

The Church Bells of Berkshire.

PART VI.

By FREDERICK SHARPE.

101. HINTON WALDRIST.

St. Margaret.

Ring of Six Bells; tenor $33\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, in B flat; and a Sanctus Bell.

Bell.	Inscription.	Weight.		
		Cwts.	Qrs.	lbs.
Treble.	THE GIFT OF CHARLES LODER ESQR. A : R [<i>Bell. Fig. 31</i>] 1709 / RECAST 1928 (T)	3	0	16
Second.	GOD PRESERVE THE CHVRCH & QVEEN A : R [<i>Bell. Fig. 31</i>] 1709	3	1	1
Third.	PEACE & GOOD NEIGHBOVRHOOD A : R [<i>Bell. Fig. 31</i>] 1709	3	2	16
Fourth.	ABRA : RVDHALL BELLFOVNDER CAST VS ALL 1709	4	1	11
Fifth.	REVD. GEORGE SHERWOOD EVANS RECTOR, J. KENT. C. WARDEN, W. TAYLOR FECIT 1843.	5	2	19
Tenor.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1868. / THE GIFT OF C. DOANE, ESQ. LONDON. / H. PEACOCK, / W. B. GINGER, / CHURCHWARDENS.	6	2	19
Sanctus.	[<i>No inscription.</i>]	—	2	0#

The Commissioners' Inventories for 1552 state *Hynton three belles A sance bell*, and these, with possible recasting, lasted down to 1709, when a ring of five was cast by Abraham Rudhall I, of Gloucester. Of these, the second, third, and fourth remain. Rudhall's tenor¹ was recast in 1843 by William Taylor, of Oxford, and the treble in 1928 by Messrs. John Taylor and Co., of Loughborough, who removed the canons from the five largest bells and rehung the ring in a new cast iron two-tier frame, mounted on rolled steel joists. Messrs. Taylor also supplied new fittings including cast iron headstocks, self-aligning ball bearings, and "Hastings" patent stays. The weights recorded above were taken after the removal of the canons. The weight of the tenor with her canons was 7 cwts. and 22 lbs.² Cast at the Whitechapel

¹ The present fifth.

² Alfred White's Note Book, fol. 6.

foundry and hung by Mr. Alfred White, of Appleton, this bell was added to the ring in 1868.

There is no clue to the founder of the sanctus but it is not likely to be older than the XVIIIth century.

Visited :

F.S., 6th August, 1928.

102.

HUNGERFORD.

St. Lawrence.

Ring of Eight Bells; tenor 43½ 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.	M. & S. LONDON. 1927. \textcircled{M} / IN LOVING MEMORY OF NIGEL. / "PER ARDUA AD ASTRA."	4	1	24
Second.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON, 1927. \textcircled{M} / GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.	4	3	15
Third.	JAMES WELLS ALDBOURN WILTS FECIT 1816. ∴ ♣ [Bell.] ♣ ∴	5	1	20
Fourth.	[As third, but with ornament after date twice.]	5	3	15
Fifth.	[As third, with ornament three times.]	6	1	4
Sixth.	[As third, with ornament four times.]	7	3	22
Seventh.	JAMES WELLS ALDBOURN WILTS FECIT 1816. ∴ ♣ [Bell.] ♣ ∴ ♣ [Bell.] ♣ ♣ [Bell.] ♣ ♣ [Bell.] ♣ ∴ ♣ [Bell.] ♣ ∴	10	0	3
Tenor.	T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1830. / JOHN WESTEL / JOSEPH ATHERTON / CHURCH WARDENS.	13	2	3
Sanctus.	WILLIAM TAYLOR OXFORD FECIT 1847 /	1	2	0#

The treble and second were added to the ring in 1927. These bells and the tenor were cast at the Whitechapel Foundry. The five oldest bells were cast at the Aldbourne foundry in 1816. [See Fig. 87.]

Prior to 1927 the ring of six hung in a two-tier oak frame. The present eight hang in a cast iron side frame mounted on a double set of rolled steel joists, erected by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank in 1927. The canons were then removed from the six oldest bells, and new fittings installed including cast iron headstocks, fixed steel

gudgeons, and self-aligning ball bearings. The tenor has been sharpened, and the remainder flattened. The sanctus retains her canons and is hung for ringing proper in a separate frame above the others.

On the north wall of the ground floor of the tower is a stone tablet, inscribed :—THE TREBLE AND SECOND BELLS IN THIS TOWER WERE / DEDICATED ON OCTOBER 2ND 1927 BY THE BISHOP OF OXFORD. THE TREBLE, THE GIFT OF EDWARD ROBERT PORTAL IN MEMORY OF HIS SON NIGEL HUGH, KILLED / WHILE FLYING APRIL 30TH 1926, BEARS THE INSCRIPTION / IN LOVING MEMORY OF NIGEL ; WITH THE MOTTO “PER ARDUA AD ASTRA.” THE SECOND, THE GIFT OF JOHN HOLMES / WOOLDRIDGE AND HIS SISTERS, CARRIES THE WORDS “GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.”

The Commissioners' Inventories for 1552 state :—*iiij belles and a Sanctus bell.*

Visited :

M.L.S., F.S., 23rd March, 1940.

103. HUNGERFORD [EDDINGTON.]

St. Saviour.

The Church, which contains one bell in a western turret, was built from designs by Sir A. W. Blomfield, M.A. (d. 1899), architect.

104. HUNGERFORD NEWTOWN.

St. Mary the Virgin.

This Church also contains one small bell, which hangs in an open turret.

On account of the shortage of petrol it has not been possible to examine the bells of the last named two churches, but they probably date from the closing years of the last century.

105. HURLEY.

St. Mary.

Ring of Three Bells ; tenor 35½ inches diameter, in A.

Bell.	Inscription.	Weight.		
		Cwts.	Qrs.	lbs.
Treble.	T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1829. / THE REV. DR. MAVOR VICAR. / WILLIAM GARDNER, HENRY MICKLEM, CHURCH WARDENS.	4	2	9
Second.	[Shield, Fig. 7.] <i>sc</i> [Stop, Fig. 55] <i>te</i> [Fig. 55.] <i>ce</i> [Fig. 55] <i>ba</i> [Fig. 55, with letter <i>c</i> above.] <i>ti</i> [Fig. 55.] <i>a</i> [Fig. 55] <i>e</i> [Fig. 55.]	5	3	0#

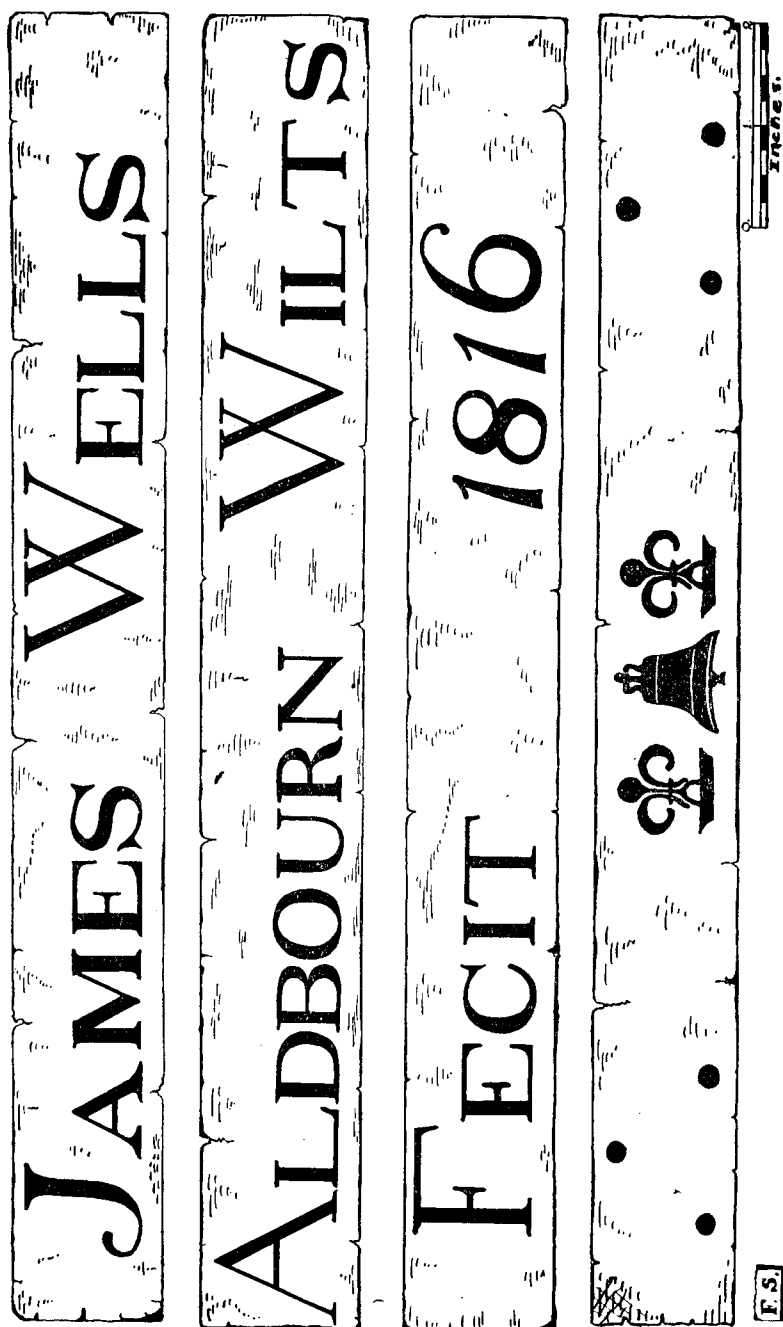


FIG 87. Inscription on present Third Bell of the Ring of Eight [Formerly the Treble of the Ring of Six] at Hungerford. An example of the lettering used by James Wells, with typical fleurs-de-lis and bell ornaments.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Weight.</i> <i>Cwts. Qrs. lbs.</i>
Tenor.	THIS BELL WAS MADE 1602 I [<i>Shield, Fig. 8</i>] C [<i>Fig. 10 four times</i>].	7 2 0#

The treble was recast by Thomas Mears II, at Whitechapel, in 1829, and has the weight painted in white on its waist. It is a maiden bell, and there are no records of its predecessor.

The second is a very thin bell with a diameter of only 31½ inches and giving B flat (approx.) as its strike note. It is also a maiden casting. The shield bearing the Arms of Chertsey Abbey [Fig. 7] was first used on a bell dated 1516 at Aldbourne, Wiltshire,¹ and afterwards passed into the possession of John Sanders, of Reading, whose bellfounding activities cover the period 1539-1559. The inscription on Hurley second is earlier in character than the bells bearing John Sander's initials, and I consider it to be among the earliest of its group,² probably dating from *circa* 1510. Many attempts have been made to decipher the inscription. The late Mr. A. H. Cocks³ suggested that it may be meant for *sancte sebastiane*. The letters however are curiously formed; t could easily be interpreted as l, and c looks very much like r. A facsimile drawing of the inscription is given in Fig. 88.

The tenor was recast by Joseph Carter, of Reading, in 1602, and affords yet another example of Carter's passion for using different types of lettering and moulding stamps.⁴ A drawing of the inscription is reproduced in Fig. 89, and, in this instance, the capitals are from the set formerly used by Thomas Lawrence, of London.⁵

The bells hang in an oak frame of the braced-centre-post type. They are fitted with elm headstocks, strap gudgeons, and brass bearings. The headstock of the second is probably as old as the bell.

The wheels of the treble and tenor are of early XIXth century date, while part of that of the second is contemporary with the bell. This is obviously a XVIth century half-wheel, similar to that at Letcombe Basset,⁶ to which a second half has subsequently been added. The XVIIth century ground rollers⁷ are still in use.

Various repairs to the bell fittings and gear have been carried out at different dates by local craftsmen, who apparently have taken the existing work for their patterns.

¹ Walters, *Church Bells of Wiltshire*, 8, 12, 276, and 277.

² See under the heading "Drayton," and Plate IV.

³ Cocks, *Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 69.

⁴ For other examples of Carter's lettering see Fig. 65, *Berks. Arch. Journ.*, XLIV (1940), 86, and Fig. 79, *Ibid.*, XLV (1941), 72.

⁵ See Cocks, *Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 45 and 81.

⁶ Illustrated *Berks. Arch. Journ.*, XLV (1941), 25.

⁷ For an illustration of one of these see *Ibid.*, XLIII (1939), 64.

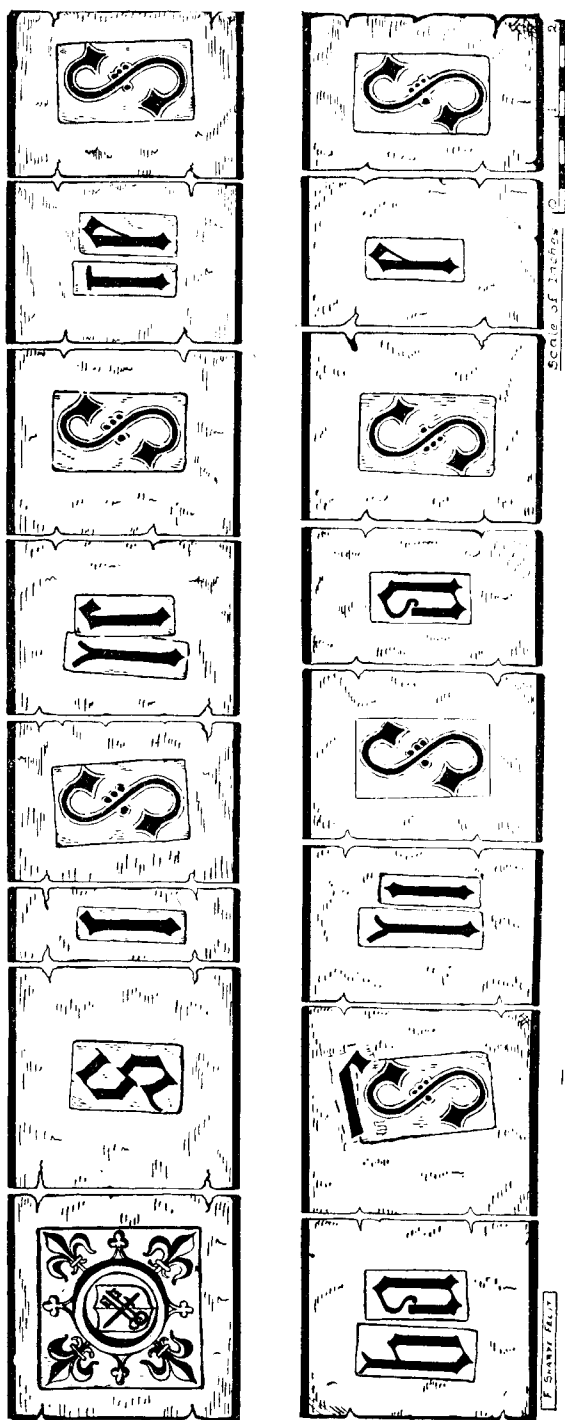


FIG. 88. Inscription on Second Bell of the Ring of Three at Hurley, cast *circa* 1510 by John Sanders, of Reading, or his predecessor. The same lettering and crest occur on a bell at Aldbourne, Wiltshire, dated 1516. The crest and S-shaped stop were on a bell, formerly at Drayton, bearing John Sander's initials, but with lettering of a different type. See Plate IV.

The Commissioners' Inventories, dated 1st August, 1552, state *iii belles*.

Visited :

T.A.T., 23rd Aug. 1892. M.M.S., F.M.U., F.S., 18th June 1939.

106.

HURST.

St. Nicholas.

Ring of Eight Bells ; tenor 44½ inches diameter, in F ; and a Clock Bell.

Bell.	Inscription.	Weight.		
		Cwts.	Qrs.	lbs.
Treble.	✠ Ad Dei gloriam et in mem : Catherina uxoris qua ob: vi Feb. mem : d: d: Edm: Broome vic : / Mears et Stainbank. Londini. Fecerunt. 1911. / (M)	4	2	3
Second.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. / GEORGE V. CROWNED, 22 JUNE, 1911. / HONOUR. THE . KING. / (M)	4	2	16
Third.	PRAYES THE LORD 1634	5	0	0#
Fourth.	[Border all round bell] / X AS TREBL BE GXN	5	3	0#
Fifth.	✠ HENRX KNXGHT MADE THXS BELL ANO X613	6	3	0#
Sixth.	[Border all round bell] / X AS THXRD WXLL SXNG	8	2	0#
Seventh.	FEARE GOD 1642	10	2	0#
Tenor.	FEARE GOD 1639	14	1	16
Clock.	[No inscription.]	-	2	0#

The six largest bells were cast at Reading, by members of the Knight family, at various dates between 1613 and 1642. Of these the earliest is the present fifth, cast, or recast, by Henry Knight I in 1613 and then probably the treble of a ring of four. All these bells bear inscriptions in the Knight's well known "sheet-metal" type. About the year 1630 the present fourth was added and the present sixth recast. That there was then a ring of five is proved by the inscriptions on these two bells, which are the work of Ellis Knight I. The ornamental borders are illustrated on Plate XVI. The present third was added to augment the ring to six in 1634, and the two largest recast, in 1642, and 1639, respectively, by the same founder.

THE CHURCH BELLS OF BERKSHIRE

PLATE XVI.



A.

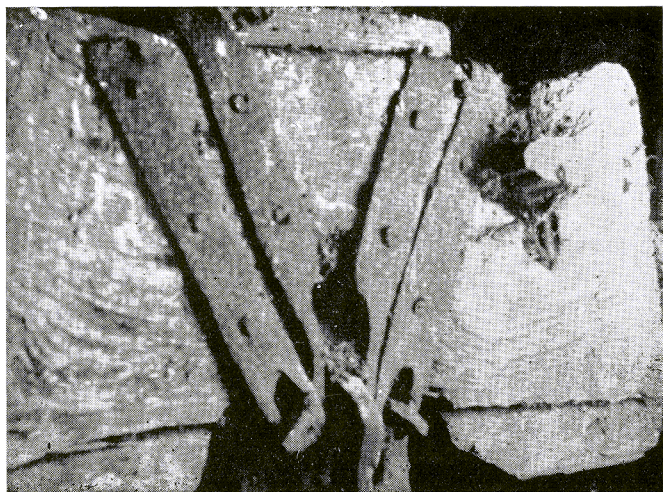


B.

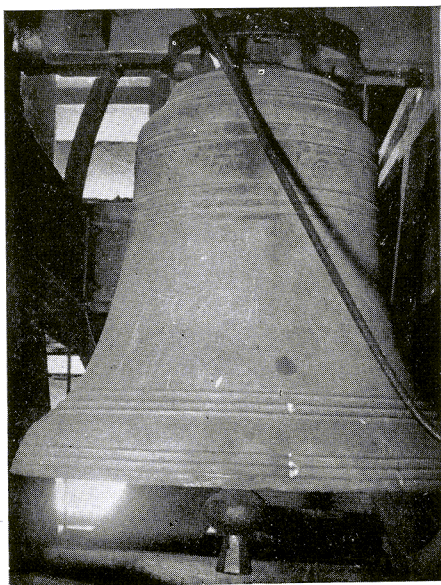
(A) Fourth Bell, and (B) Sixth Bell of the Ring of Eight at Hurst showing ornamental borders and lettering used by Ellis Knight I, of Reading, *circa* 1630.

THE CHURCH BELLS OF BERKSHIRE

PLATE XVII.



A.



B.

- A. Method of securing early XVIth century bell at Kingston Lisle to its headstock by means of nailed iron straps
- B. The Second Bell of the Ring of Six at Kintbury, cast by N. Bolter, on one of the Purdues in 1630. Note the peculiar shaped high crown ; a type favoured by these founders.

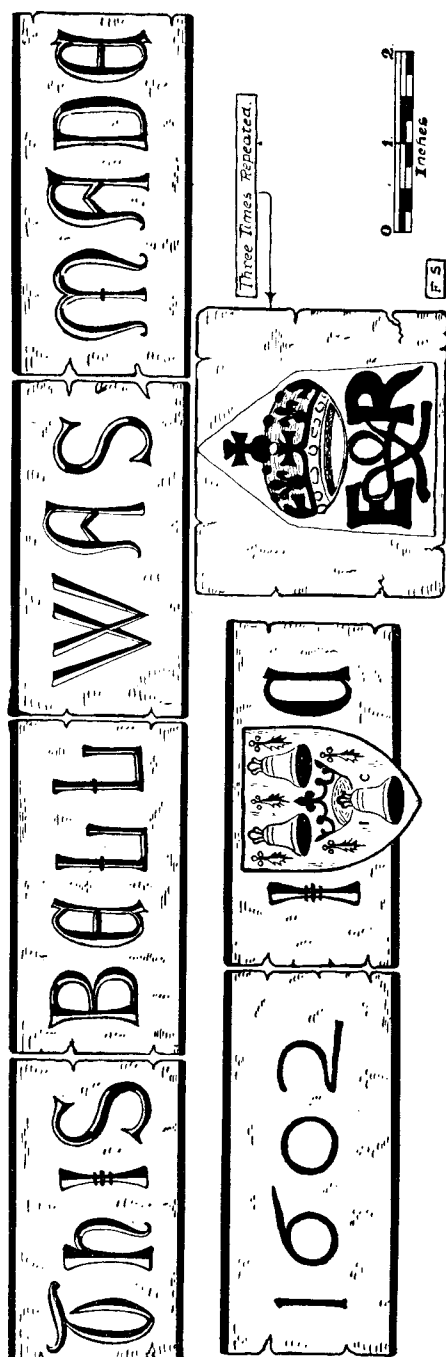


FIG. 89. Inscription on Tenor Bell at Hurley, cast by Joseph Carter, of Reading. The capitals are those formerly used by Thomas Lawrence of London. The date figures, shield, and Royal Monogram are Carter's. Compare Figs. 65 and 79.

During the period 1625-1630 Ellis Knight I frequently placed on his rings of five and six bells the following sequences of inscriptions :—

Ring of Five.

Treble.	X AS TREBL BE GXN
Second.	X AS SECOND WXLL RXNG
Third.	X AS THIRD WXLL SXNG
Fourth.	X AS FORTH SOVND
Tenor.	X AS TENAR HVM ALL ROVND

Ring of Six.

Treble.	X AS TREBL BE GXN
Second.	X AS SECOND WXLL RXNG
Third.	X AS THXRD WXLL SXNG
Fourth.	X AS FORTH XN MY PLACE
Fifth.	X AS FXFT WXLL SOVND
Tenor.	X AS TENAR HVM ALL ROVND

At Bradfield, Berks,¹ we find the fourth, and tenor; and at Hurst, the treble,² and third³ of original rings of five, while at Thatcham there remain the first five of a similar ring of six. That these bells are the work of Ellis Knight I is proved by entries in the Churchwardens' accounts of Thatcham, and the date on Bradfield tenor.

The treble and second bells at Hurst were added to the six older bells in 1911. They were cast without canons, and at the same time the canons were removed from the other bells. The work was carried out by Messrs. Webb and Bennett, of Kidlington, Oxfordshire, who rehung the ring of eight with new fittings in a wrought-iron X braced frame. The third and seventh are maiden bells: the latter being of very fine tone. The treble, second, and tenor have been flattened, and the remainder sharpened.

The sanctus, a poor casting, hangs in a cot above the tower roof and is used as a clock bell.

In the "Reading Mercury" of August 15th 1774 we read :—"This week was opened with a compleat Peal of Plain Bob by the gentlemen of Pangbourne a new peal (*sic*) of 6 bells at Englefield in this county, cast by Mr. Thomas Swaine, of Longford, Middlesex. Monday, at the ringing match on Wokingham church bells the hats were won by the Hurst Youths in their usual style. Reading 2nd. Mortimer 3rd. Binfield 4th."

¹ *Berks. Arch. Journ.*, XLIII (1939), 100.

² The present fourth.

³ The present sixth.

Ringling Matches were very popular at the time and the following two notices, taken from the County Newspaper, give a general indication of the procedure adopted on these occasions.

From the "Reading Mercury," Monday, 29th May 1786.

"RINGING. This is to give Notice that Stephen Herring at the Jack of Newbury at Binfield will give Six Very Good HATS, to be Rung for on Whit-Tuesday, viz :—Five for the men that ring the best round peal of 15 minutes long, and one for the winning umpire. No less than three sets will be allowed to ring. No ringing that day before the Hats are rung for.—There will be an ordinary¹ at one o'clock, and to begin ringing at three. No Binfield man to ring, or be an umpire for either set. Every set to bring an umpire with them."

From the "Reading Mercury," Monday, 7th May 1787.

"RINGING. This is to give notice to all Gentlemen Ringers,² and others, that there will be given gratis by Edward Atkins at the Swan, Stanwell, Middlesex. on Whit-Monday, the 28th of May, 1787, FIVE very good HATS to be rung for, by any company of ringers that chuse to ring, and one for the umpire. (Stanwell men exempted.) No less than three companies to ring. To begin ringing at three o'clock. No try peals after one o'clock. Each man to pay one shilling for his dinner, or not be entitled to ring.

N.B. Dinner to be on the table at half past one o'clock."

The Hurst ringers had been renowned for their ability a century and a half before this. When the bells of Great Marlow, Buckinghamshire, were rehung in 1640, the Hurst Ringers were employed officially to test the work, the parishioners of Great Marlow paying their expenses.³

Visited :

F.M.U., R.G., F.S., 5th April, 1941.

107. ILSLEY, EAST.

St. Mary.

Ring of Eight Bells ; tenor $37\frac{1}{4}$ 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.	✠ RING WE MERRILY UNTO GOD OUR STRENGTH ✠ 1921 (M)	3	1	1
Second.	✠ GLORY TO GOD IN THANKFULNESS ✠ (M) 1921	3	1	25
Third.	✠ 1914-1918 / (M) / A.J. W. J. B.M. A.M. H.N. W.P. E.W. H.W. E.M. F.B. A.W. F.W. W.D. V.G. R.W. E.G. R.T. A.S. G.L. O.M. G.C.	4	0	22
Fourth.	Prayce ye the Lorde © i [Fig. 8] c 1589	3	2	3

The dinner which usually preceded the competition.

¹What we should now term "Amateurs" as distinct from "Professionals."

³ Cocks. *Church Bells of Bucks*, 486.

Bell.	Inscription.	Weight,		
		Cwt.	Qrs.	lbs.
Fifth.	[No inscription.]	3	3	15
Sixth.	CAST 1612. W † Y. RECAST 1921. M & S. (M)	4	1	23
Seventh.	W R COR	6	1	25
Tenor.	RXCHARD WXGHTXCK GAVE THXS BELL X625 † / [Border]	8	2	23
Sanctus.	[No inscription.]	-	2	0#

Before 1921 there were only five bells in the ring. The present treble, second, and third were then added, the latter in memory of the men of the parish who lost their lives in the Great War of 1914-1918, and whose initials appear on the bell. Messrs. Mears and Stainbank, who cast the new bells, also installed a new frame composed of rolled steel joists, and fitted the bells with cast iron headstocks having fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and new clappers fitted with rubber buffers.

Of the older bells, the fourth is by Joseph Carter of Reading; the seventh by William and Robert Corr, of Aldbourne, whose partnership existed from 1694 to 1724; and the tenor by Ellis Knight I, of Reading.

The fifth is an early example from the medieval foundry at Wokingham. It bears the same mouldings as the tenor at Bessels Leigh, and exhibits the typical XIVth century raised-flat-band between the moulding wires below the shoulder angle.

The predecessor of the present sixth¹ was by William Yare of Reading,² and bore the inscription:—

THIS BELL WAS MADE 1612 W † Y

There is no clue to the founder of the sanctus, which is hung for chiming, and is the only bell in the tower now possessing canons of the traditional type. The treble, second, and third have "Doncaster heads"; the sixth was cast without canons, and the canons have been removed from the four oldest bells.

The Commissioners' Inventories, dated 4th August, 1552, state:—*Est Illesley thre grete belles and a lytell belle.*

East Ilsley was the former home of Mr. Richard T. Hibbert, the well-known ringer, and Secretary of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers. He learned to ring here on the former ring of five, and was among those largely responsible for augmenting the ring to eight.

¹ This was the third bell of the ring of five.

² From Tyssen's M.S.

On the walls of the belfry are several tablets recording peals on the eight bells.

Visited :

M.L.S., F.S., 8th Aug. 1936. R.G., F.S., 4th Aug. 1941.

108.

ILSLEY, WEST.

All Saints.

One bell, 17 inches diameter, hanging in an open western turret, and hung for chiming only.

It is inscribed :—

MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON, 1868. / WM. BOWLES,
JAMES OWEN, CHURCHWARDENS. / HON. & REV. E. MOORE, RECTOR.

The Commissioners' Inventories, dated 4th August 1552, state :—*West Illesley, thre belles.*

Visited :

A.W., 1868.

(To be continued.)