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THE
CHURCH BELLS OF
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VOLUME III.

BY
FREDERICK SHARPE

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NOTE.

For an explanation of the procedure followed in describing the bells see Volume I (Oxfordshire Record Society's Volume XXVIII), pp. 5—8.

THE CHURCH BELLS OF OXFORDSHIRE

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FREDERICK SHARPE.

VOLUME III.

192.

OXFORD.

The Cathedral Church of Christ.

With the exception of Big Ben, of Westminster, and the bells of St. Mary-le-Bow in the City of London, the bells of Christ Church, Oxford, are probably better known to laymen than any others in the country. They are housed in two towers: a campanile, situated above the staircase leading to the dining hall, contains a ring of twelve bells and a disused Litany bell; another campanile above the gateway leading from the city into the great quadrangle contains a bourdon bell. The tenor of the ring has a diameter of 56 inches, and its strike-note is D ♯; the diameter of Great Tom, the bourdon bell, is 85 inches, and its strike-note is approximately A natural.

Few bells have had more written about them than Great Tom and those now in the cathedral belfry; they have been popularised by such catches as *Great Tom is cast*, and Dr. Aldrich's work *Hark! the bonny Christ Church bells*; and have been familiar to generations of Oxford men. Many are the references to them in the works of Anthony Wood; they are described by Browne Willis, the antiquary, and Thomas Hearne, the diarist, from whose writings we learn much about Oxford ringers and ringing in the eighteenth century. They are described, sometimes inaccurately, in numerous guide books and local histories; leading writers on campanology¹

¹ W. C. Lukis, *An Account of Church Bells*, 1857. H. T. Ellacombe, *Notes and Queries*, 3rd Series, II, 1862; *Bells of the Church*, 1872; *The Church Bells of Gloucestershire*, 1877. T. North, *English Bells and Bell Lore*, 1888. A. H. Cocks, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 1897. J. J. Raven, *The Bells of England*, 1906. F. E. Robinson, *Among the Bells*, 1909. H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 1912. J. R. Nichols, *Bells thro' the Ages*, 1928. E. Morris, *The History and Art of Change Ringing*, 1931. J. A. Trollope, *The Ringing World*, 1940.

tell portions of their story, and modern writers on Christ Church¹ have by their excellent researches made valuable contributions to our knowledge of them.

Having been often told, it may be thought that the story of these famous bells is so well known that only a passing description is necessary, but it is doubtful if this is so. On the contrary, although much has been written in the past no one has yet related a full and complete history of the bells, so far as this is known, from the viewpoint of both antiquary and campanologist; and the accumulated mass of evidence presents many problems. In the following account reference is given wherever possible to original documents and quotations, and acknowledgment is willingly made of the debt due to previous writers; and, as much has recently been discovered relating to the various branches of the art of campanology, the present account is written in the light of modern research.

The ring at Christ Church Cathedral had its origin in the Abbey of Osney, which was situated some 350 yards to the south-west of the present church of St. Thomas, Oxford. On its foundation in 1129 the Abbey was provided with a ring of three bells in addition to a saunce, or sanctus bell, and a Litany bell.² Before the dissolution of the monasteries the Abbey possessed at least eight bells, far famed for their size and melody, and unique in their tuning: some of these exist today. As at Windsor Castle and elsewhere, the eight bells were not all in the Abbey ring but included a large bourdon bell, a Litany bell, and possibly also a saunce. Writing in the year 1661, Anthony Wood, himself a ringer,³ describes them thus:⁴

“(Tower of Osney Church.)

At the west end of the church was situated the campanile or tower, which enduring the brunt stood firme and whole within these 17 yeares.

(The bells of Osney.)

It contained a larg and melodious ring of bells, the best as was thought in England; as John Maior, a Scottish historian, reporteth in these words:—

‘*campanis coenobii de Osneya nullae in Anglia meliores putantur.*’

At the first foundation there were but three besides the saints⁵ and letany bells, but by Abbat Leech increased to the number of 7; which (as I find out of an old ‘rationale’ sometimes belonging to this church and

¹ W. D. Caroe, *Wren and Tom Tower*, 1922. W. G. Hiscock, *A Christ Church Miscellany*, 1946.

² A. Wood, *City of Oxford*, ed. A. Clarke, Vol. II, *Oxford Historical Society*, Vol. XVII, 1890, pp. 197, 220, 221.

³ See p. 72.

⁴ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 220.

⁵ A term frequently used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to describe sanctus, or saunce bells.

which speaks of the office of every bell in ringing on severall festivalls and tolling of knells) were christened¹ and called by the names of 'Hauteclere', 'Douce', 'Clement', 'Austyn', 'Marie', 'Gabriel' and 'John'."

An illustration of the tower, from a drawing by John Aubrey, was published in the eighteenth century.² It appears to have been of massive construction and of four stages; in each elevation were five belfry windows; a two-light one in the uppermost stage, and two single-light ones in each of the next two stages. A conjectural drawing of the Abbey, and illustrations of the ruins at various dates were recently published by Mr. T. W. Squires.³

Wood tells us that John Leeche was consecrated as the seventh Abbot in 1235 and resigned in 1249. During his term of office most of the Abbey was rebuilt with additions, "he himself expending much 'de proprio' towards it."⁴ Of the bells mentioned above, "Hauteclere" was probably so named in honour of St. John the Evangelist, as was a similar thirteenth century bell in Worcester Cathedral;⁵ the name "Clement" suggests that a bell had been installed as a memorial to the fourth abbot;⁶ "Douce" and "Austyn" were probably so named after donors or benefactors; "Mary" indicates the "Lady bell";⁷ "Gabriel" was the name usually given to the angelus bell;⁸ and "John" was probably the "great bell."

The "Lady bell" was used in connection with services held in the Lady Chapel; each of the others had its own particular use,⁹ and all were rung together on special occasions: they were also used to denote the canonical hours. Writing in the eighteenth century Francis Peck tells us:¹⁰

"In great abbeys these (canonical) hours were sounded on large bells, which distinguished themselves above those belonging to parish churches by their solemn, deep, notes . . . Before the Reformation the bell which rung for Evensong was called the *Ave Maria* bell; the angelical salutation being then always said. For in monasteries, as they had so many bells, so they also rung them at particular services. Thus at *Ousney Abby* they had six bells, called Douce, Clement, Austin, Hauteclere [*sic*], Gabriel and

¹ For a description of the baptism of a bell, see *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XLIX, 1946, p. 3.

² *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1771, p. 153.

³ T. W. Squires, *In West Oxford*, 1928, pp. 85—111. His statement, on p. 91, that there were ten bells in the western tower is incorrect.

⁴ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 212.

⁵ H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of Worcestershire*, 1930, p. 241.

⁶ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 211.

⁷ D. Rock, *The Church of Our Fathers*, 1905, Vol. III, p. 213.

⁸ H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 1912, p. 267, 'Gabriel' and 'John' were used together on certain occasions. T. Hearne, *Discourses*, 1720, p. 305.

⁹ D. Rock, *ut sup.*, p. 166.

¹⁰ F. Peck, *Desiderata Curiosa*, 1779, Lib. VI, § 21.

Iohn.¹ And in an old MS. relating to the religious offices performed in that Abby it is said :—'Finito *Agnus Dei* cnollentur [sic] *Douce, Clement et Austin*, et post missam per non magnum spacium pulsantur.—Et notandum, quod semper post magnam missam pulsantur *Hautecler* [sic] ; ad completorium² *Gabriel vel Ion*'.³

I consider that the use of the verb *cnollare* signifies "tolling", and that the verb *pulsare* signifies "ringing." Coming in the Mass at the end of the *Agnus Dei* tolling in the traditional manner would be an easy matter, particularly if the bells were rung or tolled from the ground floor. Dr. Raven has suggested⁴ that *cnollare* signifies "clocking", but as in this instance it would involve an ascent to the bell chamber to disconnect the clocking ropes between the *Agnus Dei* and the end of Mass, I do not think clocking is meant here. I suggest that three of the smaller bells were used at the end of the *Agnus Dei* : it would not be usual in English custom to ring heavy bells during Mass.

Wood implies that in the thirteenth century Oseney Abbey possessed a grand total of seven bells, including those used as the saunce and Litany bells, and he continues :—⁵

"All of which, for the most part, toward the suppression (being before broke and recast) had gotten new names which by tradition we have thus :—'Mary and Jesus', 'Meribus and Lucas', 'Newbell and Thomas', 'Conger and Goldeston'.

Which 'Thomas' now commonly called 'Great Tom of Christchurch' had this inscription not long since⁶ remaining upon it :—

'in Thomae laude resono Bim Bom sine fraude'

It being one of the biggest of their bells was accounted 6 foot in diameter which is 18 foot in compass, and therefore reputed to be as big as 'Edward' bell at Westminster, or 'Dunstan' bell at Canterbury spoken of by Bishop Godwin."

It will be seen that Wood's list of bells, remaining at the suppression of the monasteries in the sixteenth century, contains eight names ; and, as one of these is "Newbell", we may infer that it had recently been added to the seven previously mentioned. He also implies that "Thomas" hung in the western tower with the other bells,⁷ but J. Gutch, writing just over a century after Wood, states that Tom hung in the central tower.⁸

¹ N.B. "Mary" is omitted from this list.

² Compline.

³ T. Hearne, *Discourses*, 1720, p. 305.

⁴ J. J. Raven, *The Bells of England*, 1906, p. 322.

⁵ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 220.

⁶ This inscription probably remained until 1654. Wood wrote this account in 1661.

⁷ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 220.

⁸ J. Gutch, *The History and Antiquities of The Colleges and Halls in the University of Oxford*, by Anthony Wood, with a continuation to the present time, MDCCCLXXXVI, p. 451.

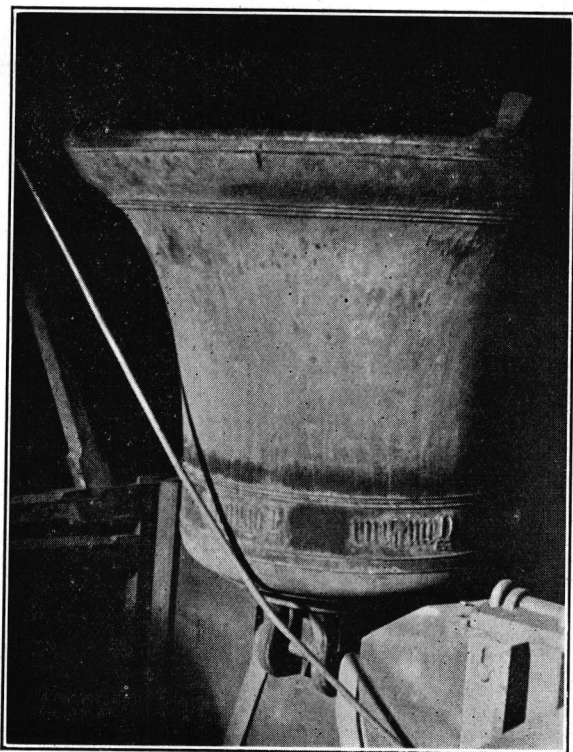


Photo :

F. M. Underhill, Esq., F.S.A.

Fig. 29. Christ Church, Oxford. The ninth bell of the ring of twelve, cast by John Bird, of London, *circa* 1410. The bell formerly hung in Oseney Abbey.

Among the Oseney Rolls given to the Bodleian Library by Anthony Wood is the computus of the sacristan of the Abbey from Michaelmas 1487 to Michaelmas 1488.¹ In it we read :

"item pro clavis & pro subleuacione campane de nomine Ihesu² & aliis necessariis per annum vjd."

"item pro magna corda empta pro le Austen xvijjd."

"item pro pinguedine empta pro campanis per annum xiiijjd."

In the computus of the sacristan for the year from Michaelmas 1495 to Michaelmas 1496 we read :³

"item sol' Henrico Roper pro duabus magnis cordulis pro le Iohn & Gabriel iijjs."

"item sol' eidem & aliis diversis hominibus pro emendacione diversarum cordularum voc' le schutting⁴ per annum viijjd."

"item sol' Willelmo Bysall pro factura & emendacione divers' le Baudricks⁵ ad diversa tempora per annum vd."

"item sol' pro pinguedine empt' per Ric' Barford pro campanis vjd."

From these accounts we learn that, by the end of the fifteenth century, at least three of the seven bells, first mentioned by Wood, were still known by their original names. This implies that three of Abbot Leech's bells, i.e. "Austyn," "Gabriel" and "John" were then still in existence. We have evidence that by the end of the fifteenth century four had been recast ; and of these we have first the bell named "Thomas", not mentioned in the original list, which Wood tells us was inscribed with a Latin hexameter of a type common in the fifteenth century ; secondly, the two bells still extant, cast by John Bird *circa* 1410 ; and lastly, the bell "Ihesu", mentioned in the sacristan's accounts, and given in Wood's list of bells remaining at the suppression. As Wood says that the bells were renamed after being broken and recast, it follows that between the years 1488 and 1546 "Austyn" was recast ; that between the years 1496 and 1546 "Gabriel" and "John" were recast, because by the latter date they had been renamed.

In the year 1539 Oseney Abbey surrendered to the king ; three years later the diocese of Oxford was founded with the Abbey Church as its Cathedral. This, in turn, surrendered in 1545 and the see was refounded as Christ Church at St. Frideswide's in the following year.⁶

¹ H. E. Salter, *The Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, Vol. VI., *The Oxford Historical Society*, Vol. CI., 1936, pp. 297—299.

² One of the recast bells : its name does not occur in Wood's first list.

³ H. E. Salter, *ut sup.*, p. 302.

⁴ "Shutting", or "splicing".

⁵ "Baldricks", i.e. the leather thongs by which in former times the clappers were suspended.

⁶ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, pp. 3, 7 and 224.

A memorandum dated 1st October in the thirty seventh year of the reign of Henry VIII states :

"The king's matie is also pleased and contented that the saide deane and prebendaryes shall have all the ornaments, plate, and juelles, and all stone, tymbere, glas, ironne, belles, and ledde, which remained at the late cathederalle (*sic*) chorche of Osney and colledge of Fridswids, or other theme, at the time of the dissolution of the same, together with suche somes of moneye as weare due and owinje unto the said late cathedrelle church of Osneye at the tyme of their surrendore thereof."¹

The church of the dissolved Priory of St. Frideswide became jointly the Cathedral of the diocese of Oxford and the chapel of the college of Christ Church.² Oseney Abbey Church, together with the adjoining monastic property, was gradually demolished.

In the account, dated Michaelmas 1546, containing payments for demolition work at Oseney Abbey, are the following entries :³

"Item to Syngleton, for setting the gable rope from Newbery to pull down ye bells iijs."

"Item, to John Wesburne, carpenter, takyng down the bell, for hymself iij days ijs."

"Item, to John Wesburne, chief carpenter, takyng down the bells for vj days iijs."

"Item, paid to Haryson for one day goyng to ye wode to help home tymber, and for lendyng his men to help down the great bell viijd."

"Item, to Wesburne and his men, one day in ye steple about the great bell and his frame iijs."

"Item, to Wellbye of Ensham, for caryege of the great bell to Fryswids, 26 September xxs."

"Item, to John Wesburne, chief carpenter, about ye loft in Fryswids steple, iij days ijs."

"Item to John Wesburne, chief carpenter, at the steple at Fryswides, vj days iijs."

"Item, for ale to theym laboreres at ye wyndyng up of the great bell into Friswides steple iiij d."

"Item, for his (John Wesburne's) iij laborers hangyng the great bell, makyng the flore vs vd."

"Item, to ij fellowes helpyng to hang hit up ij d."

"Item, payd to Wynkyll the smyth, in parte of payment for his yron worke about the mylls and Fryswids, and the great bell clapper xls."

"Item, to Wesburne, carpenter, setting upon the frame and bells into Fryswides steple xiijs."

At this point I deem it advisable to offer a few notes on the composition of medieval rings.

There is an oral tradition among ringers that before the Reformation one church in the City of London possessed a ring of eight

¹ J. Britton, *The History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of Oxford*, 1821, p. 13.

² A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 226 ff.

³ *MS. Top. Oxon, b.16.*, Bodleian Library, Oxford. W. H. Turner, *Selections from the Records of The City of Oxford*, 1879, pp. 182-184.

bells;¹ but we have no documentary evidence in support of this tradition, and the City bells perished in the Great Fire. Rings of six were extremely rare in the medieval period : we have evidence of one at the church of St. Mary, Redcliffe, Bristol;² there was another at the Church of St. Saviour, Southwark (now Southwark Cathedral);³ and there were possibly four such rings in London.⁴ According to the Edwardian inventories, at the church of St. Michael, Cornhill, there were *vj great bells*⁵ and *ij sawnse bells* ; St. Sepulchre without Newgate possessed *one great bell called baynard castell that servythe the clock, with syxe other bells in one Ryng, and one santes bell*; and at St. Magnus there were *vj bells commonly used to be rong, a clock bell and a sanctus*. We have also the tradition that Dick Whittington heard the bells of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, ringing the six-bell "change": 1-3-5-2-4-6 in the latter years of the reign of Edward III. The music of the bells seemed to him to say : "Turn a-gain, Whit-ting-ton, Thrice Lord Mayor of Lon-don". This "change", afterwards known to ringers as "Whittington's", later came to be called "Queens" because Queen Elizabeth is said to have expressed a preference for it : these names are retained today.

From the Edwardian inventories we learn that in medieval times most of the churches in London, and the principal churches elsewhere, possessed rings of five bells; others had rings of four bells; and besides these there was nearly always a saunce.⁶ The majority of village churches possessed rings containing three, or four bells; a few had five, and a few had two bells : except in the remoter districts there was seldom only one. In addition most village churches possessed a saunce. A survey of a considerable number of the smaller medieval rings has revealed that about half of them were tuned. For this purpose the major scale was not universally adopted : but any of the medieval "modes" were used. A few rings tuned in these ancient scales exist today, chiefly where bells have been recast individually to replace older ones. At East

¹ The earliest ring of eight bells of which we have certain knowledge was erected at Bishops Cannings, Wiltshire, in 1602. For a list of the earliest rings of eight in various counties, see *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XLIX, 1946, p. 9.

² *The Ringing World*. 16 Jan., 1946.

³ J. C. L. Stahlschmidt, *Surrey Bells and London Bell-founders*, 1884, p. 200.

⁴ A. D. Tyssen, *The Church Bells of Sussex*, 1915, p. 136. Mr. Tyssen mentions three.

⁵ This is not conclusive evidence that there were six bells in the ring : one may have been a clock bell.

⁶ A. D. Tyssen, *ut sup.*, p. 136.

Hendred, Berkshire, the bells are tuned in the Lydian mode, as are also those at St. Petrox, Dartmouth, Devonshire; at Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire, and at Nevern, Pembrokeshire, are bells tuned in the minor scale, as are also small rings at Fringford, Holton, and elsewhere in Oxfordshire; at Oakley, Buckinghamshire, the Phrygian mode is used; while at Basingstoke in recent times an alternative ring in the Dorian mode was provided. At Norwich Cathedral is a ring of five, four bells of which date from pre-Reformation times, and we are told by the Rev. A. A. G. Thurlow that they are tuned in a minor scale.¹ A medieval ring of five from the church of St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, recently examined by me in the Whitechapel bellfoundry, proved to have been tuned in a major scale.

Before the Reformation some of our cathedrals and greater abbeys possessed large numbers of bells, but it must not be assumed that the total number in any particular tower were tuned to be rung together.² The Rev. Canon H. T. Ellacombe quotes the following statement, made by the Commissioners of Edward VI, concerning the bells of Exeter Cathedral:³

"What the Commissioners at the view of the Cathedral Church goodes of Exon have found there . . . viij belles in one toewr namelie yes [*thes*]

Bishop Granndson's bell.1.	xl <i>c</i>	} Waight by estimacion.
B. Stafford's bell.2.	xxx <i>c</i>	
Trynitee bell.3.	xxvii <i>c</i>	
Magdalen bell.4.	xxvi <i>c</i>	
Domme bell.5.	xxv <i>c</i>	
The sixte bell.6.	xix <i>c</i>	
The major bell.7.	xvi <i>c</i>	
The eight.8.	x <i>c</i>	
Item v belles remayning in another towr		
The first called ye clock bell.1.	xxxviii <i>c</i>	} Waight by estimacion."
The second.2.	viii <i>c</i>	
The thirde.3.	v <i>c</i>	
The fourth.4.	vc	
The fifth.5.	iii <i>c</i>	

The weights of the last mentioned five bells suggest that they comprised an hour bell and clock chimes. Of the eight bells in the other tower, "Stafford", "Trynitee", "Magdalene" and "Domme" were much the same weight, and therefore almost the same note, while the 10 cwt. bell was too small to be a treble to the others. It is unlikely that they were tuned or hung as a ring.

¹ A. G. G. Thurlow, *Church Bells and Ringers of Norwich*, 1948, p. 39.

² E. Morris, *The History and Art of Change Ringing*, 1931, pp. 24, 300.

³ H. T. Ellacombe, *The Church Bells of Devon*, 1872, p. 195.

In these circumstances it is not surprising to find that the Commissioners suggested that all except three should be sold:¹ they were no longer needed for pre-Reformation ritual, and, like those at Chester, of which Mr. J. W. Clarke has given us such an interesting account,² they possessed no musical qualities as a ring.³ There were six bells in Canterbury Cathedral in 1190, but we have no evidence that they were tuned.⁴

In contrast to those at Exeter and Chester, the medieval bells at Gloucester and Oseney Abbeys were tuned in relation to one another. An inventory, made 27 May 1553, states that Gloucester Cathedral⁵ possessed :

" one grete bell⁶ whereuppon the cloke strykithe, and eight other grete belles whereuppon the chyme goithe hangyng in the towre."⁷ These eight bells *may* have constituted one of the earliest rings of eight in the world, but we have no certain proof that all of them were hung for ringing. We know that in 1527 the Abbot contracted with one Thomas Loveday :

" to make newe and repayre a chyme⁸ gonge uppon eight belles within the seid monastery, and uppon two ympnes, that is to say, *Christe Redemptor omnium* and *Chorus Novae Hierusalem*."⁹

This proves that, like the Oseney bells, those at Gloucester were relatively tuned, and it is interesting to note that both abbeys possessed a bourdon bell with a strike-note a minor third below that of the tenor.¹⁰

The evidence so far revealed indicates that eight bells, including Great Tom and the Litany bell, were removed from Oseney Abbey to Christ Church in 1546. We do not know the *exact* number of bells in the ring at this time, and as this is of considerable historical importance we must carefully examine the various possibilities. From the dimensions and tuning of those still extant we know that the Oseney bells were of exceptional size and as to

¹ H. T. Ellacombe, *ut sup.*, p. 195.

² J. W. Clarke, *The Church Bells of Cheshire*, 1949, p. 89.

³ The bells were afterwards recast : Grandison was increased in weight and the weights of the others altered proportionately.

⁴ H. B. Walters, *ut sup.*, p. 79, and F. Sharpe, *The Church Bells of Radnorshire*, 1947, p. 3.

⁵ The See of Gloucester was founded in 1539 by Henry VIII; and, as at Oseney, the Abbey Church became the Cathedral of the new diocese.

⁶ The present "Great Peter", 68½ inches in diameter, in C.

⁷ W. Bazeley, *Records of Gloucester Cathedral*, Vol. I, 1882, p. 133.

⁸ i.e. a clock chime.

⁹ W. Bazeley, *ut sup.*, p. 129. H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 1912, p. 112. Each of the tunes mentioned required an octave tuned diatonically in the major scale.

¹⁰ H. T. Ellacombe's account of these in *The Church Bells of Gloucestershire*, 1881, p. 48, contains several inaccuracies.

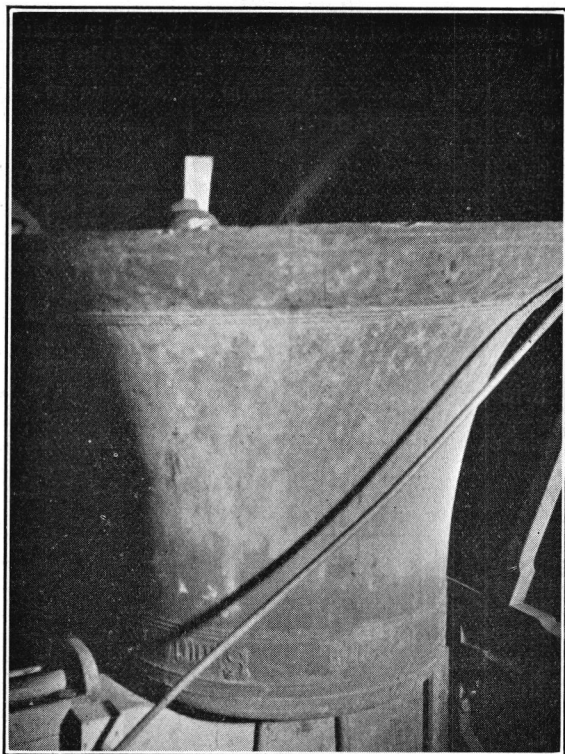


Photo :

F. M. Underhill, Esq., F.S.A.

Fig. 30. Christ Church, Oxford. The tenth bell of the ring of twelve, cast by John Bird, of London, circa 1410. The bell formerly hung in Oseney Abbey.

the number of bells in the Abbey ring there are three main possibilities : either the eight bells, mentioned by Anthony Wood, were the treble, second, third, fourth and tenor of a ring of *five*, plus Great Tom, and the saunce and Litany bells ; or secondly, they were the treble, second, third, fourth, fifth and tenor of a ring of *six*, plus Great Tom and the Litany bell ; or thirdly, they comprised a ring of *seven*, including Great Tom, and in addition to the Litany bell. Writing in 1857, the Rev. W. C. Lukis states :

The last five bells (of the ring) are said to have come from Oseney."¹

If this, the first possibility mentioned above, is correct, then evidently the saunce disappeared soon after its transfer to Christ Church ; and, within the next fifty years, one more bell was added to the ring. On the other hand we have no evidence that the saunce came to Christ Church : it is not mentioned by Wood, or in the accounts quoted here ; and we have no knowledge of any additions to the ring before the year 1680.² If the second suggestion is correct then the saunce did not survive the stormiest years of the Reformation, and the medieval ring at Oseney must have contained six bells. In support of this we have the following statement made by John Gutch in 1770 :

"Of the ten² bells mentioned, it is supposed that the seventh and eighth³ are the only two remaining of the Oseney bells ; the fifth, sixth, ninth and tenth⁴ having been recast."⁵

This implies that the ring contained *six* bells, as does also a statement made by Thomas Hearne, in 1733 :

"The last six bells (of the ring) are what are commonly called *Osney Bells*, which were in number six, & their names were (as may appear from the Curious Discourses⁶ which I printed), Douce, Clement, Haustin [*sic*], Hautcleir (or Heckstetter) [*sic*], Gabriel, John."⁷

But, as stated on page 230, Hearne is quoting the *original* Oseney names and omits "Mary" from his list. Writing in the present century the Rev. F. E. Robinson repeats Hearne's statement.⁸

¹ W. C. Lukis, *An Account of Church Bells*, 1857, p. 89. Also quoted by F. E. Robinson, *Among the Bells*, 1909, p. 69, and later contradicted by him on p. 254.

² The number of bells in the ring was increased to ten in 1680.

³ The present ninth and tenth bells.

⁴ i.e. the present seventh, eighth, eleventh and tenor.

⁵ *MS. Top. Oxon.*, c. 18, fol. 318. Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁶ T. Hearne, *Discourses*, 1720, p. 305.

⁷ *Hearne's Collections*, Vol. XI. Ed. H. E. Salter, *Oxford Historical Society*, Vol. LXXII, p. 298. H. T. Ellacombe, *The Church Bells of Gloucestershire*, 1881, p. 155.

⁸ F. E. Robinson, *ut sup.*, p. 254.

The third possibility, first suggested by Canon H. T. Ellacombe in 1862, is that the original ring brought from Oseney contained *seven* bells, of which Tom was the largest.¹ According to Wood, Tom was then much smaller,² and thus it could have formed an "extra tenor" to the others. We know that the six bells, excluding Tom, were tuned in the key of D ♮ major; the strike-notes of the two remaining Oseney bells are a semi-tone apart,³ and the tenor was tuned to them. In medieval times Tom was the same size as "Grandison", the present tenor at Exeter Cathedral,⁴ the strike-note of which is B ♮. Tom's strike-note was probably B ♮ also; and if so, had seven Oseney bells been rung in succession, or "rounds", their respective strike-notes in descending order would have been: B ♮, A ♮, G ♮, F, E ♮, D ♮ and B ♮.⁵ By tradition the tenor has long been known as "Little Tom",⁶ which suggests that, if there were seven bells in the Oseney ring, Great Tom was the tenor where all were rung, and Little Tom was used as a tenor when only six of the seven were rung. In support of Canon Ellacombe's suggestion there are the words of the well-known seventeenth century round: "Great Tom is cast, and Christ Church bells ring 1-2-3-4-5-6 and Tom comes last." On the other hand the entries in the disbursement books make a distinction between Tom and the bells in the ring: in these accounts Tom is called the "greate bell", whereas the tenor is termed the "sixth bell",⁷ or as in 1578 "the greatest bell in the ring".⁸ We do not today have rings of seven bells; this number is not suited to any known bell music; but for such a reason we cannot rule out the possibility of a ring of seven having once existed at Oseney. And before leaving the subject of early rings of bells I should like to state that the well-known bells of Croyland Abbey, seven in number, named Guthlac, Bartholomew, Betelin, Turketyl, Tatwin, Pega and Bega, mentioned by Ingulphus,⁹ did not constitute a ring as we understand the term today.¹⁰ The same applies to the bells of

¹ *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, II, 1862, p. 494.

² A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 220.

³ Me and fah in tonic sol-fa notation.

⁴ H. B. Walters, *ut sup.*, p. 108.

⁵ i.e. a minor scale with one bell missing.

⁶ *MS. Top. Oxon*, c. 186, fol. 1591. S. A. Warner, *ut sup.*, p. 129.

⁷ A proof that there were then at least six in the ring.

⁸ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 151.

⁹ *Ingulphus' Chronicles*, Bohn's ed., p. 107.

¹⁰ E. Morris, *ut sup.*, p. 24. H. B. Walters, *ut sup.*, p. 13. Quoting *V.C.H. Lincolnshire*, II, p. 105, Mr. Walters warns us that the records of Croyland Abbey before 1051 are not trustworthy.

Sherburn-in-Elmet, Yorkshire, where an inventory of *circa* 920 states : "iiij hand bellan and vj hangende bellan."¹

To my knowledge the first alteration to the Oseney bells was made in 1589 when the tenor, or Little Tom, was recast. Payment for this work was made to one Nicholas Reeve, about whom at present we know very little, and whose name was first discovered by Mr. W. G. Hiscock.² Reeve was not the owner of any of the principal bell-foundries of his day ; he may have been a descendant of Roger Reve, who was founding at Bury St. Edmunds, 1527-1533³; he may have been a relative of Giles Reve, who was founding in Kent, 1584-1592⁴; or, what is far more probable, as the Christ Church tenor has characteristics peculiar to the Nottingham founders, he may have been a relative of Thomas and Michael Reve, who cast bells for Worksop, Nottinghamshire, in 1567.⁵ And it is possible that, as so often happened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the presence of his name in the disbursement book may indicate that he was an agent receiving payment on behalf of some other person.

The Christ Church tenor has always puzzled campanologists.⁶ It is a fine-toned bell, with a bold, rich, clear strike-note now well mellowed with age, which can be heard to advantage on Sundays between 10.0 and 10.5 a.m. when it is "rung down" before Mattins. Undoubtedly it is the product of highly skilled craftsmen ; but neither the plant used in the construction of its moulds, nor the moulding stamps used to form its decoration and inscription belong to the stock-in-trade of any known founder. It may at first seem strange that the largest bell in the largest and most famous ring in the county should be of anonymous origin, but it should be remembered that the art of bellfounding declined considerably during the second half of the sixteenth century, and that the casting of such a bell would be a formidable task for a local man : the most natural thing for him to do would be to call in the assistance of some of his contemporaries. In these circumstances they would not use their own individual founders' marks and moulding stamps. Whoever its makers were—and from the size

¹ H. B. Walters, *ut sup.*, p. 14.

² W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 151.

³ C. Deedes and H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of Essex*, 1909, p. 52.

⁴ J. C. L. Stallschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent*, 1887, p. 72.

⁵ H. T. Tilley and H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of Warwickshire*, 1910, p. 61.

⁶ See : F. E. Robinson, *ut sup.*, p. 69. *R.C.A.M., City of Oxford*, 1939, p. 41b.

of the Christ Church tenor we expect that more than one was concerned—they had considerable knowledge of the methods employed in the principal Midland foundries of the day : it is noticeable that the bell has none of the characteristics of the work of the Reading or London founders. Its lettering and mouldings resemble those on bells cast by Bartholomew Atton, of Buckingham;¹ the type of decoration favours that used by the Leicester founders ; and the inscription² on the bell, viz :

TRINITATE SACRA FIAT HAEC CAMPANA BEATA

is peculiar to the Nottingham foundry at this period.³ In the inscription the letter "N" is reversed—another feature of bells by Nottingham founders, as is the use of "Ao" before the date, which also occurs here.⁴ We know there was close liaison between all three of these foundries : the Newcombes, of Leicester, and the Oldfields, of Nottingham, sometimes combined to do work of major size;⁵ and in 1589 Bartholomew Atton and Robert Newcombe III were working in partnership in this neighbourhood as itinerant bellfounders.⁶

Payments for the work to the tenor, and for other repairs carried out in the year 1589 are thus recorded in the disbursement book :

1589	To Humpsto for a rope	iijs	vjd
	To Humpstow for a bawdrick	iijs	iiijd
	To Owen & Parkhouse & others for taking down the sixt bell	xijs	vjd
	To Rich Sampson ⁷ for mending 2 bawdricks this qrtr	iijs	
	To Parkhaus and Owen and others for getting up the sixt bell & new stoking ⁸ the 5th	jli	iijs vjd
	To Garford for a rope for the new cast bell	vjs	

¹ Used on the treble at Bucknell, and illustrated in *The Church Bells of The Deanery of Bicester*, 1932, p. 16.

² In this inscription the letter "N" is reversed in each instance.

³ H. B. Walters, *ut sup.*, pp. 249, 273. Until recent times bellfounders normally selected their own inscriptions : if the Church authorities selected an inscription, the bellfounders sometimes stipulated that the Church should install the bell whether in tune or not.

⁴ H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of Shropshire*, 1915, p. 336.

⁵ In partnership they cast Great Tom, of Lincoln.

⁶ See p. 107. Also see A. H. Cocks, *ut sup.*, pp. 194-196 ; T. North, *The Church Bells of Leicestershire*, 1876, p. 52 ; and T. North, *The Church Bells of Northamptonshire*, 1878, p. 59.

⁷ The sexton. He received extra payments for ringing the "sermon bell".

⁸ i.e. fitting a new headstock.

1589	To Humpstow for a baudrick for ye new bell		iijs	vjd
	To the bell founder for casting the sixt bell, & to (the) Smith for the clapper & other things	xjli	xijs	
1590	To Mils for carriage of the sixt bell		viijs	vjd
	To him for tymbr for ye bell		vjs	
	To Sandford for mending the 3(rd) bell clapper		xs	
	To Osmund Garford for three new ropes		xvjs	
	To the bell founder more in respect of his metall	ijli		
	For ropes		ijs	vjd
	For mending divers clappers of the bells to Sandford		xjs	
	More to Nicholas Reeve for a full satis- faction for all his mettall bestowed in casting ye vjth bell, for which mettall he hath already received <i>iiijli</i> ¹ besides <i>viiijli</i> for the casting		iiiil	
	To Sandforde for mending ye clapper of ye fiftē bell		vjs	vjd
	To Ouen for worke aboute ye belles		xxvjs	
	To Sandforde for work aboute ye belles		xxs	

It will be seen that the sum of 8s.6d. was paid for carriage of the bell, presumably to the foundry and back ; and in 1605 13s.4d. was paid for the haulage of a bell to Reading and back. Reading is 28 miles from Oxford ; the next nearest foundry would be that at Buckingham, a distance of 23 miles from Oxford : it is therefore possible that Atton's foundry at Buckingham was used for the work in 1589. In the volume for the City of Oxford, published by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Mr. Walters suggests that the Christ Church tenor may be the work of Robert Atton. This cannot be correct : the contemporary owners of the Buckingham foundry were Bartholomew Atton and Robert Newcombe.

In the disbursement book for the year 1592 is the entry :

"For crosse hanging ye 2 treblees carpenters worke & ironwoorke *iiijli*."

This refers to quarter-turning the two smallest bells in the ring and indicates that their sound bows had become badly indented by the action of the clappers. This is not surprising : these two bells were used to announce the times of the daily services² and would thus have had considerable wear.

¹ *Sic.*

² See below.



Photo :

F. M. Underhill, Esq., F.S.A.

Fig. 31. Christ Church, Oxford. Portion of ornamental border, mouldings, and inscription band of the tenor bell, or "Little Tom." The bell originally hung in Oseney Abbey : it was recast in 1589.

Nine years later we read in the accounts :

To Hugh Corbett for makeing the clapper of the sixe bell newe, conditionally that if he breake within one year and a daye he will make him anew. *ijli xs*"

The treble next became damaged. Evidently the precaution of quarter-turning the trebles was taken too late. The bell was recast in 1605 at the Reading foundry by Joseph Carter;¹ and in the disbursement book for that year we read :

"To carrying the bell to Redinge to be new cast & back again *xiijs iiijd*

To Mr. Carter for casting ye treble bell etc. *vijli iiij*s

To . . . Gunter² for riding to Redinge to see ye bell cast. *vs*

For a baldrick for ye 3rd bell *vjs*

For 15 ringers on ye king's day ye 24 of March *xvs*³

For oyle for ye bells to Ellis *viiijd*

For mending two baldricks *viiijd*

(Other items for oil and ropes)

In the year 1611 another of the Oseney Abbey bells, the second of the ring, and the remaining one "cross hung" in 1592, passed through the furnace. On this occasion the founder was William Yare, of Reading, the son-in-law of Joseph Carter. In the Tyssen Collection in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries of London is a rubbing of the inscription on Yare's bell, which has since again passed through the furnace. A transcript of the inscription is given on page 246. The lettering is Lombardic and was formed by means of the moulding stamps previously part of the foundry plant of Thomas Lawrence, of London, *circa* 1535 : in some manner this plant had been acquired by Yare's predecessor, Joseph Carter.⁴ We are told by W. D. Macray⁵ that Yare's bell also bore the founder's mark, Fig. S3, as on Sir Thomas Bodley's bell in the Bodleian Library, but this is not shown on Mr. Tyssen's rubbing. The inscription on Yare's bell was also recorded in 1857 by the Rev. W. C. Lukis, but he makes no mention of the founder's

¹ First discovered by Mr. W. G. Hiscock, and quoted by him, *ut sup.*, p. 150. He is in error in stating that this bell was the predecessor of the present treble : it was the predecessor of the present seventh.

² Edmund Gunter, of Christ Church, later Astronomy Professor of Gresham College. (See *D.N.B.*)

³ The custom of ringing on the King's birthday, and Accession, still prevails.

⁴ This lettering is also found on bells at Hanborough, Kidlington, Stonesfield, and elsewhere in the county.

⁵ W. D. Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, 1890, p. 43.

mark.¹ The cross, between the founder's initials, is illustrated in Fig. S2. In the disbursement book for 1612 is the entry :—

"March 27. To Wm Yeaere for castinge ye second bell agaynst ye coronatyon daye *vli*

To him for surplussage of mettle *xvs vjd*"

Yare died in 1616 and on his death the older of the two Reading foundries closed down. In the disbursement book four years later we find payments to "Keene and Austine" for "hanginge" and "mendinge" the bells.

1620	To Keene & Austine towards ye paye for hanginge the bells	£80	0	0
	Planks & timber used about the wheelles (Keene & Austine)	£5	4	4
	3 planks to make wheelles (Alex Hill)	£2	0	0
	For mendinge greate tom's baldrick		4	0
	Bestowed upon Keene in consensu cap(<i>itu</i>)li	£3	6	0
	To Keene for mendinge the bells		10	0

In the disbursement book for 1624-5 is the entry :—

"for carpenter's worke making the ringing loft & a loft above it . . . (*and other items*) . . . *ljli*."

The position of the ringing chamber and of the doorway leading to it above the main arches of the central tower are shown in drawings by G. Clattermole, published in 1820.² A drawing and description of the ringing loft, made in 1811, is preserved in the Bodleian Library.³ Before the construction of the ringing chamber the bells were rung from the floor of the cathedral.⁴

In the year 1640 the treble was again recast. The bell bears no founder's name or marks, but at this period bellfounders frequently avoided such publicity. The disbursement books for 1640 are missing and in order to identify the maker of the bell we have to rely on our knowledge of foundry stamps and bell mouldings : fortunately on the bell in question they are well-known ones used by Ellis Knight I, of Reading, who was doing at the time a considerable amount of work in Oxford.⁵

¹ W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 89.

² J. Britton, *The History and Antiquities of The Cathedral Church of Oxford*, 1821, plates V, VI and VII. The latter was reproduced by C. Headlam, *Oxford and Neighbourhood*, (Cathedrals, Abbeys and Famous Churches, series), ed. Gordon Home, 1921, p. 20.

³ *MS. Top. Oxon*, c. 18, fol. 200.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See under the headings : Magdalen College, and the churches of St. Aldate, St. Cross, St. Giles, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Mary-the-Virgin, and St. Thomas.

Particulars of the ring of six bells in the year 1640.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Treble.	THE GRACE OF OVR LORD 1640	8 0 0†
Second.	THIS BELL WAS MADE 1611 M+D	9 0 14
Third.	      In Multis Annis Resonet Campana Johannis (Shield, Fig. S9.) (Cross, Fig. S11.) (Shield, Fig. S7.)	12 0 0†
Fourth.	      Stella Maria Maris Succurre Piissima Nobis (Shield, Fig. S9.) (Cross, Fig. S8.) (Shield, Fig. S7.)	17 0 0†
Fifth.	Sancta Maria ora pro nobis Christus Mariae filius sit nobis propitius	21 0 5
Tenor.	(Border, Fig. 31, all round bell.) / TRINITATE SACRA FIAT HAEC CAMPANA BEATA / W.I: M.H: (Rose (and crown between two griffins.) A° 1589	31 0 23

Mention has already been made of the treble, second and tenor of this ring: the other three were original Oseney bells. The fifth was probably the bell "Thesu" mentioned in the accounts; details of its inscription were recorded by Browne Willis¹ and so far as I am aware are here published for the first time: the bell has since again passed through the furnace. The third and fourth² of the 1640 ring are the ninth and tenth of the present one and are more fully described under that heading.

The exact weight of the second has been recovered from the Whitechapel bellfoundry ledgers;³ the weight of the fifth is taken from Rudhall's bill for its subsequent recasting; the weight of the tenor is recorded in a MS. in the Bodleian Library in which it is stated:⁴

"The exact weight (of Little Tom) is 1 ton 11 cwt. 0 qrs. 23 lbs. without the stock to which it is attached and which alone weighs an additional 3 cwt. 1 qr. 1 lb."

In the "Vere Bayne" scrap-book in Christ Church Library it is stated that the tenor was weighed by Mr. Blackburn, in October,

¹ Willis MS., 73, fol. 160. Bodleian Library.

² The fourth has since lost its canons.

³ I am indebted to Mr. A. A. Hughes, the senior partner of Messrs. Mears and Stainbank for this information.

⁴ MS. Top. Oxon, c. 186, fol. 1591.

1893 ; that its weight with headstock attached was 34 cwt. 1 qr. 15 lbs., and, without headstock, 31 cwt. 23 lbs.¹—a discrepancy of 9 lbs. in the weight of the headstock compared with that given above.

According to Mr. S. A. Warner, the weight of the tenor was also recorded on the ringing chamber wall.²

The ring was similar in size to the former one at Adderbury.³

Such was the composition of the ring of "bonny" Christ Church bells in the time of Dr. Henry (Later Dean) Aldrich,⁴ who composed the well-known catch, printed on page 249, and reproduced by courtesy of Mr. W. G. Hiscock, and the Oxford University Press.

In the year 1678 Great Tom was moved from the central tower of the Cathedral to be recast : its subsequent story is told on pages 258 ff. Two years later the space in the bell-frame in which it formerly hung was filled with four smaller bells⁵ to augment the number in the ring to ten, the first ring of its size in the county.⁶

Details of the alterations to the positions of the bells in the ring, due to the addition of four lighter bells in 1680 are appended and in this account of the bells between the years 1680 and 1897 they will be referred to by their new names. The bells marked * were subsequently recast.

<i>Position of bell in ring of six.</i>	<i>Position of bell in ring of ten.</i>	<i>Date of casting.</i>	<i>Strike- note.</i>	<i>Cwt.qrs.lbs.</i>
—	Second.	1680*	E♭	4 3 0†
—	Third.	1680*	D♭	5 3 18
—	Fourth.	1680*	C	7 2 27
Treble.	Fifth.	1640	B♭	8 0 0†
Second.	Sixth.	1611*	A♭	9 0 14
Third.	Seventh.	c.1410	G♭	12 0 0†
Fourth.	Eighth.	c.1410	F	17 0 0†
Fifth.	*Ninth.	15th. cent.*	E♭	21 0 5
—	Treble	1680*	F	4 0 0†
Tenor.	Tenor.	1589	D♭	31 0 23

¹ The "Vere Bayne" Scrapbook, fol. 104. Christ Church Library.

² S. A. Warner, *ut sup.*, 1924, p. 129. He gives the weight as 31 cwt. 1 qr. 23 lbs.

³ See p. 10.

⁴ During Dr. Aldrich's term of office as Dean of Christ Church there were ten bells in the ring.

⁵ H. L. Thompson, *Christ Church*, 1900, p. 231, suggests that only three were needed to bring the number in the ring up to ten ; but he omits to take into account the Litany bell, and the fact that Tom was not then part of the ring. Several others make the same error.

⁶ The Rev. F. E. Robinson's statement (*Among the Bells*, 1909, p. 255,) that the bells in the ring were augmented in number to ten in 1698 is incorrect.

Wood records the installation of the augmented ring in these words :

"October 1680. In the beginning of this month Ch(rist) Ch(urch) ten bells were hung up : and Tom reserved for the tower on the great gate."¹

The four new bells were cast by Christopher Hodson, of London. I am indebted to Mr. Hiscock for a transcript of the agreement made 12 June 1680 between the Christ Church authorities and Hodson in which he agreed (*inter alia*) :

"to new cast and make foure Treble Bells tuneable to the other Six Bells and also erect a new frame (on the old one where the great Bell formerly hung) for the said foure Bells, & provide new stocks,² new round wheels,³ new brasses, new gudgeons, new clappers and new Ropes with all other materials necessary to the hanging up of the foure Bells. And also shall hang with new stocks, wheeles, brasses and gudgeons all the six Bells."

The treasurer agreed to find the metal for the four new bells, probably from the surplus remaining after the casting of Great Tom,⁴ and to pay Hodson £40 after the bells were cast and another £40 after they were hung.

It is not surprising to learn that Hodson's bells were a failure : in the seventeenth century the proportions and scale of tuning of the partial-tones for trebles of, and above, an octave of the strike-note of the tenor were a matter of experiment, only to be proved by trial and error.⁵ Eighteen years later Hodson's treble and second were recast by Abraham Rudhall I ; and the other two were subsequently recast or exchanged at the Gloucester foundry.

Writing in the year 1730 Browne Willis describes the tower and bells thus :⁶

"The height of the Steeple, in which being a Noble peal⁷ of ten Bells, (is) 144 feet . . . John Fell, the most publick Spirited Governor this or any College ever had, who built the stately Tower in the Front at the Gate, and removed thither out of the Campanile or Steeple in the Cathedral the Great Bell called Tom, said to be brought hither with the other bells from Ofeney, which he caused to be recast with additional Metal, infomuch

¹ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 497.

² Headstocks.

³ The wording here suggests that half, or three-quarter, wheels were formerly used.

⁴ See below.

⁵ Experiments in the tuning of the trebles of rings of twelve are still being made.

⁶ Browne Willis, *A Survey of The Cathedrals of Lincoln, Ely, Oxford and Peterborough*, 1730, p. 408.

⁷ *Sic*.

CHRIST CHURCH BELLS

The musical score is written on ten staves, each with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notation consists of vertical stems and horizontal lines representing the bells. The lyrics are written below the staves, and the bell patterns are indicated by the vertical stems and horizontal lines.

Hark! The bon-ny Christ Church bells, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, they sound so

Hark! The first and se-cond bell, that e-very day at four and ten, cries

Tingle tingle ting goes the small bell at nine, To call the beer-ers home; but the

woun-dy great, so wond'rous sweet, and they trowl so mer-ri-ly mer-ri-ly,

Come come come come to prayers, and the ver-ger floops be-fore the Dean.

de'il a man will leave his cann, till he hears the migh-ty Tm.

Reproduced from "A Christ Church Miscellany," by kind permission of W. G. Hiscock, Esq.

Fig. 32. The seventeenth century catch by Dean Aldrich.

that it is now by far the biggest Bell in England The vacant Part of the Steeple, where it hung, was filled with four leffer Bells to make the old Number of six ten, two or three of which were cast by the most eminent Founder the Kingdom has produced, viz. Mr. Rudhall, of Gloucester.¹ Here is also a fine Shrill Litany Bell, which rings out at nine every Night,² preparative to the tolling of the aforesaid great Bell called Tom

In the year 1740 Hodson's two remaining bells, the third and fourth of the ring, together with the ninth, one of the original Oseney bells, were recast at the Gloucester foundry by Abel Rudhall: details of the inscriptions on the new bells will be found on page 253. We are told by Mr. Hiscock that "Morgan's benefaction of £100" covered the cost of the work to these bells.³ They were hung by Arthur Lloyd,⁴ the Oxford bellhanger, of whom more later.

Abel Rudhall's bill contains some interesting information :⁵

1741.

June 2. The Dean & Chapter of Christ Church

Drs. to Ab. Rudhall.

For three new Bells weigh'd as follows

	<i>c.</i>	<i>qrs.</i>	<i>lb.</i>
Third bell	6	2	2
Fourth bell	6	2	20
Ninth bell	20	0	23

Makes 33 1 17

At fourteen pence pr pound comes to £218 4 6

For tuning ye old seventh & Tenor bells £ 5 5 0

Makes

£223 9 6

Recd. three old bells which weigh'd
as under

	<i>c.</i>	<i>qrs.</i>	<i>lb.</i>
Third bell	5	3	18
Fourth bell	7	2	27
Ninth bell	21	0	5

Wei'd in all 34 2 22

At eleven pence pr pound comes to £178 2 2

Remains due

£ 45 7 4

¹ Abraham Rudhall cast a ring of eight bells for Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, on the tenor of which Browne Willis was described as "Benefactor". A. H. Cocks, *ut sup.*, 319.

² See below.

³ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 159.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁵ For a transcript of this I am indebted to Mr. Hiscock.

1741.

July 9. (Overleaf : Rudhall's receipt) "& I do hereby promise that if any alterations should be required about the three within mentioned Bells I will do and perform such alteration . . . within a Twelve (month) after the date hereof gratis.

Witness my hand

(Signed.) Abel Rudhall.

In addition to Rudhall's bill out of Mr. Morgan's benefaction Arthur Lloyd was paid £37.17s.4d. for hanging the bells, the cost of carriage from Gloucester came to £5.0s.6d., and a new set of bell ropes cost £3.¹ The carriage of the bells to Gloucester cost £4.16s.6d.² and was paid by the Treasurer.

The third bell³ bears the date : 1747. Either this is a founder's error for 1741, or the bell proved faulty and was recast again by Rudhall.

The Rudhall bell-catalogues⁴ contain the following entries :—

1704 Edition :⁵ "In the City of Oxford, Christ Church Cathedral, 2 (bells).

1715 Edition : (A similar entry.)

1751 Edition : "Oxford Cathedral, 5 (bells).

The five mentioned in 1751 were the treble, second, third, fourth and ninth of the ring of ten.

The weights of Hodson's bells, as recorded in Rudhall's bill, reveal the reason for their failure. Hodson cast them disproportionately small to the size of the tenor ;⁶ and, although correct for a ring of four, their dimensions were unsuitable for the "trebles" of a ring of ten. Bells such as those cast by Hodson would be heard tolerably well when rung in "rounds", but would be inaudible when rung in changes.

Miscellaneous repairs to the bells and gear were carried out by Robert Turner, in 1778, by William Taylor, in 1840, and by Alfred White, in 1860 and 1871.⁷ In the following year the bells

¹ For a transcript of this I am indebted to Mr. Hiscock.

² Disbursement Book.

³ Today this bell is the fifth of the ring of twelve.

⁴ *Catalogues of Bells cast by the Rudhalls, of Gloucester*, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁵ This catalogue covers the period 1684 to February 1704.

⁶ A similar instance occurred at York Minster, where five trebles of a ring of twelve, erected in 1681, were subsequently removed and hung in one of the parish churches in York as a ring of five. (E. Morris, *ut sup.*, p. 300).

⁷ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 248.

were removed from the central tower and hung in their present position in the campanile above the hall staircase, for which Alfred White received £50.¹ When the bells were first placed in this position Bodley's belfry tower had not been built, and they were housed in a timber construction, known as the "meat-safe", which still remains behind the masonry of the tower.

To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, two smaller bells, having the strike-notes G♭ and A♭ respectively, were given by members of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers to increase the number in the ring to twelve—the only one of this size in the county. At the same time William Yare's bell, then reputed to be poor in tone,² was recast to form the eighth of the augmented ring. The new bells were cast at the Whitechapel foundry and were installed by Messrs. Blackburn, of Salisbury.











Details of the alterations to the positions of bells in the ring due to the addition of two lighter bells in 1897 are given below :

<i>Position of bell in ring. of 10.</i>	<i>Position of bell in ring. of 12.</i>	<i>Date of casting.</i>	<i>Strike- note.</i>	<i>Diameter Inches.</i>	<i>Thickness at Sound- bow. Inches.</i>
—	Treble.	1897	A♭	25 $\frac{3}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
—	Second.	1897	G♭	27 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Treble.	Third.	1698	F	28 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Second.	Fourth.	1698	E♭	29 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Third.	Fifth.	1747	D♭	31 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{3}{8}$
Fourth.	Sixth.	1741	C	32	2 $\frac{3}{8}$
Fifth.	Seventh.	1640	B♭	34 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Sixth. ³	Eighth. ³	1897	A♭	38	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Seventh.	Ninth.	c.1410	G♭	41 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{5}{8}$
Eighth.	Tenth.	c.1410	F	46	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Ninth.	Eleventh.	1740	E♭	48 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Tenor.	Tenor.	1589	D♭	56	3 $\frac{5}{8}$

¹ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 248.

² F. E. Robinson, *ut sup.*, p. 254.

³ The sixth of the ring of ten was Yare's bell, dated 1611, which was recast with the addition of 46 lbs. of metal to form the eighth of the ring of twelve.

Particulars of the ring of twelve bells.			
<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.¹</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>	
Treble.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1897. / IN HONOREM DEI. / SEXAGESIMUM JAM ANNUM REGNANTE VICTORIA. / D.D. / COLLEGIUM CAMPANISTARUM HUJUSCE DIOCESEOS.	4	3 1
Second.	(<i>Same as trble.</i>)	5	2 1
Third.	ABRA RVDHALL OF GLOVCE BELL FOVNDER 1698 (<i>Border, Fig. D2.</i>)	5	3 0 [†]
Fourth.	GOD - PROSPER - THE - CHVRCH - OF - ENGLAND : 1698 : A-R: (<i>Bell.</i>) / (<i>Cable</i> <i>moulding all round bell, with border, Fig.</i> <i>D14, below.</i>)	6	0 0 [†]
Fifth.†	(<i>Fig. D2.</i>) A(<i>Bell.</i>)R 1747 (<i>Fig. D2.</i>)	6	2 2 ²
Sixth.	PROSPERITY TO ALL OUR BENEFACTORS A(<i>Bell.</i>)R (<i>Border, Fig.</i> <i>D8.</i>)	6	2 20
Seventh.	THE GRACE OF OVR LORD 1640	8	0 0 [†]
Eighth.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1897. / INSCRIPTA OLIM / W + Y 1611 / RECUSA EST A.D. MDCCCXCVII. / DET SONITUM PLENUM DEUS ET MODULAMEN AMENUM.	9	2 4
Ninth.	     In Multis Annis Refonet Campana Johannis (<i>Shield, Fig. S9.</i>) (<i>Cross, Fig. S11.</i>) (<i>Shield, Fig. S7.</i>)	12	0 0 [†]
Tenth.†	     Stella Maria Maris Succurre Piissima Nobis (<i>Shield, Fig. S9.</i>) (<i>Cross, Fig. S8.</i>) (<i>Shield, Fig. S7.</i>)	16	2 0 ³
Eleventh.†	PROSPERITY TO THIS COLLEGE A(<i>Bell.</i>)R 1740 (<i>Border, Fig. D2</i>)	19	3 0 ⁴

¹ Many accounts of these inscriptions have been published : those here recorded have been carefully checked with the originals on the bells. For valuable assistance in taking a complete set of rubbings of the inscriptions and casts of the founders' marks I have to thank Mr. J. R. Chaundy.

² Weight as recorded in Abel Rudhall's bill ; see p. 250. The bell has since lost its canons, and now weighs approximately 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt. See also statement about the date of this bell on p. 251.

³ Approximate weight *after* removal of canons.

⁴ Approximate weight *after* removal of canons. When cast this bell weighed 20 cwt. 0 qrs. 23 lbs.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Tenor.†	(<i>Border, Fig. 31, all round bell.</i>) / TRINITATE SACRA FIAT HAEC CAMPANA BEATA / W-I: M-H: (<i>Rose and crown between two griffins.</i>) A° 1589	30 0 0 ¹

The treble and second were cast at the Whitechapel foundry and have canons of the traditional type. Although cast in a thick scale their tones are weak compared with the more sonorous ones of the larger bells. They are hung in an unsuitable position almost in the centre of the bell-frame; and a situation similar to that created in 1680 now prevails. A proposal has been made by the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers that these two bells should be recast as a memorial to the Rev. Canon G. F. Coleridge, a former Master of the Guild, and President of The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, who died in 1949 at the age of 91.

The third and fourth are by Abraham Rudhall I. The third has plain canons: those on the fourth are cabled, and encircling this bell below the inscription band is a cable moulding. Both bells have been quarter-turned. Their predecessors were cast by Christopher Hodson.

The fifth and sixth are by Abel Rudhall: their predecessors were also by Hodson. The fifth has lost its canons; the sixth has been quarter-turned.

These six bells have had their tones flattened by tuning: the treble and second were thus treated in a tuning machine: the others were tuned by hand chipping.

The seventh is by Ellis Knight I: the lettering of its inscription is formed in the well-known "sheet-metal" type favoured by the Reading founders. It has been slightly flattened in tone in an unusual manner by means of the removal of a segment of the inner surface of its sound-bow, approximately one eighth of an inch deep and fifteen inches long. It has been quarter-turned. Assuming that the Oseney ring contained either six, or seven bells, its predecessor was an Oseney bell, recast by Joseph Carter. If, on the other hand, the Oseney ring contained only five bells, its predecessor must have been added to the ring between the years 1546 and 1589, and subsequently recast by Carter.

The eighth is a fine-toned bell by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank; it has canons of the traditional type, and has been tuned in a

¹ Approximate weight *after* removal of canons. For the original weight of this bell see p. 246.

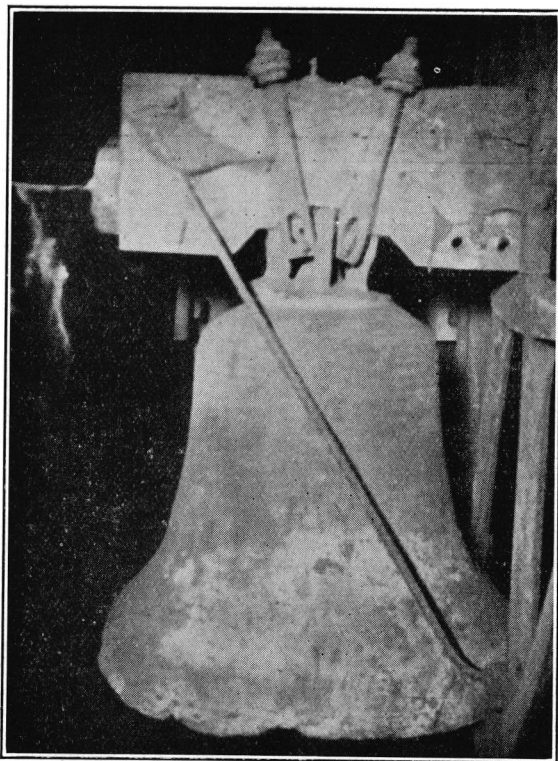


Photo : F. M. Underhill, Esq., F.S.A.

Fig. 33. Christ Church, Oxford. The disused Litany bell.

tuning machine. Its predecessor was an Oseney bell, recast by William Yare. The quarter chimes of the cathedral clock are struck on the fourth and eighth bells.

The ninth, an original Oseney bell, is a fine-toned casting by John Bird, of London, *circa* 1410; it bears the well known founder's marks, described on page 253. Below its shoulder is a series of mouldings: the first, third, fourth, fifth and sixth of these are narrow ones; the second is broader, similar to but not so broad as those favoured by London founders of the preceding century. The band containing the inscription occurs between the third and fourth mouldings. On the lip of the bell are more narrow mouldings and another broad one. The bell has been quarter-turned and its canons are still intact. For the first three and a quarter centuries of its existence it was a maiden bell; afterwards it was very carefully tuned by Abel Rudhall who slightly flattened its strike-note. The bell is illustrated in Fig. 29.

The tenth is also an original Oseney bell. It is a maiden casting with similar mouldings and by the same founder as the ninth. Its tone is remarkably good, and, not having been tuned, sounds almost the same¹ as when it formed part of the Abbey ring. It bears the larger version of John Bird's initial cross, together with the two shields, Figs. S7, and S9. Unfortunately it has now lost its canons. The bell is illustrated in Fig. 30, and a scale drawing of its inscription is given in Fig. 34. Considering the vast amount of use this bell and the ninth have had during the past five and a half centuries, their condition today is remarkable. Given due care and attention they should last for many centuries.

The eleventh is by Abel Rudhall. It has lost its canons, and has been sharpened in tone by means of the removal of a considerable portion of its lip. Its predecessor was the Oseney bell described on page 246.

The tenor has already been described,² and it is sufficient to add that its canons have now been removed and that during process of tuning, possibly that mentioned in Rudhall's bill of 1741, the mouldings above its sound-bow have been chiselled off. The canons of the bell were intact when it was rehung in 1872 by Mr. Alfred White; but between that date and 1923, when first seen by me, they had been removed. The strike-note of the bell is only

¹ Provided bells are prevented from corroding their tones improve with age.

² See p. 240 ff.

slightly flat of D and it was so tuned to correspond with the strike-notes of the medieval bells brought from Oseney Abbey : since the end of the sixteenth century the new and recast bells in the ring have been tuned to it. The initials : "W.I." "M.H." on the waist of the bell indicate William James and Martin Heton, who, as Mr. Hiscock tells us,¹ were Dean and Treasurer respectively in 1589.

The bells hang in a massive side-pattern oak frame, originally made for the ten largest bells, and installed in 1872. To this frame a cast iron upper tier, which now contains the third and fifth, was added by Messrs. Blackburn, of Salisbury, in 1897.

The fittings of the tenor, type H, and the plate gudgeons and self-aligning ball bearings of the other bells were renewed in 1937 by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank, of the Whitechapel foundry, London. The elm headstocks and traditional-type wheels of the treble, second, third and fifth are by Messrs. Blackburn : the rest of the gear, type A, is by Mr. Alfred White, of Besselsleigh and Appleton, and dates from 1872.

The Litany bell is now disused. It is a rough casting of primitive shape, and *may* have been brought with the other bells from Oseney, but although its proportions are those of an early fourteenth century bell, it may be a copy of an older bell by some later itinerant and not highly skilled craftsman. It has five badly-formed narrow mouldings below the shoulder and two mutilated mouldings on the lip : there are no mouldings above its sound-bow. Its chief dimensions are :—diameter, $20\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; height from lip to crown 19 inches ; height of canons 4 inches ; its argent is concealed by the headstock and cannot be measured. Its sound-bow varies in thickness from $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches to $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches ! Where the "cap", or canon mould, was joined to the cope is a flange similar to those found on bells cast by members of the Purdue family and inside the bell the sound-bow tapers sharply towards the lip. But the greatest peculiarity of the bell is in the external shape of its sound-bow ; after curving outward in the usual manner this curves very slightly inwards towards the lip instead of continuing outwards as on bells of normal shape. It is illustrated in Fig. 33. The bell was formerly tolled before Latin prayers at 9 p.m. in term,² but its sound-bow is not greatly indented by the action of the clapper and the bell does not appear to have had much use.

¹ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 151.

² *MS. Top. Oxon. c. 183*, fol. 536.

As previously stated, the bourdon bell, Great Tom, is a descendant of one of the bells of Osenev Abbey from whence it was brought on the transfer of the see to Christ Church in 1546. Anthony Wood tells us that the original bell was six feet in diameter,¹ and its weight therefore was between $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 4 tons.² On its arrival at Christ Church the bell was hung in the central tower of the cathedral.³ The accounts relating to its removal from Osenev have been quoted among those relating to the removal of the ring.

We have already noted that the bells were rung from the ground floor of the cathedral before the construction of the ringing loft, and we are told by Browne Willis that it needed the combined strength of sixteen men to swing Great Tom.⁴ This is not surprising when one considers the weight of the bell, the primitive methods of bell hanging employed before the invention of nuts and bolts, and the difficulties caused by such a long length of rope.⁵

Great Tom is said to have been so named after St. Thomas of Canterbury, and to have been inscribed :

In Thomae Laude Refono Bim Bom Sine Fraude

which, according to Wood, "was formerly put on by a monk of Osney."⁶ The bell probably bore founders' marks, word-stops, and crests, but of these we have no record. The type of inscription suggests that the bell dated from the fifteenth century ; and it may have been one of Abbot Leech's original thirteenth century bells, which was subsequently recast and renamed.⁷

Wood tells us that :⁸

"Dr. Tresham, it seems, baptised⁹ this bell when 'twas transported to Christchurch (of which place he was canon) with the name of 'Mary'

¹ A. Wood, *Survey of the Antiquities of the City of Oxford*, Vol. II. ed. A. Clarke, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XVII. 1890, p. 220.

² "Grandison", the tenor bell at Exeter Cathedral has a diameter of 72 inches, and weighs 72 cwt. 2 qrs. 2 lbs. Its strike-note is Bp. "Great Peter", of Gloucester Cathedral, the sole surviving medieval bourdon bell in the British Isles, was cast *circa* 1450 ; it has a diameter of $68\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and weighs approximately 58 cwt. Its strike-note is C natural.

³ *MS. Top. Oxon.*, b. 16. Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁴ Browne Willis; *A Survey of the Cathedrals of Lincoln, Ely, Oxford and Peterborough*, 1730, p. 408.

⁵ If hung with modern gear one man could easily ring Great Tom : the author has rung Great Peter, of York, singlehanded.

⁶ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, Vol. I, Ed. A. Clarke, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XIX, 1891, p. 85.

⁷ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, Vol. II. ed. A. Clarke, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XVII, 1890, p. 220.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ See footnote ¹ on p. 229.

for joy (as Dr. Humphreys saith¹) of Queen Marie's raigne; and being about that time Vicechancellour of the University and hearing it accidentally ring when the learned Juell was with him about other business burst out into these words:

'O bellam et suavem harmoniam! O pulchram Mariam! ut sonat musice! ut tinuit melodice! ut placet auribus mirifice!' Thus he. And soe much was the old man delighted with the noise of it that he promised the students that if they would come to masse which was then restored in Queen Marie's dayes to get the 'Lady bell' at Bampton (of which place he was vicar) and others added to it and make it the sweetest ring of bells in England."

The last statement implies that Tom was included in the ring, a possibility mentioned on page 239.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Great Tom's clapper needed frequent repairs, of which Mr. Hiscock has given an interesting account.² The clapper appears to have been enlarged from time to time; and, when made by Thomas Matthew, of Chester-ton, and Nicholas Nichols, of Islip, at the end of the sixteenth century it weighed 211 lb.³

The bell was recast *at least* six times in the seventeenth century. On one of these occasions some verses, entitled "On Yonge Tom", were written by Dr. Richard Corbet⁴ and afterwards published with his poems.⁵ For a long time, Corbet's verses were the only known record of this passage of the bell through the furnace; and as several different versions of them have been quoted *in extenso*,⁶ I deem it advisable to append a transcript of the original MS.:⁷

¹ Quoted by A. Wood, *ut sup.*, from "*in vita Juelli*, parte 3, fol. 81."

² W. G. Hiscock, *A Christ Church Miscellany*, 1946, pp. 143—5.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Richard Corbet: born 1582; Student of Christ Church 1598; B.A., 1602; M.A., 1605; Junior Proctor, 1612; B.D., 1617; Dean of Christ Church, 1620; Bishop of Oxford, 1628; Bishop of Norwich, 1632; Died at Norwich, 1635; Buried in Norwich Cathedral. (*Dic. Nat. Biog.*)

⁵ *Certain Elegant Poems, written by Dr. Corbet, Bishop of Norwich*, 1647, p. 28. In the published version several verses, contained in the original MS., are omitted.

⁶ *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, II, 1862, p. 494.

Tanner MS., cccclxvi., fol. 676. (Bodleian Library).

Gentleman's Magazine, XCVIII, pt. 2, 1828, p. 19.

H. T. Ellacombe, *The Church Bells of Gloucestershire*, 1881, p. 198.

J. J. Raven, *The Bells of England*, 1906, p. 293.

Douce MS., 5, fol. 27 (Bodleian Library). This version is entitled: "Verfes on Tom the greate bell of Chrifschurch at his casting 1623 reported to be made by Mr. Dr. Corbet, Deane of that houfe."

⁷ *MS. Ashmole*, 36, 37, fol. 260. (Bodleian Library).

“ To Yonge Tom.

Bee dum you infant chimes ; thump not the mettle
That nere outrunge a tinker and his kettle,
Ceafe all your petty larums, for to-day
Yonge Tom's resurrection is from the clay.
And know when Tom fhall ring his loudest knells,
The big'ft of you'le be thought but dinner bells.

Old Tom's growne yonge againe the fiery cave
Is now his cradle that was erft his grave,
Hee grewe upp quickly from his mother earth,
For all you fee is not an howre's birth :
Look on him well—my life I dare engage,
You nere faw preteyer babie of his age.

Some take his meafure by the rule ; fome by
The Jacob's ftaffe take his profunditee :
And fome his altitude ; fome bouldly fware
Yonge Tom's not like the olde ;¹ but Tom, nere feare
The Criticke Geometrician's lyne,
If thou as loude as ere thou didft ringe nyne.²

Tom did noe sooner peepe from under ground
But ftraight St. Marie's³ tenor loft his founde
Oh how his maypole founder's hart did swell
With full moone fydes of joy ; when that crackt bell,
Choaked with envie, and his admiration,
Runge like a quart pott to the congregation.

Myles,⁴ what's the matter ? Belles thus out of fquare
I hope St. Marye's Hall wont longe forbear.
Your Cockfcombe-pate, thre Clock hanges dumbe in towre,
And knows not that foure quarters makes an howre.
Now Broutes⁵ joyes ring out, the Churlifh Cur
Nere laughes aloude till great belles catch the mur.

This bell is proude and hopes noe other
But that in time hee fhall be Great Tom's brother :
Thou art wife if this thou wifheft : be it soe.
Let one henn hatch you both ; for this much know,
Hee that can caft great Christchurch Tom so well,
Can eafily caft St. Mary's greateft bell.

¹ Dr. Raven (*ut sup.*, p. 292) comments on the considerable technical interest taken in the work.

² Reference to the tolling of Great Tom at 9.5 p.m.

³ Note in the original MS.:—"The very day that Tom was cast St. Marie's tenour was burst in a peale."

⁴ Note in the original MS.:—"The Clarke of the Universsitie." See p. 264.

⁵ Note in the original MS.:—"The name of the Bell-caster." But cf. Virgil, *Aen.* VIII, 425.,

"Ferrum exercebant vasto Cyclopes in antro
Brontesque Steropesque . . ."

I owe this reference to Dr. C. T. Onions,

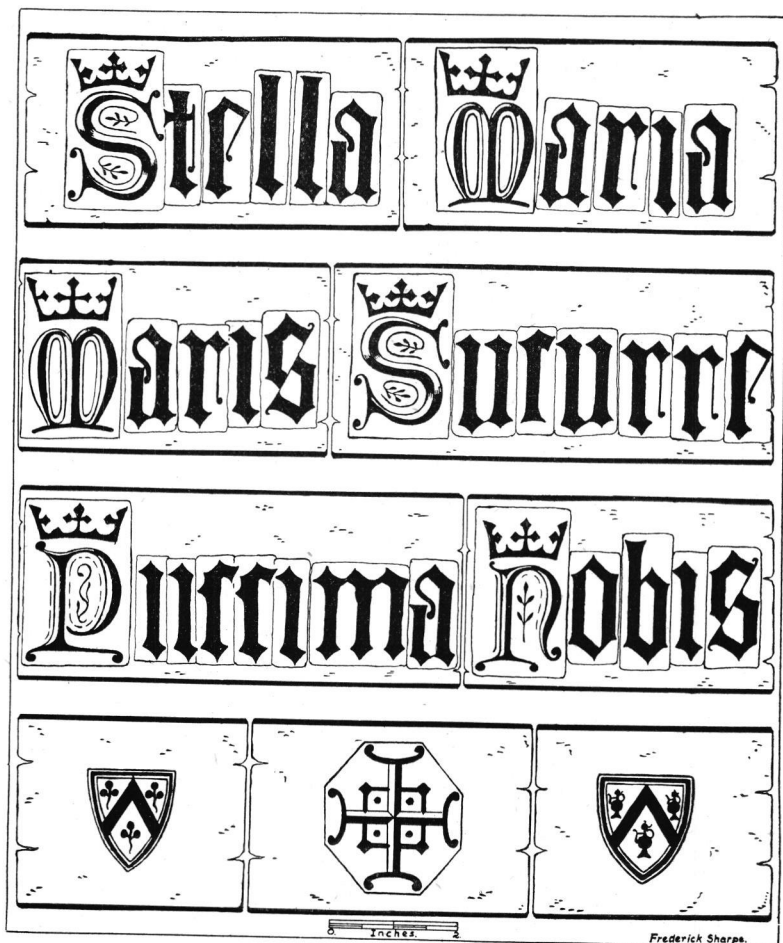


Fig. 34. Christ Church, Oxford. Scale drawing of the inscription on the tenth bell of the ring of twelve. The bell was cast early in the fifteenth century by John Bird, and originally hung in Oseney Abbey.

Rejoyce with Christchurch—looke higher Ofeney,
 Of Gyante Bells the famous treafury :
 The bafe vast thundering Clocke of Westminster
 Grave Tom of Linconne—Hugh Excefter—¹
 Are but Tom's eldefth brothers, and perchance
 Hee may call cozen with the bell of Ffrance.²

Nere grieve, old Ofeney, at thy heavy fall,
 Thy reliques build thee up againe : they all
 Florish to thy glory : thy fole fame
 When thou art not will keepe greate Ofeney's name,
 This Tom was infant of thy mighty fteple,
 Yet hee is lord controwler of a people.

Tom lately went his progresse, and lookt ore
 What hee nere faw in many yeares before.
 But when he faw the *old foundation*,³
 And little hope of separation,
 He burft with griefe, and left he should not have
 Due pomp ; hee's his owne bellman to the grave ;

And that there might of Tom bee ftill ffrange mention
 He carried to the grave a newe invention :
 They drew his browne bread face on pretty gines,⁴
 And make him ftalke upon two rowlinge pinnes.
 Hee nere fate fuch a loafe into the oven.
 But Sander Hill⁵ fwore twice or thrice by heaven,

But Tom did Sanders⁶ [vex],⁷ his Cyclops maker,
 As much as hee did Sander Hill the baker.
 Therefore loude thunderinge Tom be this thy pride,
 When thou this motto fhalt have on thy fide—
 Great World, one Alexander conquered thee,
 But two as mightie men fcarce conquered mee.

¹ For details of the sizes and weights of these bells, see pp. 267—7.

² The most famous French bell, then existing, was bourdon of Notre Dame, Paris, 104 inches in diameter, weighing approximately 11 tons, 3 cwt., and cast in 1472.

³ Note by Canon Ellacombe : "Christ Church."

⁴ *Ibid* : "Engines."

⁵ Note in Corbet's original MS.:—"Christ Church baker." Misquoted by Ellacombe and Raven as "Christ Church butler." Mr. W. G. Hiscock tells us (*ut sup.*, p. 145) that Sander Hill was a Chamberlain of the City and one of several bakers supplying bread to Christ Church.

⁶ See p. 264.

⁷ The word "vex" does not appear in Corbet's original MS. but is given in the Douce MS.

Brave conſtant ſpirit, none could make thee turne
 Though hanged, drawne, quartered, till they made thee burne,
 Yet not for this nor tenn times more be fory
 Synſt thou was martyred for the Churches glorie.¹
 But for thy meritorious ſufferinge
 Thou ſhortly ſhalt to heaven goe in a fringe !
 And though wee grieve when thou waſt thumpt and bangd,
 We all be gladd (Great Tom) to ſee thee hanged."

Writing in the year 1862, and endeavouring to assign a date to the poem, the Rev. Canon H. T. Ellacombe says :

"His (Dr. Corbet's) name appears on the fifth bell of St. Mary's, Oxon, 1612, as 'Junior Proctor'. Five was a usual number for a parish peal [*sic*], and as the present sixth, or tenor, is dated 1639 (too late for Corbet's poem) the probability is that the bell which records his name, 1612, was recast in place of 'St. Marie's tenour' which he represents in his poem to have been 'choaked with envie' the very day 'Yonge Tom' was cast. So that thus we get a *probable date* for the casting of 'Yonge Tom'."²

In making this statement Ellacombe was evidently unaware that the present tenor at St. Mary's had a predecessor. According to the records of that church the tenor had been broken for many years before it was recast in 1639, and this is the bell which became cracked the day that Tom was cast and "runge like a quart pott to the congregation."

Obviously thinking in the same terms as Canon Ellacombe, Dr. Raven says :³

"The first mishap [to Great Tom] recorded was in 1612 when recasting was necessary from some injury, most likely caused by the inevitable clocking.⁴ The genius of Dean Corbet . . . celebrated the occasion in some quasi-jocular verses."

This statement has often been quoted, and to the writer's knowledge no one has previously questioned its accuracy, but in regard to the *date* mentioned by Dr. Raven, it must be treated with reserve. Both Ellacombe and Raven may have possessed evidence unknown to the author, but the only reference they quote is Corbet's poem, which does not contain any certain proof that Tom was recast in 1612. It will be noted that Ellacombe's conjecture about the date of the recasting of St. Mary's tenor is incorrect ; and there is no entry in the disbursement books relating to payment for the recasting of Tom in 1612.

¹ This statement suggests that Tom may have been damaged while being rung on some controversial occasion.

² *Notes and Queries*, 3rd Series, II, 1862, p. 494.

³ J. J. Raven, *The Bells of England*, 1906, p. 257.

⁴ "Clocking" consists of tying a cord to the clapper and pulling it against the bell. It is possible to crack the bell by this method either by striking it too hard, or by holding the clapper against it after the initial impact.

Our knowledge of the persons mentioned in the poem is scanty and does not materially assist in solving the problem. We first hear of Edward Myles in 1616,¹ and he is mentioned as "Clerk of the University" in 1619.² Sander Hill, the baker, supplied bread to Christ Church from about 1599.³ John Saunders, the Reading bellfounder, died in 1559, and in the early years of the seventeenth century his foundry was owned, first by Joseph Carter, and later by William Yare, both of whom were employed by the Christ Church authorities to recast bells in the ring. One Henry Sanders, a bellhanger who worked in conjunction with James Keene, may have been the man in question.⁴ All subsequent quotations concerning the alleged passage of Tom through the furnace in 1612 may be traced to the before-mentioned statements by Ellacombe and Raven which seem to be based solely on the evidence of Corbet's poem, but this appears to refer to the recasting of Tom in 1626, the details of which were unknown to them. Tom's passage through the furnace in the last-named year happened during Corbet's term of office as Dean of Christ Church, and Corbet himself signed the disbursement book for a payment made on account to the bellfounders on this occasion.

In a MS. bequeathed to the Bodleian Library by the late Mr. H. Hurst is the following note :

"Keen, a bellfounder, run Gt. Tom in 1625/6 while Dean Corbet was dean, and was to have 100 marks for his pains — It was run again in 1654 by one Michael Darby of White Chapel, Bellfounder, for £50."⁵

We are indebted to Mr. Hiscock for the discovery of the details of Keen's work.⁶ In the Bodleian Library is a bond for £150, dated 15 May, 1626, given by :

"Hunfredum Keene de Calcott⁷ par de Heyford ad Pontem alias Neither Heyford in com. Oxon yeoman et Jacobum Keene de Nova Woodstock in com. (Oxon) pred. bellfounder"

to the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church in which reference is made to articles of agreement then made

¹ *Register of the University of Oxford*, Ed. A. Clarke, Vol. II, part 1, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. X, 1887, p. 430.

² *Ibid.*, p. 405, The duties of the University Clerk are described by Mallet, *History of the University of Oxford*, Vol. II, 1924, p. 337.

³ The writer searched the disbursement books for the years 1595 to 1643.

⁴ See below under the heading : Carfax tower.

⁵ *MS. Top. Oxon. C.187*, fol. 245. Bodleian Library.

⁶ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 145.

⁷ The registers of Heyford-ad-Pontem contain many entries regarding the Keene family. These will be given later in an account of the Woodstock foundry.

"concerning the new casting, making, carrying, and hanging up the greate bell of the above named Deane and Chapter called Greate Tom."¹

It will be noted that "carrying" is mentioned in the bond, which suggests that the work was not done locally. About the time that Tom was recast, James Keene established the Woodstock foundry, and the bell may have been cast there. If so, this would explain the tradition, long prevalent among Oxfordshire ringers, and quoted by Mr. Cocks,² that Tom was recast at Woodstock.

Payments for this work are recorded in the disbursement books thus :

1625—6. To Keene bellfounder in part of payment for cafting greate Tom 27 *li* 10s 0: & to Mr. Holloway for drawing the covenants 10s ... xxviiij *li*.

(Signed) Rich: Corbett.

To Keene in part of payment for cafting the greate bell ... viij *li*.
1626—7. To Keene bellfounder to make up 28 *li* paied in the former yeare the sum of 66 *li* 4—0 . . . xxxviii *li* 1vs.

(Signed) Humphrey Keene's 7 mark.

The Keenes appear to have reproduced Tom's original inscription on the new bell. In the Tanner MS. is a shortened version of Corbet's poem, entitled :

" O Tom o Xt church newly caft"
and at the end is the following statement :

"Great Tom was caft againe A°. 1653 [*sic*] or thereabouts ; it had then o[n] its verge this : 'in Thomae laude,' [*etc. ut sup.*]"³

The original medieval inscription would not have been placed on the "verge" of the bell. Dedicatory inscriptions and fifteenth century hexameters were invariably placed in the inscription-band below the shoulder. Only when the inscription-band was full were additional inscriptions, such as those on the thirteenth century bell at Caversfield, and the sixteenth century bell at Kencot, already described, placed on the verge, or sound-bow, or on the waist of a bell. Probably the Keenes filled Tom's shoulder inscription-band with their own names, and those of the Dean and Treasurer, and reproduced the former inscription on the sound-bow. This is confirmed by Wood, who states :

"The inscription that was upon this bell when he was caft about the year 1653 [*sic*] was this : 'In Thomae Laude', [*etc. ut sup.*]"⁴

¹ MS. *Top. Oxon. C.22.* fol. 36. Bodleian Library.

² A. H. Cocks, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 1897, p. 171.

³ Tanner MS. *ccclxvi*, fol. 676. Bodleian Library.

⁴ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ed. A. Clark, Vol. 1, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XIX, 1891, p. 185.

and, writing in the year 1661, he says :

"Tom had this inscription not long since remaining upon it."¹

Dr. Tanner's statement, quoted above, also implies that the bell cast when Corbet wrote the poem remained until *circa* 1653. This confirms the theory, mentioned on page 264, that the poem refers to the recasting of Tom in 1626.

The main facts regarding Tom's next passage through the furnace have been the common knowledge of campanologists for three hundred years²; but the precise details of this work were altogether forgotten until Mr. W. D. Carøe found in the Treasury at Christ Church a receipt for fifty pounds, paid to Michael Darbie for recasting the bell. This receipt, printed *in extenso* by Mr. Carøe in his valuable work on Tom Tower³, contained a reference to :

"certaine Articles bearing date the Third day of Aprill 1654 made between the said Deane and Chapter on the one p'te and mee the said Michael Darbie on the other p'te."

Prompted by this quotation the writer inquired at the Christ Church Treasury for the document in question. A search, made by Mr. E. G. W. Bill, proved successful, and the writer is greatly indebted to him for the following transcript, not, so far as is known, hitherto published :

"Articles of Agreement Indented had and made the third day of Aprill 1654 Betweene the Deane and Chapter of the Cathedrall Church of Christ in Oxon of King Henry Theights foundacon of the one pte, And Michael Darby of White Chappell in London—Bell founder of the other pte, as followeth

Ffirst the said Michael Darby doth by these presents Couenant promise and agree to and with the said Deane and Chapter and their Successors, That hee, the said Michael Darby shall and will beefore the Tenth day of May next cominge after the date hereof, att his owne proper costs and charges, new melt and Cast the greate Bell belonginge to the Said Church, and make the same a perfect, sound and well Tuned bell, in the judgement of Two Skylfull Artificers, being Bell founders, And alsoe that hee the said Michael Darby shall not Change, or waste or Cause, give way, or Suffer to bee Changed, or wasted, any of the mettle of the said Old Bell, but shall and will putt all the said old mettle into the said new bell, as neere as possible itt may, or can bee donne, And shall deliver, or cause to bee delivered unto the said Deane and Chapter, their Successors, or Assignes, all such mettle as shall remayne after the said bell shall bee new made as is aforesaid, And in case the said new bell shall not bee found well and perfectly made at the first casting thereof, That then hee the said Michael Darby shall at his like proper Costs and Charges, new cast and make the same untill itt shall bee a perfect Sound and well Tuned bell as is before expressed, And further the said Michael Darby doth

¹ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 220.

² Also recorded in the following :

J. J. Raven, *ut sup.*, p. 257.

Gentleman's Magazine, 1829, II, p. 19.

Oxford Journal, 12th April, 1890.

MS. Top. Oxon. C.187, fol. 245. Bodleian Library.

³ W. D. Carøe, *Wren and Tom Tower*, 1922, p. 67.

GREAT TOM IS CAST.

S

a 3 Voc Mr White

Great Tom is Cast, and Christ church Bells ring

one, two, three, four, five, six, and Tom comes

laft

From: PLAYFORD'S MUSICAL
COMPANION

1677.

F. Sharpe. 1951.

Fig. 35. The catch, "Great Tom is Cast", probably composed by Blaize White, of Christ Church, *circa* 1654.

hereby Couenant and agree to and with the said Deane and Chapter, and their Successors, That if the said new bell shall att any tyme fayle, Cracke or breake within the Space of one yeare and one day after the new making thereof, That then hee the said Michael Darby shall at his like Costs and Charges, from tyme to tyme, new make the said Bell, until it shall bee and continue Sound and perfect for one whole yeare and one day after the said new casting and making thereof.

It is also Agreed by and betweene the said parties to these presents, That hee the said Michael Darby shall and will att his like Costs and Charges, take downe the foresaid Bell from the place where itt doth now hang, and cause the same to bee conuayed unto the Worke house within the said Cathedrall Church, being the place appoynted for the melting and Casting thereof, And shall finde all his like Costs and Charges, all the Moulds, furnaces, pitts, firing, and all other necessaryes and materials whatsoever belonging, or to bee used, in or aboute the Casting and making of the Said new Bell, And after the said Bell shall be soe Cast and made as aforesaid att his like Costs and Charges shall cause the same to be Carried back and sett up againe in the same place from whence itt was taken down, skyllfully, firmly and strongly in the judgment of able and knowing workmen.

It is further Agreed, And the said Deane and Chapter doe for themselves and their Successors Couenant to and with the said Michael Darby, That they the said Deane and Chapter, soe soone as the said worke shall bee donne and finished as is herein Expressed, shall pay or cause to be paid unto the Said Michael Darby or his Assigne, or Assignes, the full sume of fifty pounds of Currant English money for his paynes and Charges in and aboute all the said worke.

In witnes whereof to the one part of these present Articles remayning with the said Deane and Chapter, the said Michael Darby hath sett his hand and seale, And to the other part hereof remayning with the said Michael Darby, the said Deane and Chapter have sett their Common Seale, the day and yeare first aboue written."

(Signed : "Michael Darby." The seal has been removed).

The new bell weighed only 2 tons 13 cwt. 1 qr. 9 lbs.¹, and therefore its diameter must have been reduced to approximately 65 inches. The former tenor at the Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, London², had a diameter of this size and sounded the strike-note B natural : the strike-note of Darbie's bell was probably similar ; and, if so, the result of the reduction in Tom's size was that the seven bells were now relatively tuned in the Lydian mode.

We are told by Anthony Wood that the inscription on Darbie's Great Tom "was made by Mr. . . . Godolphin, a student."³ The bell is said to have been inscribed :⁴

¹ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 147.

² H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 1912, p. 108.

³ Possibly Sir William Godolphin, for whom see *D.N.B.* (*The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, Vol. I, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XIX, 1891, p. 185.)

⁴ *Oxford Journal*, 12th April, 1890. This inscription was apparently unknown to Dr. Raven and Mr. Carøe.

MICHAEL DARBYE¹ DID RUN ME
GREAT TOM OF OXFORD FOR TO
BE AND HERE I HANG UNTIL I
CRACK FOR I AM METAL TO THE
BACK

In the past it has been the custom to condemn the works of Michael Darbie.² Certainly his bells are not to be numbered among the best products of our seventeenth century bellfounders ; but it must be remembered that he undertook formidable tasks without the advantage of a proper foundry or plant ; and if, owing to an itinerant founder's methods, his bells are rough in appearance, the quality of their tone is not far below that of the average mid-seventeenth century bell. Whatever his failings, Michael Darbie did not lack courage and initiative, and he was in many ways a pioneer, as his work at New College and Merton College testifies. His chief failure was at Merton for which he was severely censured by Anthony Wood, and which will be described later. But Darbie's Great Tom must have been a success or he would not subsequently have received so many orders for work in Oxford.³

Mr. Hiscock suggests that the catch, "Great Tom is cast," was composed by Blaze White, of Christ Church, who took his M.A. degree in the year that Darbie recast Tom.⁴ It was first published in "Playford's Musical Companion" in the year 1677. A copy of the original score is given in Fig. 35. The catch implies that Tom was rung as a tenor.

The story of Richard Keene's three failures in attempting to recast Tom, and the subsequent success of Christopher Hodson in casting the present bell has often been told.⁵ The most comprehensive account is that given by Mr. Hiscock,⁶ whose knowledge of the Christ Church disbursement books is unrivalled. Further particulars of this work, also discovered by Mr. Hiscock, and not hitherto published, have been incorporated in the following account ; and the writer is greatly indebted to him for so generously placing his notes at his disposal.

¹ *Sic.*

² *E.g.* Messrs. Wood, Raven, Lukis, Walters and Robinson.

³ See under the headings : St. Aldate, St. Peter-in-the-East, Brasenose College, Merton College, New College and Queen's College, Oxford, and Elsfeld, Islip, Stanton Harcourt, Stanton-St.-John, and elsewhere in the county.

⁴ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 146.

⁵ *E.g.* Messrs. Wood, Willis, Rawlinson, Ellacombe, Raven, Lukis, Walters and Caröe.

⁶ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, pp. 143-149.

On 5 August 1678 Articles of Agreement¹ were made between the Treasurer and Richard Keene, of Woodstock, by which Keene undertook to recast Great Tom and guarantee his work for a year and a day for the sum of £50, or, alternatively, to receive fifteen shillings per cwt. for recasting the existing bell, plus one shilling per lb. for any metal added during the operation. For the hire of scales and weights and assistance in weighing the bell before and after it was cast Keene was to pay £2, and he agreed to cast the bell before 10 October, 1678. The Treasurer agreed to pay expenses incurred in taking down the bell and conveying it to the furnace and back again, and to allow Keene the use of the "Work-house" in Christ Church in which to carry out the work. This site, on the north side of the great quadrangle, continued to be called "Bell Yard" until 1737, when one of the canons was given the use of it.²

We are not told the reason for the recasting of Tom on this occasion. It may have been because of some injury to Darbie's bell, or because of a desire for a larger and better bell, coupled with the wish to augment the ring. As previously stated there were at this time seven bells in the ring, the strike-notes of which were probably tuned in the Lydian mode. Rings of eight and ten bells, tuned in the major scale, were then becoming fashionable, and to augment the Christ Church ring so that it would contain ten bells, tuned diatonically in the major scale, two courses were open: if Tom was retained as the tenor, three trebles would be required, giving the strike-notes D♯, C♯ and B, and also it would be necessary to recast the F natural bell into one sounding the strike-note E natural; alternatively, if Tom was removed, four trebles would be needed sounding the strike-notes F, E♭, D♭ and C. The alternative scheme was adopted and Tom was removed from the central tower of the Cathedral to be recast and enlarged, and to make room for the four new trebles.

In his previous passages through the furnace in the seventeenth century, Tom was considerably reduced in size and weight. This is not surprising: modern foundries melt about one-third more metal than that estimated to be required to fill the bell-moulds. Obviously the seventeenth century foundries had no large stock of extra metal by which they could allow a margin for safety, and were cautious in the matter. Richard Keene endeavoured to cast a much larger bell than any then existing in the British Isles: in making the attempt he was a pioneer; he had no examples from

¹ I am indebted to Mr. Hiscock for a transcript of these.

² W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 148.

which to make a "strickle", or pattern, and no means of calculating how much metal would be needed. Twice he failed because there was insufficient metal to form the canons. After the second failure the Treasurer bought two secondhand bells, weighing respectively $14\frac{1}{4}$ cwt. and $11\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. together with 56 cwt. 3 qrs. 10 lb. of bell-metal, at a cost of £348:3.6d., through John Paine, an Oxford brazier.¹ On the occasion of Keene's third attempt the mould burst and the molten metal ran into the ground. The story is best told in the words of Thomas Baskerville :²

"In his (Dr. Fell's) time, 1681,³ ye famous Tom, now ye greatest bell in England, for it weighs 16700 pounds,⁴ was cast, but it miscarryd 3 times, twice it wanted mettle to make out ye canons, and a 3rd time it burst ye mould and ran into ye ground, so yt poor Keen or King of Woodstock Bellfounder whose ill luck itt was thrice to faile was half beside himself and quite undone, till ye Coll: made him amends, at last ye 4th time it was cast, and brought to perfection by Christopher Hodson, a London Bellfounder. Ye greatness of ye bell and those failures in its casting made a poet bestow a song on 't:

'Great Tom to Town is lately come
That long lay in his Mother's Womb,
Although he bee much older grown
It will augment unto his Tone,
Then hang him up although wee fear him
That wee at night at 9 may heare hime.
Bome Bome Bome.'

After Keene's first failure the imperfect bell weighed 93 cwt. 0 qr. 23 lbs.; in his second attempt he included a further 2 cwt. 3 qrs. 9 lb. What was added and wasted in the third attempt when the mould burst we do not know, but Keene was paid over £400 for his work and metal.⁵

The Treasurer then engaged Christopher Hodson, of London, to do the work. In Articles of Agreement, dated 17 December, 1679, Hodson undertook to cast a bell seven feet in diameter for the sum of £180.⁶ He succeeded at the first attempt. Anthony Wood tells us :

"1680 Apr. 8 Maundy Thursday Great Tom of Ch[rist] Ch[urch] cast, after 3 endeavours but in vaine."⁷

¹ Paine's receipted bill, Christ Church Treasury.

² *Thomas Baskerville's Account of Oxford, 1670-1700*, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XLVII, *Collectanea IV*, 1905, p. 182.

³ *Sic*.

⁴ i.e. 7 tons, 9 cwt. 0 qrs. 12 lbs.

⁵ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, p. 148.

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, Vol. II, Ed. A. Clarke, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XXI, 1892, p. 484.

Hodson was paid on 4 May, 1680, and his fee increased to £190. For transcripts of the Accounts covering his expenses and other payments relating to the hanging of Great Tom the author again is indebted to Mr. Hiscock :

"1680. Here is a perfect accompt of Hodson's expenses concerning Great Tom.

		£	s.	d.
Imprimis for	bricke and clay	10	10	0
Item —	iron and iron worke	5	15	0
—	Wood	5	5	0
—	Coles	2	0	0
—	Ropes	4	14	0
—	Pulleys	2	5	0
—	Mason's worke	2	10	0
—	Labourrs all the time	2	15	6
—	Wax and Rozen	1	16	0
—	Tanne Ashes		5	0
—	Hempe		5	0
—	An Argent & Cannon		15	0
—	cutting the State's armes		5	0
—	takeing downe and setting up the bell	8	10	0
—	my owne expenses	5	10	0
—	six men that hopd downe the bell to the place where it was cast and up again	2	0	0
—	horsdunge	1	0	0
—	200 of mettall ¹	6	0	0
		<hr/> £62 0 6 <hr/>		

1680. March 8

Paid more to Mr. Hodson ye Bellfounder for mettles &
tin £78.9s.6d.

1680. May 4

Paid Mr. Hodson in full for casting the greate bell. £190.0s.0d.

The bricks, clay, iron, and horsedung would have been used in the construction of the "core" and "cope" moulds;² wax would be used in making the pattern of the canons; the mason's work comprised the building of the core; the canon and argent were probably some additional metal.

The tower over the gateway leading into the great quadrangle was built under the direction of Sir Christopher Wren,³ and later we find that two of his chief masons were employed to hoist Tom into it.

¹ i.e. 2 cwt.

² See p. 75 *O.R.S.*, Vol. XXVIII.

³ W. D. Caröe *ut sup.*

1683. Given ye workmen for drawing up ye bell £2.os.od.
 Paid for two Braffes¹ for Tom £4.12s.od.
 Paid for Poles, Bords, scaffolding, Tackle, Ropes et.
 ye bill of Kempster & Robinson £50.os.od.
 1685. For the clapper of the Great Bell (Bernard Rawlins
 decd.) (Sd.) Mary Rawlins. £12.12s.6d.

To receive the bell a side-pattern frame of the braced-king-post type was installed, and a grillage of oak braces inserted under the foundation beams of the bell frame to transmit the forces set up by the swinging bell to second floor level. It is difficult to understand why Sir Christopher Wren installed a frame of this type as king-post bell-frame construction was then rapidly being discontinued. The oak for the bell-frame came from Dorton Park, near Thame.²

Concerning the first occasion on which the bell was used, Anthony Wood tells two conflicting stories :

"1682. Dec. 3. Su[nday] Ch[rist] Ch[urch] great bell rung out about 7 at night for (Edward) Barber, M.A., and student of Ch[rist] Ch[urch], who died in the vicaridge house at Cassington on that day."³

"1684. May 29. Th[ursday]. Great Tom rang out inter horas 8 et 9. The first time it rang."⁴

There are two possible explanations of these statements : Great Tom may have been tolled, by the method known as clocking, before being hoisted into the tower ; or, alternatively, Little Tom may have been used on the first occasion, as obviously it was on a similar one on 30 June, 1679, also mentioned by Wood.

Great Tom's inscription is contained in two inscription-bands, situated below the shoulder of the bell. Between the two bands is a narrow moulding-wire ; there are two moulding-wires above the upper band, and three below the lower band, three above and two below the sound-bow.

The bell is inscribed :

MAGNVS * THOMAS * CLVSIVS *
 OXONIENSIS * RENATVS * APRILIS
 * VIII * ANNO * MDCLXXX
 * REGNANTE * CAROLO * II
 * DECANO * IOANNE * (Four
 coins.) / OXON * EPISCOPO *
 SVBDECANO * GVL * IANE * SS
 * TH * P * THESAURARIO
 * HEN * SMITH * SS
 * TH * P * CVRA * ET *
 ARTE * CHRIST * HODSON *
 (Eleven coins.)

¹ i.e. brasses, or brass bearings.

² W. G. Hiscock, *at sup.*, pp. 156, 233.

³ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, Vol. III., ed. A. Clarke, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XXVI, 1894, p. 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

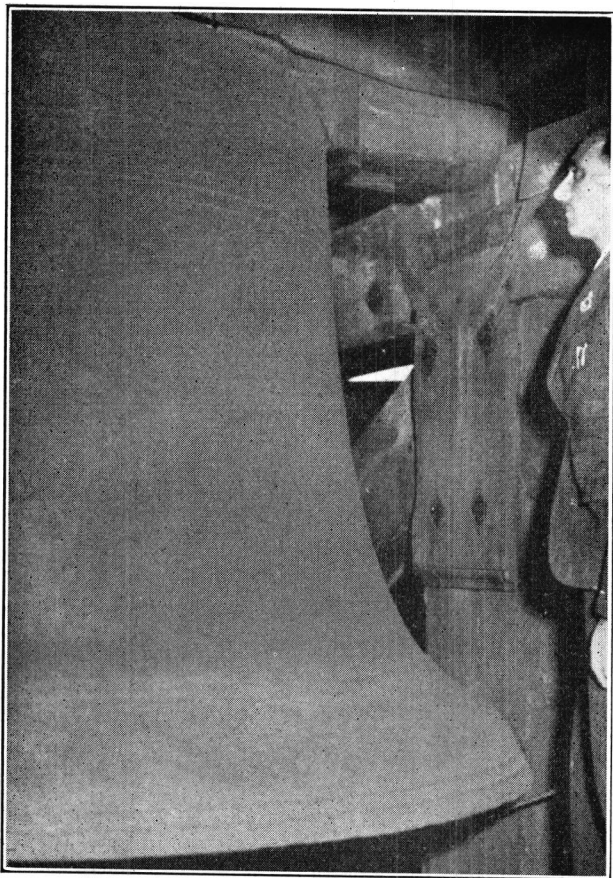


Photo.:

W. Harris Morgan, Esq.

Fig. 36. Christ Church, Oxford. Great Tom, the bourdon bell, cast by Christopher Hodson, in 1680. On the right is Mr. E. G. Moore, Steward of the Oxford Society of Change Ringers.

In the inscription the word-stop, Fig. T5, is denoted by the sign *. "Clusius" refers to Tom's use to announce the time for the closing of the college gates. The Dean mentioned in the inscription is the famous John Fell, D.D., 1625-1686¹; the sub-dean is William Jane, 1645-1707.²

Great Tom's gear consists of a plated elm headstock, strap gudgeons, brass bearings, and a seventeenth century clapper to which has been fitted a nineteenth century head. The clapper was altered and repaired in the nineteenth and present centuries. The original crown staple is broken, and a false one, dating from the last century, is now secured to the bell by means of bolts which pass through holes drilled in its crown. There are some fragments of a bell-wheel of non-traditional type attached to the headstock; the lower half of this wheel has disappeared, and about half the spokes, and almost all of the sole and raves of the upper half are missing. There are two disused seventeenth century "ground-trucks", or rope rollers, at the north and south ends of the frame cills. The existence of these proves that two ropes were used for the purpose of swinging Tom. There is also a rope hole in the centre of the bell pit on the north side through which a clocking rope passed before the original crown staple broke.

In addition to the crown staple, clapper, and wheel, mentioned above, the other gear is not in its original state: repairs were carried out by Abraham Rudhall I, in 1692, by C. and G. Mears, in 1847, and by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank, in 1946.³

The sound-bow of the bell is indented on the north and south sides, showing that in former days Tom was frequently rung. The sound-bow is more deeply indented on the north side where the clapper struck when he was clocked, or tolled, before the above mentioned accident to the original crown staple. The sound-bow is also indented on the north west side where the clapper now strikes when the bell is clocked.

Owing to the dilapidated state of the wheel, gudgeons, and bearings, and by reason of the present position of the clapper and clock hammer, the bell cannot now be rung. Since 1847 it has been sounded by the method known to campanologists as clocking.⁴

¹ *D.N.B.* Vol. VI, p. 1157.

² *D.N.B.* Vol. X, p. 681.

³ Disbursement books.

⁴ For a list of bells cracked by "clocking" see H. T. Ellacombe, *Bells of The Church*, 1872, p. 217. For an order forbidding clocking in 1594, see *Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XLIX, p. 7. Only Tom's great size and the physical effort needed to move his huge clapper seems to have saved him from a similar fate.

The principal dimensions of Great Tom are : diameter at lip, 85 inches ; height from lip to crown, 69 inches ; height of canons, 12 inches ; and thickness of sound-bow, 6 inches : its argent is concealed by the headstock and cannot be measured. It is the largest bell in the county, and until comparatively recent times was the largest in England.

The bell is abnormally thick in certain places which accounts for its unique partial-tones.¹ It is an "Old-Standard" bell, with a distinct charm of its own, and its great booming tones are well-known to Oxonians. Its strike-note is *approximately* A natural. Judged *solely* by the standards of modern bellfounding the tone of the bell would be considered poor, because its partial-tones are not harmonically true. But no attempt has ever been made to tune Tom or to correct its partial-tones. Writing in 1872, Canon Ellacombe says :

"The tone [of Tom] is generally considered A, but, being faulty in some parts, the tones vary, and some say it gives out five notes."²

Ellacombe probably means "partial-tones" of which Tom has more than five.

A modern bell with a diameter of 85 inches would weigh approximately 6 tons, and its strike-note would be G natural : this has caused many campanologists to doubt Baskerville's statement that Tom weighs 7 tons, 9 cwt. 0 qrs. 12 lbs.³ Basing his calculations on the sums Hodson and Keene were paid at the known ruling price of metal, Mr. Hiscock computes the weight of the bell at approximately 7 tons 7 cwt. 3 qrs. 11 lbs.;⁴ and this is probably as near the actual weight as it is possible to calculate, bearing in mind Tom's peculiarities, for if the bell was not abnormally thick its strike-note would be much lower than A natural.

For purposes of comparison the dimensions and weights of some notable English bourdon bells are appended :

London. St. Paul's Cathedral. *Great Paul*. 1882.*

Diameter : 114 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Weight : 16 tons 14 cwt. 2 qrs. 19 lb.

Liverpool Cathedral. *Great George*, 1940.*

Diameter : 114 inches. Weight : 14 tons 15 cwt. 2 qrs. 2 lb.

Westminster. Houses of Parliament. *Big Ben*. 1858. ¶

Diameter : 108 inches. Weight : 13 tons 10 cwt. 3 qrs. 15 lb.

York Minster. *Great Peter*. 1927.*

Diameter : 104 inches. Weight : 10 tons 16 cwt. 2 qrs. 22 lb.

Bristol University. *Great George*. 1925*

Diameter : 100 inches. Weight : 9 tons 11 cwt. 2 qrs. 0 lb.

¹ See p. 5, *O.R.S.* Vol. XXVIII.

² H. T. Ellacombe, *The Church Bells of Devon*, 1872, p. 394.

³ See p. 271.

⁴ W. G. Hiscock, *ut sup.*, pp. 146-148.

Buckfast Abbey. *Hosannah*. 1935.*

Diameter : 91 inches. Weight : 7 tons 9 cwt. 0 qr. 18 lb.
Oxford. Christ Church. *Great Tom*. 1680.

Diameter : 85 inches. Weight : *approximately* 7 tons 7½ cwt.
Lincoln Cathedral. *Great Tom*. 1835. ¶

Diameter : 82½ inches. Weight : *approximately* 5 tons 10 cwt.

London. St. Paul's Cathedral. *Great Tom*. 1716. ¶

Diameter : 82½ inches. Weight : 5 tons 2 cwt. 1 qr. 22 lb.
Exeter Cathedral. *Great Peter*. 1676.

Diameter : 76 inches. Weight : *approximately* 4 tons.

Gloucester Cathedral. *Great Peter*. *Circa* 1450.

Diameter : 68½ inches. Weight : *approximately* 2 tons 18 cwt.¹

Great Tom is now used as a clock bell, and every evening at five minutes past nine is tolled for 101 strokes.² This was originally intended as a signal for the closing of the college gates, but its purpose is now obsolete. One stroke was given for every student attached to the original foundation, and one added in 1603 under the Thurston bequest. The bell is also tolled for one hour at the death of the reigning Sovereign, or of the Dean.

No description of the Priory bells is known to the writer : if they hung in the central tower they must have been removed to make room for the Oseney bells. Their removal is not mentioned in the accounts, which implies that they were hung elsewhere, and they may have been housed in a western tower, or in a detached campanile.

The following quotation is given by J. Gutch and Mr. Warner:

'Item to James Fleming for making scaffolds for ye taking down of the old steptull.'³

Some authorities think that this refers to a western tower which may have been taken down by Wolsey when he demolished the west end of the church to make room for the great quadrangle.⁴

In accordance with an ancient custom the clock in the cathedral belfry is not regulated by Greenwich time but by that of the meridian on which it stands. For this reason the principal services commence five minutes later than the times advertised.

Some account of the ringing of the bells of St. Frideswide's Priory, and of the part they played before the Reformation in the time-keeping of the University, has been given by Mr. Warner.⁵

¹ The bells marked * were cast at the Loughborough foundry ; those marked ¶ were cast at the Whitechapel foundry ; Great Peter, of Exeter, was recast by Thomas Purdue. Great Peter, of Gloucester, is the only medieval bourdon bell remaining in this country ; the name of its founder is unknown.

² On two occasions the author has tolled the 101 strokes on Great Tom.

³ S. A. Warner, *Oxford Cathedral*, 1924, p. 123.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

A few medieval ringing customs survived until the year 1940 : owing to the war-time ban on ringing, they were then discontinued and have not been revived. Before 1940 the method of sounding the bells for the principal daily services was as follows : the seventh bell was rung for five minutes at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., beginning when the cathedral clock struck the hour, or at five minutes past the hour by Greenwich time ; at 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. the eighth and ninth bells were chimed for ten minutes, taking their time on each occasion from the cathedral clock ; commencing at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., and taking their time from Great Tom, on which the hours by Greenwich time are struck, the eleventh bell was chimed for five minutes, that is until the cathedral clock struck the hour. The practice of sounding certain bells at intervals during the space of an hour before services is said to have been introduced in monastic times so that those who were working, or fishing, should not be late in their attendance.¹

Throughout the seventeenth century payments were made to the sexton for ringing the "sermon bell"; and important events, either public or personal, were commemorated by the ringing, or tolling, of the bells. The works of Anthony Wood contain over two hundred references to the ringing, or tolling, of bells in Oxford.

Of payments made for ringing on notable occasions and recorded in the disbursement books, one deserves special mention :

"1660. Pd. for ringers two days at the proclamation & thanksgiving for his Majesty 00. 15. 00.

(Signed) Will. Child."

The custom of ringing on the King's Accession and on Royal Birthdays is still maintained.

The ringing of the Christ Church bells, other than that normally done by the sexton, has for over two centuries been done by members of The Oxford Society of Change Ringers, a company famed for its skill in that art. Unfortunately, the earlier records of the society have been lost, but we know that like London, Cambridge and Norwich, Oxford was one of the chief centres at which the art was first practised. Mr. J. Armiger Trollope says :

"Nowhere was change ringing earlier practised or more quickly developed than at the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and among students at the Inns of Court in London At those places were gathered together a number of young men, intellectually much superior to the average person, and just at that time of life when physical sports most appeal. And many of them, when their student days were over took down into the country the love of ringing they had learned at Oxford or

¹ S. A. Warner, *ut sup.*, p. 135.

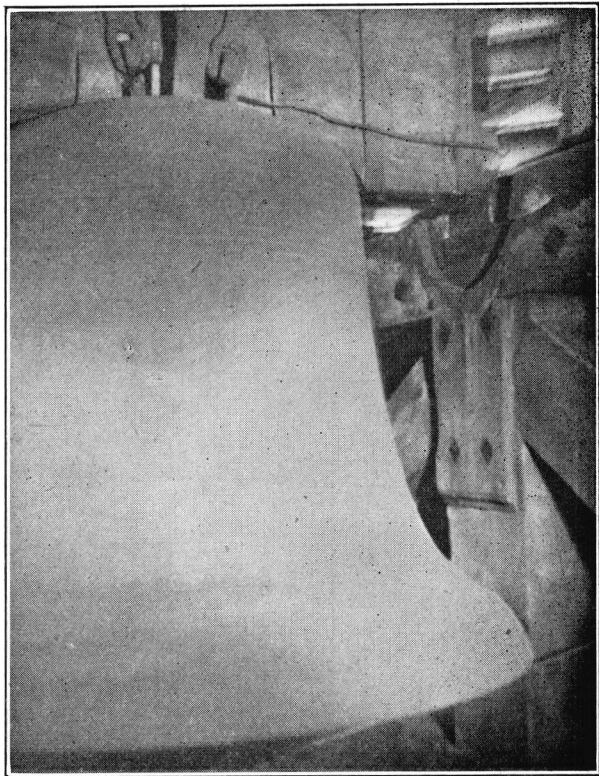


Fig. 37. Christ Church, Oxford. Great Tom. Owing to the position of the frame, beams and gear, it is not possible to obtain a photograph of the complete bell. Portions of the canons may be seen at the top of the photograph and the details of the junction of head, king post, and main braces of the braced-king-post bell frame should be noted.

Cambridge and became propagandists of the new art ; while the Society of College Youths¹ owed much of its pre-eminence in the seventeenth century to men who had become ringers in their University days."²

We have already mentioned Richard Duckworth, the author the first text book on the Art of Change-ringing.³ He was Rector of St. Martin's, Carfax, Oxford, from 1676 to 1682, and may have been the author of the change-ringing compositions, or "methods" as they are called, known to ringers as "Oxford Bob," "Double Oxford," and "Oxford Treble Bob," which doubtless were first rung here in the seventeenth century. Because Oxford Treble Bob dates from the year 1677 and Kent Treble Bob dates from 1788, many ringers think that the "Treble Bob" system originated in this city.⁴

John Sacheveral, a gentleman who lived near Oxford, and whose comments on the Horspath bells have already been quoted,⁵ held an important position among the Oxford ringers at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Sacheveral was an acknowledged authority on bells,⁶ and a member of The Ancient Society of College Youths. He held the office of Steward of that society in 1702,⁷ and there is no doubt that the ringing compositions practised by the London Society were known to the Oxford ringers and vice-versa.

Considerable interest was aroused in Oxford in the year 1733 by a visit of members of The Ancient Society of College Youths under the leadership of that famous ringer, Benjamin Annable, of which Thomas Hearne has given us such an excellent account. As a result of this visit the first complete peal to be scored in the county was rung on the bells of the cathedral. The story is best told in the words of Thomas Hearne :

"1733. May 24 (Thur.). On Whitsunday last (May 13) came to Oxford on foot 15 ringers from London, and the day before came on horseback one Mr. Skelton, about 14 or 15 years ago a Commoner of Queen's Coll. Oxford, and an excellent Ringer, and at this time Register to the

¹ A London ringing society founded in 1637. It is now known as "The Ancient Society of College Youths," and has the type of status among ringers that the M.C.C. has among cricketers.

² *The Ringing World*, 18th October, 1940.

³ O.R.S. Vol. XXVIII, p. 24.

⁴ W. Snowden, *Standard Methods*, 1928, p. 11.

⁵ O.R.S. Vol. XXX, p. 174.

⁶ *Hearne's Collections*, Vol. 140, fol. 99.

⁷ *The Ringing World*, 25th October, 1940.

Bishop of London (Gibson) and a Proctor in the Arches. The next day being Monday, May 14, the Oxford ringers gave them a short peal at Magd. Coll., as they did in the evening a short one at Christ Church, the Londoners laying still that day, that they might refresh themselves after the fatigue of their journey. The day after (being Tuesday, May 15) the Londoners rang a peal admirably well at New College of about 1,500 changes from a little before 11 Clock in the morning till 12, and in the evening they did the same at Christ Church. On Wed. May 16, they (the Londoners) began to ring at Christ Church in the morning a quarter or more before 12, & they rang till 2 most incomparably well, when the gudgeons being bad, the biggest bell (that is, the tenth) fell down, but not through the loft, otherwise they proposed to have rung, 5,040 changes. In the Evening they rang the 8 bells at Magd. Coll., but 2 or 3 ropes breaking, they could not proceed above $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour. On Thurs. May 17, they began to ring at New College, proposing to ring the said number of changes, viz. 5,040, there. They began a little before 12 & rang about 3 quarters of an hour, when one of the ropes broke, & so they were stopped. Afterwards they dined at the Weers beyond Frier Bacon's study, and some (if not all) of them stepping over to Ifley, they rang the six bells there (viz. 700 changes upon them). The next day, being Friday May 18, they were resolved to ring the above mentioned number of 5,040 changes upon New College ten bells, as they had begun to do before. Accordingly they began a little before 12 in the morning, and rang full 2 hours wanting two minutes, when one of the ropes broke, & put a stop to the peal, for which all were sorry, as they were at the fall of the Great Bell at Christ Church. For their ringing at both places as well as elsewhere, was most surprisingly fine, without the least fault from beginning to end, such as never was before in Oxford, and 'tis a scandal, that the Bells should be not in good order. Saturday May 19 they went out of Town. On Tuesday May 22 the great Bell at Christ Church was got up again, and in the evening the Oxford men rang all ten, and endeavoured to imitate the Londoners, but they were soon out, and made poor work of it in comparison of the others."¹

To Thomas Hearne we are indebted for the following record of the first complete peal to be rung in the county :

"1734. Jan. 2 (Wed.) Christ Church ten bells being now in very good order, yesterday some select Oxford ringers rang them all for a wager. They were every man of them Townsmen, but had received some considerable instructions from Mr. Stone, M.A., a man in Orders, and a good ringer himself, Fellow of Wadham College. The wager was, that they could not ring the 5040 changes (quarter or cater changes) upon them. They were to have six tryals, & if upon the sixth tryal they did not do it, they were to loose [*sic*]. Yesterday they began, being the first tryal, just as [*sic*] twelve clock, and finished the whole 27 minutes after 3 clock. This is the first time that this number of changes was ever rung in Oxford, the biggest Bell at Christ Church falling down, & the Ropes breaking at New College, when the Londoners rang at both places lately, otherwise the said Londoners (who rung at each place above two hours, and never made the least fault) would have done it with the greatest ease

¹ *Hearne's Collections*, ed. H. E. Salter, Vol. XI., Oxford Historical Society, Vol. LXXII, 1918, p. 209.

imaginable. The Oxford Ringers yesterday made many mistakes, so t'was expected they must have given over several times. I did not hear them till they had been at it about 3 quarters of an hour, but afterwards I heard them quite out till they had done, and I observed 52 faults in their ringing, nine of which were very considerable ones. However take it all together t'was excellent Ringing and they may glory of it. The most considerable fault was occasioned by Dr. Gregory, Regius Professor of Modern History & Student of Christ Church, who broke in upon the ringers, to their great disturbance."¹

"1734. Jan. 24. (Thur(s)day). The names of those Oxford ringers that rang the 5040 changes upon Christ Church ten Bells on New Year's day last are in order as each man rung his Bell

1. Mr. Richard Hearne, a taylor.
2. Mr. John Vicars, second Butler of New College.
3. Mr. John George, a taylor.
4. Mr. Guy Terry, a potash maker in St. Clements.
5. Mr. Thomas Yate, second cook of Magd. College.
6. Mr. John Broughton, a barber of St. Peter's in the East.
7. Mr. Richard Smith, a glover in St. Peter's in the East.
8. Mr. William Barnes, second cook of Christ Church.
9. Mr. Arthur Lloyd, of Holywell, carpenter and bel-hanger.
10. Mr. Nicholas Benwell, sexton of Christ Church."²

Mr. Warner has given an interesting account of the ringing which in former years took place at the election of university and diocesan officers, and on the occasions of visits by famous people.³ Most of these customs have been discontinued.

In addition to the Sunday service ringing and that done at weddings and on special occasions, the Christ Church bells are now rung on the six following traditional occasions :

- May 12th. Coronation day.
- June 20th. Christ Church gaudy.
- August 4th. H.M. The Queen's birthday.
- October 19th. St. Frideswide's day.
- December 11th. H.M. The King's Accession.
- December 14th. H.M. The King's birthday.

The ringing chamber contains many peal tablets. Some were removed from the central tower in 1872 : others are the property of the Oxford Society of Change Ringers. A list of the tablets is appended, on which are recorded details of the following peals :

North Wall. (Left to right).

1. 4th June 1945. 5007 Stedman Cinques, in 3 hrs. 38 mins.⁴
2. 22nd August 1907. 5055 Stedman Cinques, in 3 hrs. 37 mins.
3. 26th December 1931. 5280 Cambridge Surprise Maximus, in 4 hrs. 7 mins.

¹ *Hearne's Collections, ut sup.*, p. 290.

² *Hearne's Collections, ut sup.*, p. 298. On pp. 398—399 Hearne gives some interesting details of ringing at Christ Church and New College.

³ S. A. Warner, *ut sup.*, pp. 130—133.

⁴ Rung to commemorate the end of the War in Europe.

4. 18th January 1898. 5040 Kent Treble Bob Maximus, in 3 hrs. 58 mins.¹
5. 10th January 1899. 5004 Stedman Cinqes, in 3 hrs. 30 mins.
6. 17th September 1903. 5004 Stedman Cinqes, in 3 hrs. 31 mins.
7. 20th July 1931. 5007 Stedman Cinqes, in 3 hrs. 44 mins.
8. 7th September 1935. 5007 Stedman Cinqes, in 3 hrs. 40 mins.
9. 5th September 1936. 5016 Grandsire Cinqes, in 3 hrs. 40 mins.
10. 19th March 1934. 5007 Stedman Cinqes, in 3 hrs. 45 mins.²
11. 27th March 1815. 10,008 Grandsire Caters, in 6 hrs. 42 mins.³
12. A tablet, belonging to the Oxford Society of Change Ringers, on which are recorded details of the ten following peals, only one of which was rung at Christ Church.
 - (a) 27th March 1815. 10,008 Grandsire Caters, at New College.
 - (b) 5th February 1815. 6101 Grandsire Quatuors,⁴ at Magdalen College.
 - (c) 5th October 1817. 5040 Grandsire Triples, at Merton College.
 - (d) 4th September 1820. 5376 Bob Major, at New College.
 - (e) 4th December 1824. 5021 Grandsire Quatuors,⁴ at Magdalen College.
 - (f) 12th October 1826. 5130 Grandsire Quatuors,⁴ at New College.
 - (g) 16th April 1827. 5003 Grandsire Major, at New College.
 - (h) 20th August 1827. 6137 Grandsire Quatuors,⁴ at New College.
 - (i) 19th January 1828. 5163 Grandsire Quatuors,⁴ at Christ Church.
 - (j) 8th April, 1834. 5120 New Treble Bob Major, at New College.
13. 4th January 1781. 5148 Grandsire Quatuors,⁴ in 3 hrs. 35 mins.
14. 20th May 1773. 6102 Grandsire Quatuors,⁴ in 3 hrs. 55 mins.⁵
15. 20th July 1847. 5040 Stedman Triples, in 3 hrs. 12 mins.⁶
16. 19th January 1828. 5163 Grandsire Caters, in 3 hrs. 36 mins.⁷

East Wall. (Left to right).

17. 27th December 1937. 5007 Stedman Cinqes, in 3 hrs. 34 mins.
18. 24th March 1950. 5280 Yorkshire Surprise Maximus, in 3 hrs. 48 mins.
19. 19th January 1828. 5163 Grandsire Caters, in 3 hrs. 36 mins.⁸
20. 22nd September 1820. 5003 Grandsire Quatuors,⁹ in 3 hrs. 32 mins.
21. 24th August 1946. 12663 Stedman Cinqes, in 8 hrs. 48 mins.¹⁰

¹ Rung with the bells muffled in memory of the Rev. C. L. Dodgson, (Lewis Carol), Student of Christ Church, who died 14th January, 1898. During the ringing the Very Rev. H. G. Liddell, some time Dean of Christ Church, died at Ascot, Berkshire.

² On the tablet it is stated: "This peal was rung to Celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the First Peal in the City of Oxford." (*sic.*) See p. 281.

³ Rung at New College. A duplicate record of Peal No. 12a.

⁴ *Sic.*

⁵ Rung at Magdalen College.

⁶ Rung at New College.

⁷ Also recorded on tablets Nos. 12(i), and 19.

⁸ Also recorded on tablets Nos. 12(i) and 16.

⁹ *Sic.*

¹⁰ The World's record peal of Stedman Cinqes.

South Wall. (Left to right).

- 22. 26th December 1889. 5040 Kent Treble Bob Royal, in 3 hrs. 33 mins.
- 23. 28th August 1896. 5184 London Surprise Major, in 3 hrs. 37½ mins.
- 24. 24th September 1903. 5004 Stedman Cinques, in 3 hrs. 32 mins.
- 25. 5th April 1869. 5040 Grandsire Triples, in 3 hrs. 14 mins.

West Wall.

- 26. 9th November 1943. 5016 Grandsire Caters, in 3 hrs. 41 mins.

Because of its historical importance, a transcript of tablet No. 21 is appended :

"THE OXFORD DIOCESAN GUILD / and the / OXFORD SOCIETY OF CHANGE RINGERS / ON SATURDAY AUGUST 24th 1946, RANG ON / THESE BELLS, IN 8 HOURS & 48 MINUTES / A PEAL OF / ~~Stedman~~ Cinques / 12663 CHANGES / BEING THE LONGEST PEAL OF CINQUES / YET RUNG IN THIS METHOD. / WALTER F. JUDGE, Treble / VICTOR J. F. BENNETT II / ALFRED BALLARD III / ARTHUR H. REED IV / CHRISTOPHER W. WOOLLEY V / SIDNEY T. HOLT VI / FREDERICK A. H. WILKINS VII / ERNEST MORRIS VIII / PAUL K. WILLIAMSON IX / RICHARD A. POST X / RICHARD WHITE XI / FRANK C. W. KNIGHT Tenor / COMPOSED BY CHARLES W. ROBERTS / CONDUCTED BY WALTER F. JUDGE / THE VERY REV. JOHN LOWE D.D. DEAN."

Much more could be written about the ringing of the Christ Church bells, but, owing to pressure of space, this must be left for the future historian of the Oxford Society of Change Ringers.

Visited : F.S., 23rd July, 1921—10th June, 1951.

The author wishes to express his grateful thanks to the Very Rev. John Lowe, D.D., Dean, and to the Chapter of Christ Church for permission to visit the Christ Church towers whenever he desired, and for giving him every facility to examine documents and records ; to Mr. W. G. Hiscock, the Librarian, for so generously placing his own notes at the author's disposal, and for many valuable suggestions : to Mr. F. M. Underhill, F.S.A., and Mr. Harris Morgan for photographs ; to Mr. J. R. Chaundry for assistance in taking rubbings, casts, and details of the bells ; to Mr. E. G. W. Bill, for a transcript of the articles of agreement between Michael Darby and the Dean and Chapter for the recasting of Great Tom, and to all others who gave freely of their time and knowledge among whom must be mentioned Miss A. V. Jones, Messrs. A. A. Hughes (Mears and Stainbank), W. F. Judge (Ringing Master), V. Bennett (Late Secretary, O.S.C.R.), P. Walker (Present Secretary, O.S.C.R.), E. G. Moore (Steward, O.S.C.R.), and Dr. C. T. Onions.



Photo.:

W. Harris Morgan, Esq.

Fig. 38. St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford. The tenor, or "Degree", bell, cast by Ellis Knight, of Reading, 1639.

193.

OXFORD.

St. Aldate.

A western tower with spire containing a ring of six bells ; tenor 39 inches diameter, in G ; and a sanctus bell, 16½ inches in diameter.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
Treble.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1874.	3	3	24
Second.	MICHAEL DARBIE MADE MEE 1654	4	1	0†
Third.	(Same as second.)	5	0	0†
Fourth.	PRAYES YE THE LORD 1627	6	1	0†
Fifth.	HENRX KNXGHT MADE MEE X620	7	2	0†
Tenor.	+ REVD. CHARLES WARNER, B.A., CURATE. REVD. WILLIAM HAWKINS, M.A., RECTOR. WILLIAM BAXTER AND WILLIAM RINGROSE CHURCHWARDENS. 1847. WM. TAYLOR, OXFORD, FECIT. / (Scroll border.)	10	2	0†

The treble was added to the ring in 1874. The second and third were made by Michael Darbie in the same year as that in which he recast Great Tom. The fourth is by Ellis Knight I, the fifth by Henry Knight I, and the tenor by William Taylor. The former tenor may have been a fifteenth century bell, or one of Henry Knight's castings, similar to the former tenor at All Saints. According to Lukis, the former tenor at St. Aldate's was inscribed: "In multis annis resonet campana Johannis." He gives no details of its lettering or founder's marks.¹

The ring is fitted with gear, type A, and hangs in a nineteenth century oak frame.

The saunce is hung for chiming ; it was cast at the Gloucester foundry and bears the inscription :

T RUDHALL (*Fig. D14.*) (*Bell.*) 1780
(*Fig. D14.*) (*Bell.*) (*Fig. D14.*)

Visited : F.S., 22nd May, 1924.

194.

OXFORD.

St. Andrew.

An open turret above the south-west porch containing one bell, 30 inches in diameter, hung for chiming.

The bell was cast by Messrs. J. Taylor and Co., and is inscribed :

+ VENITE EXVITECVS DOMINO +
MCMXXXI / (*Vine border all round bell.*) /
(*Loughborough foundry mark.*)

¹ W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 92.

The cross and lettering are copies of some beautiful medieval examples, found in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and the neighbouring counties.

The bell has no canons; its strike-note is C natural, and it weighs 5 cwt. 1 qr. 5 lbs. It is fitted with a cast iron headstock, fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, and iron lever.

Visited : F.S., 16th April, 1951.

195.

OXFORD.

St. Barnabas.

A southern campanile containing one bell, 24 inches in diameter, weighing 3 cwt. 25lb., hung for ringing, and a set of ten "tubular bells," tuned diatonically in the key of A.

The bell hangs in an oak frame in the north west corner of the campanile ; it is fitted with gear type A and is inscribed :

J. TAYLOR & CO. FOUNDERS
LOUGHBOROUGH 1869.

The tubes hang in a separate frame in the centre of the tower and are sounded by means of hammers, operated from an "Ella-combe" chiming manual in the vestry. They were first hung in 1890. Each tube is stamped with its musical note and a number corresponding to its position in the set ; and, in addition, each bears the following inscription :

G. & J. / HARRINGTON'S PATENT
TUBULAR BELLS / TRADE-MARK.

The initials are those of the bell-founders, Messrs. Gillett and Johnston, of Croydon. The treble tube is 60 inches long by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter ; and the tenor tube 103 inches long by 4 inches in diameter.

A tablet near the vestry door is inscribed :

+ IN MEMORY OF / FRANCES RAWNSLEY
/ WHOSE GIFT MADE POSSIBLE THE /
RESTORATION OF THE BELLS / AND THE
RE-CASTING OF / NUMBERS 3, 7, AND 8 /
IN THE YEAR A.D. 1949 / R.I.P.

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 28th April, 1951.

196.

OXFORD.

St. Clement.

A western tower containing three bells. The smallest is the saunce : it was made at the Bicester foundry, probably from the metal of an older bell, and bears the inscription :

∴ W: HACKINS. E: HARRIS.
CHURCH=WARDENS (*Fig. P11, twice.*)
E: HEMINS. BISSITER. FECIT. J73J.

The largest bell, $21\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, was cast at the Woodstock foundry and is inscribed :

RICHARD SHVRLY ROBERT GRIFFIN
C W 1636

The other bell bears no inscription. Its principal dimensions are : diameter $20\frac{1}{2}$ inches, height from lip to crown $18\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and height of canons $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. On the evidence of its shape it may be assigned to the latter half of the thirteenth century, and it resembles the bell at Hampton Gay already described.¹ Thus it is the oldest bell now remaining in the City of Oxford.

In a MS. in the Bodleian Library are some interesting notes by Mr. H. Paintin of the occasions on which these bells were rung when they hung in the former church which was situated on "The Plain."²

6 Edw. VI. *Two small bells in the steeple. Two sans bells.*

Visited : F.S., 7th January, 1933.

197.

OXFORD.

St. Cross.³

A western tower containing a ring of six bells†; tenor $38\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, in A♭; and a sanctus bell, 13 inches in diameter.

Bell.	Inscription.	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
Treble.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. / GIVEN BY GEORGE J. HANKS, A.D. 1874. / J.C.W., H.J.T., CHURCHWARDENS. / REVD. G. N. FREELING, VICAR. / PRAISE YE THE LORD.	3	3	18
Second.	1677	4	1	13
Third.	RICH KEENE MADE ME 1677	5	0	9
Fourth.	FEARE GOD 1641	6	0	15
Fifth.	◇ ABRAHAM WATSON AND THOMAS RXME CHVRCH WARDENS x620 H◇K	7	1	6
Tenor.	PROSPERITY TO THIS PARISH (Fig. D8.) A (Bell.) R (Fig. D8.) 1726 (Fig. D8.) / (Border, Fig. D14, all round bell.)	9	2	22

The treble was cast at the Whitechapel foundry and added to the ring in 1874; the second and third are by Richard Keene; the fourth is by Ellis Knight I, the fifth by Henry Knight I, and the tenor by Abraham Rudhall II. On the third the letter "N" is reversed. The fourth was cast at the same time as the ninth at Magdalen College, and the inscriptions on both should be noted.

¹ O.R.S., Vol. XXX, 1947, p. 150, and Fig. 19.

² MS. Top. Oxon., d. 285, fol. 77.

³ Or Holywell, St. Cross.

The bells hang in a cast-iron "H"-pattern frame installed by Messrs. J. Taylor and Co., who also supplied new gear, type L.

The saunce is hung for chiming. It was cast by Abraham Rudhall II, and bears the inscription :

A(Bell)R (Fig. D14.) 1721 (Border, Fig. D14.)

Apart from the mention of Richard Duckworth, Wood has nothing to say about the ringers of his day with one exception. It appears that one Chilmead had been a supporter of the mayor in a dispute between the City and Merton College : the college lost a law suit concerning this

"And A[nthony] W[ood] doth well remember, that the citizens insulted so much, when they overcame the coll[ege] in their sute, which was tried in Westminster hall, that in their returne from London, the mayor, or chief officers of the city, did ride into Oxon triumphantly thro Halywell, to take, as it were, possession of the liberties that they had obtained therein. And one . . . Chilmead, as he remembers, who had been one of the bel-men of the city, but then living as an undertenant in Halywell, did in their passage present them with wine and ale, while the parish bells rang for joy, occasion'd as t'was supposed, by the said Chilmead."¹

Visited : F.S., 23rd February, 1925.

198.

OXFORD.

St. Ebbe.

A western tower containing a ring of eight bells ; tenor 31 inches diameter, in B ♯.

Bell.	Inscription.	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
Treble.	IN MEMORIAM J. W. WASHBROOK, 1925.	2	2	20
Second.	(Same as treble.)	2	3	10
Third.	J. BRIANT HARTFORD FECIT 1789	3	1	12
Fourth.	(Same as third.)	3	2	2
Fifth.	(The same, except date : 1790.)	3	2	24
Sixth.	J. BRIANT. / HARTFORD FECIT / UNFEIGNED PRAISE TO HEAVENS ALMIGHTY KING, / FOR HEALTH RESTORED TO GEORGE THE THIRD WE SING. / HÆC SEXTA ACCESSIT A.D. 1790.	4	0	12
Seventh.	(Same as third.)	3	3	23
Tenor.	THIS PEAL ² WAS RAISD ² BY VOLONTARY ² SUBSCRIPTION. H. RICHARDS, RECTOR. E. GOODYER, J. W. CLUFF, CHURCHWARDENS. J. BRIANT HARTFORD FECIT 1789.	4	3	19

¹ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 397.

² *Sic.*

A ring of six from the Hertford foundry 1789-90, to which two "trebles" were added in 1925 as a memorial to J. W. Washbrook, a noted ringer, and the first man to ring two bells through a complete peal of 5,040 changes.¹ The new bells were cast at the Whitechapel foundry and hung by Mr. Richard White, who had previously rehung Briant's bells with gear, type B, in a new wrought-iron side-pattern frame.

Near the belfry door is a tablet inscribed :

"The bells in this tower were repaired and rehung and the two trebles added by the Oxford Diocesan Guild and ringers of the British Empire in memory of James William Washbrook, a highly-skilled ringer, a talented composer and an able conductor, and for many years instructor to the Guild. Born July 27, 1864. Died Christmas Day, 1923."

At the beginning of the nineteenth century St. Ebbe's church possessed a ring of eight. Two trebles, the gift of Mr. Baker, plumber, and Mr. Scarsbrook, collar-maker, were added to Briant's ring in 1803.² They remained in the tower for about forty years and were then removed, recast and rehung in Holy Trinity Church.³

Mr. Lukis has preserved a record of the three bells which were melted down and recast into six by Briant in 1789. According to him they bore the inscriptions :

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Treble.	HENRY BAGLEY MADE ME. 1737. THOMAS HEICHT AND BEN BROWN CHURCHWARDENS.	6
Second.	+ W J S T Z D	7½
Tenor.	HENRY KNIGHT MADE ME. IOHN DAWSON AND IOHN BROOKES C W 1616	10½

Of these bells the treble was probably cast at Witney, where Henry Bagley III had a temporary foundry. The inscription on the second is similar in character to that on a bell at Marsh Baldon,⁴ and the bell may have been by John White of Reading, *circa* 1530. The tenor was by Henry Knight I. Lukis states that all three were broken.

¹ For further details see T. W. Squires, *In West Oxford*, 1928, p. 31 ff.

² W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 91.

³ See below under the heading Oxford, Holy Trinity.

⁴ *O.R.S.*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949, p. 25.

The last
strave is good

Keep ye all
in agreement

Then let us
sing it againe

With songe my
hearts excellen

Kell. Bro^r L^h Loxdon

Fig. 39. Music from the fourth bell of the ring of six at St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford. (See Fig. 40).

There were in the tower until 1925 two small disused bells. The smaller, cast by Matthew Bagley I, was inscribed :

M B 1699

It was afterwards taken by a former vicar to a church in South Africa. The larger, inscribed :

MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS,
LONDON. 1870.

was added to the metal of the new trebles.

Visited : F.S., 14th April, 1925, 2nd February, 1926.

199.

OXFORD.

St. Frideswide.¹

An enclosed southern turret containing one bell, 14 inches in diameter, hung for chiming. The bell was cast by Messrs. Warner, and is inscribed :

LONDON 1871

In the central tower is a disused bell, 13 inches in diameter, inscribed :

MEARS & STAINBANK FOUNDERS
LONDON 1873

There is also a modern sanctuary bell, 4½ inches in diameter, hung for chiming. It bears the inscription :

VOCEM MEAM AVDIT QUI ME TANGIT

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 28th April, 1951.

200.

OXFORD.

(The former Church of St. George, George Street).

Before its demolition the church possessed an enclosed south-western turret, containing one bell, 26 inches in diameter, hung for ringing. It bore the inscription :

W: TAYLOR OXFORD FECIT. 1850 (*Four coins*) / VOX DILECTI MEI PULSANTIS
APERI MIHI SOROR MEA ++

The bell was stored for many years in the church of St. Mary Magdalene ; it was afterwards sold for scrap metal to Mr. R. White, and was examined by the writer in his workshops at Appleton.

¹ Oseney.

201.

OXFORD.

St. Giles.

A western tower containing a ring of eight bells ; tenor 42½ inches diameter, in F #.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
Treble.†	M & S. LONDON (<i>Whitechapel foundry mark.</i>) (<i>Six coins.</i>) / Venite Exultemus Domino. / D.D. Henricus Wyllie Hughes. / 1927.	4	2	24
Second.†	(<i>Six coins.</i>) MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. (<i>Whitechapel foundry mark.</i>) / Te Deum Laudemus. / 1927.	5	0	1
Third.	Gloria in exelsis (<i>Two coins.</i>) + (<i>Two coins.</i>)	5	2	0½
Fourth.	Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine ¹ (<i>Two coins.</i>) + (<i>Two coins.</i>)	6	0	0½
Fifth.	Magnificat anima mea Dominum ait Maria (<i>Two coins.</i>) (<i>Crossed sword and key.</i>) (<i>Two coins.</i>)	6	3	0½
Sixth.	Sonitus Egidii confendat culmina Coeli (<i>Two coins.</i>) + (<i>Two coins.</i>)	7	2	0½
Seventh.	Sum Rosa pulsata mundi Katerina vocata (<i>Two coins.</i>) + (<i>Two coins.</i>)	9	2	0½
Tenor.†	FEARE GOD HONAR ¹ THE KXNG x632	13	0	0½

The treble and second were added to the ring in 1927 ; they were cast at the Whitechapel foundry. The tenor is a maiden bell by Ellis Knight I ; and the remainder are by William Taylor, of Oxford.

According to Lukis² five bells were cast in 1850 by Taylor and these replaced a ring of four inscribed :

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>
Treble.	THIS BELL WAS MADE 1605
Second.	THIS BELL WAS MADE 1602
Third.	Sum Rosa Pulsata Mundi Katerina Vocata
Tenor.	FEARE GOD HONOR ² THE KINGE ² 1632

Lukis is in error regarding the tenor. This is still in existence, and three former bells appear to have been recast and two added in 1850.

¹ *Sic.*

² W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 92.

Mr. V. Bennett states that the former saunce was given to the Radcliffe Infirmary, and that it now hangs in the turret of the chapel there.

The oak frame was installed in 1907 by Mr. F. White, and the gear, types B and G, is by members of his family.

7 Edw. VI. *Item 3 belles in the steple.*

Visited : F.S., 4th February, 1934.

202.

OXFORD.

**The Independent Evangelical Church of St. John.
(Squitchey Lane).**

The church possesses one small bell which is hung for chiming in an inaccessible position in an enclosed north-western turret.

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 28th April, 1951.

203.

OXFORD.

**St. John-the-Evangelist.
(The Society of St. John the Evangelist).**

A western tower containing one bell, 45½ inches in diameter, in F ; and an open northern turret containing a sanctus bell.

The tower bell is hung for ringing in a cast iron side-pattern frame, with gear similar to type H, but lacking a stay and slider. The bell was cast at the Loughborough foundry, and weighs 18 cwt. 0 qrs. 17 lbs.; it is inscribed :

+ COESTOR IOHES EVI
AVDIT DICAT VENI VENI
DNE IHC / (Loughborough foundry
mark.) / A.S. MCMXXXII / DD. M.M.

The saunce is inaccessible.

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 28th April, 1951.

204.

OXFORD.

**St. John-the-Evangelist.
(New Hinksey).**

A south-western turret containing one small bell, hung for chiming. The writer regrets that, owing to the inaccessible position of the turret, he has been unable to examine the bell. The church was built in 1900 in place of a smaller one dating from circa 1869. The bell of the former church is preserved in the organ chamber of the present one. It is 16 inches in diameter and is inscribed :

J. WARNER & SONS LONDON 1869

Visited : F.S., 17th September, 1932.

205.

OXFORD.

St. Luke.¹

The church was erected a few years before the war of 1939-45, and possesses one small bell, hung for chiming under an overhanging gable above the porch. When seen from the ground the bell appears to bear no inscription or marks, and looks like a late nineteenth century casting.

Visited : F.S., 9th June, 1951.

206.

OXFORD.

St. Margaret.

An open northern turret containing one bell, hung for chiming, and inaccessible without the use of scaffolding. Its gear consists of elm headstock, strap gudgeons, brass bearings and iron lever. The church was built 1883—1902.

Visited : F.S., 21st April, 1951.

207.

OXFORD.

St. Martin, or Carfax Tower.

A campanile, formerly the western tower of St. Martin's church, containing a ring of six bells†; tenor 45 inches diameter, in F. On the exterior of the eastern wall of the tower are two quarter-jack bells,† 13½ and 20 inches in diameter respectively.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Treble.	RICARDVS KEENE ME FECIT 1676	4 2 7
Second.	(<i>Same as treble.</i>)	5 2 1
Third.	SAMVELL HVNT MATHEW ² MILLER C W 1678	6 0 17
Fourth.	(<i>Same as treble.</i>)	8 3 22
Fifth.	(<i>The same, but with letter D reversed.</i>)	11 0 1
Tenor.	WILLIA ² MORILL ✠ NICHOLAS ORVM ✠ RICARDVS KEENE ✠ ME FECIT 1676	15 0 22

A complete ring³ by Richard Keene, and one of the best cast at the Woodstock foundry. The bells hang in a cast iron H-pattern frame installed at the end of the last century by Messrs. J. Taylor and Co. The gear is type G.

¹ A chapel of ease in the parish of St. Matthew.

² *Sic.*

³ The only *complete* ring, cast in an Oxfordshire bellfoundry, remaining today in the city.

MUSIC FROM BELL AT OXFORD, IN SHORT SCORE.

THE FIRST STRAIN.

THE SECOND STRAIN.

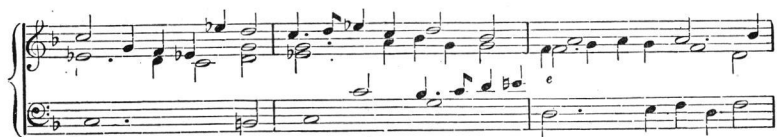
a Defective in original.

b This note and the following not in the original.

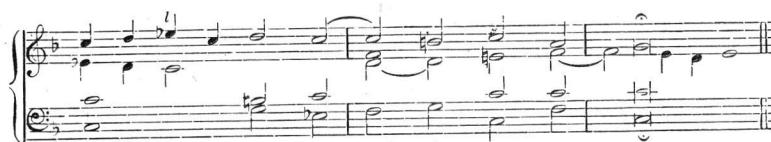
c Semibreve in original.

d Defective in original.

Fig. 40. Music from the fourth bell of the ring of six at St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford (see Fig. 39), as transposed into modern notation by Dr. Rimbault, and reproduced by courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of London.



THE THIRD STRAIN.



c Very defective here in original.

f Minim in original.

g Minim in original.

h It has been necessary to lengthen this note.

i Minim in original.

k Defect in original here.

l Flat not in original.

The two quarter-jack bells weigh 2 qrs. 9 lb., and 1 cwt. 3 qrs. 12 lb. respectively ; their strike-notes are F natural, two octaves above the tenor, and B flat, an octave above the third. Each bell bears the inscription :

J. TAYLOR & CO. LOUGHBOROUGH 1898

below which is a vine border encircling the bell. Two seventeenth century "quarter-jacks" in period costume strike these bells before the chiming of the quarters.

There was formerly also a sanctus bell. It was examined *circa* 1875 by the Rev. T. A. Turner, who states that it was 21½ inches in diameter, and that it bore the founders' marks Figs. F2, F5, and Q3¹. The bell therefore dated from the middle of the fourteenth century and came from the Wokingham foundry.

The ancient church was frequently used as a fortress by the townsmen in their battles with the scholars ; and in the year 1321 complaint was made to the King that the citizens had raised and crenellated its walls.² Wood tells us that the tower was reduced in height in 1340 by command of Edward III because the scholars complained that : "the townsmen would in times of combat with them retire up there as their castle and from thence gall and annoy them with arrows and stones."³

In these "town versus gown" disputes the Carfax bells played an important part. The tower had long contained the town's "common bell," which was rung to give the alarm and to call together the citizens in an emergency ; and on it the curfew was rung and it was used to announce the opening and closing times of the market.⁴ The ringing of the town bell was the signal for the notorious battle between the citizens and the scholars which began on St. Scholastica's Day, 1354.⁵

An inventory, dated 1547, states : *Item j sacryng bell. Item a great bell and a Stokk, and all that sumtyme was the merkett bell; and another, made in 1552, states : iiij bells hangyng in the steple.*⁶

¹ Walters' MS. Society of Antiquaries Library.

² C. J. H. Fletcher, *A History of the Church and Parish of St. Martin (Carfax), Oxford*, 1896, p. 10.

³ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 86.

⁴ C. J. H. Fletcher, *ut sup.*, p. 9. See also under the heading : Lincoln College.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 10.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 124—125.

Entries relating to the bells in the churchwardens' accounts, transcribed by the late Mr. A. H. Cocks, are now in the Walters' MS. at the Society of Antiquaries Library. From them the following particulars are derived :

- 1574. The *iiijth* bell mentioned.
- 1578. Mention of a *new bell*. Probably a treble was then added to make the number in the ring five.
- 1584. The treble recast.
- 1616. The tenor recast.
- 1622. The fourth recast.
- 1630. The treble recast by James Keene ; the saunce rehung, and the tenor recast.

In the year 1676 the churchwardens contracted with Richard Keene to recast the ring of five into a ring of six with additional metal as required. The accounts covering this transaction have been published by Mr. Cocks, and need not be repeated.¹ At the time the work was done, Richard Duckworth, the famous campanologist, whom we have mentioned before,² was Rector of St. Martin's, Carfax, and may have been a prime mover in originating the scheme. Wood recalls the installation of the bells thus :

"Oct. 1676. St. Martin's bells of five dull ones made six pretty good."³

Doubtless the third did not entirely please Duckworth's critical ear, as two years later this bell was again recast.

Carfax church was demolished in 1896 as part of a street improvement, and the parish attached to the neighbouring one of All Saints. The City undertook to retain on its present site the ancient tower and to maintain it and the bells in good repair.

Visited : F.S., 21st January, 1933, 3rd May, 1951.

208.

OXFORD.

St. Martin and All Saints.⁴

A western tower with spire containing a ring of eight bells ; tenor 36 inches diameter, in A^b; and a sanctus bell, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter.

Bell.	Inscription.	Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.
Treble.†	THE GIFT OF / ALDERMAN F. W. ANSELL, J.P. / EX-MAYOR OF OXFORD. / M. & S. LONDON. 1927. (Whitechapel foundry mark.)	3 0 19

¹ A. H. Cocks, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 1897, p. 169.

² O.R.S., Vol. XXVIII., 1946, p. 24.

³ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 357.

⁴ Formerly All Saints.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Second.†	THE GIFT OF / ALDERMAN G. CLARIDGE DRUCE, J.P., D.Sc., LL.D., / EX-MAYOR OF OXFORD, / CHAIRMAN OF THE FEOFFEEES OF ALL SAINTS. / MAY, 23, 1926. / MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1927. (<i>Whitechapel foundry mark.</i>)	3 1 15
Third.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. / DEFUNCTAE MATRIS REDIVIVA PROPAGO. / W. W. MERRY, VICAR. / T. J. W. SHEARD, H. G. TAGART, CHURCHWARDENS. / A. WATTS, CLERK. / 1874.	3 1 13
Fourth.	RECAST BY MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. 1874. / IN MVLIS ANNIS RESONET CAMPANA IOHANIS. / RICHARD YEAMANS ANTHONI CROOKE CHVRCHWARDENS 1622 / H K	3 2 23
Fifth.	◇ THXNKE NO COST TO MVCH H K x622	4 0 22
Sixth.	◇ THAT YOY BE STOWE OF ALL THOMAS HARRXS CLARKE H K x622	5 0 20
Seventh.	◇ TO BRXNGE TO PAS SO GOOD A THXNG HK x622	6 1 18
Tenor.	◇ THAT FXVE BELLS MAYE TO GETHAR RXNG HK x622	7 3 10

Of a ring of five, installed in 1622 by Henry Knight I, four bells remain. Knight's original tenor bore the inscription :

IN MVLIS ANNIS RESONET CAMPANA
IOHANNIS / RICHARD YEAMINS
ANTHONI CROOKE CHVRCHWARDENS
1622 HK¹

This bell was recast in 1874 to form the present third and fourth. The treble and second were added in 1927.

The inscriptions on the fifth, sixth, and seventh occur in the following form at Quainton, Buckinghamshire,² on four bells, cast by Henry Knight in 1621 : Treble : ◇ THXNKE NO COST TO MVCH HK x62x. Second : ◇ THAT YOY BESTOW OF ALL HK x62x. Third : ◇ TO BRXNG TO PAS HK x62x. Fourth : ◇ SO GOOD A THXNG HK x62x. The Quainton tenor has been recast, but doubtless it formerly bore the same inscription as that on the present tenor at All Saints, Oxford.

¹ W. C. Lukis, *An Account of Church Bells*, 1857, p. 92. J. Skelton, *MS.*, dated 1813, (now in Bodleian Library), fol. 57, records the inscription thus : IN MULTIS ANNIS RESSONET CAMPANA IOHANNIS RD YEOMAN ANT COOKE C W HK 1622.

² A. H. Cocks, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 1897, p. 552.

The bells hang in a nineteenth century oak frame. The twentieth century bells have gear, type H : the others have gear, type E.

The saunce is hung for chiming ; it was cast at the Bicester foundry, and bears the inscription :

IOHN: WILKINS. WILLIAM: YOUNG.
CHURCH=WARDENS. (*Fig. P11, twice.*)
ED: HEMINS. BISSITER FECIT. J729.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth it became customary for the bells of Oxford to be rung on St. Hugh's Day. Mr. Neale has extracted the following account of the origin of this custom from the works of Anthony Wood, who states that it was told to him on 2 April 1610 by one Myles Windsore :

"Nov. 17. 1561.

St. Hugh's Day being formerly a gaudy day at *Lincoln* some of the Fellows went after dinner and rang the bells at All Saints. Mr. John Wayte (Mayor) dwelt in the parish 'who being much displeased with their ringing (for he was accounted a great precision¹) came to ask why all this Ringing, charging them with Popery as if they had rung a Dirige for Queen Mary who died on S. Hugh's Day. Most said they had been ringing for exercise but some said they rang for joy because Queen Elizabeth was proclaimed that day. Thereupon the Mayor caused S. Martin's bells to be rung and as many others as he could command. Hence the custom grew to ring on that day during her reign.' "²

Visited : F.S., 21st January, 1933, *et seq.*

209.

OXFORD.

St. Mary Magdalene.

A western tower containing a ring of six bells ; tenor 36 inches diameter, in A ; and a sanctus bell, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Treble.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1874. / J.C.C.	3 1 16
Second.	(<i>Same as treble.</i>)	3 3 18
Third.	(<i>The same.</i>)	4 1 13
Fourth.	(<i>The same.</i>)	5 1 1
Fifth.	(<i>The same.</i>)	6 0 21
Tenor.	MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON. 1874. / + TO THE GLORY OF GOD + / RECAST 1874. / J. C. CAVELL, J.P.	7 2 8

A complete ring from the Whitechapel foundry. The portions of the inscriptions recorded above *in italics* are not cast in relief but have been incised. The oak frame and gear, type A, are contemporary with the bells.

¹ *Sic.*

² C. M. Neale, MS. *Oxford Annals* 1531-1604, p. 177, Bodleian Library.

The saunce was made by Richard Keene, and is inscribed with the date :

1681

Before 1874 the ring contained five bells, which, according to Lukis,¹ bore the following inscriptions :

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Treble.	JOHN BRADSTOCK DANIEL SHILFOX CHURCHWARDENS 1717	5½
Second.	THOMAS CLARKE AND IOHN CARSLI CHURCHWARDENS 1618 HK	5½
Third.	PRAYES YE THE LORD 1626	6
Fourth.	LET YOVR HOPE BE IN THE LORD 1626	7
Tenor.	JOHN TAYLOR GILES BROWNE C W RICHARD KEENE MADE MEE 1681	9½

From these inscriptions we may safely assume that the treble was by Abraham Rudhall I, the second by Henry Knight I, and the third and fourth by Ellis Knight I. The tenor was cast at the Woodstock foundry. The third was similar to St. Aldate's fourth; the fifth similar to Magdalen College tenor; and the second similar to bells at Cuddesden and elsewhere. It is interesting to note that Ellis Knight was working in Oxford at the same time as the Keenes were engaged in recasting Great Tom.²

An account of the fate of the treble, after its removal in 1874, will be found in *The Church Bells of Berkshire* under the heading : Appleton.³

Details of the weight of the former treble were taken from the notebook of Alfred White, the bellhanger. That of the tenor has been calculated from its dimensions, as recorded by Lukis,⁴ and from its strike-note. The weights of the other bells are conjectural.

Lukis gives the diameter of the tenor as 38 inches and its strike-note as F natural,⁵ but the strike-note must have been F♯, otherwise that of the treble would not have been C♯ as recorded by Alfred White.

7 Edw. VI. *Item three great bells.*

Visited : F.S., 22nd May, 1926.

¹ W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 92.

² See p. 264.

³ *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 78, 79.

⁴ W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

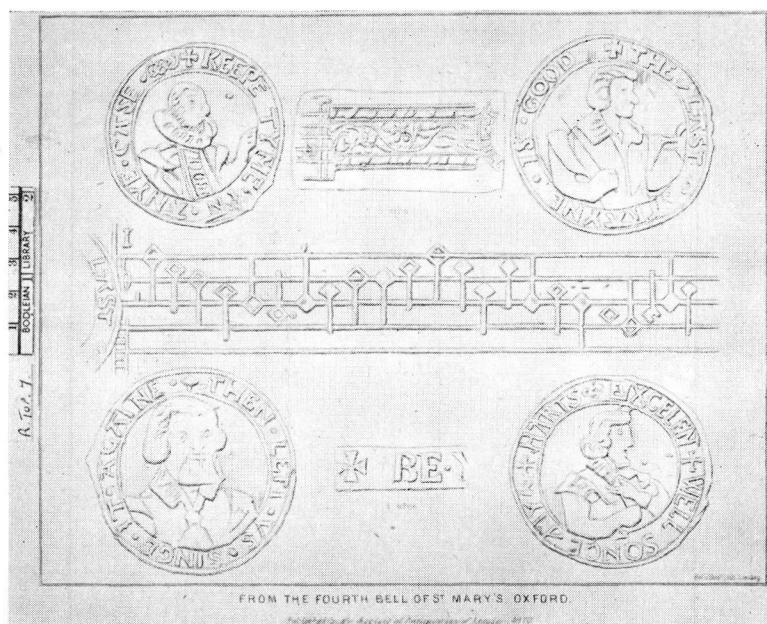


Fig. 41. Scale drawing of the four roundels, and of portions of the ornamental border and music on the fourth bell of the ring of six at St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford. Reproduced by permission of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

210.

OXFORD.

St. Mary-the-Virgin.

A northern tower with spire containing a ring of six bells†; tenor 53 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches diameter, in D; and a sanctus bell, 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Treble.	PROSPERITY TO THE CHVRCH OF ENGLAND (<i>Border, Fig. C5.</i>) A(Bell)R 1731 (<i>Border, Fig. C5.</i>)	8 2 0†
Second.	* GLORIA * DEO * IN * EXCELSIS (<i>Fig. L1.</i>) * F*S G*A H*O T*H * 1623 * I * (<i>Fig. L1.</i>) / (<i>Loughborough foundry mark.</i>) / RECAST * 1894 * (<i>Border.</i>) H*B (<i>Rose.</i>) VC (<i>Shield, bearing Arms of Oxford University.</i>) G * E * U (<i>Rose.</i>) SP (<i>Border.</i>) C * W * C * O (<i>Rose.</i>) JP	10 1 16
Third.	R.E. . F.B. . CHVRCHWARDENS . APR . 8 . 1641 .	11 2 0†
Fourth.	(<i>Border, Fig. S13, all round bell.</i>) / (<i>Cross, Fig. R12.</i>) BE · YT · KNOWNE · TO · ALL · THAT · DOTH · ME · SEE (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) THAT · NEWCOMBE · OF (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) LEICESTER · MADE · MEE (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) 1612 (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) / (<i>Border, Fig. S13.</i>) / (<i>Two bands of music encircling bell, for a description of which see pages 308—310.</i>)	15 0 0†
Fifth.	(<i>Border, Fig. T13, all round bell, with border, Fig. S13, below.</i>) / (<i>Cross, Fig. R12.</i>) BE · YT · KNOWNE · TO · ALL (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) THAT · DOTH · (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) ME · SEE · THAT (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) NEWCOMBE · OF (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) LEICESTER · MADE · MEE · 1612 (<i>Fig. S13.</i>) / (<i>Border all round bell.</i>) / THO : SINGLETON : DOCT : IN : DIVINITYE : AND VICE : CHANCELLOR (<i>Shield, bearing Arms of Oxford University.</i>) THO : SELLER : SENIOR : PROCTOR : (<i>Shield, bearing Arms of Oriel College.</i>) RICHARD : CORBET : IVNIOR : PROCTOR (<i>Border.</i>) (<i>Shield bearing Arms of Oxford University.</i>) THO : L : ELLESMERE : L : HIGH CHANCELLOR : OF : ENGLAND : AND : CHANCELLOR : OF : THE : VNIVERSITYE : OF : OXON : ANO : 1612 (<i>Shield, bearing Arms of Oriel College.</i>)	20 0 0†
Tenor.	LOVE · GOD · 1639 M'D · L'B · CHVRCHWARDENS / ROGER BRACEGIRDLE MATHEW GENT CHVB	27 0 0†

The treble is by Abraham Rudhall II, of Gloucester, the second by Messrs. J. Taylor and Co., of Loughborough; the third and tenor are by Ellis Knight I, of Reading, and the fourth and fifth by Newcombe, of Leicester.

The strike-notes of the third and fifth have been sharpened by means of the removal of portions of the lips of the bells: the strike-notes of the others have been flattened. The canons have been removed from all the bells.

The treble is a fine-toned bell. It replaces an unsatisfactory casting, by William Yare, which is described later.

On the second Messrs. Taylor and Co. have admirably reproduced in facsimile the inscription, lettering and marks formerly on its predecessor. In the inscription recorded on page 304 the sign * denotes Fig. R10; the sign † denotes Fig. H8; the letter "N" is reversed in the reproduced portion of the inscription; and the initials after the date, 1894, are those of H. Boyd, Vice Chancellor, G. E. Unwin, Senior Proctor, and C. W. C. Oman, Junior Proctor.

The "sheet-metal" type lettering and mouldings on the third are the well-known ones used by Ellis Knight I. The bell resembles the seventh at Christ Church, and the ninth at Magdalen College, and, like them, bears no founder's marks or initials.

The borders on the fourth and fifth are those generally used by the Oldfields, of Nottingham, who may have been in partnership with Newcombe on this occasion. The unique decoration on the fourth is described on pages 308-310.

The lettering on the tenor is similar to that on the third with the exception of the portion recorded above in *italics*. This has been incised on the crown of the bell, and the letter "N" is reversed.

The former second was by Robert Atton, of Buckingham, who may have been assisted by some contemporary founder. The writer has a rubbing of its inscription, made by the late Mr. A. D. Tyssen before the bell was recast. The lettering *resembles* the medium-sized set then in use at the Buckingham foundry¹ but is not *identical* with it, and the border, Fig. L1, while very much like Atton's is also not identical with it.² The rose stamp, Fig. M7, was consistently used by Atton. Similar bells are, or were, to be found at Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire,³ and Tredington, Worcestershire.⁴

The saunce is described on page 307.

¹ A. H. Cocks, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 1897, p. 204.

² *Ibid.*, Fig. 67.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

⁴ H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of Worcestershire*, 1930, p. 225.

In his valuable book on the Church of St. Mary-the-Virgin, T. G. Jackson gives the following extracts from the accounts relating to repairs to the bells :¹

Out of an accompte "Mich: H. 6.39 °° to Mich: A° Ed.4. 1° .²

"de xvj d pro i baudryke *ad* campanam."

"de xlj d pro factura unius Claper *ad* dictam campana."

From the Computus of 1492 :

"Item pd for ye making of Judas bell, 3d."

"for a new whele of ye bell, 6d."

"for half a hide of white leder for bawdryks, 8d ob."

"Item for making a bocle & pyn to ye great bell, ij d."

From the Computus of 1510 :

"It: for a new whele for ye morrow masse bell, xij d."

"It: for a new rope for ye said bell, ix d."

"It: for ye carrying of ye same before ye church, ij d."

From the Computus of 1534 :

"It: for new trussing of ye bells, x s x d."

"It: for a bawdryck for ye paruis bell, x d."

"It: to Ringers at generall processions at diuers times ye towne, 8d."

It will be seen that with two exceptions these payments cover minor repairs and replacements. What is meant by the term "Judas bell" is not known. The price paid for this is so small that it could not have been a tower bell : it may have been a small handbell. The mention of bell wheels in the accounts for 1492 and 1510 has been interpreted by some to indicate that complete wheels were then being introduced, but it is doubtful if this is so. Three-quarter wheels continued to be made throughout the sixteenth century, and many of these have survived until the present day.³ When complete wheels were first introduced they were usually described as "round wheels" to distinguish them from the older types.⁴

In the Library of The Society of Antiquaries of London are transcripts, made by the late Mr. A. D. Tyssen, of entries in the churchwardens' accounts relating to repairs to the bells.⁵ Among them are the following :

1584.

"Item for casting of towe bell brasses weying 4 li . . . 3s 6d and for a pounce and a half of new brasse 9d for the third bell. iiij s iij d."

1597.

"Item for a new sherborne⁶ for the third bell & mending two sherbornes for the second bell"

"Item for lij greate nayles for the same, ij keyes & ij bolsters"

¹ T. G. Jackson, *The Church of St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford*, 1897, pp. 210—212.

² i.e. 1460-1461.

³ *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XLV, 1941, Plate IX.

⁴ See p. 248.

⁵ Walters' MS., Society of Antiquaries Library.

⁶ Probably "Shearbands." See below.

By these entries it appears that the brass bearings of the third bell were recast in 1584, and that, in 1597, the second and third bells were "trussed", or resecured to their headstocks by means of shearbands and nails. Writing in 1897, Mr. A. H. Cocks thought that shearbands were the clamps formerly used for fixing a bell wheel to a headstock,¹ but as fifty-two nails are mentioned here it seems more likely that the term *sherborne*, or *shearband*, refers to the iron bands or straps which passed through the canons, and were nailed to the headstock.² Six of these bands, (four single ones and two double ones) were required for each bell. Each single band required five or six nails, and each double one twice that number to secure the bell to the headstock. Two bells were trussed, and no doubt some of the old nails were found on removal to be serviceable and were reused, and fifty-two new ones bought to make up the required number. The iron clamps which secured the wheels to the headstocks were smaller in size and required four small nails each. Two clamps were required for each bell. It is interesting to learn that this method of attaching a bell to its headstock was in use in Oxford at the end of the sixteenth century. It was soon superseded by the use of slotted pins, fitted with keys, dogs, and bolsters. Two keys and two bolsters are mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts for 1597 at St. Mary's, and we may safely assume that the argent of one bell was secured by this method. One slotted U-shaped pin, requiring two keys, would be needed to fasten the argent to the headstock. Bolsters were used to take up the "play" between the keys and other parts of the ironwork, in a similar manner to that in which washers are used today.

In the year 1611 the saunce was recast. The founder was probably William Yare, of Reading, who cast bells for Christ Church, and the Bodleian Library during that year. In the accounts covering the period 29th March 1611—17th April 1612 are the following entries:

"Item to the Bellfounder for casting the sauncks bell . . . xliij s"

"Item to the Smith for ironwork to fasten the same bell to the stoke . . . xij d"

"Item a new roape for the same sauncks bell . . . ij s ijd"

This bell exists today. It is a plain casting, devoid of founder's marks or inscription, but with mouldings similar to those on the bell in the Bodleian Library.

¹ A. H. Cocks, *ut sup.*, p. xxxii.

² For an illustration of these see *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XLIV., Plate VI. The saunce at Cottisford, illustrated in Fig. 14, (*O.R.S.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 109), is secured by shearbands of a smaller type.

In the following year a work of major importance was undertaken. The fourth and fifth had to be recast, and the famous bellfounding firm of the Newcombes, of Leicester, was called in to perform the contract. The work was so well done that, in spite of extensive use, these two bells are still in existence, and are now the oldest bells in the ring. The fourth, known to campanologists as the "music bell", is unique in its decoration, and one of the conditions of contract may have been that this unique form of musical decoration should be used. Great skill would be needed to prick out a musical score on the "cope," or outer mould, of a bell; and, to do this, independently constructed moulds would be necessary. At first it may seem surprising that William Yare, who did so much work in Oxford in the preceding year, should not have been commissioned to recast the fourth and fifth at St. Mary's, but we must remember that, in the majority of instances, he used the "clay model" method of forming his copes.¹ For this reason he may have declined to do the work, as it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to superimpose staff notation on a clay model.

The music bell is well-known. It has been described by Messrs. Ellacombe, Lukis, North, and Walters, and there are references to it in the works of most writers on campanology. The best description of the decoration on this bell known to the author is that by the Rev. J. Fowler, portions of which are given below *in extenso* by kind permission of The Society of Antiquaries of London.

"The music comprises four detached pieces, looking like the parts of a harmonised composition. They are written in square notes on the five-line staff, each part headed by a distinct cleff, apparently the *Cantus*, *Medius* (possibly Tenor), *Altus*, and *Bassus*. Each division is preceded by a roundel, containing a man's profile and bust in relief in the dress of the period, and encircled by a legend, as follows: 1. + KEEPE · TYME · IN · ANYE · CASE. 2. THE · LAST · STRAYNE · WAS · GOOD. 3. THEN · LETT · VS · SINGE · IT · AGAINE. 4. EXCELLENT · WELL · SONGE · MY · HARTS. I have succeeded in making a transcript in the old notation, from which, with the kind and valuable assistance of Dr. Rimbault, I have made out the score copy which I now exhibit. The music is very quaint and beautiful in its way, in the style of the Elizabethan Madrigals. It may have been an exercise for *sol fa* practice or for the viols, well known to some of the societies of ringers at the time, and perhaps a "Fancy" if not a composition of Newcombe the bell-founder. Many of his class were sufficiently well skilled in prick song to write in this style, as, for example, the father of Milton, who was a scrivener. Or it may have come from the donor or donors of the bell,

¹ See *O.R.S.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 75.

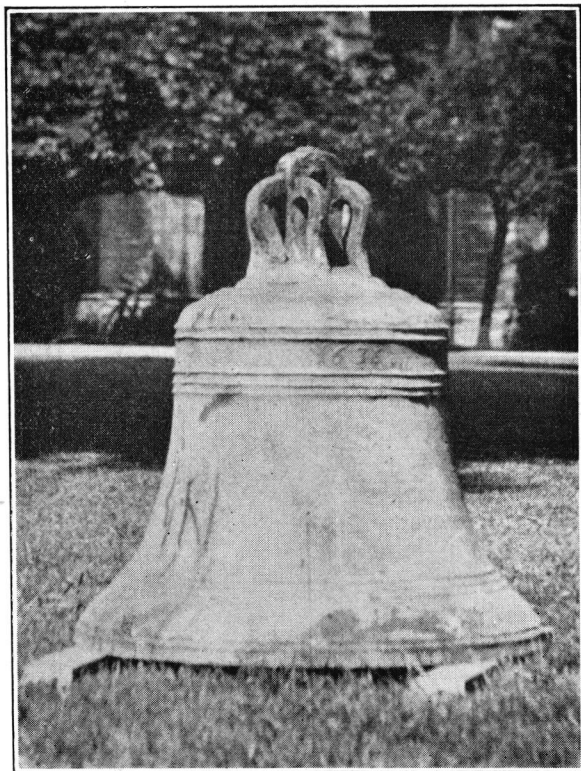


Fig. 42. Balliol College. A disused bell cast by Ellis Knight I, of Reading, 1636.

about whom however nothing is known.¹ The parish records have been searched in vain for anything relating to the casting of this bell. It has been suggested that the intention was for a party of musicians to perform the music standing round the bell; but this could not be while the bell was hung, at any rate, on account of the frame concealing a good deal of the notation.

"Dr. Rimbault found great difficulty in scoring some parts of the composition on account of the number of false dots, lines, etc., as it stands on the bell, but his knowledge of the part-writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has enabled him to produce an intelligible and no doubt a substantially correct version."²

Reproductions of Mr. Fowler's drawings are given in Figs. 39—41, by the permission of The Society of Antiquaries.

Describing the fourth and fifth at St. Mary's, Mr. North says :

"The band ornament (*Fig. 513*) used so generally by the Nottingham founders is introduced, showing, I think, that Oldfield, of Nottingham, was in partnership with Newcombe in this transaction."³

The writer endorses Mr. North's opinion, with the additional comment that the two foundries appear to have worked in conjunction with one another on every job of major importance.⁴ On his way down to Oxford from Leicester Newcombe cast a bell for Claydon, already described,⁵ and one for Tadmarton, which will be described in a future volume.

Mr. Tyssen could find no record of payment for the recasting of the two bells at St. Mary's in the churchwardens' accounts for 1612 and the following years; but, as the fifth bears the names of the principal officers of the University, and the Arms of the University, and those of Oriel College, we may assume that these institutions were responsible for promoting the scheme and that they also paid for it.

Four years after the casting of the "music bell" by the Newcombes, William Yare was commissioned to recast the treble, but he died before the work was completed, and the parish had difficulty in recovering the bell. After his death the older of the two Reading foundries closed down. On its return from Reading the bell was hung by one, Dubber, doubtless a member of the Wolvercote family of bell hangers, one of whom made the bellframe for St. Michael's.

¹ The author suggests that Dr. Richard Corbet may have been responsible for the unique decoration. He is known to have been a musician. See *D.N.B.*

² *Archaeologia*, Vol. XLII, 1870, pp. 491—3.

³ T. North, *The Church Bells of Leicestershire*, 1876, p. 56.

⁴ See p. 241.

⁵ *O.R.S.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 95.

In the accounts covering the period Easter 1616—Easter 1617 are the following entries :

"Item a new clapper and baldrick for the first treble xviijs ix*d.*"

"Item for casting the same bell and addinge more mettle vli xviijs v*d.*"

"Item for carryinge the same bell to Readinge and bringinge it backe xxxijs v*d.*"

"Item for newe irons and mendinge olde irons belonginge to the same bell vjs vij*d.*"

"Item layd out in fyve journeys to Readinge before William Yare his death, and since, to recover the same bell, the same being (by the said Yare) solde into Buckinghamshire xvs."

"Item for hanging the same bell to Dubber xs."

In the year 1623 another major work was carried out. Three bells were recast, and, although they are no longer in existence, we are fortunately able to identify them. In the accounts the treble and tenor are mentioned by name, and, as the former second bore the date 1623, it must therefore have been the remaining one. The tenor appears to have been cracked through misuse by some members of the University. Twyne gives the following extract from the Vice-Chancellor's accounts :

"For Mr. Dr. Piers his Account, Vice chanc' of ye vniversity made in April 1624. Item received of 8 Schollars for breakinge ye great bell at St. Maries ye sume of 4 li."¹

The Vice-Chancellor contributed £5., and Mr. Edwards £10, towards defraying the expense, and the sum of £1.3s.3*d.* was given by the University towards the cost of recasting the tenor.

In the accounts the bellfounder is not mentioned by name, but as the second bell bore ornaments, lettering and founder's marks similar to those used by Robert Atton, we may safely ascribe the bell to him. He probably had the assistance of some contemporary founders. The quality of their work was inferior to that of Newcombe, and, as previously stated, the three bells have again been recast. In the accounts covering the period Easter 1622—Easter 1623 are the following entries :

"Item received of Mr. Vice Chancellor towards the casting of the bell, and of Mr. Edwards² xli xvj*li.*"

"Item of the Proctors towards the reparations of the tennor or greate bell xxiijs ii*d.*"

"Impr. paid to the Belfounder for casting three bells xxvii*li.*"

"Item payed to labourers to helpe out the bells before they were caste & to bring them in after they were caste viijs ii*d.*"

¹ Twyne MS., VI., fol. 24. Bodleian Library, Oxford.

² See p. 312.

"Item for takeing downe the bells and for hanginge and trussinge them xxxs vjd."

"Item for ironwork about the bells xlviijs."

"Item for tymber used about waighing of the bells vijs rod."

"Item for the use of fearne [*sic*] to loade the bells & for carryeing & recaryeing them to & from the pitte ix s iiij d."

"Item to labourers to cary waights and helping to waigh the bells iijs vjd."

"Item for exchanging the Brasses of the first trebbll. iijs."

Mention of a bell casting pit indicates that the bells were recast locally.

The tenor was soon cracked again. If the statements by Dean Corbet quoted on page 260 are correct, the bell was broken on the day that Great Tom was recast by the Keenes, which, as we have seen, took place in the year 1626. Canon Ellacombe's theory that the cracked bell was the predecessor of the present fifth is incorrect.¹ The accounts for 1623 and 1639 mention the tenor being recast: Ellacombe thought that the fifth was formerly the tenor and that one more was added in 1639 to make six, but did not realise that the bell of 1639 had a predecessor.²

After the fracture mentioned above St. Mary's tenor was not recast for many years. From the MSS. of Bryan Twyne we learn that:

"St. Marie's great Bell hauing layen broken a great while together, some of Dionufius Edwards, his heire or assigns had, in michaelmas terme 1639, attempted to begge it of ye kinge; w[hi]ch the vniverfitie not allowing of, vpon fome conference had with ye parifhioners of St. Maries, they laide all ye burdens & charge of ye Bells and Bell-ropes vpon ye vniverfitie; wherevpon ye vniverfitie challenged interest over the church itself, and thefe things were gathered for that purpose."³

Twyne then quotes the statement given on page 311 relating to the receipt of money from the eight schollars who had on a previous occasion broken the tenor bell at St. Mary's and also notes:

"Dennys Edwards widdow her petition about St. Maris's Bells and other passages about them. N.p.230 &: p: 237."⁴

¹ *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, II, 1862, p. 494.

² See p. 263.

³ *Twyne MS.*, VI, fol. 24. Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁴ *Ibid.*

The tenor was recast in the year 1639 by Ellis Knight I, of Reading. It is a fine-toned bell which may best be heard when rung as the University "Degree bell". There are no entries in the churchwardens' accounts relating to payments for its recasting by Knight, but the late Rev. H. E. Salter found a note among the Acts of Convocation that in 1639 the University had collected £45.4s.0d. towards recasting the great bell at St. Mary's and repairs in the tower, and had paid this sum to the churchwarden.¹

Two years later the third was recast by Ellis Knight. The bell bears the initials of the churchwardens, and, like Great Tom, states the date of its passage through the furnace, an unusual feature in a bell inscription. By a strange coincidence both bells were cast on 8th April.

In the churchwardens' accounts for the year ending at Easter 1650 is the entry :

"Item payd to Geffs and a man to help him to take off the fourth Bell to repayre the brasses thereof and for making a stay for ye Tenor 3s. 6d."

The bellhanger was John Jeffs who made the bellframes at Adestock, Bow Brickhill, and Simpson, Buckinghamshire. He was probably a Buckinghamshire man.²

Early in the eighteenth century a proposal was made to increase the number of bells in the ring to eight, or ten. In the diary of Thomas Hearne we read :

"When Dr. Shippen was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, 'twas proposed to have St. Marries six Bells in Oxford made either eight or ten. Dr. S[hippen] was mightily for it & refered the management to Sacheverel³ (he died about 1725). Upon w[hi]ch Mr. Brookland⁴ . . . went to Sacheverel & desired him to go forthwith to Dr. S[hippen], but Sacheverel (who said if they were made either eight or ten, provided the fifth were new cast, it would be the best Peal⁵ in England) neglecting to go, the matter was Dropt & wholly laid aside."⁶

¹ *Walters MS.*, Society of Antiquaries Library.

² A. H. Cocks, *ut sup.*, p. 296.

³ See p. 280.

⁴ Probably Mr. Brickland, a schoolmaster, and one of the ringers, whose name occurs in early peal records.

⁵ *Sic.*

⁶ *Hearne's Collections*, Vol. IX, ed. H. E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, p. 304.

William Yare's treble of 1616 was again recast in 1731. On this occasion the founder was Abraham Rudhall II, of Gloucester. The second was recast at the Loughborough foundry in 1894, and thus the ring assumed its present form. Both recast bells are excellent in tone: the treble may be heard to the best advantage when "leading" the ring as it is being "raised" or "lowered in peal"; the second is familiar to Oxonians by reason of its use as "Convocation bell."

The bells in the ring hang in a side-pattern oak frame installed in 1894 by Messrs. J. Taylor and Co., of Loughborough, who also supplied new gear, type B. Subsequently, the tenor was again rehung by them with gear, type E.

The saunce is hung for chiming in a separate vertical-type frame mounted above the ring.

Most writers on campanology mention these bells, and several make the same mistakes as Canon Ellacombe. The works of Anthony Wood contain many references to the occasions on which these bells were rung.¹

Visited: F.S., 7th January, 1933; J.R.C., F.S., 21st April, 1951.

¹ See (*inter alia*): W. C. Lukis, *An Account of Church Bells*, 1857, pp. 35, 39, 43, 56 and 90. *Archaeologia*, Vol. XLII, 1870, p. 491. H. T. Ellacombe, *Bells of the Church*, 1872, p. 457. T. North, *The Church Bells of Leicestershire*, 1876, pp. 56-7. T. G. Jackson, *The Church of St. Mary-the-Virgin, Oxford*, 1897, pp. 174 ff., 210-13. A. H. Cocks, *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, 1897, pp. 91, 156, 296. *The Life and Times Anthony Wood*, ed. A. Clarke, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. I., pp. 168, 412, 492; Vol. II., pp. 156, 157, 159, 207, 208, 219, 253, 346, 385, 539, 544, 545; Vol. III., pp. 2, 94, 223, 226, 263, 265, 334, 390, 412; Vol. IV., pp. 76, 209. H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 1912, p. 310. R.H.C.M., *Oxford City*, 1939, p. 136b.

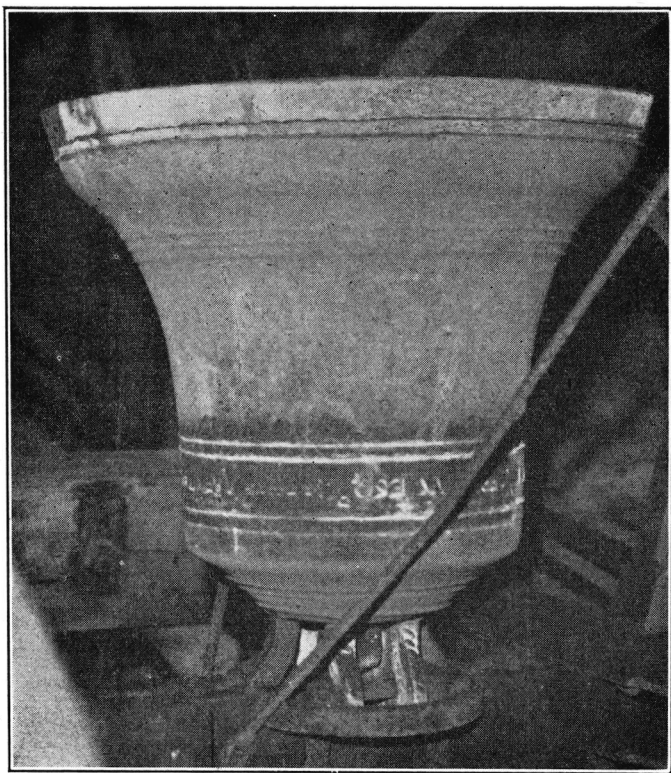


Photo :

W. Harris Morgan, Esq.

Fig. 43. Magdalen College. The treble bell of the ring of ten, cast by Abel Rudhall, of Gloucester, 1740.

211.

OXFORD.

St. Matthew.
(Grandpont.)

A southern tower containing one bell, $25\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, in G. It is hung for ringing in an oak frame, and is fitted with gear, type A.

The bell has a "Doncaster"-type head, and is inscribed :

CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1891.

In the tower are amplifiers by means of which gramophone records of bells are broadcast to the parish.

Visited : F.S., 9th June, 1951.

212.

OXFORD.

St. Michael.

A western tower containing a chime of six bells ; tenor 42 inches diameter, in F \sharp ; and a sanctus bell, $17\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Treble.	IOHN HERRING IOHN ROYSTON CHVRCH WARDENS 1708 AR(Bell) (Fig. D14.)	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Second.	FEAR GOD HONOUR THE KING A(Bell.)R 1755 (Fig. D8.)	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
Third.	1668	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
Fourth.	1668	7
Fifth.	RICHARD KEENE CAST THIS RING 1668	9
Tenor.	SAMPSON RAWLINS ROBERT KEATE C W 1668	12

The treble was cast by Abraham Rudhall I, and was added to the ring in 1708 ; the second was recast by Abel Rudhall in 1755 ; the remainder are by Richard Keene, who in the year 1668 recast four old bells into a ring of five with the addition of 256 lbs. of new metal. The new ring was hung in the following year and Anthony Wood tells us :¹

"13. Mar[ch] 1669, S[unday]. St. Michael's bells rung after they were cast into 5."

The churchwardens' accounts contain much interesting information about the bells and the occasions on which they were rung.

¹ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, Vol. II, ed. A. Clarke, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XXI., p. 152.

Transcripts of entries in them relating to payments for work to the bells were made by the late Mr. A. D. Tyssen, and are now in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries.¹ From them we learn the following :

- 1589. One bell was added to the ring. The bellfounder's name is not mentioned.
- 1594. One bell recast.
- 1605. The forebell² recast. In the accounts for this year the "great, second, third, and saunce bells are also mentioned": this proves that there were then at least four bells in the ring, and that in addition to these there was a saunce.
- 1612. "Item to Phillip Wyandes for a newe frame for fyve bells
vj li x s vj d."
- 1630. The third bell was recast at Reading.
- 1662. The "sans" bell was recast at Woodstock.
- 1669.³ Four bells recast into five with the addition of some metal as recorded above.

The work in 1589 and 1605 was probably done by the founders who were then working at Christ Church.⁴ In 1630 the Reading foundry was owned by Ellis Knight I, and in 1662 Richard Keene owned the Woodstock foundry. Transcripts of entries in the churchwardens' accounts for the years 1669 and 1755 have been published *in extenso* by Mr. Cocks,⁵ and I deem it unnecessary to repeat them.

The bells were formerly hung for ringing. According to Mr. Lukis the old bell frame had the following inscription incised in it :

"MADE BY R. DUBBER OF WOLVERCUT WILLIAM OAK (.....)
ROBERT WA(.....) CHURCHWARDENS"⁶

This frame was removed in the year 1898. The bells were then hung "dead", and converted into a chime by Mr. F. White.

The saunce is hung for chiming. It is inscribed with its maker's name and date of recasting :

ROBT. PATRICK OF LONDON FOUNDER 1784

Visited : F.S., 14th January, 1933.

¹ Walters' MS., Society of Antiquaries Library.

² i.e. the treble.

³ The bells are dated 1668 : payment for the work was made in the following year.

⁴ See p. 240—244.

⁵ A. H. Cocks, *ut sup.*, pp. 112, 168.

⁶ W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, 1857, p. 90.

213.

OXFORD.

St. Michael and All Angels.
(Summertown.)

An open central turret containing one small bell, hung for chiming. The bell is inaccessible without the use of scaling ladders or scaffolding. The church was built in 1909. The former parish church, dating from 1834 and dedicated to St. John-the-Baptist, was demolished in 1925.

Visited : F.S., 9th June, 1951.

214.

OXFORD.

St. Paul.

An enclosed north-western turret containing one bell, 22 inches in diameter, hung for ringing with gear, type A, in an oak frame.

The bell was cast by W. and J. Taylor, and bears the inscription :

TAYLOR FECIT OXFORD 1836

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 21st April, 1951.

215.

OXFORD.

St. Peter-in-the-East.

A western tower containing a ring of eight bells ; tenor $37\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, in A ; and a sanctus bell $15\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
Treble.	MEARS & STAINBANK, WHITECHAPEL FOUNDRY, LONDON. / RING OUT THE FALSE / 1891.	3	1	14
Second.	MEARS & STAINBANK, WHITECHAPEL FOUNDRY, LONDON. / RING IN THE TRUE / 1891.	3	3	19
Third.	GOD SAVE THE KING ANNO DOMINI 1700 (<i>Border, Fig. D14.</i>)	4	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Fourth.	RECAST BY ABEL RUDHALL J753 (<i>Border, Fig. D8.</i>)	4	3	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Fifth.	PEACE & GOOD NEIGHBOVRHOOD (<i>Fig. D8.</i>) ABRA : RVDHALL CAST ME IN THE YEAR 1700 (<i>Fig. D14.</i>)	5	1	0 $\frac{1}{2}$

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
Sixth.	THO : SHEPERD (<i>Fig. D2.</i>) SEYMOVR COOKE CHVRCHWARDENS A (<i>Bell</i>) R 1700	5	3	0†
Seventh.	MR. IOHN HILL L T 1700 (<i>Fig. D8.</i>)	7	0	0†
Tenor.	(<i>Border, Fig. D14, all round bell.</i>) / RING PROSPERITY TO ENGLAND A : R (<i>Two bells.</i>) 1700 (<i>Border, Fig. D8.</i>)	9	1	0†
Saunce.	COME AT MY CALL & SERVE GOD ALL 1777	1	0	0†

The treble and second were cast at the Whitechapel foundry, and were added to the ring in 1891 ; the fourth is by Abel Rudhall, the saunce by Thomas Rudhall ; and the remainder by Abraham Rudhall I. The ring hangs in a two-tier oak frame, and is fitted with gear type A. The saunce is hung for chiming.

The churchwardens' accounts contain the following entries:¹

"1616. Recd. Item of the Scollrs of Magdalen Hall towards a newe Belle wheele. v s."

"1620. Item to Mr. William Raniford for mending 4 baldricks and for fyve cotterells and oil iij s."

"1632. It. paid to Thomas Webb of St. Clements for five bell ropes weighing 36 *li* at 5*d* per *li* 15 s."

"1655. Recd. for a tax that was made by the parrish concent towards casting the bell £5. 10s. 6*d*."

"1655. Recd. of those that were not in the tax 6s. 0*d*."

"1655. Pd. to Goodman Canckot for removing the beame in the belfrey 1s. 6*d*."

"For help to take down the first bell 1s. 0*d*."

"To John Bew for carring and bringing home ye bell from Christ Church 1s. 8*d*."²

"For a new set of ropes 15s. 0*d*."

"To the Belfounder for casting the first bell £5. 8s. 6*d*."

"Payd. for chipping³ the tenor and advise and for beavers 4s. 0*d*."

"1684. For casting the second bell £5. 10s. 0*d*."⁴

"1684. ffor 51 pounds of mettall £2. 11s. 6*d*."

"1684. ffor waighing the bell twice and for help then 5s. 0*d*."

¹ Transcripts of the churchwardens' accounts by the late Mr A. D. Tyssen. Walters MS., Society of Antiquaries Library.

² In 1654 Michael Darbie erected a furnace in Christ Church in order to recast Great Tom. The treble for St. Peter-in-the-East was probably cast there by him.

³ i.e. tuning.

⁴ This bell was probably recast in 1684 by Richard Keene.

In the year 1697 the sum of two shillings and nine pence was expended at two meetings with Richard Keene to discuss proposals for the recasting of the ring. But nothing came of these discussions, and three years later Abraham Rudhall was paid thirty pounds for casting a ring of six bells. The accounts also contain the following entries relating to Rudhall's work :

"It. payd. for the carriage of the Bells to ye water & home again 4s. 6d."

"It. their water carriage to Letchlade and back again £1. 8s. od."

"It. for the articles and bond from the Bellfounder 7s. 6d."

"It. charges at loading the Bells at the water 8s. 6d."

"It. for help in drawing up the tenor 2s. 6d."

"It. spent at our meeting to bargain wth the Belfounder. 3s. od."

"It. payd. Mr. Speakman's bill for work & timber at ye bells £10. 1s. 5d."

"It. payd. him (i.e. Rudhall) for 4 New brass boxes £1. 4s. od."

"It. payd. him for wast of mettle being 82 li at 1s ye pound £4. 2s. od."

"It. expended wth the Bellfounder 2s. 10d."

Owing to the dilapidated state of the gear these bells have not been rung for many years.

Visited : F.S., 10th October, 1931.

216.

OXFORD.

St. Peter-le-Bailey.

A south-eastern tower containing two bells. The larger, 40 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, was evidently intended to be the tenor of a ring of eight which has not yet materialised ; it is inscribed :

WITH SEVEN MORE I HOPE SOON TO
BE * FOR AGES JOINED IN HARMONY
* ROBT. WELLS ALDBOURN FECIT
1792 *

The smaller bell, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, bears no inscription or marks.

Lukis states¹:—

"Four bells were sold towards finishing the present tower, one small bell remaining until 1792, when a larger one was put up."

Visited : F.S.,

¹ W. C. Lukis, *An Account of Church Bells*, 1857, p. 92. He gives the inscription on the larger bell, but not accurately.

217.

OXFORD.

SS. Philip and James.

A central tower containing one bell, 45 inches in diameter, sounding the strike-note of F♯, hung for ringing, and weighing 15 cwt. 3 qrs. 4 lbs.

Owing to corrosion the inscription on the bell is not distinct and some of the letters are difficult to decipher. The uncertain ones are given below in Roman type : the others are recorded in Old English capitals, being the printer's type nearest to the original. My best thanks are tendered to Mr. A. R. Pink for obtaining a rubbing of the inscription under very difficult conditions.

The bell is inscribed :

A. M. D. G. / IN HONOR[?] SS.
PHILIPP[?] ET JACOBI / REC
NON IN P[?] MEMORIAM
WILLIELMI MORRISON / PER
ANNO[?] XXVII VICARI[?] DE
MADSONER NORTON / HANC
CAMPA[?] FACIENDAM CUR
AVIT WILH[?] A.D. 1896 / WILH[?] ARD
C. DERMER, S.T.B. PASTORALIS IN
HAC PAROC[?]A / CURA[?] AN[?]M
IAM XXVII AEC[?]TE

Visited : A.R.P., 1948.

218.

OXFORD.

St. Thomas the Martyr.

A western tower containing a ring of six bells ; tenor 35 inches diameter, in A.

Bell.	Inscription.	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
Treble.	INO. KING & INO. SLATTER C-WARDENS. THO. LODER BENEFAC[?]R A(Bell)R 1733 (Border, Fig. D14.)	3	2	0
Second. ¹	(Fig. D14.) A(Bell)R (Fig. D14.) WILLIAM ADAMS CURATE / ² WILLI AM ² LAPWORTH & WALTER KIMBER. CH: W: 1717	3	3	0
Third. ¹	1706 / SOLOMAN MOORE OVERSEER (Fig. D2.) IONAH PAYNE CHVRCHWARDEN	3	3	0

¹ Both second and third bells have a diameter of 26½ inches.

²⁻² Sic.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Fourth.	WISHING PEACE & GOOD NEIGHBOVRHOOD (<i>Fig. D2.</i>) A : R (<i>Bell</i>) 1706 (<i>Fig. D2.</i>)	4 1 0
Fifth.	RECAST 1806 THOMAS BLINCOC THOMAS SPINLOVE CHURCH WARDENS (<i>Border,</i> <i>Fig. G11.</i>) THOMAS MEARS & SON OF LONDON FECT.	5 2 0
Tenor.	(<i>Same as fifth.</i>)	7 2 0

The two largest bells were recast at the Whitechapel foundry ; the others are from the Gloucester foundry. The treble is by Abraham Rudhall II : the remainder by Abraham Rudhall I.

In addition to the treble here, bells given by members of the Loder family are to be found at Harwell, and Hinton Waldrist, Berkshire.¹

According to Mr. Lukis² the former fifth was inscribed :

WM WRIGHT AND RICHARD NEATE
CH WARDENS 1625 E K

and the former tenor bore the inscription :

J. STILES T. JORDIN
CHURCHWARDENS H STEVENS
JOHN KENSELL OVERSEERS.

The initials on the fifth were doubtless those of Ellis Knight I, who at the time cast several bells for Oxford churches. The tenor was probably the work of Abraham Rudhall.

In the 1715 edition of the Rudhall bell catalogue³ it is stated that the Gloucester foundry had supplied four bells prior to that date to augment the number in the ring to five. As the former fifth⁴ was dated 1625 it follows that in 1715 the ring comprised the following :

Treble : by Abraham Rudhall I, cast before the year 1715.

Second : by Abraham Rudhall I, 1706.

Third : same as second.

Fourth : by Ellis Knight I, 1625.

Tenor : same as treble.

Subsequently the treble⁵ was recast by Rudhall in 1717 ; and a treble added to augment the number of bells in the ring to six in 1733.

¹ *The Berkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XLV, 1941, p. 70, and Vol. XLVI, 1942, p. 10.

² W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 91.

³ *Catalogue of Bells cast by Abraham Rudhall*, 1715 ed., Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁴ In 1715 this bell was the fourth in the ring.

⁵ When the ring was augmented in 1733, this bell became the second.

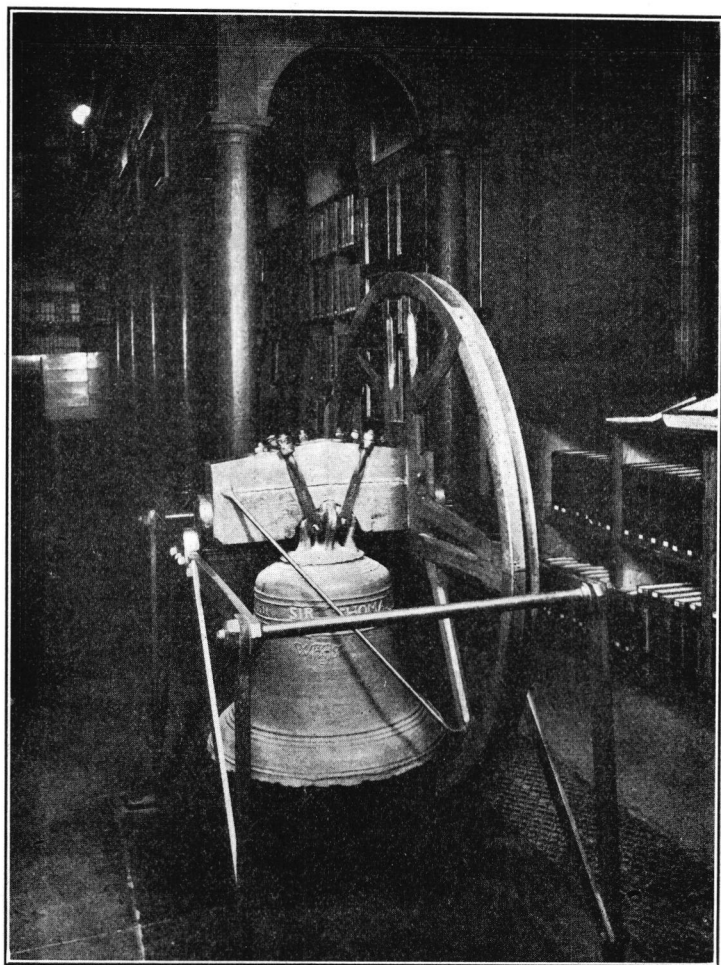


Photo :

The Oxford University Press.

Fig. 44. Bodleian Library. Bell cast by William Yare, of Reading,
1611.

The bells now hang in a wrought-iron side-pattern frame, with gear, type C, installed by Mr. F. White in the year 1900.

Mr. T. W. Squires tells us¹ that in a seventeenth century MS. it is recorded :

"Upon the Saints' bell of this Church this : 'barbra avocor anno domini MCCCCLII.' "²

Had this bell survived it would now be among the first dozen dated bells in England.³

Visited : F.S., 21st January, 1933.

219.

OXFORD.

The Holy Trinity.

An enclosed turret containing two bells, 12½ and 25¼ inches in diameter respectively.

There is an oral tradition among Oxford ringers that these two bells were cast from the metal of the former treble and second bells at the church of St. Ebbe.⁴

The larger is inscribed :

W : TAYLOR OXFORD FECIT 1845
(Border.)

The smaller bears the inscription :

+ W: TAYLOR OXFORD 1845 (Border.)

Visited : F.S., January, 1933.

220.

OXFORD.

The Bodleian Library.

At the Selden End of Duke Humphrey's library is an open bell-frame containing one bell, 22 inches in diameter, fitted with gear, type A, and hung for ringing. The bell is a "maiden casting," by William Yare, of Reading, and is inscribed :

SIR THOMAS BODELEY GAVE THIS
BELL 1611 / W(Fig. D5.)Y

An illustration of the bell, bell-frame and gear is given in Fig. 44.

The original bell, given by Bodley in 1604 for the purpose of announcing the opening and closing times of the library, proved

¹ T. W. Squires, *In West Oxford*, 1928, p. 31. The list of inscriptions given by Mr. Squires contains a few inaccuracies.

² *Sic*. Obviously intended for "Barbara Vocor."

³ H. B. Walters, *The Church Bells of England*, 1912, p. 317.

⁴ See p. 290.

unsatisfactory, and was recast with additional metal into the present bell seven years later. At first it hung in a turret above the west end of Duke Humphrey's library, but in the year 1747 was taken down and stored under a staircase and, in course of time, its existence became forgotten.

In July, 1866, during the removal of some rubbish, the bell was discovered, and restored to its original use. The bell-frame and gear, made by Alfred White in 1866, were renovated by Messrs. Richard White and Son¹ in 1950.²

Visited : F.S., 1932-1951.

221.

OXFORD.

All Souls' College.

In an enclosed turret, situated at the north-west of the chapel, is a bell, 16½ inches in diameter, hung for ringing. It is inscribed with the date :

1678

and its shape and mouldings resemble those on bells cast at the Reading foundry in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

In an open turret on the south of the hall is another bell, 13¼ inches in diameter, hung for chiming. It was cast at the Aldbourne foundry and bears above its sound-bow the inscription :

JAMES WELLS ALDBOURN FECIT 1809

After the date is a border consisting of fleurs-de-lys, Fig. D9, and bells, Fig. D7, alternating.

Visited : F.S., 18th June, 1951.

222.

OXFORD.

Balliol College.

An enclosed turret at the north-west of the chapel contains one bell, 30 inches in diameter, sounding the strike-note C natural, and weighing 4 cwt. 3 qrs. 11 lbs.

The bell is hung for ringing in a cast-iron "A" pattern frame, and has gear, type A. It is inscribed :

JOHN TAYLOR & SON, FOUNDERS,
LOUGHBOROUGH. 1857.

¹ Grandson and great-grandson of Alfred White.

² For further details see *The Bodleian Library Record*, Vol. III, No. 51, March 1951, pp. 143-146, and plate II.

On the roof of the tower above the library is another bell, 21½ inches in diameter, hung "dead," and used as a clock bell. It is inscribed :

THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON
1842

There is also a disused bell, 18 inches in diameter, cast by Ellis Knight I, and inscribed with the date :

X636

It has a mediæval-type stirrup-topped clapper complete with baldrick which must have belonged to an older bell. The bell is illustrated in Fig. 42. It was formerly the hall bell.

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 16th June, 1951.

223.

OXFORD.

Brasenose College.

An enclosed central turret contains two bells, 16 and 30 inches in diameter, respectively.

The smaller bell is hung for chiming, and is used as the hall bell. It was probably cast at the Hertford foundry and is inscribed with the date :¹

1792

The larger bell is hung for ringing and is used as the chapel bell. The oak frame in which it hangs is of seventeenth century pattern and, with the exception of the clapper, the gear, type A, dates from the nineteenth and present centuries. The bell was cast by Michael Darbie in the same year as that in which he recast Great Tom, and bears the inscription :²

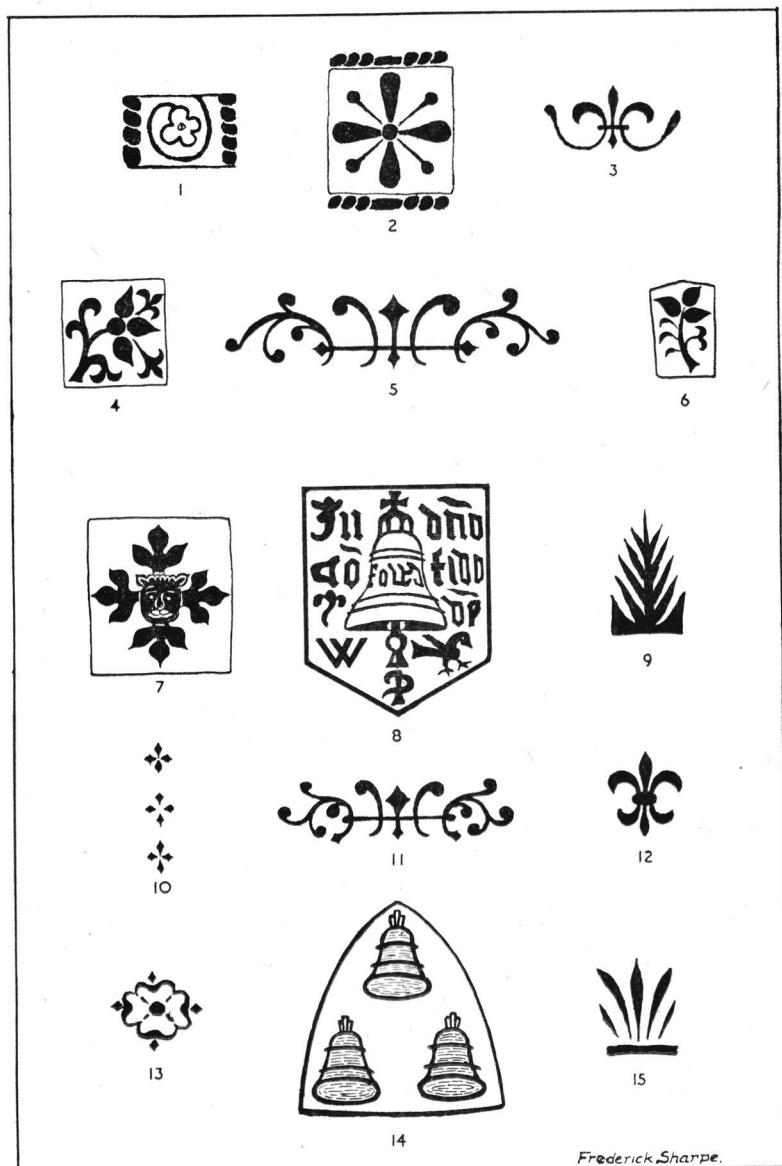
MICHAEL DARBIE MADE ME 1654

The clappers of both bells are of mediæval type, with stirrup tops and leather baldricks. The smaller one has a busk board. The clappers doubtless belonged to the predecessors of the present bells.

Visited : F.S., 19th June, 1951.

¹ R.C.H.M., *Oxford City*, 1939, p. 26b. The statement regarding this bell is incorrect.

² *Brasenose Quatercentenary Monographs*, Vol. II, Part I, Oxford Historical Society, 1909 Vol. LIII, Monograph XI, p. 21. It is stated that the bell cost £12 10s. od., but the inscription is incorrectly recorded.



figs. P1—P15. Half-scale details of founders' marks. P1—3 and P12—15, Chacombe foundry. P4 and P6, Buckingham foundry. P7, Norwich and Bedford foundries. P8, London medieval foundry. P5 and P11, Bicester foundry. P9, Whitechapel foundry. P10, Burford foundry.

224.

OXFORD.

Corpus Christi College.

In an oak frame mounted on the roof of the gatehouse tower is a bell, 34 inches in diameter, hung "dead", and sounded by means of an electrically operated tolling hammer. The strike-note of the bell is B natural, and it weighs 7 cwt. 2 qrs. 2 lbs. It was cast at the Whitechapel foundry, and bears the inscription :

MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS,
LONDON. (*Whitechapel foundry mark,*
with initials : A.A.H.) / A.S.
MCMXXXVI. / ROBERTUS MOWAT
OLIM SOCIUS / PAULUS PATRICK
OLIM SCHOLARIS / COLLEGIO
SUO DONO DEDERUNT / HANC
CAMPANAM / QUAE PRECATIONUM
HORAS INDICARÉT / AETERNITATIS
MONERET.

In an enclosed central turret above the kitchen roof is another bell, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, hung for ringing. The bell bears no inscription or marks, but judged by its shape, dates from the seventeenth century : its mouldings are similar in type and number to those on bells by Christopher Hodson. The gear includes an elm headstock, strap gudgeons, and stock hoops, probably of the same age as the bell ; the clapper is of medieval pattern, with stirrup-top, baldrick and splints, and must have once belonged to an earlier bell. Attached to the headstock is a half-wheel of sixteenth century type, which has been so often repaired that not much of the original work remains. One canon of the bell is missing and a large piece has been broken out of its sound-bow.

In an enclosed octagonal western turret above the roof of the chapel is another bell, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, hung for ringing. While the bell remains in the turret a thorough examination of it is impossible as the turret is one of the most inaccessible of its kind in the country. In medieval times it was entered by means of a staircase and hatchways inside the chapel roof ; part of this staircase remains but the upper hatchway has been boarded up and a lead flat constructed above it. The cill of a vertical type bell-frame is mounted directly above the lead flat.

The base of the turret was reached with difficulty by the writer by means of ladders placed on the chapel roof. One section of the louvred framework surrounding the octagon was found to be hinged, and thus formed an inspection door, but the internal dimensions of the turret were too small to admit anyone. In these circumstances the writer was forced to make his inspection from

the outside, and, in order to have both hands free, had to be lashed to the turret with ropes.¹ This only permitted an inspection to be made of one side of the bell : the lettering on the side of the bell furthest removed from the access door could not be seen, and was felt with the tips of the fingers. A rubbing of the portion of the inscription which could not be seen was obtained with considerable difficulty ; and to add to the difficulties the bell was badly corroded.

The bell has mouldings of fourteenth century type between the shoulder angle and the inscription band. The latter is enclosed between two separate moulding wires ; and there are three similar wires above and two below the sound-bow. The inscription is formed in Lombardic capitals. The writer cannot be certain that he has interpreted all the letters correctly, particularly those which could only be felt with the fingers, but the inscription appears to be :

(Corroded mark which may be an initial cross.) S A M C T C T C
 M A *(two or more corroded letters.)*

The indistinct letters are the C, E, M, and final A. The last named is particularly indistinct. The letter E may possibly be an A ; and the letter M may be an E.

Bells with inscriptions in Lombardic capitals were common in the fourteenth century ; a few examples dating from the period commencing with the Reformation and ending with the death of Queen Mary are also known to campanologists. To the fifteenth century belong bells inscribed in "mixed Gothic" lettering, having "black-letter" smalls, with initial capitals. Some fifteenth and early sixteenth century bells are inscribed entirely in black letter minuscules.

The Corpus Christi bell is an extremely thin casting of an early type ; and, as it has an inscription in Lombardic capitals, coupled with fourteenth century type mouldings, it would appear to date from the fourteenth century. But, on the other hand, it may be an inferior example of mid-sixteenth century bellfounding. Such a casting would not date from the period commencing with the introduction of black letter inscriptions in the fifteenth century and ending with the dissolution of the monasteries : it was either cast before or after that period. It may date from the stormy years of the Reformation, in which case the founder seems to have

¹ In this difficult task the writer was ably assisted by Mr. F. W. Wheeler.

relied upon its inaccessibility not to endanger his life. If it dates from the fourteenth century it is obviously a second-hand bell as the college was founded in 1516, but the bell may have belonged to one of the halls which formerly occupied the site.¹ It was in use in 1553. J. Meade Falkner tells us :

"With the death of the young King in 1553, the scenes were changed once more with kaleidoscopic rapidity, and the Catholic misrule and excesses of Mary superseded the Protestant misrule and excesses of Edward VI. As there had been an exodus of Catholics from Oxford in 1547, so now there was an exodus of Protestants.

Peter Martyr was one of the first to recognise the change. He girded up his loins and retreated to the more congenial atmosphere of Geneva, whither he was followed by many of his co-religionists. As he left Oxford, he heard the sanctus bell of Corpus Christi ringing at the Mass. 'Ah,' he said, 'this little bell hath overturned all my doctrine.'²

The bell hangs from its original elm headstock, which is riddled with plug holes, showing where it had been "retrussed" on many occasions. The headstock is fitted with a restored half-wheel, and with gudgeons of the drive-in type secured by stock hoops. The bearings and ironwork date from the nineteenth century.

Visited : F.S., 23rd August, 1951.

225.

OXFORD.

Christ Church.

An open turret on the eastern gable of the dining hall contains one bell, 16½ inches in diameter, weighing approximately one cwt., and having the strike-note C#. The bell was cast at the Oxford foundry and bears the inscription :

WHETHER THEREFORE / YE EAT OR
DRINK / OR WHATSOEVER YE DO : / DO
ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD. / TAYLOR'S³
1839 FOUNDER'S³ / OXFORD.

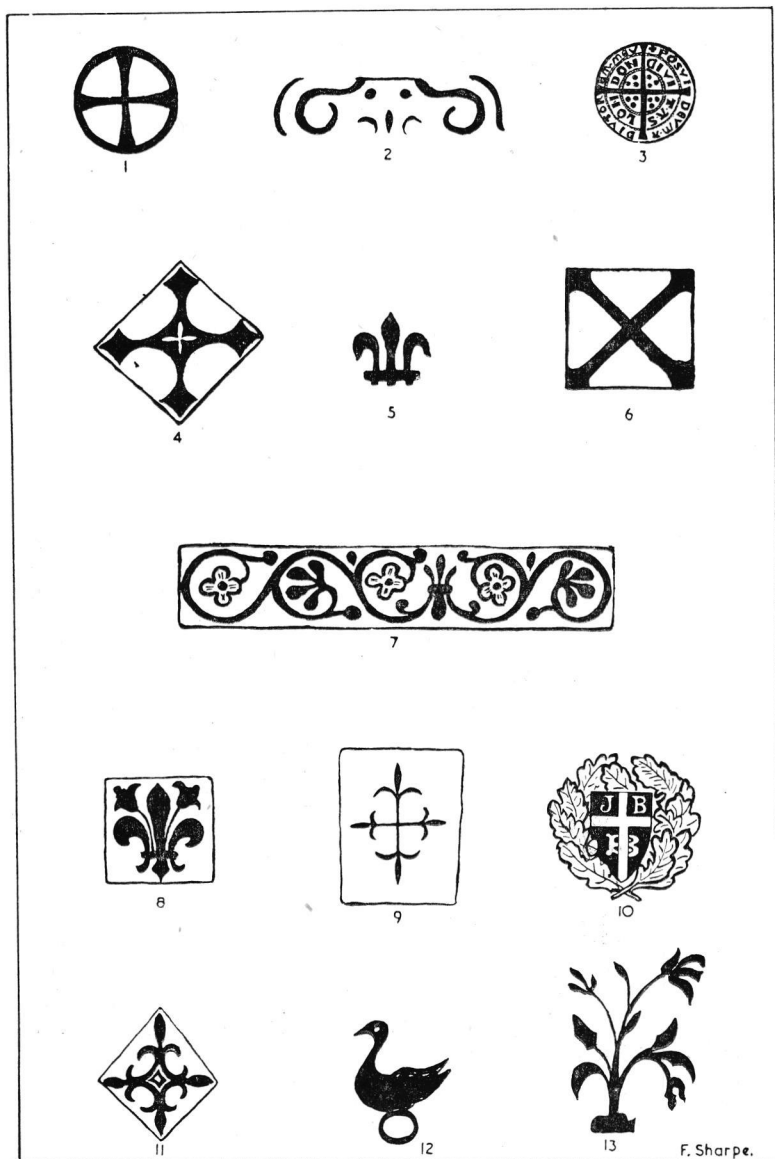
Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 25th February, 1950.

The Cathedral Church of Christ serves also as the college chapel. Great Tom and the bells in the "meat-safe" belfry are described on pages 227-284.

¹ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, pp. vii and viii.

² J. Meade Falkner, *A History of Oxfordshire*, 1899, p. 174.

³ *Sic.*



Figs. Q1—Q13. Half-scale details of bellfounders' marks. Q1 and Q5, Burford foundry. Q2, Q7 and Q13, Chacombe foundry. Q3, Wokingham and Reading foundries. Q4, Buckingham foundry. Q6 and Q8, Woodstock foundry. Q9, Unknown fourteenth century foundry. Q10, Birmingham foundry. Q11, London mediaeval foundry. Q12, Aldbourne foundry.

226.

OXFORD.**Exeter College.**

In an enclosed central turret above the chapel roof is one bell, 22 inches in diameter, hung for ringing. The bell was cast by James Bartlett and is inscribed :

ARTHVRVS BVRY S TH DD RECTOR
1685 ¹ / (*Whitechapel foundry mark.*)

On the balcony above the hall doorway is another bell, 17 inches in diameter, hung "dead" and used as a clock bell. Its shape and mouldings resemble those of bells cast at the Whitechapel foundry, and it is inscribed with the date :

1820

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 25th June, 1951.

227.

OXFORD.**Hertford College.**

In an inaccessible position at the top of an enclosed staircase turret situated at the north-west of the new chapel is one bell, hung for chiming. The writer regrets that he has been unable to examine it. He has, however, frequently heard the bell chimed for chapel services and, as it has octave-hum tuning, considers it to be a modern bell, perhaps contemporary with the chapel, which was erected in 1908.

228.

OXFORD.**Jesus College.**

An open turret above the west gable of the chapel contains one bell, 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, hung for ringing. The bell bears no inscription or marks ; but, judged by its shape and mouldings, probably dates from the eighteenth century. It hangs in an oak frame and is fitted with gear, type B.

In an open turret above the clock is another bell, 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, hung "dead," and used as a clock bell. It is similar to the clock bells at the Clarendon Press and those at Exeter and Oriel Colleges, and is inscribed with the date :

1831

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 25th June, 1951.

¹ *Sic.*

229.

OXFORD.

Keble College.

In the roof space above the chapel ceiling are two bells, 34 and 36 inches in diameter respectively, hung for ringing. They are housed in a deal frame and are fitted with gear, type A. Each bell is inscribed :

CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS
LONDON 1874.

Near the entrance to the dining hall is a bell, 21 inches in diameter, hung for chiming. It was cast by Abel Rudhall, and bears the inscription :

COME TO MY CALL TO SERVE GOD
ALL A (Bell.) R 1752 (Border, Fig. D14.)

As the college dates from 1870 it would be interesting to learn where this bell hung before it came to Keble.

In the clock tower are three "hemispherical bells," 25 $\frac{3}{4}$, 30 $\frac{1}{2}$, and 36 inches in diameter, respectively. Each "bell" is inscribed :

MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS,
LONDON. 1873.

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 25th February, 1950.

230.

OXFORD.

Lincoln College.

An enclosed turret containing one bell, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, hung for ringing. The bell was cast at the Gloucester foundry by Abel Rudhall, and bears the inscription :

COME AWAY MAKE NO DELAY
(Border, Fig. D14.) A (Bell.) R 1748
(Border, Fig. D14.)

Visited : F.S., 4th June, 1951.

A. Clark has given us the following account of the way in which the bell is rung for chapel services :¹

"*The Bell-Almanac*. A custom worth noting is the ringing of the bell for the Chapel services. The bell is rung steadily for a few minutes, changing at the end of the time to shorter, sharper strokes,² (irreverently termed "swearing"). Then for one minute there is silence, and then the second bell strikes the number of days of the month.³ All old Lincoln

¹ A. Clark, *University of Oxford, College Histories, Lincoln*, 1898, p. 209.

² This is evidence that the bell was first "rung up": its strokes would automatically become quicker as it was being "rung down."

³ A custom still observed at Exeter Cathedral, and elsewhere.

men will remember that, towards the end of the month it was quite easy to be in place in Chapel by leaving one's room at the beginning of the second bell, but that the single toll for the first day of the new month took most by surprise and made "thin" Chapels. The purpose of this custom may have been, in the days before desk almanacs, to let the chaplain know the day of the month for reading the Psalms. Of its origin, it can only be said that as no living memory can recall when it was not so, no record tells when it came in. Sir John Peshall notes a similar custom at Carfax Church, in 1773. "Curfew," he says, "is rung constantly at eight : it is the custom after the ringing and tolling this bell, to let the inhabitants know the day of the month by so many tolls."

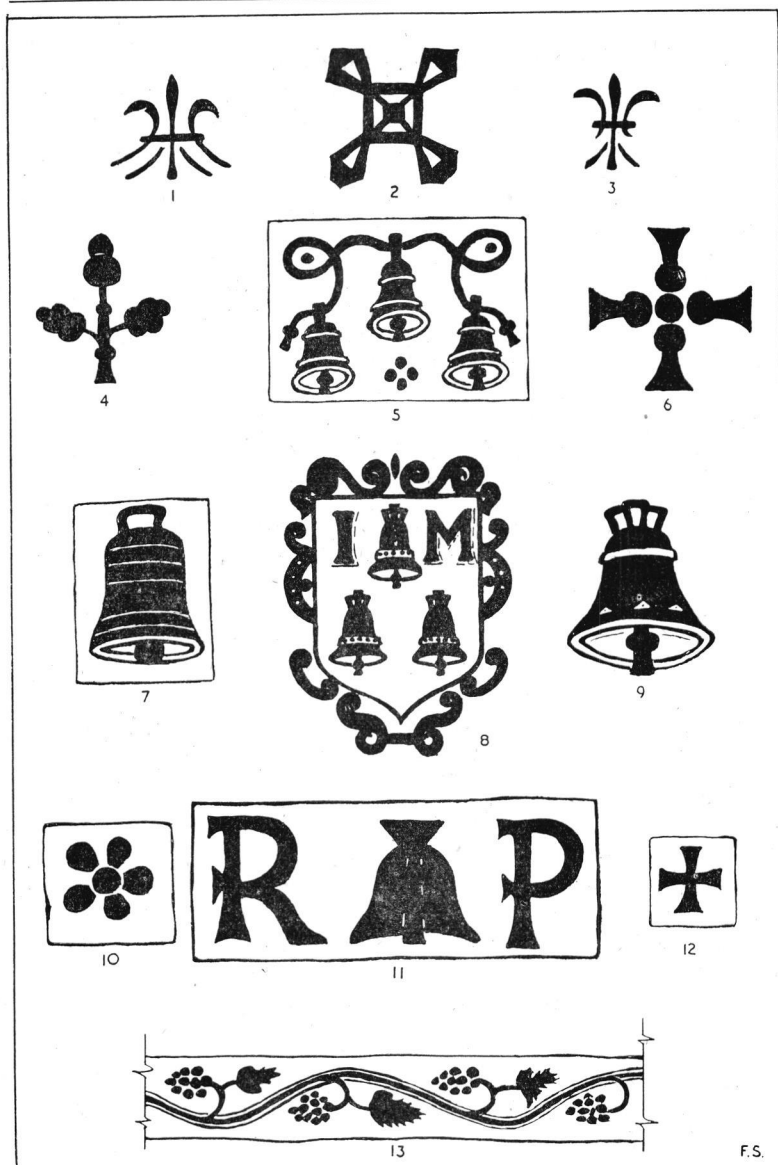
231.

OXFORD.

Magdalen College.

A campanile containing a ring of ten bells ; tenor 47½ inches diameter, in E.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Treble.	THE GIFT OF WM: FREMAN ESQR: (<i>Border, Fig. D14.</i>) A (Bell.) R 1740 (<i>Border, Fig. D14.</i>)	5
Second.	THE GIFT OF WM: FREMAN ESQR: OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE A (Bell.) R 1739	5½
Third.	GOD SAVE THE CHVRCH & QVEEN (<i>Border.</i>) A : R (Bell.) 1712 (<i>Border.</i>)	5½
Fourth.	PEACE & GOOD NEIGHBOVRHOOD (<i>Fig. D10.</i>) A : R (Bell.) 1712 (<i>Border, Fig. D2.</i>)	5¾
Fifth.	RECAST AT THE EXPENSE OF WM: FREMAN ESQR: (<i>Border.</i>) A (Bell.) R 1748 (<i>Border.</i>)	6½
Sixth.	PRAYES ♣ YE ♣ THE ♣ LORD ♣ 1623 ♣ / E ♣ K	7
Seventh.	(<i>Shield, Fig. E7, four times.</i>) / (<i>Cross, Fig. N10.</i>) Sum (<i>Fig. K7.</i>) Rosa (<i>Fig. K7.</i>) Pulsata (<i>Fig. K7.</i>) Mundi (<i>Fig. K7.</i>) Katerina (<i>Fig. K7.</i>) Vocata	8½
Eighth.	OMNIA FIANT AD GLORIAM DEI. RECAST BY R: TAYLOR & SONS. MDCCCXXVIII.	10
Ninth.	HONOR THE KINGE 1641	13
Tenor.	♣ LET ♣ YOVR ♣ HOPE ♣ BE ♣ XN ♣ THE ♣ LORD x623 / E ♣ K	19



Figs. R1—R13. Half-scale details of bellfounders' marks. R1, R3, and R13, Chacombe foundry. R2, Reading foundry. R4—R7 and R10, Buckingham foundry. R8, Worcester foundry. R9, Whitechapel foundry. R11, Itinerant seventeenth century foundry. R12, Leicester foundry.

The treble, second and fifth are by Abel Rudhall ; the third and fourth are by Abraham Rudhall I ; the sixth, ninth and tenor are by Ellis Knight I ; the seventh is by William Dawe, of London, *circa* 1410 ; and the eighth is by Messrs. Taylor, of Oxford.

The seventh has lost one of its canons, and has had a false, iron canon fixed to its crown ; below its shoulder between two moulding wires is a narrow flat moulding of the type peculiar to the products of the London bellfounders. The treble has cabled canons.

The ring is fitted with gear, type C, and hangs in a side-pattern oak frame, made by Messrs. White, of Appleton, and ingeniously planned so that the treble bells swing on the south side of the tower,¹ nearest "The High," and so that the sonorous tones of the tenor bells are more prominent on the opposite side of the tower. It follows that the full beauty of the bells is heard to the best advantage in the Botanic Gardens by the River Cherwell.

Fortunately the authorities at Magdalen did not succumb to the persuasive voice of Michael Darbie and consign their ancient bells to his furnace in the seventeenth century as did their contemporaries at Merton and New College, and the present ring, like that at Christ Church, has been built up from the medieval one.

The medieval bell remaining in the tower is some forty years older than the college, and once formed part of an early ring, about which H. A. Wilson tells us :

"On August 9th of that year [1492] the 'first corner stone' of the new bell tower was laid by the President. The building of this tower seems to have been completed in 1504, as in the year 1504-5 the bells were removed to it, and an old bell-tower (probably part of the Hospital buildings²), the site of which cannot be determined, was pulled down."³

From Mr. Wilson we also learn that :

"In 1602 there were further repairs to the walls and a new bell was cast for the tower."⁴

The bell was probably made by Joseph Carter, of Reading, who at the time was doing a considerable amount of work in the neighbourhood.

In the year 1623 Ellis Knight I, of Reading, recast two of the bells, one of which was the famous tenor. He placed on them

¹ Soon after daybreak on the first morning in May each year the choir sings a Latin hymn to the tune "Hymnus Eucharisticus" from the top of this tower.

² i.e. The Hospital of St. John the Baptist which formerly stood on the site.

³ H. A. Wilson, *University of Oxford, (College Histories Series.) Magdalen College*, 1899, p. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

his fleur-de-lys word-stop, Fig. N13, and the founder's mark, Fig. N11. He recast another bell in 1641, but on this occasion discreetly omitted his initials and founder's marks, having inscribed the bell with the motto : "HONOR THE KINGE."

Richard Symonds visited the tower in 1643 and states in his notes :

"On the third bell in the Tower [is] this inscription :

'Sum Rosa pulsata mundi Katrina' vocata'

On the fourth :

'Dulcis sisto Melis vocor campana Gabrielis'

On both a chevron between three ewers.²

On each 'William Founder me fecit'^{3,4}

As the two largest bells now in the tower were in existence when Symonds visited it, and as he states that in 1643 the two medieval bells were respectively the third and fourth of the ring, it follows that in his day the ring consisted of six bells. The third of these remains today and now forms the seventh of the ring of ten. As in 1643, it is the fourth largest bell in the tower. Thus in the reign of Charles I the ring comprised the following :

Bell.	Inscription.	Approx. Weight. Cwt.
Treble.	(Unknown.)	7
Second.	PRAYES ♣ YE ♣ THE ♣ LORD ♣ 1623 ♣ / E ♣ K	8
Third.	(Cross, Fig. N10.) Sum (Founder's mark, Fig. K7.) Rosa (Fig. K7.) Pulsata (Fig. K7.) Mundi (Fig. K7.) Katerina (Fig. K7.) Vocata (Fig. K7.) (Shield, Fig. E7, four times.)	9
Fourth.	(Probably, ⁵ Cross, Fig. N10.) Dulcis (Fig. K7.) Sisto (Fig. K7.) Melis (Fig. K7.) Vocor (Fig. K7.) Campana (Fig. K7.) Gabrielis (Fig. K7.) (Shield, Fig. E7.)	11
Fifth.	HONOR THE KINGE 1641	13
Tenor.	♣ LET ♣ YOVR ♣ HOPE ♣ BE ♣ IN ♣ THE ♣ LORD 1623 / E ♣ K	19

¹ *Sic.*

² Obviously Fig. E7.

³ Obviously Fig. K7.

⁴ *Oxford Church Notes*, 1643-4, made by Richard Symonds, ed. Dr. Rose Graham, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XLVII, 1905, p. 131.

⁵ *Sic.*

The second, third, fifth and tenor of this ring remain : they are now respectively the sixth, seventh, ninth and tenor. The fourth has since been twice recast. No particulars of the treble are known to the writer : either this bell was the one added in 1602,¹ or it was recast between 1602 and the time of Richard Symonds' visit in 1643. If the latter, the bell added in 1602 must have been the tenor, in which case the medieval ring was tuned in the minor scale—not an uncommon feature of medieval bell tuning. If the bell added in 1602 was the treble, the medieval ring was tuned in the major scale.

As both bells, described by Symonds, were cast by William Dawe, *circa* 1410, it seems likely that the medieval ring of five was made by him.

The bells were increased in number to eight in 1712 when the present third and fourth² were cast by Abraham Rudhall I. At the same time he recast the former fourth, which then became the sixth of the augmented ring. According to Mr. Lukis³ this bell bore the inscription :

EST CAMPANARUM SINE ME
SYMPHONIA NULLA AR 1712

It has since been recast.

Two additional bells, the present treble and second, were given by William Freman in the years 1739-40. He was a member of the college, a great lover of bells, and a keen ringer.⁴ He paid for the recasting of the fifth in 1748. These three bells are in the tower today and are excellent examples of the craftsmanship of Abel Rudhall.

Finally, the eighth⁵ was recast by Messrs. Robert Taylor and Sons at their Oxford foundry in 1828, and the ring assumed its present form.

Personal opinions vary regarding the merits of any particular ring of bells, and campanologists are noted for being extremely controversial in such matters, but the majority agree that the Magdalen College bells are excellent, and among ringers they are

¹ See p. 336.

² In 1712 these were respectively the treble and second.

³ W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 89.

⁴ William Freman's ringing career is described in *The Ringing World*, 1940, *passim*.

⁵ The eighth bell of the present ring of ten was the sixth of the ring of eight between 1712 and 1739 ; before 1712 it was the fourth of the ring of six.

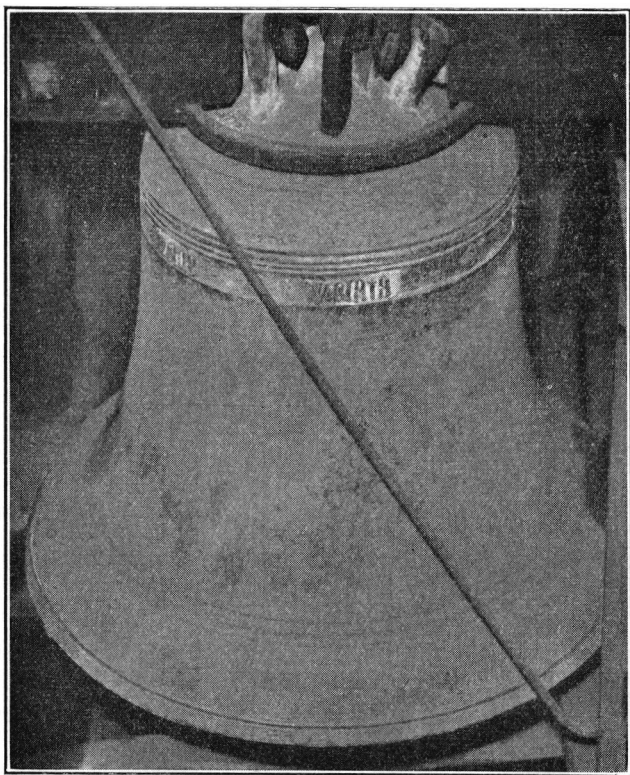


Photo :

W.Harris Morgan, Esq.

Fig. 45. Magdalen College. The seventh bell of the ring of ten, cast by William Dawe, of London, *circa* 1410, i.e. some forty years before the founding of the College.

noted for clarity of strike-note and richness of tone. In the writer's opinion they are among the best in the country, and comprise one of the finest examples of "old-standard" tuning. Among the Rudhalls' sweet-toned trebles he considers the third to be of outstanding quality, and the two largest bells are some of the finest products of the post-Reformation Reading foundry. The rich mellow tones of the two last mentioned bells may be heard to an advantage when they are "rung up" for Chapel Services on Festivals.

In the tower in 1932 was a disused bell, 11 inches in diameter, said to have been brought from Magdalen College School in 1895. The bell was inscribed :

J. WARNER & SONS LONDON 1886.

The chapel possesses an open north-western turret containing one bell, 16 inches in diameter, hung for ringing. The writer has not seen this bell, but is informed by Mr. E. G. Moore that it bears no inscription or marks. It has been quarter-turned and is fitted with gear type C.

Visited : F.S., 1932—1951.

232.

OXFORD.

Merton College.

A central tower containing a ring of eight bells, tenor 53½ inches diameter, in D.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Treble.	✠ CHRISTOPHER ◇ HODSON ◇ MADE ◇ ME ◇ MDCLXXX ✠ (<i>Four coins.</i>)	6
Second.	✠ D ◇ HEN ◇ ABYNDON ◇ S ◇ T ◇ D ◇ COLL ◇ HVIVS ◇ CVST ◇ R ◇ R ◇ II ◇ R ◇ C ◇ II (<i>Four coins.</i>) ✠ CHRISTOPHER ◇ HODSON ◇ MADE ◇ ME ◇ MDCLXXX ◇ INSTAVRATVM	6½
Third.	✠ EX ◇ DONO ◇ TOMAE ◇ MILBOVRN ◇ A ◇ M ◇ ET ◇ COLL ◇ HVIVS ◇ NVPER ◇ SOCII ✠ CHRISTOPHER ◇ HODSON ◇ MADE ◇ ME ◇ MDCLXXX ◇ WH ✠ (<i>Five coins.</i>)	7½

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Fourth.	✠ CHRISTOPHER ◇ HODSON ◇ MADE ◇ ME ◇ MDCLXXX ✠ WH (<i>Six coins.</i>)	8½
Fifth.	✠ CHRISTOPHER ◇ HODSON ◇ MADE ◇ ME * MDCLXXX (<i>Four coins.</i>)	11
Sixth.	✠ CHRISTOPHER * HODSON * MADE * ME * MDCLXXX (<i>Six coins.</i>)	14
Seventh.	✠ CHRISTOPHER * HODSON * MADE * ME * MDCLXXX (<i>Six coins.</i>)	20
Tenor.	✠ D * HEN * ABYNDON * S * T * D * COLL * HVIVS * CVST * R * R * II * R * C * II * (<i>Six coins.</i>) ✠ INSTAVRATVM * A * D * MDCLXXX * CHRISTOPHER * HODSON ✠ (<i>Eleven coins.</i>)	28

As testified by their inscriptions the bells were made by Christopher Hodson, in 1680, and they have the unique distinction of being the oldest *complete* ring of eight by one founder in existence. Each bell retains its canons and has been quarter turned. On the waist of each bell is a shield bearing the College Arms.¹ Fig. T5 is denoted by the sign *

The ring hangs in a massive oak frame of the braced-king-post type, made to the pattern of the former seventeenth century frame by Messrs. White, of Appleton, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The gear, types C and E, is also by members of this family of bellhangers.

These bells have a long and interesting history. They are mentioned in the Bursar's rolls as early as the year 1288, and were later increased in number to five.² Some of them were cast when the massive tower was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, and bore the name of Dr. Henry Abendon,³ then Warden, who subscribed the sum of £20 towards the cost of their installation.⁴ Writing in the seventeenth century Anthony Wood, who often rang here, tells us that the tenor was reputed to be the finest bell in England.⁵

¹ A portion of the shield on the seventh may be seen in Fig. 47.

² G. C. Brodrick, *Memorials of Merton College*, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. IV., 1885, p. 14.

³ A. Wood. *Life and Times*, Vol. I., ed. A. Clark, Oxford Historical Society, Vol. XIX, 1891, p. 211.

⁴ G. C. Brodrick, *ut sup.*, p. 160.

⁵ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 212.

Unfortunately this famous ring has passed through the furnace. During the time of the Commonwealth, Michael Darbie, an itinerant bell-founder, who evidently possessed a very plausible tongue, called at the college and suggested that he should recast the five ancient bells into a ring of eight. The warden was absent, but the sub-warden sanctioned the scheme, and among those who subscribed to it was Anthony Wood, from whom we get the following account :

"1657. Jan[uary] 10. A[nthony] W[ood], his mother, and his two brothers, Robert and Christopher Wood, gave 5*li.* to Merton Coll[ege] towards the casting of their five bells into eight. These five were antient bells, and had been put up into the tower at the first building thereof, in the time of Dr. Henry Abendon, warden of Merton Coll[ege], who began to be warden in 1421. The tenor or great bell (on which the name of the said Abendon was put) was supposed to be the best bell in England, being, as 'twas said, of fine mettall silver sound.¹ The generality of people were much against the altering of that bell, and were for a treble to be put to the five, and so make them six : and old sarjeant Charles Holloway, who was a very covetuous man, would have given money to save it, and to make the five, six bells, that is, to put a treble to them. But by the knavery of Thomas Jones, the sub-warden (the warden being absent) and . . . Derby, the bellfounder, they were made eight : and Dr. John Wilson, Dr. of musick, had a fee from the college to take order about their tuning."²

The new bells were not a success, and Wood, very naturally, blamed the bellfounder. But in passing judgement on the works of Michael Darbie we should remember that he was in many ways a pioneer, and that in his day the casting of rings of eight was purely an experiment. His ring at Merton was the second *complete* octave made by any one bellfounder, and the technique of casting trebles for rings of that number had not then been discovered. From Wood we get this account of the first occasion on which the bells were rung :

"1657. May 14. Th[ursday]. All the eight bells of Merton Coll[ege] did begin to ring. And he [Anthony Wood] heard them ring very well at his approach to Oxon in the evening, after he had taken his rambles all that day about the country to collect monuments. The bells did not at all please the curious and critical hearer. However he plucked at them often with some of his fellow-colleagues for recreation sake. They were all afterwards recast, and the belfry wherein the ringers stood (which was a little below the arches of the tower, for while the five hanged the ringers stood on the ground) being built of bad timber, was plucked down also ; and after the bells were put up againe, this belfry, that now

¹ It is a common mistake to suppose that bells contain silver, and that silver improves their tone.

² A. Wood, *ut sup.*, pp. 211—212.

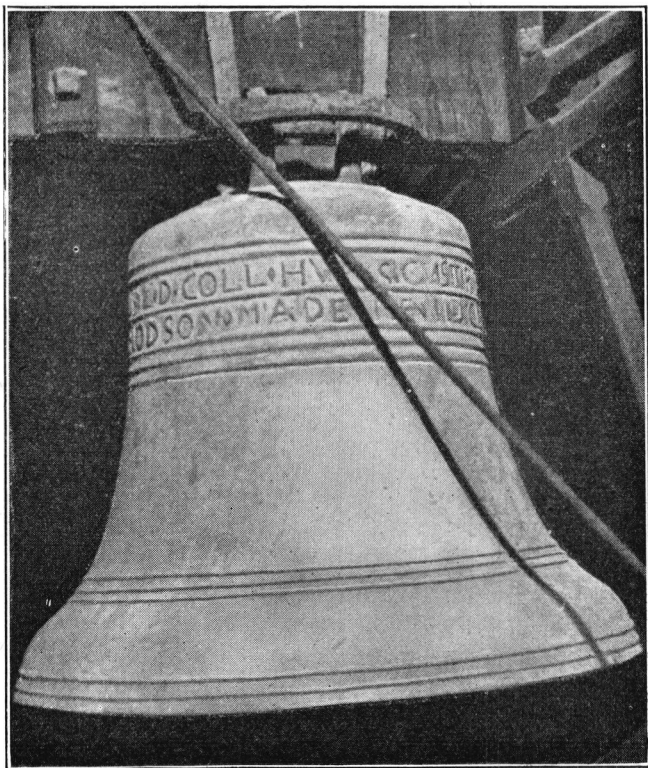


Photo.:

W. Harris Morgan, Esq.

Fig. 46. Merton College. The second bell of the ring of eight, cast by Christopher Hodson in 1680.

is above the arches, was new made and a window (broke thro' the tower next to Corpus Christi Coll[ege]) was made to give light."¹

In a later account Wood condemns the bells in stronger terms and accuses Michael Darbie and Dr. Jones of stealing metal from the ancient bells :

"December 1675. The bells of Mert[on] Coll[ege] antient. Some belonged to the parish church before it was collegiate, especially the second. The tenor, the best bell in England, was given, or else set up, in the time of (Henry) Abendon, warden, as his name upon it shows. These five bells were made 8 [in] 1656, Dr. (Thomas) Jones then sub-warden. They first rang May [14th. 1657.] My mother and my two brothers gave towards the casting as College tenants. They being so cast, severall were found to be ugly dead bells ; for the truth is [that] . . . Darby who cast them stole a great deal of mettle from them (and [Thomas] Jones they say complice with him); and whereas the old tenor was the best bell in England, this is now the worst. At the same [time] a loft was set up about 3 yards *below* the top of the arches of the tower. I perswaded the Society to set it *above* the arches, but I was not then heard. But that loft, being of green timber, bowed and became weak. At length this year 1675 (Sept. and Aug.) it was taken downe and most of it was given to Halywell to make a scaffold at the west end of the church there : and this now standing above the arches was then set up."²

There seems little doubt that Darbie's ring was unsatisfactory. Taking advantage of the visit of Christopher Hodson to Oxford for the purpose of recasting Great Tom, the Merton authorities engaged him to recast their ring. Wood makes the following comments :

"This yeare [1680] our eight bells were new cast."³

"Feb(ruary) 2, [1681]. W[ednesday]. Merton College eight bells, newlie cast by Christopher Hudson⁴ of London, rang to the content of the S[oc]ietie. For his work and some metall he is to have about 300 *li*. They were before cast from 5 to 8 by one Michael Darbie anno 1656⁵ who spoyl'd them."⁶

Among campanologists the tones of the Merton bells are not generally considered to be of outstanding quality, but as stated before, in Hodson's day the casting and tuning of complete octaves of bells was largely a matter of experiment, only to be proved by trial and error.⁷ The bells remain as Hodson made them.

¹ A. Wood, *ut sup.*, p. 219.

² *Ibid.* Vol. II., p. 332.

³ *Ibid.* p. 508.

⁴ *Sic.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ A. Wood, MS. "E," p. 33.

⁷ The bells would not sound so harsh to the listener outside the tower if the belfry windows were properly treated for bell acoustics.

As previously mentioned the bells were originally rung from the ground floor of the chapel. Considering their weight, the primitive methods of bell hanging then in vogue, and the difficulties caused by such a long length of rope, exceptional skill must have been required to ring them, and this bears testimony to the ability of Anthony Wood and his contemporary ringers. We have seen that in the middle of the seventeenth century a ringing floor was installed *below* the apex of the arches of the tower, and that this subsequently gave place to the present curious ringing gallery. The gallery extends round the four sides of the tower above the arches ; and the ringers stand, two on each side, behind the ballustrades of the gallery. Through an opening in the centre, about 20 feet square, one looks down into the chapel, the floor of which is some 60 feet below. The bells hang approximately 20 feet above the gallery with only the carved oak ceiling between. Highly skilled ringers are still needed here owing to the widely-spaced rope circle, and the difficulties of conducting the ringing.

In an enclosed staircase turret at the north-west of the dining hall is a small bell, hung for ringing. A close examination of the bell is not possible without removing the upper floor of the turret, but when seen from the outside through the turret windows the bell appeared to bear no inscription or marks.

Visited : F.S., 1932—1951.

233.

OXFORD.

New College.

A campanile containing a ring of ten bells, tenor 48½ inches diameter, in E♭.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Treble.	MANNERS MAKETH ¹ MAN (<i>Fig. D3.</i>) AR: (<i>Bell.</i>) 1712 (<i>Figs. D3, D8 and D3.</i>)	4
Second.	MANNERS MAKETH ¹ MAN W : W ² (<i>Fig. D2.</i>) A R : (<i>Bell.</i>) (<i>Fig. D2.</i>)	4½ ³
Third.	MICHAEL DARBIE MADE ME 1655 / W(<i>Shield bearing Arms of New College.</i>)W ¹	4½
Fourth.†	MANNERS MAKES MAN W:W AR (<i>Two bells.</i>) 1703 (<i>Fig. D2.</i>)	5½
Fifth.	(<i>Same as third.</i>)	6

¹ *Sic.*

² The initials "W.W." are those of William of Wykeham.

³ Note the unusual scale of weights.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Approx. Weight. Cwt.</i>
Sixth.	HENRY :::: KNIGHT :::: OF :::: READING :::: MADE :::: MEE :::: 1672 ::::	7
Seventh.	PROSPERITY TO NEW COLLEGE (<i>Fig.</i> <i>D8.</i>) A:R (<i>Bell.</i>) 1712 (<i>Fig. C5.</i>)	9
Eighth.†	(<i>Same as third.</i>)	10½
Ninth.†	MANNERS MAKETH MAN (<i>Fig. C5.</i>) A(<i>Bell.</i>)R (<i>Fig. C5.</i>) 1723.	14
Tenor.†	(<i>Same as third.</i>)	20

The treble, second, fourth and seventh are by Abraham Rudhall I ; the ninth is by Abraham Rudhall II, the sixth by Henry Knight II, and the remainder by Michael Darbie. The fourth, eighth, ninth and tenor have lost their canons ; the third and seventh have been quarter turned ; and, with the exception of the treble and second the remainder have been one-eighth turned. The treble, second and seventh have cabled canons.

The ring hangs in a seventeenth century oak frame, to which additions were made when the bells were increased in number in 1712. In the nineteenth century various repairs were carried out and one cast iron section was added to the frame. The headstocks, ironwork and gear are mainly by Alfred White, but portions have been renewed by his sons and grandson, and by Messrs. Blackburn. The gear of the treble, second, third and fifth is type A ; that of the fourth and sixth type C ; and that of the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenor type B.

As at Magdalen and Merton the ring at New College originally consisted of five bells. We are told by H. Rashdall and R. S. Rait that :

"The great tower, standing outside the city walls, served as a receptacle for a clock and bells. Five bells were given by the founder,¹ at a cost of £132.16s.4d. Three of them were dedicated respectively to the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, and St. John Baptist and St. Frideswide."²

¹ The College was founded in 1379 by William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, the bell-tower was built *circa* 1400.

² H. Rashdall and R. S. Rait, *University of Oxford, College Histories, New College*, 1901, p. 81.

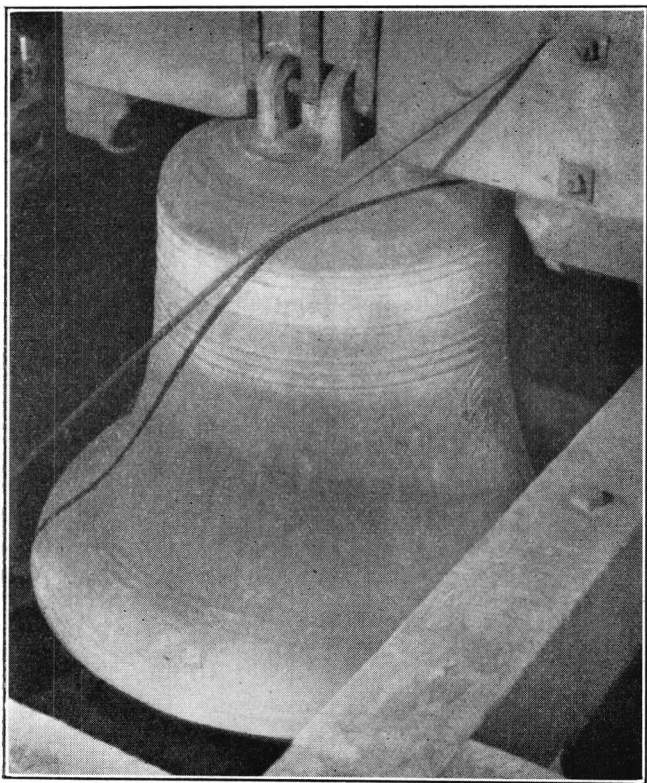


Photo :

W. Harris Morgan, Esq.

Fig. 47. Merton College. The seventh bell of the ring of eight, cast by Christopher Hodson in 1680.

The five medieval bells were recast in the year 1655 by Michael Darbie into a ring of eight, the first of this number in the county, and the first *complete* octave known to campanologists to be cast by one bellfounder.¹ We are told by W. C. Lukis that "the surplus metal of the old bells overpaid all the expenses" of the recasting and rehanging.² As the weight of the eight largest bells is approximately 76 cwt., and as we know the relative value of recasting and rehanging bells compared with the price of bell-metal, we may safely assume that the total weight of the medieval ring was nearly twice that of the present one, and that the medieval tenor weighed well over two tons.

Of Darbie's ring four bells remain. They are the present third, fifth, eighth and tenor, and before the bells were augmented in number to ten were respectively the treble, third, sixth and tenor. Fortunately the treble and tenor of the 1655 ring have survived and afford interesting examples of the efforts of the first designer of a complete octave to overcome the difficulties involved.

One of Darbie's bells—the fourth in his ring—had to be recast after the short space of seventeen years, and Henry Knight, of Reading, was called in to perform the contract: Knight's bell is now the sixth of the present ring.

In the year 1703 the second of Darbie's octave was recast by Abraham Rudhall I, of Gloucester. It now forms the fourth of the ring of ten.

Nine years later there seems to have been some rivalry between Magdalen and New College in regard to the number of bells in their respective towers. In 1712 Abraham Rudhall I added two bells to increase the number at Magdalen to eight, whereupon New College employed him to increase the number in their tower to ten. During the same year Rudhall recast Darbie's fifth to form the seventh of the augmented ring.

The only subsequent alterations have been the recasting of the ninth by Abraham Rudhall II in 1723, and repairs and renewals of the gear.

Details of some of the peals rung here have been given on pages 281—283: others are recorded in the peal book of the Oxford Society of Change Ringers.

¹ The earlier octaves were formed by augmenting smaller existing rings.

² W. C. Lukis, *ut sup.*, p. 90.

Among the Rawlinson MSS. at the Bodleian Library is a poem entitled :

"On the bells of New College in Oxon, / wh[i]ch lately were moulded; and from / 5 turned into Eight."¹

Visited : F.S., 28th February, 1925 ; 30th December, 1950.

234.

OXFORD.

Oriel College.

An enclosed central turret contains one bell, 19½ inches in diameter, hung for ringing.

The bell was cast at the Bicester foundry by Edward Hemins, and is inscribed :

AVE MARIA — IN FESTO ANNVNC.
B.V.M. MDCCXXIX COLL. ORIEL (*Fig.*
P11.) / ED. HEMINS BISSITER FE (*Fig.*
P11, six times.)

The gear, type A, is by Alfred White.

In an open turret above the roof of the gatehouse tower is another bell, 20½ inches in diameter, hung "dead" and used as a clock bell. It was probably cast at the Whitechapel foundry, and is inscribed with the date :

1820

Visited : F.S., 4th June, 1951.

235.

OXFORD.

Pembroke College.

Under a penthouse on the roof of the tower over the gateway is one bell, 15 inches in diameter, hung for chiming. The bell was examined by Mr. L. H. Chambers who states that it was cast at the Gloucester foundry and that it bears the inscription :

I. RUDHALL FECT. 1830.

Visited : L.H.C., 7th March, 1937.

¹ *Rawlinson MS.*, Poet. 84, fol. 105.

236.

OXFORD.

The Queen's College.

The author has not examined the bells of this college but is informed by Mr. L. H. Chambers that they are two in number, measuring $16\frac{1}{2}$ and $34\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter respectively.

The smaller is by Michael Darbie, and bears the inscription :

M D 1655

The larger was cast at the Gloucester foundry in the year in which Abraham Rudhall II succeeded his father. The bell is inscribed :

GOD PROSPER & PRESERVE THIS
PLACE A R (Bell.) 1718 (Ornamental
border.)

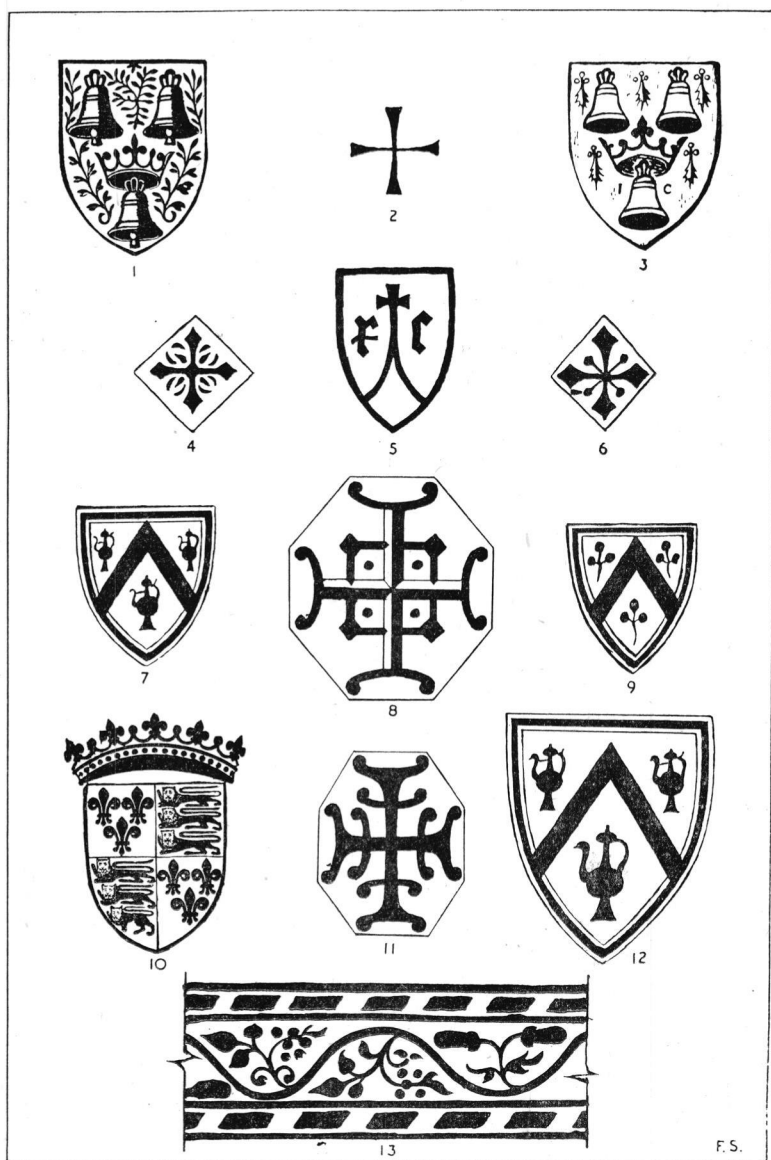
Visited : L.H.C., 7th March, 1937.

We are told by Dr. Magrath that a bell was bought for seven shillings in 1385-6, the old one having been sold for five ; and he gives the following extracts from the college accounts relating to the bell :¹

- "1385-6. pro campana empta Londonie vijs.
receptus pro antiqua campana vs.
- 1391-2. pro Wyres ad campanam jd.
- 1398-9. pro cordula campane empta in capella jd.
- 1400-1. pro corda ad campanam ijd.
- 1418-19. pro campana capelle xs. vijd.
pro j Claper eidem viijd.
servisio (beer) aptanti truncum pro campana capelle jd.
pro cariagio campane a Londonia viijd.
pro trunco facto capelle campane xxd.
- 1438-9. pro cordula campane ijd.
- 1439-40. pro tribus boltes de ferro pro campana iiijd.
pro emendatione campane iijs.
pro uno ligamento ferreo ad eandem campanam jd.
pro mutacione campane vjs.
- 1443-4. pro uno ferro campane iiijd.
- 1468-9. pro uno Wyer ad campanam in capella iijd.

From these extracts we learn that the bell was renewed in 1418-19 and rehung in 1439-40. The other items refer to repairs,

¹ J. R. Magrath, *The Queen's College*, Vol. I., 1921, p. 75.



Figs. S1—S13. Half-scale details of bellfounders' marks. S1 and S3, Norwich and Reading foundries. S2, Reading foundry. S4—S12, London medieval foundries. S13, Leicester foundry.

and to the provision of new ropes. The only items which require explanation are those referring to "wyres." These were the thin iron wires, or rods, by means of which a medieval clapper was bound to the splint.

237.

OXFORD.**St. Edmund Hall.**

One bell, 17 inches in diameter, hung for chiming in an aperture in the west gable above the library roof. The bell was probably cast at Burford by Edward Neale, and is inscribed with the date :

1658

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 16th June, 1951.

238.

OXFORD.**St. John's College.**

An enclosed central turret containing one "hemispherical bell," or gong, 32 inches in diameter, hung "dead", and sounded by means of chiming hammers. It bears the inscription :

CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS
LONDON 1910.

and replaces a bell of orthodox type.

Visited : J.R.C., F.S., 25th June, 1951.

239.

OXFORD.**Trinity College.**

An open turret above the hall roof contains one bell, 19 inches in diameter, hung for ringing with gear, type A. The bell was cast at the Gloucester foundry, and bears the inscription :

T : RUDHALL FOUNDER 1775 (*Fig.*
D8.) (*Bell.*) (*Fig. D8.*)

In an open turret above the roof of the chapel tower are three clock bells, 14½, 18 and 24 inches in diameter, hung "dead."

The two smallest bear no inscription : the largest is inscribed with the date :

1787

The three bells were probably cast at the Whitechapel foundry.

Visited : F.S., 4th June, 1951.

240.

OXFORD.

University College.

Above the roof of the chapel and hall are three bells. The hall bell, 12 inches in diameter, is of modern shape and bears no inscription or marks ; it is hung for chiming. The clock bell, $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, is hung "dead"; it also bears no inscription, but judged by its shape appears to date from the seventeenth century. The chapel bell, 15 inches in diameter, is hung for chiming ; it is the only bell in Oxford by a member of the Bagley family and was probably cast at Witney ; it is inscribed :

HENRY BAGLEY MADE ME 1738 :-:

Visited : H.B.W., 1923.

241.

OXFORD.

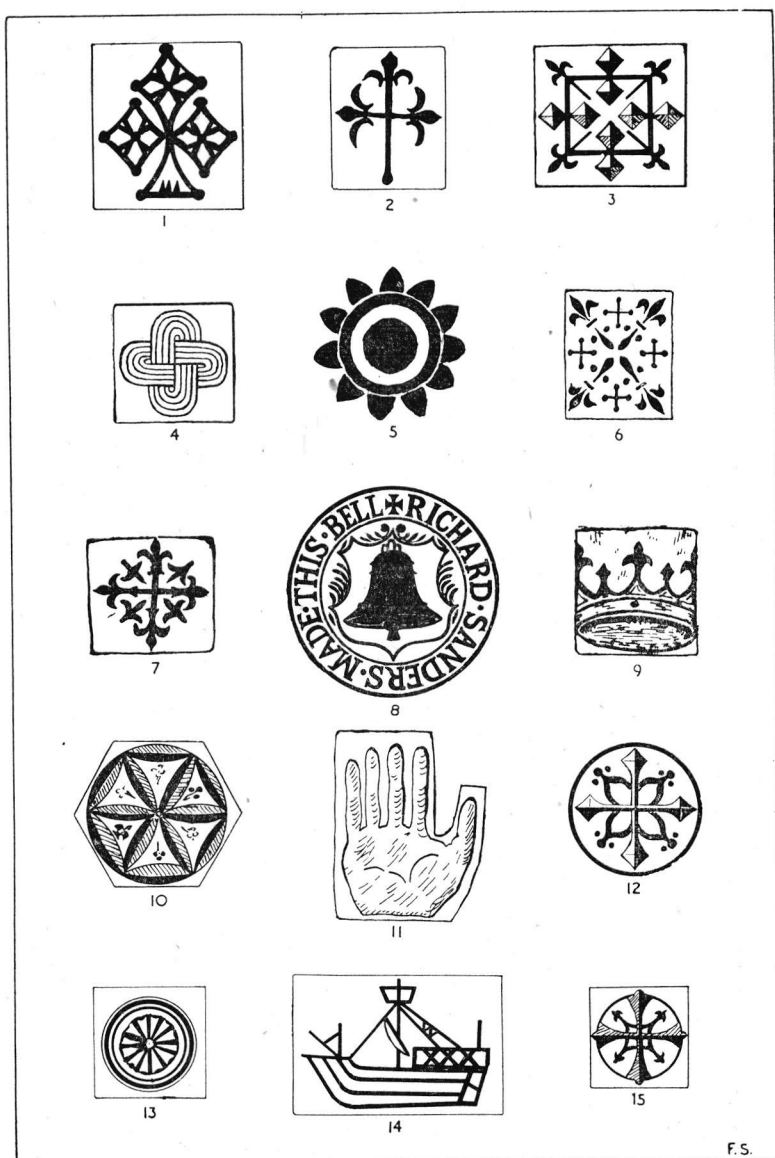
Wadham College.

An enclosed central turret containing one bell, 22 inches in diameter, hung for ringing. The bell was cast at the Whitechapel foundry and is inscribed :

ROBERT STAINBANK, FOUNDER,
LONDON. / B. P. SYMONS, D.D.,
WARDEN, / G. E. THORLEY, M.A.,
BURSAR. } 1868.

This is the only bell in Oxfordshire bearing the name of Robert Stainbank. The gear, type A, is by Alfred White.

Visited : F.S., 14th June, 1951.



Figs. T1—T15. Half-scale details of bellfounders' marks. T1, T3, T4, T6, T10—T15, Bristol medieval foundry. T2, T7 and T9, Gloucester medieval foundry. T5, Itinerant seventeenth century foundry. T8, Bromsgrove foundry.

242.

OXFORD.**Worcester College.**

An open turret above the gateway containing one bell, 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, hung for ringing. Below the shoulder of the bell are five narrow mouldings, and above its sound-bow is the inscription :

ROBERT WELLS ALDBOURN WILTS
FECIT 1790

followed by a border consisting of five sets of three stars set in the form of triangles. The gear, type C, is also by Wells and includes the earliest form of hoop gudgeon so far discovered.

Visited : F.S., 19th June, 1951.

243.

OXFORD.**The Clarendon Press.**

An open turret above the main gateway containing three bells, 18, 24 and 30 inches in diameter. The middle sized bell is hung for ringing with gear, type A ; the others are hung "dead"; all three are used as clock bells. They were cast at the Whitechapel foundry.

The two smallest are each inscribed with the date :

1837.

The largest bears the inscription :

THOMAS MEARS OF LONDON FOUNDER 1837.

Visited : 1st June, 1951.

244.

OXFORD.**Women's Colleges, Schools, and Roman Catholic Institutions.**

With one exception the bells in the numerous schools and those in women's colleges, and Roman Catholic institutions have not been examined. Most of these are under 16 inches in diameter, and are hung for chiming : the majority date from the latter half of the last century. The exception is St. Edward's School, the only school to possess bells hung for ringing.

245.

OXFORD.

St. Edward's School.

A south-western tower with spire contains five bells : the smallest of these is the saunce, which is hung for chiming ; the largest is hung "dead"; the remaining three are hung for ringing. The diameter of the tenor is 42 inches, and its strike-note is F natural.

<i>Bell.</i>	<i>Inscription.</i>	<i>Cwt.Qrs.Lbs.</i>
Treble.	JOHN TAYLOR & Co., FOUNDERS, LOUGHBOROUGH, 1879. / VENITE EXULTEMUS DOMINO.	4 2 6
Second.	JOHN TAYLOR & Co., FOUNDERS, LOUGHBOROUGH, 1879. / JUBILEMUS DEO SALUTARI NOSTRO.	4 3 22
Third.	JOHN TAYLOR & Co., FOUNDERS, LOUGHBOROUGH, 1879. / CUSTOS QUID DE NOCTE ? / CUSTOS QUID DE NOCTE?	6 1 15
Tenor.	JOHN TAYLOR & Co., FOUNDERS, LOUGHBOROUGH, 1879. / VENIT MANE ET NOX: CONVERTIMINI VENITE.	14 2 21

The saunce bears no inscription, but, like the others, was installed by Messrs. Taylor in 1879.

The writer has not seen these bells, and is greatly indebted to Mr. J. R. Chaundy, Mr. D. I. Gilbert-Davies, and Messrs. John Taylor and Co., for the foregoing details.

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