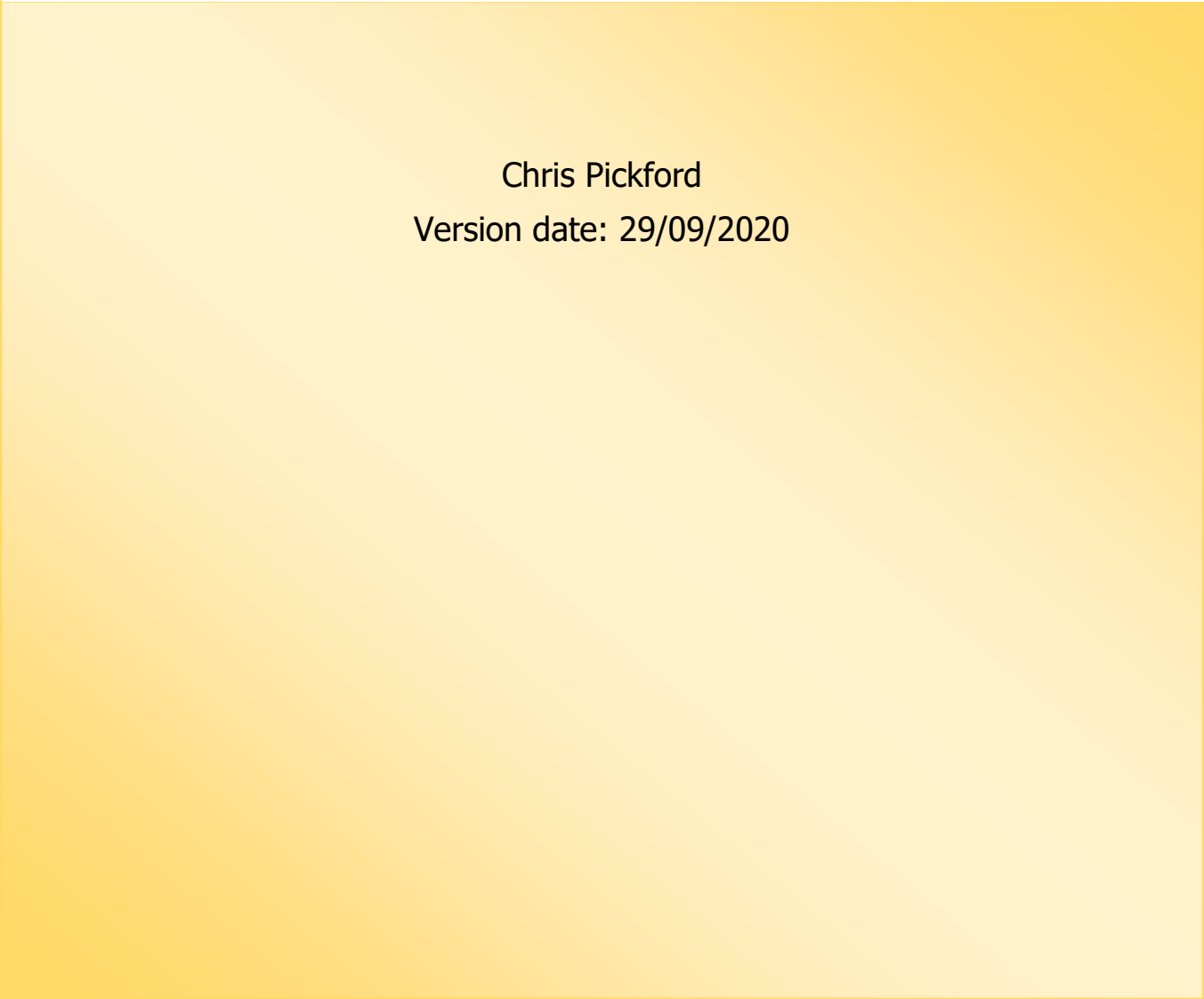




# **BIRMINGHAM: OUTSIDE THE CITY**

Chris Pickford

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# **WARWICKSHIRE BELLS WITHIN BIRMINGHAM DIOCESE (BUT OUTSIDE THE CITY)**

## ***INTRODUCTION***

This file gives details of the bells in churches and other buildings outside the City area but within the area of the Diocese of Birmingham. The entries have been extracted from the writer's previous "Warwickshire" manuscript (compiled in the mid-1980s) to give basic information on those places not currently included in the main "Birmingham" survey.

While some details are fully up-to-date, many of these notes require some updating and expansion because the main "Warwickshire" survey, although fully researched, still (September 2020) awaits writing up in full. Also, being "mirror entries" for those in the master file some in this version may not have been updated when changes were made to the main file.

The origins of this survey - commencing with my first Warwickshire belfry investigations in 1968 - are explained in the preface to the Birmingham section of the work.

In making this version available for the Guild to publish online I wish it to be clearly understood that I have no desire to be at all protective of this work. The information has only been collected and put together in this way in order to make the material accessible to all who have an interest in it. I am keen that it should be used and enjoyed, and I am happy for parts of it to be quoted or copied (preferably with acknowledgment) as seems helpful. I am happy for the sentiments in this paragraph to be liberally interpreted even though copyright law might restrict such uses if strictly applied.

However, users should please note:

1. This is still work in progress and so the content of my master copy - not synchronised with the online version - is frequently changing (with revisions to existing entries as well as new additions). So this version may not be entirely up to date.
2. While I can be cavalier about my own copyright in this work, I ought to point out that the copyright in some of the extensive quotations may belong to others. In any published use, care needs to be taken to ensure that third party copyright is not infringed.

Last, I would ask anyone with additional information, suggestions and corrections to let me know so I can make any necessary amendments

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## **GAZETTEER**

### **AMINGTON – St.Editha**

Amington was a mediaeval chapelry in the parish of Tamworth. Although the ancient chapel fell into disuse in the eighteenth century the remains of the building survived and were incorporated in a new church built in 1836. A drawing in the Aylesford collection shows the wall and double bellcote of the old chapel as they appeared in about 1820 and an engraving dated 1841 shows the new church with the old bellcote. The bellcote is depicted in both drawings as being without bells.

The present church was erected on an enlarged site at the sole cost of C.H.A. A'Court Repington Esq of Amington Hall, and it was consecrated on Tuesday 25th October 1864. The architect was G.E. Street, and the contractor was a Mr. Briggs of Birmingham. The church is built of rock-faced sandstone and it has a double bellcote of stone at the east end of the nave, over the chancel arch. There are two bells, both uninscribed and undated, of which full particulars are as follows:

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>lbs.</b>
1.	South aperture	2384	D + 25.37	14 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	0	1	26
2.	North aperture	2186	Db - 24.74	13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	0	2	15

These bells probably date from 1864. It will be noted that the larger bell is lighter and has the higher note. They have shallow moulding wires on the crown, soundbow and rim, with incised bands below the shoulder. Their canons and argents have been removed. The bells were not tuned when the restoration took place in 1973.

Since rehangng by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1973, the bells have been sounded by electrically operated solenoid clappers. They are hung from channel-section steel deadstocks secured to the sides of the bellcote with steel angle-plates. The restoration of the bells was paid for by George Nutt in memory of his wife, Emma E. Nutt, who died in 1968. Before 1973 the bells were hung for swing-chiming, and in 1979 the old fittings remained in the churchyard. They consisted of wooden headstocks, strap gudgeons, stock hoops and iron chiming levers.

Inside the church there is a disused bell from the village school, but which is said to have been cast for the previous church built in 1836. The bell is uninscribed. It has four plain canons and a lozenge on the argent. It is 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches in diameter and its note is approximately C sharp.

Visited by C.J.P., G.D.A., 21 July 1979 and C.J.P., 14 May 1986.

### **ATHERSTONE - Grendon Lodge**

Grendon Lodge is a substantial house on the north side of Watling Street at the western edge of the town. It was originally in Grendon parish but it is now in Atherstone. The house was built in 1828 for Mary Satterthwaite, and on the back of the building there is a rainwater head dated 1828 with the initials "M S".

To the rear of the house is a courtyard with stables and workshops. Over the eastern range is an enclosed turret containing a clock and bells. The clock itself is signed on the setting dial by James Wallis of Skinner Street, Bishopsgate, London and dated 1831. It is a three-train movement in a cast-iron four-poster frame, originally striking the hours and ding-dong quarters and showing the time on a single copper convex dial (3ft. 3in diameter). It has deadbeat escapement and maintaining power. It is currently disused and the quarter-striking train (along with its clock hammers) has been removed.

The bells hang in an enclosed turret above the clock. They are as follows:

#### ***Bell***

1. 1831

#### ***Inscription***

2. 1831
3. 1833

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Thomas Mears II, 1831	11	1:1-2:2:1	2839.5	F+28	0	1	5*
2.	Thomas Mears II, 1831	12 $\frac{1}{8}$	2:1-2:2:1	2625	E-7	0	1	20*
3.	Thomas Mears II, 1833	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	2:2-2:2:2	1877.5	Bb+11	1	1	0*

Although the bells bear no markings other than the dates, they are clearly the work of the Whitechapel Foundry where Thomas Mears II was the proprietor in 1831-3. The weights given (in cwt. qrs. lbs) above are approximate, and the values given for the nominals (in Hz and as variations from the notes in cents of a semitone) are tentative. There is no record of the actual weights and tonal analysis for bells of this size is difficult.

The two smaller bells each have an argent and single canons only. The hour bell has a full set of canons. All three have cast-in crown staples, but internal clappers have not been fitted. They hang from the beams within the turret. The argent and canons of the two smaller bells are tucked up into slots in a north-south beam and secured with pegs or bolts passing horizontally through the canon loops. The hour bell is hung to the east side of the beam carrying the others, to which it is partly secured by bolts through the canons and partly held from above. They bells were sounded by clock hammers fixed to a lower beam on the west side. Only one hammer remains, but the brackets for the others are still in place.

The two dates on the bells can probably be explained. It would seem that three bells were supplied with the clock in 1831, and the beam from which the two smaller bells are suspended has a further slot for another bell with the same type of canons. It rather looks as though the original bell was not thought large or powerful enough, and that a heavier replacement (which could not be hung in the original position of its predecessor because of its canons) was supplied in its stead.

Visited: C.J.P., 25 September 2009 (clock) and 19 August 2010 (bells) ; Thanks to Howard and Judy Vero

### **AUSTREY – St. Nicholas**

There was a church at Austrey by the twelfth century but the present building dates from later times. The west tower is of thirteenth-century date. It is in the Early English style and carries a fine broach spire of the same style and period. The rest of the church dates from a complete rebuilding in around 1330. The whole church underwent an extensive restoration under Ewan Christian in 1844-5.

The tower has a vestry on the ground floor with a fireplace in the north-east angle. The ringing room is on the first floor, with the clock in the chamber above - a false floor supported by a wooden framework secured to the walls of the ringing room - and the bell chamber at the level of the louvred belfry window openings. There is ladder access to all levels of the tower with the first ladder at ground level being accessible either through the west door or through a door in the western side of the vestry. These arrangements date from 1844-5, prior to which the ground floor of the tower was used as a wood and coal store and there was an external ladder on the south side giving access to the ringing room.

#### *The present bells*

The tower houses a ring of five bells in the key of F natural (698Hz or F minus 1 cent), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 41 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

**Bell****Inscription**

1. (*Brasyer shield*) GOD SAVE THE KING 1632  
*Waist:* RECAST A.D. 1911 / (*James Barwell's foundry mark*)
2. (*Brasyer shield*) WILLIAM (*acorn border*) CROSS (*border*) THOMAS (*border*)  
TAYLOR (*border*) ANNO (*border*) DM (*border*) 1632 (*border*)
3. RECAST AT GLOCESTER BY THO<sup>S</sup>: RUDHALL (*scroll border*) 1770 (*border*)
4. (*Brasyer shield*) IHS:NAZARENVS (*acorn border*) REX.IVDEORVM (*border*) FILI:DEI  
(*border*) MISERERE:MEI (*border*) 1632 (*border*)
5. (*Brasyer shield*) CVM . SONO . SI . NON . VIS (*acorn border*) VENIRE (*border*)  
NVNQVAM . AD . PRECES . (*border*) CVPIES . IRE : (*border*) 1632 (*border*) /  
(*arabesque border all round*)  
*Soundbow:* (*Two groups of three coins*)

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Mouldings	Hz	Cwt.	Qrs.	lbs.
1.	James Barwell, 1911	30 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	2:2-2:3:2	1065.5	5	0	0*
2.	Hugh Watts II, 1632	32 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1-3:3-3:3:2	931	6	0	0*
3.	Thomas Rudhall, 1770	34 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2:2-2:3:2	898.5	8	0	0*
4.	Hugh Watts II, 1632	38	1-3:3-3:3:2	784.5	10	0	0*
5.	Hugh Watts II, 1632	41 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1-3:3-3:3:2	698	13	0	0*

The inscription of the former treble of 1632 has been reproduced in modern lettering on the new bell of 1911. This bell was cast without canons and it was quarter turned in 1987. The four larger bells retain their canons, those on the third bell (although the single canons have been cut off and only the doubles remain) being cable patterned. The third bell has been quarter turned and the remainder one eight turned. The third and fourth bells have not been tuned, but the second has been chipped heavily inside the soundbow and the tenor has been slightly edged or skirted at the lip.

The oak bell frame is probably of the same date as the bells, i.e. 1632. The bells were originally hung on two levels, with the treble bell in a pit above the rest and in the base of the spire and the other four below (*Bellframes* layout 4.3). The upper frame remains *in situ* but empty. In 1911 the bells were rearranged so that both the treble and second bells could be accommodated in the transverse pit which formerly contained only the second bell. All five bells now hang on one level (*Bellframes* layout 5.1). The treble and second bells swing mouth-to-mouth on the east side of the tower with the three largest bells swinging east to west and side by side in three parallel pits to the west of them. The rope-circle is anti-clockwise. The frame consists of sills, braces, jack braces and long frame heads (*Bellframes* type 6.B) and the western ends of the pits of the three largest bells were originally open-ended. The sills are framed on a level. The upper tier is of similar type and construction. In 1911, the frame was strengthened by the addition of an iron head joining the western ends of the frame, and new wooden blocks were inserted in the timbers to carry the bearing blocks. In 2002 the frame was tie-rodged in stainless steel and a new support structure was added below the original foundation beams.

The fittings date from 1911 when the bells were rehung by James Barwell & Co. of Birmingham. They include elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, gunmetal bearings in cast iron housings with hinged lids, traditional type wheels, traditional type stays and sliders, and independent crown staples. Although the four largest bells retain their canons, they are hung by bolts through the crown.

*History*

In 1552 there were four bells here - "Alstreij iiiij<sup>or</sup> belles in the steple". Nothing is known of them or of any work done to them in the next eighty years, but in 1632 Hugh Watts II Leicester supplied a new ring of five bells. The present frame may well date from 1632 like the bells. Four of the Watts bells survived intact until the early twentieth century, but H.T.

Tilley noted in 1876 that the treble was cracked. It was recast in 1911. The actual inscription on the original bell (31" diameter) was:

(*Brasyer shield*) GOD (*acorn border*) SAVE (*border*) THE (*border*) KING (*border*) 1632  
(*border*)

The surviving Churchwardens' accounts commence in 1708 and run through in an unbroken series to 1952. While they contain no references to major work on the bells, there are some payments of interest:

1708	May ye 4th Spent of Chatborn when he came to measure ye 4th Bell wheel	6d.
17th.	Pd to Robert Erpe for carying ye 4th bell brasses to Sibson to be Cast by Tho Granger	6d.
	Spent on Granger when he brought ye Brasses	6d.
	P <sup>d</sup> to Walter Chadborn his bill for work done at ye 4th Bell	£1.15.0.
1715	Aprill ye 16th 1715. paid W <sup>m</sup> . Smith of this Town Blacksmith ye sum [blank] of ffor mending ye bells at severall times	4s.1d.
1748	Sep: 19. pd Tho <sup>s</sup> : Mould & william Mousley for takeing ye Little Bell out of ye Brasses & Cleaneing ye Brasses	1s.
1749	Dec <sup>r</sup> 16 paid Joshua poynton Lengthning ye fourth Bell Clapper	1s.6d.

The third bell was recast at Gloucester by Thomas Rudhall in 1770. The Rudhall catalogue of 1788 lists one bell supplied to "Austry" and the parish accounts for 1770-1 include the following references to the work:

	Paid a Part for New Bell	£5.5.0.
	Paid for Let <sup>r</sup> from Rudal the Bell Founder	5d.
	for Casting the Bell	£5.17.0.
	Carriage of Do	£1.9.4.
	for Gartering the Bell	1s.6d.
	Carriage of the Bell from Tamworth	2s.

The restoration of the church in 1844-5 improved access to the belfry as described above.

Taylors inspected the bells on 17 February 1909. They found the treble - which was hung above the rest in a separate frame - to be cracked in head. They considered that there would just be room for it and the second in the long pit in the lower frame. They also noted that all the bells had been reversed (i.e. quarter turned) except the recast third. They submitted an estimate for rehangng but Taylors did not get the job.

In the *Ringng World* of 14 April 1911 p.53 it was reported that Austrey tower and spire were to be repointed and that the old five bells were to be rehung - "Messrs. Barwell will do the rehangng and refitting of the bells". The present treble bell was cast by James Barwell and Co. of Birmingham in 1911 and the fittings also date from that time.

In 1987 Arthur Fidler of Bow (Devon) carried out an overhaul of the fittings, refurbishing the clappers, providing new bell bolts and quarter turning the treble. The gudgeons of the treble were also renewed and machined to match the existing brasses.

The spire was repaired in 1996 and in 2002 the timber bellframe was repaired by Sapcotes Ltd under the supervision of the church architect, Christopher Thomas. The frame was through-bolted in stainless steel tie-rods and a new structural support frame was inserted beneath the foundation beams to distribute the dynamic loads to all walls of the tower.

### *Ringng*

On the north wall of the ringng room there are substantial remains of old ringngers' rules painted on the plaster. These are in black-letter within a coloured border, the words "you begin a bell for ... / ... spurs, & girdles you ..." being clearly legible on the first two lines.

These rules, which must date from the early seventeenth century, are partially concealed by the woodwork supporting the false ceiling of the ringing room.

Like most parishes with bells, Austrey has a long tradition of ringing but it is of above average interest and significance since there is definite evidence that method ringing (charge-ringing) was practiced here. From entries in the Churchwardens' accounts for the years 1741-3 it would seem that change ringing was introduced and first practiced in Austrey at about that date. Payments for "oyl for the Change Ringers" in 1741-3 and "oyl for the Changers at severall times" in 1744 suggest that method ringing was something of a novelty.

There is a further set of ringers' rules, dated 1780, on a painted board in the tower. These appear to be a later copy of the earlier ones. The full text is as follows:

Before you begin, a bell for to sway / Hatts spurs and girdles, you must lay  
away, / And he that doth, a bell overthrow, / Must pay a groat, before he doth  
go; / He that will not, these orders obey, / Bare-headed must go, or 4 pence  
shall pay. / Thomas Smith Scripsit Aged 9 Years J780

Lastly, there is a report from *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* of Monday 27 January 1783 which confirms that the village had a change-ringing team at that time and included a blind ringer in the band:

On Monday the 14th Inst. Robert Wright, of Austrey, in this County (commonly called by the Name of Blind Bob) who goes about playing on the Violin, for a Livelihood, and never rang a Bell before he was deprived of Sight, strange as it may appear, rang the Treble Bell through a Five Bell Peal of Changes, on the Musical Bells of that Place, the second Time of Trial, to the great Astonishment of the Standers by; and what is still more remarkable, he hath since rung on the same Bells sundry Kinds of different Peals of Changes, in the greatest Regularity and Order.

The accounts for the period also contain references to this blind ringer and musician. In 1781 there is a payment to "Blind Robin", and in 1783 sums paid to "Bob Wright" and "Bob Wright" appear alongside the charges for the ringers and for reeds for the instruments. In 1782 Bob Wright was paid 5s for violin strings, followed by 5s in 1783-4 to "Blind Bob for playing musick" and 5s in 1784-5 "To Blind Bob for Fiddle Strings". Blind Bob is mentioned again in 1786-7 and thereafter appears in the accounts for some years under his full name, e.g. "Pd. Robt. Wright for Playing" in 1797-8.

Research in the parish registers suggests that Robert Wright was born in about 1756. He was married at Austrey to Ann Clarke on 4 April 1785. She died some 26 years later, and the register for 27 October 1811 records the burial of "Ann the wife of Robert Wright who is blind". Robert survived her by over 20 years, dying in November 1833 at the age of 77.

### *The clock*

There has been a clock at Austrey since at least the early eighteenth century, as shown by entries in the accounts from 1708 when the churchwardens spent 6s. "For Oyl for ye Clock & Chimes". This shows that there were chimes too - probably a tune-playing chime barrel and not just clock chimes. The payments include:

1715	May ye 21st pd. Joseph Baker off Appleby for mending and cleaning ye clock and Chimes	9s.
1750	The chimes went to Appleby and. were repaired by Joseph Baker for the sum of	£7.2.0.
1768	Paid John Lakin for Repairing the Chimes	£4.18.0.
	Paid Robert Wright for Do & other work	£4.17.10½.
1778-9		Recd. For old chime hammers £0.3.8½.
1813	Paid Henry Baker for a New Slate Stone Dial and new Dial Works	£30.11.0.
	Paid Henry Baker for repairing & cleaning the clock &c 4 years	£6.15.6.

The records also include a Vestry agreement for payments to be made to the parish clerk for maintenance of the church clock and bells in 1787. The clerk received a shilling a year for "drawing up [and] Cleaning the Church Clock and finding Oil for the said Clock and keeping it in repair" and "oil whatever is necessary for the Bells".

The present clock was put up as a War memorial in 1923, as commemorated on a tablet in the church. It was made by John Smith & Sons of Derby. It is a two-train movement on a flatbed frame with pinwheel escapement and hour-strike. It shows the time on a slate dial (5ft diameter) with gilded Roman numerals – probably the one supplied by Henry Baker in 1813 -on the south side of the tower.

Visited C.J.P., 7th July 1974, 7 January 1989 and 14 May 2009

### **BADDESLEY CLINTON – St Michael**

The church here originated as a chapelry of Hampton in Arden, in existence by 1217. The first known rector was appointed in 1305. The oldest parts of the present fabric are the lower parts of the nave walls, probably of C13 date. The church was greatly altered in the time of Henry VII by Nicholas Brome, who died in 1517. He added the tower and clerestory, probably between 1496 and 1509. The chancel was rebuilt and enlarged in 1634. The church was restored by Payne & Talbot in 1874 at the expense of Lady Chatterton.

The west tower, which is strikingly similar to that at nearby Packwood, also funded by Brome at about the same time, is in three stages with projecting SE stair turret and embattled parapet. An inscription on the south wall in the base of the tower records that the steeple was built "in the reign of King Henry the Seaventh". Access to the bells is by spiral stair. There is an intermediate chamber below the bells, which are at the level of the belfry window openings.

#### ***The present bells***

The tower houses a chime of three bells in the key of D flat (1123.5Hz of Db plus 22 cents)

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Inscription</i></b>
--------------------	---------------------------

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | Sancte Nicholae Ora ( <i>shield</i> ) Pro W Nbis H  |
| 2. | HENRY ( <i>double fleur de lis border</i> ) BAGLEY ( <i>border</i> ) MADE ( <i>border</i> ) MEE ( <i>border</i> )<br>1678 ( <i>border</i> ) |
| 3. | S T O M A ( <i>shield with the initials T N</i> )   |

<b>Bell</b>	<b><i>Founder and date</i></b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	William Hasylywood, c.1500	25 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3:2-3:3:2	1407	F+12	3	2	0*
2.	Henry Bagley, 1678	27 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3:2-3:3:2	1238.5	Eb-8	4	0	0*
3.	Thomas Newcombe, c.1580	30	3:3-3:3:3	1123.5	Db+22	5	0	0*

The treble bears the initials of its founder, William Hasylywood, who operated a bell foundry in Reading from 1494 until his death in 1508. It is a good casting, inscribed in Gothic capitals with black-letter smalls. The inscription contains three errors, the founder omitting the 'n' from Sancte, the 'o' from Nobis, and placing a word between the initials W H. The second bell was cast in 1678 by Henry Bagley I of Chacombe, and bears an ornamental border, which is made up from two continuous bands of fleur de lis border. It is clear that when the mould was made, a band of this border was impressed first and then the lettering set in into it afterwards. The tenor bell bears the usual Newcombe gothic lettering the TN mark. All three bells retain their canons, those of the second being patterned. They have



been quarter turned in relation to the stocks and hammers. The strike note of the treble has been deepened by chip tuning. The two larger bells are maidens.

The bells hang in an oak bell frame with north-south parallel pits for three bells (*Bellframes* layout 3.1), the treble in the eastern pit and the tenor on the west. There are four trusses of two different types. The two inner trusses are constructed of sills, main braces, jack braces and long frame heads (*Bellframes* type 6.B), and the two outer trusses consist of sills, main braces, end-posts and long frame heads (type 6.A). The construction of this frame suggests that it was installed in the seventeenth century, but it includes quite a lot of material from an earlier frame. These include curved braces with transom slots re-used as braces in the north and south sections and at least one of the end-posts is a reused king-post. This suggests a former type 3.C frame, perhaps of c.1500

The bells are hung 'dead' for chiming with elm dead stocks fixed to the frame heads. They are sounded by means of an Ellacombe chiming manual on the south wall of the base of the tower. The chiming manual and fittings are by Mears & Stainbank, 1938.

### **History**

There is some evidence that the church here possessed bells before the erection of the present tower. Writing in the early C17th, the antiquary Henry Ferrers of Baddesley Hall (b.1549-d.1633) noted that the bells were previously "hanged in a turret". As noted above, the treble bell was cast by William Hasywood of Reading in about 1500. It may well be one of the original bells installed by Brome when the new tower was first built. Timbers from the contemporary bellframe remain too, incorporated in the present frame.

In 1552 there were three bells here – "Baddesley Clynton iij belles, a handbell and a sacring bell". One of these was the present treble. The other bells have since been recast, the tenor by Thomas Newcombe of Leicester in about 1580 and the second by Henry Bagley of Chacombe in 1678. At some stage in the mid C17 the old bellframe was reconstructed in its present form. The bells were hung for full-circle ringing until the early C20th.

In 1938, the bells were rehung for chiming by Mears & Stainbank of Whitechapel, London. The firm's daybook of 28 September 1938 given the following summary of the work:

New fittings for the 3 Bells:- Headstocks & supporting ironwork. Chiming hammers, fitted in iron stanchions, pulleys and ropes. Chiming bracket.  
Dress all timbers with 10 gallons of Kendall's solution. Fitting all & leave ready for use. All charges. £49.14.0

The only further change since 1938 has been the installation of a boarded platform over the bells. The boards have been laid on top of the frame, making it difficult to access all areas of the belfry. However, the flooring in the pits of the bells is incomplete and so it is possible (with short ladders) to access the bells from below.

**Visited:** C.J.P., 11 February 1976 and 20 July 2011; Christopher Dalton and Dr. John Eisel, 29 March 2000

### **BADDESLEY CLINTON – Hall**

There are bells on the house here – a fine moated manor house with parts dating back to about 1300 – and in the stables. The present stables were built for Edward Ferrers (1678-1729) whose "account of what I have built and altered in and about Baddesley house" states that "The Coach Stable and Coach Houses" were erected in 1714 at a cost of £76.17.6. The accounts also show that Ferrers spent £19.4.0 on "The Clock, Bell, Fan Dyal Board etc".

The weather-boarded clock turret on the stables contains a clock and bell. The bell is inscribed:

**Bell****Inscription**

1. + EDWARD (*coin*) FERIS (*coin*) ESQ<sup>R</sup> (*coin*) 1714 (*floral border*) (*coin*) / (*small scroll border all round*)

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Mouldings	Hz	Note	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	Joseph Smith, 1714	17 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	2:2-2:3:2	1916.5	Bb+47	1	1	0*

The lettering and ornamental borders are those used by Joseph Smith, of Edgbaston, who doubtless cast the bell for Edward Ferrers in 1714. It is an excellent casting of good tone. The bell is now sounded only by a clock hammer, but it retains some of its earlier fittings for swing chiming. It hangs by its canons from an elm headstock, and it has drive-in gudgeons and stock hoops. There is no clapper.

The clock mechanism appears to be of early eighteenth century date, and it is probably coeval with the existing stable block of 1714. The clock has an upright wrought iron frame with independent going train and strike train. The hour strike mechanism is driven by the lower winding barrel and has a locking plate on the outside of the frame opposite the winder. The going train drives a minute hand on the dial overlooking the main drive. It is a four-wheel train with anchor escapement, and the pendulum is hung from the top of the frame and swings at right angles to the body of the clock.

There is another bell on the roof of the main house behind the large chimney stack to the right of the main public entrance on the east wing. Its rope hangs behind the door of one of the ground floor rooms in that part of the house. The bell is small, cast with canons, and it is hung dead and clocked. Close inspection has not been possible but the administrator – who saw it during roof repairs in 1980 – does not remember seeing any inscription on it.

There is also a small bell under a wood canopy in the south east corner of the courtyard. This bell is a brass foundry type casting, of about 8 inches in diameter, and it is probably of nineteenth century date.

Tilley and Walters noted a small chapel bell here, described in *The Church bells of Warwickshire* p. 106 as 'of foreign workmanship' and dated 1545. It bears the inscription in plain Roman letters: "+ IHESVS ES MINEN NAEM" at the top, with a further inscription on the rim in Gothic capitals "IC BEN GHEGTEN INT IAER MDXLV". This is a small table bell handbell used in the chapel, which was set aside and furnished for Roman Catholic services in 1875. It is five inches high, including the handle of angels linking arms. Assuming it is genuine – replicas of such bells are in fairly widespread circulation – then it was probably cast in Mechlen (or Malines) in Belgium.

Inventories of 1730 and 1760 list the contents of the house and outbuildings in detail. The later inventory, drawn up on 12 October 1760 following the death of Thomas Ferrers, lists a number of bells in and around the house, including:

- In the Room over the Coach Stable ... The Stable Clock Bell and Waite [no value]
- In the Kitchen ... One Bell Mettle Morter and Iron Pestell 15s
- In the Brew House ... One Bell Mettle Pot One Old Iron Boiler and One Suff Grate £1
- In the Servants Hall ... One Bell and two Punch Bowles £1.5.0
- In the Little Parlour ... One bell and hangings for it 15s
- In the Great Hall ... One Eight Day Clock and Case and Bust £5.5.0
- In the Great Parlour ... One bell and hangings for it £1
- In the Landry (*sic*) ... One old Fire Shovel Tonges and fender and One old Crack'd Bell 5s".

**Visited:** C.J.P. and Rosemary Money, 5 September 1980, C.J.P and Heather Pickford, 20 July 2011: Thanks to T.W. Ferrers-Walker Esq (1980) and Mr. W.R. McLeod, administrator (1980)

## **BADDESLEY CLINTON – St.Francis of Assisi (R.C.) and the Poor Clares Convent**

The Ferrers family of Baddesley Clinton Hall adhered to the 'old faith' after the Reformation, and so there is a long tradition of Roman Catholic worship in the parish. With the relaxation of the laws restricting Catholicism in the later C18th it was natural that Baddesley should become a focus for Catholic institutions and worship. A Franciscan Academy moved to Baddesley Green from Birmingham in 1785 and the first buildings on the present site were erected in 1793. A chapel followed in 1800 and in 1850 the Poor Clares arrived here from Belgium.

The present buildings, including the church, school, presbytery and convent, date mainly from 1870. The rebuilding was made possible by a substantial donation from the Clifford family of Chudleigh in Devon, two of whom are commemorated in stained glass windows in the church. The architect for the whole complex was Benjamin Bucknall, then of Swansea, and the builder was John Hall Clark of Warwick. The church was opened and dedicated on the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, 4 October 1870, but not consecrated until 5 September 1894.

The church is a plain brick building in the French Gothic style with an open wooden bellcote or turret over the entrance front. This turret is hexagonal and has a low cap covered in slate tiles. The present cap replaces a much taller spire which (some 40 feet high) with an ornamental wrought iron cross on top. Since the closure of the convent in 2011 the former convent chapel has become part of the church. It has an open bellcote of stone on the end gable.

There are thus two bells, one for the church and one for the convent. Both are inaccessible without long ladders or scaffolding but full examination was made possible when repair and maintenance work was carried out in 2019 (on the convent turret) and in 2020 (at the church).

The church bell is hung for ringing within a light wooden framework inside the turret. The frame has sills, long heads and pairs of parallel braces with horizontal struts between the middle braces. The frame was renewed after the pattern of a previous one by local joiner John O'Reilly in about 2008-10. The fittings include a wooden stock, strap gudgeons, square stock hoops, plain bearings, clapper, wheel and metal stay and latchet slider. The bell bears the following inscription:

+ Ave Maria gratia plena + Ave Maria gratia plena +  
*Soundbow (above three wires):* MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON, 1870

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Weight</b>
1.	Mears & Stainbank, 1870	20"	2:2-2:3:2	1910.5	Bb+42	2-0-0*

It has canons and it has not been quarter turned. The main inscription is in neat Victorian Gothic lettering and the makers' signature is in standard Whitechapel Roman type.

The convent bell hangs from an iron bar stock with wall-mounted bearings, iron wheel and clapper. It has a Carr-type argent (a particular form associated with the Woodlands foundry at Smethwick) with a square hole for the stock. The inscription reads:

*Waist:* MARIA STELLA / MATUTINA / "CHARLES CARR" MADE ME 1894

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Charles Carr, 1894	18"	1:2-2:3:2	2076.5	C-13	1	2	0*

The bell was evidently supplied at about the time of the consecration in 1894.

On the nearby school building (now the parish hall) there is a small bell of about 10" diameter in an iron bracket mounted on the wall. This is without inscription, but it has a Carr-type argent and the form of the bracket resembles those illustrated in Carr's catalogues of the period.

**Visited:** C.J.P. (binoculars), 5 September 1980, 12 October 1985, 20 July 2011, 9 August 2011 (telescope), 26 June 2019 (scaffolding to convent turret) and 10 July 2020 (scaffolding to church turret); Thanks to Fr. John Sharp, 2014 and 2019-20 and Nigel Hogg (2020)

### **BADDESLEY ENSOR – Church**

There has been a church at Baddesley Ensor since the twelfth century. The Norman church survived until 1845 and its graveyard remains. The building was demolished at the time of the erection of the new church, but fragments of its Norman stonework are preserved – some in Baddesley and a doorway re-erected at the back of Atherstone church. This was a simple structure with an enclosed bell turret over the roof of the nave towards the back of the church. A drawing of c.1820 in the Aylesford Collection shows the turret with brick infill to the timber framing, a tiled pyramid roof and a weathercock.

The present church was built to the designs of Henry Clutton, architect, in 1845-6 and erected at the expense of W.S. Dugdale of Merevale Hall. The faculty authorising the scheme was granted on 19 September 1845 and the completed church was consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester on 1 September 1846. It has a short tower and spire over the south transept or vestry, with spiral stair access in the north-west corner. The stair is unusual in that it also gives access to the pulpit. The first stage only goes to the clock room from where a separate stair in the same angle of the tower continues up to the bells.

#### ***The present bells***

The tower contains two bells, which are both hung for ringing. Details are as follows:

- | Bell | Inscription  |
|------|--|
| 1.   | RICE ( <i>coin</i> ) GOODE ( <i>coin</i> ) CHVRCH ( <i>coin</i> ) WARDING ( <i>coin</i> ) 1706 ( <i>coin</i> ) ( <i>arabesque border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> ) |
| 2.   | C AND G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1846   |

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Mouldings	Hz	Note	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	Joseph Smith, 1706	22 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub>	3:2-3:3:2	1020.5	C-43	2	2	0*
2.	C & G Mears, 1846	44 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2:2-3:3:2	682.5	F-40	14	2	11

The smaller bell was cast by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston in 1706, and it was the only bell at the old church which was replaced by the present building in 1846. It retains its canons and has not been quarter turned, but it is badly damaged - a large piece of metal having broken off at the soundbow.

The larger bell swings north to south in an oak bell frame in the centre of the tower (*Bellframes* type 6.B with X-bracing in the ends). This was supplied in 1846 by C. and G. Mears of Whitechapel who also supplied the fittings the bell. These consist of an elm headstock, strap gudgeons, stock hoops, plain brass bearings, traditional type wheel and a traditional type stay and slider. The smaller bell is hung to the west of the larger bell, and it swings between the western head of the frame already described, and an independent frame section parallel with the west wall of the tower. This additional frame section was probably added by a local contractor, and it consists of sill and frame head with two sets of main braces. This bell is fitted with an elm headstock, drive-in gudgeons, stock hoops, plain bearings, bell wheel, and traditional type stay and slider, and it has a clapper with an exceptionally long flight. These fittings probably date from the eighteenth century.

The daybooks of the Whitechapel foundry contain an entry relating to the bell, frame and fittings supplied in 1846. This reads as follows:

6 August 1846 – Baddesley, the New Church	
Per Mr. Dugdale, ordered by Mr. Clutton	
To a Bell 14-2-11 @ £6	£87.11.9.
Clapper	£1.0.0.
Stock, Wheel, Ironwork, Brasses &c	£7.10.0.
Oak frame & fixing	<u>£10.18.0.</u>
	total £106.19.9.

The bells have been disused for some decades, the smaller one being broken and it being thought inadvisable to use the larger bell. A system for broadcasting recorded bells was in use in 1979, and this has recently (2009) been updated and modernised.

Smith of Derby supplied a new church **clock** in 1920. It is a flatbed movement with a pinwheel escapement and maintaining power. It strikes the hours on the larger bell and shows the time on a 5ft skeleton dial on the south face of the tower. The erection of the clock as a Great War memorial is recorded on a stone tablet on the outside of the tower:

+ TO THE GLORY OF GOD + / AND IN MEMORY OF THE MEN / OF BADDESLEY  
ENSOR WHO FELL IN / THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918. / THE CLOCK IN THIS  
TOWER / AND THE OBELISK ON THE COMMON / WERE ERECTED BY THE  
PARISHIONERS. / + "THEY DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE". +

Visited C.J.P., G.D.A., 21 July 1979 and C.J.P. 25 September 2009; Thanks to Cllr Ray Sweet (Churchwarden)

### **BALSALL COMMON – St. Peter**

This church was built as a Chapel of Ease in the parish of Temple Balsall, and the first services were held in the 'Balsall Street Chapel', as it was known, after the building was licensed for worship on 20 March 1871. The church was dedicated to St. Peter in 1911. Balsall Common became a conventional district in 1913, and acquired parochial status in 1959 but owing to a legal technicality St. Peter's did not become a parish church until 1990.

The church remains largely as it was built in 1871. It has a weather-boarded timber turret and spire let over the west end of the nave, but the single bell actually hangs in an aperture in the west wall of the church and not, as one might expect, in the turret. The bell bears no inscription, date or marks, but it is a brass foundry casting with six plain canons. It probably dates from 1871. It is 17¼ inches in diameter, and its note is B natural.

The bell is hung for ringing, and it is fitted with a wood headstock, strap gudgeons, stock hoops, plain brass bearings, wheel, iron spur stay and metal door-bolt type slider, ground pulley, and a hook-over clapper. The wooden framework is constructed within the aperture containing the bell. Like the bell itself, the frame and fittings probably date from 1871.

Visited C.J.P., R.M., (binoculars) 15 August 1980, and C.J.P. (ladder) 26 October 1985.

### **BARSTON – St. Swithin**

Barston was originally a chapelry of Berkswell and remained so until a separate ecclesiastical parish and benefice was created in 1893. It had an ancient chapel – from which four of the existing bells originated – but this was rebuilt in 1721-6 after its roof fell in. The present church is essentially a Georgian building consisting of chancel, nave and west tower in brick with stone quoins. The tablet over the west door (now badly eroded) was originally inscribed "This church nearly destroyed was rebuilt by the generous help of this county AD 1721. Thomas Fisher", part of the money having been raised by charitable brief.

The church was restored in 1899-1900 by E.H. Lingen Barker, but the tower belongs wholly to the 1721-6 rebuild and it is the part of the Georgian church that remains least altered. It has a ground floor ringing room, a clock room on the first floor and a bell chamber above. Access to the upper levels is by spiral stair in a brick column in the north east corner.

### ***The present bells***

The church has a ring of six bells in the key of C natural (1068Hz or C plus 35.2 cents)

- | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | 310 / * JOHN TAYLOR & CO. * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 1960<br><i>Waist:</i> PETER DAWSON, VICAR / GEORGE CLIVE JACKSON } / PERCY FINDON }<br>CHURCHWARDENS  |
| 2.          | ABRAHAM FISHER GAVE MEE WILLIAM BAGLY MADE MEE 1691 ( <i>border</i> )   |
| 3.          | MATHEW ( <i>border</i> ) BAGLY ( <i>border</i> ) AND ( <i>border</i> ) WILLIAM ( <i>border</i> ) BAGLEY ( <i>border</i> )<br>MADE ( <i>border</i> ) MEE 1689 ( <i>border</i> )  |
| 4.          | <i>No inscription</i>   |
| 5.          | ( <i>Coin</i> ) ( <i>floral border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> ) M <sup>R</sup> ( <i>coin</i> ) ROBERT ( <i>coin</i> ) BOYSE ( <i>coin</i> ) MINESTER ( <i>coin</i> )<br>1728 / ( <i>floral border all round</i> )  |
| 6.          | MATTHEW ( <i>border</i> ) BAGLEY ( <i>border</i> ) MADE MEE WILLIAM ( <i>border</i> ) SHACTHWALL<br>( <i>floral border</i> ) AND ( <i>border</i> ) IOHN ( <i>border</i> ) EATON ( <i>border</i> ) C W ( <i>stop</i> ) / 1683<br><i>On soundbow: Impressions of four coins, arranged 0 / 0 0 0</i> |

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Mouldings	Hz	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1960	21½	2:2-2:3:2	1793	2	1	22
2.	William Bagley, 1691	22¾	1-2:2-2:3:2	1596	2	2	7
3.	Matthew and William Bagley, 1689	24	2:1-3:3:2	1422	2	3	24
4.	Unknown	24	<i>See text</i>	1345	2	2	23
5.	Joseph Smith, 1728	27⅞	2:2-2:3:2	1197	3	3	24
6.	Matthew Bagley, 1683	30½	3:3-3:3:2	1068	5	2	3

The oldest of these bells is the present fourth bell which, though uninscribed, can be dated to the fourteenth century on the basis of its shape and mouldings. It is almost certainly one of the three bells – “*ij belles*” – listed at “*Barston chappell*” in 1552. It has a diameter of 24 inches, and its other measurements are as follows: Shoulder circumference, 44 inches; Lip to shoulder tangent, 17½ inches; Height to top of argot, c.25½ inches. It has three moulding wires on the crown, two flat moulding wires above and below the inscription band and a thick, flat wire in the inscription band, one wire each side of a raised band on the sound bow, and two moulding wires at the lip (the lower one flat). The bell retains its canons, though one of the single canons is missing, and it has been one eighth turned.

Of the other bells, the second, third and tenor were cast at Chacombe in 1691, 1689 and 1683 respectively. Their founders were William Bagley, Matthew and William Bagley and Matthew Bagley. The fifth bell was cast by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston in 1728, and the treble bell was cast at Loughborough by John Taylor & Co. in 1960. The treble bell was cast without canons and has not been turned. The other bells retain their canons and have been quarter turned. The canons of the three Bagley bells are all patterned.

When H.B. Walters visited Barston in 1907, there were only five bells, but he recorded that there were pits for six bells in the bell frame. From the Churchwardens accounts we learn that the present bell frame was supplied in 1856-6 by Charles Hope, a builder from Berkswell, who was paid £31 on 5 January 1856 “for new framing the Bells”. Hope’s own account book gives further details of the work:

Contract to Bells at Barston Church	
1855 Sep 10 Contract timber and Workmanship	£ 24 17s. 6d.
10 Wrought Judgeons & 10 Brass bareings	£ 3 6s. 4d.
4 Oak Beds to Bells	12 0d.

[2 New Weels - <i>crossed out</i> ] 8 Feet In ½ Oak to weels	5s. 4d.
7 Days Making Weels	8s. 0d.
[7 - <i>crossed out</i> ] 8 Days making New Clappers & rebedding bells	£ 1 18s. 0d.
Ash to Clapers	<u>2s. 6d.</u>
	(Total) £31 19s. 2d.

The frame is of standard construction (*Bellframes* type 6.A) but on an unusual plan. It is arranged in the manner of a traditional type four bell frame around a central well hole, except that the second and third bells swing mouth to mouth in one quarter of the frame and a single frame head has been inserted in the 'well' for the treble bell.

The treble bell is fitted with a cast iron headstock, fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type stay and slider and a traditional type wheel, all supplied by John Taylor & Co. in 1960. At the same time they renewed the gear of the other bells, but followed the pattern of their former gear. The five largest bells are fitted with elm headstocks, traditional type wheels, self-aligning ball bearings, and traditional type stays and sliders. The gudgeons of the second, third and fourth bells are of the 'strap' type, and the two largest bells have plate gudgeons. The bells were rededicated on 13 June 1960.

### **History**

As already noted, there were three bells here in 1552. The number was later increased to five – probably by 1691. As the church accounts refer to both the great bell (i.e. tenor) and the fourth bell in 1707-8, it is evident that the present fifth – dated 1728 – was a recast of an older bell and not a new one. The earlier accounts are incomplete and there is no mention of either the work on the bells at the time the church was rebuilt in 1721-6 or the recasting in 1728. Minor repairs to the fittings are mentioned, though, including new brasses or bearings supplied for the tenor in 1799 by Richard Pennell of Birmingham.

There is a **clock**. The present clock shows the time on a flat metal dial on the north face of the tower. The original mechanical movement has been replaced, and the hands are now operated by a Smith of Derby synchronous unit (no.24174) of 1983 with a later auto-re-start system. The hour strike mechanism, also by Smith, is dated 1973. The clock mechanisms are housed in a wooden case on the south side of the clock chamber. The parish records seem to indicate that the clock was first installed in 1865, from which date an additional allowance of ten shillings was paid to the parish clerk for clock winding. It may have been supplied by William Leeson of Coleshill who was paid for cleaning and repairs from 1865 until at least 1903 (later as Leeson & Son).

**Visited:** C.J.P., 19 July 1975; CJP and Heather Pickford, 22 October 2010: Thanks to Gordon O'Connor

### **BAXTERLEY – Dedication Unknown**

The western tower of this church houses a single bell which is hung for ringing, the diameter of which is 25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches. The bell sounds the note E natural.

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1.      W. BLEWS AND SONS BIRMINGHAM 1875

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	William Blews, 1875	25 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	E	3 ½	2	0*

This bell was cast by William Blews and Sons of Birmingham in 1875, and it is inscribed in the gothic lettering usually associated with the work of the foundry. It retains its canons and has not been quarter turned. Until 1875, the tower contained two bells of which the smaller was cast by Robert Newcombe of Leicester in 1586, and the larger was a mediaeval bell which was probably cast at Warwick in the mid fourteenth century. The letter of the

larger bell was of the same type as that on the bell at Wyken, though the initial cross is not known to have been used elsewhere.

The bell hangs in the lower tier of a two-tier wooden bell frame which was installed by William Blews and Sons in 1875. The lower tier is constructed of sills, main braces, long frame heads and corner posts, and the upper tier is built on the frame heads of the lower frame. It consists of tall main braces and long frame heads and is secured at the outer ends with iron cross pieces. The upper tier has never been occupied. The bell is fitted with an elm headstock, strap gudgeons, nuted stock hoops, plain brass bearings, traditional type wheel and a traditional type stay and slider. These fittings were supplied by Blews in 1875.

Visited C.J.P., 19 November 1977.

### **BENTLEY HEATH – St.James, Widney Road, Dorridge**

Bentley Heath is now part of Dorridge, but when the church and school were first built in 1869-70 it was an outlying area of the vast parish of Solihull. The development was made possible by a bequest from George Homer of Solihull who died in November 1867 leaving funds to endow a church and school at Bentley Heath. Arrangements for the buildings were finalised in May 1869. The church was licensed for worship on 11 June 1869 and the school opened on 25th April in the following year.

Erected as a dual-purpose building, the church school was designed by a Mr. Watson, architect, and built by Mr. Skinner whose tender was for £445.10.0. It is a low building in the Victorian Gothic style with polychromatic brickwork. It may have had a bell and bell turret. The building still stands, but since the relocation of the school to new buildings in Widney Close the old premises have been converted to houses.

It was a mission church of Solihull until it was transferred to Dorridge in 1940. The original church remained in use in shared accommodation until 1975. A new school was built nearby in 1978, and in 1982 the church reopened, again within the Bentley Heath Church of England Primary School. Later, in 1999-2000, the church facilities at the school were improved with the construction of a new hall used as a worship area dedicated on 2 May 2000. The end of the building is of red brick with a Cotswold stone cross set in the outer wall and the building is signed as "St.James ... the church in the school". There is no bell or belfry.

Visited: C.J.P. 17 August 2010

### **BENTLEY – St. John**

Bentley was a Mediaeval Chapelry in a detached portion of the parish of Shustoke. The original chapel was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and the remains of this building survive in a field about a mile to the south of the site of St.John's church which was built in 1837 and demolished in 1972.

The church built in 1837 had a substantial western tower, which contained a single bell. Following the demolition of the church in 1972 some of the fittings including the altar cross and candlesticks were taken to the Arthur Rank Centre at the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh, but the Centre had no use for the bell which has subsequently placed in the church at Merevale along with the small bell from Bentley School.

The church bell is 17 inches in diameter, and it bears no inscription or marks other than the date 1837. The style of the date figures and the shape of the bell indicate that the founder was Thomas Mears II of Whitechapel, although there is no trace of it in the foundry records as the day-books before July 1837 have not survived. The bell has six plain canons, but apart from the clapper no fittings remain.



Visited (At Merevale) C.J.P. 26 October 1985.

### BICKENHILL – St. Peter

The western tower with spire of this church houses a ring of six bells in the key of A natural (870.5Hz or A minus 18.79 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 37¾ inches.

#### **Bell**

#### **Inscription**

1. 298 / TAYLORS \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1929 \*  
*Waist:* I.M. / T.C. BAINES, PRIEST, / VICAR 1915-1928
2. M<sup>R</sup> CARVER (*arabesque border*) MINISTER (*border*) 1703 (*border*)  
*Soundbow:* (*Four coins*)
3. M<sup>R</sup> SAMVEL (*arabesque border*) COX (*border*) AND (*border*) M<sup>R</sup> IOHN SHAW CHVR WAR  
1703 (*border*)
4. (*Arabesque border all round*) / (*cross*) IESVS BE OVR SPED (*fleur de lis*) 1636 (*floral border*)(*medallion border*)  
*Waist:* (*Shield in the shape of a heart with the initials T H*)
5. (*Cross*) (*vine border*) SOLI (*border*) DEO (*border*) GLORIA (*border*) PAX (*border*)  
HOMINIBVS (*border*) 1650 C W T D / (*John Martin's large trade mark*)
6. M<sup>R</sup> HENRY KARVER VICAR IOHN HINSHAW AND IOHN BARBONE CHVRCH WARDENS  
1707 (*arabesque border*)

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1929	2:2-2:3:2	1470	25½	3	3	21
2.	Joseph Smith, 1703	2:3-2:3:2	c.1310	27½	4	1	0*
3.	Joseph Smith, 1703	2:3-2:3:2	1168	29¼	4	3	0*
4.	Thomas Hancox, 1636	3:1-1:3:2	1071.5	30	5	1	0*
5.	John Martin, 1650	3:3-3:3:2	962	32¾	6	2	0*
6.	Joseph Smith, 1707	3:2-3:3:2	870.5	37¾	8	2	0*

The treble, cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, was added to the ring in 1929. Of the others, the second and third were cast by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston in 1703, and the tenor was cast by the same founder in 1707. The 1703 bells are the earliest extant examples of Joseph Smith's work and both are excellent castings. The fourth was cast in 1636 by Thomas Hancox II of Walsall, and it bears the fine medallion border and trademark generally used by the founder. The bell was cast by John Martin of Worcester, although it may have been cast locally. John Martin itinerated during the period of the Protectorate, and it would seem from the churchwardens' accounts of Fillongley that he set up a temporary foundry at Coleshill in 1648-9. He cast a number of bells for churches in north Warwickshire in the early 1650's, and these bells may have been cast at Coleshill. The treble bell was cast without canons, and the canons of the five largest bells have been removed. All five old bells have been quarter turned, and all have been tuned by chip tuning.

According to the *Worcester Diocesan Church Calendar* for 1899, p.190, the bells had been 're-hung and newly fitted' in the previous year. This work was carried out by James Barwell and Co. of Birmingham who provided a new composite wooden and cast iron bell frame (*Bellframes* type 7.B.a, layout 5.1) and supplied new ring fittings for the five bells. The work cost £134.13.6. Barwell's bell frame remains, but in 1929 John Taylor & Co. added a built-up mild steel frame (*Bellframes* type 8.1.F.f(ii)) for the new treble bell, which stands on the frame heads of the pit of the fifth bell. The treble bell is fitted with a cast iron headstock, fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheel, and a Hastings stay unit. These fittings were supplied by John Taylor & Co. in 1929. The other bells are fitted with elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and traditional type stays and sliders. With the exception of the bearings, these fittings are those supplied by James Barwell in 1898. The tenor bell was re-hung on ball bearings in 1929, and the second, third, fourth and fifth bells were fitted with ball bearings in 1958, the work being carried out by John Taylor & Co. in both instances.

Repairs to the frame and fittings were carried out by the local ringers under Simon Adams in 2003-4, with some of the specialist work being undertaken by John Taylor & Co. This involved repairs to the wheels, new pulleys and new gudgeons and bearings for the treble.

In the church, there is a bellmetal tablet inscribed "THE TREBLE BELL WAS PLACED / IN THIS TOWER IN MEMORY OF / THOMAS CHARLES BAINES, PRIEST, / VICAR OF THIS PARISH 1915-1928." The tablet was cast by Taylors at Loughborough.

A synchronous electric clock with hour-strike unit by Smith of Derby was installed in 1958 (no.9394). It displays the time on a dial on the south face of the tower and strikes the hours on the tenor bell.

Visited C.J.P., 20 November 1977; C.J.P. and S.M.A. 15 September 2005

### **BIRCHMOOR – St.John**

Birchmoor is a hamlet in the parish of Polesworth. A mission room was provided for the convenience of the local parishioners in the late nineteenth century. The building was completed in 1888 and opened and first licensed on 9 January 1889. It was originally built as a single room with an entrance lobby and a small belfry with a spirelet. At some date the belfry was modified by replacing the spirelet with a low pyramid roof, and in about 1970 the entire building was refurbished and an extension was built at the east end for use as a chapel. The building is still in use (2006).

The turret contains a small bell hung for swing chiming. It has canons and plain mouldings, and appears to be hung from a wrought iron stock and fitted with an iron chiming lever. A small bell from St.John's Mission Church, Birchmoor, weighing 0-1-21, was refurbished by John Taylor & Co in March 1953 when they fitted a new clapper and crown staple, new bell bolts and rope. The cost of the work was £10.10.0.

**Visited:** CJP, 16 April 2006

### **CATHERINE-DE-BARNES HEATH – St.Catherine-de-Barnes, Church/School**

Catherine-de-Barnes Heath is a hamlet of nineteenth century origin, situated near the Grand Union Canal at the eastern extremity of the parish of Solihull. In 1879, a dual-purpose Church and Day School was built there to the designs of J.A. Chatwin, architect, the cost being borne by Joseph Gillott Esq. of Berry Hall. The building was licensed for worship on 10th October 1879, and the church and school records show that it became fully operational early in 1880. Gillott maintained the building at his own expense until his death in 1903, when it was purchased and vested in trustees for church purposes.

Over the centre of the building there is a timber-framed turret with a tiled spirelet, and this contains three small bells which are hung for chiming. The bells are disposed in two levels, with one hung above the others and completely out of sight. The inscriptions of the two lower bells are partially visible from below. The words "...TAYLOR & C<sup>o</sup> FOUNDERS 1879..." can be seen on one bell (the smaller of the two), and " ... FOUNDERS 1878." on the other. The Loughborough Bell Foundry records reveal that John Taylor & Co. supplied three bells in March 1880 to Joseph Gillott "for St. Catherine's Schools, Barnes Heath, Birmingham". Details of the weights and diameters of the bells are as follows:

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1879-80	16 $\frac{1}{8}$	0	3	8
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1879	19 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	2	17
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1878	22	2	2	6

The bells have canons, and they are apparently hung dead and sounded by means of ropes attached to the clappers. There is a disused chiming manual on the ground floor of the

vestry on the north side of the church but the ropes now terminate in the upstairs room above.

These bells replaced a chime of three small Barwell bells installed when the church was being built – probably in 1878. These had diameters of 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" , 15<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" and 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" and weighed approximately <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, 1 and 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cwt. J.W. Taylor Jun inspected them at the invitation of Joseph Gillott on 12 November 1879. His notebook records the following details: "A small peal of three bells cast by Barwell of Birmingham. The tenor is G# in case. The two trebles both appear too sharp. There certainly is not room to hang them to swing. They are now struck with Ellacombe hammers. These could I think be made to work easier than they do at present but would never be satisfactory. The turret is just over the chancel arch and the ropes pass over pulleys down the roof to the chancel on the north side. The tower ought to have been built over the lobby at the west end. This lobby is 7 feet wide."

The Taylor Daybook records the following entry dated 31 March 1880:

Jos. Gillott Esq, Berry Hall, Solihull, Birmingham.	
To new peal of 3 bells 5-0-3 at £6.13 per cwt	£33.8.6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> .
Clappers for Do	£3.0.0.
Man's time and expenses fixing etc [itemised]	£4.16.2.
Mr. T. Journey to inspect	<u>£2.2.0.</u>
	[total] £43.6.8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>

Visited C.J.P., R.M. (binoculars) 5 September 1980; CJP and SMA (binoculars)

### **CHADWICK END – Chapel**

The chapel at Chadwick End was opened in 1875 as a mission church in the parish of Temple Balsall. It closed some years ago, and the building has apparently been demolished. No information on the bell, if there was one, has been preserved.

Site visited C.J.P., 12 October 1985

### **CHESSETTS WOOD – Former Mission Chapel**

The chapel at Chessetts Wood was built as a mission chapel in the parish of Knowle and licensed for worship on 30 April 1890. It ceased to be used for Ecclesiastical purposes some years ago and it has been subsequently converted into a joinery workshop, but the single bell remains in place in the turret over the door. The bell is 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches in diameter, its note is E natural, and it weighs about 100 lbs. It bears no inscription or date, but it has the trade mark of James Barwell of Birmingham on the waist. It no doubt dates from about 1890. The fittings are of contemporary date, and the bell is secured by a peg argent to a wrought iron headstock and fitted with plain bearings, a clapper, and an iron wheel.

Visited C.J.P., 20 November 1977.

### **COLESHILL – Coleshill Hall**

Now used as a hospital, Coleshill Hall has a striking clock made in 1891 by Leeson of Coleshill. It is a two-train movement in a frame designed for three trains, but the quarter chimes have never been added.

### **COLESHILL – St. Peter and St. Paul**

The western tower and spire of this church contain a ring of ten bells in the key of F sharp (734Hz or F# minus 14.07 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 42<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches.

#### ***Bell*                      *Inscription***

1.     209 357B / (*blank*)  
       *Waist:* SILVER JUBILEE / ELIZABETH II 1952 – 1977  
       *Opposite:* 19 (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) 78
2.     209 358B / (*blank*)

- Waist:* THE GIFT OF / THE WALL FAMILY 1977  
*Opposite:* 19 (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) 78
3. 323 / ON EARTH PEACE (*floral border all round*)  
*Waist:* IN MEMORY OF / JOHN WILLIAM FIFIELD / PRESENTED 1923 / BY A.F.  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's circular mark*)
4. 549 260 / GOODWILL TOWARD MEN (*floral border all round*)  
*Waist:* IN MEMORY OF / EMMA FIFIELD / PRESENTED 1923 / BY A.F.  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's circular mark*)
5. 245 209 / THE GIFT OF HENRY SMITH OF COLESHILL GENT. 1920.  
*Waist:* CYRIL CHATFIELD / AND / JOHN JONES / CHURCHWARDENS / 1975  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1978
6. 151 209 / GOD SAVE HIS CHURCH 1720.  
*Waist:* CANON FRANK MORGAN. / VICAR 1975  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1978
7. 211 209 / JOSEPH SMITH IN EDGBASTON MAIDE ME. 1720.  
*Waist:* LESLIE L. WILLIS, EDWIN CONNINGTON, / DONALD L. MANNING-HOOPER/  
OFFICERS OF / GUILD OF BELLRINGERS / 1977.  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1978
8. 214 209 / JOHN COLE AND THOMAS BRUCE CHVRCH WARDENS 1720.  
*Waist:* ROY CLARKE / AND / GEOFFREY WHITHOUSE / CHURCHWARDENS / 1977.  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1978
9. 137 902 / MR. DIGBE COATS RECTER 1720.  
*Waist:* JAMES CAPPER / VICAR 1977.  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1978
10. 265 209 / MY MOVRNFVLL SOVNDE DOTH WARNEING GIVE THAT HEAR MEN  
CANNOT ALLWAYS LIVE 1720.  
*Waist:* IN MEMORY OF / ALL PAST RINGERS.  
*Opposite:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1978

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	22 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1881	3	2	22
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	23 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1676	3	3	10
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1923	25 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1488	4	0	0
4.	John Taylor & Co, 1923	26 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1404	4	2	14
5.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	28	1247	4	3	10
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	29 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1108	5	0	26
7.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	32 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	988	6	3	4
8.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	34 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	931	8	0	17
9.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	38	828	10	1	22
10.	John Taylor & Co, 1978	42 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	734	14	0	24

The present bells were all cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, and apart from the third and fourth bells, cast in 1923 when the bells were augmented to a ring of eight, they date from 1978 when the old six were recast and two further bells added to the ring. The restored and augmented ring of ten was dedicated on 30 May 1978.

In 1552 there were "iij belles" at Coleshill, but the commissioners noted "that the parishe have sold sithence the last Survey oone of the forsaid belles to repear their steple". Dugdale notes that the steeple was injured by lightning in about the year 1550.

The old bells were a complete ring of six cast in 1720 by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston. When taken to Loughborough for recasting in 1977, the old tenor was found to weigh 12 cwt 2 qrs 22 lbs. The old bells were in the key of F sharp (743Hz). They replaced a ring of five, to which a new treble bell given by Henry Smith of Coleshill was added in 1720. The full inscriptions were:

**Bell****Inscription**

1. (*Arabesque border all round*) / THE (*coin*) GIFT (*coin*) OF (*coin*) HENRY (*coin*) SMITH (*coin*) OF (*coin*) COLESHILL (*coin*) GENT (*coin*) 1720 (*arabesque border*) / (*floral border all round*) (*mark with initials IS and three bells*)  
*Waist: (coat of arms)*  
*Rim: (small scroll border all round)*
2. GOD (*coin*) SAVE (*coin*) HIS (*coin*) CHURCH (*coin*) 1720 (*coin*) (*border*) (*mark with initials IS and three bells*) (*two coins*) (*coin*) / (*border all round*)  
*Rim: (border all round)*
3. IOSEPH (*coin*) SMITH (*coin*) IN (*coin*) EDGBASTON (*coin*) MADE (*coin*) ME (*coin*) 1720 (*coin*) (*border*) (*mark with initials IS and three bells*) / (*border all round*)  
*Rim: (border all round)*
4. IOHN COLE AND THOMAS BRVCE (*coin*) (*border*) (*coin*) CHVRCH (*coin*) WARDENS (*coin*) 1720 (*two coins*) (*mark with initials IS and three bells*) (*coin*) / (*border all round*)  
*Rim: (border all round)*
5. MR DIGBE (*coin*) COATS (*coin*) RECTER (*coin*) (*border*) (*coin*) 1720 (*border*) (*coin*) (*border*) (*three coins*) (*mark with initials IS and three bells*) / (*border all round*)  
*Rim: (border all round)*
6. MY (*coin*) MOVRNFVLL (*coin*) SOVND (*coin*) (*border*) DOTH (*coin*) WARNEING (*coin*) GIVE (*border*) THAT HEAR MEN (*coin*) CAN NOT (*coin*) ALLWAYS LIVE 1720 (*mark with initials IS and three bells*) / (*border all round*)  
*Rim: (border all round)*

The inscriptions of the 1720 bells have been copied in modern lettering on the new bells, but the coins, borders and foundry marks have been omitted. The version of the inscriptions given here comes from Tilley & Walters, but amended (as regards the ornamentation) to show the borders on the treble illustrated in an incomplete rubbing in the Turner collection (Vol.13 p.28) at the Society of Antiquaries dated 14 June 1882. The precise markings on the other bells may not be entirely accurate as shown here, as the discrepancies on the treble shows that Walters seems to have had difficulty in making sense of Tilley's notes.

The bells were rehung in a new frame with entirely new fittings by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1978. The frame is of cast iron "lowside" pattern, and the bells are fitted with cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and traditional type stays and sliders.

Prior to rehanging, the bells were hung in an old wooden frame which was extended to take two additional bells in 1923. The treble was hung in the old frame and a separate timber frame was installed to the west of the old frame for bells 2 and 3. The rope-circle was anti-clockwise. Taylors rehung the back six on ball bearings in 1933. The six bells had been previously rehung by George Mears in August 1862 at the time of William Slater's restoration of the church, and in about 1907 by James Barwell of Birmingham. Barwell removed the canons from the tenor and fitted a cast iron stock.

The present clock was installed by William Leeson of Coleshill in 1860.

Visited C.J.P., 24 July 1979

**CURDWORTH – SS. Nicholas and Peter**

Here is a fine Norman church of c.1170 of which the walls of the chancel and eastern part of the nave survive largely intact. The nave was lengthened in the C15th, and in about 1460 the present west tower was added. This is a well-proportioned structure in the Perpendicular style, with heavily crocketed windows and gables – very typical of the work of this period in north Warwickshire. At the top of the tower there are springers for an intended spire. Access to the tower is by spiral stair in the south west corner.

### ***The present bells***

The tower contains a ring of three bells. The bells are approximately in the major key of B flat, but the note of the tenor - midway between B flat and A at 906Hz (or B flat minus 49.59 cents) – is flat in relation to the others

#### ***Bell***

#### ***Inscription***

1. THOMAS (*border of palmettes*) WILCOX (*border*) EDWARD (*border*) ASTLEY (*border*) 1663 (*border*) / (*arabesque border all round*) / (*John Martin's trade mark with three bells*)
2. THO<sup>S</sup> EAYRE = DE KETTERING = FECIT - 1756. VOX MEA EST DULCIS MEA SCINTILLANS VULTUS. (*dagger*) (*scroll border*) / (*floral border all round*)
3. + SANCTA MARIA VIRGO INTERSEDE PRO TOTO MVNDO

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Founder and date</i></b>	<b><i>Diameter</i></b>	<b><i>Mouldings</i></b>	<b><i>Nominal</i></b>	<b><i>Note</i></b>	<b><i>Cwt.</i></b>	<b><i>Qrs.</i></b>	<b><i>Lbs.</i></b>
1.	John Martin, 1663	29¼	2:2-1:3:2	1192.5	D +26.10	5	0	0*
2.	Thomas Eayre, 1756	30¾	3:3-2:3:2	1064.5	C +29.52	5	3	0*
3.	Unknown, pre-1500	34¼	3:2-3:3:2	906	Bb - 49.59	7	2	0*

The treble bell was cast in 1663 by John Martin of Worcester who also cast a bell for the nearby parish of Drayton Bassett in the same year. It is a rather clumsy casting with crudely formed canons. The second bell was recast at Kettering in 1756 by Thomas Eayre, the work being fully documented in the accounts (see below). The tenor is an example of the work of an unidentified Midlands bell founder, but neither the place of residence nor the identity of the founder are known. The dating is uncertain too (see below). The bell has tall, rather square canons, and its tone is good. All three bells retain their canons and have been quarter turned. The strike note of the treble bell has been raised by the removal of a portion of the lip, but the other two bells are maiden castings.

The bells hang in an oak bellframe which is constructed of sills, main braces and long frame heads (*Bellframes* type 6.A), with jack braces in the outer trusses (north and south) and return sections only (i.e. these trusses are type 6.B). The frame is remarkably tall, standing 74" from underside of sill to top of heads. All three bells swing east to west (*Bellframes* layout 3.1), with the treble bell in the centre pit, and the tenor to its north and the second bell to its south. This bell frame was probably installed in about 1640. The floor under the bells, along with the supporting woodwork, is mediaeval. The floor and bellframe are all supported from an offset on the east and west walls and along the diagonal side of the stair turret in the south west corner.

The bells are fitted with elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, plain brass bearings, traditional type wheels and traditional type stays and sliders. These fittings are the work of James Barwell Ltd. of Birmingham who re-hung the bells in 1905 at a cost of £38. There is also a chiming hammer on the tenor.

### ***History***

There were three bells at Curdworth – iij belles in the steeple in 1552. One of these, the present tenor, remains. Another, the treble, was recast by John Martin in 1663. The Browne-Willis listing of 5 bells here in c.1750 must be erroneous.

Regarding the medieval tenor, it should be noted that bells with similar lettering and marks exist at Hartlebury and at Old St. Martin's Church, Worcester, and there was formerly a bell of this type at Brewood, Staffordshire. While H.B. Walters tentatively suggested that these bells might have been cast by a Lichfield founder in the early C14 (Michael de Lichfield mentioned just before 1300 or Henry Mitchell who cast a bell for Croxden in 1313). These

dates are impossibly early for a bell like the Curdworth one, and Christopher Dalton (in 2003) thought it probably "later mediaeval".

In 1460, a bellfounder names John Brasyer of Walsall (along with Thomas Baly of Walsall) instigated a suit against the Vicar of "Credeworth" Warwickshire for debt. It is most likely that this suit relates to a debt due to the founder for casting a bell, and it could possibly give an indication of the date and founder of this bell. It is also possible, though, that the debt was for one of the other pre-1552 bells since recast. So while Brasyer almost certainly cast a bell for Curdworth in about 1460, we cannot be entirely certain that the surviving tenor is his.

The surviving Churchwardens' accounts commence in 1739 and the early years include a few minor repairs to the bells. In 1750, Edward Freeman was paid 1s.6d. "for a staple for the Bell" and 1s. "for Iron to hang the Clapper". The interest, however, is in the payments in connection with the recasting of the second bell by Thomas Eayre of Kettering in 1756:

1754		
3 April	Paid the Other Churchwarden for goeing to Litchfield for Advice	2s.9d.
	For my Journey to Kettering amd Expences	13s.6d.
1755		
Feb 15	Spent Bargaineing with Mr. Eayre for Casting the Bell	2s.6d.
	Paid Ricd. Brown for his Trouble	2s.0d.
	Spent Takeing the Bell Down	5d.
	Carrying it to Birmingham	2s.6d.
	Spent Unloading and Weighing it	6d.
2 May	Expenses at Birmingham Load ye New Bell	1s.0d.
	Paid the Caryers Bill for 6 <sup>C</sup> :3 <sup>qr</sup> :21 <sup>lb</sup> up and 9 <sup>C</sup> :0 <sup>qr</sup> :14 <sup>lb</sup> Down in all	
	16 <sup>C</sup> :0 <sup>qr</sup> :7 <sup>lb</sup> at 4 <sup>s</sup>	
		£1.12s.1½d.
	Carrying the Bell from Birm:	2d.6s.
	Spent unloading it	6d.
	Paid for 3 new bellropes	5s.3d.
1756		
7 Oct	Paid Mr. Thos. Eayre for the new Bell and for new hanging 3 Bells	£14.3s.6d.
1757		
	Pd for A Letter from Kettering [ <i>possibly about the clock – see below</i> ]	4d.
March 28	Pd for plates for the Bell wheels	10d.

Thus, Eayre was paid £14. 3s. 6d. for "the new Bell and for new hanging 3 Bells." The weight of the old bell was 6cwt. 3qrs. 21lbs., but the weight of the present bell was not recorded in the accounts as the 9cwt. 0qr.14lbs. of goods delivered to the parish by the carrier included three new sets of fittings for the bells.

The later records include a note about bellropes by the Churchwarden, dated 24 November 1883: "The ropes for the bells at Curdworth Church should be 75 feet long, three strands (about ½ inch rope) and the wool should be 13 feet from the bottom".

The Church and tower were restored by Bodley & Garner in 1895-6. Restoration of the bells followed some ten years later in 1905. The minute book of the Bells Committee charts the progress of the project:

5 June 1905	Meeting to consider report of Messrs. Barwell and estimate for rehangng at a cost of £38.7.6. Agreed that an estimate be obtained from Taylor
3 July 1905	Meeting to consider Taylor estimate (£43 if rehung in the old frame or £89 if a new cast iron frame were substituted). Barwell's estimate accepted subject to an assurance that the supporting timbers be sufficiently sound

22 August 1905 It was confirmed that Barwell's tender had been accepted;  
appeal widened to cover other costs and repairs

In addition, the papers include a copy of Barwell's specification which was incorporated in a printed appeal leaflet headed "Curdworth Church Bells". The full text is as follows:

The dear old Curdworth bells.

"And when this life is ended, and the chequered scene is o'er;

It may be our blissful lot to wake Upon a happier shore.

Where the thoughts may yet revert to earth,

And touched by memory's spells,

We may think of Sabbaths here below,

And the dear old Curdworth bells".

We have quoted these pathetic lines from an epitaph in our churchyard. The bells are silenced. We cannot ring; and now are afraid even to chime them, their condition is so serious.

Specification and Tender for restoring the Ring of Three Bells at Curdworth Parish Church to safe and first class ringing order

Dismantle all three bells of their fittings and stage or suspend them during the progress of the other work.

Remove all such old fittings and clappers to the foot of the tower on the outside at the disposal of the Vestry, reserving only the Gun Metal Bearings for casting into new ones.

Thoroughly clean the surface of all three bells, quarter-turn them so that the clappers strike on unworn surfaces, and fit them with new clappers and reverse staples.

Repair the existing Frame Work and strengthen same by securely bolting into the angles of the top timbers massive iron angle plates. Also insert new dry English Oak bed plates for the new bearings.

Supply and attach entirely new fittings for all three bells consisting of – Dry Elm Head Stocks with turned steel gudgeons in improved cast iron mountings and all necessary bolts and nuts and suspension irons.

Oak wheels with filleted garter holes for saving wear in the ropes, and stayed to the head stocks with wrought iron braces – Ash Stays, Sliders and Slider Beds.

Best coloured salley, soft flax-ended, bell ropes.

Lignum vitae friction pulleys running on turned steel spindles in cast iron boxes, and all necessary rope guides and thimbles in bell and clock chambers.

Supply and fix a neat iron salley guide in the wall of the Church to render the track of the Tenor Rope safe for ringing.

Recast the existing gun metal bearings into massive new ones, accurately bore them, and fit in massive cast iron hinged lid grease boxes securely bolted to the frame work.

Paint all new iron and steel work excepting actual bearing surfaces in two coats of good paint, and well oil the new wood work of the fittings.

Leave all three bells in first class ringing order.

The whole of the materials specified in the foregoing to be the best of their respective kinds.

Include all Railway Carriages and expenses or Road Carriages as the case may be, workmen's out expenses, and the provision of all tools and tackle requisite in the execution of the foregoing.

The whole complete for the sum of Thirty Eight Pounds Seven Shillings and Sixpence. (£38 7s. 6d.)

JAMES BARWELL, LTD.

N.B. – It may be as well to mention that it is very usual in such work as this to cut the cannons or loops off bells in order that the head stocks may fit more close and snugly, but we should consider it a great detriment to do this in the case of such interesting bells as these are.



The work was done as specified, the work being reported in the *Birmingham Diocesan Church Calendar* 1906 p.188 as follows:

The bells (three in number) have been re-hung by Messrs. Barwell, of Birmingham, at a cost of £38, the expense being defrayed by the Hon. Frances Adderley, as a memorial to the late Lord Norton

The bells have had no major work since 1905, but the fittings have been overhauled in recent times by Gordon Lane of Kingsbury.

### ***The clock***

An entry in the accounts for 1747 – “paid Vale mending the clock weights 1s.6d” – shows that there was an ancient clock here. Not long after the bells were put in good order in 1756, the wardens turned their attention to the clock. A new clock was provided by John Luckman of Bickenhill in 1757 and the accounts record the following details of the work:

1757 14 December Spent Bargaining for the New Clock	1s.0d.
Pd Mr Wright for writeing the Agreement	1s.3d.
Pd for A Letter from Kettering [ <i>possibly an estimate for a new clock, as Thomas Eayre made clocks as well as bells</i> ]	4d.
23 April [1758] Pd John Luckman for a new Church Clock	£7.10.0.
1758 Paid John Luckman a years wages for Looking after the Clock	2s.6d.

There is a gap in the accounts between 1805 and 1857, but the later volume shows that the parish regularly spent money on maintaining the clock until about 1885. William Leeson of Coleshill has responsibility for the clock throughout, undertaking repairs in 1857-8 (£4.15.0), 1873 (£7.10.0) and 1885 (£4). Leeson was paid annually up until 1869 – when compulsory Church rates were abolished – and thereafter occasionally.

The clock clearly fell into disuse towards the end of the C19th. When John Taylor & Co visited Curdworth to inspect the bells on 15 June 1905 they noted “there is an old clock in the chamber below bells, but not used, and looks only fit for the scrap head”.

The present clock – a synchronous movement with hour strike mechanism – was installed by Smith of Derby in 1976. It shows the time on a 4ft fibreglass dial on the east face of the tower and strikes the hours on the tenor bell. A plaque in the church records that the clock was given in 1976 by Ida Mildred Whitmore in memory of her father Robert Minshall Hargrave of Curdworth, who died in 1906.

**Visited:** C.J.P., C.J.N.D., R.L.J., 30 April 1977; Christopher Dalton and Dr. John Eisel, March 2000; C.J.P., H.E.P., C.J.N.D., 28 February 2003; Thanks to David Kelly (data on nominals)

### **DORDON – St. Leonard**

In 1867 Sir George Chetwynd gave a site for a chapel of ease at Dordon, a district in the parish of Polesworth, and the church was built in 1867-8 to the designs of G.E. Street, architect. It was opened on 14 April 1868, and at that time the church consisted of a nave and chancel with an octagonal bell turret supported by a broad buttress at the west end, all built in red brick with Hollington stone dressings. A narrow south aisle, also designed by Street, was added in 1878, but this was re-built when the church was enlarged and remodelled under the Birmingham architect W.H. Bidlake in 1901-2.

The octagonal stone bell turret and spirelet are part of the original building of 1867-8, repaired or rebuilt after storm damage in January 1925. The bell is an uninscribed brass foundry casting with a peg-argent. It has no inscription or marks, but there is a moulding wire on the crown, two below the shoulder, and two on the sound-bow. The church records indicate that the present bell was dedicated on 9 June 1925 although it seems likely that this refers to its installation as the bell itself is apparently of late nineteenth-century date.

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1	Unknown, C19th	16	D/C#	1	0	0*

The bell is hung for swing chiming. It is fitted with an iron headstock of unusual shape and design, an iron-chiming lever, and a clapper, and it hangs in an iron frame consisting of two independent cast iron pedestals bolted to wooden beams in the base of the turret. The frame and fittings are unlikely to be the originals of 1868 and probably date from 1925.

The parish records also include a copy of an estimate from John Warner & Sons for supplying a bell. As the cost was above the sum allowed for in the estimates, this was referred to the architect for approval. The outcome is not recorded, but it seems probable that the bell referred to was duly ordered and installed. The letter from the Clerk of Works is dated 13 March 1868, and the copy estimate shows that Warners tendered to supply an 18" bell (weight 1-1-16) for £12.7.0. The cost of "erecting the same in turret with stock, spring hammer and rope, with necessary wood & ironwork for suspending it from the corbel stones, travelling expenses & carriage included" was £8.17.6., making a total of £21.17.6. Warners indicated that "Builders assistance will be required to drill through stonework for rope" and presumed "that the scaffolding is still standing". They also explained that "The bell is a "loam cast bell" of deep tone & being smaller than usually cast in loam is 2d per lb extra in cost on that account". Presumably this bell hung in the turret until 1925.

Visited C.J.P., G.D.A., 21 July 1979 (ladders); CJP 14 May 2009

**DORRIDGE** [text already included in main "Birmingham" file]

### **DORRIDGE - St.George and St.Teresa of the Child Jesus (R.C.)**

The Roman Catholic mission at Dorridge commenced in a chapel in the garden of John Tarleton Hardman, the fourth generation head of the Hardman firm, in 1905. The first church of 1917 was destroyed by fire in 1934. The present church is on the south side of Station Road. Its nave was built in 1934-5 to the designs of J. Arnold Crush. The building was extended and the orientation reversed by Cyril Horsley in 1977, and in 2005-6 a new parish centre was added by Brownhill Hayward Brown.

There was no bell here up until 2013 when Taylors were commissioned to supply one to mark the International Year of Faith. The bell was dedicated by Archbishop Bernard Longley when he visited the parish in September and it is hung under a canopy high on the plain west wall of the building. It is fitted for stationary chiming with an electro-magnetic chiming hammer and programmable control unit to sound the daily angelus and to ring for services.

Details of the bell are as follows:

<i>Bell</i>	<i>Inscription</i>
1.	TO MARK THE YEAR OF FAITH 2012-13 * ( <i>Taylors' circular mark</i> ) * <i>Waist: (Coat of Arms) / FRANCIS</i> <i>Opposite: "COME, / RING OUT OUR JOY TO THE LORD; / HAIL THE GOD WHO SAVES US" / (PSALM 94)</i> <i>Soundbow: (four crosses)</i>

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 2013	23	2:2-2:3:2	1760	A	3	0	6

*Not visited:* Details *ex.inf.* John Taylor & Co

### **DOSTHILL – St. Paul**

This church was built in 1871-2. The architect was G. Holmes of Birmingham and the builder was G. Lilley of Ashby de la Zouch. The total cost of the church amounted to over



1. WALTER CHETWYND ES<sup>o</sup> (*arabesque border*) HENRY (*border*) BAGLEY (*border*) MADE (*border*) MEE 1692  
*Waist: (Coat of arms of Chetwynd)*
2. (*Cross*) GLORIA DEO IN EXCELSVS 1615 (*vine border*)
3. 237 | (*cross*) (*fleur de lis*) A B C (*fleur de lis*) D F E  
*Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / Recast 1906*
4. (*Crown*) (*fleur de lis*) M E L E D E (*fleur de lis*) G E R I T
5. (*Brasyer shield*) IHS:NAZARENVS (*acorn border*) REX.IVDEORVM (*border*) :FILI:DEI (*border*) :MISERERE:MEI: (*border*) 1623
6. 177 | (*Large border all round*)  
*Waist: To the Glory of GOD / and in loving memory / of Henry Hanmer, / Rector of Grendon from 1844 to 1904, / and of Sybella Elizabeth his wife. / This bell was given / by their sons and daughters / July 1906.*  
*Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark)*

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Mouldings	Nominal	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	Henry Bagley, 1692	28½	3:3-3:3:2	1221	4	3	7
2.	William Clibury, 1615	30⅞	3:2-2:3:2	1091	4	3	10
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1906	32	2:2-2:3:2	971	6	0	4
4.	Newcombe, c.1580	34	2:2-2:3:2	916	6	3	8
5.	Hugh Watts, 1623	36⅞	3:3-3:3:2	820	8	1	23
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1906	41⅞	2:2-2:3:2	728	11	2	14

The treble of 1692 bears the coat of arms of the Chetwynd family only waist. The second bell now has a modern metal plate inside the crown, indicating that some defect was discovered when the bell was rehung in 1906. The inscription of the old third bell has been reproduced on the existing third bell, and the letters C and D are reversed. Each letter E in the inscription of the fourth bell is reversed. The canons of the four old bells have all been removed and these bells have been turned. The treble, fourth and fifth bells have all been chip tuned, and the whole ring was retuned by John Taylor & Co. in 1906.

The bells hang in a massive oak bellframe which was probably constructed in the seventeenth century - dated to c.1630-1640 by Christopher Dalton and John Eisel when they visited in 2000 - and re-erected in the present church tower in 1845-7. Originally built for five bells, it had four parallel pits (for bells 1, 5, 2 and 4 west to east) and one transverse pit (for the third) to the south. The rope circle must have been anti-clockwise (or possibly irregular). The frame consists of sills, main braces, jack braces, and long frame heads. The heads and sills are framed on one level. The frame stands on the floor of the bell chamber which is supported by two main east-west beams of 1845-7.

In order to fit the new tenor into the existing frame in 1906, Taylors created two pits - now containing bells 5 and 6 swinging mouth-to-mouth and north-south - in the old tenor pit and in the western part of the transverse pit. All the bells except the fourth now swing North to South. In 1906 Taylors strengthened the frame by inserting iron tie-rods and cast-iron angle plates.

The fittings are those provided by John Taylor & Co. in 1906, and they include cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, plain bearings with Heywood lubricators, traditional type wheels, and traditional type stays and sliders. The tenor bell was rehung with ball bearings by the local ringers in about 1970.

### **History**

In 1552 there were three bells and a small call bell - iij belles and a saunce bell - here. Of these, two were recast in the second half of the sixteenth century by members of the Newcombe family of Leicester, perhaps in the 1570's or 1580's. The fourth bell survives, but the third (diameter 31" and weighing 5-2-23) was recast a semitone lower when the ring

was remodelled in 1906. Tilley and Walters give the inscription – not quite as reproduced on the present bell – as follows:

(Cross) A B (*fleur-de-lis*) D C F E

It is not clear when the number of bells was first increased from three to five, but on the evidence of the frame (built for five bells) it seems possible that there were five bells here by 1640. Certainly the present second was cast by William Clibury of Wellington in 1615, and Hugh Watts II of Leicester cast the fifth bell (then the tenor) in 1623.

The treble was cast in 1692 (and not 1699 as stated by Tilley & Walters). The founder was Henry Bagley II, and the bell was probably cast at Ecton, Northants, where the Bagleys (previously at Chacombe) established a foundry by 1687. The bell bears the name of Walter Chetwynd, the Lord of the Manor and patron of the living, and has the coat of arms of the Chetwynd family only waist. In 1692 Bagley cast a new ring of six for the church at Ingestre in Staffordshire where the Chetwynds had their main seat. All six bells there were inscribed like the Grendon treble.

The Churchwardens' accounts survive from 1721 to 1897, although they contain few significant entries relating to repairs to the bells, the steeple, clock, ringing etc. Among the entries are the following:

22 April 1728	- It was then agreed ... that no Ringing money shall be allow'd Except half a Crown on Christmas Day, half a Crown on New Years Day, & half a crown on the 5th of November	
1741	Spent at a Meeting about ye Church Steeple And sending Thos. Moseley word not to come again	1s. 6d.
	June 7. Pd Willm. Brown for his advice and Pointing ye steeple	2s. 6d.
1755	Spent with Ricd. Wright intreating about the Bell	1s. 0d.
	Pd Ricd Wright bill for three new wheels	£4.2.6.
	For a new yoke ready dressd, a pully & carriage for the bell	7s. 6d.
	For 22 feet of elm board, 2d a foot	3s. 8d.
	For nails for mend the Wheels and Floor	10d.
	For 8 day Bored Wright, & 8 days work of Robt. Wright	£2.0.0.
1813	Church clock	£30
1814	April 7. Mr. Lagoe bill Repairing the Bell weels &c	£4.2.4.

When improvements to the church were carried out in 1824-5 the old tower was left largely unaltered, although its roof was repaired. By 1829, however, there were concerns about the safety of the structure and the Stafford architect James Trubshaw was called in to report on its condition. He gave a further report in 1840, when the parish also consulted Edward Blore who was then working at Merevale Hall nearby. Blore's report dated 18 May 1840 survives among the parish records, and in it he reported that:

"...notwithstanding the alarm excited by the apparently dilapidated state of the tower, there is no reasonable ground to apprehend any immediate danger, the settlements in the masonry being of old standing and not likely to extend further. I have also ascertained that the walls although not well built are of such thickness and solidity as to render the vibration from the ringing of the bells not perceptible and consequently that it is unnecessary to discontinue the use of the bells" but ... "the time may not be very distant when it may be necessary to have a new Tower is very probable, but in my opinion the present one is calculated to last many years in perfect safety"

Others did not share his confidence, and further advice was sought from John Sinclair of Hartshill, the resident engineer to the Coventry Canal Company. On 28 January 1845 the Vestry, "read and considered Mr. Sinclair's report respecting the tower of Grendon Parish Church from which it appears that the said tower is in so very dangerous state that it may fall down at any time and when least expected". It was resolved that the old tower should

be taken down immediately, and this was done shortly afterwards by William Fox, an Atherstone builder. The minute book contains a note recording that:

“Friday 28 March 1845 Thomas Martin of Atherstone, clockmaker, removed the Church Clock to Atherstone and took charge of it and [in different hand] one of the church bells was hung to a beam in an old barn which stood by the north entrance gate of the churchyard - and was used for the calling together of the inhabitants for church services”

At a Vestry meeting on 14 May 1845, Mr. Sinclair reported that Fox had taken down the old tower “with great care and circumspection and without any accident, [and] that all the beams were much decayed and the principal beam having only one inch of rest in the walls, was in a most dangerous state, and it is God’s mercy that when the bells were rung did not fall and bring down the whole fabric with them”. The work of taking down the bells was undertaken by William Toon of Atherstone whose agreement with the parish also covered their re-installation, so the Vestry agreed that the Churchwardens “be empowered to advance the sum of eight pounds to William Toon on account for taking down the bells, as per agreement”.

The original plan was that a new tower should be built by William Arthur Watson of Over Whitacre at a sum not exceeding £600. This was agreed at a Vestry meeting on 26 March 1845, but at the meeting on 14 May Sinclair produced his own drawing and plan for the new tower. It was duly resolved that this plan “be adopted and carried into execution under the superintendence and directions of Mr. Sinclair”. The work proceeded on this basis, the contract being awarded to William Fox whose total bill amounted to £1132.9.10. Other major payments were to William Chambers, the stonemason (£222.5.9) and to the architect John Sinclair (£75) and the accounts include full details of all costs including materials, carriage and extras.

Work on the new tower began in the late spring of 1845 and by July it was built nearly to the first storey. The main structure was completed early in 1846. However, there was a shortfall in the available funds and on 8 March 1846 the Vestry resolved “That after the rehangings of the Bells, laying Belfry floor and Bell-ringing Room floor which is absolutely necessary for the safety and use of the bells, and refixing the clock, that the works be stopped until such time as the parish think fit to proceed”. A later note records that “the church tower was finished building in the autumn of the year 1846”.

The accounts include payments for reinstating the clock and bells, i.e.

1846	Wm. Toon “To Contract work taking down the Tower Bells and putting them up in the New Tower” £30 and “To Sundry Materials provided” £3.2.5½.total	£33.2.5½.
30 Dec 1847	To [George] Martin Clockmaker	£24.10.0.

Taylor inspected the bells on 3 July 1905, and found a ring of five (tenor 37” diameter and weighing about 9 cwt) in a wooden five-bell frame. They found the bells all much worn and in need of quarter turning. In the following year, the bells were restored and augmented to six. A faculty for placing an additional bell in the tower and the erecting a memorial in the chancel to the Rev. Henry Hanmer and his wife, Sybella Elizabeth, was granted on 2 October 1906. Taylor records show that the work on the bells was completed on 8 September 1906. The job was not reported in the Bell News.

Apart from the rehangings of the tenor bell on ball bearings by the local ringers in the early 1970s, the bells and their fittings remain as last restored by Taylor in 1906.

There has been a church clock at Grendon since at least 1726 when it is first mentioned in the accounts. The present clock - probably the one purchased in 1813 for £30 and re-erected in the new tower in 1846 as noted above – is in an enclosed wooden case in the middle of the clock room. There is no signature or date on the mechanism and the maker’s

bill is not among those preserved with the other vouchers for 1802-1989 in the parish records. It is a two-train movement in a simple wrought iron plate and spacer frame, showing the time on two flat copper dials in stone surrounds above the belfry windows (with blanks of similar style on the east and west sides) and sounding the hours on the fifth bell. The clock has recently (2009) been reinstated after some years in disuse. When examined in 1985 many of the working parts were missing following a failed attempt to electrify the movement in the 1970s.

*Visited:* C.J.P., R.M., 14 April 1979; C.J.P., 9 March 1985 and 14 May 2009; Christopher Dalton and John Eisel 29 February 2000

### **GRENDON – Grendon Hall**

Grendon Hall was a seat of the Chetwynd family of Ingestre in Staffordshire. The brick manor house of c.1600 was enlarged for Walter Chetwynd by Richard Trubshaw in 1725 and a new stable block was erected in the eighteenth century. The house was remodelled and enlarged under Joseph Potter of Lichfield in 1825. The estate was sold in 1911. The main house was demolished in 1933 but a lodge of 1878 still survives.

### **HAMPTON IN ARDEN – St. Mary and St. Bartholomew**

The western tower of this church contains a ring of eight bells in the key of G natural (771.5Hz or G minus 27.8 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 40<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches.

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Inscription</b>
1.	148/ GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>
2.	196/ IN TERRA PAX ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>
3.	161/ IN HOMINIBUS BONAE VOLUNTATES ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>
4.	245/ LAUDAMUS TE ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>
5.	182/ BENEDICIMUS TE ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>
6.	211/ ADORAMUS TE ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>
7.	142/ GLORIFICAMUS TE ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>
8.	160/ GRATIAS AGIMUS TIBI ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / * 1912 *</i>

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	23 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1546	3	0	12
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	24 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> "	1449	3	1	1
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	26	1290	3	2	25
4.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	28	1159	4	1	6
5.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	30 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1030	5	0	21
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	32 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	967	6	2	1
7.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	36 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	869	8	0	25
8.	John Taylor & Co, 1912	40 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	771.5	12	0	22

These bells were cast in 1912 by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, and they were cast without canons and tuned on the true-harmonic system. They were installed at Hampton in Arden in 1975-6 and dedicated on 26th June 1976, having been transferred from the redundant church of St. John the Evangelist, Oldham Road, Miles Platting, Manchester, which was demolished in 1973-4.

The church at Miles Platting was built in 1855 at the expense of Sir Benjamin Heywood, the Manchester banker, and usually for the period in which it was built it was designed in the Italian Romanesque style with a North West campanile. The churchmanship at St. John's was high, and the church became widely renowned as the centre of Anglo-Catholicism in Manchester. A ring of six bells (tenor 11 cwt. 1 qr. 10 lbs.) cast by John Warner & Sons of London was installed in 1872, but there were problems with tower oscillation and in 1911 the parish took the matter in hand and undertook the necessary strengthening of the fabric. At this time, Sir Arthur Percival Heywood, the President of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and the grandson of the builder of the church offered to pay for the bells to be recast into a ring of eight and rehung in a new iron frame. The offer was accepted, and the new bells were dedicated on Saturday 13th April 1912.

In 1967, however, it was reported that the church was suffering from settlement in the foundations, and in line with Diocesan policy it was decided to demolish the building and to erect a modern church on the site. The proposal met with some opposition, but the demolition was authorised in 1971 and the last service was held in the old church on Easter Sunday, 22nd April 1973. By this date, negotiations for the transfer of the bells to Hampton were already in hand, and after the service a full peal was attempted (unsuccessfully) by a band of ringers from the Lancashire Association and the St. Martin's Guild. Soon afterwards the church was demolished, and the bells were taken down by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough and put into storage pending installation at Hampton.

In 1552 there were three bells at Hampton, but by 1629 when two bells were recast at Walsall by Henry Oldfield the number had been increased to four. The bells concerned were the third and tenor of the ring, and the weight of the tenor bell after recasting was 13 cwt. 1 qr. 3lbs. In October 1634 the treble bell was recast at Leicester by Hugh Watts, and on return in weighed 7 cwt. 3 qrs. 18 lbs. These bells seem to have been destroyed when the spire was stuck by lightning on St. Andrew's day 1643 and both the tower and the body of the church were severely damaged by the falling masonry. The spire was never rebuilt, and in the political and religious climate of the Civil War and Interregnum the Churchwardens encountered difficulties in raising funds for the restoration of the church. In 1652, the court of Quarter Sessions ruled that the whole parish should pay a levy towards the cost of the work, but opposition continued into 1653 and 1654 when further orders were made. It is not known exactly when or by whom the bells were recast, but the work seems to have been completed by Easter 1654 when John Fetherston was instructed to 'peruse and see how much money hath been expended about the repair or building the said steeple and casting and framing the bells'. John Martin of Worcester was working in the area at the time, and he may have cast a new ring for Hampton in about 1654.

The bells were again completely recast in 1725 by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston who supplied a new ring of six bells. This ring remains today, although now at Nether Whitacre rather than in its original home at Hampton in Arden. Details of the bells - including weights and tuning figures as recorded on arrival at Loughborough in 1975 - were as follows:

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Joseph Smith, 1725	28	3:2-2:5:3	1334	E+20	4	3	1
2.	Joseph Smith, 1725	28 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	1202	D+40	4	3	13
3.	Joseph Smith, 1725	30	3:2-2:5:3	1079	C+53	5	0	15
4.	Joseph Smith, 1725	31 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	1015	B+47	5	3	19
5.	Joseph Smith, 1725	34 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	871	A-18	7	2	25
6.	Joseph Smith, 1725	39 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	794	G+22	11	0	12

These bells were last rung at Hampton on 15th June 1975 and afterwards rehung at Nether Whitacre (under which heading they are more fully described). At Hampton, they had been rehung with new fittings in a composite cast iron and timber frame by James Barwell Ltd. of Birmingham in 1907, and they were subsequently rehung on ball bearings by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1937.



The present bells are hung on one level in a cast iron "H" frame constructed by John Taylor & Co. in 1975-6 using the frame castings made in 1912 for Miles Platting with new foundation girders, new steelwork, and one new frame casting. The original 1912 headstocks of the six largest bells were retained, but in 1975-6 new ones were provided for the treble and second bells which were previously hung from wrought iron bar headstocks, and all the bells were rehung with new gudgeons and bearings. The fittings now consist of cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and traditional type stays and sliders.

The church clock was supplied by William Leeson & Son of Coleshill in 1891, and the old movement, believed to have been made in the late seventeenth century by Nicholas Paris of Warwick, is preserved in the church.

Visited C.J.P., 26 August 1975 and 24 July 1979.

### **HAMPTON IN ARDEN – Hampton Manor**

Hampton Manor house was built in 1855 for Sir Frederick Peel and further improved between 1868 and 1873. The architect for the later work was W. Eden Nesfield, who in October 1869 produced drawings for an ornamental clock tower to be built in the grounds to the South of the main building. The designs were modified and improved, but the tower was erected soon afterwards and the work was apparently completed by 1872. Further work may have been carried out in 1892 when the building firm of Parnell of Rugby were working at Hampton for Sir Frederick Peel.

The clock bell hangs from a deadstock supported on beams inside the roof structure of the tower. It has a diameter of 24 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches and its strike note is F natural. The details of the inscription and approximate weight are as follows:

#### ***Inscription***

CAST. A. D. 1892

*Waist:* DENT. / 33 COCKSPUR STREET. / LONDON

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Founder and date</i></b>	<b><i>Diameter</i></b>	<b><i>Note</i></b>	<b><i>Cwt.</i></b>	<b><i>Qrs.</i></b>	<b><i>Lbs.</i></b>
1.	Gillett & Johnston (for Dent), 1892	24 $\frac{1}{8}$	F	2	3	14

The bell was supplied in 1892 by M.F. Dent & Co. of 33 Cockspur Street, London, a noted firm of clockmakers, but it was cast for Dent by the bellfounders Gillett & Johnston of Croydon whose records provide further information. Their bell (no.1345) was supplied to Dent & Co for Sir Frederick Peel of Hampton in Arden on 29 January 1892. It has a Doncaster head and a cast-in crown staple, but it appears to have been sounded only by the clock hammer.

The clock movement was also by Dent of Cockspur Street, London. It has been removed from the tower since 1978, although the case and the dial motion work for the four dials remain in position. The full history of the clock is a matter for conjecture, but it seems likely that the original timepiece put up in about 1872 had no strike mechanism, in consequence of which it was subsequently replaced by a new hour-striking clock in 1892.

Since the adaptation of the Manor as a Hotel the clock dials have been restored and a new electric clock system installed. This took place in about 2008-9.

Visited C.J.N.D., 25 January 1978, and C.J.P., 26 October 1985 and (external only) 10 September 2010.

### **HAMPTON IN ARDEN – School (Fentham's Charity School)**

Fentham's Charity school was founded under the will of George Fentham, 1690, and the school house of 1782 with classroom alongside still survives in Fentham Road. Nearby and opposite is the present school whose main building dating from 1914 was erected as the new Boys School. Under a canopied shelter on the side of the building facing the road is a small bell, c.15" diameter, dated 1849. It came from the Girl's School (now demolished) erected on the High Street by what is now Wellmeadow Grove in 1849 at a cost, including the teacher's house, of £1300.

The date figures and style of the canons indicate that the 1849 bell was probably cast by C. & G. Mears of Whitechapel. It might just possibly be the 14" bell (weight 0-2-8¼) invoiced to S. Taylor of 282 Bradford Street, Birmingham, on 16 April 1849. In 1849, no.282 Bradford Street was the address of Samuel Briggs, the Birmingham builder.

Visited C.J.P., 10 September 2010

### **HOCKLEY HEATH – St. Thomas**

On 23 August 1878 the new parish of Nuthurst cum Hockley Heath was formed from parts of the parishes of Hampton in Arden, Tanworth, Lapworth and Salter Street. The chapel built in 1834 was considered too small to serve the needs of the newly formed parish, and so in 1879-1880 a new church was built on a site nearer to the main centre of population. The building was designed by John Cotton, architect, of Temple Row, Birmingham, and erected by Messrs. J. Barnsley & Sons of Birmingham at a total cost of £ 2,350. It was consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester on 30 June 1880.

The church has a tower, with a spire of yellow brick, on the north side of the junction of the nave and chancel. The tower contains one bell which is hung for ringing:

Inscription  
JAMES BARWELL FOUNDER. BIRMINGHAM. 1880

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	James Barwell, 1880	26⅞	2:2-2:3:2	1615	Ab-48	4	0	14

It was cast in 1880 by James Barwell of Birmingham, and it has a Doncaster head. It has been tuned on a lathe, but it has not been quarter turned. Barwell also supplied the frame and fittings. The wooden bell frame consists of cills, main braces, corner posts and long frame heads (*Bellframes* type 6.A). There are no pegs in the joints where the braces enter the heads and sills and the frame is held together with iron tie rods – vertical through the trusses and horizontal across the pit-ends. The bell is fitted with an elm headstock, strap gudgeons, stock hoops, plain bearings with hinged wooden covers, a traditional type wheel (formerly fitted with iron wheel stays), a traditional type stay and slider, and a clapper suspended by wooden busk boards from an independent crown staple.

By 2018 the original fittings were in a rather dilapidated state. In that year repairs were undertaken to bring the bell back into a ringable state. The damaged bellwheel was reconstructed locally. John Taylor & Co replaced the stay, repaired the ground pulley and refurbished the clapper fittings. Simon Adams refitted these parts and overhauled the bell, doing the work voluntarily in his own time. The job was completed in November 2018.

The bell from the old church hangs in an ornamental iron frame over the partition to the new rooms at the back of the church. It is 18⅝ inches in diameter, its note is approximately F natural (1366Hz or F-38 cents), and it bears the date and inscription below the shoulder as follows:

NUTHURST CHAPEL  
1834

The identity of the founder is not known, but the bell is of brass foundry type with six short canons, and it was probably cast in 1834 by a Birmingham brassfounder. The mouldings are typical for a bell of this type, with a squared edge below the shoulder, two shallow mouldings above the soundbow and one at the lip. The frame in which it now hangs was made by a local ironworker in the late 1960's. In 1973 the bell and frame stood on the floor at the back of the church, but since it was moved to its new position in about 1998 it has been fitted with a chiming rope fixed to the clapper.

Visited C.J.P., 28 September 1985 and 23 April 2011; Simon Adams (John Taylor & Co), November 2018

## **HOCKLEY HEATH – *see also* NUTHURST-CUM-HOCKLEY HEATH, Mortuary Chapel**

### **HURLEY – Church of the Resurrection**

This church was built in 1861 as a Mission Chapel to serve the hamlet of Hurley which was in the parish of Kingsbury. It was licensed for worship on 24 October 1861. It is a prefabricated building with a cast iron framework standing on brick foundations and the small iron buttresses have attractive decorative mouldings.

The small bell turret over the east end of the building was probably erected about 30 years after the church was built. It is square in section and it is surmounted by a covered spirelet. The bell is about 16 inches in diameter and it has a peg argent. The note is D flat plus 23 cents (2248Hz).

The bell is apparently without inscription or date, although it bears a mark on the waist – partially obscured by a heavy coat of paint – which resembles the trademark of James Barwell of Birmingham. The bell cannot have been cast as early as 1861 and it probably dates from about 1890. It hangs from a headstock made of flat iron and it has an iron-chiming lever.

Visited C.J.P., (binoculars) 12 October 1985; C.J.P. (nominal) 17 September 2009

### **KINGSBURY – St. Peter and St. Paul**

The Western tower of this church, largely rebuilt in 1610-11, contains a ring of eight bells in the key of E natural (649Hz or E minus 27.14 cents. The diameter of the tenor bell is 46 inches.

#### ***Bell***

#### ***Inscription***

1. 274 245 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1969 \*  
*Waist:* THE GIFT OF GORDON H. LANE TO THE MEMORY OF HIS / FATHER  
HOWARD A. LANE AND COUSIN JOYCE LANE, BOTH / RINGERS AT THIS CHURCH
2. 274 195 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1969 \*  
*Waist:* THIS PEAL WAS RESTORED AND AUGMENTED BY THE ASSISTANCE / OF THE  
BARRON BELL TRUST, AND THE BEQUEST OF W.E. DAVIES, / CHURCH WARDEN  
1935-1964
3. 182 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1959 \*  
*Waist:* I CAME BY MANY 'LANES'
4. 274 211 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1849 \* RECAST  
1969 \*  
*Waist:* THE NAMES OF THE RINGERS HERE LISTED BELOW, / RAISED MOST OF THE  
MONEY FOR OUR MUSIC TO FLOW. / ROBERT FARMER / GORDON H. LANE / D.  
KEITH LANE / WALTER G. LANE / ANTHEA C. RICHARDS / KEITH C. RICHARDS /  
NIGEL W. RICHARDS
5. 274 140 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1849 \* RECAST  
1969 \*

*Waist:* RINGERS ARE TAUGHT, SOME DON'T STAY / SOME HAVE BEEN RINGING FOR MANY A DAY, / THE KIND WHO KEEP THE ART ALIVE, / RAISED TO EIGHT OUR PREVIOUS FIVE

6. 274 201 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1849 \* RECAST 1969 \*

*Waist:* A TREBLE WAS ADDED IN '59 / THE OLD BELLS RECAST IN '69 / THEN TWO MORE TREBLES WERE HUNG ALONGSIDE, / TO THE GLORY OF GOD WE RING OUT WITH PRIDE

7. 274 177 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1849 \* RECAST 1969 \*

*Waist:* KENNETH E. HOOD VICAR / W. HERBERT DAVIES } / ALBERT E. WRIGHT }  
CHURCHWARDENS

8. 274 225 / THE OLD FOUR BELLS RECAST INTO FIVE 1849. R: GLOVER & J: CLARKSON C: WARDENS

*Waist:* (*Taylor's' circular mark*) / RECAST 1969 / "THERE MUST BE A BEGINNING OF ANY GREAT MATTER, BUT / THE CONTINUING UNTO THE END UNTIL IT BE THOROUGHLY / FINISHED, YIELDS THE TRUE GLORY." / THE BELLS DEDICATED BY JOHN W. BENNETT, VICAR 1953-1964

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1969	28¼	1298	5	0	9
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1969	29	1224	5	1	16
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1959	30½	1094	5	3	12
4.	John Taylor & Co, 1969	32½	972	6	2	10
5.	John Taylor & Co, 1969	34⅞	866	7	3	3
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1969	37	817	9	1	17
7.	John Taylor & Co, 1969	41⅞	728	12	1	15
8.	John Taylor & Co, 1969	46	649	17	1	0

The present bells were all cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, the third in 1959 and the rest in 1969. The same firm also cast the previous ring of five, dated 1849, of which the heavily ornamented crown of the old tenor has been preserved as a centre piece on the ringing room table. Other pieces from the canons of the old bells are placed round the edge of the table. The existing bells were all cast without canons, and they are generally regarded as an excellent modern ring.

The history of the bells can be traced from 1552 when there were four great bells in the steeple. Two early bells, one (the treble) inscribed "Sanctum" and the other (the third) with "IHESVS NAZARENUS REX IVDEORVM" survived until 1849. The churchwardens' accounts refer to the recasting of two bells (the third bell and the great bell) by Thomas Newcombe of Leicester in 1567. Edward Newcombe recast the second bell in 1602, and in 1612 the tenor was recast by the Newcombe brothers in partnership. It is said that the rebuilding of the steeple in 1612 was followed by the addition to a further bell to make a ring of five, but there is no evidence to confirm this tradition.

There were only four bells when they were all taken down and sent to Loughborough to be recast in 1849. The foundry records provide the following information about the old bells, one of which – the third – was cracked.

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Inscription</b>
1.	Sanctum
2.	EDWARDE NEWCOM MADE MEE 1602
3.	IHESUS NAZARENUS REX JUDEORUM
4.	BE YT KNOWNE TO ALL THAT DOTH ME SEE THAT NEWCOMBE OF LEICESTER MADE MEE 1612

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Mediaeval	35	7	2	20
2.	Edward Newcombe, 1602	37	9	0	0
3.	Mediaeval	43	15	1	4
4.	Newcombe, 1612	47 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	19	2	3

The old bells were replaced in 1849 by a new ring by John Taylor & Sons of Loughborough. The new bells were dated 1849 and the tenor was cast on 12 December of that year, but the four smallest were actually cast on 8 January 1850. They were cast with small canons with elaborate decoration as noted below. Details of these bells were as follows:

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Inscription</b>
1.	+ I TAYLOR & SON BELLFONDERS ( <i>border</i> ) 1849 ( <i>border</i> )
2.	+ I T ( <i>border</i> ) 1849 ( <i>border</i> )
3.	+ IOHN TAYLOR AND SON BELLFONDERS LOUGHBOROUGH 1849
4.	+ IOHN TAYLOR AND SON BELLFONDERS LOUGHBOROUGH ( <i>border</i> ) 1849 ( <i>border</i> )
5.	THE OLD FOUR BELLS RECAST INTO FIVE 1849. R : GLOVER & J : CLARKSON C : WARDENS. <i>Waist: (Banner with I : TAYLOR + FECIT LOUGHBOROUGH)</i>

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Canons</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Son, 1849	34 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Queens heads	7	0	23
2.	John Taylor & Son, 1849	35 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	Queens heads	7	0	27
3.	John Taylor & Son, 1849	37 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Plain	8	0	0
4.	John Taylor & Son, 1849	41 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	Lions heads	10	3	18
5.	John Taylor & Son, 1849	47	Lions heads	16	0	16

The bells were opened by the Stoney Stanton ringers on 12 February 1850, the event being reported in *Bell's Life in London* of 24<sup>th</sup> February:

On Tuesday, the 12th of February, 1850, the Ancient and Romantic Village of KINGSBURY, Warwickshire, was all animation, in consequence of the opening of a new PEAL OF BELLS, cast and hung by Messrs. TAYLOR and SON, of Loughborough; weight of tenor, 16 cwt., in the key of E; total weight of the peal 50 cwt. A company of ringers was invited from Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire, to discharge the performances of the day, who rang many six scores in their customary scientific manner; after which a very respectable party, including the Minister and Churchwardens, partook of an excellent dinner at the Swan Inn. The melodious tones of the bells were much admired by all present, and great eulogisms were conferred upon the founders for the superior style in which they had completed their work.

The bells were hung in the old wooden frame, which had three parallel pits (east-west) on the east side of the tower and a transverse pit for the tenor to the west. The two smallest bells of the five were hung to swing mouth-to-mouth in the pit along the north wall of the tower. It was a tall frame, about six feet high, of jack-braced construction (*Bellframes* type 6.B) and of substantial proportions. The depth of the sills and heads was 15 and 11 inches respectively.

The bells were re-hung on ball bearings by Taylors in 1921. At that time, they reused most of the old fittings and the bells were not quarter turned. In 1959 the same firm added another bell to make a ring of six. This involved the installation of a cast iron lowside pit – with the new bell swinging north-south – in the north west corner of the tower. The new bell (retained as the third of the present ring) was then 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" in diameter and weighed 5-3-12.

In 1968-9 the bells were completed restored, the five bells of 1849 being recast, two bells added, and all re-hung in a new frame with new fittings. The dedication of the restored ring took place on 28 June 1969.

The bells hang in a cast iron "low side" frame, dating from 1969 but incorporating a casting supplied when the bells were augmented to six in 1959. The fittings include cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, ball bearings, traditional wheels, traditional stays and sliders, and independent crown staples. The fittings of the third bell date from 1959, and those of the others from 1969.

Visited: C.J.P., 24 July 1979 and 18 January 1986

### **KINGSWOOD – St. Chad**

This church was built as a Mission Chapel in the Kingswood area of the Parish of Lapworth, Kingswood having become a sizeable hamlet in the nineteenth century on accounts of its position at the junction of the Stratford-upon-Avon and Grand Union Canals. Its proximity to Lapworth Railway Station was another factor which contributed to its growth.

The church was licensed for worship in June 1898. It is a prefabricated iron building with a square bell turret with copper covered spirelet over the main entrance front. The bell is a brass foundry casting with a peg argent, and it is about 16 inches in diameter. It bears the foundry mark of James Barwell of Birmingham on the waist, and it was probably supplied to the church in 1898. It is hung between two girders in the base of the spirelet, and its fittings consist of an iron bar headstock, plain bearings, iron chiming lever, and a clapper.

Visited C.J.P. (binoculars) 26 October 1985

### **KNOWLE – St. John the Baptist, St. Laurence, and St. Anne**

The western tower of this church contains a ring of eight bells in the key of G natural (798Hz or G plus 11.03 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 38 inches.

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Inscription</b>
1.	267 / ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist:</i> 1914 THEY DIED FOR US 1918 <i>Opposite:</i> 1931 / TAYLOR
2.	212 / ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist:</i> IN MEMORY OF / MY FATHER AND MOTHER / A.E. WILLIAMS, CHURCHWARDEN <i>Opposite:</i> 1931 / TAYLOR
3.	298 806 / IN MEMORY OF HILDA ROSE AND MARY GAUKROGER <i>Waist:</i> BARWELL 1897 / TE DEUM LAUDAMUS / 1837 VICTORIA R.I. 1897 / D.D. THOMAS SAVAGE M.D. / ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / RECAST 1979
4.	130 806 / IN MEMORY OF EDITH HANCOX AND CHARLOTTE HOTCHKISS <i>Waist:</i> BARWELL 1897 / IN NOMINE DOMINI / 1837 VICTORIA R.I. 1897 / D.D. T. HUBERTUS BOWER ET FAM / ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / RECAST 1979
5.	195 806 / IN MEMORY OF HELEN FURBER <i>Waist:</i> BAGLEY 1687 / RECAST BARWELL 1897 / THE GIFT OF B. MARIA CHRISTOPHERSON / GOD SAVE THE QUEEN / ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / RECAST 1979
6.	158 806 / IN MEMORY OF CHARLES & ELLEN MARTINEAU <i>Waist:</i> BAGLEY 1687 / RECAST BARWELL 1897 / AT THE COST OF THE PARISHIONERS / OF KNOWLE. / FEAR GOD. / ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / RECAST 1979
7.	236 / ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist:</i> † /       1687                   1897                   1931 BAGLEY        BARWELL        TAYLOR

8. 137 806 / THE GIFT OF KNOWLE BELLRINGERS  
*Waist:* BARWELL 1897 / IN NOMINE DOMINI / 1837 VICTORIA R.I. 1897 / D.D.  
 JOHANNES WAKEFIELD / (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1979

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1931	24¼	1581	3	2	0
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1931	25	1490	3	3	8
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1979	25¾	1329	3	2	0
4.	John Taylor & Co, 1979	26⅞	1182	3	3	2
5.	John Taylor & Co, 1979	29	1056	4	2	9
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1979	31	995	5	3	3
7.	John Taylor & Co, 1931	33⅞	886	7	1	10
8.	John Taylor & Co, 1979	38	789	9	3	7

Until 1897 there were only three bells at Knowle, all cast in 1687 by Matthew Bagley. It seems that they were cast at Evesham and transported up the river Avon to Stratford or Warwick, and brought thence by road to Knowle by John Simons. The bells cost £30, and the tenor bell weighed about 7 cwt. In 1877 John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough submitted an estimate for adding three new bells to make a ring of six, but the scheme remained in abeyance until Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. In that year, James Barwell of Birmingham contracted to recast one of the old bells, to cast three new ones, and to provide a new bell-frame and new fittings for the entire ring. It was originally intended that two of the Bagley bells should be retained, but the tonal difference between the old and the new was found to be so marked that they were also recast. The bells thus became a complete ring of six by Barwell with a tenor weighing 10 cwt. 0 qr. 7 lbs., and they were dedicated on 7th August 1897. In 1931 the fifth bell became cracked and it was recast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, who at the same time cast two additional bells to make a ring system, and this emphasised the inferior tone of the other bells of 1897. In 1979 the remaining Barwell bells were recast by John Taylor & Co., and the three Taylor bells of 1931 were quarter turned, the restored ring being rededicated by the Bishop of Birmingham on 20th November 1979.

When the bells were restored in 1897, James Barwell installed a composite frame with cast iron sections and wooden cills and frame heads. This frame was extended by John Taylor & Co. in 1931 by the addition of two further composite sections to the east of the original frame, making two pits to contain the new bells added to augment the ring to eight. With the exception of one section of the 1897 frame preserved *in situ* on the north side of the tower, all this framework was removed in 1979, and John Taylor & Co. provided a new cast iron "lowside" frame position at a lower level in the tower.

The bells are fitted with cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, self aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and traditional type stays and sliders. There is also an Ellacombe chiming hammer for the tenor bell. The headstocks of the treble and second bells date from 1931, and all the old wheel centres have been retained, but otherwise all the fittings date from 1979 and they were supplied by John Taylor & Co.

Visited C.J.P., 26 August 1975, and 26 October 1985

### **KNOWLE – Knowle Hall**

The original Knowle Hall was a sizeable house built by Fulke Greville in the early seventeenth century, and in the 1730's it became the seat of the well known architect and builder, Francis Smith of Warwick. Smith died in April 1738, and in 1754 his heirs disposed of the property which afterwards gradually fell into decay. The house became a farmhouse and the park was turned over to farm land.

A view of the house by Thomas Ward (1770-1850) shows a range of buildings on either side of the garden in front of the house. The buildings on the south side had a clock dial on an enclosed wooden turret rising from the roof, and the turret doubtless also contained a bell.

The present house was built on a new site closer to the village of Knowle in 1834 after the owner of the estate, William Wilson, had been advised by his architect that the walls of the old mansion were "weak and unsafe". The clock turret was not replaced, and today Knowle Hall has neither clock nor bell.

Visited C.J.P., 26 October 1985

### **KNOWLE – Springfield Hall**

Springfield Hall in a large house of eighteenth century date situated at the eastern edge of the Parish of Knowle. It is now used as a school.

On 29<sup>th</sup> November 1913, a turret clock was ordered from Gillett & Johnston of Croydon for the new garage at Springfield. The order was placed by a London architect named Alan Brace, and the builder is named in the records as Mr. Redhouse. The clock was a no. 1 striking clock costing £53.15s., and the two external dials on the turret were designed and made specially by the Birmingham Guild Ltd. The clock bell (No. 2862) was cast by Gillett & Johnston in December 1913 or January 1914, and it was 17½ inches in diameter, weighing 1 cwt. 0 qrs. 2 lbs.

It is believed that the clock and bell remain in place in the turret, but they are now disused as access was made difficult when the garage was converted to provide additional classroom accommodation for the school.

Visited C.J.P. 12 October 1985

### **LAPWORTH – St. Mary**

Lapworth is a pre-Conquest settlement and the oldest parts of the church date from the twelfth century. The nave is essentially of this date – although much altered by the addition of the aisles and clerestory – and one Norman window remains over the first arch of the thirteenth-century north aisle. The tower stands to the north of the church and must have been free-standing at first, although it is now linked to the east end of the north aisle by a short corridor or passage. The tower date from the late fourteenth century and it carries an octagonal spire which was partially rebuilt under the direction of J.A. Chatwin in 1884.

#### ***The present bells***

The tower on the north side of the church has a spiral stair in the north-west corner giving access to the clock room, bell chamber and battlements. A ringing floor has been inserted and this is reached by ladder from the lower stage of the tower which is used as a vestry.

There is a ring of six bells in the key of G natural (777Hz or G minus 15.51 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 38<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches.

#### ***Bell***

#### ***Inscription***

1. 161 318 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \*  
*Waist* a: IN MEMORY OF / ALFRED MELSON 1852-1929  
*Opposite*: EDWARD FENWICK, RECTOR / ROGER WATKINS } / NOEL BAMFORD }  
CHURCHWARDENS / 1963
2. 173 / W<sup>M</sup>. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1786  
*Waist*: THIS BELL RECAST AND THE PEAL REHUNG / BY PARISHIONERS AND  
FRIENDS / 1963 / \* \* \* / EDWARD FENWICK, RECTOR / ROGER WATKINS } / NOEL  
BAMFORD } CHURCHWARDENS / 1963  
*Opposite*: 19 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 63
3. BRYANVS ELDRIDGE ME FECIT 1656



4. + SANCTA KATERINA ORA PRO NOBIS
5. (*Brasyer cross*) PRAISE THE LORDE 1600
6. 247 / W<sup>M</sup>. MEARS LATE LESTER PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1786  
*Waist:* THIS BELL RECAST AND THE PEAL REHUNG / BY PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS / 1963 / \* \* \* / EDWARD FENWICK, RECTOR / ROGER WATKINS } / NOEL BAMFORD } CHURCHWARDENS / 1963  
*Opposite:* 19 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 63

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1963	26	2:2-2:3:2	1306	3	3	20
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1963	27½	2:2-2:3:2	1163	4	0	10
3.	Bryan Eldridge, 1656	30	3:3-2:3:2	1036	5	0	2
4.	Worcester foundry, c.1440	32¼	3:4-3:3:3	978	6	1	15
5.	Watts, 1600	35	2:3-3:3:2	871	7	2	6
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1963	38⅝	2:2-2:3:2	777	10	1	2

The three modern bells are all flat-topped castings, tuned on the true-harmonic system. The three old bells all retain their canons and they have been quarter turned. The fourth is inscribed in small Gothic letters with a crown over the first letter of each work (as underlined). The letters are spaced evenly all round the inscription band (and not grouped in words as on some bells by this founder). The inscriptions of the two bells recast in 1963 have been reproduced in similar lettering on the new bells.

The bells hang in a cast iron bellframe of "lowside" pattern (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.h). The fittings include cast iron headstocks (those of the three old bells being of canon retaining type), fixed steel gudgeons, ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and Hastings stays. The frame and fittings were supplied and installed by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough in 1963.

#### *History*

In 1552 there were four bells and a saunce bell at Lapworth. Of the bells mentioned in the Edwardian Inventory of that year one survived – the present fourth, which was probably cast at Worcester in about 1440 by a founder named Richard le Belyetere.

The remaining mediaeval bells were subsequently recast and the saunce or sanctus bell disappeared. One of the old bells was recast in 1600, the present fifth having been cast at Leicester in that year. This bell bears the Brasyer cross, indicating that it is most likely the work of Hugh Watts I. In 1656 Bryan Eldridge of Chertsey (Surrey) cast what is now the third bell of the ring, this being one of several bells supplied by him to Warwickshire churches between 1656 and 1658 when he probably had a temporary foundry in or near Coventry.

It is not entirely clear when the number of bells was increased from four to five. In around 1750 Browne-Willis noted five bells here, but his notes are not always reliable. It seems more likely that the ring was augmented to five in 1786 when William Mears of Whitechapel recast the old tenor and supplied a new treble. Mears became the main proprietor of the foundry after the death of his former partner William Chapman in 1784, the succession being noted in the inscriptions on the former Lapworth bells which were as follows:

#### **Bell**

#### **Inscription**

1. W<sup>M</sup>. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1786
5. W<sup>M</sup>. MEARS LATE LESTER PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1786

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	William Mears, 1786	28½	1235	D+87	4	3	8
2.	William Mears, 1786	39	805	G+46	10	0	3

The reputed weight of the old tenor was 18cwt, but this was far too heavy for a bell with a diameter of only 39 inches. The exact weights were recorded in 1963.

There are no early churchwardens' accounts or vestry minutes, but one of the parish registers includes various notes written during the incumbency of the Rev. A. St. John Mildmay, who was Rector from 1848-1864, and these include a note dated 1855 about the ringers. In that year, Mildmay

"... arranged with the Bellringers that their money collected should be equally divided among them & not spent at the Public House that they should ring on all the [*word illegible*] Festivals of Xmas, Easter, Whitsunday & Trinity S. & at the customary one the 5th of November"

The bells were examined by the Rev. H.T. Tilley for his book on Warwickshire bells in February 1876 and again by William Saunders (the Sherbourne manuscript) on 20 July 1891. Tilley noted that the frame has pits for six bells with the "treble hung above the rest". Saunders provides a slightly more detailed description of the frame and fittings with a plan of the old bellframe and brief notes on the clock. He noted "Ring of 5. Cage good. Treble above. Clock under bells. Weights come up through cage. Hour on 5. S face above S belfry window. ... [Bells] rung from church floor. Ropes don't form ring. Fittings fair".

The frame was arranged on the hollow-square plan with four pits round the walls (*Bellframes* plan 5.7 configured A1, E2, B3, C4 and D5). These pits housed bells 2-5 with a clockwise rope circle. The treble was hung in the middle of the frame and swung diagonally from north-west to south-east, its rope falling between those of bells 4 and 5. It looks as though the treble pit was slightly raised above the heads of the other pits rather than at a higher level in the tower.

The spire was partially rebuilt and the tower restored under the direction of the Birmingham architect J.A. Chatwin in 1884. The rehunging of the bells followed a few years later, and in a report of the work of Charles Carr of Smethwick in *Campanology* 9 December 1896 "Lapworth" appears in a list of jobs that were about to be done by the firm. A later inspection report of 2 October 1958 by John Oldham and Jack Fidler of John Taylor & Co confirms that the bells were rehung by Carr as it notes that the fittings were "Carr's about 60 years old".

On 11 September 1961 a faculty was granted "for making a door in the west curtain wall connecting the church with the bell tower, subsequently rehunging the bells, making good the flooring etc in the tower". The work was undertaken under the supervision of the church architect, A.B. Chatwin, and the "old oak frame, long past repair" was removed by Bragg Bros. Ltd. who carried out all the necessary structural work in the tower. The work on the bells was undertaken by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough who recast the old treble and tenor, supplied a new treble (given by Mrs. Nume in memory of her uncle, Alfred Melson, who was churchwarden 1923-9) to make six and rehung the bells with new frame and fittings. The bells were rededicated by the Bishop of Birmingham at evensong on Sunday 28 April 1963.

The *clock* is said by some to date from the sixteenth century, although a date in the later seventeenth century is suggested by some horologists. In his 1934 *Guide to Lapworth Church* J.J. Belton wrote that "This time piece is one of the earliest of village clocks. Its mechanism is very primitive and much of it consists of rough blacksmith-made parts. Yet in spite of its primitive construction, and the fact that the weather has an effect on the ropes which carry the weights, the clock keeps remarkably good time. It is said to be a 'bedstead' clock and dates from the early 16th century". Interestingly, a revised dating of c.1690-1710 is given in the service sheet for the 1963 rededication of the bells although the 1968 church guide dates it to "the end of the 16th century".

There is a mention of a clock here in the Visitation returns for 1674 in which it is noted that "The upper floore of the tower is uncovered, whereby the clock is already disordered, and

destruction threatened to the bell frames". In October 1674 it was certified that all the necessary repairs had been completed.

This is a rather tantalising reference as far as the clock is concerned as it is open to interpretation in two entirely different ways. It clearly indicates that there was an old clock that had fallen into "disorder" because of the state of the tower, and this could be taken to show that the present clock is an ancient one that was restored in 1674. On the other hand, it is possible that the old clock was beyond repair which would imply that the present one was put up in the course of the repairs completed in that year.

A date of 1674 would certainly fit some features of the mechanism. The clock has a wooden fieldgate frame in which the two trains are arranged one above the other – the going train at the bottom and the striking train above. The going train was made with an anchor escapement and there is no sign of conversion from the older verge and foliot system, and this must mean a date later than the mid 1660s. Similarly, the kick-start striking mechanism belongs to this period.

A.E. Everitt's lithographs of the church in *Notices of Warwickshire Churches* (1858) show a diamond-shaped clock dial over the southern belfry window opening on the tower. The dial had two hands. As noted above, William Saunders recorded in 1891 that the clock had a dial above the belfry window on the south face of the tower. The present dial is in the same position, but it is of metal with openwork in the centre and a chapter ring painted blue with Roman numerals in gold. It dates from the early twentieth century.

The clock has been restored recently by English Clockmakers of Derby (Richard Blackwall). The work involved overhauling and restoring the works, installing mechanisms for automatic winding and for night silencing, and to restoring the dial and hands. A faculty for the work was issued on 31 October 2000.

Visited C.J.P., 5 November 1968, 26 October 1985 and 11 July 2009

### **LEA MARSTON – St. John the Baptist**

This church has a North Western tower containing a ring of three bells with a tenor in B natural (985Hz or B minus 4.86 cents) and having a diameter of 32½ inches.

#### ***Bell*                      *Inscription***

1.     J : TAYLOR & C<sup>O</sup>. FOUNDERS LOUGHBOROUGH 1873
2.     JOHN RUDHALL GLOCESTER FEC<sup>T</sup>. 1791
3.     + JOHN TAYLOR & SON FACERUNT : LOUGHBOROUGH 1855

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Founder and date</i></b>	<b><i>Diameter</i></b>	<b><i>Nominal</i></b>	<b><i>Note</i></b>	<b><i>Cwt.</i></b>	<b><i>Qrs.</i></b>	<b><i>Lbs.</i></b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1873	29½	1254	D# + 13.15	5	1	13
2.	John Rudhall, 1791	30¼	1059	C + 20.55	5	2	0*
3.	John Taylor & Son, 1855	32½	985	B - 4.86	6	1	8

The catalogue of bells cast at the Gloucester foundry published in 1804 lists three bells cast for Lea Marston, of which the present second bell was evidently one, and this suggests that John Rudhall supplied a complete ring of three in 1791. It would appear that in this instance Rudhall's list may be inaccurate, however, as the Loughborough Foundry records show that the old tenor delivered for recasting in 1855 bore the inscription "GOD SAVE THE CHVRCH 1629". It weighed 5 cwt. 2 qrs. 7 lbs. The present tenor was cast by John Taylor & Son in 1855, and in 1873 the same firm recast the treble bell which, according to the Vestry minutes, had "between cracked for some time". All three bells have canons, those of the treble being of angular type and those of the tenor being patterned, and the second and tenor bells have been quarter turned.

An early nineteenth century drawing of the church shows and embattled fourteenth century tower standing within the nave and rising from the roof at the west end of the church. At the time of the restoration of the church in 1876 – 7 the old tower was taken down and replaced by the present North Western tower, built to the designs of the architect Frederick Preedy of London. The bells, frame, and fittings were evidently transferred from the old tower to the new without major alteration, since the existing oak bellframe was constructed in the late eighteenth century. The initials and date "T P 1793" are carved on the western frame head, and although "T P" cannot at present be identified the frame is clearly the work of a bellhanger and not a local carpenter. The bells hang in three parallel pits with the tenor bell in the centre, and the frame consists of cills, main braces, and long frame heads. It was strengthened with angle plates and tie rods when the bells were refitted by James Barwell of Birmingham in 1907.

The fittings were renewed by James Barwell Ltd. of Birmingham in 1907 at a cost of £33 2s 6d. , and they consist of elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, plain bearings in iron housings, traditional type wheels with iron wheel stays, and traditional type stays and sliders. The clappers are suspended from independent crown staples, and the ground pulleys are mounted in iron housings.

Visited C.J.P., 14 February 1976 and 9 January 1988; Thanks to David Kelly (data on nominals)

### **MAXSTOKE - St. Michael**

The church here was established in the 1330s by Sir William de Clinton, at much the same time as the adjacent Priory consecrated in 1342 and Maxstoke Castle which lies about 1½ miles to the north. The church consists of nave and chancel under one roof, built on a scale suggesting that it may have been originally intended as the chancel of a much larger building. It is largely of mid-C14 date, but the tower standing within the west end of the nave was erected during a Georgian remodelling in 1773-5. Faculty plans survive in the Lichfield diocesan archives and there are building accounts in the parish records. The parish spent over £207 on the scheme, but the accounts only record summary payments to Thomas Shuttleworth and John Cheshire who carried out the work.

The C18 tower probably replaced an earlier one, as in 1552 there were two bells in the steeple here – "Maxstoke two small belles in the steeple". The present tower is brick inside, but faced with stone externally and with light Gothic detailing. There are stairs to the gallery, from where ladders give access to the bells.

There are two C17 bells which are hung for ringing.

#### ***Bell***

#### ***Inscription***

1. GLORIA DEO IN EXCELSIS 1631  
*Waist: (Heart-shaped trade mark of Thomas Hancox) (Impression of the seal of Langdon Monastery) (Impression of unidentified seal)*
2. *(Lion's head cross)* GOD *(arabesque border)* SAVE *(border)* THE *(border)* KING *(border)* 1641 *(border)*

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Thomas Hancox, 1631	23¼	2:2-2:3:2	1481.5	F# +1	2	3	0*
2.	Hugh Watts, 1641	25⅝	3:2-2:2:1	1180	D+7	3	2	0*

The smaller bell was cast at Walsall in 1631. It bears the foundry mark of Thomas Hancox, but as Thomas Hancox the elder died in the year in which the bell was cast it is uncertain whether it was cast by the father or by the son. The bell also bears impressions of two mediaeval seals which are found on a number of bells cast at the Walsall foundry. The first of these was identified by H.B. Walters as the seal of the Monastery of West Langdon, Kent

and it represents the Virgin and Child in a shrine with an elaborate architectural surround. The inscription round the seal is legible. Walters was unable to identify the second seal which depicts towers and a central spire. The larger bell was cast at Leicester in 1641 by High Watts II and it is a later example of his work. Both bells are maiden castings. They retain their canons and they have not been quarter turned.

The oak bell frame was probably installed when the tower was rebuilt in 1773-5. It is constructed of cills, main braces, jack braces, and long frame heads (*Bellframes* type 6.B), and the bells hang in parallel pits to swing east to west. The fittings of the bells appear to be contemporary with the frame and they consist of oak headstocks, strap gudgeons, stock hoops, plain brass bearings with wooden covers, unorthodox type wheels with iron wheel stays and traditional type stays and sliders. They are small rope rollers in lieu of ground pullies and the clappers have wooden tops secured by keyed ironwork. The frame and fittings are of excellent design and they are an interesting example of an eighteenth century installation.

There is no *clock*

**Visited:** CJP, 19 November 1977 and 18 May 2010: Thanks to Michael Fetherston-Dilke, Churchwarden (2010)

### **MAXSTOKE - Castle**

Maxstoke Castle is a fortified manor house, built in around 1340 by Sir William de Clinton who received a licence to crenellate in 1345. With high curtain walls, corner towers and a substantial gatehouse tower at the main entrance, the castle stands on a moated site. In 1599 the estate was acquired by Thomas Dilke of Coleshill whose descendants have enjoyed continuous ownership ever since.

The cupola on the roof of the north-east corner tower of the castle gatehouse contains a small bell which is both hung for swing chiming and used in connection with the clock. The bell has a diameter of 17 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches and its strike note is C natural (2051.5Hz or C minus 34 cents). It is inscribed only with the date, 1812, but the style of the date figures and canon mouldings indicates that the founder was probably Thomas Mears of Whitechapel, London. The bell is fitted with a wooden headstock, drive-in gudgeons which rotate in slots in the wooden frame of the cupola, a wheel and a hook-over type clapper. The wooden supports to the cupola failed and between 2004 and 2010 the structure was renewed in steel. The bell has been rehung to swing between two parallel wooden beams in the new turret.

Although the present bell was cast in 1812, there is evidence to show that there was a bell in the cupola on the gatehouse at a much earlier date. A bell in this position is shown in an engraving of the castle by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, dated 1729 and a "Clock and bell in the tower" are mentioned in an inventory of the castle taken in 1753. A document in the family muniments shows that a new clock was installed by a Coleshill clockmaker, William Vale, in 1757. Vale's receipt dated 26 August 1757 shows that he was paid £20 by Esq<sup>r</sup>. Dilk for a "a Turret Clock with Brass Wheels". As the clock dial is not shown on the engraving of 1729, it is probable that the 1757 clock replaced an earlier one which merely struck the hours on the small bell in the cupola without showing the time on an external dial.

The clock mechanism is situated in the uppermost room in the north-east corner tower of the gatehouse and there is ample fall for the clock weights through the lower chambers. There is no date or maker's name on the setting dial but the present clock is probably contemporary with the 1812 bell as its cast iron four-poster frame is of a type commonly used by London makers from the end of the eighteenth century into the first half of the nineteenth century. It is a two-train movement with deadbeat escapement, maintaining power, brass wheels and countwheel-controlled hour striking mechanism. It displays the time on a single-handed dial on the outside of the gatehouse tower facing the main drive.

A clock from Maxstoke is to be seen at the late Victorian church of St. Mark's at Washwood Heath, near Birmingham. A brass plate in the base of the tower records that its clock was given by Mrs. Lincoln Tangye of Maxstoke Castle and set in motion by Lord Norton on Coronation Day, 22 June 1911. The clock itself is a second-hand movement signed on the barrels of the striking train by Alexander Simmons of Warwick and dated 1855. The clock and bell at Washwood Heath belong together, the bell being almost certainly the 18" bell invoiced to Alexander Simmons by C & G Mears for £10.0.10 on 3 November 1855, as noted in the Whitechapel foundry daybooks.

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1855

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	C & G Mears, 1855	18 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	C	1	1	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>

At Maxstoke, this clock was probably placed on the Victorian stable block to the north east of the house built for Charles Fetherston-Dilke II who inherited the estate in 1853. During his tenancy of the Castle in the early years of the twentieth century Harold Lincoln Tangye (later Sir Lincoln Tangye) installed electricity generating plant in the stables, and this may have necessitated the removal of the clock and bell.

**Visited:** CJP and Rosemary Money, 15 August 1980 and CJP, 3 June 2004 and 18 May 2010: Thanks to Captain C.B. Fetherston-Dilke (1980) and Michael Fetherston-Dilke (2004 and 2010)

**MEREVALE – Our Lady**

The enclosed wooden turret on the roof of the church at the junction of the nave and chancel was rebuilt when the church was restored in 1893. There are two bells which are hung for swing chiming. Their diameters are 26 and 27<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches and their respective strike notes are E natural and D natural.

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. *Waist: (Taylor's circular mark)*
2. J : TAYLOR & Co FOUNDERS LOUGHBOROUGH

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1893	26	E	3	2	9
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1893	27 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	D	4	1	24 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>

These two bells were both cast by John Taylor and Co. of Loughborough. Neither is dated but the Loughborough foundry records indicate that they were supplied to the church at the time of the restoration in 1893 and they were apparently supplied from stock. They have angular canons and they have not been quarter turned.

The bells swing east to west between three parallel beams fixed in the walls of the turret and they are fitted with elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, plain bearings in iron housings, clappers suspended from independent crown staples and iron chiming levers. The fittings were provided by John Taylor & Co. in 1893.

Until 1893 there were two small bells described by the Rev. H.T. Tilley as "devoid of inscription, but evidently ancient". The Loughborough foundry records give the sizes and weights of these bells as 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" 0cwt. 3qrs. 13lbs. and 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" 1cwt. 0qr. 1lb. as received at the foundry on 20 December 1892, but no details of the shapes or dimensions seem to have been recorded. From the available information it seems that these were uninscribed bells of some antiquity and it is a matter for regret that they have been destroyed since their scrap value can hardly have made a significant reduction in the cost of the new bells.

The clock was presented to the church by Henry Digby Parry-Mitchell of the Gate House, Merevale, in 1913. It was made by John Smith & Sons of Derby and it is a two-train movement in a cast iron flatbed frame, with pin-wheel escapement and an hour strike mechanism (now disused) which struck the larger bell. Invoiced on 16 August 1913, it cost £66 and the total cost, including the necessary building work, was £81.5.0.

Two small bells are preserved in the church, one from St. John's chapel at Bentley (demolished in 1972), and the other from Bentley school. The former has a diameter of 17 inches and it is dated 1837. It was probably cast by Thomas Mears II of Whitechapel. The latter is a late nineteenth century brass foundry casting with peg argent and its diameter is 11 inches.

Visited by C.J.P. 19 November 1977 and 26 October 1985

### **MEREVALE - Merevale Hall**

Merevale Hall stands in an impressive hilltop site at the end of a ridge above Atherstone. The present house was built on the site of an earlier mansion in 1838-44 for Sir William Stratford Dugdale and its architect was Edward Blore. On the house itself there are two small bells, both brass foundry castings of about 1840, which were no doubt put up at the time of the rebuilding. The kitchen bell hangs in a valley in the roof on the north side of the house and the other hangs in an open stone bell cote among the battlements on the entrance front. Both bells are about 15 inches in diameter.

The stable block to the south west of the house has an embattled clock tower with three stone dials (2ft 6in diameter). Like the house itself, the stables were rebuilt in 1841 to the design of Edward Blore. The clock was recently restored in about 1980. It is a two-train movement in a wrought iron birdcage frame, with recoil escapement and rack striking and it bears the name of "WYNN, Dean St<sup>t</sup>, Soho, London". William Wynn, watch and clockmaker, is listed at 84 Dean Street, Soho in a London trades directory of 1823-4, and in a subsequent directory of 1839 his address is given as 19 Dean Street. The clock was doubtless made in this period and it was probably installed in its present position in 1841.

The small clock bell has a diameter of 16¼ inches and it is without date, inscription or marks. It has a plain raised band round the shoulder. It has six canons, one of which is broken and it is fixed to a beam in the roof of the clock tower. The date of the bell is uncertain, although it appears to be older than the clock and it may have come from the eighteenth century stable block demolished when the present stables were built in 1841.

Visited C.J.P., 20 November 1985

### **MIDDLETON - St. John The Baptist**

The western tower of this church houses a ring of three bells in the key of G natural (776.5Hz or G minus 16.62 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 38⅝ inches

#### ***Bell***

#### ***Inscription***

1. T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1826. (*border*)
2. T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1826. (*border*)
3. T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1826. (*border*) HENRY RUSHWORTH WOOLLEY VICAR (*border*)  
*Waist:* JOHN LEES } / JOHN GILLMAN } CHURCH WARDENS

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Founder and date</i></b>	<b><i>Diameter</i></b>	<b><i>Nominal</i></b>	<b><i>Note</i></b>	<b><i>Cwt.</i></b>	<b><i>Qrs.</i></b>	<b><i>Lbs.</i></b>
1.	Thomas Mears, 1826	32⅞	978	B – 17.2	6	0	23
2.	Thomas Mears, 1826	34¼	872	A – 15.81	6	2	13
3.	Thomas Mears, 1826	38⅝	776.5	G – 16.62	8	3	1

All three bells were cast in 1826 by Thomas Mears of the Whitechapel Foundry, London and are inscribed with his usual lettering and border. All three bells retain their canons and have been quarter turned. The second and tenor bells were tuned at casting and all three bells were retuned by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, in 1939. The tone of the treble and tenor bells is entirely typical of the work of the founder, but the retuning of the second bell was extremely successful.

The bells hang in a massive oak bell frame in which all three bells swing east to west, with the tenor bell in the southern side of the tower. The frame rests on two beams fixed north to south in the tower and the cills stand on these beams. Each truss consists of a cill, main braces, king post, short frame head and there are rope transoms across the main braces of all three pits. The construction of this frame suggests that it was built in the fifteenth century and it is therefore one of the most interesting bell frames in the county. It was strengthened by the addition of iron angle plates by John Taylor & Co in 1939.

The bells are fitting with elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type stays and sliders and traditional type wheels with wrought iron wheel stays. These fittings were supplied by John Taylor & Co. in 1939, when the bells were also retuned and quarter turned.

There is a set of ringers' rules, dated 1782, on a stone tablet in the ringing chamber of the tower.

The clock was made by Alexander Simmons of Warwick in about 1855.

Visited C.J.P., 14 February 1976; C.J.N.D., 25 April 1986; Thanks to David Kelly (data on nominals)

### **MIDDLETON - Middleton Hall**

Middleton Hall has a Norman window on the west wall of the east range and therefore claims the distinction of being the oldest domestic building in the county still in use. Other old work is concealed within, but the external appearance of the building reflects the extensive remodelling which took place in the early years of the eighteenth century. The house remained in the hands of the Willoughby family until the early twentieth century and in 1966 the property was acquired by the Amey Roadstone Corporation Ltd., (ARC), the present owners.

There was originally a turret clock with a bell in the old stable block, known as the "Tudor Barn". The clock movement and the bell were taken down some years ago and they remain intact in a store belonging to ARC where they were examined by the writer.

The clock movement is of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date. It has a wrought iron birdcage frame 21¼ inches wide, 17 inches high and 10 inches deep, with 'go' and 'strike' trains side by side. The wheels are brass and there are brass bushes in the iron pinion bars. Part of the escapement is missing, but the escape wheel is of pin-wheel type. The striking mechanism has a count wheel. The dial motion work operated from the same arbour as the setting dial and the dial itself is made of sheet metal. It is three feet in diameter, with gold Roman numerals painted on a black background. Unfortunately, the original setting dial, which no doubt bore the date and the name of the maker, has been lost and a makeshift copper plate has been fitted in its place.

The bell is 19¼ inches in diameter and it sounds the note A natural (876.5hz or A-6). It bears the following inscription:

*IVLY (coin) 1721 (coin) (floral border all round) (coin) / (Joseph Smith's  
large trade mark) (floral border all round)  
Rim: (scroll border all round)*



This bell, an excellent casting and of good tone, was cast in July 1721 by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston. It retains its canons and original cast-in crown staple and it appears to have been used only as a clock bell.

### **Addendum (June 1994)**

Since 1985 the clock and bell have been returned to Middleton Hall from the ARC store. The movement has been restored to working order and it is now on display with other exhibits in the old kitchen. The bell is on display with the clock.

A disused house bell is stored in another part of the building. The bell bears no inscription or marks but its shape and mouldings – which are comparable to those of the later c13th bell from Ullenhall which hung until recently at Emmanuel Church in Sparkbrook – indicate an early date. The bell has square-section moulding lines on the crown, shoulder, low waist and rim in the configuration 1:5:3:2. The lip of the bell is flat and of early form (Elphick type 3) and the six canons and argent are comparatively tall in proportion to the height of the bell. The canons have ridged mouldings. The leading dimensions of the bell are as follows: diameter 13 inches, tangent 11 inches, shoulder circumference 22¼ inches height to shoulder 10¾ inches height to seat of canons 12", canons 3 inches and argent 4 inches.

Visited C.J.P. 2 July 1985 (at Abingdon) 10 June 1994 (Middleton) and 14 July 2015

### **MINWORTH - St. George The Martyr**

This church was erected in 1909-10 as a Mission Church in the Parish of Curdworth and first licensed in 1911. It cost £1,022 and the architect was Sir Charles Nicholson, Bart. The foundation stone was laid on 29 April 1909. The church is built in brick and on the east side of the building it has a brick and stone bell cote in which there is a single bell hung 'dead' for chiming.

#### **Inscription**

+ I WILL (*coin*) SOVND (*coin*) AND (*coin*) CALL, THE CONGREGATION / 1709  
(*floral border all round*)

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Joseph Smith, 1709	18⅞	3:2-2:3:2	1645	Ab-16	1	0	22

This bell was cast in 1709 by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston as one of a pair he supplied to the church at Water Orton, the adjoining parish. It was probably transferred to Minworth when the church was built in 1909-10. The bell has canons.

Before the recent restoration the bell was hung for swing chiming with a wooden headstock, drive-in gudgeons, stock hoops, wall-mounted plain bearings, clapper and an iron-chiming lever. These fittings probably dated from 1909. It now hangs from a steel deadstock fixed to the stone corbels of the bellcote, with a solenoid clapper and tolling unit. It was rehung by Hayward Mills Associates in 2003.

Visited C.J.P., R.M., (binoculars) 5 September 1980; C.J.P. (ladders) 11 August 1989; C.J.P. (binoculars) 18 January 2004; nominal from George Dawson

### **NETHER WHITACRE – St. Giles**

There has been a church here since about 1200, but the present fabric is entirely of later date. The body of the church was rebuilt in 1870 to the designs of Robert Jennings of Atherstone, leaving only the old tower. The date of the tower is uncertain, but it is perhaps of the C16th. It is short, heavily buttressed, of red ashlar with Y-tracery in the windows and old carvings re-set in the masonry. Access to the tower is by spiral stair in the South west corner to the clock room and thence by ladder to the bells

### ***The present bells***

The western tower of this church contains a ring of six bells in the key of G natural (764Hz or G plus 44.72 cents). There is also a clock bell.

- | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | ( <i>Arabesque border all round</i> ) / COME ( <i>coin</i> ) LET US SING ( <i>coin</i> ) UNTO THE LORD ( <i>coin</i> ) 1725 ( <i>floral border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> ) / ( <i>Arabesque border all round</i> )        |
| 2.          | GOD SAVE SIH ( <i>coin</i> ) CHURCH ( <i>coin</i> ) 1725 ( <i>floral border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> ) / ( <i>arabesque border all round</i> )   |
| 3.          | IOSEPH ( <i>coin</i> ) SMITH ( <i>coin</i> ) IN ( <i>coin</i> ) EDGBASTON ( <i>coin</i> ) MADE MEE ( <i>coin</i> ) 1725 ( <i>floral border</i> ) / ( <i>arabesque border all round</i> )                            |
| 4.          | IOHN TALLIS ( <i>coin</i> ) THOMAS ARDEN OF HAMPTON ( <i>coin</i> ) AND CLEMENT FISHER ( <i>floral border</i> ) / WILLIAM LOWES OF BALSALL ( <i>coin</i> ) CHURCH WARDENS 1725. ( <i>border</i> )                   |
| 5.          | SAMUELL LYDIATT D:D VICAR ( <i>coin</i> ) LINGEN UNITT ( <i>coin</i> ) CURATE ( <i>coin</i> ) 1725 ( <i>floral border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> ) / ( <i>arabesque border all round</i> )                                 |
| 6.          | ( <i>Arabesque border all round</i> ) / I TO THE CHURCH THE ( <i>coin</i> ) LIVING CALL ( <i>coin</i> ) AND TO THE ( <i>coin</i> ) GRAVE DOE SVMON ALL 1725 ( <i>coin</i> ) / ( <i>arabesque border all round</i> ) |

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Joseph Smith, 1725	28	3:2-2:5:3	1285	4	1	26
2.	Joseph Smith, 1725	28 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	1146	4	1	26
3.	Joseph Smith, 1725	30	3:2-2:5:3	1022	4	2	14
4.	Joseph Smith, 1725	31 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	964	5	1	13
5.	Joseph Smith, 1725	34 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	859	7	0	26
6.	Joseph Smith, 1725	39 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	3:2-2:5:3	764	10	1	0

These bells were cast in 1725 by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston for the church at Hampton in Arden, and they were transferred to Nether Whitacre in 1977 after a ring of eight bells from Miles Platting, Manchester, had been installed at Hampton. The canons, including those of the third bell which were patterned, were removed in 1975-7, and the bells have been retuned and eighth turned.

The present cast iron "lowside" frame (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.h and layout 6.1) was installed in 1977 by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough, the firm responsible for the transfer and retuning of the bells, who also supplied new fittings. The fittings consist of cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, self aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and traditional type stays and sliders.

For a few years after the new bells were installed, the surviving bell from the old ring remained unhung in the West window of the bell-chamber, but in 1981 it was rehung as an hour bell for the clock. The work was carried out by Mr. Richard Dale of Nether Whitacre, the tower captain, who installed a new steel construction attached to the West side of the bellframe and hung the bell from light steel bars. Details are as follows:

#### ***Inscription***

+ NEWCOMBE OF LEICESTER MADE MEE 1612 (*vine border*)  
*Soundbow. (five coin impressions)*

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Newcombe, 1612	29 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	3:3-3:3:1	1108	C#-1	4	3	0*

It was cast at Leicester in 1612 by the Newcombe brothers working in partnership, and it bears a shortened version of the inscription more commonly found on bells cast by the

Newcombes at this date. The canons of the bell are intact. The bell was not turned in relation to the stock and the clapper strikes on the outside at a point where there is also internal wear from the clapper.

The bells are rung from a first-floor ringing room, and the gallery is separated from the church by a carved wooden screen installed in 1982. It bears an inscription on the front "DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF BARBARA AUDREY CAMPBELL, J.P. 1931-1980".

### **History**

In 1552 there were three bells here – at "Netherwhitacre iij belles, a saunce bell and a handbell" – and the number of bells in the tower remained unchanged until 1977 when the present ring was installed.

Not much is known about the bells, but there are Churchwardens' accounts from 1634 which show that a new bellframe was provided in 1639-40. The accounts record the following expenditure:

1639	Item for worke about the Bell frames viz	
	To Tho: Higgins for 4 dayes worke & a bond & cuttinge	
	endes to stocke the frame	v <sup>s</sup> .
	To Robt Keelinge for Iron worke	ij <sup>s</sup> .
	To Rich Croxall for wood	xiiij <sup>d</sup> .
	for nayles	xj <sup>d</sup> .
	for makeinge the middle wheele	v <sup>s</sup> .
	To Thomas Hitson for wood	ij <sup>s</sup> . viij <sup>d</sup> .
	To Johes Allin for wood	vj <sup>d</sup> .
	my expenses thereabout	xviiij <sup>d</sup> .
		Total xvij <sup>s</sup> . ix <sup>d</sup> .
1640	Item spent att Kimberleyes when wee agreed w <sup>th</sup> th ...	
	bell hanger a bout a new frame for the Bells &c ...	
	viz spent xij <sup>d</sup> . given in earnest vj <sup>d</sup> . for his breakfast ...	
	vj <sup>d</sup> . for writeinge the articles of agreement thereabout 6 ...	
	more spent then by W <sup>m</sup> . Jolliffe x <sup>d</sup> .	
	Item spent on the bellhanger when hee came over ...	
	choose tymber for the frames &c July 8 xj <sup>d</sup> . given ...	
	him towards his charges vj <sup>d</sup> . more spent by W <sup>m</sup> . J : ...	
	Item payd for squareinge of the tymber for the	
	frames v <sup>s</sup> . vj <sup>d</sup> . spent then iiij <sup>d</sup> .	
	Item payde (in parte) for tymber for the bell frames xxij <sup>s</sup> .	
	... by W <sup>m</sup> . Jolliffe in full 4 <sup>li</sup> . 11 <sup>s</sup> . 4 <sup>d</sup> .	v <sup>li</sup> . xiiij <sup>s</sup> . iiij <sup>d</sup> .
	Item spent when I bargained with the sawyars of the bell	
	tymber	
	... helpinge to draw the tymber to the pittes 4 <sup>d</sup> .	
	... for drawinge the pitt 3 <sup>s</sup> . 4 <sup>d</sup> .	
	... xv to Edw Hasterley for carrieinge it to the	
	... 3 <sup>d</sup> to 2 men to helpe to load it xvj <sup>d</sup> for bread	
	... with the draweing of it xij <sup>d</sup> .	xxviiij <sup>s</sup> .
	Item spent by Tho: Snell when I went to helpe the	
	bellhanger and his men to lodginge May 12. 1641 6 <sup>d</sup> . spent	
	on them and ye sawyars when I sett them to saw the	
	tymber smaller after it was brought to the Church 4 <sup>d</sup> . to	
	Amos Barton for makinge the sawpit there & for other	
	worke viij <sup>d</sup> . payd to the sawyars for that worke May 15 4 <sup>s</sup> .	
	spent when I payd them ...	[total] ix <sup>s</sup> . iiij <sup>d</sup> .
1641-7		(Accounts missing)

Clearly the timber was cut and sawn locally. Unfortunately, though, the name of the bellhanger is not recorded and because the volume is damaged the details of the transaction

are incomplete. The frame removed in 1977 (described below) may well have been the one erected in 1639-40.

The accounts for 1634 to 1712 also contain other routine payments for work on the clock and bells. These include:

1636	Item paid to Tho: Higgins for hangeinge up the second bell and for settinge up the Dyall	iijs
1687	Item payd for oyle and charcole which was used about the mendeinge of the bells	0.1.0.
	Item payd to John Symons for plateinge of the bell wheeles unscreweinge the bells and screweinge of them againe and for a locke	0.5.0.
	Item payd to Amos Barton for wood for the bell claper and for his paines helpeinge John Symons about the bells	0.1.6.
	Item payd to Amos Barton for woodeinge the great bell Claper 4 <sup>d</sup> for lether 4 <sup>d</sup> for oyle 4 <sup>d</sup>	0.1.0.

There is a gap in the accounts from 1713 to 1755, and the first significant entries in the volume commencing in 1756 relate to the recasting of two bells by Thomas Hedderly of Nottingham in 1783. Hedderly's printed list (published in 1787) lists bells supplied to "Nether Whittaker", and Thomas Hedderly's notebook contained some scrappy notes relating to his work here:

- a) Treble wittaker / 3-3-4 / Before cast / piece 6lb / wieihed / with Little Bell
- b) Bells cast ... Witaker 2
- c) [no heading or place name] 6-0-17 / 3-3-4 / [total] 9-3-21

The entries in the accounts are as follows:

1782-3	Pd for fetching the Pulleys	0.1.0.
	Pd when taking the Bells down & weaying them	0.8.6.
	For taking the Bell to Burton	1.1.0.
	For Warfige	0.0.6.
	Pd the Carrage of the Bells from Burton to Notingham	0.7.6.
	Decr. 29th. Pd the Carrage of the Bells back from Notingham to Burton	0.8.8.
	For Warfige	0.0.8.
	For fetching the Bells from Burton	1.1.0.
	Edward Butler going to Notingham about the Bells and Expences & Horse	0.14.6.
	Pd Thos Hedderley for the Bells and Asisting for geting them up	£23.11.7.
	Pd. for 35 Quarts of Ale	
	Pd Francis Clark for mending the Bell Clapr	0.1.6.
	Pd. Henry Wright when try'd to mend the Bell	0.3.0.
1784-5 (1785) Jany. 26.	Agreed With Wm Snape to mend the Bell att	£1.11.6.
	for Taking Out of the Steeple & Drawing to Snapes	2.6.
	Spent on Those Who Asisted for Laying In the Stock & Getting In the Steeple Again	2.0.
	Spent on Those Who Asisted Geting the Bell Up again	4.6.
	for fastning the Second Bell & Wedges	4.
	Pd for a Stone & Puting In the Bell Hole	2.0.

There accounts continue into the nineteenth century, but without anything of great interest relating to the bells except for the following reference to minor repairs in 1827:

1827	March 26 p <sup>d</sup> Isaac Dicksons Bill for Mending the Bell	16.0.
------	--	-------

March 27th P<sup>d</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> Pickfords Bill for taking down the Bell &c  
and for a beam and Workmanship

£2.9.6.

The three bells at Nether Whitacre up until 1977 were as follows:

- | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | W <sup>M</sup> BUTLER C W THO <sup>S</sup> HEDDERLY OF NOTTINGHAM FECIT 1783 ( <i>coin</i> )             |
| 2.          | + NEWCOMBE OF LEICESTER MADE MEE 1612 ( <i>vine border</i> )<br><i>Soundbow. (five coin impressions)</i> |
| 3.          | WILLIAM BUTLER CHURCH WARDEN THO <sup>S</sup> HEDDERLY NOTT <sup>M</sup> FECIT 1783                      |

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Thomas Hedderly, 1783	27½	D#	2:2-3:3-2	4	0	20
2.	Newcombe, 1612	29¼	C#	3:3-3:3:1	4	3	0*
3.	Thomas Hedderly, 1783	32¼	B	2:2-3:3-2	5	3	18

By 1975 the canons of the treble bell had been removed and replaced by iron lugs bolted through the crown. The other bells had canons. None had been quarter turned. All three were maiden bells.

The bells were hung for ringing – and were ringable. They were fitted with wooden stocks, strap gudgeons (secured with tail-bolts, plates and stock hoops), plain bearings with wooden covers, wooden wheels (one-piece construction without meeting spokes), traditional stays and sliders, and busk-boarded clappers. These fittings were probably of C18th date.

The wooden frame was of oak or chestnut. It was supported on substantial east-west beams and it had pits for four bells – three parallel and one transverse (i.e. *Bellframes* plan 4.3). The transverse pit along the north side of tower was open-ended on the west – the heads linked only by a light iron bar – and had never been occupied. The northern truss may have been a later addition to the original three-bell frame. The three parallel pits were occupied west to east by bells 3, 1 and 2, giving an anti-clockwise rope circle. It was a standard frame with sills, shallow braces and long heads (*Bellframes* type 6.A), but with jack-bracing in the return sections to the parallel pits. It may have been of 1639-40.

The scheme for installing the present bells was conceived after Hampton in Arden acquired the eight bells from Miles Platting in 1974-5. With the Hampton bells coming to Nether Whitacre, two of the old bells here were sold to Coleshill in 1976-7 to provide scrap metal towards the two new bells added there in 1978 to make a ring of ten. The remaining bell from the old ring (the second) was preserved for use as a clock bell and it is described above.

A faculty for the Hampton scheme was granted on 2 July 1974. The bells were last rung in their original home on 15 June 1975. The faculty for the Nether Whitacre end of the project was granted on 30 June 1977 and the newly-installed bells were dedicated on 22 December 1977. A report of the work appeared in the *Ringing World* on 6 January 1978.

The scheme was later completed by the hanging of the clock bell in 1981 and the erection of the ringing gallery and screen in 1982, as described above.

The church **clock** was given in 1893 by Dorothy Adcock in memory of her brother, Thomas Biddle of Botts Green who died in 1870 as recorded on a brass plate in the base of the tower, inscribed:

THE CLOCK IN THIS TOWER WAS ERECTED / TO THE GLORY OF GOD, AND IN  
MEMORY / OF THOMAS BIDDLE OF BOTTS GREEN, / WHO DIED DECEMBER  
11<sup>TH</sup>.. 1870. / AGED 71 YEARS / BY HIS SISTER DOROTHY ADCOCK, / A.D.  
1893.

The clock was made by John Smith & Sons of Derby in 1893, and it is a two train movement in a flatbed frame. It originally had a pinwheel escapement, but the clock is now electrically driven by a synchronous motor. It was converted to direct drive by Hartshorn in 1973. It has one 5ft dial on the west face of the tower. It used to strike the hours on the tenor bell (which still – 2010 – has a clock hammer) but since 1981 it has struck the separate clock bell.

**Visited:** C.J.P., 6 September 1975, 14 February 1976, 24 July 1979, 18 January 1986 and 20 April 2010; Thanks to Richard Dale

### **NEWTON REGIS – St. Mary**

The church at Newton Regis originated as a chapelry of nearby Seckington in the twelfth century. The earliest parts of the present building date from the early thirteenth century when the lower part of the tower was built. The spire was added in a different stone in the mid fourteenth century. The tower has been strengthened at various times, with the west wall being thickened in the eighteenth century. Steel tie-rods with X-plates on the outside have been inserted quite recently, some of them replacing earlier strengthening of a similar type. The church exterior was restored by C. Ford Whitcombe in 1905 and the interior in 1908.

The tower houses a ring of three bells in the key of G natural (790.5Hz or G plus 14.31 cents), as follows:

- | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | 158   ( <i>floral border all round</i> )<br>Waist: ..... OF LONDON FECIT 1769, R. ELSON CHURCHWARDEN. ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> )   PIECES RECAST 1931, HILDA MARY INGE, PATRON.  |
| 2.          | ( <i>Arabesque border all round</i> )   + RAPHE WOOLLEY CHAROLES HOLDEN HARRE SPENCER CHVRCH WARDENSE 1602   ( <i>acorn border all round</i> )<br>On waist: ( <i>four crowned rosettes, of two types alternately</i> )  |
| 3.          | ( <i>Arabesque border all round</i> )   ( <i>Brasyer shield</i> ) FEDCBA ( <i>border</i> ) MLKIHG ( <i>border</i> ) XWVTS ( <i>border</i> ) RQPON ( <i>border</i> ) FEDCBA ( <i>border</i> ) MKLIHG ( <i>border</i> ) 1642<br>( <i>border</i> ) XW   ( <i>arabesque border all round</i> )<br>Soundbow: ( <i>impressions of three coins</i> ) |

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1931	31 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	994	B + 11	5	2	17
2.	Newcombe, 1602	32 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	879	A - 1	6	2	19
3.	Hugh Watts, 1642	37 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	793	G + 19	9	0	5

The treble bell was recast in 1931 by John Taylor & Co from the pieces of a bell supplied to the church in 1769 from the Whitechapel foundry, London. Taylors received broken metal weighing 3-3-17 from the parish towards the new bell. In 1769, the ownership of the Whitechapel foundry passed from Thomas Lester and Thomas Pack to Thomas Pack and William Chapman, and as the first portion of the inscription of the old bell had not been preserved, it is not possible to say whether the bell was cast by Lester and Pack or Pack and Chapman. It was evidently cracked or broken by 1859 when Taylors gave an estimate for recasting it. The second bell was cast in 1602 by the Newcombe brothers of Leicester and is an excellent casting which bears four crowned rosettes on the waist, one of which also occurs on the second bell at Offchurch. The tenor bell is a late example of the work of Hugh Watts of Leicester, and was cast in 1642. The treble bell was cast without canons, but the two larger bells retain their canons and have been one eight turned.

The bells hang in an oak frame which was supplied by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1931. The same firm also supplied the fittings which consist of cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, traditional type stays and sliders, and an Ellacombe chiming apparatus. The headstocks of the two larger bells are of

the canon retaining type. The bells were dedicated by the Bishop of Birmingham on 16 May 1931.

There is a clock with a skeleton dial on the west face of the tower. It was installed by Smith of Derby in 1887. It is a three-train movement in a flatbed frame. The going train has a pinwheel escapement. The clock shows the time on a 5ft skeleton dial on the west face of the tower and it strikes the ding-dong quarter chimes on bells 1 and 2 and the hours on the tenor.

Visited: C.J.P., 24 August 1974 and 24 June 2009

### **NO MANS HEATH – St.Mary the Virgin**

No Mans Heath is an area at the point where the counties of Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire converge. It was originally extra-parochial, but a district chapelry of No Mans Heath was created on 12 December 1873, a few years after the church was built. The church is now (2009) redundant but it is to be adapted for community use.

The church building stands in Warwickshire but it belongs to Lichfield Diocese. The church was built in 1863-5 and consecrated on 19 July 1865. The identity of the architect is uncertain, but it is a small brick building in the Perpendicular style with chancel, nave and south porch. A vestry was added on the north side of the church by F.T. Beck of Wolverhampton in 1901.

There is a bellcote over the west gable, containing a small bell hung for swing chiming. The bell is inaccessible, but in 1985 the late Ranald Clouston examined it by telescope and noted that it carries an inscription on the soundbow which he read as:

... & SONS LONDON 1858

He noted that the third figure of the date was not well cast.

The bell is clearly the work of John Warner & Sons of London, and probably dates from 1865 (on the basis that the church is of this date, a poorly cast "6" could be read as a "5" and the numerals 8 and 5 are easily confused when seen from a distance through a telescope). The bell is about 14" in diameter. It has a peg argent, and it is hung with an iron stock, an iron chiming lever and a clapper. The bearings are set in wooden blocks fixed to the side walls of the bellcote.

Visited: R.W.M.C. 9.3.1985 (telescope); C.J.P. 24 June 2009

### **NUTHURST cum HOCKLEY HEATH – Mortuary Chapel**

Nuthurst was originally a detached portion of the parish of Hampton in Arden. The Mediaeval chapel fell into disuse in the seventeenth century and by 1730 it was in ruins, but the remaining fragments survived into the early nineteenth century and the ruins are depicted in an illustration in the Aylesford collection. In 1834 a new chapel was built on the site to the designs of James Benjamin Harris of Henley in Arden, builder and surveyor, and this remained in use as a Mortuary chapel after the new church was built at Hockley Heath in 1879-1880. It still stands, but the bell-cote on the west wall of the nave was taken down some year ago and the bell is now stored in the new church.

The bell is 18<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches in diameter, its note is approximately F natural, and it bears the date and inscription below the shoulder as follows:

NUTHURST CHAPEL  
1834

The identity of the founder is not known, but the bell is of brass foundry type with six short canons, and it was probably cast in 1834 by a Birmingham brassfounder. It now hangs in a decorative wrought iron frame made by a local ironworker in the late 1960's.

Visited C.J.P., 10 February 1973.

## **NUTHURST cum HOCKLEY HEATH, St.Thomas – see HOCKLEY HEATH**

### **OVER WHITACRE – St. Leonard**

This church was built on the site of its mediaeval predecessor in 1765-6, and there is a date stone inscribed 17 (*fleur de lis*) 65 on the east wall of the ringing chamber in the tower. The western tower has a tall stone spire built in 1850 to replace the dome which originally adorned the tower, and there are two bells which are hung for ringing. The notes of the bells are E flat and B flat, and the larger bell is 34 inches in diameter.

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1. [No Inscription]
2. (*Brasyer shield*) CELORVM CHRSTE PLATIAT TIBI REX SONVS ISTE 1616

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Unknown	26 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1229	E flat - 21.71	3	2	14
2.	Hugh Watts, 1616	34	920	B flat - 23.04	7	0	23

The smaller bell appears to date from the mid fourteenth century. It bears no inscription, but there are three moulding wires on the crown, one above and one below a concave fillet moulding in the 'inscription band', three on the soundbow, and three on the lip. The diameter of the bell is 26<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches, and its leading dimensions are as follows: shoulder circumference 45 inches; lip to shoulder tangent 19<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches; height to seat of canons 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches; height of canons about 5 inches; and soundbow thickness (unworn) 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches. The larger bell was cast in 1616 by Hugh Watts of Leicester. Both bells retain their canons and they have been quarter turned. The smaller bell was retuned by John Taylor & Co. in 1933, and the larger bell has been chip tuned inside the soundbow.

The bells hang in a cast iron bell-frame of lowside pattern, and they sing east to west in parallel pits. They are fitted with cast iron canon-retaining headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, self aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and Hastings stay units. The frame and fittings were supplied and installed by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1933.

The clock is an electric synchronous movement by Smith of Derby, with going train and hour-strike unit. It was dedicated on 6 February 1949.

Visited C.J.P., J.C.E., 26 June 1976, and C.J.P. 12 October 1985.

### **PACKWOOD – St. Giles**

The western tower of this church houses a ring of eight bells in the key of B flat (921Hz or B flat minus 21.16 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 33<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches.

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1. 211 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1960 \*  
*Waist:* THIS BELL IS GIVEN / IN LOVING MEMORY OF / ARCH. WILSON OF PACKWOOD HALL / BY HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN / JULY 8<sup>TH</sup>. 1959
2. 310 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1960 \*  
*Waist:* THIS BELL IS GIVEN / IN LOVING MEMORY OF / ARCH. WILSON OF PACKWOOD HALL / BY HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN / JULY 8<sup>TH</sup>. 1959
3. 243 / (*blank*)  
*Waist:* TE DEUM LAUDAMUS / IN MEMORY OF / THOMAS SAVAGE M.D. / 1907



- Opposite: (Taylor's rectangular mark) / RECAST 1957 / \* \* \* / D. CAMPBELL MILLER, M.A., VICAR / A.H. WILSON } / R.E. TALLIS } CHURCHWARDENS*
4. 196 / CANTATE (*floral border*) DOMINO (*border*) CANTICVM (*coin*) NOVVM (*coin*) 1686 (*border*)  
*Waist: (Coat of arms, with a coin above)*  
*Opposite: (Taylor's rectangular mark) / RECAST 1957*  
*Soundbow: (six coins)*
  5. HENRY BAGLY MADE MEE 1686 (*floral border*)  
*Waist: (Coat of arms, surrounded by fourteen coins)*
  6. (*Floral border with cable moulding above and below all round*) / MATHEW BAGLY MADE (*three coins*) MEE 1686 (*floral border*)  
*Waist: (Coat of arms)*
  7. HENRY (*two coins*) BAGLY MADE MEE ===== 1686  
*Waist: (Coat of arms, with a coin above and another below)*
  8. FEAR GOD AND HONNOR THE KING (*Floral border all round*) / THOMAS (*border*) FETHIRSTON (*border*) ES<sup>q</sup> (*border*) 1686 (*border*)  
*Waist: (Royal arms, surrounded by 27 coins)*

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1960	20½	1842	2	0	10
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1960	21½	1739	2	1	16
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1957	23⅞	1549	2	3	3
4.	John Taylor & Co, 1957	24½	1380	3	0	12
5.	Henry Bagley, 1686	26⅝	1229	4	0	22
6.	Matthew Bagley, 1686	28⅝	1161	4	3	0
7.	Henry Bagley, 1686	30½	1035	5	1	16
8.	Bagley, 1686	33⅞	921	6	3	14

Until 1907, these bells were a complete ring of five from the Chacombe foundry of Henry and Matthew Bagley. Four of these bells now remain, the treble having been recast at Loughborough in 1957. The Bagley bells are ornately decorated, and the Royal Arms on the tenor are especially fine. A treble bell was added to make the bells a ring of six in 1907. The new bell was cast by James Barwell of Birmingham, but was recast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1957. In 1960, the bells were further augmented to eight by the addition of two new treble bells, which were also cast at Loughborough.

The bells hang in a two-tier cast iron bell frame. The third, sixth, and seventh bells occupy the upper tier and are hung in a lowside frame, while the other five bells hang below in an 'H' section frame. This frame was installed by John Taylor & Co. in 1957. The fittings of the four smallest ball bearings, traditional type wheels and traditional type stays and sliders. The fittings of the four largest bells are the same except for the headstocks which are of the canon retaining type. The fittings of the two smallest bells were supplied in 1960, and those of the others date from 1957. The four largest bells retain their canons and have been one-eight turned. The sixth and seventh bells were retuned at Loughborough in 1957, but the fifth and tenor have not been retuned.

Visited C.J.P., P.C.R. 27 February 1976.

### **PACKWOOD – Packwood House**

Packwood House was built in the late C16 for the Fetherston family whose descendants, the Fetherston Leighs and Fetherston Dilkes, owned it until 1869. The Ash family acquired it in 1905 and from the 1920s Graham Baron Ash restored the old house and added the Long Gallery and Great Hall. He gave Packwood to the National Trust in 1941. The older parts of the property include the house itself and the large stable range facing the road running past the east side of the building. Over the road there is a smaller stable block to which a garage was added in the 1920s or 1930s.

Packwood is noted for its sundials. There is one, dated 1667, on a stone column in the gardens west of the house. There are three more, all painted (white with blue border and black lines) within brick surrounds in the walls of the buildings to which they belong. One is on the building that links the house and stables (illustrated in a view of c.1756), another is over the archway of the main stable block and the third is on the end wall of the smaller stable block across the road from the house.

There is no turret clock in the house, but there are clocks on both the stable blocks.

The main stable range was built by Roger Hurlbutt for John Fetherston in the 1660s and it has two enclosed turrets on the roof, one on the end towards the house and the other in the middle over the archway. Neither of the turrets contains bells. The clock chamber is mentioned in a draft lease of the outbuildings dated 29 January 1722/3 and the clock dial and turrets are shown on a drawing of the house dating from c.1756. There is still a clock in the same position, the present single-handed cast-iron dial being signed "C F / 1817". The hand is now driven by a synchronous motor drive by "Grayson" whose name is on a plate fixed to the case. The original clock mechanism has been replaced, however, and there is nothing within the roofspace of the gable end by the dial to indicate its original position. In 1991, however, the old clock from Packwood was on loan to Baddesley Clinton and on display there. Members of the Antiquarian Horological Society who visited in October 1991 thought it probably the work of Paris of Warwick, c.1700.

There is another clock turret on the garage part of the stable block across the drive from the main house. This was apparently erected as an addition to the existing building for A.J. Ash in 1914 when the local authority passed plans for a "motor garage" at Packwood House. The clock is housed among the roof timbers below the turret. It is a two-train flatbed movement signed on the frame by "W.F. EVANS & SONS / SOHO CLOCK FACTORY / BIRMINGHAM." The going train has a deadbeat escapement, weighted arm maintaining power and a compensation pendulum. The striking train has an external countwheel. There is no date on the clock, but it may well date from 1914 as Evans was making clocks of this type at that time. The gilded clock dial is square with the sun, moon and stars in the corners. The chapter ring is set within an octagon against a blue background. The clock was restored for the National Trust in 1997-8.

The clock bell hangs above the dial in a four-poster turret with a lead-covered roof. The bell is hung "dead" from a beam concealed within the roof of the turret and suspended by long U-bolts through the canons. Details of the bell are as follows:

### ***Inscription***

PROSPERITY TO THIS PLACE A : R 1713 (*floral border*)

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Abraham Rudhall I, 1713	17½	?:1-1:2:1	1855.5	Bb-8	1	1	0*

This bell was cast at Gloucester in 1713 by Abraham Rudhall Senior. It was doubtless acquired by Graham Baron Ash, but its original provenance is not known. It retains its canons intact and it has a clapper suspended from the original cast-in crown staple. It is only sounded by the clock hammer, which is pivoted above the bell. The tone of the bell is good. The bell was noted as unhung (resting on the floor of the turret) in 1980 but has since been reinstated.

There is also a small call bell in a wrought iron frame on the side of a big chimney on the east side of the house. It is about 10 inches in diameter, and apparently uninscribed. It is hung for swing chiming with bar stock (secured to the peg argent of the bell), iron chiming lever, counterbalance and clapper. It is disused.

In the courtyard were preserved five old clappers from the bells at Packwood Church. They were removed to house in 1907 when the bells were restored, and were hung in a line on the courtyard wall.

In the house there are several bellmetal mortars, one of which is inscribed: JOHN FRY : ANNO DOMINI .:. 1 6 8 4 (*fleur de lis*). The identity of the maker is not known.

**Visited:** C.J.P. 11 February 1976 and 5 September 1980; Christopher Dalton, 29 September 1997; C.J.P. and Richard Jones 18 May 2012: Thanks to Joy Tovey (Property Manager), 2012

### **POLESWORTH – St. Editha**

This church has its origins in the Benedictine nunnery that existed at Polesworth before the Norman Conquest. The community was expelled by the early Normans but later re-founded in about 1130. The nunnery was dissolved in 1539, after which parts of the monastic church were taken over for parochial use. These origins explain the rather curious appearance of the building and the odd placing of the tower at the east end of the north aisle.

The lower stages of the tower are believed to incorporate C12th or C13th masonry and there is said to be a disused spiral stair in the south west corner. However, the tower was extensively remodelled by Sir Richard Herthill (d.1389) in the fourteenth century. The tall Decorated window in the north wall and the north and west belfry windows are of this period. The south and east sides, however, are much plainer and very different. This is the result of a partial collapse and subsequent rebuilding that took place in 1711-12 as noted below.

Access to the ringing room is by a wooden spiral stair in the north east corner of the tower from the vestry. There is ladder access to the higher levels.

### ***The present bells***

The tower now contains a ring of eight bells in the key of F natural (699Hz or F plus 1.35 cents), as follows:

Bell	Inscription
1.	GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON <i>Waist:</i> (CFJ monogram) / THIS PEAL WAS INCREASED FROM EIGHT TO TWELVE BELLS / FEBRUARY, 1935. / L.B. SLADEN, VICAR. / J.C. MAY } / W. MACKANESS } CHURCHWARDENS <i>Low waist:</i> 3 <i>Opposite:</i> 5148
2.	JOHN * TAYLOR * BELLFOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 2004 * / ( <i>Gillett &amp; Johnston mark</i> ) <i>Waist:</i> COME AND WORSHIP THE LORD <i>Opposite:</i> RING OUT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD
3.	ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION 1896 ( <i>border</i> ) <i>Waist:</i> J.G. TROTTER, VICAR / F. TIBBITS } / J.B. DAVIES } CHURCHWARDENS / FOR THE GLORY OF GOD <i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> )
4.	THE GIFT OF MR: EDW <sup>D</sup> : TOON BORN AT DORDON IN THE PARISH OF POLESWORTH / A ( <i>bell</i> ) R 1740
5.	TO HONOUR BOTH OF GOD & KING. OUR VOICES SHALL IN CONSORT RING ( <i>border</i> ) / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1776. W <sup>M</sup> KETTLE CH. WARDEN.
6.	( <i>Arabesque border all round</i> ) / FEARE ( <i>vine border</i> ) GOD ( <i>vine border</i> ) HONOR ( <i>vine border</i> ) THE ( <i>vine border</i> ) KING ( <i>vine border</i> ) 1667 / ( <i>George Oldfield's mark</i> )
7.	( <i>Arabesque border all round</i> ) / IOHN ( <i>vine border</i> ) YOVNG ( <i>vine border</i> ) THO ( <i>vine border</i> ) LACKIN ( <i>vine border</i> ) IOHN ( <i>vine border</i> ) HOLLMES ( <i>vine border</i> ) DAVID ( <i>vine border</i> ) CORBESON ( <i>vine border</i> ) WARDENS ( <i>vine border</i> ) / ( <i>arabesque border all round</i> ) / ( <i>George Oldfield's mark</i> ) 1654

8. (*Arabesque border all round*) / ALL (*vine border*) GLORI (*vine border*) BEE (*vine border*) TO (*vine border*) GOD (*vine border*) ON (*vine border*) HIGH 1664 (*George Oldfield's mark*) (*vine border*)

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Gillett & Johnston, 1935	27 <sup>15</sup> / <sub>16</sub>	1399	5	1	12
2.	John Taylor & Co, 2004	28½	1318	5	3	10
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1896	30½	1175.5	6	1	14
4.	Abel Rudhall, 1740	32¼	1044	6	1	3
5.	Pack & Chapman, 1776	33½	930.5	6	1	0
6.	George Oldfield I, 1667	36	870	7	1	14
7.	George Oldfield I, 1654	39½	781	10	0	15
8.	George Oldfield I, 1664	43	699	11	2	11

The three seventeenth century bells by George Oldfield I of Nottingham bear the founder's usual "G O" mark and ornamental borders. The Rudhall bell (now no.4) is inscribed in lettering of two sizes, and the last part of the inscription on the Pack & Chapman bell of 1776 (no.5) is incised and not cast in relief. These bells have all lost their canons and they have been quarter turned. The three later bells were all cast with flat tops. The inscription on the 1935 treble relates to its previous home at Kidderminster (St.Mary) where it was no.3 in the old ring of twelve. The new second was cast to a Gillett & Johnston profile to match the treble.

The fittings of the back six are mainly those provided in 1896 by John Taylor & Co. The same firm fitted ball bearings in 1937, but these were replaced when Eayre and Smith again renewed the gudgeons and bearings in 1982. Otherwise the fittings were unaltered. They consist of cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, ball bearings, traditional type wheels, traditional type stays and sliders, and clappers suspended from independent crown staples. The two bells added in 2004 have modern Taylor fittings of similar type.

The bells hang in a cast-iron lowside frame (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.n) supplied by Eayre & Smith in 1982 and installed locally. It was built with pits for eight bells, although the two vacant pits remained empty until 2004. It is on the standard eight-bell plan (*Bellframes* 8.3) with bells 1, 8, 4 and 5 swinging east-west in parallel pits, 2-3 mouth-to-mouth and north-south on the east and 6-7 on the west.

### **History**

In 1552 "Pollysworth" had four bells and a small sanctus bell – "iiij<sup>or</sup> bells and a saunce bell". Some of these were recast or replaced in the seventeenth century, the three largest bells of the present ring having been cast at Nottingham by George Oldfield I between 1654 and 1667.

On the evidence of the present fourth bell, apparently added to make five as a gift from Edward Toon in 1740, it would seem that Polesworth only had four bells until that time. However, entries in the later C17th Churchwardens' accounts indicate that the ringers were paid half a crown on public ringing days – suggesting five ringers at 6d each – which could mean that there were already five bells as early as 1677. Unfortunately the accounts give no clear indication of the number of bells then in the tower although the mention of the fourth bell (1688-9) and the great bell (*passim*) would seem to confirm that there were five.

Payments recorded in the accounts from 1677 show that the bells were carefully maintained at parish expense – and much used – as the following extracts show:

1677	29 May. Payd for Ringing it being his Majtie Birth & Restoration day	5s. 0d.
	3 Augst. pd to Chadburn for yielding ye Clock wire & sticking a Clapper for one of the bells	4d.
1678	Decr 20th. for a new Brass for a bell way 7lb 3qr at 14d. a lb, pd 0:9:0 for the ould brass wayein 7lb & a qr. at 7d a lb. 0:4:3	4s. 7d.
	Pd to Hewer for 1 daye laying down the new Brass	2s. 6d.

	pd to Tho Bankes for helping him	1s. 0d.
	pd for Leatherings for the Bells	1s. 0d.
	Pd for a kee for the bells	2d.
1679	March 20th. Pd to Robert Ball for 3 Bell Ropes	9s. 0d.
1679	April 21th (sic) 1679, Memorandum that it is order <sup>d</sup> by the Minister & wee the Inhabitants of the Parish of Polesworth whose names are subscribed that noe Church warden shall hereafter pay above two shillings and six pence for Ringing upon any of these three (viz <sup>t</sup> ) ye 23d of Aprill, ye 29th of May & the 5th of Nov <sup>r</sup> . [signed] William Wragge, Vicar [and six parishioners]	
1680	4th Novbr pd for a bell rope for the 3d bell	2s. 6d.
1683	Novmr 7th. Pd to Mr. Wood for Exchange of 2 old Brassis for 2 new ones for the Bells & pd for Carriage 6d all	12s. 9d.
1685	Sept 18. pd to John Chartbarn for mending the frame and for a new springe to the great bell & for cleats to ye Litl bell brass & for Lethering the great bell & Cleating ye brasses	2s. 1s. 4d.
	Pd for plates & nayles to mend the 3 bell whelle	8d.
	November 13. Pd to John Chatborn for 3 plates & one pece of sroud to the great bell & for peceing the Clock Hamber & for one new screw box for the great bell	2s. 6d.
1686	Sept 16 Joh Chadborns bill	
	paid John Chadburn for a gudgin for the seckond bell	3s. 4d.
	for plates to Fasten the gudgeon	4d.
	for mending the clock hammer Frame and a new shroud for the wheele	1s. 2d.
	for mending 2 stapels	3d.
	Charges at that time about them that helped about lifting the bells and other worke	1s. 6d.
1687 and 1682	(Memoranda concerning payments by the Vestry for ringing, limiting payments to half a crown on stated days 27 March 1687, and stipulating that no parish money be paid for ringing, 28 March 1682)	
1687	June. Pd to John Chartbarn for making one yoake one pin and box for ye great bell	2s. 0d.
	& for Cleaits to mend ye great bell brase and gudion	6d.
	& for 1 screwe cap for the 3 bell whelle	6d.
	& for screwing up the litell bell	4d.
1688-9	26 Jan. payd for fastening one Gudgeon & Rod for 4o Bell	1s. 0d.
	more for new Rods & mending old ones & cleates	1s. 6d.
	payd for 4 New Boxes for the third Bell	2s. 0d.
1706	for shooting Ropes & stings (sic) to tie ye clappers	1s. 0d.
	To Ball for a sett of bell Ropes weight 23 pds	15s. 4d.
	For making two new bell wheeles	£2 16s. 0d.
	Note of memorandum of 1687 that the parishioners "allow of no money to be given for Ringing" and note that 2s be allowed in future, n.d. [1706]	
1707	Sept. 6th. Paid John Maning for brasses for the bells for ye last year & 4 pins & cotters	12s. 0d.

In 1687 the accounts also refer to concerns about the state of the steeple which was inspected by two local workmen and subsequently repaired as these payments show:

1687	23 April Spent of John Swindall & John Chartbarn when they went to Veue the Steple	1s. 0d.
	July. For Swindalls bill of worke Don at ye Steple	£2 12s. 8d.
	Pd to Henry Haultman for Caridg of 2 load of stone from Warton quarry	4s. 0d.

Pd to John Chatbarn for 4C 3qrs of Iornworke used about the Steple and his worke £9 2s. 0d.

Further trouble lay ahead, and in 1711-12 the parish faced a much bigger repair bill for major work on the tower. The accounts are frustratingly vague, but the combined evidence from the documents and from the fabric of the tower seems to suggest a partial collapse of the structure that necessitated the removal of the spire and major work on the tower itself. Certainly the accounts refer to "Taking down the Spyre" in September 1711 and there is a mention of making good the breach in the garden wall of Polesworth Hall to the south of the church in 1712.

The work was undertaken by direct labour, the Churchwardens supervising the work, paying all the men and purchasing the materials. The total expenditure over the two years amounted to around £300. A payment on 28 June 1712 "for Ale att Rearing the Roof of the Steeple" indicates that by then the work was nearing completion. The appearance of the tower suggests that the south and east walls were almost entirely rebuilt, and the rather unusual square-headed belfry windows and the tower parapet must surely be of this period.

Once the tower had been rebuilt or restored, the bells were reinstated. The accounts contain numerous payments referring to this work:

1712-3	12 July. Paid for Ale at Unloading the Bells att Faseley	1s. 0d.
	August.	
	Paid Mr. Simonds & Mr. Eaves in part for Timber delivered being 400 foot at 14d per foot, £23.6.8.	£11 0s. 0d.
	Paid Tho: Walton in pt for Hanging ye Bells	£10 0s. 0d.
	Paid Jno Chadbournes Bill [probably ironwork]	£2 14s. 0d.
	Janry 27. paid Tho: Walton's Bill for Casting of Bell Brasses	£3 4s. 0d.
	Disbursed by Richd. Aldridge	
	Paid my selfe 5 times going to Fasely about ye Bells	5s. 0d.
	Paid Tho: Walton in pt of his Bill	£5 0s. 0d.
	Paid for Gilding of the Wether Cock	10s 0d.
1713	Disbursed by Thos Hewitt since Easter [1713]	
	Gave the Ringers when they put ye Bell Ropes too	1s. 0d.
	Pd Saml. Woodward for Mending ye Bell Wheels	9s. 3d.
	Pd Luke Faux for strings to tye ye Bell Clapers	1s. 6d.
	Paid Josh. Slater for a pulley Wheel	4d.
	Pd Jno. Clay for putting up Sally-Beams	4s. 9d.
	pd Mr. Balls Bill for 2 setts of Bell Ropes	£1 6s. 8d.
	pd Tho: Walton More to'wds his Bill	£7 10s. 0d.

These accounts show that the work of rehangng was undertaken by a carpenter or bellhanger named Thomas Walton. Interestingly, salley beams (rope guides) were fitted. Quite why the bells were brought from Faseley is unclear. Perhaps Walton had his workshop there, or maybe the bells had been stored there while the tower was being rebuilt. There is also a possibility – although this is purely speculative – that the old bells were damaged by the fall of the tower and that the metal was exchanged for others (the present back three) that were obtained from elsewhere. If something like this happened, then it might help to explain why the number of bells seems to have reverted from five to four in the earlier decades of the C18th.

Certainly the bell given by Edward Toon in 1740 seems to have been an addition to the ring rather than a replacement or recasting of an existing bell. The bell was cast by Abel Rudhall of Gloucester, whose printed catalogue of bells cast to Lady Day 1751 lists one for Polesworth "(to make 5)" and states that it was "The Gift of Mr. Edward Toon". The accounts for 1740 show that the bell was transported up the river Severn from Gloucester to Bewdley, and carried overland to Tamworth and on to Polesworth. The Churchwardens spent a shilling on "Mr. Toons men for Eating & Drinking when they brought the Bell to Polesworth". In 1740 the bells were also rehung in a new wooden frame by Richard Wright at a cost of £36. During the work, one of the bells was hung "in the Windor to Call people to Church"

The next major work on the bells came in 1776 when the second bell (now the fifth) was recast at the Whitechapel Foundry in London by Lester & Pack. The accounts contain the following payments in connection with the work:

1776 William Kettle and John White, Churchwardens	
Octob 5. pd a Bill for the New Bell & Hanging the other	£25 14s. 0d.
pd John Perry a Bill for work at the Bells	£4 11s. 8d.
Spent on the workmen	10d.

The Church underwent a thorough restoration under G.E. Street in 1868-9. The work included the opening of new arches into the south and west sides of the tower and the creation of a vestry on the ground floor. The present first-floor ringing room would seem to have been provided at that time. The exterior stonework of the tower was also restored, but in the extensive documentation about the job there is no mention of any work being done to the bells.

Apart from minor repairs and regular maintenance, nothing further was done on the bells until they were rehung and augmented to six by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough in 1896. Taylors inspected the bells on 27 August 1896 and submitted their report and estimate two days later. They quoted £83.6.4. for strengthening the old wooden frame and rehunging the five bells with new fittings (cast iron stocks etc) plus a further £55.10.0. for a new treble bell complete with additional framework and fittings. An alternative quote was obtained from James Barwell of Birmingham but Taylors got the job. The old bells were delivered to Loughborough on 30 September.

The work was completed on 7th December, when the work was invoiced, and the final cost was £136.15.10. Special services took place in connection with the restoration of the bells on 6 December 1896 when the Tamworth ringers rang a 720 of Grandsire Minor. This was reported in the *Bell News* on 26 December 1896 (p.463). The restoration was also reported in the *Worcester Diocesan Church Calendar* for 1898 (p.203) which stated:

Towards the end of 1896, the five fine old bells were thoroughly restored by Messrs. Taylor and Co., of Loughborough, at the cost of £90.5s.10d., and a sixth bell added at a cost of £55.10s, the amount being raised by subscriptions and offertories

This job was completed very soon after Taylors first began to produce bells tuned on their newly perfected true-harmonic system. In their letter of 28 August 1896 Taylors had stated that their new tuning machine would enable them "...to secure a correctness of tune never before attempted both in the subsidiary overtones as well as in the fundamental tones of the bells". No charge was made for the retuning of the old bells, perhaps an indication of how keen Taylors were to make use of and experiment with their new equipment. Removing the canons and retuning resulted in a significant reduction in the weights of the bells as shown here:

<i>Bell</i>	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Before</i>	6-3-23	6-3-26	8-0-15	11-0-4	13-2-0
<i>After</i>	6-1-3	6-1-0	7-1-14	10-0-15	11-2-11

Taylors had observed in their original tender that the bells were "...not at all correctly in tune with each other, the third bell being very perceptibly too flat for the others which should be tuned down to that". In the retuning, the primary tones of the bells (now known as the nominals) were corrected to bring the bells in tune as a ring and the partial tones were brought closer to true-harmonic tuning. The result is a musical and pleasing ring.

In 1937 John Taylor & Co rehung the bells on ball bearings. The bells were not removed from the tower and only the headstocks had to be taken to the works.

Before the restoration of the bells in 1980-82, the six were hung in a massive oak frame with pits for five bells to which an additional oak frame section was added in 1896. The older portion of the frame was doubtless the one installed by Richard Wright in 1740. It was of lowside construction (*Bellframes* type 6.A) with some corner posts and jack-bracing. Taylors sketch plan shows that before 1896 it had a clockwise rope-circle with the two

smaller bells swinging mouth-to-mouth on the east side of the tower and the other three in parallel pits to the west (i.e. *Bellframes* plan 5.1). As altered to take six by the addition of a fourth parallel pit on the north it was on plan 6.1)

In August 1980 the old frame was removed, and the work of installing a new cast iron "lowside" frame with pits for eight bells was completed in September 1982. The new frame was built by Eayre & Smith Ltd., then of Kegworth, and installed by the Polesworth ringers and their friends.

The bells were augmented to eight in 2004. The work was carried out by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough who cast the new second bell. The new treble (cast by Gillett & Johnston in 1935) was obtained from St. Mary & All Saints, Kidderminster, where it has been the third of the old ring of twelve. It became available after Kidderminster bells were replaced by an entirely new ring in 2004. Taylors provided new fittings as required and installed the two new bells. As reported in the *Ringing World* on 5 November 2005 (pp.1061-2) the new bells were delivered on 22 October 2004, dedicated on the following Sunday, installed on 1-3 November and first rung as an octave on 7 November.

The extracts from the Churchwardens accounts already quoted indicate that the bells were regularly rung. Painted on the east wall of the ringing room there is a set of old ringers' rules – undated, but referring to "George our Gracious King" and probably dating from the early C19th. In the south wall of the nave there is a stained glass window with a representation of a bellringer. This window – designed and executed by Clayton & Bell in about 1872 – was erected in memory of John Stonehouse "for being a bellringer for 50 years and never missing a service". Stonehouse died, aged 74, in April 1871.

There has been a **clock** since at least 1677 when the first surviving volume of Churchwardens' accounts begins. References to the clock include:

1677	3 Augst. pd to Chadburn for yielding ye Clock wire & sticking a Clapper for one of the bells	4d.
1679	Pd to John Chadborne for Lookeing to ye Clock a yere [The Chadburns looked after the clock until well into the C18th]	5s. 0d.
1685	November 13. Pd to John Chatborn for 3 plates & one pece of sroud to the great bell & for peceing the Clock Hamber & for one new screw box for the great bell	2s. 6d.
1702	April. Pd Ann Hall for goeing for ye Clockmaker Pd to the Clockmaker for comeing 3 times	6d. 6s. 0d.
1715	[mention of Chadburn cleaning the clock]	
1716	12 Oct. paid Joseph Baker for Removeing the Clock Paid John Chadburn for work done about ye Clock Paid John Banks for 3 days work done about ye Clock	9s. 0d. 6s. 0d. 4s. 0d.
1812	January 9th. John Kendall's Bill for a New clock case and other repairs 9 March. Paid Mr Baker Repairing the Church Clock as agreed	£8 15s. 3d. £12 12s. 0d.

These payments indicate that the clock was a striking mechanism. It seems to have been reinstated after the tower was repaired in 1711-12. Further work was undertaken in 1812 when the clock was repaired by Baker – probably Richard Baker of Tamworth (see the entry for the Nethersole School) – and a new clock case erected by John Kendall.

The present clock was installed by Leeson & Son of Coleshill in 1879. It is a two-train movement with hour strike, showing the time on an open-centred metal dial over the belfry window on the west side of the tower. Separate Cambridge (or Westminster) quarter chimes were added – on the floor below – by Smith of Derby in 1899. The work was invoiced on 18 March 1899 at a cost of £52.10.0 - £50 for the quarter chimes and £2 for an Ellacombe chiming hammer for one of the bells.

The installation of the quarter chimes was reported in the *Worcester Diocesan Church Calendar* for 1900 (p.203) which noted "Cambridge chimes put up at a cost of about £60, as a memorial, to the late F. Tibbits, for many years churchwarden".

Visited C.J.P., G.D.A., 21 July 1979, and C.J.P., 26 October 1985 and 22 September 2009





n.d.	Pd Thomas Thompson for Boarding up the Clock House till it could be glazed	6d.
1803	Pd Mr Baker for a Deed Stamp and parchment One sheet of Parchment for a Model for the School Clock Frame	£1.7.6. 6d.

The minutes and accounts give no indication of what work was done to the clock when the schools were rebuilt in 1817-9, but it would seem that the clock from the previous building – having been new in 1800 - was re-used when the school. This was not without difficulty, however, as is evident from the following letter from the clockmaker to one of the Trustees dated 18 March 1819. Richard Baker of Tamworth wrote to -. Dugdale Esq M.P., of Merevale Hall, to advise him of the situation and to make him aware of various defects in the arrangements proposed by the architect:

Sir,

I beg to be excus'd for the liberty I take in troubling you, tho' I think it my duty to give the following information to the Trustees of Polesworth School, and no one more proper than yourself for the communication.

Have been told by Mr. Potter to fix the Clock up, and found it in a rusty, bad state and necessary to be brought to the Shop, to be well pollish'd and proper alterations, which he would not agree to, but wish'd it to be fixed without, on which accounts have declined doing it, at all on his account. I wish to observe to you, and which I think has escaped the notice of the Trustees, that the Building is only made for one Dial next the Street. I conclude there should be one on the other side for the use of the School houses, which would be the most useful if the two, and as the Clock is made for Two Dials, and for uniformity should not have been omitted, fixing the Clock will very troublesome unless some alteration.

I expected to have been consulted and employed when the Clock was taken down, which was done by the Masons, improperly laid in a damp place, and become very rusty, no passage is left in the building to the Cupola, whenever the Hammer work wants cleaning or repairing, a ladder must be .. [tear] to go up the Tileing on the outside, a trap ... [tear] may still be made. I have recommended Copper Dials as much the best, and most durable, and if two, not more expence, which Mr. P. objects to. Should this information prove useful and acceptable I am gratified, shall be happy to serve the Trust, and do the best of my judgment in what commands they please to give.

Your Obedient Humble Servant  
Richd. Baker

From the description of the clock in 1950, it sounds as though Baker's clock of 1800 remained in use until the mechanism was removed in the later twentieth century.

Visited C.J.P., 18 November 1979

### **SALTER STREET – St. Patrick**

The church at Earlswood or Salter Street was built in 1840 as a Chapel of Ease in the parish of Tanworth, and the architect of the original building was James Benjamin Harris of Henley in Arden. The church was consecrated on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1840. Salter Street became a separate parish in 1843, and in 1861-2 the church received the addition of a Western tower designed by G.T. Robinson of Leamington, the Archidiaconal architect. The tower cost £1200 , and it was given by Thomas Burman in memory of his parents John and Catherine Burman of Waring's Green. The body of the church was rebuilt in 1899, but the striking Victorian tower of 1861 was retained unaltered.

The tower contains a ring of five bells in the key of A natural, of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 35<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches.

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Inscription</i></b>
--------------------	---------------------------

1. J WARNER & SONS LONDON 1861  
*Waist: (Royal arms) / PATENT*
2. CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1861  
*Waist: (Royal arms) / PATENT*
3. CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1861  
*Waist: (Royal arms) / PATENT*
4. CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1861  
*Waist: (Royal arms) / PATENT*
5. CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1861  
*Waist: (Royal arms) / PATENT*

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Warner & Sons, 1861	28	4	3	20
2.	John Warner & Sons, 1861	29	4	3	7
3.	John Warner & Sons, 1861	29 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	5	1	7
4.	John Warner & Sons, 1861	31 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	6	0	20
5.	John Warner & Sons, 1861	35 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	8	0	21

These bells were cast by John Warner & Sons of the Crescent Foundry, Cripplegate, London, in 1861, and supplied to the Vicar, the Rev. T.H. Mynors, at a cost of £270. Warner's receipt is dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 1862, and a printed testimonial from the Vicar dated 21 January 1862 was published in several editions of the firm's catalogue. The bells have angular canons, and they have all been quarter turned. They were retuned in 1937 by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon.

The oak bellframe was installed in 1861, and it appears to have been made by W. Ballard of Leamington whose receipts for a total of £65 survive among the parish records. Ballard's bill shows that in November 1861 he "prepared and fixed the Oak Bell framing complete for five Bells" and a floor of 2 inch Best pitch pine planking on strong beams with a "man hold and trapdoor to admit bells". The frame consists of cills, main braces, jack braces and long frame heads, with supplementary angle plates and tie rods. The two smallest bells swing East to West and mouth-to-mouth in open ended pits on the South side of the tower, and the others hang at right angles to them in three parallel pits.

The bells are fitted with elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, self aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels and iron wheel stays, traditional type stays and sliders, independent crown staples, and clappers. The gudgeons and bearings were renewed when the bells were retuned and rehung by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon in 1937 at a cost of £138, but the other fittings are mainly as supplied by John Warner & Sons in 1861. A new Ellacombe chiming apparatus was installed in November 1973 by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough at a cost of £433.40p.

The clock is by Leeson & Son of Coleshill and it is dated 1874. It is a two-train movement with deadbeat escapement, in a cast iron flatbed frame.

Visited C.J.P., N.C.R.C., 28 July 1972, and C.J.P., 28 January 1985.

### **SECKINGTON – All Saints**

This church has a Western tower and spire. The original tower was of late C13th date with a later west window and parapet but by 1869 it was in a poor state of repair and a fund was opened to raise money for its restoration. In 1883 the tower was completely rebuilt from the ground on new foundations but "every stone which could be reused was marked as it came down and ... rebuilt in its old position". The rebuilding was carried out by J. Thompson of Peterborough under the direction of the architect A.W. Blomfield, who was also responsible for restoring and re-roofing the nave and body of the church at the same time.

The lower stage of the tower to the first floor is built in stone, but the inner walls of the upper levels are lined with brick. The floorboards and joists are all of deal. There is ladder access to all levels of the tower.

There is a ring of four bells in the key of B flat (921Hz or B flat minus 21 cents). The tenor bell is not the heaviest bell in the ring as it is lighter than the third by 87 lbs. Previous published accounts of the bells have contained a number of inaccuracies, particularly with regard to the order of the bells in the ring. The following details are believed to be correct:

- | Bell | Inscription   |
|------|---|
| 1.   | + I E S V S   |
| 2.   | J. TAYLOR & C <sup>o</sup> .. BELLFOUNDERS LOUGHBOROUGH 1886.<br><i>Waist:</i> 1886 / W.H. FREER, RECTOR. / R. THIRLEY, CHURCHWARDEN      |
| 3.   | J : TAYLOR & C <sup>o</sup> .. FOUNDERS LOUGHBOROUGH 1886.<br><i>Waist:</i> LAUS DEO. / GIVEN BY T.H. FREER. / 1886.                      |
| 4.   | ( <i>Brasyer shield</i> ) MLKIHG ( <i>acorn border</i> ) FEDCBA ( <i>border</i> ) XWVTS ( <i>border</i> ) RQPON<br>1640 ( <i>border</i> ) |

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Robert Mellours, c.1520	26¼	1230	Eb – 20	3	1	24
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1886	28¾	1161.5	D – 19	4	2	24
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1886	32	1031	C – 25	6	2	27
4.	Hugh Watts, 1640	32¼	921	Bb -21	5	3	24

When H. T. Tilley visited Seckington in October 1876 there were only two bells, namely the present treble and tenor. The treble bears a large Maltese cross and it is inscribed in large Gothic capitals used in the mid Fourteenth century and afterwards by John Potter of York and his successors which appear to have passed into the hands of the Nottingham founders by the late Fifteenth century. Tilley and Walters considered this bell to have been cast at Nottingham and thought it "a square-shouldered bell, and looks early". The suggestion that it is a Nottingham bell is confirmed by George Dawson who thinks, however, that it was probably cast by Robert Mellours in about 1520. The moulding wires are arranged 3:3-2:3:3, and the leading dimensions of the bell are diameter 26¼ inches, shoulder circumference 46 inches, lip to shoulder tangent 20 inches, height to crown about 21 inches, and soundbow thickness (unworn) 1⅞ inches. The tenor bell was cast in 1640 by High Watts II of Leicester and it is a late example of his work. Both the old bells have been turned, and their canons have been removed.

At the time of the rebuilding of the tower in 1883 the two old bells were rehung by Mr. Thompson, the contractor. In 1885 Taylors carried out an inspection and noted "two bells, a fourth apart", hung in a pitch pine frame for three bells "made by the builder last year". Shortly afterwards the bells were taken down again. In 1886 they were taken to Loughborough to be retuned as the treble and tenor of a ring of four, two new bells being added to complete the ring. The work was completed in August. One of the new bells was given by the Rev. T.H. Freer, Rector of Sudbury, Derbyshire, the other was paid for by subscription, and the total cost of the work on the bells amounted to £130. The two new bells were cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1886. They have angular canons and they have not been quarter turned. Taylors' invoice for their work is as follows:

31 August 1886 – Revd. W.H. Freer, Seckington Rectory, Tamworth.	
To two new bells for Seckington, as 2nd & 3rd to make with the present two a peal of four, 2nd 4-2-24, 3rd 6-2-27, (total) 11-1-23 at £5.12s. per cwt	£64.3.0.
To new fittings for the four bells & the necessary frame &c as per est. Aug.13/85	£56.10.0.
To carriage from Tamworth	14s.3d.
To inscription 62 letters at 3d.	15s.6d.
29 September [expenses - including fixing salley guides] (total)	<u>£2.15.2½.</u>

Settled Nov.6/86

The present softwood bellframe is of rather unusual plan and construction, and it was evidently installed by the contractor when the tower was rebuilt in 1883 and modified to accommodate the additional bells in 1886. The three parallel pits on the East side of the tower contain (in order from North to South) the tenor, third, and treble bells, and the second bell hangs in a long pit to the West of the others in which the outer frame section is connected to the main frame by cast iron spacers. Each section of the main frame consists of cill, main braces, corner posts and long frame heads. The Western section of the frame is of similar construction, and is has been reinforced with iron tie rods.

The bells are all fitted with elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, plain brass bearings in iron housings with hinged lids, traditional type wheels with iron wheel stays, traditional type stays and sliders, and clappers suspended from independent crown staples. These fittings were provided by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1886, but they were overhauled in April 1970 by Gordon Lane of Castle Bromwich at a cost of £77.

Little is known of the earlier history of the bells. There were three bells here in 1552 – “ij belles in the steeple” – and the Browne-Willis notes indicate that the number may have been reduced to two by the middle of the eighteenth century. No further information is available.

There is no clock.

Visited: C.J.P., 24 August 1974, and 30 April 1977; Sam Austin 27 November 2004; C.J.P. 24 June 2009

### **SHIRLEY – ST. JAMES**

This church was built in 1831 as a chapel of ease in the parish of Solihull, and Shirley did not become a separate parish until 1843. The building was designed by the architect Robert Ebbels of Wolverhampton, and it is unusual in having the tower at the East end, situated on the side of the church facing the main road from Birmingham to Stratford upon Avon.

John Rudhall of Gloucester supplied “a Bell for a New Chapel at Solihull, Warwickshire” on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1831, and it is evident that this bell was hung at Shirley since a bell of similar weight was taken in part exchange for the new bells installed in February 1855. Rudhall’s foundry records show that the bell was 20<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches in diameter and it weighed 1 cwt. 3 qrs. 9 lbs., and the bell credited by C. & G. Mears to the Rev. N. Stephenson of Shirley on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1855 weighed 1 cwt. 3 qrs. 8 lbs.

The tower now contains a ring of eight bells in the key of B flat (918.5Hz or B flat minus 25.87 cents), and the tenor bell has a diameter of 34<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches. Details of the inscriptions and weights of the bells are as follows:

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Inscription</b>
1.	305 / DEI GLORIAS QUI VICTORIAM DEDIT 1946 ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor’s rectangular mark)</i>
2.	148 / REJOICING IN PEACE 1946 ( <i>border all round</i> ) <i>Waist: (Taylor’s rectangular mark)</i>
3.	380 / TAYLORS * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 1929 *
4.	C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1855
5.	C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1854
6.	C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1854
7.	C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1854
8.	C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1854

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1946	22 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1835	3	0	2
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1946	23 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1733	3	1	20
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1929	25	1543	3	3	1
4.	C. & G. Mears, 1855	26	1374	3	2	8
5.	C. & G. Mears, 1854	28 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1222	4	0	21
6.	C. & G. Mears, 1854	29	1155	4	1	12
7.	C. & G. Mears, 1854	31	1030	4	3	25
8.	C. & G. Mears, 1854	34 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	918.5	6	1	1

The bells were installed in February 1855 as a ring of four with a tenor bell weighing 6 cwt. 2 qrs. 2 lbs. The total cost of the work including the frame and fittings amounted to £219 10s., but C.& G Mears allowed £10 14s 3d. for the old bell making a net cost to the parish of £209 5s. 9d. Ten months later, in December 1855, the same firm supplied an additional bell weighing 3 cwt 3 qrs. 8½ lbs. to make a ring of five and they also provided the necessary fittings and installed the additional framework for the new bell at a total cost of £45 10s. The bells remained a ring of five until November 1929 when they were retuned, quarter turned and rehung by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough who also added another bell to make a ring of six. At this date the canons of the five old bells were removed. The ring was further augmented in 1946-7 when John Taylor & Co. added two more bells to complete the octave. The new bells were dedicated on 7 June 1947.

The bells hang in a cast iron frame of "lowside" pattern, constructed with pits for six bells in 1929 but extended in 1947 when the ring was increased to eight. The treble and second bells occupy pits in the older part of the frame, and the third and fourth bells are hung in the pits added in 1947. The entire frame was made by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough.

The fittings consist of cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels, and Hastings stay units, and they were all supplied by John Taylor & Co. The fittings of the treble and second bells date from 1947 and the remainder from 1929.

The present clock is an electrical impulse system installed in 1947 by Gent & Co of Leicester, displaying the time on two dials and striking the hours on the tenor bell. It was given by Norman Shirley (churchwarden) and Mrs. Shirley to replace the previous weight-driven clock installed in 1847. The new clock was dedicated – with the two trebles – on 7 June 1947. The old clock was by Elleby of Ashbourne and dated 1847, with extended barrels and recoil escapement. It was transferred to Bishop Ryder's church in 1946 and remained there until that church was demolished in 1960.

Visited C.J.P., 26 October 1985.

### **SHUSTOKE – St. Cuthbert**

The western tower with spire of this church houses a ring of six bells in the key of A flat minor – tuned roughly as nos 2-7 of an octave (i.e. a minor five with an added treble) - of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 39<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches.

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1.     298 / (*floral border all round*)  
*Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / 1950*
2.     [*Blank*]  
*Waist: UNTUNED BY LIGHTNING FLAMES AND FIRE 1886 / AGAIN I LEAD THE STEEPLE CHOIR 1887.*  
*Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark)*
3.     OF (*floral scroll border*) FORE (*border*) HE (*border*) CAST (*border*) VS (*border*) INTO (*border*) FIVE (*border*) 1698 (*border*)

4. REPAIRD (*border*) OVR (*border*) CHVRCH AND (*border*) BELLFREE (*border*) HERE (*border*) 1698 (*border*)
5. LESTER & PACK OF LONDON FECIT 1768
6. JO<sup>S</sup> GIBSON CH. WARDEN (*ornament*) LESTER & PACK OF LONDON FECIT 1768 (*loop border*)

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1950	25½	1377	F-24	2:2-2:3:2	3	2	3
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1887	27¼	1233.5	Eb-15	2:2-2:3:2	4	2	0
3.	William Bagley, 1698	28¾	1093	Db-24	1:1-3:3:2	4	3	0*
4.	William Bagley, 1698	30¾	964	B-42	3:3-3:4:2	5	1	0*
5.	Lester & Pack, 1768	34	920.5	Bb-22	3:2-2:3:2	7	2	0*
6.	Lester & Pack, 1768	39⅛	811.5	Ab-40	3:2-3:3:2	10	2	0*

The treble bell was cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough and added to the ring in 1950. The second bell was recast by the same firm in 1887 from a bell which had been cracked in 1886. The old bell was cast by William Brooke of Bromsgrove in 1736, though the Churchwardens' accounts reveal that it was delivered to Brooke at Edgbaston and not Bromsgrove. The same bell had previously been recast at Edgbaston in 1733, and it seems that the first recasting was unsuccessful and that further recasting was necessary. The third and fourth bells were cast by William Bagley of Chacombe in 1698 and are all that remain of a ring of five which he cast for the church in that year. In a printed list of bells cast by the Bagleys which was issued in 1732 there is an entry which refers to Shustoke bells which reads "Shestock 5". The two largest bells were recast at Whitechapel in 1768 by Lester and Pack. The treble bell was cast without canons and the canons of the second bell are of the angular type, but the canons of the other four bells are of traditional type. None of the bells has been quarter turned. The two smallest bells have been tuned on a lathe and the strike note of the third bell has been lowered by chip tuning, but the three largest bells are maiden.

The bells hang in a massive oak bell frame which was installed in 1769. It bears the inscription 'Jos : Gibson / C W: 1769' – now partially concealed by angle-plates (removed temporarily to check the date and wording) - on one of the frame heads, and the Churchwardens' accounts record the purchase of timber costing £18 14s. 3d. in that year. The accounts also record a payment of £26 12s. 3d. to Jos. Radford for hanging the bells, and we may presume that the frame was built by him. It was built with pits for six bells with four parallel pits for the tenor, treble, second and third bells, and with pits for the fourth and fifth bells to swing mouth to mouth to the west of the other bells. It consists of cills, main braces and long frame heads and has massive corner posts in the four outer angles. The frame has been strengthened by the addition of angle plates in recent years. The treble bell is fitted with a cast iron headstock (repaired and plated by Gordon Lane after it was damaged), fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheel and traditional type stay and slider, these fittings being supplied in 1950. The five larger bells are fitted with Elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, self aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels and traditional type stays and sliders. The ball bearings were fitted in 1924 by John Taylor & Co., and the remainder of the fittings of the second bell are those supplied by that firm in 1887. However, the other fittings of the four largest bells were supplied by Robert Summers of Tanworth in Arden at a cost of £85 10s. This work was executed in 1883. The 1883 bearing blocks – cast iron housings with hinged lids – remain in the tower.

The clock is by William Potts & Sons of Leeds, 1921. It is a two-train flatbed movement with gravity escapement, showing the time on three skeleton dials. The erection of the clock is commemorated on a carved tablet on the west face of the tower inscribed "+ / The Clock in the tower / of this Church was erected / by the Parishioners in / grateful and loving memory / of those who fell / in the Great War / 1914-1919".

Visited C.J.P., J.C.E., 26 June 1976 and C.J.P., 9 January 1988 and 15 August 2007

### SHUSTOKE – Blyth Hall

Blyth Hall was a seat of the Warwickshire Historian, Sir William Dugdale, who bought the Manor in 1625 and lived in the house until his death in 1686. To this day the Hall remains in the hands of the Dugdale family. The core of the house is of seventeenth century date but the main front dates from 1692, and further alterations were carried out in the nineteenth century. The outbuildings at the back of the house include a stable block and coach house with a clock turret.

The clock movement bears neither maker's name nor date, but the date 1709 appears on a wooden setting dial on the inside of the wall directly behind the external clock dial. The clock has a wrought iron birdcage frame with six brass finials. The going train is equipped with maintaining power, and it has a recoil anchor escapement. The time is displayed on an undated single-handed diamond-shaped dial overlooking the courtyard behind the house. The strike mechanism (disused) is controlled by a countwheel with external notches, and it strikes the hours on a small bell which hangs in a hexagonal cupola on the roof of the building.

The bell is about 18 inches in diameter. It has canons, and it is hung with a wooden headstock with drive-in gudgeons and stock hoops. The clapper is missing, and the bell is now hung to be used only as a clock bell although it appears to have been formerly hung for swing chiming. The bell has 2:2-2:3:2 mouldings. It has the date 1709 in the inscription band. The date figures do not seem to be those of any regular bellfounder of the period.

Visited C.J.P. (binoculars) 12 October 1985 and (telescope) 17 August 2015; Thanks to Sir William Dugdale (1985) and Lady Dugdale (2015)

### SHUTTINGTON – St. Matthew

This church has a weatherboarded bell turret over the west end of the nave. The turret contains one bell hung for ringing. The bell has a diameter of 28<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches and sounds the note D natural (1193Hz or D plus 26 cents).

#### Inscription

IESVS (*vine border*) BEE (*border*) OVR (*border*) SPEED (*border*) 1664 (*border*) (*raised patch*) | (*George Oldfield's mark – upside down*)

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Hz	Note	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	George Oldfield, 1664	28 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1193	D+26	4	2	0*

This bell was cast in 1664 by George Oldfield I of Nottingham. His badge or trade mark appears – upside down or inverted - below the inscription band. The bell has six plain canons. It has not been quarter turned.

The bell is hung for ringing in the western pit of a wooden frame constructed to house two bells swinging north-south. The trusses of the occupied pit consist of sills, braces, jack braces and long heads. The eastern truss of the empty pit has a sill, king post, braces and long head. The return sections are jack-braced. There is a carved inscription "R B 1664" on the head of the frame at the north end of the eastern pit.



The fittings consist of an old oak stock with strap gudgeons, stock hoops, plain bearings, traditional wheel and traditional stay and slider on the wheel side of the bell.

Visited C.J.P., 21 July 1979 and (tonal analysis only) 14 August 2009

### **SHUTTINGTON – School**

A bell from Shuttington School was examined in the County Store in Warwick by Duncan Lund in 1979. It was a small brassfoundry bell with a peg argent. It was uninscribed. The diameter of the bell was 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches, and it was fitted with an iron bar stock and the remains of an iron wheel. Its clapper was missing.

Visited R.D.L., 23 February 1979

### **TANWORTH IN ARDEN – St. Mary Magdalene**

The western tower with spire of this church houses a ring of eight bells in the key of G natural (764Hz or G minus 44.72 cents), of which the tenor bell has a diameter of 41 inches.

Bell	Inscription
1.	<p>(<i>blank</i>) <i>Waist:</i> IN. MEM. WILLIAM HENRY SMART (1858–1934) / D.D. SARA ANNE SMART, HIS WIFE, 1949 / GLORIA TIBI, DOMINE <i>Opposite:</i> 19 (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>) 49</p>
2.	<p>(<i>blank</i>) <i>Waist:</i> IN. MEM. WINIFRED SMART (1888–1948) / D.D. WILLIAM H. SMART, HER HUSBAND, C.W 1949 / IN TE, DOMINE, SPERAVI. <i>Opposite:</i> 19 (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>) 49</p>
3.	<p>PROSPERITY TO THE CHVRCH 1707 (<i>Richard Sanders's mark</i>) <i>Low waist:</i> S. MARY MAGDALENE, 1949 <i>Opposite:</i> (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>)</p>
4.	<p>RICHARD SANDERS OF BROMSGROVE CAST US ALL (<i>four small bells</i>) / 1707 <i>Low waist:</i> MEARS &amp; STAINBANK OF WHITECHAPEL RECAST US, 1949. <i>Opposite:</i> (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>)</p>
5.	<p>HENRY HARIS IOHN SALLTOR C W (<i>Richard Sanders's mark</i>) 1707 <i>Low waist:</i> W.H. SMART, T.A. BARRATT CHURCHARDENS, 1949 <i>Opposite:</i> (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>)</p>
6.	<p>H.H I.S C W 1707 (<i>Richard Sanders's mark</i>) (<i>arabesque border</i>) (<i>Sanders's mark</i>) (<i>border</i>) <i>Low waist:</i> THE RINGERS BELL, 1949. <i>Opposite:</i> (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>)</p>
7.	<p>GOD SAVE QVEEN ANN. 1707 (<i>Richard Sanders's mark</i>) (<i>arabesque border</i>) <i>Low waist:</i> GOD SAVE KING GEORGE AND QUEEN ELIZABETH, 1949. <i>Opposite:</i> (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>)</p>
8.	<p>M<sup>R</sup> JOHN WELCHMAN VICAR WILLIAM CHAMBERS. THOMAS PARSONS. WILLIAM HYATT (<i>floral border</i>) RICHARD INSULL CHURCH. / WARDENS 1733 (<i>border</i>) <i>Waist:</i> (<i>Two coats of arms</i>) / (<i>Mears &amp; Stainbank's foundry mark</i>) / RECAST MEARS &amp; STAINBANK 1949 <i>Opposite:</i> DUDLEY W. LEE, M.A., VICAR, 1949</p>

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Nominal	Note	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	26	1528	G-44.72	4	0	21
2.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	27	1438	F#-49.81	4	2	23
3.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	28	1276	E-56.74	4	2	16
4.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	30	1148	D-39.74	5	2	0
5.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	32	1020	C-44.41	5	3	17
6.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	33	956	B-56.59	6	2	20
7.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	36	860	A-39.80	8	2	2
8.	Mears & Stainbank, 1949	41	764	G-44.72	12	1	0

This fine ring of eight was cast at Whitechapel, London, in 1949 by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank. The new bells replace a ring of six originally cast by Richard Sanders of Bromsgrove in 1707, of which the tenor had been recast in 1733 by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston. The old tenor was 41¾ inches in diameter and weighed 12 cwt. 0 qrs. 9 lbs. The inscriptions of the old bells have been reproduced in facsimile on the new ring. The weights given above differ from those displayed on the "official" Mears & Stainbank notice in the tower which show the tenor as 12-1-5 in F sharp, but the figures given here have been confirmed as being correct.

The bells were rehung in a new cast iron lowside bell frame with all new fittings in 1949, the whole installation being the work of Messrs. Mears and Stainbank. The frame is on one level and supported on a single girder foundation. All eight bells swing east-west, bells 3-6 in parallel pits to the west and nos. 1-2 and 7-8 on the east. There is a special casting on the south side of the third where the pit has been designed to fit in the corner by the newel stair turret. The treble is hung at a slightly higher level than the others, the bearings being fitted to pedestals mounted on the frame. The fittings consist of cast iron headstocks, fixed steel gudgeons, self-aligning ball bearings, traditional type wheels and traditional type stays and sliders.

The clock is signed on the setting dial "LEESON & SON / 1873 / COLESHILL". It is a two-train movement in a flatbed frame. The going train has a deadbeat escapement and a compensated pendulum with a beat of 1½ seconds. The striking train has a countwheel and strikes the hours on the tenor bell. The time is displayed on copper convex dials on the north and west sides of the tower. There is a brass plate on the frame recording the service of Alfred Henry Summers who retired as clock-winder in 1946, aged 85, after looking after the clock for over 46 years.

Visited: C.J.P., 27 September 1975 and 27 August 2008

### **TANWORTH IN ARDEN – Beaumont Hill House**

This eighteenth century farmhouse, the home of the Burman family for almost two centuries, has a cupola on the roof with a small bell hung for swing chiming. There is no access to the bell from below, and it can only be examined with roofing ladders. According to John Burman, the bell is inscribed "J.S. 1715" and it is believed to have been cast by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston.

Visited C.J.P., 7 October 1977

### **TEMPLE BALSALL – St. Mary**

The Knights Templar founded a preceptory here in the mid-C12th. After their order was disbanded in 1312 their estate passed to the Hospitallers who remained in possession until the dissolution in 1541. The present church was the original chapel here, but there is some doubt as to whether it was built for the Templars or by the Hospitallers. The late Geometrical style of the tracery suggests a late C13 date but on historical grounds there is support for the suggestion that it was built for the Hospitallers around 1340. After the

dissolution the building fell to ruin until restored under Lady Anne Holbourne's bequest in 1667-70. After the establishment of Lady Katherine Leveson's hospital in 1677 the building served both as a parochial chapelry (in Hampton-in-Arden parish until 1863) and also as a chapel for hospital inmates. The building was restored under George Gilbert Scott in 1849 and further work took place in 1896.

As restored in 1667-70 the church had an oblong stone turret in the South West corner. This stood above the base of the original stair turret and the supporting buttress on the south. At Scott's restoration in 1849 the C17 turret was replaced by the present one, built in a style more in keeping with the rest of the building.

The single bell is hung in the south western spirelet of the church. Access is by spiral stair from the South-West corner of the nave. The stair leads to the level of the church roof from where there are doors giving access to the parapets. A short iron ladder continues upwards to the bell, which is as follows:

### ***Inscription***

WILLIAM ELDRIDGE MADE MEE 1670 .....

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	William Eldridge, 1670	27¼	2:3-2:3:2	1248.5	E <sub>b</sub> +5	4	0	0*

This bell was cast in 1670 by William Eldridge of Chertsey, Surrey, the brother of Bryan Eldridge who cast a number of bells in the county in 1656. This bell is the only example of William's work in Warwickshire. It is a good casting of good tone, and is a maiden bell. It retains its canons, but has not been quarter turned.

The present bell frame, which rests on a circular base built on a ring of stone corbels in the turret, was probably installed when the turret was built in 1849. It consists of crossing braces, corner posts and frame heads, with low transoms across the pit ends. When the bell was later rehung two arched cast iron braces were inserted across the outer ends of the frame heads to provide additional lateral bracing. The present bearings sit in timber blocks set into the original frame timbers.

The fittings are probably the work of James Barwell of Birmingham, c.1896. They consist of an elm headstock, plate gudgeons (flat type with four bolts), plain brass bearings in cast iron housings, clapper and cast-in crown staple and a small wooden bell-wheel. The bell is secured by two-bolts through the stock and through the crown, i.e. without canon straps. There are wooden rope bosses in the stair where the rope passes through the stone treads.

There is no clock.

**Visited:** C.J.P., 7 February 1976 and (with Heather Pickford) 19 June 2019

### **TEMPLE BALSALL – Lady Katherine Leveson's Hospital**

The Hospital (now Lady Katherine Housing and Care) was founded in 1677 under the will of Lady Katherine Leveson (d.1674), one of the granddaughters of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The original buildings no longer survive as the Hospital was rebuilt on a grander scale in the early C18. The two main ranges face each other, one built in 1709-13 and the other in 1725-7. Francis Smith of Warwick was the architect. A drawing of c.1790 in the Aylesford collection shows a bell turret in the middle of the block at the north end of the courtyard. This was altered when the far end of the courtyard was rebuilt under C.S. Smith in 1836.

The clock turret at the north east angle of the Hospital courtyard contains a small clock bell. It is inscribed:

1678 (*vine border*) (*vine border*)

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Weight</b>
1.	John Martin 1678	13"	1459	F#-24	0-2-x

There is no maker's mark on the bell but the date figures and vine border are those used by John Martin, of Worcester, who doubtless cast this bell. It was cast in 1678, the year after the original foundation of the Hospital. The bell retains its canons.

Although it has a clapper and cast-in crown staple - suggesting that it was once swung - this bell is now used solely as a clock bell. It hangs by its canons from a beam within the cap of the turret.

The clock is a two-train movement in a wrought-iron birdcage frame. There is no name or date on the engraved brass setting dial. The wheels are of brass and the pinions turn in brass bushes. The going train has an unusual pin-wheel type escapement - probably a later adaptation - with the pallets at right angles to the escape wheel. A night-silencer has been fitted to the striking train. The clock shows the time on a stone dial in a square surround on the South side of the clock turret (i.e. facing the courtyard). The dial has a blue background and the stone numerals are painted gold.

**Visited:** C.J.P., 7 February 1976 and (with Heather Pickford) 19 June 2019

### **UMBERSLADE – Christ Church (Baptist)**

This church was built in 1877 to the designs of a Birmingham architect named George Ingall, and it was paid for by George Frederick Muntz Esq. of Umberslade, a wealthy industrialist who was a staunch supporter of the Baptist church in the Midlands. The builders were Messrs. Smallwood & Co. of Wootton Wawen. The dedication of the church took place on 18 September 1877. It is in the Decorated style, built of blue lias with limestone dressings. The roofs are of slate and there is a nave, polygonal chancel, transepts and a three stage tower topped by an octagonal spire. The tower has a stair turret at the south east corner and a parapet with bold pinnacles. Inside, the building retains its original timber furnishings and the interior is dominated by a large Gothic pulpit with an open baptistry in front. Since about 2002 the building has been in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust, under whom a programme of repairs was commenced in 2007 with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources. This included work on the tower and spire.

Unusually for a nonconformist church, there are bells here. Even single bells are uncommon in the free churches, but rings of bells and chimes are rarer still. Moreover, of the sets of bells that once hung in the churches of non-Anglican churches relatively few now survive. There are rings at Todmorden Unitarian church (eight of 1868), Brookfield Unitarian church at Gorton (eight of 1871), Hebburn Presbyterian Church (originally six of 1872, remodelled as a lighter ring in 1986) and Saltaire Congregational Churches (six of 1857-1870 sold in 1941 but replaced by a new ring in 2003). A further ring of six at Lightcliffe Congregational Church (1871) has been sold. There are - or were - chimes of eight or more bells only at West Croydon Congregational Church (eight of 1885-6 - sold in 1975), Watchorn Memorial Church (Methodist) at Alfreton (twelve bells of 1929) and Grainger's Lane Methodist Church at Cradley (eight of 1939 - recently removed). Umberslade thus shares this distinction with only a handful of others.

A report of the dedication ceremony in September 1877 stated that "...automatic bells and a clock would be placed in the tower shortly". The contract was awarded to Gillett & Bland of Croydon, whose records indicate that the order was placed in February 1877. The firm supplied an eight-day turret clock with gravity escapement, showing the time on iron skeleton dials on the south and west sides of the tower, and sounding the hours and Westminster quarters on the bells. They also supplied a carillon or chiming machine "to play 7 tunes on 8 bells", and the machine was also equipped with a barrel "pricked with changes similar to ringing a peal for the services of the church". According to the specification there were to be eight bells with a tenor weighing 8 cwt., and their combined weight was to be two tons. The total cost was £705 10s., and the work of installation was apparently

completed in March 1878. Both the clock and the chiming machine have the name of "GILLETT & BLAND / MANUFACTURERS / CROYDON" and the date "AD 1877" on the frame castings.

The tower with its tall spire stands at the south west corner of the church. Fitting the clock, chiming machine and bells in the tower called for some ingenuity. The clock is on the first floor, from which a ladder leads up to an upper chamber housing the chiming machine. The eight bells are all hung from wooden deadstocks in a two-tier wooden frame at the level of the belfry window openings.

The bells are all uninscribed and undated, but they appear in the Croydon foundry records as bells numbered 178-186 cast in February 1878. It would seem that they are early examples of the bellfounding work of Gillett & Bland of Croydon, although some doubt is cast on this by a note "from Warner & Sons" which appears alongside the entries relating to two of the bells. Full details of the diameters, notes and weights of the bells are as follows:

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Mouldings</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	24½	2:2-2:3:2	1693.5	A flat + 33	3	1	24
2.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	25	2:2-2:3:2	1600.5	G + 35	3	2	24
3.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	26½	2:2-2:3:2	1428.5	F + 38	4	0	18
4.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	27½	2:2-2:3:2	1274.5	E flat + 41	4	0	24
5.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	29	2:2-2:3:2	1137	D flat + 43	4	2	9
6.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	30½	2:2-2:3:2	1064.5	C + 29	5	1	10
7.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	33	2:2-2:3:2	952	B flat + 36	6	1	20
8.	Gillett & Bland, 1878	36½	2:2-2:3:2	843.5	A flat + 26	8	0	10

All the bells were cast with canons (those of bells 2 to 8 being of angular type), and they are hung by them from deadstocks with traditional supporting ironwork. They have cast-in staples for internal clappers, but they are sounded only by external hammers. The clock bells (nos.2, 3, 4, 7 and 8) all have three hammers each while the other bells each have only two. The wooden framework is arranged on two levels with pairs of bells hanging into the window openings. The treble, second, fifth and sixth bells are in the upper level and the third, fourth, seventh and tenor bells are below.

When the writer examined the bells in 1975 the carillon machine was disused, although the clock - converted to electric operation by John Smith & Sons of Derby in about 1960 - was still in use. Having been silent for over forty years, the carillon was restored between 1978 and 1981 by members of the Hockley Heath Steam Association led by Mr. Jack Marshall. The work is commemorated on a panel of photographs at the back of the church above a small brass plate inscribed "The clock, carillon and bells fitted / in this church were completely restored / (1978-1982) and re-commissioned by the / Hockley Heath Steam Association, as part / of their contribution towards the centenary / celebrations of 1977."

The notice also gives details of the tunes played by the chimes, which are as follows: Sunday, ordinary chimes and special chimes, with 'O Rest in the Lord' every hour. Monday, 'Blue Bells of Scotland'. Tuesday, 'The Minstrel Boy'. Wednesday, 'Hymn of the Homeland'. Thursday, 'The Last Rose of Summer'. Friday, 'All Through the Night'. Saturday, 'Home Sweet Home'. There are two barrels and a cupboard alongside the machine to house the

second barrel when not in use. The frame of the chiming machine is set out with two hammers per bell and there is space for further hammers to be fitted for extra bells. The machine operates on the Imhof system, allowing the hammers to be re-set between blows to reduce the power required to drive the barrel and improve the regularity of the tune-playing.

Visited C.J.P., 27 September 1975; CJP and HEP 11 December 2007; Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Jack Marshall and the Historic Chapels Trust

### **WARTON – Holy Trinity**

A daughter church of Polesworth, Holy Trinity was built in 1840-1841. Much of the cost (£1275) was borne by the Trustees of Francis Nethersole's Charity. The church was designed and built by Thomas Johnson of Lichfield. It is an aisleless building with a short chancel and a simple west porch. There is an open bellcote on the west gable of the nave. The first stone was laid on 28 September 1840 and the completed building was consecrated on 26 October 1841. A separate chapelry of Warton was formed in 1849.

The bellcote contains a single bell, as follows:

#### ***Inscription***

THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON 1841

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	Thomas Mears, 1841	20¾	1785	A + 24	1	3	2¾

This bell was cast at Whitechapel by Thomas Mears II in 1841, and supplied through Thomas Johnson of Lichfield, the architect and builder of the Church. Mears supplied several bells of about this size to Johnson in 1841 and the Warton bell cannot be identified in the Whitechapel daybooks with complete certainty, but the entry of 9 March 1841 for a bell (weighing 1-3-2¾) and a clapper probably refers to this one. The bell retains its canons and has not been quarter turned. It is hung for swing chiming with a wooden headstock, drive-in gudgeons, stock hoops, brass bearings fixed in the walls of the bell-cote, and an iron chiming lever. Of the fittings, only the clapper was supplied by Thomas Mears, and the remainder were presumably made by Johnsons' carpenter who according to the Specification was to "Hang a Bell of 2 cwt. in the Turret".

Visited C.J.P., G.D.A., 21 July 1979 (ladders); C.J.P. (tonal analysis only) 24 June 2009

### **WARTON – Parish Room**

The Parish Room was built in 1909, as recorded on a date-stone on the exterior of the building. After the Great War, a clock was erected on the building as a War Memorial. This is recorded on a stone tablet on the main façade of the building inscribed "To the Glory of God / and in memory of the men / who fell in the Great War / 1914-1918. This clock has been erected / by the inhabitants of Warton / 1921". The cast iron clock dial bears the name of "J. Smith & Sons / Derby" who supplied the clock.

#### **Bell *Inscription***

1. TAYLOR \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1921 \* [*rest invisible*]

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Hz</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1921	17	2022	B+40	1	0	1

The bell is hung "dead" in a four-poster turret rising from the roof over the main entrance. It is used only to strike the hours.

The Smith of Derby sales ledger for December 1921 contains the following entry: "New clock erected in Parish Hall £100.8.0., Bell £15, Weather vane £7.10.0., total £122.18.0". The bell for Warton is not identified by name in the Taylor records, but one of a corresponding value (costing £13 5s. 2d.) and the correct note was dispatched and invoiced to Smiths on 30 August 1921. As this was the only bell of matching size supplied in the period the entry no doubt refers to the Warton bell.

Visited C.J.P., 12 October 1985 and (binoculars) 22 February 2004

### **WATER ORTON – Church**

Water Orton was originally a chapelry in the parish of Aston until a separate parish was created in 1871. A Chapel of Ease was erected here in the 14th century, and this stood on the site of the old churchyard in Old Church Road. The chapel was rebuilt in the early C18th. An illustration in the Aylesford Collection shows it as a simple building of chancel, nave and west tower with plain parapet and pinnacles. It was of stone with round-headed openings and a small circular window above the west door of the tower.

The old church became inadequate for the growing population, and in 1877 it was decided to build a new church. Bateman & Corser of Birmingham were the architects and the eventual cost amounted to £3885. The foundation stone was laid on 11 September 1878 and the completed church was consecrated on 7 October 1879. The new church was formally substituted for the old one by an instrument dated 18 December 1879.

The church is in a rather harsh Victorian Decorated Gothic style, rock-faced and with stone dressings. It has a north-west porch tower which originally carried a tall stone spire, demolished in 1987. There is ladder access to the clock and bells. The inside of the tower is constructed of brick.

There were two small bells in the C18th church – one now in the tower of the present church and the other (of the same date) now at Minworth. The Minworth bell was the larger of the two, and for completeness its details are given here:

#### ***Inscription***

+ I WILL (*coin*) SOVND (*coin*) AND (*coin*) CALL, THE CONGREGATION / 1709  
(*floral border all round*)

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Founder and date</i></b>	<b><i>Diameter</i></b>	<b><i>Mouldings</i></b>	<b><i>Hz</i></b>	<b><i>Note</i></b>	<b><i>Cwt.</i></b>	<b><i>Qrs.</i></b>	<b><i>Lbs.</i></b>
1.	Joseph Smith, 1709	18 $\frac{1}{8}$	3:2-2:3:2	1645	Ab-16	1	0	22

Shortly before the present church was completed, on 11 September 1879 the Clerk of Works was "instructed to remove one of the bells from the old church and refix the same in the new church". It seems probable, though, that both bells were transferred from the old church to the new, complete with their old wooden frame. The old church was later demolished in 1887.

The bell now in the tower is as follows:

#### ***Inscription***

+ IOHN BVRTON (*coin*) CHVRCH (*coin*) WARDEN (*coin*) 1709 (*coin*) / (*floral border all round*)

<b><i>Bell</i></b>	<b><i>Founder and date</i></b>	<b><i>Diameter</i></b>	<b><i>Mouldings</i></b>	<b><i>Hz</i></b>	<b><i>Note</i></b>	<b><i>Cwt.</i></b>	<b><i>Qrs.</i></b>	<b><i>Lbs.</i></b>
1.	Joseph Smith, 1709	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	2:2-2:3:2	1993.5	B+15	1	0	0*

This bell was cast in 1709 by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston, and it was the smaller of the two bells in the old church. It has a false crown inside, and it is now bolted directly to its

headstock. There is a large circular pad between the bell and the stock, and it is not clear whether it retains its canons or not. It has not been quarter turned.

The bell hangs in a nineteenth century wooden frame in which there are pits for two bells swinging east-west. The existing bell occupies the southern pit. The frame is of slight construction and may well have come from the old church. It consists of sills, main braces, corner posts and long heads (i.e. *Bellframes* type 6.A).

The bell was rehung with new fittings after 1955, but the old fittings consisting of an eighteenth century elm headstock with drive-in gudgeons, stock hoops, and a wooden bell wheel used to remain in the tower. It is now fitted with a round steel bar headstock, iron chiming lever and counterbalance, and line-shaft ball bearings – possibly by Gillett & Johnston or Charles Carr, and possibly of about 1955.

Above the bell frame are the remains of the framework for a set of eight tubular bells. Made in Coventry by Harrington, Latham & Co, these bells were originally put up at Erdington Parish Church in 1890 and removed when the new ring of eight bells was installed there in 1903-4. They were purchased by John Bagnall who gave them to Water Orton church in 1904. They were still in the tower in 1955 when repairs were contemplated. Taylors noted that the smallest was about 4ft long and the largest 8ft, the notes of these tubes being 1068 Hz [C-35] 548 Hz [C#-20] respectively. They have since been removed, possibly at about the same time as the bell now in the tower was rehung.

The clock is a two-train flatbed movement with deadbeat escapement. It shows the time on four skeleton dials and strikes the hours and a single blow at the half-hour on the bell. The setting dial is signed by "W.F. Evans & Sons / Soho Clock Factory / Birmingham". The movement is not dated, but a tablet in the church records that the clock and memorial tablet were erected in 1920 in memory of parishioners who died in the Great War:

+ / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / AS A THANK-OFFERING FOR THE RESTORATION OF PEACE / IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE LOYAL SERVICES / OF THE 73 MEN OF THIS PARISH WHO SERVED WITH H.M. FORCES / IN THE GREAT WAR / AND IN PIOUS MEMORY OF / JOSEPH BONEHAM / CHARLES BURTON / ARNOLD HAWKINS / SIDNEY PROSSER / GILBERT WILLDEY / WHO NOBLY DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY / THE PARISH CHURCH CLOCK AND THIS TABLET WERE ERECTED / BY PARISHIONERS OF WATER ORTON, A.D. MCMXX

In about 1999 the clock was converted to auto-wind by John Smith & Sons of Derby.

**Visited:** JT&Co 2 June 1955; C.J.P., 30 December 1977, 10 October 1989 and 5 May 2010: Thanks to Canon Stephen Mayes

## **WISHAW – ST. Chad**

The western tower of this church houses a ring of three bells in the key of B flat.

### **Bell**

### **Inscription**

1. (Cross) THOMAS (vine border) GOODARD (border) CVRCH (border) WARDIN (border) 1650 T C / (John Martin's large trade mark)
2. (Cross) MICKEL (vine border) WALFORD (border) RECTOR (border) 1650 (border) / (John Martin's large trade mark)
3. REV<sup>D</sup>. N. BAYLEY VICAR W. BERKIN D. WALKER CHURCH WARDENS 1809. (border) / THOMAS MEARS & SON OF LONDON FECIT  
*Waist (incised):* THIRD BELL REHUNG / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / EASTER 1997

<b>Bell</b>	<b>Founder and date</b>	<b>Diameter</b>	<b>Nominal</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Cwt.</b>	<b>Qrs.</b>	<b>Lbs.</b>
1.	John Martin, 1650	28 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>	1198.5	D +35	4	2	0*
2.	John Martin, 1650	31	1070.5	C +39	5	2	0*



3.	Thomas Mears & Son, 1809	32 $\frac{7}{8}$	955.5	Bb + 42.5	6	0	6
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The two smaller bells were cast in 1650 by John Martin, a Worcester bellfounder who appears to have itinerated during the unsettled years of the Civil War and Protectorate. They bear his usual trade mark and ornamental borders. Martin probably supplied three bells in 1650. There were certainly three bells here until 1830 when the tenor bell, which was broken, was sold for £21. The two remaining bells were then rehung with new fittings by a Mr. Holbeach at a cost of £6 4s. The remaining Martin bells retain their canons and have been quarter turned. The smaller bell has had its strike note lowered by means of chip tuning, but the second is a maiden bell.

The tenor was acquired from the closed church of St. Michael, Derby, in 1996-7. It had been taken down in December 1980 and after several years in store in the crypt of Derby Cathedral it was acquired for Wishaw through Hayward Mills Associates in May 1996. It was provided with new fittings and installed in the empty pit in the old frame. The dedication of the new bell took place on 22 June 1997.

The bells hang in an oak frame constructed with pits for three bells. It consists of sills, main braces and long frame heads, with jack braces in the outer trusses (north and south) and return sections only. The braces are neatly stopped and chamfered. The tower was rebuilt in about 1711-12 after funds had been raised by brief for repairs to the church and steeple. The present bellframe is probably coeval with the tower.

The two older bells are fitted with elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, ball bearings, traditional type wheels with iron wheel stays. These fittings resemble the work of James Barwell & Son of Birmingham who may have rehung the bells at the time of the restoration of the church under A.B. Phipson, architect, in 1887. The bearings date from 1954 when the bells were taken down, cleaned, quarter turned and rehung by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon at a cost of £172. The tenor has a cast iron canon retaining headstock with fixed steel gudgeons, ball bearings, wheel, stay and slider. It was provided by Hayward Mills Associates who in 1997 strengthened the frame, overhauled the fittings of the two old bells (adding stays and sliders which were not present previously) and installed the additional bell.

An old headstock – possibly that of the former tenor bell - remains in situ in the tower, and is fitted with strap gudgeons and stock hoops and part of a traditional type bell wheel. The bearing blocks have been removed. The clappers of the other two bells are fixed to the wall in the base of the tower alongside a tablet which records the rehanging of the bells in 1954.

There is no clock.

Visited C.J.P., 14 February 1976; C.J.P., H.E.P. and C.J.N.D., 28 February 2003; Thanks to David Kelly (data on nominals)

### **WOOD END – St. Michael**

This church was built as a Mission room to serve and outlying district of the parish of Kingsbury, and it was first licensed for worship on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1906. It is now served by the Vicar of Dosthill. It has a small western turret in which there is a small bell of about 10 inches in diameter. The bell has no visible inscription or marks, and it probably dates from about 1906. It is hung for swing chiming.

Visited C.J.P., R.M. (binoculars) 5 September 1980.