cast in 1738 by Henry Bagley III during his residence at Witney.¹ The treble has been considerably sharpened by hand-chipping.

The second is from the Aldbourne foundry with the usual characteristics of bells by the Cors and Wellses. Its inscription band is taken up by a series of five moulding wires, and the inscription occurs above the sound-bow.

The tenor was recast at the Whitechapel foundry in 1911; and there is no record of its predecessor.

The Sanctus, cast by the Taylors, of Oxford, in 1839, has angular canons, and hangs in the west window of the belfry. It is swung by means of an iron lever, and is fitted with an elm headstock and hoop-gudgeons of early type.

Visited :

F.S., 29th May, 1939.

¹ See footnote to Catmore.

60.

COXWELL, LITTLE.

St. Mary.

This Church possesses a Chime of Two Bells, which hang in a small, open, central bell-turret. Both are inscribed with the date "1663," and were cast by Richard Keene, of Woodstock.¹

Visited :

A. F. Smith, 1925.

61.

CRANBOURNE.

St. Peter.

The Church was erected *circa* 1851. It possesses one small bell, hung for chiming only, in a western turret.

62.

CROWTHORNE.

St. John the Baptist.

One bell, hung for chiming only, in an open turret over the chancel-arch. It was erected in 1873, when the nave was dedicated : the chancel, Lady Chapel, and vestries were added later. [Letter from the Rev. Canon G. F. Coleridge, 20th May 1939.]

63.

CUMNOR.

St. Michael.

Ring of Six Bells ; tenor 44 inches diameter, in F. ; and a Sanctus Bell.

| <i>Bell.</i> | <i>Inscription.</i> | <i>Weight.</i> | | |
|--------------|--|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cwts.</i> | <i>Qrs.</i> | <i>lbs.</i> |
| Treble. | ✠ HENRX KNXGHT MADE MEE ANO X6X7 TB XP / RECAST 1932 / MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. (M) | 4 | 1 | 23 |
| Second. | WILLIAM PERRY GEORG GODFREY 1666 | 5 | 1 | 0# |
| Third. | ◇ EDWARD COOKE HENRX TAYLAR CHVRCH WARDNES H K X62X | 6 | 2 | 0# |
| Fourth. | ◇ HENRX KNXGHT MADE MEE X620 | 8 | 0 | 0# |

¹ These inscriptions are in Keene's well-known type, numerous examples of which occur in Oxon and the neighbouring counties on bells bearing his name. Bells inscribed only with date are characteristic of the first few years of the "Restoration" period. See also Caversham for a similar example from the Reading foundry.

| Bell. | Inscription. | Weight | | |
|--------|---|--------|------|------|
| | | Cwts. | Qrs. | lbs. |
| Fifth. | † LET YOVR HOPE BE XN THE LORD X623 EK | 10 | 0 | 0# |
| Tenor. | GOD PROSPER THE CHVRCH OF ENGLAND ABRA' RVDHALL [Bell : Fig. 31, twice.] 1700 [Border : Fig. 30.] | 14 | 0 | 0# |

The sanctus bears no inscription. Its diameter is 14 inches, and it weighs approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt. [See below].

The treble was recast by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank in 1932. The former treble was inscribed **HENRX KNXGHT MADE MEE ANO X6X7 TB XP ✕** which is reproduced in facsimile on the present bell. The initials TB and IP are probably those of the Churchwardens, and N in Ano and Knight is reversed.

The 2nd is by Richard Keene,¹ of Woodstock : the 3rd, 4th and former treble, by Henry Knight I, of Reading, whose successor, Ellis I was the founder of the 5th. The tenor, a very beautiful, soft, mellow toned bell, is by Abraham Rudhall I, of Gloucester. All the bells have their canons intact, and the five largest have been quarter-turned.

These bells hang in a XVIth century oak frame originally made for five, and later (probably in 1617) adapted for six by the lengthening of the existing treble pit. The frame, being older than any of the five largest bells, proves that the dates inscribed on them refer to recasting ; and 1617 is remarkably early for a ring of six,² being only six years later than the date of the installation of a ring of this number at Harwell. (*q.v.*). The present fittings were renewed a few years ago by Mr. Richard White, of Appleton, whose grandfather, Mr. Alfred White, resided for a short time at Cumnor, and commenced his bell-hanging career just over one hundred years ago by rehanging these bells with new fittings in the existing frame.

The Commissioners' Inventories for 1552, record *iiij belles and a saunce bell*. The present sanctus, on account of its shape, is not likely to be the one referred to here. On the evidence of the frame the bells must have been augmented to a ring of five shortly after this date.

Lukis, p. 63.

Visited :

F.S., 28th May 1932, and 19th May 1939.

¹ For an illustration of the lettering used by the Keenes, see Sharpe, *Church Bells of the Deanery of Bicester*, Fig. 11, the upper set. See also Longworth, Berks, and Fig. 66.

² See *Ibid* page 70.

64.

DENCHWORTH.

St. James.

Ring of Four Bells; tenor 29½ inches diameter, in D flat, and a Sanctus Bell.

| <i>Bell.</i> | <i>Inscription.</i> | <i>Weight.</i> | | |
|--------------|--|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | <i>Cwts.</i> | <i>Qrs.</i> | <i>lbs.</i> |
| Treble. | THXS BELL WAS MADE X624 | 2 | 2 | 0# |
| Second. | WILLIAM BELCHER FRANCIS BELCHER C W HENRY BAGLEY MADE ME J733 | 2 | 3 | 0# |
| Third. | TO THE GLORY OF GOD AMEN. A.D. 1868. / T. S. F. RAWLINS, VICAR. / T. WALKER, J. JEFFERIES, CHURCH-WARDENS. / ROBERT STAINBANK, FOUNDER, LONDON. | 3 | 1 | 23# |
| Tenor. | RECAST BY MEARS & STAINBANK, 1869. / AT THE COST OF THE REV ^D . T. S. F. RAWLINS, LATE VICAR. / THOMAS WALKER, JAMES JEFFERIES, WARDENS. / GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH. | 4 | 3 | 3 |

The sanctus, which weighs approximately ½ cwt., bears no inscription nor marks, and, on the evidence of its shape, is probably not earlier than XVIIth century. It is hung for chiming only in a separate frame in the recess formed by the north window of the belfry.

The treble was cast by Ellis Knight I, of Reading: lettering as Fig. 50.¹ The 2nd is by Henry Bagley III, and was cast at Witney. These two bells have been quarter-turned.

The 3rd and tenor are from the Whitechapel foundry. The name of Robert Stainbank occurs only on a few bells² cast at the beginning of his career.

In the Kimber collection at the Whitechapel foundry are preserved facsimile drawings of the inscriptions on the former 3rd and tenor. The former 3rd bore simply the initial cross fig. 45, followed by the shield, fig. 39, and was cast *circa* 1430 by a successor (name unknown) to the foundry in Aldgate formerly worked by William Dawe, from whom the stamps were acquired.

¹ This is the lettering of Henry Knight I, who was succeeded by Ellis I in 1623.

² There are five bells at Radway (Warwickshire) each inscribed with the name of Robert Stainbank, and others are to be found at Winterbourne, Wilts.

The former tenor¹ was inscribed :—

OVR FACHAR WISE ARC IN BEVEN & WK

and was cast *circa* 1575 by William Knight, the second of that name of whom we hear at Reading. Owing to their pre-Reformation character the authorship of bells bearing these stamps had been a mystery until the discovery of a dated example at Letcombe Bassett. (*q.v.*).

The present bells hang in a medieval-shaped oak frame originally constructed for three bells and altered, presumably in 1624, to take four. This involved the construction of the curious "X" braces to the pits of the three largest bells and the removal of the former centre-posts. The extension to the frame being made on the east side of the tower, also resulted in the bell-rope "circle" being anti-clockwise. In 1939 this frame was in a very dilapidated condition.

The bells were fitted with new elm headstocks, strap gudgeons, brass bearings, wheels, clappers, and ground pullies by Mr. Alfred White, of Appleton, in 1868. When the tenor was recast in the following year, an elm pad was fitted to its headstock showing that Knights' bell had large canons and once hung to this stock. One canon of the tenor is now broken, and a false iron canon fitted in its place. The treble has a false clapper-staple, keyed to its crown, which suggests that this was fitted in the XVIIth century.

Denchworth. three grett (?) belles, a saunce belle a lege (lyche) belle, a sacrynge belle.

(1552 Inventories.)

Visited :

F.S., 22nd April 1939.

65.

DENFORD.

The Holy Trinity.

One bell, 18 inches diameter, note B, weighing approximately 1½ cwt., hung for ringing. It is inscribed with date, 1832, only, and appears to be the work of Thomas Mears Junior, of Whitechapel. It has an unusually round shoulder for a bell of this date, and normal type canons. No means of access to the bell was provided when the small tower of this Church was built in 1832. The oak bell-frame seems to have been placed in position before the tower was completed; and, after the bell was hung, the masonry raised, and the bell *built in*! It was examined with difficulty: ladders were procured giving access to the roof of the Church, from which another ladder was raised to the belfry window, and the examination conducted from the outside.

Visited :

F.S., 2nd March 1940.

¹ See Plate III.

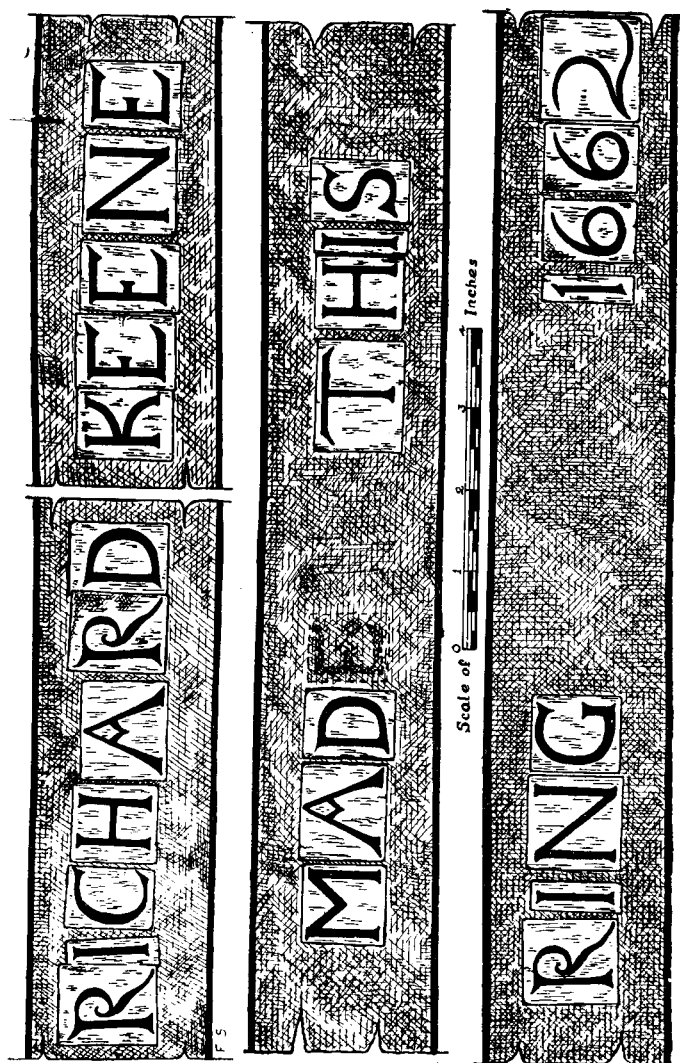


FIG. 66.

Lettering used by Richard Keene, of Woodstock, Oxon. An example from the fourth bell of the ring of five at Longworth.

66.

DIDCOT.

All Saints.

Ring of Three Bells; tenor 30½ inches diameter.

| Bell. | Inscription. | Weight. | | |
|---------|--|---------|------|------|
| | | Cwts. | Qrs. | lbs. |
| Treble. | © [Lion's Head. Fig. 1.] [Trefoil, Fig. 2.] | 2 | 3 | 0# |
| Second. | [Same as treble.] | 3 | 1 | 0# |
| Tenor. | ROBERT IENNINNGS IOHN TAYLER C W 1703. | 4 | 3 | 0# |

The treble and 2nd are early XIVth century bells from the Wokingham foundry. Other bells in this group are to be found at Appleford, Arborfield, and Aston Upthorpe, Berks, (*q.v.*) while in other counties examples are reported at Eastleach Martin, Glos., Aldershot, Itchen Abbas, and Headbourne Worthy, Hants, and two at Rotherfield Peppard, Oxon.¹

The tenor is by Samuel Knight, of Reading, with inscription in his well-known lettering.

The bells were rehung in 1926 by Mr. Richard White, of Appleton, who supplied new fittings, but re-used the existing frame, which forms a part of the small wooden tower in which they hang.

Visited :

F.S., 18th June 1926.

67.

DONNINGTON CASTLE.

In the gatehouse of the castle hangs a Russian bell, probably of XVIIIth century date, acquired in 1886. It bears no date nor inscription, but has a band of floral ornament on the shoulder and a similar one on the sound-bow.²

68.

DRAYTON.

St. Peter.

Former Ring of Five Bells; tenor 42 inches diameter, in F sharp;³ and a Sanctus Bell.

| Bell. | Inscription. | Weight. | | |
|---------|---|---------|------|------|
| | | Cwts. | Qrs. | lbs. |
| Treble. | This Bell Was Made 1601 3 [Shield, fig. 58] C | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Second. | RICHARD KEENE 1665 | 6 | 2 | 2 |

¹ An interesting bell forming a connecting link between the Appleford group and the Chilton group is to be found at Woolhampton (*q.v.*).

² From Walters' MS.

³ From Tyssen's MS., and the Whitechapel Foundry records.

| Bell. | Inscription. | Weight. | | |
|---------------------|--|---------|------|------|
| | | Cwts. | Qrs. | lbs. |
| Third. | © [Cross, fig. 4] [♠] Sancta [♠] Maria [♠] Ora [♠] Pro [♠] Nobis [Lion's face, Fig. 1] | 7 | 3 | 27 |
| Fourth. | THIS BELL WAS MADE 1608 3 [Shield, fig. 58] C | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Tenor. ¹ | [Arms of Chertsey Abbey, Fig. 7] SA NCCA [Stop, Fig. 55] ANNA [Fig. 55] ORA [Fig. 55] PRO [Fig. 55] NOBIS / I [Fig. 55] S | 11 | 3 | 14 |
| Sanctus. | R. WELLS | 2 | 0 | ½ |

Of these, the treble and 4th were by Joseph Carter, of Reading; the 2nd was by Richard Keene, of Woodstock; the 3rd, an early XVth century bell from the Wokingham foundry, with lettering and stamps similar to those on the 2nd bell at Coombe (*q.v.*); and the tenor by John Saunders, of Reading, whose bell founding activities cover the period 1539—1559. Although he lived through the Reformation Saunders was an ardent adherent of the former style of worship, and was not afraid to express his views. Drawings of the inscriptions on the 3rd and tenor of this ring of five are preserved in the Kimber Collection at the Whitechapel Foundry; these are reproduced in Plates III and IV.

The Commissioners' Inventories of 1552 record *fourre belles*, two of which survived until 1871. See below.

Several of the bells being cracked² the complete ring was taken down in 1871 and recast into a ring of six in the key of A natural.

Particulars of Ring of Six Bells, in 1871.

| Bell. | Inscription. | Weight. | | |
|---------|---|---------|------|------|
| | | Cwts. | Qrs. | lbs. |
| Treble. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS LONDON, 1871. / SANCTA KATERINA. | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| Second. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON, 1871. / SANCTUS MICHAELUS. | 4 | 0 | 10 |
| Third. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1871. / SANCTA MARIA. | 4 | 2 | 10 |
| Fourth. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1871. / SANCTUS GABRIELIS. | 4 | 2 | 20 |
| Fifth. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1871. / SANCTA ANNA. | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Tenor. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1871. / SANCTUS PETRUS. | 7 | 0 | 7 |

¹ On the tenor the letter S is reversed in each instance. See Plate IV.

² See Robinson, *Among the Bells*, p. 23.

In 1878, the Rev. F. E. Robinson,¹ was presented by Lord Wantage to the Vicarage of Drayton; and two years later he gave an additional treble, and tenor to augment the ring to eight. The installation of these bells, the necessary additional framework, and other bellhangers' work was carried out by Mr. Frederick White, of Besselsleigh, and Appleton. Also the strike note of the 4th bell was flattened a semi-tone to form the 5th of the ring of eight.

Particulars of Present Ring of Eight Bells.²

Tenor. 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter, in G.

| Bell. | Inscription. | Weight. | | |
|----------|---|---------|------|------|
| | | Cwts. | Qrs. | lbs. |
| Treble. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / THE GIFT OF THE REV. F. E. ROBINSON, / VICAR OF THIS PARISH. / T. N. DEWE, C. LYFORD, CHURCHWARDENS. / 1880 / WHILE HERE WE BLEND IN TUNEFUL SOUND / MAY PEACE AND HOLINESS ABOUND. | 3 | 1 | 22 |
| Second. | [Former treble of six, 1871.] | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| Third. | [Former second of six, 1871.] | 4 | 0 | 10 |
| Fourth. | [Former third of six, 1871.] | 4 | 2 | 10 |
| Fifth. | [1871 bell, lowered from C# to C.] | 4 | 2 | 20 |
| Sixth. | [Former fifth of six, 1871.] | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Seventh. | [Former tenor of six, 1871.] | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Tenor. | MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / THE GIFT OF THE REV. FRANCIS EDWARD ROBINSON. / VICAR OF THIS PARISH. / T. N. DEWE, C. LYFORD, CHURCH- WARDENS. / 1880. / I TOLL THE FUNERAL KNELL, / I HAIL THE FESTAL DAY, / THE FLEETING HOUR I TELL, / I SUMMON ALL TO PRAY. | 9 | 1 | 20 |

¹ Francis Edward Robinson was born at Begbrook, Oxfordshire, in 1833. He was educated at Winchester College and Exeter College, Oxford, taking his B.A. degree in 1853, and proceeding to his M.A. in 1857. From 1853 to 1867 he was a clerk and partner in The Old Bank, Oxford. Having decided to take Holy Orders, Mr. Robinson was, in 1868, ordained deacon to the curacy of Tubney, Berks, and in the following year priest, by Bishop Wilberforce.

See also under the heading Appleton.

² These bells are illustrated in their inverted position in *Among the Bells*, page 6.

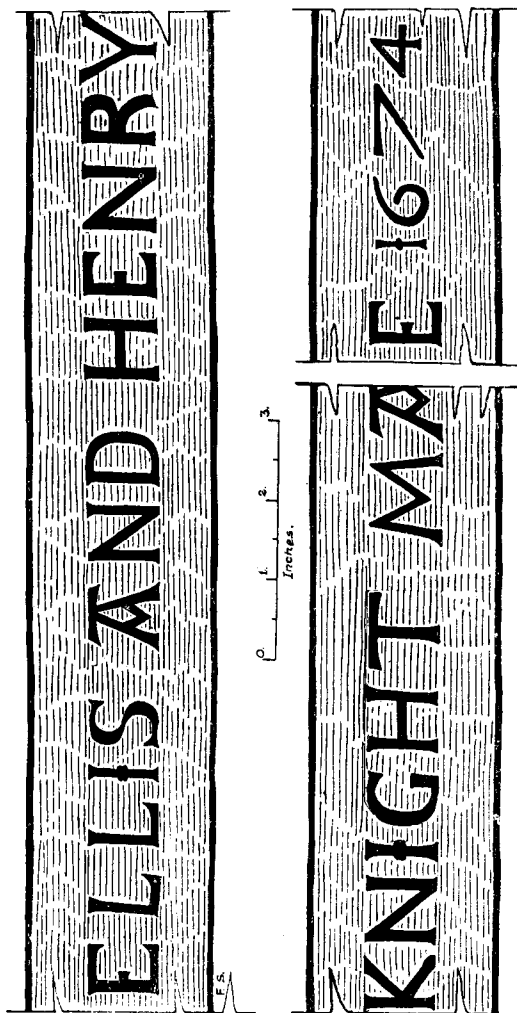


FIG. 67.

Lettering used by Ellis Knight II and Henry Knight III. of Reading. An example from the treble of the ring of six at East Hendred.

The little sanctus bell by Robert Wells, of Aldbourne, mentioned in Tyssen's MS, still remains.

The new bells were dedicated, together with a new organ, at a special service on May 27th, 1880, and the new ring of eight was opened in the afternoon with a peal of 5040 Grandsire Triples, noteworthy as the first peal ever called by an incumbent upon his own bells; the ringers being:—F. Stedman White, treble: E. Holifield, 2nd: Frederick White, 3rd: George Holifield, 4th: W. Bennett, 5th: J. White, 6th: Rev. F. E. Robinson (Conductor), 7th: and Jesse Avery, tenor.¹

During Mr. Robinson's incumbency a very large number of peals were rung on these bells.² The most important ones are recorded on stone and marble tablets in the tower.

On the north side are recorded the following:—

- Dec. 27th, 1880. 5,120 Kent Treble Bob Major, in 3 hrs. 6 mins. by members of The Ancient Society of College Youths.
- Feb. 2nd, 1882. 5,040 Stedman Triples, in 3 hrs. 1 min., by members of The Oxford University Society of Change Ringers [First Peal by The Society.]
- Oct. 2nd, 1884. 5,040 Stedman Triples, in 2 hrs. 51 mins. by eight clergymen. [First Clerical Peal.]
- May 5th, 1886. 5,040 Grandsire Triples, [Holt's original] in 2 hrs. 58 mins. [The first occasion on which this composition was called by an incumbent on his own bells. Mr. Robinson achieved this six times during his ringing career.]
- April 19th, 1884. 5,088 Double Norwich Court Bob Major, in 3 hrs. 12 mins., [First peal in the method by The Oxford Diocesan Guild.]
- October 2nd, 1885. 5,120 Superlative Surprise Major in 3 hrs. 13 mins. [Described by Mr. Robinson as the first time an incumbent had rung a peal in "that Queen of Methods" on his own bells.]
- April 3rd, 1899. 5,056 Cambridge Surprise Major in 2 hrs. 42 mins.
- Jan. 7th, 1897. 5,088 London Surprise Major, in 2 hrs. 42 mins. [The two last were the first in their respective methods rung here, and the first occasions in which an incumbent had rung them.]

The eight peals were conducted by The Rev. F. E. Robinson.

On the south side of the tower are four tablets recording even more famous feats than the above.

A large stone tablet records three peals rung in one day, each in 2 hrs. 40 minutes in three following intricate methods, *viz*:—5056 Cambridge Surprise Major, 5088 Superlative Surprise Major,

¹ The majority of this band were Appleton men.

² See generally, Robinson, *Among the Bells*.

and 5184 Double Norwich Court Bob Major, by W. Cobb, C. Trinder, H. Fruin, F. Field, T. Short, H. D. Betteridge, J. W. Washbrook, and the Rev. F. E. Robinson: all of which were conducted by Mr. Washbrook.

In the centre of the south wall is a marble tablet recording the first unconducted¹ [or selfconducted] peal of Stedman Triples, ever accomplished on Church Bells.

It is inscribed :—LAUS DEO. / ON MONDAY, AUGUST 7TH 1899, / THURSTAN'S FOUR PART PEAL / OF STEDMAN TRIPLES, 5040 CHANGES, / WAS RUNG UNCONDUCTED IN THIS TOWER, / IN 2 HOURS AND 42 MINUTES. / A. W. PIKE, TREBLE. / C. GILES, 2. / F. HOPGOOD, 3. / J. W. WASHBROOK, 4. / REV. F. E. ROBINSON, 5. / W. J. SMITH, 6. / E. HIMES, 7. / REV. G. F. COLERIDGE, TENOR. / FIRST TIME OF PERFORMANCE ON CHURCH BELLS.

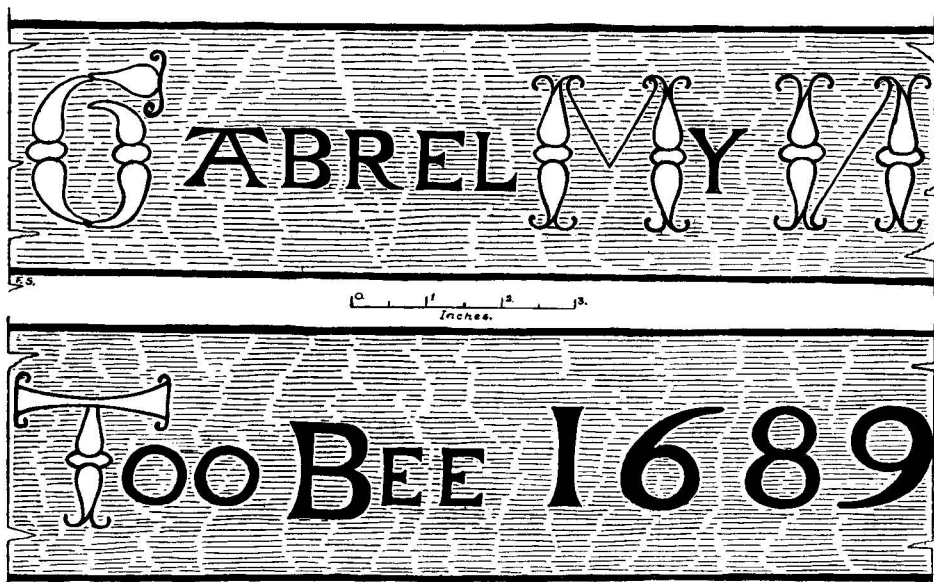


FIG. 68.

Lettering used by Samuel Knight of Reading. An example from the tenor at East Hendred. The large ornamental capitals are part of a set formerly used by John Wallis, of Salisbury.

¹ In an unconducted, or self-conducted, peal the Bobs and Singles are not called. Each ringer memorises the composition, and the whole has to be rung without a mistake, and without a word being spoken. Umpires are required for peals of this kind.

The subjoined comment appeared in "Bell News."

"An uncondacted peal of Stedman has for some time been contemplated by The Oxford Guild. An attempt to assemble a band for the task in December last was not successful. On that occasion non-resident members of the Guild were invited, but more mature deliberation resulted in the determination to select a band from resident members only—the sufficient number being furnished by the two chief towns of the Diocese, Oxford and Reading. August 7th was the day chosen for the business, and at an early hour on that day the arrivals at Drayton vicarage began. By eleven o'clock the men were in their places, and the umpire—Mr. Charles Hounslow, of Oxford—seated in his judicial chair gave the word 'Go.' The command was promptly obeyed; each man settling down to his work with the confidence of an expert in uncondacted work, although none of them had ever done much of it before. Part-end after part-end rolled up with the most satisfactory precision, the single was made as a perfect matter of course, and the prospects of success were of the brightest, when alas! in the 40th course, one or two of the old hands began to look as if something were wrong; and, in the 41st course, two of the bells having shifted, the ringing ceased. After an interval the task was again undertaken at 3.30 p.m., and this time with complete success. Mr. Hounslow's most careful scrutiny could not detect any assistance given by any of the band to a neighbour in distress, because no one was ever in that predicament. The peal was absolutely uneventful: good solid clear striking throughout."

To the west of the last named tablet is another recording one of the greatest of Mr. Robinson's band's achievements, a longer length of London Surprise Major than any previously reached: due to the genius of Mr. Washbrook.²

The tablet is inscribed:—"LAUS DEO. / ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17TH 1896, / A PEAL OF LONDON SURPRISE MAJOR / OF 11,328 CHANGES, / WAS RUNG IN THIS TOWER / IN SIX HOURS AND SIX MINUTES. / C. HOUNSLOW, TREBLE. / F. EXON, 2. / C. FOWLER, 3. / C. EXON, 4. / E. HIMS, 5. / T. PAYNE, 6. / REV F. E. ROBINSON, 7. / J. W. WASHBROOK, TENOR. / COMPOSED & CONDUCTED BY J. W. WASHBROOK."

A marble tablet in the south east corner of the belfry records the accomplishment of one of Mr. Robinson's greatest desires. It is inscribed:—"LAUS DEO / THIS TABLET RECORDS THE 1000TH PEAL / RUNG BY THE REV F. E. ROBINSON M.A. VICAR OF THIS PARISH / VIZ: 5040 STEDMAN TRIPLES RUNG IN 2 HOURS & 47 MINUTES / AUGUST 9TH 1905. / J. W. WASHBROOK JUNR, TREBLE. / G. A. SMITH, 2. / F. HOPGOOD, 3. / J. W. WASHBROOK, 4. / C. H. FOWLER, 5. / H. MILES, 6. / REV^D F. E. ROBINSON, 7. REV^D G. F. COLERIDGE, TENOR. / CONDUCTED BY THE REV^D F. E. ROBINSON. / THE FIRST 1,000 PEAL OF 5,000 CHANGES & UPWARDS RUNG BY ONE PERSON."

² Prior to the composing of this peal by Mr. Washbrook, it was not thought possible to obtain such a length in the method.

This peal was intended to be a repetition of the famous self-conducted peal rung in 1899, and the following account, written by our member, the Rev. Canon G. F. Coleridge, appeared in "Bell News" of August 19th 1905.

"All the original ringers of that peal (the 1899 one) duly turned up with the exception of Mr. C. Giles, who stood out to let Mr. Washbrook ring a pair: the Rev. G. F. Coleridge, who was present, also gladly giving up his rope in favour of the veteran, Mr. F. White, of Appleton, who had strong prior claims to be included. Punctually at 11 a.m. the band stood to their ropes, Mr. C. Hounslow, of Oxford, being installed, as originally, umpire-in-chief, faced by Mr. Humfrey, of Kingston-on-Thames, and the Rev. G. F. Coleridge, with paper, pencil, and watch, checking the course-ends; a wink of the eye, or a nod of the head would immediately have brought up "stand" from one or other of the three, whose eyes were glued upon the performers, more especially on Mr. Washbrook, who rang 3—4 with the apparent ease and accuracy of a pair of hand-bells. All went well till an unlucky 5th bob at 7 in the 2nd course of the 3rd part brought the peal to an untimely end. As it was determined to score a peal that day at all costs, attempt number two was shortly made, the well-worn variation being trotted out, the voice of the Rev. conductor this time being audible to listeners. This peal was also doomed to failure; to the great consternation of the large party at luncheon the bells were set in the 48th course: the slow falling of a bell proclaiming a broken rope. Two days later the band, with the addition of Mr. Washbrook's son, and the Rev. G. F. Coleridge instead of Mr. F. White, rang the excellent peal recorded above. At its conclusion the Rev. G. F. Coleridge grasped the hand of his brother priest, and in the name of The Exercise at large congratulated him on being the first to attain 1,000 peals, referring to the satisfaction felt by the other members of the band in being associated with him in the accomplishment of his long-cherished desire. Mr. C. Hounslow then entered the Church, accompanied by members of the Robinson family and others, and in a neat speech produced an Illuminated Address which he read and presented in the name of The Oxford Society of Change Ringers, to which in reply Mr. Robinson spoke feelingly, and thanked all those who had been associated with him during his ringing career, and for the assistance they had given him in peal-ringing, and in the furtherance of the Art."

On October 31st 1908, Mr. Robinson resigned the living of Drayton, and was obliged on account of ill-health to give up ringing. In all he had accomplished 1,261 peals of 5,000 changes and upwards, rung in 456 towers for 32 Guilds and Associations. He was Master of The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers from 1881 until 1910.

Visited:

A. D. Tyssen, *circa* 1860.

F.S., 21st April, 1925.