

# **BELLS IN AND AROUND BIRMINGHAM: A SURVEY AND HISTORY**

**(PART 1: PREFACE, EXPLANATORY  
NOTES, INTRODUCTION,  
LOCATIONS A-E)**

Chris Pickford

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## Preface

Not long after I took up ringing in 1966 I began collecting information on the bells in Worcestershire (where I was at boarding school) and Warwickshire (where my parents lived). I date my first 'serious' visits to April 1968 since when I have been working intermittently on comprehensive surveys of bells in the two counties. The prospect of tackling a large urban area like Birmingham was always a rather daunting one and for a long time I skirted round it. However, when I took on the role of Bells Adviser to the Birmingham Diocesan Advisory Committee in 1987 I decided to pick up the challenge and during the course of the next couple of years managed to visit nearly every belfry in the area.

The work originally led to the creation of a Diocesan Inventory (rather in the format of the present National Bells Register) and the updating of the Council for the Care of Churches' preservation list for the Diocese. I stepped down as Bells Adviser in 1998 but in 2003-4 - following a return to the Midlands - I did some further survey work and wrote up the entire work in its present form. Since then I have tried to keep it up to date as best I can.

I never intended this to be a book - and long ago gave up talking of books to replace Walters's books on the *Church Bells of Warwickshire* (1910) *Church Bells of Worcestershire* (1925-31) - as this sort of study is too specialised (and too detailed in this form) for traditional publication. Commercial publishers, certainly, aren't interested. I do believe, though, that the survey is worth completing even if it remains unpublished.

In making the draft version available 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.

To that end I have previously made copies of the file available to quite a number of people in the past and now I am glad that the Guild has expressed a wish to 'publish' it online.

There are just three further points to make – two *caveats*, and a request

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.
3. The request is simply that anyone with additional information, suggestions and corrections let me know so I can make any necessary amendments

As to what is presented here, please note that there are no illustrations yet. The list of photographs at the beginning is simply a working list of what might be included later on. Similarly, there are the beginnings - but no more than that - of a general introduction to the work. This was begun in 2004 but work came to an abrupt halt owing to a change in employment and I have never got round to completing it. Lastly, a full version of this work should include analytical lists of the bells cast by each founder, the bellhanging work of the various firms and clocks arranged by maker and date. A spreadsheet version of this information exists ready for future extraction into a suitable format.

Finally, the main survey covers the area of the City and its suburban hinterland. The rural part of Birmingham Diocese in Warwickshire and in the modern Solihull Metropolitan Borough is included in my main Warwickshire survey. It has been fully researched but not yet written up in as much detail as the Birmingham part. For completeness, the current

versions of the main belfry descriptions - by no means complete or in an ideal format - are provided as a separate file with its own preface.

**Chris Pickford FSA**

4 Walmsley Court, High Street, Kinver, DY7 6HG

Tel: 01384 872519 or (mobile) 07811 453525

E-mail: [c.j.pickford@talk21.com](mailto:c.j.pickford@talk21.com) or [pickford5040@gmail.com](mailto:pickford5040@gmail.com)

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## Explanatory notes

This is intended as a parallel publication to "Warwickshire". Combining the two seems impractical both on account of size and also because "Birmingham" covers areas that were never in Warwickshire. Boundaries have changed several times, and the complexity of the evolution of administrative areas (civil and ecclesiastical) means that it is hard to define areas that will be generally meaningful and readily understood.

*Maps* [not included in this version]

- 1) Birmingham ancient parish – with outline of county boundaries, and spot locations for main places in surrounding area (Aston, Edgbaston, Handsworth, Kings Norton, Moseley, Northfield, Sutton, Yardley etc)
- 2) Present City of Birmingham – and places just outside the edge – with diocesan and county boundaries as practicable
- 3) Coverage of volume showing main area, outline of motorway ring, and "fringe areas" hatched to indicate level of coverage
- 4) Location maps for main districts (e.g. Aston, Edgbaston, Handsworth, Harborne, Moseley, Smethwick)

Coverage:

Main area of the City of Birmingham – all Church of England churches (past and present), some public buildings, most buildings with public clocks, and other places of interest

Area A – Worcestershire and Staffordshire sides (basically as main area)

Area B – Warwickshire side (the outlying deaneries). Summary entries (describing existing bells – not a full historical account) for churches. Other buildings not included. This area will be covered in full in the companion volume on Warwickshire.

The aim of the two publications is to provide full coverage of the area at its greatest extent, although "Birmingham" has been less exhaustively investigated – in terms of secular locations with clocks and bells – than the rest of "Warwickshire". Any division must be artificial, but treating "Birmingham" and "Warwickshire" as separate blocks should have the advantage of creating comprehensive reference books for two distinct areas.

For this volume, the original intention had been to arrange by dedication and then by place, using the system adopted by the *Victoria County History*. This avoids the complexities of new parishes created from new ones and districts formed from parts of others, but it is not so readily accessible to readers unfamiliar with the area. While it works well for churches, it fails to provide a satisfactory framework for secular buildings.

The order of the entries therefore follows the general principle of arranging the church or building by district and then alphabetically by dedication or name. This has the advantage of grouping entries by locality so you can see what churches and bells are listed in (e.g.) Edgbaston. Cross references are also given, however, to show where entries for particular districts (e.g. Gravelly Hill) can be found. For separate churches formed out of ancient parishes, further cross references have been provided (e.g. CASTLE BROMWICH – *see also* SHARD END, All Saints). Places where new parishes have been formed from parts of several older parishes are generally listed under their new name, with cross-references back to the others (e.g. Kings Heath, Stirchley).

Complete consistency is nigh impossible, but what I have aimed to do is to group entries and provide cross-references in such a way that the reader will find entries within no more than two searches. Some places are particularly difficult, the worst areas being Bordesley and Small Heath where churches have gone under alternative names at different dates. Duddeston and Nechells provides another example of this.

## Work done

- Visit notes – inscriptions and basic details extracted
- Card index – key information extracted
- M&S index – searched quite thoroughly
- Tilley & Walters – done
- Main card index and “Warwickshire” index – checked for stray references
- Worcester Diocese card index – consecrations etc
- Lists of founders, hangers and clockmakers lists compiled on Excel
- Approximate weights marked \*

## Work still required

- Scan through cards and computer entries to look for omissions
- Specific research query list
- Country houses and public buildings
- ILLUSTRATIONS
- Maps

## MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS [not included in this version]

- Map      Birmingham parish – see above
- Map      Birmingham City (as now) – see above
- Map      Coverage map – as above
- Maps     Site of Blews, Barwell and Carr foundries (Goad Plans, if available)
- Map      Good Knaves End, Edgbaston (Smith’s foundry)
1.      Aston: church (old engraving?)
  2.      Aston: Tenor bell
  3.      Balsall Heath, St.Paul: New steel campanile
  4.      Birmingham: Art Gallery (full page from G&J catalogue 1907)
  5.      Birmingham, Art Gallery: Postcard view (CJP)
  6.      Birmingham, Bishop Latimer’s: Church (WDCC?)
  7.      Birmingham, Bishop Ryder’s: Church
  8.      Birmingham, Christ Church: Church and Town Hall (Local Studies?)
  9.      Birmingham, City Bushell: From Warwickshire Records
  10.     Birmingham, Market Hall: Clock chime and bells, 1939 (Local Studies? – or newspaper)
  11.     Birmingham, Public Offices: Exterior Church (Local Studies - (*Birmingham Faces and Places* Vol.II p.15 – 1 May 1889)
  12.     Birmingham, Spring Hill Library: Exterior
  13.     Birmingham, St.Bartholomew: Church (Local Studies?)
  14.     Birmingham, St.Chad’s Cathedral: Main front before completion (CJP book)
  15.     Birmingham, St.Chad’s Cathedral: Old frame plans etc
  16.     Birmingham, St.Chad’s Cathedral: New bells, 1939 (SMG Library)
  17.     Birmingham, St.George: church
  18.     Birmingham, St.James, Ashted: church
  19.     Birmingham, St.Martin: Taylor frame drawing, 1858
  20.     Birmingham, St.Martin: Old bells in churchyard, 1928 (RLJ)
  21.     Birmingham, St.Martin: Tenor in action, 1980s (colour photo – SMG)
  22.     Birmingham, St.Martin: The new sixteen in the church, 1991
  23.     Birmingham, St.Mary: Church (Local Studies?)
  24.     Birmingham, St.Michael, Warstone Lane: Church (Local Studies?)
  25.     Birmingham, St.Peter: Old Church (Local Studies?)
  26.     Birmingham, St.Philip (Cathedral): the new ten (Clayton collection)
  27.     Birmingham, St.Philip (Cathedral): Gillett trebles, 1949
  28.     Birmingham, St.Thomas: church
  29.     Birmingham, Witton Cemetery: Chapels (Local Studies?)
  30.     Bordesley, Holy Trinity: church (postcard view - CJP)

31. Bordesley, St.Andrew: Church (RLJ?)
32. Bournville: Carillon (Taylor pictures – Clayton collection)
33. Bournville: Carillon in Gillett works, 1934 (use George Fearn copy – SMG)
34. Castle Bromwich: New bells, 1952
35. Cofton Hackett: Blews bell (CJP photo)
36. Deritend: Church (Local Studies?)
37. Deritend: Belfry interior
38. Duddeston, St.Matthew: Church as built (engraving)
39. Edgbaston, St.Augustine: Church (WDCC?)
40. Edgbaston, St.James: Church (Local Studies?)
41. Edgbaston, University of Birmingham: University clock bells on lorry (JT&Co)
42. Edgbaston, University of Birmingham: Tower (Local Studies?)
43. Erdington, Abbey: Church – exterior from S showing turret and tower
44. Erdington, Abbey: Old frame plans etc
45. Erdington: Sir Josiah Mason's Orphanage
46. Handsworth, Cemetery: Chapel
47. Kings Norton: Tenor, 1924 (postcard)
48. Kingstanding churches: ICBS photos?
49. Moseley, St.Agnes: Church (CJP postcard – tower before completion)
50. Northfield: Frame drawings
51. Northfield: Tenor, 1923 (postcard)
52. Pye Hayes, Church: ICBS photo?
53. Sheldon: Frame drawing (CJP)
54. Solihull: Tenor, 1932 (postcard)
55. Sparkbrook, St.Agatha: Church
56. Sparkhill, St.John: The mediaeval bell from Ullenhall, via Emmanuel
57. Sutton Coldfield, Old Town Hall: Before removal of clock tower
58. Sutton Coldfield, St.James, Four Oaks: Postcard view (CJP)
59. Wythall: Church
60. Yardley: Old frame drawings (architect, 1947)

### **UNIDENTIFIED – Birmingham**

Taylors bought broken metal of 17-2-11 nett (17-2-15 gross) on 5 Dec.1953 from Arthur E. Milner, Metals Ltd, Birmingham. Provenance not stated. *Where was this from ??? [almost certainly St.Thomas?]*

### **UNIDENTIFIED – Birmingham**

Birmingham: Bells book, Nov.1963 – Arthur E. Milner (Metals) Ltd, Bell by Llewellyns & James 1904, 1351hz; Furnace book, 12 Nov.1963 – A.E. Milner (Metals) Ltd. Bell 26½", 3-2-20 nett

### **UNIDENTIFIED – Birmingham**

Undated entries in old notebook at Loughborough show that Taylors supplied a heavy bell for Birmingham in about 1841. It was a 47¼" bell weighing 17-0-25, replacing an old bell of 17-2-24. Was this for St.Chad's? Could Hardman have purchased it for his works?

In July 1985 Taylors used metal weighing 16-0-12 "ex Hardman stained glass broken metal" for Birmingham. Was this the same bell?

## **INTRODUCTION [*N.B.: In draft, and only partly written - but with notes on intended content for the uncompleted sections*]**

### **PREFACE**

*"To include all these [the modern churches] would have meant time spent in the grime of some fifty Birmingham belfries, with little or no result to shew, and I trust future antiquarians will pardon the omission"*

So wrote H.B. Walters in 1910 in his preface to his book on *The Church Bells of Warwickshire*. The book was largely based on the work of his friend the Rev. H.T. Tilley, Vicar of Bearwood from 1888 to 1902, who died in 1905. Together they had explored a great many Midlands belfries, and Walters later published a similar books on Shropshire and Worcestershire bells to which Tilley also contributed.

These books provide a generally thorough and reliable account of the bells in the ancient churches in those counties. While now out of date, they remain invaluable as a historical record of the bells that then existed and provide a wealth of other information on the bellfounders and craftsmen who made and maintained them.

The omission of bells in modern churches has proved, however, to have been unfortunate since many of those that they might have seen had disappeared by the time this present survey was begun. Similarly, of course, Walters confined his interest to church bells, ignoring the large numbers of bells to be found in secular locations.

This survey ... [\[expand and complete from here\]](#)

### **CHAPTER 1 – Places with bells**

The use of *signa* as a means of communication dates back to prehistoric times, and bells made of metal represent a particular development from earlier forms. Used to raise the alarm, call people together and communicate information, the earliest *signa* – and, indeed, the earliest bells – were secular rather than sacred in purpose. This duality of use has continued throughout history, and consequently this survey deals with bells in general and not specifically with those which are hung in churches and places of worship.

The survey itself provides detailed information on what is known about the bells – past and present – that have existed in the main churches, public buildings and other locations in the greater Birmingham area. This introduction aims to summarise some of the historical trends in the use of bells that can be drawn from the available evidence. It is in two parts. The first deals with the buildings in which bells are housed, looking at each of the main building types. The second studies where bells came from through different periods of history and looks at the people involved in the bell industry.

### **CHURCH BELLS**

Bells are, of course, primarily associated with churches. This is because church bells are heard most regularly and have the most obvious history. It is also because, to a perhaps surprising extent, secular uses have been combined with religious ones since bells were first hung in churches in mediaeval times. Hence many of the customary uses of bells of a purely functional or practical nature have become associated with the church buildings from which the sound is heard.

Examples of this include the curfew, the market bell, the gleaning bell, the pudding bell and other uses which, although no longer with us, remained common until the nineteenth century. Clock chimes, on the other hand, have been a feature of English life since medieval times and remain as the surviving example of the use of church bells for purely civil purposes.

While it was not unknown in mediaeval times for there to be a separate town belfry, it was much more common for the church tower to be regarded as the place in which to hang all the bells needed for common use. The bells in the church belonged to the community at large. This arrangement was to some extent formalised with the establishment of the Church of England after the Reformation. The ringing of bells for state and church purposes continued the pattern of dual use that began in earlier times.

The emergence of ringing as a recreation or pastime in the later sixteenth century, coupled with the advent of change-ringing, led to significant developments in bells and ringing in the post-Reformation era. In particular, additional bells were provided to enable the ringers to extend their repertoire. The number and weight of the bells in each church became a matter of local pride – even more than it had already been in the mediaeval period when the size and quality of towers and spires had symbolised the importance of each town and village.

### ***Mediaeval churches and chapels***

In this context, it is informative to take a look at the number of bells (where known) in each of the principal mediaeval churches and chapels in the mid sixteenth century and to plot the dates at which additional bells were provided to increase the number in each ring to six, eight, ten and so on. Fortunately, the so-called Edwardian inventories provide information on the numbers of bells in 1552/3 and in most cases the dates of subsequent augmentations are known from local records.

| <b><i>Parish and dedication</i></b> | <b><i>Tower</i></b> | <b><i>1552</i></b> | <b><i>5</i></b> | <b><i>6</i></b> | <b><i>8</i></b> | <b><i>10</i></b> | <b><i>12</i></b> | <b><i>12+</i></b>   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Aston, SS.Peter & Paul              |                     | 5                  | 1552            | ----            | 1776            | 1814             | <b>1935</b>      |                     |
| Austrey                             |                     | 4                  | <b>1632</b>     |                 |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Barston                             |                     | 3                  | 1691            | <b>1960</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Bickenhill                          |                     | 3                  | 1707            | <b>1929</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Birmingham, St.John, Deritend *     |                     | 2                  | ----            | ----            | <b>1776</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Birmingham, St.Martin               |                     | 3                  | ----            | 1682            | 1706            | 1758             | 1772             | <b>1991</b><br>(16) |
| Castle Bromwich *                   |                     | ??                 | 1717            | <b>1952</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Coleshill                           |                     | 3                  | ----            | 1720            | 1923            | <b>1978</b>      |                  |                     |
| Edgbaston                           |                     | 3                  | 1685            | 1898            | <b>1927</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Grendon                             |                     | 3                  | 1699            | 1906            |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Hampton in Arden                    |                     | 3                  | ----            | 1725            | <b>1976</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Handsworth                          |                     | 4                  | ----            | 1701            | <b>1890</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Harborne                            |                     | 3                  | ----            | 1691            | <b>1877</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Kings Norton *                      |                     | 4                  | ----            | 1689            | 1783            | <b>1926</b>      |                  |                     |
| Kingsbury                           |                     | 4                  | 1849            | 1959            | <b>1969</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Knowle                              |                     | 3                  | ----            | 1897            | <b>1931</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Lapworth                            |                     | 4                  | 1786            | <b>1963</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Moseley *                           |                     | 3                  | ----            | ----            | <b>1874</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Nether Whitacre                     |                     | 3                  | ----            | <b>1977</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Northfield                          |                     | 3                  | 1637            | 1730            | 1923            | <b>1999</b>      |                  |                     |
| Packwood                            |                     | 3                  | 1686            | 1907            | <b>1960</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Polesworth                          |                     | 4                  | 1740            | <b>1896</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Rowley Regis                        |                     | 4                  | 1684            | ---             | <b>1887</b>     |                  |                  |                     |
| Sheldon                             |                     | 4                  | 1992            | <b>1997</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Shustoke                            |                     | 5                  | 1552            | <b>1950</b>     |                 |                  |                  |                     |
| Solihull                            |                     | 3                  | ----            | ----            | 1686            | 1894             | 1968             | <b>1996</b><br>(13) |
| Sutton Coldfield                    |                     | 4                  | ----            | 1778            | <b>1884</b>     |                  |                  |                     |



|                   |  |   |             |      |             |  |  |  |
|-------------------|--|---|-------------|------|-------------|--|--|--|
| Tanworth in Arden |  | 4 | ----        | 1707 | <b>1949</b> |  |  |  |
| Yardley           |  | 2 | <i>1638</i> | 1902 | <b>1950</b> |  |  |  |

**Notes:** \* were strictly chapelries (not parish churches). Dates in *italics* are conjectural – either where the date of augmentation is not known, or where (as with Sutton Coldfield) it represents the earliest date at which the number is recorded. Dates in **bold** represent the highest number of bells in each tower to date.

Not all churches acquired additional bells, however, and there are several instances where the number of bells has remained the same or where the increase has not led to the establishment of a ring of five or more bells. These include:

| <b><i>Parish and dedication</i></b> | <b><i>1552</i></b> | <b><i>Now</i></b> | <b><i>Date of change / notes</i></b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Baddesley Clinton                   | 3                  | 3                 | One mediaeval bell survives            |
| Baddesley Ensor                     | --                 | 2                 |  |
| Baxterley                           | 2                  | 1                 | Two old bells recast into one in 1875  |
| Cofton Hackett                      | 2 small            | 2                 | Hung in open cote                      |
| Curdworth                           | 3                  | 3                 | One mediaeval bell survives            |
| Elmdon                              | 2                  | 2                 | Both recast                            |
| Frankley                            | --                 | 1                 | There were two bells until c.1865      |
| Lea Marston                         | 2                  | 3                 | Apparently three by 1629               |
| Maxstoke                            | 2 small            | 2                 | Both recast                            |
| Merevale                            | --                 | 2                 | Two ancient bells survived until 1893  |
| Middleton                           | 3                  | 3                 | Mediaeval three-bell frame survives    |
| Newton Regis                        | 3                  | 3                 | One bell broken and missing by 1876    |
| Over Whitacre                       | 3                  | 2                 | Church rebuilt in 1765                 |
| Seckington                          | 3                  | 4                 | Only two in 1876, but two added 1886   |
| Shuttington                         | 2                  | 1                 | Hung in frame for two dated 1664       |
| Temple Balsall                      | --                 | 1                 |  |
| Water Orton *                       | --                 | 1                 | One transferred to Minworth in 1909    |
| Wishaw                              | 3                  | 3                 | Bell sold in 1830 and replaced in 1997 |

**Notes:** \* were strictly chapelries (not parish churches)

Alongside the gradual increase in the number of bells – and often in the total weight of metal in the tower - there was also a general trend in the period from around 1550 to 1850 to achieve this by scaling down the size of the ring by lowering the weight of the tenor bell. St.Martin's, Birmingham, where a much heavier ring of ten with a tenor bell of 35 cwt was installed in 1758 in place of a ring of eight bells with a tenor weighing only 17 cwt, stands out as a striking exception to the norm. At Aston in 1776 the total weight of the bells was increased from 57cwt to 88cwt, with an increase in the weight of the tenor from 18cwt to 21 cwt.

### ***Churches built or substantially altered in the period 1600 to 1800***

Although the nineteenth century was when new churches were built in large numbers, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also witnessed a considerable amount of church building activity. Additional church accommodation was needed in Birmingham for the rapidly expanding population and a number of new churches were provided. Elsewhere, additional buildings were erected in new settlements or for the convenience of people living at a distance from their parish church.

| <b><i>Church</i></b> | <b><i>Church</i></b> | <b><i>Tower</i></b> | <b><i>Originally</i></b>          | <b><i>Later developments</i></b>            |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Birmingham, St.Paul  | 1777-9               | Spire 1823          | Probably one bell of 1779 or 1823 | Bell recast 1858, and two clock bells added |

|                            |        |                      |  |   |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------------|--|---|
|                            |        |                      |  | in 1874   |
| Birmingham, St.Bartholomew | 1749   | Cupola only          | Two bells (one large and one small) 1749                                   | Closed in 1935 and later demolished                                 |
| Birmingham, St.Mary        | 1774   | 1774                 | One bell, 1774-5 (possibly second-hand bell from St.Michael's, Coventry)   | Church demolished 1925  |
| Birmingham, St.Philip      | 1711-5 | 1725                 | One bell, 1715   | Ring installed after 1728   |
| Hall Green, Ascension      | 1704   | 1704                 | One bell, 1704   | Original bell survives  |
| Smethwick, Old Church      | 1732   | 1732                 | One bell, 1732   | Ring of eight in 1897   |
| Ashted, St.James           | 1791   | Turret c.1791 / 1810 | Probably a single bell of c.1791 (church) or c.1810 (date of consecration) | Tower and spire added c.1840. Eight tubular bells installed in 1891 |

This period also saw the rebuilding or restoration of many churches, and in some cases the addition of new towers and bells. Examples include:

| Church                        | Date   | Nature of work  | Changes to bells                |
|-------------------------------|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| Hampton in Arden              |        | Removal of spire and partial rebuilding of tower after lightning damage |                                 |
| Birmingham, St.John, Deritend |        | Rebuilding, with addition of new tower                                  | Bells later installed (in 1776) |
| Edgbaston, St.Bartholomew     | 1683-5 | Restored after damage sustained during the Civil War                    | New bells (5) in 1685           |
|                               |        |   |                                 |

### ***Nineteenth century churches***

The first wave of early nineteenth century church building saw the opening of entirely new churches between 1800 and 1840. These were funded under a range of different schemes, with the money for Christ Church (1805-1814) and Bishop Ryder (1837-8) being raised locally, while many of the others were either built by or granted aided by the Church Building Commissioners.

| <b><i>Church</i></b>            | <b><i>Architect</i></b> | <b><i>Date</i></b> | <b><i>Bells</i></b> | <b><i>Weight</i></b> | <b><i>Founder/date</i></b> | <b><i>Later</i></b>                             |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Birmingham, Christ Church       | Charles Norton          | 1805-14            | 1                   | 8½ cwt               | John Rudhall, 1813         | Demolished 1899. Bell transferred to Sparkbrook |
| Birmingham, St.Peter, Dale End* | Rickman & Hutchinson    | 1825-7             | 1                   | 12 cwt               | Thomas Mears, 1827         | Replaced in 1837 when church rebuilt after fire |
| Erdington, St.Barnabas*         | Thomas Rickman          | 1822-3             | 1                   | 10 cwt               | Thomas Mears, 1824         | Replaced by tubular bells 1890                  |
| Birmingham, St.George*          | Thomas Rickman          | 1819-22            | 1                   | 15 cwt               | John Rudhall, 1822         | Further bell added in 1839. Sold 1962           |
| Birmingham, St.Thomas*          | Rickman & Hutchinson    | 1826-9             | 1                   | 20 cwt               | Not known (probably        | Destroyed c.1941                                |

|                                     |                  |         |   |        |                    |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------|---|--------|--------------------|--|
|                                     |                  |         |   |        | Mears)             |  |
| Bordesley, Holy Trinity, Camp Hill* | Francis Goodwin  | 1820-22 | 2 | 16 cwt | John Rudhall, 1823 | Sold for scrap after closure of church |
| Birmingham, Bishop Ryder            | Rickman & Hussey | 1837-8  | 1 | 4 cwt  | Taylor, c.1838     | Ring (8) installed in 1868/9           |

The five new churches marked with an asterisk were "Commissioners' Churches", built with funds from the first Parliamentary grant awarded in 1818 and distributed by the Church Building Commissioners. The Commissioners met the entire cost of these churches, and at this stage there was enough money to fund the erection of lavishly furnished and impressive buildings with towers and spires. As can be seen from this table, however, it was normal to provide just one bell though generally one of a fair size.

By the time of the second grant (which provided funds towards the churches in the following table) in 1825 there was less money to go round. It became necessary to build much more cheaply. The Commissioners only made a contribution towards the cost, and the bulk of the money had to be raised locally. Most of these churches had one bell, but of a smaller size than those provided for the new churches of the previous decade.

| <b>Church</b>                    | <b>Architect</b>     | <b>Date</b> | <b>Bells</b> | <b>Weight</b> | <b>Founder/date</b> | <b>Later</b>  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|---|
| Birmingham, All Saints, Hockley  | Rickman & Hutchinson | 1832-3      | 1            | 3¾ cwt        | Thomas Mears, 1832  | Bell recast in 1862 and 1875; chime (8) installed in 1929 |
| Birmingham, St.Jude              | C.W. Orford          | 1850-51     | 1            | 2½ cwt        | Unknown, c.1851     | Recast (same size) in 1878                                |
| Ladywood, St.John the Evangelist | S.S. Teulon          | 1852-4      | 1            | 1¾ cwt        | Taylor, 1854        |   |
| Birmingham, St.Matthias          | J.L. Pedley          | 1855-6      | 1            | 2½ cwt        | C & G Mears, 1856   | Scrapped on closure of church                             |
| Balsall Heath, St.Paul           | J.L. Pedley          | 1852-3      | 1            | 10¾ cwt       | C & G Mears, 1855   | Proposal (abortive) for eight bells 1895                  |
| Saltley, St.Saviour              | R.C. Hussey          | 1848-50     | ??           | ??            | Unknown, c.1850     | Replaced by tubular bells in 1904                         |

In 1838 the rural dean initiated a public appeal to raise funds to build ten new churches for poorer parts of the borough within five years. This was known as the Ten Churches Fund, administered by the Birmingham Church Building Society. In the event, five churches were built in ten years. These were:

| <b>Church</b>              | <b>Architect</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Bells</b> | <b>Weight</b> | <b>Founder/date</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Duddeston, St.Matthew (1)  | William Thomas   | 1840        | 1            | 3 cwt         | John Taylor, 1840   |
| Birmingham, St.Mark (2)    | G.G. Scott       | 1841        | 1            | 3½ cwt        | Thomas Mears, 1841  |
| Birmingham, St.Luke (3)    | H. Eginton       | 1842        | 1            | 8 cwt         | Thomas Mears, 1842  |
| Birmingham, St.Stephen (4) | R.C. Carpenter   | 1844        | 1            | 2½ cwt        | Unknown, 1842       |

|                          |                |      |   |       |                   |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|---|-------|-------------------|
| Bordesley, St.Andrew (5) | R.C. Carpenter | 1846 | 1 | ½ cwt | C & G Mears, 1847 |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|---|-------|-------------------|

Other churches of the period 1835 to 1880 (examples)

| <b>Church</b>                            | <b>Architect</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Bells</b> | <b>Weight</b> | <b>Founder/date</b> |
|--|------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Edgbaston, St.James                      | S.S. Teulon      | 1852        | 1            | 8             | Taylor, 1852        |
| Edgbaston, St.George                     | J.J. Scoles      | 1836        | 1            | 3             | Mears, 1838         |
| Shirley                                  |                  |             |              |               |                     |
| Smethwick (North Harborne), Holy Trinity |                  |             |              |               |                     |
| Birchfield, Holy Trinity                 |                  |             |              |               |                     |
| Ward End, St.Margaret                    |                  |             |              |               |                     |
| Selly Park, St.Stephen                   |                  |             |              |               |                     |
| Birmingham, St.Saviour, Hockley          | J.A. Chatwin     | 1874        | 1            | 6¾ cwt        | Barwell, 1874       |
| Moseley, St.Anne                         |                  |             |              |               |                     |

Towers rebuilt, altered or added later

| <b>Church</b>        | <b>Church</b>                                    | <b>Tower</b>   | <b>Bells</b>                            |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Ashted, St.James     | Opened 1791 and consecrated 1810; later enlarged | Original turret of c.1810 replaced by new tower and spire c.1840 | Tubular bells (8) and new clock in 1891 |
| Boldmere             | J.F. Wadmore, 1857                               | Spire added 1871   | New bell by Blews, c.1871               |
| Salter Street        |  |  |   |
| Moseley, St.Agnes    |  |  |   |
| Aston Brook, St.Mary | James Murray, 1863                               | John Cundall, 1882   | Not known                               |

Late C19th crisis – rationalisation (Birmingham Churches Act – Christ Church>St.Agatha) and structural problems (St.Luke's, St.Peter's, St.Mark's, St.Andrew's – City Surveyor's intervention) – "four churches erected by the Birmingham Church Building Society, nearly 50 years ago, all of which fell into a deplorable condition. The others were St.Andrew (Bordesley), St.Mark, and St.Stephen (Newtown Row). All four churches were built with external walls of soft red sandstone, an interior wall of brick, and a filling of rubble between the two."

Later Anglican churches (examples) – Later Victorian, Edwardian and modern churches  
General trend of open bellcotes with small bells, or more ambitious towers built for larger bells that were never installed. Particularly disappointing to climb up to a sizeable belfry with large louvred openings (e.g. Maney, Burney Lane) only to find a miserable little bell – uninscribed and undated, hung for swing chiming, and weighing little more than one cwt – intended for temporary use but never replaced with anything substantial. Many Birmingham towers are like this, including the fine tower and spire of St.Augustine's, Edgbaston, which contains a single Barwell bell of 1913. At Cotteridge and Stirchley (both now demolished) the churches built around the turn of the twentieth century had substantial towers, containing tiny call bells only.

Extensive church building from the 1880s to the Great War – Highgate, St.Chrysostom, Small Heath. Towers built only to the lower stage. Exceptions at Bishop Latimer, Cotteridge, Stirchley. Spires completed at St.Mary and St.Ambrose Edgbaston, St.John the Baptist Sparkhill, Washwood Heath

1930s church building under Bishop Barnes:

Successor churches in the suburbs (transfer of endowments – and sometimes fittings too)  
pre- and post-war – St.Mary's > Pye Hayes; St.Bartholomew > Allens Cross; Small Heath > Shard End; Immanuel > Highters Heath; Deritend > Longbridge

New churches too – Weoley Castle, Tyseley

War damage – never reopened: Duddeston St.Anne bombed 1941, never reopened;  
St.Thomas, Bath Row; St.Catherine, Nechells

War damage – restored after the War: Christ Church, Sparkbrook (but lost spire)

Modern churches – Although there is a requirement in Canon Law that a church should have a bell to summon people to worship, this has been generally ignored in churches built or rebuilt since the 1960s. Bells were installed at St.Boniface Quinton, St.John the Baptist Longbridge, St.Peter Hall Green, Lea Hall, Perry Beeches and Shenley Green, but the rebuilt churches of St.George in Birmingham, St.James in Aston, St.John at Harborne, Lozells and Bartley Green are without bells of any kind. The new churches at Hodge Hill, Banners Gate, Castle Vale, St.Clement at Castle Bromwich, and Brandwood. Bells are not to be found in the ecumenical partnership churches either, i.e. The Cotteridge Church, Gospel Lane. There are earlier examples too, at Bournville, Warley Woods and Londonderry, for instance, of modern churches without bells. The bells originally provided have in some instances been removed, as at Four Oaks

Closure and demolition of churches

| Church               | Closed | Building                  | Bells                    |
|----------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
|                      |        |                           |                          |
|                      |        |                           |                          |
| Birmingham, St.Peter | 2001   | Sold for alternative uses | In tower pending removal |

Mission churches – temporary buildings, later replaced by permanent churches (but bells sometimes retained, e.g. Burney Lane, Maney, Marston Green); Mission churches now demolished (St.Monica's, Edgbaston); Mission church buildings surviving but in non-ecclesiastical use (Chesetts Wood); Surviving mission churches (Hurley, Birchmoor);

Classic pattern of mission churches becoming church halls after permanent churches built, e.g. Bournville, St.Oswald Small Heath, St.Gregory Small Heath

Every effort has been made to chronicle the history of the bells of each church covered by this survey, and especially to document the bells and clocks of those churches which have been demolished or converted to other uses. Inevitably, however, there are some for which information is lacking. These include:

| Church / dedication  | Date         | Missing information                 | Clues                      |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Aston Brook, St.Mary | 1863 or 1882 | Details of bell                     | Church 1863 and tower 1882 |
| Aston, St.James      | 1891 or 1899 | Details of bell                     | Church 1891 and 1899       |
| Birchfield, Holy     | 1864         | Details of original bell (used from | The builder was Samuel     |

|                                  |      |   |  |
|----------------------------------|------|---|--|
| Trinity                          |      | 1864 until 1897)  | Briggs                                       |
| Birmingham,<br>St.Jude           | 1851 | Details of bell (replaced in 1878)                          | The builder was Wilson of Handsworth         |
| Ladywood,<br>St.Margaret         | 1875 | Details of bell and belfry                                  | The builders were Messrs. Wilson, Handsworth |
| Birmingham,<br>St.Nicholas       | 1868 | Details of bell (in open turret)                            | The builders were Messrs. Webb               |
| Birchfield, All Souls,<br>Witton | 1907 | Details of bell   |  |
| Ashted, St.James                 | 1791 | Details of bell(s) before 1891                              |  |
| Boldmere,<br>St.Michael          | 1857 | Details of original bell (presumably 1858, replaced c.1970) | The builder was Isaac Highway                |

As these bells have not been traced through the surviving records of the main bellfounders of the time - Mears & Stainbank of Whitechapel, Taylors of Loughborough and Gillett & Johnston of Croydon – then it seems likely that they were small brassfoundry bells, cast by one of the local founders (Blews, Barwell or Carr), products of the other main foundries (e.g. Warners of Cripplegate, Llewellins & James of Bristol) or made

Changes to bells from C17th

Changes to bells not solely connected with erection of new churches and improvements to existing church buildings. Pattern of regular renewal, replacement and improvement

Examples – by type (?)

St.Martin's

St.Philip's

Jubilees: additional bells, 1887 (Oldbury) and 1897

### ***Other denominations***

Roman Catholic churches

Oscott connection

St.Chad's

Erdington Abbey

St.Anne's (McShane, 1884)

St.Patrick's (single Carr bell of 1894)

Aston (two large Taylor bells installed in 1934 when a tower was added to the original church of 1922)

Serbian Orthodox: Three Taylor bells

Nonconformist chapels

Chapel in Broad Street

### **PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

Early public buildings

The Welsh Cross and the High Cross or Old Cross

The schools (? Separately?)

Town Halls

Birmingham – and Art Gallery

Handsworth

Yardley District Council

Cemeteries (check dates – all from memory)

Warstone Lane – Mears 1848

Witton – Taylor 1862 (large and small)

Lodge Hill – Carr 1895

Brandwood End – small bell by Carr 1899

Handsworth – Carr 1909 (large and small)

Public Libraries

Balsall Heath (Moseley Road) Cossins & Peacock, 1895-6. R. Fenwick, Builder. Clock by Smith of Derby with 3 cwt bell 1896

Spring Hill

Bloomsbury

Erdington (Carnegie) 1905-7 – tall clock tower not built

Schools: Bournville, Harborne, Blue Coat, King Edward's, Ada Street (Small Heath)

Houses: Aston Hall (small bells by Mears in 1846 and 1847), New Hall, others outside the City

Other

Factories: Bournville works; Balsall Heath Tannery; Cape Hill Brewery

Commercial: Great Western Arcade; Imperial arcade

Hotels and public houses: not surveyed, but several have or had clocks and clock towers

| <b>Location</b> | <b>Name</b>  | <b>Street</b>                | <b>Date</b> | <b>Brewery</b>      | <b>Architect</b>                           | <b>Notes</b>  |
|-----------------|--|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--|---|
| City Centre     | Cobden Temperance Hotel  | Corporation Street           | 1883        |                     | William Doubleday (and J.P. Osborne)       | Clock tower and spirelet on one corner. Now demolished                                    |
| City Centre     | White Lion Hotel   |                              |             |                     |  | Synchronous clock supplied by Smith of Derby in 1950s                                     |
| City Centre     | Crown (now Edwards bar)  | Broad Street                 | 1781-1930   | Mitchells & Butlers | Clock tower added by E.F. Reynolds in 1930 | The original Butler's brewery site. Clock tower at corner of main façade                  |
| City Centre     | King Edward VII (later the Ben Jonson and then Monkey Mick's Cider House | Corporation Street (275-279) | 1905        | Mitchells & Butlers | Wood and Kendrick                          | Corner clock tower at junction with Staniforth Street                                     |
| Aston           | Barton's Arms  | High Street (114)            | 1901        | Mitchells & Butlers | Mr. Brassington of James and Lister Lea    | Clock tower over the centre of the main building  |
| Aston           | Queen's Hotel  | Church Lane (165)            |             | Atkinsons           |  | Clock dial on curved wall of building at junction with Queens Road. Demolished after 1969 |
| Bordesley Green | The Samson and Lion  | Yardley Green Road (42)      | 1922        | Mitchells & Butlers | James and Lister Lea                       | Clock with projecting drum dial over the main entrance                                    |

|            |                    |                      |        |                     |  |   |
|------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------|---------------------|--|---|
| Erdington  | Red Lion           | Station Road (105)   | 1899   | Mitchells & Butlers | Wood and Kendrick                        | Clock tower over entrance at junction with Short Heath Road                                       |
| Hall Green | Robin Hood         | Stratford Road       | 1926   | Mitchells & Butlers | Conversion to pub by H.W. Hobbis in 1926 | Clock turret (with bell) on stable block of former mansion at Six Ways converted as a pub in 1926 |
| Moseley    | The Fighting Cocks | St.Mary's Row (1)    | c.1903 |                     |  | Prominent clock tower with louvred openings at main entrance                                      |
| Sheldon    | Three Horseshoes   | Coventry Road (2102) | 1930s  | Mitchells & Butlers | Wood and Kendrick                        | Copper convex dial over entrance. Demolished c.1982   |
| Yardley    | Bull's Head        | Coventry Road (1283) | c.1900 | Mitchells & Butlers |  | Clock turret with illuminated dials at junction with Waterloo Road                                |
|            |                    |                      |        |                     |  |   |

Installations other than ringing peals and single bells

The chimes

| Church                            | Bells | Tenor  | Key | Founder | Date | Notes                              |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|-----|---------|------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Birmingham, All Saints</i>     | 8     | 6-1-21 | C   | Taylor  | 1929 | <i>Demolished, 1973</i>            |
| Harborne, St Faith & St Laurence  | 8     | 6-1-21 | C   | Taylor  | 1929 | From All Saints (installed 1975-6) |
| Maryvale, Our Lady etc (R.C.)     | 8     | 7-2-2  | Bb  | Taylor  | 1963 |                                    |
| <i>Smethwick, St Paul</i>         | 8     | 3-1-18 | E   | G&J     | 1924 | <i>Removed 1993</i>                |
| Sparkhill, English Martyrs (R.C.) | 8     | 7-3-26 | A   | Taylor  | 1946 |                                    |
| Tile Cross, St Peter              | 6     | 4-0-9  | D   | Taylor  | 1968 |                                    |

Tubular bells

| Church                            | Bells | Key | Date | Notes   |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|------|---|
| <i>Ashted, St James the Less</i>  | 8     |     | 1891 | <i>War damaged, demolished</i>                          |
| Birchfield, Holy Trinity          | 8     | C   | 1897 |   |
| <i>Bordesley, St Andrew</i>       | 13    |     | 1891 | <i>Several stolen by 1900 (replaced 1908). All gone</i> |
| Edgbaston, St Mary & St Ambrose   | 8     | C   | 1899 |   |
| <i>Erdington, St Barnabas</i>     | 8     |     | 1890 | <i>Removed 1903. Transferred to Water Orton</i>         |
| <i>Handsworth, St Michael</i>     | 8     | Ab  | 1888 | <i>Sold c.1965</i>                                      |
| Saltley, St Saviour               | 8     | C#  | 1904 |   |
| Sparkhill, St John the Evangelist | 8     | C   | 1905 |   |
| <i>Wythall, St Mary</i>           | 8     | C   | 1908 | <i>Believed removed since closure</i>                   |

## CHAPTER 2 – Bellfounding

This chapter aims to provide a chronological overview showing which founders provided bells for the area at different dates – generally by date of first appearance of individual founders. Lists of the work of each founder are given separately elsewhere in this book.

The traditional approach to “founders chapters” in area-based books of this type has been to give a brief history of each bell foundry and its principal founders. The result is generally a mix of previously published information with a few additional facts. This is in many ways



rather unsatisfactory, as there are unexplained discrepancies in the details available from the different books and yet none of them offer a comprehensively updated account of a given foundry.

Some of the more recent books have provided substantially updated accounts of the founders who were based in the area – a welcome development. The present work therefore contains a section which provides an entirely new history of each of the “Birmingham” bellfounders and bellhangers along with comprehensive lists of their work.

Even this, however, leaves a void in the coverage – one that this chapter aims to fill. Here, the aim is to examine the geographical distribution of bells in the area in relation to the places where they were cast, to relate this to the available transport facilities and to link this to the commercial activities of the foundries and their owners. The account of *Staffordshire Bells* by Trevor Jennings is of this type, and a pioneering study which has had few imitators.

The earliest bells are hard to place, as there are no firm indications where they were cast – and even dating is approximate. The oldest bell in the area – now at Sparkbrook – originally came from Ullenhall, from where it was displaced in 1877. It dated from the early thirteenth century.

Other blanks: Barston, Sheldon

Mediaevals: From Nottingham, Leicester, Worcester and Lichfield (Curdworth)

C16th: Frankley bell; Newcombes of Leicester; Nottingham (Seckington bell)

C17th: River transport – Hancox (Northfield, Elmdon); Martin of Worcester (Solihull and Bickenhill etc); Bagley (Harborne, Birmingham, Solihull and Kings Norton); Nottingham (Solihull)

C18th: Smith (covered in “Birmingham” chapter), Sanders, Bayley, Rudhall, Wells (canals), Hedderley (inc Sutton Coldfield)

C18th: first appearance of Whitechapel, and Birmingham rings; Harborne recasting etc

Association of clocks and bells –

C19th Rudhall and Mears; Taylors from 1838, Warners from 1859, Naylor Vickers, Gillett

Birmingham founders (brief mention only here)

C20th: decline of small firms, and emergence of the big three – Whitechapel, Loughborough and Croydon (until 1950s). Intense rivalry (Bournville)

Bellhanging

Little evidence owing to loss of documentary evidence and replacement of frames and fittings to keep bells in usable condition.

Early frames: Middleton, Sheldon (mark I)

C16th work: Sheldon (mark II)

C17th: Northfield frame (and accounts), Austrey, Sheldon; mention Solihull and Scattergood (with link with Lichfield)

C18th: William Laurence at St.Philip's, the Turners at Aston, Deritend and Kings Norton; Sutton Coldfield in 1787; Eayre at Curdworth; The old frame at Coleshill

C19th: Whitechapel hangers (Oliver at Aston and St.Martins)

C19th: local craftsmen – Hope at Berkswell; Bingham

Later C19th: Bells hung by founders; Moseley hung by Bateman

C20th: Bisseker, Groves (separate chapter); Hayward Mills, Eayre & Smith and Arthur Berry

### CHAPTER 3 – The Birmingham Founders

To cover in detail the founders in the area covered by the survey

John Martin – peripatetic

Joseph Smith of Edgbaston

Barlow and other Birmingham brassfounders

The brassfounders

Blews

Barwell

Carr and Non Ferrous Casting Company

Hangers

Groves

Bisseker

### LISTS – bellfounders and bellhangers

Alphabetically by name / firm (including lists of Barwell, Blews and Carr bells – in Birmingham only here) **Or** Founder / Foundry, with names (cross-referring to predecessors and successors), working dates

Date, place, bell(s) and notes – italics if gone / recast

### CLOCKS

Summary / chronology

List

## GAZETTEER

### ACOCKS GREEN – Sacred Heart and the Holy Souls (R.C.), Warwick Road

There was a Roman Catholic community at Acocks Green in the early nineteenth century. A new mission was established in 1905 and a temporary church was opened in 1907. This was later replaced by a permanent church, a red and grey brick building in the Gothic style, which was begun after the Great War as a War Memorial Church and opened in 1924. It was designed by G.B. Cox. The building was completed in 1940 and the consecration took place on 24 October 1945.

Before the opening in 1924 a bell was presented to the church by J.W. Carr of Messrs. Charles Carr of Smethwick. The bell was blessed on 18 December 1924 by Bishop Glancey and hung in a gable on the unfinished end of the church. It was later transferred to the present belfry and rehung with a wheel when the turret was added to the church in 1940. The turret is octagonal and stands at the south east corner of the church. It has narrow openings at the belfry stage and it is terminated with a copper roof and finial.

The bell is accessible by ladder from the organ loft. It is as follows:

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

1. *Inscription band: (Blank)*

*Waist:* CARR'S OF SMETHWICK MADE ME / 1924 / POPE COUNTRY & KING

*Opposite:* DE PROFUNDIS CLAMAVI / AD TE DOMINE (PS. 129)

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter                          | Mouldings | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Charles Carr, 1924 | 24 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>16</sub> " | 4:2-2:4:2 | F    | 3    | 1    | 0*   |

The bell has a Carr type argent and it is true-harmonically tuned. It hangs between two steel girders spanning the turret on an offset just below the belfry window openings. It is fitted with a square-section bar stock, with ball bearings, clapper suspended from a cast-in staple, and a bronze mounting on the stock for the bell wheel. There are wooden beams below the bell for the pulley block and there are bronze rope bosses in the concrete floors of the turret. It was originally hung for swing chiming by rope and wheel, but the wheel and pulley have been removed fairly recently and it is now sounded automatically by an Angelus tolling unit. The tolling unit has a hammer which strikes on the south side of the bell.

**Visited:** CJP 2 December 2005 (ladders) and *ex.inf.* Sam Austin; Thanks to Fr. David Tams

### ACOCKS GREEN – St.Mary, Warwick Road

St.Mary's originated as a daughter church of Yardley, a separate parish of Acock's Green being formed in 1867. The original building of 1864-6 is by J.G. Bland of Birmingham and in the Early English style. The foundation stone was laid on 13 October 1864 and the first portion of the church was consecrated on 17 October 1866. It was extended in 1878-1882 and in 1891-2, and completed in 1894 by the addition of the chancel. J.A. Chatwin & Son were the architects for the later work. The church was damaged by enemy bombs in 1940 and restored after the War. It was rehallowed on 8 October 1949 after renovation.

Bland's original plans included a south-west steeple, but this was never built. There is a cantilevered belfry on the north side of the chancel – a part of the building added in 1894 – with a small bell of about 16" diameter hung for swing chiming. The bell has a peg argent and appears to be without inscription or marks. It has a bar stock, an iron wheel and a hook-over clapper.

**Visited:** CJP 15 May 1988

### ALLENS CROSS – St.Bartholomew, Hoggs Lane and Allens Farm Road

This church was built to serve the new inter-war housing estate developed by the Corporation in the previously rural district of Allens Cross in the parish of Northfield. A new parish was created in 1938, and the church was built in 1937-8 as a suburban replacement for the former City church of St.Bartholomew. S.N. Cooke & Partners were the architects and the church cost £5650 to build. The foundation stone was laid on 21 April 1937 and the

church was consecrated on 7 May 1938. The church was later extended and the new chancel was consecrated on 11 December 1959.

It is a brick building in the Romanesque or early Christian style, with a porch-tower at the south west corner containing a single bell:

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. 196 / THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON 1841  
*Waist:* FROM S. MARK, LADYWOOD / RECAST 1948  
*Opposite:* ( *Taylor's rectangular mark* )

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter                       | Note       | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1948 | 24 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | E (1340Hz) | 3    | 0    | 1    |

The bell was cast from the metal of the former bell from St.Mark's and installed under a faculty dated 1948. It is fixed to a steel girder and sounded by trigger-action clapper.

Owing to the condition of the fabric the church was closed for services in 1998 and later damaged by fire following an arson attack in 1999. The congregation now meets in the former chapel of the Hollymoor Hospital (*q.v.*), and in 2003 the church was made redundant. It was demolished in September 2005 and the bell was transferred to Bartley Green from where, unfortunately, it was stolen before it was hung.

**Visited:** CJP 26 Aug 1988

**ALUM ROCK – All Saints Convent**

The Convent occupies an eighteenth century brick house which was originally the manor house of Alum Rock. After it became an Anglican convent of the Sisters of the Society of the Incarnation, a chapel was added in 1911 to the designs of Cecil G. Hare. The dedication of the chapel by the Bishop of Birmingham on 14 June 1912 was reported in the *Birmingham Diocesan Calendar* for 1913. The report states that the chapel was erected in memory of Charles Henry Bromley and dedicated to St.Francis and St.Claire.

Taylor's supplied a small bell for All Saints Convent, Alum Rock, Birmingham, in 1974. The foundry records indicate that Taylors received an old bell on 21 May 1974 weighing 0-1-26. The full details of the present bell are:

**Inscription**

- 183 106 / ( *Blank* )  
*Waist:* 19 ( *Taylor's rectangular mark* ) 74

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Note            | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|-----------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1974 | 17       | D flat (2198Hz) | 0    | 2    | 21   |

**Not visited:** *Ex.inf.* Taylors

**ALUM ROCK – see also SHAW HILL, St.Mary and St.John, Alum Rock Road**

**ASHTED - St.James the Less (former church), Barrack Street and Great Brook Street**

The church at Ashted was founded in 1789 when a house built in 1777 for Dr. John Ash, the founder of the General Hospital, was converted into a chapel. Owned initially by a Mr Brooke, it was opened under episcopal licence as a proprietary chapel in September 1791. It was later consecrated on 7 September 1810, and in 1853 it became the church of a separate parish, formed from Aston. The building was repaired and altered by Rickman and Hutchinson in 1829-30 and further enlarged under Edward Welch in 1835. It was a plain rectangular church of brick with a semicircular porch projecting on one side of the building. This carried a small belfry shown in a sketch of 1835. The original brick turret and cupola was replaced with a handsome classical tower and spire at some time in the mid nineteenth century.

The church was restored in 1887-8 at a cost of £2500 by Osborn and Reading of Birmingham, architects, the contractors being Jeffery & Son. It was reopened on 22

September 1888. Shortly afterwards, F.B. Osborn supervised the installation of a new clock and peal of eight tubular bells, dedicated on 18 April 1891, at a cost of £400. The bells were doubtless supplied and installed by Harrington Latham & Co of Coventry. They were used for church services and the clock struck the hours and quarters.

The clock was provided by Smith of Derby, whose sales ledger for 18 April 1891 contains an entry for a "New church clock with Cambridge chimes, gravity escapement, compensated pendulum, complete excepting dials and woodwork" supplied for £158 to "St.James Church Clock Committee, Ashted, Birmingham. Mr. Osborn, Bennetts Hill." The clock had four dials (4ft diameter).

The church was badly damaged during World War II in an air raid in November 1940. Services continued in the Dollman Street Mission church. The Bishop issued an order deferring restoration on 11 October 1945, and the building lay in ruins until subsequently demolished in about 1956. The parish was united with Duddeston in 1967.

### **ASTON – All Souls, Wenlock Road, Witton**

This church was built in 1906-7. The architect was Philip Chatwin. The foundation stone was laid on 10 October 1906 and the consecration took place on 9 November 1907. In 1926 All Souls became the parish church for a district taken from the parishes of Aston and Birchfield.

It was a brick building with stone dressings, with a low central tower over the crossing. A church inventory of 1936 indicates that it had one bell. The church has been closed and demolished, having been declared redundant in 1981.

### **ASTON – Aston Hall**

Joseph McKenna mentions that there is a turret clock at Aston Hall, suggesting that it was made by George Donisthorpe (fl.1755-1802). There may have been an hour bell with this clock. However, an enquiry to the curator yielded the information that the clock is a modern electric movement without a bell. It is believed to be a Gents synchronous electric movement of c.1984.

The Whitechapel daybooks contain the following entries relating to bells for Aston Hall. These were probably put up in buildings around the house and grounds.

5 Dec.1846 – James Watt Esq, Aston Hall, near Birmingham, per order Wm. Buckle  
To a 12 Inch Bell 0-1-11½ @ 14½d £2.7.9  
Stock, Crane, Neck, Ironwork, Brasses &c £1.2.0

6 Feb. 1847 – James Watt Esq, Aston Hall  
To 1 18 Inch Bell 1-1-8½ @ 15d £9.5.8  
Clapper 8.6  
Stock, Crane, Neck, Ironwork £2.10.0

In addition, an entry in the Loughborough foundry records shows that John Taylor & Co supplied a dinner bell for "Aston Hall" – possibly here – in 1876. It was 18⅞" diameter, weighing 1-1-19

***Not visited:*** Thanks to Chris Rice (Curator)

### **ASTON, Chamberlain Clock Tower, Aston Cross – see BIRMINGHAM**

### **ASTON – Sacred Heart (R.C.), Witton Road**

The original Aston mission was established in 1897, an iron mission church being provided for worship. The present church was built in the Italian Romanesque style in 1922 to a design by Harrison & Cox of Birmingham. Parnell & Co of Rugby were the builders, to whom payments totalling £29772 were made in 1920-24 for their work here. The church was consecrated on 22 June 1933. The north-west tower or campanile was originally left unfinished, but it was completed by G.B. Cox of Harrison & Cox in 1934.

The campanile contains two bells supplied by Taylors to the order of Mgr. Price, who first enquired about the cost of bells early in 1934 when the tower was in the course of construction. The initial suggestion in February 1934 was that there should be two bells,

weighing 9 cwt and 15 cwt. A second scheme was for three bells, with the largest weighing 15 cwt. In May Taylors submitted a fresh estimate for two bells of 13 and 21 cwt, for which an order was placed in June. These bells are as follows:

- | <b>Bell</b>                             | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|---|---|
| 1. 160 / ( <i>Birmingham ornament</i> ) | <i>Waist:</i> SONO LAUDES / SANCTAE MARGARITAE MARIAE, / CORDIS JESU / FIDISSIMAE SPONSAE<br><i>Opposite:</i> 19 ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) 34             |
| 2. 192 / ( <i>Birmingham ornament</i> ) | <i>Waist:</i> AVE COR JESU DULCISSIMUM / ( <i>symbol of the Sacred Heart</i> ) / ADVENIAT REGNUM TUUM<br><i>Opposite:</i> 19 ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) 34 |

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Note    | Mouldings | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1934 | 40½      | 776.5   | G-16.62 | 2:2-2:3:2 | 12   | 3    | 0    |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 1934 | 47¾      | 653     | E-16.5  | 2:2-2:3:2 | 20   | 2    | 11   |

The bells are hung for balanced swinging with cast iron stocks, ball bearings, wheels, and clappers with independent crown staples. A separate tolling hammer is fitted to the tenor. The total cost of the bells and fittings came to £339.9.6. The bells were dispatched at the end of the year and invoiced on 19 December 1934. Taylors did not hang them, and they were hung at the top of the tower in a light steel framework designed by the architects and installed by the contractors. The frame rests on an offset below the belfry window openings. It has two parallel pits and the bells swing north-south with the larger bell to the west. The individual frame sections have base girders with vertical uprights and light diagonal bracing only.

**Visited:** CJP and SMA, 15 September 2005 and *ex.inf.* Taylors

### **ASTON – St.James, Frederick Road**

The original building opened as a mission church in Aston parish in 1891, and a nave was added in 1898-9. J.A. Chatwin was the architect. The church was licensed for marriages 26 March 1900 and consecrated on 3 November 1906, some years after it had first opened. It was declared redundant in 1979 and afterwards replaced by the new church built on the same site.

The present church centre was built in 1979-81 to the designs of S.T. Walker & Partners (Paul Burley, project architect) to replace the original building. The builders were C.L. Holding & Sons. It was licensed and designated as a parish worship centre on 21 March 1981. The new church has no bell.

**Church visited:** CJP 24 August 1988

### **ASTON – St.Mary (former church), Aston Road North, Aston Brook**

This church was designed by James Murray and built in 1863 as a memorial to Josiah Robins, the "squire" of Aston Brook who first promoted the idea of a church for the district. Robins died before the church could be built, but his wishes were honoured by his heirs – his son Josiah Yeomans Robins and daughters Mrs Blount, Mrs Parker and Miss Lydia Robins – who gave the site and provided £4000 towards the cost of the church and schools. The consecration took place on 10 December 1863. A tower was added in 1882, the gift of J. Yeomans Robins Esq. The architect was J. Cundall of Leamington and Messrs. Barnsley & Son of Birmingham were the builders. Writing in about 1890 E.H. Lingen Barker stated that the church had a lofty North western tower containing one bell without inscription. Repairs were carried out to the building in 1962-4, but plans for closure were announced in February 1970. The parish was abolished in 1971. By 1977 the church had been closed and demolished and the site was being redeveloped for industrial use.

## **ASTON – SS.Peter and Paul (Parish Church)**

This substantial church originally served the extensive and once rural parish of Aston. Although largely rebuilt in late Victorian times, its history extends back to before the Norman Conquest and the church at Aston is mentioned in the Domesday survey. The west tower and spire date from the fifteenth century, but the body of the church was largely rebuilt between 1879 and 1893 under the Birmingham architect J.A. Chatwin, the main contractors being Messrs. Sapcote & Sons. The church was reopened on 6 July 1880 after the completion of the first stage of the work. The chancel was reopened on 8 September 1883 followed by the nave on 19 April 1884. In 1883-4 the base of the tower was thrown open to the church and the old organ gallery and ringing loft were removed.

The spire has been repaired on a number of occasions, most notably when it was partly rebuilt in 1776-7 – at about the same time as the new bells were installed - by John Cheshire, the noted Warwickshire steeple builder. Earlier repairs mentioned in the churchwardens accounts include those by Samuel Blighe in 1652-3 and by an un-named "steeple amender" in 1684 when the weathercock was re-gilded at the same time. On 7 January 1733 the Vestry noted that the steeple was "in a ruinous condition and ought immediately to be repaired". In 1739 the wardens consulted Robert Cadman "about repairing ye steeple". Cadman was a noted steeplejack who performed balancing acts in public at great heights. Shortly after his visit to Aston he met with a fatal accident at Shrewsbury. The necessary work on the steeple was done instead by Humphrey Hollins at a cost of £22.10s. The tower and spire were again restored in 1831 and 1907.

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

The tower contains a ring of twelve bells in the key of D natural (581Hz or D minus 18.76 cents)

#### ***Bell***

#### ***Inscription***

1. 161 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1935 \*  
*Waist:* GIVEN BY THE PEOPLE OF ASTON / IN THANKFUL COMMEMORATION / OF THE SILVER JUBILEE OF / KING GEORGE V AND QUEEN MARY / 1910-1935
2. 210 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1935 \*  
*Waist:* GIVEN BY THE PEOPLE OF ASTON / IN THANKFUL COMMEMORATION / OF THE SILVER JUBILEE OF / KING GEORGE V AND QUEEN MARY / 1910-1935
3. 173 / THIS TREBLE BELL WAS PRESENTED TO THE PARISH OF ASTON BY THE. / INTEREST OF JOB PERRENS JOSHUA SHORT & W<sup>M</sup>. HASSALL 1814 (*border*) / T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT:  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1935
4. 186 / T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1814 : PEACE & UNANIMITY WITH ALL THE WORLD. (*border*)  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's rectangular mark*) / RECAST 1935
5. 213 / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1775 (*border*)  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1935
6. 158 / TO HONOUR BOTH OF GOD & KING : OUR VOICES SHALL IN CONSORT RING (*border*) / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1776  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1935
7. 202 / YE PEOPLE ALL WHO HEAR US RING. BE FAITHFULL TO YOUR GOD & KING (*border*) / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1776.  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1935
8. 147 / PEACE AND GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD. T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1814. (*border*)  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1935
9. 372 / MUSIC IS MEDICINE TO THE MIND (*border*) PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1776.  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1935
10. 177 / JAMES COOKE ESQ<sup>R</sup>. SECRETARY (*border*) PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1776  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1935
11. 225 / YE RINGERS ALL THAT PRIZE YOUR HEALTH & HAPPINESS : BE SOBER MERRY WISE & YOU'LL THE SAME POSSESS (*four coins*) PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1776 / (*two coins*)  
*Waist:* (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1935

12. *Shoulder*: 263 / RECAST 1935 BY JOHN TAYLOR & CO., LOUGHBOROUGH.  
*Inscription band*: THE REV<sup>D</sup>. B. SPENCER. L.L.D. VICAR : JOS<sup>H</sup>. ARMISHAW. THO<sup>S</sup>. PERRENS.  
 JN<sup>O</sup>. DEYKIN. CHURCH WARDENS 1814. (*border*) / THOMAS MEARS OF LONDON FECIT  
*Waist*: THIS RING OF TEN BELLS WAS RECAST AND REHUNG / IN THE JUBILEE YEAR  
 OF 1935 / HENRY M<sup>C</sup> GOWAN, M.A., VICAR / H. PLATT } / E.M. ROBERTS } WARDENS  
 / THE PEAL WAS RE-DEDICATED ON S<sup>T</sup> PETERS DAY 1935  
*Opposite*: TO THE GLORY OF GOD / THE TWO LARGEST BELLS OF THIS PEAL / WERE  
 RECAST AND REHUNG / AS THE GIFT OF / THE BARRON BELL TRUST / 1935 / EMMA  
 BARRON, FOUNDER / F. HOPKINS } / C.M. WALROND } / H.W. ELDRED } TRUSTEES

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 26       | 1746    | 5    | 0    | 2    |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 26½      | 1552    | 4    | 3    | 20   |
| 3.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 27⅝      | 1468    | 5    | 1    | 11   |
| 4.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 28½      | 1305.5  | 5    | 1    | 19   |
| 5.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 30       | 1164    | 5    | 3    | 10   |
| 6.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 31¼      | 1096    | 6    | 2    | 4    |
| 7.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 33⅛      | 978     | 7    | 0    | 25   |
| 8.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 35½      | 871     | 8    | 1    | 11   |
| 9.   | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 38½      | 776     | 10   | 1    | 14   |
| 10.  | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 41       | 732     | 12   | 2    | 21   |
| 11.  | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 46       | 653     | 17   | 1    | 22   |
| 12.  | John Taylor & Co, 1935 | 51½      | 581     | 24   | 2    | 18   |

These bells were dedicated on 29 June 1935. They are hung on one level in a cast iron lowside frame with standard Taylor fittings, including cast iron stocks, ball bearings and Hastings stays.

### History

In 1552 there were five bells at Aston, "oon of them broken". A document of 1566 refers to two new bells for the church, but no further details are available. This must indicate a recasting of some of the old bells, as the number of bells seems to have remained five until the late eighteenth century.

Churchwardens' accounts survive for the period 1651-1746. No payments for recasting bells occur during this time, indicating that the bells in existence in the early seventeenth century remained in use until the Pack & Chapman octave was installed in 1776. From later evidence it is known that the total weight of the five old bells was 57cwt, implying individual weights of about 7½, 8½, 10, 13 and 18 cwt.

Similarly, no major alterations to the frame and fittings are mentioned, although there are numerous reference to minor repairs and replacement of worn fittings, often undertaken by an individual like Thomas Holland who has a regular contract for the work from about 1659 to 1667. These are some of the more significant or interesting examples from the accounts:

#### 1651

paid to Richard Muckley for mending the third bell clapper and making a new bolt for the fourth bell for making ten cletes for the second bell and for makeing a staple for the bell free dore and setting it in 4s.2d.

#### 1663/4

Item payd Tho Shengleton for casting bell brasses £1.5.5.  
 Item 29 Feb Payd to Shingleton towards the Brasses £1.10.0.

#### 1664

payd to Thomas Brigins for 2 bell wheels [separate payments from each of the three wardens totalling £2.5.6]

Item payd to Prichitt for iron work for the bells 3s.2d.

#### 1666



It for making 35 cotters and cleats 2 hackes 25 staples 10 spiiks for the bells and 2 plates  
4s.6d.

**1667**

It payd Tho Holland for keeping the bells in order for the year 1667  
8s.4d.

**1676**

28 April paid Walter Bradnocke for screwing up the third and fourth bells  
1s.4d.

paid for Laying the belfree flore and for mending the bell wheeles and setting the top most dore

head the master 3 days worke at 14d a day and his man 12d a day  
6s.6d.

paid Walter Bradnock for putting a stay to the great Bell  
15s.

**1678**

paid William Smalwood for staying the four bells  
15s.

**1679**

paid for mending the third bell clapper and wheele  
2s.6d.

my charges at Aston when we mett about the 4th bell to be mended

**1680**

October 7th paid then unto John Vale for hanging the bells at Aston and for amending things  
about them  
7s.

October 7th given them to the Clarke of Aston for his paines for severall times comeing with  
things to John Vale about the Bells  
6d.

24th paid then more unto John Vale for things about the bells  
1s.6d.

**1681**

paid John Vale for Turneing the Bell and other worke  
£1.3.0.

**1682**

paid for five Pullayes for the Bells  
1s.8d.

paid for amending the Third Bell clapper & other work done to the bells  
8s.2d.

paid to Richard Heabeard for amending the Bell Clapper  
6s.10d.

**1683**

paid William Smalwood a Smith bill for worke done to the bells  
10s.10d.

**1685**

paid to John Vale for casting the Brasses and Laying them  
£1.13.0.

Spent when I went to see the worke done  
1s.

paid for amending the second bell clapper and other work  
5s.4d.

paid for Ale when the Little Bell was downe for drawing it up  
1s.

paid for wedges and four screwes for the Little bell  
1s.

**1686**

paid for 5 pulleyes for the bells  
2s.

**1687**

Walter Bradnocke for new wheel  
16s.3d and 19s.0d.

**1690**

pd for Irons for the bells and for 5 pulleys  
4s.8d.

**1700**

Pd Will: Moore for Iron worke about ye great bell  
2s.6d.

pd for two pound of wedges & fastining ye gugins of ye third bell  
1s.

**1701**

for mending ye Great Bell Claper & laying on 14l: of Iorn and turning ye Ball  
5s.

Pd Wm Moor for Ironwork for Hanging ye Great Bell  
12s.

Pd Tho Lane for a new stock & wheele for ye Great Bell  
£2.15.0.

pd for Mending ye Bells & fastning ye Gugings & lining ye Clapers  
5s.

**1702**

Pd Wm Moore for a Crowne Staple in ye Great Bell & altring Clapper  
10s.

**1714**

There was found among ye Rubbage 52l. of bell mettle, wee sold for £1.7.4., and the rest we  
used to make brasses of ye bells

**1726**

Mr Carver for bras & casting ye bras for the great bell  
6s.8d.

**1733**

Paid William Moore for new brasses, new gudgeons a new stock and new hanging four bells  
£10.14.11

The account book contains a draft memorandum dated 8 September 1775 as follows: "Wee  
whose Names are under Written think it necessary to take down the Bell Floor and Put up a

New Floor and Bell Frame for Eight Bells". Although the entry is unsigned, it is clear that the idea found favour within the parish as in 1776 the five old bells were taken down and replaced by a new ring of eight, complete with a new oak frame and all new fittings. The new bells were cast by Pack and Chapman and hung by Samuel Turner, the Whitechapel bellhanger. The new bells arrived at Aston in May 1776, as reported in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 6 May 1776:

We have the Pleasure to inform the Publick, that the new Peal of eight Bells, (cast by Mess. Pack and Chapman, Bell-founders of White Chapel, London) for the Parish Church of Aston, near Birmingham (the Tenor whereof is near 21 cwt.) were delivered on Saturday last, to the Satisfaction of the Subscribers, as also to those who are conversant, and take Pleasure in that harmonious and melodious Musick

The opening of the bells was reported in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* on Monday 22 July 1776 and also (as quoted here) in the *Coventry Mercury* of Monday 5 August 1776:

On Monday the 15th of July last, at the opening of a new peal of 8 bells at Aston, near Birmingham, Holt's 5040 Grandsire Triples was rung in 3 hours and 4 minutes by the St.Martin's Youths. The said bells were cast by Messieurs Pack & Chapman, & hung by Mr. Samuel Turner, all of London

According to the Whitechapel foundry records, the total weight of the new bells was 86-0-6 and the full dimensions of the original octave – tuned in the key of E flat in contemporary tuning (but D in modern pitch) - were as follows:

| Bell | Diameter | Weight | Bell | Diameter | Weight  |
|------|----------|--------|------|----------|---------|
| 1.   | 30¼"     | 5-3-20 | 5.   | 39½"     | 10-1-9  |
| 2.   | 31½"     | 6-2-11 | 6.   | 41"      | 11-0-24 |
| 3.   | 33½"     | 7-2-21 | 7.   | 44½"     | 14-3-14 |
| 4.   | 36"      | 8-2-16 | 8.   | 50¼"     | 20-3-3  |

Details of the costs are recorded in the notebook of Thomas Hedderly, the Nottingham bellfounder, who seems to have copied the information from a contemporary account on a visit to Birmingham in the late 1770s. Pack & Chapman invoiced for:

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 86 cwt at £6   | £ 516.6.5      |
| 8 Clappers 2-0-20 at 9d                                | 9.3.0          |
| 8 ropes 47 lbs at 1/- per lb                           | 2.7.0          |
| Freight &c of Old Bells to Hanging and Erecting nicely | 3.6.0          |
| Excess Timber  | <u>37.0.0</u>  |
| £ 568.2.5  |                |
| Old Bells 57 Cwt at £4.16.0                            | <u>274.1.0</u> |
| 294.1.0  |                |
| Founder subscribed £6.6. and 14s. towards carriage     |                |

Further details are recorded in the accounts, which record the following expenditure on the new bells:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1775-6</b> - Thomas Hooper, John Dafforn and Thomas Smith, churchwardens |           |
| Paid for Ale at taking down ye Bells floor                                  | 3s.       |
| Paid Expences at going to Buy ye Timber                                     | 7s.6d.    |
| Paid at meeting the Bellfounder at Walsall                                  | 4s.6d.    |
| Paid for weighing the Bells   | 7s.6d.    |
| Paid at Walsall to see if Timber was ready                                  | 4s.6d.    |
| Paid at getting ye Timber up into the Steeple                               | 18s.0d.   |
| Paid Messrs Lycett & Taylor for Timber                                      | £12.2.1.  |
| Paid Mr. Bennett for Carriage   | £2.16.0.  |
| Paid Mr. Allen for Timber   | £12.14.4. |
| <b>1776-7</b> - Thomas Hooper, Thomas Allen and Thomas Smith, churchwardens |           |
| Loading the Timber at the sawpit  | 1s.6d.    |
| Paid for weighing the Bells   | 2s.6d.    |
| Paid Carriage to the Wharf for Do   | 14s.      |
| Paid at the loading of them   | 2s.6d.    |
| Pd for drawing the scale & weights  | 5s.6d.    |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Paid Mr. Turner's first bill                          | £37.      |
| Pd Jos <sup>ph</sup> Adkins for Carriage of the Bells | £20.4.3.  |
| Paid Mr. Turner's second bill                         | £3.       |
| Paid Mr. Cook part of Mr. Pack's Acct.                | £6.14.9.  |
| Paid the last payment for the Bells                   | £68.8.0.  |
| Pd for examining and screwing up ye Bells             | 5s.       |
| Received by old Iron                                  | £1.17.4½. |
| Received by old Brass                                 | £3.2.6.   |

A large beam from the belfry – removed in 1935 – remains in the base of the tower. It bears the date 1775 and names of the three churchwardens – T. Hooper, J. Dafforn and T. Smith – whose names also occur in the account book under the year in which the bells were cast and hung. When he inspected the bells in June 1932 J.P. Fidler noted this inscription as being “cut on one of the subsidiary beams” – i.e. on one of the bearers rather than on the frame itself.

Within a few years of the installation of the new bells Aston developed a strong band of ringers. Led by Joshua Short, the St.Peter's Youths rang a number of remarkable peals. The first was a peal of Bob Major on 30 March 1788 which was reported as “the first peal of the kind ever rung by that society”. Later in the same year they rang a long peal of 10,080 Bob Major, followed in 1789 by one of 14,224 changes in 8 hours 45 minutes, all the more noteworthy since all the ringers were under twenty years of age. Their greatest performance came four years later, as reported in the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* of 15 November 1793:

On the 1st of October last was rung at St.Peter's Church at Aston, near Birmingham, a true and Complete peal of Bob Majors, consisting of 15,360 changes, which was completed in nine hours and 29 minutes. This is considered to be the greatest performance that ever was done by one set of men: Burn 1, Smith 2, Pratt 3, Bayliss 4, Wilmot 5, Silvester 6, Hassall 7, Short Tenor. Weight of the Tenor 21 hundred.

The bells were popular with visiting bands too, and a number of peals were rung at Aston by the St.Martin's Youths at the time.

By 1814 two of the bells were cracked, and on 25 May a meeting was held “to consider the Propriety of Exchanging the two Broken Bells and other work which will be necessary to be done to put the whole Peal into proper condition”. The proposal was accepted and the meeting resolved that the work be done immediately. The minutes also state that:

“as there is already a Frame for Ten Bells, and the Campanalogian Society of Birmingham having by a Letter addressed to the Clergy and Churchwardens of this Parish dated the 23rd day of May Instant voluntarily offered to present the Parish with a good Treble Bell if the Parish will be at the expense of furnishing another, in order to increase the Peal of Bells to Ten, it is also unanimously resolved that such offer be accepted and that an additional Bell be provided by the Churchwardens at the Expense of this parish”.

Plans of the old frame show that the pits of the front three bells of the octave were adapted to accommodate the extra trebles in 1814. Matters were not quite as the meeting had been led to believe, but the ringers got their way and secured a successful augmentation to ten. The inscription on the treble records that the bell was “presented to the parish of Aston by the interest of Job Perrens, Joshua Short and William Hassall”, three of the ringers.

Thus in 1814 two trebles were added to make ten and two of the old bells – the sixth and tenor of the ten – were recast. Thomas Mears of Whitechapel was the founder employed to carry out the work. The contemporary weights of the new bells are not recorded, but their diameters were 28¼”, 30”, 36” and 50½”. When weighed later they were found to weigh 5-2-27, 6-1-5, 8-1-8 and 22-0-18 nett.

The opening peals were rung on 17 and 18 October, as commemorated on a painted board erected in the belfry by order of the churchwardens. Contemporary newspaper reports noted “These harmonious peals were given in consequence of the addition of two bells, making in the whole ten, that now adorn that elegant gothic steeple.” The church accounts include the following entries relating to the work:

#### **1814**

18 March By Letter from Bell founder

9d.

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| 3 Nov By Thos Mears on Acct of new Bells | £200. |
| By Letter from Do                        | 9d.   |
| By Letter (Mears)                        | 9d.   |

# 1815

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| 14 Jan By Mrs Ann Weldon on Acct. of Mr. Mears | £7.11.0. |
| 19 Jan By Thos Mears Ball[anc]e of his Acct    | £5.2.0.  |

The work of installing the new bells was carried out by Charles Oliver (senior) of Whitechapel. He is not mentioned in the accounts as he was in the employ of Thomas Mears, but when he died in 1850 the Birmingham ringers rang a peal at Aston "as a token of respect to the late Mr. Charles Oliver, who, in 1814, hung these bells in a superior manner, standing the test of time in the ringing of a vast number of peals of 5,000 and 6,000 each".

According to John Day's *Recollections*, the good condition of the bells also owed much to the efforts of successive parish clerks and steeplekeepers. Robert Roberts looked after them from 1814 until his death in 1841, and another ringer, John James, afterwards had the care of Aston bells for some years until about 1850.

The bells were next rehung in 1868-9, the cost being met by voluntary subscriptions. Day tells us that the work was done by E. Cresser, the brother of Amos Cresser, the Birmingham ringer who was employed as foreman for Blews in 1869 and later worked as a bellhanger for Taylors and for Gilletts. The work involved the rehanging of the seventh, eighth and tenor.

At the time of the Victorian rebuilding and enlargement of the church under J.A. Chatwin in 1879-1890, the tower was restored and the ringing room raised by some twenty feet to its present position. This work was completed by September 1883. Three years later, in 1886, the bells were rehung with new fittings including "new wheels, new and improved gudgeons, iron carriages for the brasses etc" by James Barwell of Birmingham who also repaired and strengthened the old frame. Barwell's printed testimonials include the following:

Aston Parish Church, near Birmingham,  
February 7th, 1887.

We have much pleasure in stating that we are thoroughly satisfied with the manner in which you have completed your contract for the re-hanging of our ring of ten bells.

The improved steel gudgeons and gun-metal bearings with cast-iron mountings appear admirably adapted for efficiency and durability.

We understand that the ringers have expressed their satisfaction with the "go" of the bells through the medium of the "Bell News".

Signed John W. Yates, James Evans, Churchwardens

Nothing else of any significance was done to the bells, frame or fittings until 1935 when the old ring was replaced by the present ring of twelve. Estimates for repairs were obtained from Taylors in 1924 and from Mears & Stainbank in 1926, but nothing was done. By 1935 the eighth was cracked and the frame and fittings were in a very poor state.

The inscriptions of the old bells are repeated in facsimile on the present ones, and the other details – the weights being those recorded (nett) when the bells were dismantled in April 1935 - were as follows:

| Bell | Founder and date     | Diameter | Note      | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|----------------------|----------|-----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Thomas Mears, 1814   | 28¼      | F sharp   | 5    | 2    | 27   |
| 2.   | Thomas Mears, 1814   | 30       | E         | 6    | 1    | 5    |
| 3.   | Pack & Chapman, 1775 | 30       | D         | 5    | 2    | 16   |
| 4.   | Pack & Chapman, 1776 | 31¼      | C sharp   | 6    | 1    | 27   |
| 5.   | Pack & Chapman, 1776 | 33½      | B         | 7    | 2    | 7    |
| 6.   | Thomas Mears, 1814   | 36       | A         | 8    | 1    | 8    |
| 7.   | Pack & Chapman, 1776 | 39½      | G         | 10   | 0    | 20   |
| 8.   | Pack & Chapman, 1776 | 41¼      | F sharp   | 11   | 0    | 0    |
| 9.   | Pack & Chapman, 1776 | 44½      | E         | 14   | 2    | 20   |
| 10.  | Thomas Mears, 1814   | 50½      | D (591Hz) | 22   | 0    | 18   |

## ***Clock***

The Churchwardens' accounts indicate that there was a clock in the church at Aston by 1651 and the clock chamber is mentioned in 1663-4. Payments in the accounts are mostly of a routine nature. The parish clerk had responsibility for winding and regulating the clock, and a local tradesman or clockmaker undertook maintenance and repairs.

Humphrey Hadley II provided a new clock in 1708 at a cost of £16 and John Brooks was paid £2.11.0 "for Bords and Making ye Clock house". In 1763 George Donisthorpe repaired the clock for £19.4.5½, and Mr Baron, Carpenter, received £3.6.11 "for Work & Timber for Clock Case &c". In 1767 the dial was repainted at a cost of £1.11.6. Thomas Bingham of Birmingham worked on the clock in 1824, and his bill to the churchwardens of 21 May specifies what was done:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| To Repairing the goeing part of the Church Clock | £15.0.0. |
| To Empowering the striking part                  | £8.10.0. |
| To gilding Dial & Rim                            | £9.0.0.  |
| To Repairing & Gilding Fingers                   | £1.5.0.  |

The total cost was £33.15.0. Bingham was paid £20 on 19 July 1825, and the remaining £13.15.0 on 19 June 1827.

The present clock is a Pul-syn-etic electric system by Gents' of Leicester, installed in 1938. It was dedicated on 9 July. The pendulum-controlled master clock (serial no.4853) is in the ringing room and the date on the label inside the case is 17 May 1938. The master clock controls a large dial on the east side of the tower driven by a waiting train (Hipp toggle) mechanism which was linked to separate electro-mechanical hour strike and Westminster quarter chime units. The master clock also controls slave dials in the church, one in the vestry and another on the west wall of the nave under the tower. The latter is on a wooden board which has a carved inscription:

THE CLOCKS AND CHIMES / WERE GIVEN TO THIS CHURCH BY / SIR FREDERICK AND  
LADY SMITH / AS A THANK OFFERING FOR THEIR / GOLDEN WEDDING 9 JULY 1938

The slave movements in the church are unsigned, but the waiting train movement in the tower has "PUL-SYN-ETIC / ELECTRIC" on the top of the cast iron frame and "PUL-SYN-ETIC / PATENTS" on the brass setting dial. The striking trains (now disused) are unmarked.

***Visited:*** CJP and RLJ 7 October 1989; CJP (with AHS tour group) 9 July 2009

**ASTON, St.Saviour – *see* BIRMINGHAM, St.Saviour, HOCKLEY**

**ASTON – *see also* ASHTED, BORDESLEY, CASTLE BROMWICH, DERITEND, ERDINGTON, LOZELLS, NECHELLS, SALTLEY, SMALL HEATH, SPARKBROOK, WARD END and WATER ORTON**

**BALSALL HEATH – Lime Grove Tannery (former), Moseley Road**

The tannery in Moseley Road was established in the 1740s and run for several generations by the Homer and Edwards families. It had a bell dated 1749 which was acquired in about 1935 by Mr.Muscott of Hay Mill tannery and presented to St.Chad's, Hay Mill, where it remained until 1983. It is now at St.Cyprian's, Hay Mill (*q.v.*).

***Visited:*** CJP 7 August 1988 (at Hay Mill)

**BALSALL HEATH – Public Library, Moseley Road**

The library at Balsall Heath was built in 1895-6 to the designs of Cossins & Peacock. The builder was R. Fenwick of Birmingham. It is a striking building in what Bryan Little described as "the Jacobean-Renaissance" style with a "whimsically capped clock tower". The foundation stone was laid on 18 May 1895 and over the door are the words "Free Library / 1895". The opening took place on Monday 9 March 1896. The adjacent public baths were built some ten years later to the designs of William Hale & Son and opened on 30 October 1907.

The clock tower has four illuminated dials. In October 1895 the City Council's Public Libraries Committee resolved to accept the estimate of Messrs. Smith of Derby for supplying and fixing a clock at the Balsall Heath Branch Library for £96. Smith's sales ledger shows that the clock was installed early in 1896. An entry on 14 March 1896 records details of the invoice to "Birmingham Corporation, Balsall Heath Library. New Tower clock with four 5ft dials and 3cwt bell fixed without woodwork or gas fitting, £96".

The original movement was replaced – along with ten other public clocks in the City – in 1958. The present clock is a synchronous timepiece dated 1958 (no.9897) by Smith of Derby. The bell from the original clock was evidently removed when the present non-striking movement was installed, but pencilled notes on the door of the clock case mention repairs and adjustments to the hammer. The bell was originally hung in the space above the clock dials and its wooden framework and clock hammer remain *in situ*. The bell seems to have been about 24" in diameter.

**Visited:** CJP, HEP, RLJ, 24 January 2003

### **BALSALL HEATH – St.Barnabas, Ladypool Road and Clifton Road**

The original mission church in Ladypool Road (in the parish of St.Paul's) was opened on 30/31 July 1890 and enlarged in 1894. Additional land was acquired for a permanent church in 1899 and the foundation stone was laid 14 June 1899. The plans were prepared by T.F. Proud, architect, and the completion of the building was carried out by William Hale & Sons. The chancel was built first in 1898-9 along with the first bay of the nave, followed by the rest of the nave in 1904. It was built in brick with terracotta dressings. The architect planned a south west tower with octagonal belfry stage, embattled parapet with pinnacles and a short slate spire, but this was never built. The church was consecrated on 11 June 1904 and St.Barnabas became a separate parish in August 1905.

The original church badly damaged by fire on 12 April 1970 and subsequently rebuilt on a reduced scale. The church was re-hallowed on 21 September 1972. The present bell – hung on a steel bracket on the south side of the building – is a small one obtained when the church was being rebuilt. At that time the vicar, The Revd. W.E.C. Lowndes, a former Royal Naval officer, obtained a decommissioned Royal Navy ship's bell from Portsmouth. It is about 10" diameter, inscribed (incised) on the waist: LC 22. It has a peg argent and it is clocked by a rope tied to the clapper.

**Visited:** CJP 27 July 1988

### **BALSALL HEATH – St.Luke (former church)**

St.Luke's mission church (in the parish of St.Barnabas), was built in 1908 and licensed for public worship from 1908 to 1926. It is not known if it had a bell.

### **BALSALL HEATH – St.Mark (former church), Wenman Street**

St.Mark's was a mission church in St.Paul's parish, opened on 13 September 1892 and licensed for worship until 1926. No bell details are available.

### **BALSALL HEATH – St.Paul (former church), Moseley Road**

This church was built in 1852-3 as a district church in Kings Norton parish. The architect was James Lyndon Pedley and the contractor was Samuel Briggs. The foundation stone was laid on 17 May 1852 and the consecration took place on 17 May 1853. It was a large church in the Decorated style, with a west tower of four stages (82 feet high) with pairs of lancet bell openings and a stair turret in the north east corner. The tower was apparently added shortly after the consecration and completed in 1855. The bell was of this date:

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1855

| Bell | Founder and date  | Diameter                       | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | C & G Mears, 1855 | 40 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | G    | 10   | 2    | 21   |

In 1884 Thomas H. Barns gave a clock in memory of his uncle. It was made and installed by Joyce of Whitchurch and it had four dials. It is mentioned in the Joyce catalogues, and a letter to the Vicar from the donor is preserved in the parish records. Dated 20 November 1884, it reads:

That it may be of use to the inhabitants I sincerely hope, and to the public.

Thomas H. Barns

The building was declared redundant from 1 July 1979. It was demolished in about 1980 and replaced by the new St.Paul's church centre (*q.v.*). The site of the old church has been redeveloped. After the closure of the church the bell was removed by Arthur Berry and subsequently transferred to a steel campanile outside the new St.Paul's Church Centre. It is not known what became of the clock.

**BALSALL HEATH – St.Paul's Church Centre, Edward Road and Mary Street**

| <i><b>Bell</b></i> | <i><b>Inscription</b></i> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1                  |                           |
| 2                  |                           |
| 3                  |                           |
| 4                  |                           |
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| 95                 |                           |
| 96                 |                           |
| 97                 |                           |
| 98                 |                           |
| 99                 |                           |
| 100                |                           |

- | Bell | Founder and date  | Diameter         | Hz  | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | C & G Mears, 1855 | 40 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 779 | G-11 | 10   | 2    | 0    |

**Visited:** CJP 26 July 1988

This church was built in 1882-3. It was a gift from W. Sands Cox Esq whose death delayed the opening of the completed church until January 1883. It was soon afterwards extended at an extra cost of £1000 before the completed building was consecrated on 14 August 1883. Messrs. Bateman and Corser were the architects. The builder of the original part of the church was J. Hardwick, and the 1883 extension was erected by J. Bowen of Balsall Heath after Hardwick's death. The west end was damaged by fire but restored in 1886.

A church terrier dated 1885 states that there was a turret with one bell. Later photographs show that the turret stood over the chancel end of the nave. It was open at belfry level and carried an octagonal spire. Nothing is known of the bell. The church was

**BANNERS GATE, St.Columba – see SUTTON COLDFIELD, St.Columba, Banners Gate**

This church was originally built in 1909-14 as a mission church in the parish of The Lickey. Barnt Green became a separate parish in 1922. The architect was A.S. Dixon and the church was designed in the Byzantine style. The proposed tower at the west end of the north aisle was never built. There is an enclosed bell turret over the centre of the building with a small bell hung for swing chiming with a bar stock and iron lever. The bell has a peg argent and its diameter is 10". It has no inscription or markings. There was a bell by July 1911 when regular payments for bell ringing commence in the accounts.

The original church had a small bell of c.1840, and in 1886 G.K. Stanton referred to "a small bell cot ... built over the apex at the west end, which contains one bell only". The bell is said to have been given away when the present church was built in 1965. The new church was designed without a belfry and there is no bell now. In 1989 the parish made enquiries about obtaining one, but this has never been pursued. Arrangements were made in 2005 for the transfer of the single bell from Allens Cross following the demolition of that church, but unfortunately it was stolen from the church at Bartley Green before it was hung.

It is a red brick church in the early Christian or neo-Byzantine style of the period. It has an open-sided brick bell turret for two bells on the north east side with parallel beams supporting a single bell hung for swing chiming.

The bell has six small canons. It is close to true-harmonic tuning. These features indicate that it was probably cast by Charles Carr of Smethwick. It was originally hung with a wooden stock, plate gudgeons, plain bearings, iron chiming lever and counter-weight.

Since my visit the bell has been rehung with locally-made fittings by Simon E. Adams of Yardley. Simon renewed the headstock, supporting ironwork, lever and clapper, but reused



the old gudgeons and bearings. The work was completed in December 1997. It is still hung for swing chiming. There have also been proposals to hang a second (smaller) bell in the turret.

**Visited:** CJP 10 June 1988 and (ladders) 11 August 1989

## **BIRCHFIELD, All Souls – see ASTON, All Souls, Witton**

### **BIRCHFIELD - Holy Trinity, Birchfield Road**

This church was built in 1863-4 as a daughter church in the parish of Handsworth. The architect was J.A. Chatwin and Samuel Briggs & Sons of Walsall were the builders. The total cost amounted to £5103 of which Briggs received £3979 for his contract and extras. The laying of the foundation stone on 26 May was reported in *The Builder* of 6 June 1863. The completed church was consecrated on 17 May 1864. It is built in a transitional gothic style, with a tower and spire rising above the porch at the south-west corner of the building. Birchfield became a separate parish in 1865.

Nothing is known of the original bell, presumably erected in 1864 when the church was built and scrapped in 1897 when the present tubular bells were installed.

The tower now contains a set of eight tubular bells in the key of C natural put up in June 1897 for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, as recorded on a plaque in the base of the tower. The bells hang in two rows of four in a wooden framework, with the even-numbered bells in one row and the odd-numbered ones in the other. They are chimes from a plucking manual on the first floor of the tower. There is no manufacturer's name on the bells or on the manual, but the installation is doubtless by Harrington, Latham & Co of Coventry.

The dimensions of the bells are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Length</b> | <b>Diameter</b> |  | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Length</b> | <b>Diameter</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|--|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1.          | 58¾"          | 3¼"             |  | 5.          | 73⅛"          | 3¼"             |
| 2.          | 60¾"          | 3¼"             |  | 6.          | 75⅛"          | 3¼"             |
| 3.          | 64½"          | 3¼"             |  | 7.          | 79½"          | 3¼"             |
| 4.          | 67¾"          | 3¼"             |  | 8.          | 89⅛"          | 3⅝"             |

Dayre & Smith quoted for an overhaul of the bells in 1989 but the work was carried out by local volunteers instead and completed later in the year.

**Visited:** CJP 24 August 1988

## **BIRMINGHAM, Ada Street Schools – see SMALL HEATH, Ada Street Schools**

### **BIRMINGHAM – All Saints (former church), Lodge Road, Hockley**

This church was built in 1832-3 to the designs of Thomas Rickman whose partner Henry Hutchinson (d.1831) had a hand in the original scheme. Part of the cost was met by a grant from the Church Building Commissioners. It was in a simple gothic style with lancet windows. It had no tower, but the four main corners of the building originally carried tall pinnaced turrets or dwarf spires with pierced lights on each side. The consecration took place in September 1833 and the parish of All Saints was created in the following year. The chancel was rebuilt and enlarged by J.A. Chatwin in 1881.

The church originally possessed a single bell which was hung in the south west turret. Later photographs of the church, taken in the 1960s after the spirelets had been removed, show the bell and wheel in the open-sided turret. The original bell (27⅜" diameter, weighing 3-3-9) was cast by Thomas Mears of London in 1832. This bell was sold to Taylors in 1862 when the Loughborough foundry provided a new bell for the church. The Taylor bell was supplied through William Blews of Birmingham on 8 November 1862. It was inscribed:

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1. J.B. GABRIEL M.A. RECTOR, W.J. BEWLAY AND R. PLEDGE, CHURCH WARDENS 1862

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | John Taylor & Co, 1862  | 28½             | 4           | 2           | 27          |

| <i>Bell</i> | <i>Inscription</i> |
|-------------|--------------------|
|-------------|--------------------|

1. JAMES BARWELL FOUNDER, BIRMINGHAM 1875.

According to a letter of 26 June 1963 in Taylors' files, the bell was then disused but still in the turret. It evidently remained in place until the closure and demolition of the church.

| <i>Bell</i> | <i>Inscription</i> |
|-------------|--------------------|
|-------------|--------------------|

- The bells were dedicated on 22 September 1929. Harry Withers played the bells on the occasion. The arrangement of the bells does not seem to have been entirely satisfactory, and after the bells were installed the parish complained of noise and rattle from the clavier.

**Visited:** The chime bells (at St.Faith and St.Laurence, Harborne) CJP 28 July 1988; the turret bell (at Bishop Latimer's) CJP 11 September 1988

### **BIRMINGHAM – Alliance Assurance Building (former), 130 Colmore Row**

Standing on a corner site facing the main front of the Council House is the (former) Alliance Assurance Building. Originally known as 130 Colmore Row, the building occupies a prominent position at the junction of Colmore Row, Victoria Square and Waterloo Street. The building was designed for the Alliance Assurance Company by Henry L. Goddard, architect, of Leicester in 1903 and completed in 1904. The rainwater heads are dated 1904, and the building has the Company Crest and "1824 / MULTI SOCIETATE TUTIORES" over the main entrance. For some time the building was used as offices for the City Council and since 12 June 2006 it the Birmingham Carer's Centre operated by Age Concern in partnership with the City Council has been based here.

There is a clock dial below the open cupola above the main entrance. The clock itself is housed in a purpose-built compartment behind the dial. It is signed by "SWINDEN & SONS BIRMINGHAM" on the lower edge of the setting dial but there is no date. It was probably installed in 1904, but the style of the clock is rather old-fashioned for the date and it is just possible that the movement was re-used from a previous building. It is a little flatbed timepiece with pinwheel escapement, still pendulum driven but now auto-wound.

**Visited:** CJP 10 September 2003 (exterior only) and CJP (on AHS tour) 10 July 2009;  
Thanks to Jonathan Ansell

### **BIRMINGHAM – Art Gallery and Council House**

The Art Gallery is a fine classical building designed – like the adjoining Council House of 1874-9 - by Yeoville Thomason. The foundation stone for the Art Gallery extension was laid by the Mayor on 19 July 1881. Completed in 1885, the building has a tall clock tower with a tiled pyramidal roof. The tower – often regarded as Birmingham's counterpart of Big Ben - is known as Big Brum. At the foot of the tower is a brass plate in the wall which states:

COUNCIL HOUSE CLOCK / --- / THE CLOCK IN THIS TOWER / INDICATES GREENWICH  
MEAN TIME / ON THE FIRST STROKE OF THE HOUR BELL / --- / THE MINUTE HAND  
MOVED FORWARD / AT THE COMPLETION OF EACH / HALF MINUTE.

This important clock was supplied and installed by Gillett & Co. of Croydon in 1885 and it strikes the hours and quarters on five large bells. The clock and bells were the gift of Mr. Abraham Follett Osler (1808-1903), the Birmingham glass manufacturer best known for the crystal fountain he designed and made for the Great Exhibition in 1851. A brass plate over the doors of the clock case states "Clock and bells / presented to the Corporation of Birmingham / by Abraham Follett Osler Esq<sup>re</sup> F.R.S. / June 1885. Thomas Martineau Esq Mayor". The hour bell (see below) carries a similar inscription.

The clock is a large three-train flatbed movement, with "Gillett & Co / Manufacturers / Croydon / AD 1885" cast on the frame. It has a Grimthorpe gravity escapement and a train remontoire moving the minute hand in half-minute steps. Joseph McKenna states that the clock was set going on 25 November 1885. According to a contemporary description:

"The clock movement is housed in an iron frame, cast in one piece, which measures 8 feet by 3 feet. The pendulum is 125 feet long and weighs 4 cwt. Its hour bell weighs 3 tons 6 cwt., and is struck by a hammer weighing 180 lbs., while the quarter bells range in weight from 12 cwt. to 2 tons 2 cwt. They are wound every two days, and winding takes 5½ hours a week. The chimes are similar to those of the clock of St. Mary's, Cambridge. The dials are each 10½ feet in diameter, and were originally illuminated by gas jets, kept alight by a low flame during the day, and increased to full pressure at dusk. From top to pavement level, the clock tower is 153 foot 4 inches in height."

Since its installation, the clock has been modified and repaired several times. In 1905 Gillett & Johnston fitted a "stop chimes apparatus" on the quarter chimes for Swinden & Sons, the Birmingham clockmakers, at a cost of £17.10s. Smith of Derby fitted auto-winding to the going train and motor drives to the striking trains in 1958. Smiths' publicity materials indicate that the work was carried out in association with their sister company William Potts & Sons Ltd, Leeds. They provided "a temporary installation which enabled the Council House Clock to continue to indicate time during the change-over period".

In 1992 the clock was again refurbished in the course of repairs to the tower, the work being carried out by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon. A plate on the clock case records the restoration of the tower and clock and the re-commissioning by the Mayor on 22 December 1992.

RECOMMISSIONED BY THE MAYOR CLLR. PETER J.P. BARWELL, MAYOR, ON  
COMPLETION OF THE REFURBISHMENT OF THE CLOCK AND TOWER BY CHRISTIANI &  
NIELSON LRD. AND GILLETT & JOHNSTON (CROYDON) LTD, 22 DEC. 1992

The clock and bells at Birmingham Council House are mentioned in a list of "famous places where Gillett & Co's clocks and bells are erected" published by the firm in 1888. It is worth noting that Charles Bland (1829-1884), a partner in the firm of Gillett & Bland, was a native of Birmingham. The order books show that the total cost of the clock and bells amounted to £1721.

The clock bells hang in a wooden framework (supported on three large steel girders) at the level of the belfry window openings. They are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | CAST BY GILLETT & C <sup>O</sup> CROYDON 1885<br><i>Waist: (border all round)</i>   |
| 2.          | CAST BY GILLETT & C <sup>O</sup> CROYDON 1885<br><i>Waist: (border all round)</i>   |
| 3.          | CAST BY GILLETT & C <sup>O</sup> CROYDON 1885<br><i>Waist: (border all round)</i>   |
| 4.          | CAST BY GILLETT & C <sup>O</sup> CROYDON 1885.<br><i>Waist: (border all round)</i>  |
| 5.          | CAST BY GILLETT & C <sup>O</sup> BELL FOUNDERS & CLOCK MANUFACTURERS CROYDON LONDON<br><i>Waist: (border all round) / PRESENTED BY / A. FOLLETT. OSLER / JUNE 1885.</i> |

| <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.          | Gillett & Co, 1885      | 38¾             | 961.5     | A#+54       | 12          | 3           | 0           |
| 2.          | Gillett & Co, 1885      | 42¾             | 850.5     | G#+40       | 16          | 0           | 14          |
| 3.          | Gillett & Co, 1885      | 48              | 761.5     | F#+49       | 23          | 3           | 0           |
| 4.          | Gillett & Co, 1885      | 61½             | 565       | C#+32       | 44          | 2           | 0           |
| 5.          | Gillett & Co, 1885      | 70              | 495       | B+3         | 66          | 2           | 0           |

According to the Croydon foundry records, the bells were cast between 13 March and 29 June 1885 (nos.834, 835, 825, 820 and 835 from 1 to 5). These numbers may be cast on the bells but they were not found in the usual position on the shoulders. The bells have Doncaster heads and cast-in clapper staples. The hour bell and fourth quarter bells are un-tuned. The three smaller bells have all been tuned on a lathe, with a band of machining (between 7 and 8½ inches) being visible inside the soundbow and low waist on each bell. The bells are secured direct to the wooden framework with V-bolts through the canons and (later) supplementary ironwork. Smith of Derby provided new bell straps in February 1979 at a cost of £695.

**Visited:** CJP, RLJ, CJND 24 January 2003; CJP (with AHS tour) 10 July 2009

### **BIRMINGHAM – Bishop Latimer's church, Handsworth New Road**

This substantial church was built in 1903-4 with funds provided by an anonymous lady donor. The architect was W.H. Bidlake and William Sappcote & Sons were the builders. The foundation stone inscribed "To the Glory of God and in memory of Hugh Latimer Bishop of Worcester 1535-1539, Martyr 1555" was laid on 4 April 1903. The consecration took place on 23 July 1904. A new parish was created in 1905 from the parishes of St.Chrysostom and St.Cuthbert, Birmingham. The church has a tall brick tower rising above the porch at the south-east angle of the building.

Plans for the ring of ten never materialised, but a single bell – intended as the fourth of the ten - was installed in the new tower. It was inscribed:

*Waist:* HOOPER / BISHOP AND MARTYR / BORN 1495 / MARTYRED 1555.

Waist: WE ARE PLACED HERE BY SUBSCRIPTION / IN THE YEAR MDCCLXXVI / THO:  
COX MINISTER

2. 210 / RECAST BY JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1958 \*  
*Waist:* HEALTH & HAPPINESS TO ALL OUR WORTHY SUBSCRIBERS / R WELLS FECIT MDCCLXXVI
3. 245 / RECAST BY JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1958 \*  
*Waist:* R WELLS ALDBOURNE FECIT MDCCLXXVI
4. 151 / RECAST BY JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1958 \*  
*Waist:* MAY THE TOWN OF BIRM<sup>M</sup> BE EVER HELD IN ESTEEM / FOR ITS MANUFACT<sup>S</sup> R WELLS FECIT
5. 178 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. LOUGHBOROUGH LEICESTERSHIRE 1904  
*Waist:* HOOPER / BISHOP AND MARTYR / BORN 1495 / MARTYRED 1555.
6. 236 / RECAST BY JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1958 \*  
*Waist:* WISDOM TO THE COUNCIL OF THE STATE / & SUCCESS TO THE BRITISH FLEET / R WELLS FECIT MDCCLXXVI
7. 137 / RECAST BY JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1958 \*  
*Waist:* MAY GREAT BRITAIN EVER STAND / UNRIVALLED IN HER COMMERCE / R : WELLS F : MDCCLXXVII
8. 265 / RECAST BY JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* LOUGHBOROUGH \*  
*Waist:* R WELLS OF ALDBOURNE FECIT / MDCCLXXVI / \* \* \* / RECAST 1958 / CECIL H. SMYTH, VICAR / OWEN R. GREEN } / HENRY A. HIPKISS } WARDENS  
*Opposite:* TO THE GLORY OF GOD / PART OF THE EXPENSE OF RESTORING THESE BELLS / WAS DEFRAYED BY THE BARRON BELL TRUST 1958 / EMMA BARRON, FOUNDER / H.W. ELDRED } / K.C. WALROND } / E.R. PENNELL } TRUSTEES

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter         | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1958 | 25 $\frac{7}{8}$ | 1441.5  | 4    | 0    | 6    |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 1958 | 26 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 1358    | 4    | 0    | 26   |
| 3.   | John Taylor & Co, 1958 | 28 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 1208    | 4    | 2    | 7    |
| 4.   | John Taylor & Co, 1958 | 29 $\frac{5}{8}$ | 1071    | 5    | 0    | 3    |
| 5.   | John Taylor & Co, 1904 | 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 953     | 6    | 0    | 14   |
| 6.   | John Taylor & Co, 1958 | 34               | 898.5   | 7    | 1    | 16   |
| 7.   | John Taylor & Co, 1958 | 38               | 799     | 10   | 0    | 12   |
| 8.   | John Taylor & Co, 1958 | 42 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 710     | 13   | 3    | 22   |

The bells are tuned in the key of F, and the tenor weight was originally given as 14-0-8. At Bishop Latimer's they were hung on one level in a cast iron lowside frame (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.h, layout 8.3) with ringing fittings of 1958 by Taylors. The bells and frame were removed from the tower in the week after Christmas 1971. They were transferred – with the bells – to Perry Barr in 1972, but the foundation beams for the frame remain *in situ* and the rope bosses can still be seen in the ringing room ceiling.

**Visited:** RLJ 13 Nov 1977 and CJP 11 Sept 1988; old bells visited (at Perry Barr) CJP 10 Sept 1988

### **BIRMINGHAM – Bishop Ryder's (former church), Gem Street**

This church was built in 1838 as a memorial to the Rt Rev Henry Ryder, Bishop of Lichfield from 1824 until his death in 1836. Birmingham was in Lichfield Diocese until 1838 and Bishop Ryder had spoken in favour of building a new church in the Gosta Green area of the City at the annual meeting of the Diocesan Church Building Society in December 1835. The architects were Rickman and Hussey, whose designs included a pinnacled west tower of brick with stone dressings and an octagonal top. The foundation stone was laid on 23 August 1837 and the new church was consecrated on 18 December 1838. A parish was assigned from St.Martin's Birmingham in 1841. After being disused for some years, the church was demolished in January 1960. It stood on part of the site now occupied by Aston University.

### **Former bells**

A single bell was originally supplied by Taylors of Oxford for the new church in about 1838. The entry in Taylors' records is undated, but the other details were noted as:

| <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 & John Taylor, c.1838 | 27½             | E           | 3           | 3           | 25          |

This bell was used until a new ring of eight was installed in 1868. The new bells, hailed in the local press as "the first eight ever cast in Birmingham", were cast by William Blews & Sons and apparently dedicated or installed on 15 November 1868. The official opening or inauguration took place on 11 January 1869, attended by The Rev. H.T. Ellacombe, Canon Cattley and E.B. Denison QC (later Lord Grimthorpe). The date of the bells is often given as 1869, but this is clearly incorrect as the inscriptions show. Details of the bells – which were in the key of G natural (800 Hz) were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM 1868.                             |
| 2.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM 1868.                             |
| 3.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM 1868.                             |
| 4.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM 1868.                             |
| 5.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM 1868.                             |
| 6.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM 1868.                             |
| 7.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM 1868.                             |
| 8.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS. BIRMINGHAM FOUNDERS 1868.                    |
|             | <i>Waist:</i> T HART BURGESS, D D VICAR / H H POWER } / T KENDRICK } |
|             | CHURCHWARDENS  |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b>    | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Note</b> | <b>Nominal</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 26½             | G           | 1642           | 5           | 0           | 21          |
| 2.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 26¼             | F sharp     | 1540           | 5           | 1           | 13          |
| 3.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 28¾             | E           | 1359           | 5           | 2           | 7           |
| 4.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 30              | D           | 1206           | 5           | 3           | 21          |
| 5.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 32½             | C           | 1070           | 6           | 3           | 18          |
| 6.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 34              | B           | 1007           | 7           | 1           | 27          |
| 7.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 37              | A           | 912            | 9           | 3           | 25          |
| 8.          | William Blews & Sons, 1868 | 40¼             | G           | 800            | 11          | 1           | 21          |

These are the nett weights of the bells as received at Loughborough on 16 June 1923. According to Taylors' records, the inscriptions were set in 7/8" Roman type, and not in the Victorian gothic lettering generally used by Blews from 1869 onwards. The full tuning figures for the ring were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Pitches</b>            |  | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Pitches</b>           |
|-------------|---------------------------|--|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1.          | 438, 707, 974, 1370, 1642 |  | 5.          | 306, 525, 654, 930, 1070 |
| 2.          | 424, 658, 924, 1290, 1540 |  | 6.          | 264, 476, 602, 766, 1007 |
| 3.          | 367, 606, 806, 1130, 1359 |  | 7.          | 255, 436, 556, 744, 912  |
| 4.          | 322, 574, 722, 998, 1206  |  | 8.          | 224, 374, 482, 646, 800  |

The bells were hung in a wooden frame complete with ringing fittings, the entire installation being the work of William Blews & Sons. The original frame remained in use from the time the bells were first installed until their eventual removal in 1960. The frame had bells 1-2 and 5-6 swinging mouth-to-mouth and north-south on the west and east sides of the tower respectively, and these pits were open at the north and south ends – the heads linked by light iron bars. The other bells swung east-west in four parallel pits, in order from north to south 4, 3, 7 and 8. The bells were rehung in 1895 by Charles Carr of Smethwick.

Always regarded as being of poor tone, the Blews bells became unsafe for ringing and fell silent in 1922. Thanks to the generosity of Cllr. R.R. Gelling they were recast in 1923 and

replaced by a new Taylor ring in the key of F sharp (742Hz or F# plus 4.7 cents). Details of these bells were:

| <b>Bell</b>   | <b>Inscription</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. 196 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</i>   |                    |
| 2. 298 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</i>   |                    |
| 3. 150 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</i>   |                    |
| 4. 238 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</i>   |                    |
| 5. 158 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</i>   |                    |
| 6. 202 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</i>   |                    |
| 7. 194 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</i>   |                    |
| 8. 177 / WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM, 1868<br><i>Waist: TO THE GLORY OF GOD / AND IN MEMORY OF / GEORGE AND MARY STEPHENS / THESE BELLS WERE RECAST AND REHUNG / BY THEIR NEPHEW / ROBERT RAISBECK GELLING / 1923 / * * * / CANON G.E. BADGER, VICAR / JAMES GEORGE, RINGING MASTER</i><br><i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1923</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, 1923  | 24 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1484           | 3           | 1           | 11          |
| 2.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 25 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1399           | 3           | 2           | 10          |
| 3.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 27 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1246           | 4           | 0           | 7           |
| 4.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 28 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1112           | 4           | 1           | 4           |
| 5.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 31 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 990            | 5           | 2           | 17          |
| 6.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 32 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 930            | 6           | 2           | 18          |
| 7.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 36 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 832.5          | 8           | 3           | 22          |
| 8.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 40 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 742            | 12          | 3           | 24          |

These bells were hung with new fittings in the 1868 wooden frame which was repaired and lowered twenty feet in the tower to accommodate the new ring. They were dedicated on 30th December 1923. The replacement of the old bells was carried out at the instigation of the ringing master, James George, who rang in the last peal on the old bells on 21 May 1921 and conducted the first on the new ring on 28 January 1924.

A screen or partition was erected between the church and ringing room in 1936 in order to keep out the sound and prevent the loss of heat. According to the faculty papers, "The noise from the bell ringing chamber disturbs to a very considerable degree the quiet of the church before service" ... "especially as the Head Ringer [James George] is an old man, who very audibly encourages his team in their efforts". A ringing character and stalwart of the exercise, James George rang tower bells well into his eighties. His activities were curtailed by the war and by the amputation of a leg, but he rang in a handbell peal on his 95th birthday. He spent the last few years of his life in Bournemouth where he died, aged 97, in March 1951.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the bells were still in regular use, especially for peals. In all, some 200 peals were rung at Bishop Ryders, with an average of ten peals a year being rung in the tower until the last on 22 August 1959. The church was demolished soon afterwards, the removal of the bells being reported in the *Ringling World* of 29 January 1960. The bells were afterwards transferred to St.Peter's Harborne (*q.v.*) in 1962-3 and dedicated there on 2 March 1963.



To mark the centenary of the church, a clock was put up on the tower. This was reported in the *Birmingham Post* of 17 September 1938. The idea of installing a clock had been first mooted when the bells were installed in 1868-9, and it was stated in a report of the opening that it was "intended to provide a clock with Cambridge quarters". The clock installed in 1938 was a small second-hand timepiece, probably by Evans of Handsworth. It was given to the church by Messrs. Boxfoldia Ltd and installed at a cost of £13.19s.0d. This was replaced in 1946 with an old clock (by Elleby of Ashbourne, 1847) which was obtained from Shirley when a new clock was installed there.

**Bells examined:** CJP (at Harborne) 11 Sept 1988

### **BIRMINGHAM - Blue Coat School**

The Blue Coat school was opened in 1724 in a building at the eastern end of St.Philip's churchyard. The school moved to new premises in Somerset Road, in Harborne, in 1930. The new school buildings were designed by J.F. Ball and H.W. Simister.

A catalogue published in c.1931 shows that Smith of Derby supplied an "electric Chiming clock with four large dials" for the new Blue Coat school. It was an electrically-wound striking clock with ding-dong quarter chimes, for which John Taylor & Co of Loughborough supplied two small bells – the largest 2 cwt – in 1930. It cost £205. Taylors' records show that the bells were forwarded to Messrs. B. Whitehouse, builders and contractors, for Smiths on 16 October 1930. Details of the bells are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>                         |
|-------------|--|
| 1. 138 /    | TAYLORS * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 1930 * |
| 2. 242 /    | TAYLORS * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 1930 * |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b>  | <b>Note / nominal</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | John Taylor & Co, 1930  | 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ | A sharp (1824.6Hz)    | 1           | 0           | 16          |
| 2.          | John Taylor & Co, 1930  | 21               | G (1534.2Hz)          | 1           | 3           | 5           |

**Not visited:** *Ex.Inf.* Taylors and Smith of Derby

### **BIRMINGHAM – Board Schools**

A catalogue issued by Charles Carr of Smethwick in about 1891 shows that the firm supplied bells for the Birmingham Board Schools – apparently cast between 1885 and 1891. No further details are given.

### **BIRMINGHAM - Bull Ring Indoor Market**

The new Birmingham indoor market hall was built in 2000 to replace the old Bull Ring market hall. The building was designed for the Birmingham City Council by Benoy Architects and Designers, built by Shepherd Construction and opened in October 2000. Inside there is a feature clock by Smith of Derby, installed in 2000. It is a non-striking clock showing the time on a suspended globe with four dials. The arrangement includes four sculptured figures representing traditional tradespeople of the market.

### **BIRMINGHAM, Cathedral – see BIRMINGHAM, St.Philip's Cathedral**

### **BIRMINGHAM – Chamberlain Clock Tower, Five Ways**

Joseph McKenna states that the clock tower at Five Ways was the first of the so-called Chamberlain clocks in the City. It was offered to the council by Miss J. Attwood Davies, in memory of her late father, John Birt Davies, who is commemorated by an inscription on the clock tower which reads "TO COMMEMORATE / THE FIRST CORONER OF THE BOROUGH / JOHN BIRT DAVIES M.A., F.R.C.P., J.P. / WHO HELD THE OFFICE FOR 36 YEARS / OBIIT 1878".

Miss Davies requested that the clock should be placed at Five Ways. The Council minutes for February 1887 record:

"After trying a wooden structure of about the same dimensions as the clock offered by Miss J. Attwood Davies, in several situations at the Five Ways, and having ascertained that the donor particularly wished the clock to be placed in that locality, your Committee have come to the conclusion that the centre of Islington Row, at its junction with the Five Ways, offers the most suitable site for its erection, and they therefore propose placing it there."

McKenna comments that the identity of the maker of the original clock is not known. However, the Croydon foundry records indicate that Gillett & Co. received an order from Johnson & Co, Birmingham solicitors, for a clock and bell for the Lamp Clock at Five Ways on 19 October 1886. The clock was to strike the hours on a ½ cwt bell. The clock was to be a no.0 striking clock with deadbeat escapement and four illuminated dials lit by gas. It cost £90. The records state that column for the clock was made by Hart, Son, Peard & Co. Ron Dove saw the clock in 1958 and noted that it was a four-dial timepiece, "probably by Gilletts".

At the opening of the twentieth century the illuminated dials were electrified, and the movement was later replaced by one made by Smiths of Derby in 1958. The clock was removed from its original site during the redevelopment of the area, to its present site at the junction of Harborne and Calthorpe Roads. By 1995 there was a quartz master clock with a heavy duty motor drive showing the time on four illuminated dials. The clock is maintained by Birmingham City Council.

The clock bell was removed and taken into store in September 1980. According to the Corporation records, it was a 20" bell cast by Gillett & Co of Croydon and dated 1887. The Gillett records indicate that the original ½ cwt bell was exchanged for a larger one shortly after the clock was installed, but the actual bell that went with the clock has not been identified in the foundry records.

The replacement is perhaps explained by an entertaining letter published in the *Birmingham Daily Post* on 28 June 1887:

THE BELL IN THE FIVE WAYS CLOCK.

To the Editor of the Daily Post.

Sir, - Possessing a spout, perhaps you will kindly allow me to pour forth my complaint. I consider myself a very useful article in my proper place, but why I should be stuck up here in a sort of iron dove-cote I cannot tell. As I hear the ridiculous sound I make when that wretched hammer hits me every hour, I don't sing for joy like a kettle should, but I regularly boil over with indignation. Do for pity's sake, Mr. Editor, get me taken down, and let me be used for my natural purpose. Those poor cabmen below me might find me useful for boiling water for their tea. They surely must want something to drink, for from their cracked throats proceed such fearful noises as they shout "igher up," "igher up."

Will not the bell-founders of the town, for their own credit's sake, club together and put a really melodious silver bell in my place? It would save them a lot of blushes as they pass me every day. Anyhow, I beseech those who hung me here to take me down, or I shall certainly commit suicide, and then the present coroner would hold an inquest over me. The verdict would be "cracked." This would be a terrible end indeed.

Islington Row, June 27.

TIN KETTLE

**Visited:** Ronald H. Dove 1958 and CJP, 25 February 2006: Thanks also to Joe McKenna and to Andrew Nicholls MBHI (1995 visit notes)

### **BIRMINGHAM – Chamberlain Clock Tower, Aston Cross**

Joseph McKenna notes that this was the second of the "Chamberlain clocks", unveiled in December 1891. It had replaced an earlier clock tower erected in 1854 at Aston Cross. The replacement clock was presented to Aston Manor Local Board by its chairman, Cllr. Lewis Spokes Richards. The clock tower was designed by the architect, Arthur Edwards, and manufactured by George Smith and Company of the Sun Foundry, Glasgow. All this is recorded on various inscriptions around the base of the clock tower, as follows:

*North side:* PRESENTED TO THE MANOR OF / ASTON LOCAL BOARD BY / LEWIS SPOKES RICHARDS ESQ. / CHAIRMAN / DECEMBER 1891

*South side:* MANUFACTURED / AND ERECTED BY / GEORGE SMITH AND COY. / SUN FOUNDRY GLASGOW / ARTHUR EDWARDS, ARCHITECT / DECEMBER, 1891

*On base:* SUN FOUNDRY, GLASGOW

The original movement was made by Smith and Sons of Derby, whose sales ledger for 12 March 1892 contains the following entry: "L. Richards Esq, Aston, Birmingham. New turret clock with four 3ft.6in. dials fixed in iron tower as per agreement £55". The 1891 clock was a timepiece with pinwheel escapement and illuminated dials, still in use in 1958.

In 1958 Smiths replaced the old clock with a new synchronous movement. This was removed during improvements to the cross and its surroundings in 1990 and afterwards restored and rebuilt. The reinstatement of the clock is recorded on an inscription added on the east side of the structure as follows:

(*City arms*) / ASTON CROSS CLOCK / RESTORED FOR / BIRMINGHAM CITY  
COUNCIL / PRESENTED TO THE COMMUNITY BY / COUNCILLOR MATTHEW  
REDMOND / CHAIRMAN OF THE TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE / 6TH APRIL  
1992 / DEREK RAWSON BSC TECH CENG / CITY ENGINEER / CLOCK RESTORATION  
ROY G. HANCOCK CMBHI / STRUCTURAL RENOVATION A.K. HUGHES LTD.

By 1995 there was a "quartz master clock with a heavy duty 4-way drive unit, dial motionworks and sodium flood lights" for the four illuminated dials. This clock, like the other "Chamberlain clocks", is still maintained by Birmingham City Council.

**Visited:** CJP, 25 February 2006: Thanks also to Smiths of Derby, Joe McKenna, and Andrew Nicholls

### **BIRMINGHAM – Chamberlain Clock Tower, King's Head**

According to Joseph McKenna, the "King's Head" clock which now stands at the junction of High Street and Union Street, formerly stood outside the public house of the same name on the Hagley Road at Bearwood. The stand, with its horse trough base, was made by J. & A. Law, ironfounders of Glasgow whose name can be seen on the cast iron column. The original clock movement was made in 1900 by Arthur Walker, a local clockmaker, whose premises were at 31a Vere Street.

The "King's Head" clock, with its gas-lit dials, was dismantled during road widening in 1971, and removed to a Council store. Following pedestrianisation of the High Street, the clock was renovated, fitted with a new electric clock mechanism, and re-erected by the City Engineer's Department on its present site at the junction with Union Street. It was officially unveiled on 1st April 1979.

The four illuminated dials are now (1995) driven by "four self-start synchronous electric movements with auto-restart unit. The clock is maintained by Birmingham City Council.

**Visited:** CJP 10 September 2003: Thanks to Joe McKenna, and Andrew Nicholls MBHI (1995 visit notes)

### **BIRMINGHAM – Chamberlain Clock Tower, Hockley**

Joseph McKenna gives details of the fourth "Chamberlain Clock" in the Jewellery Quarter at the junction of Frederick Street, Vyse Street and Warstone Lane. It is a true "Chamberlain clock", erected by public subscription to commemorate Joseph Chamberlain's visit to South Africa as Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1903 soon after the Boer War.

The column of the clock was made by Messrs. Hart, Son & Peard & Co, art metal workers of Grosvenor Street West, London. The movement was made by W. F. Evans & Sons, of 154, Soho Road, Handsworth. These names are recorded on the structure. The *Birmingham Post* of 1 February 1904 carried the following description of the clock:

"The clock ... has four dials, which will be electrically illuminated at night. Special attention has been devoted to the excellence of the materials employed in its construction, and the most modern methods have been followed; for instance, to reduce friction to the lowest possible limit, ball-bearings are applied to each moving part, and the wheels and pinions are so arranged that any particular one can be removed without interfering with the others."

Chamberlain's wife, Mary, unveiled the clock on 30th January 1904. There are two inscriptions on the clock. The first is:

"1903 / In commemoration / of the visit paid to / South Africa / by the / Right Hon. / J. Chamberlain, M.P., / Secretary of State for the Colonies, / this clock / was erected by his constituents, / the electors of West Birmingham. / Henry Payton, J.P., Chairman. / Landed at Durban, Dec. 26 1902, / Sailed from Capetown, Feb. 25 1903."

The second is a quotation from one of Chamberlain's speeches:

"We have shown that we can be strong / and resolute in war; it is equally / important to show that we can be / strong and resolute in peace."

Ron Dove later noted that the clock was an Evans timepiece. The original movement was replaced by a Smith of Derby synchronous mechanism in 1958 when most of the City clocks were modernised. This was again replaced by a Joyce of Whitchurch synchronous movement in 1990.

A further inscription records the restoration of the clock in 1990 - a complete rebuilding and refurbishment carried out by the Octo Welding and Engineering Company of Lozells in 1989-90. Part of the cost was borne by the businessmen responsible for "The Spencers" office and retail development nearby. The inscription reads "THE CHAMBERLAIN / MEMORIAL CLOCK / RESTORED 1990 / BIRMINGHAM / CITY COUNCIL / AND THE SPENCERS / SPENCER STREET / BIRMINGHAM".

Taylor's supplied a small bell – with an hour-strike unit – for the Chamberlain Tower at Hockley in 1990. It is:

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. (*Border all round inscription band*)  
Waist: 19 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 90

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Note    | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1990 | 18       | 2077    | C-13.29 | 1    | 1    | 20   |

By 1995 there was a "heavy duty self-start synchronous movement with inverter unit, bevel works and dial motionworks, quartz master clock with electro-magnetic hammer". This was installed by Joyce of Whitchurch and John Taylor & Co in 1990. The bell is hung from a steel stock and sounded by an electro-magnetic hammer. The clock is maintained by Birmingham City Council.

**Visited:** CJP, 25 February 2006: Thanks also to Joe McKenna, and Andrew Nicholls MBHI (1995 visit notes)

**BIRMINGHAM - Christ Church (former Church), Colmore Row**

Christ Church was built under an Act of Parliament passed in 1803 with the intention that it would be the town's first 'Free Church' with free seats. The site was given by W.P. Inge. King George III contributed £1000 and agreed to lay the foundation stone but in the event he was prevented by illness from performing the ceremony. The Earl of Dartmouth, acting for the King, laid the foundation stone on July 22, 1805. A brass plate on the stone had the following inscription:

"The first stone of Christ Church was laid the twenty-second day of July, 1805, by command of his Most Gracious Majesty George the Third, the pillar, guardian, and ornament of the Christian Faith, in the 68th year of his age, and the 45th of his reign. - RICHARD PRATCHET, High Bailiff."

The church was built to the designs of Charles Norton, a Birmingham builder and surveyor, assisted by William Whitmore. It stood on a prominent site at the top of a flight of steps at the junction of Colmore Row (then called Ann Street) and New Street. It was built in stone and in the classical style with a Doric portico. The architect's original scheme envisaged a cupola or domed tower over the portico for the belfry, as shown on a commemorative medal struck to mark the laying of the foundation stone in 1805. Progress with the new building was slow, however, and the plans had been changed by the time funds were available for completing the church. As finished in 1813-14, the church had a west tower with an octagonal belfry stage and a tall spire. The consecration took place on 6 July 1813.

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. JOHN RUDHALL GLOCESTER FEC<sup>T</sup>. J8J3 (*border*)

Christ Church became a separate parish in 1865, but not long afterwards the building was swept away in the re-development of the area round the Town Hall and Council House. Described in 1878 as "one of the ugliest churches in the town", Christ Church was closed under the Birmingham Churches Act of 1897 and demolished in 1899. The site was sold to the Trustees of the Colmore Estate in 1897 and the proceeds were used to fund the erection of a new church in the suburbs – St. Agatha's at Sparkbrook. The bell from Christ Church was among the fittings transferred to the new building. It is still in use there.

There is no mention of the purchase of the clock in the Trustees' minute book, but an entry in the Thwaites & Reed daybooks shows that the clock was evidently made by John Thwaites of Clerkenwell and supplied through Allport. The details, with the prices in Thwaites' code, are as follows:

3 Dec.1816 Mr. Allport [extras]

**BIRMINGHAM - Church of the Messiah (Unitarian), Broad Street (*demolished*)**

The building had a prominent tower and elaborate spire on the right-hand side of the street façade. A photograph taken in 1865 shows clock dials on two sides of the tower. The congregation moved to a new meeting house in Five Ways in 1973 and the Broad Street church was demolished in April 1978. The spire had been truncated some years earlier.

The Cobden Hotel – named after Richard Cobden (1804-1865), the radical writer and statesman – was built in 1883 for the Coffee House Company. The building also included shops and offices fronting on Corporation Street, and there was a clock tower and spirelet on the corner over the street junction. The architect was William Doubleday of Birmingham,

whose Gothic designs were illustrated in *The Builder* of 24 March 1883. The building has now been demolished, and nothing is known of the former clock.

### **BIRMINGHAM – Corporation Square and the street market**

The shopping precinct in Corporation Square is a group of modern buildings surrounding an open street market. It is in the area bounded by Corporation Street, Queensway, Bull Street and Dale End. The original buildings were built in 1963-6 to the designs of Sir Frederick Gibberd and included an advertising tower. This was replaced in 1990 when Bob Bowyer Associates erected what Andy Foster has described as “a lumpy Toytown clock tower (with electric chimes)”.

The tower stands among the stalls in the centre of the open area, the lower stages acting as a covered entrance to an underground car park. The clock shows the time on four 9ft illuminated skeleton dials and ‘strikes’ the hours and Westminster quarter chimes on ‘synthetic bells’. Smith of Derby provided the clock and dials in 1990, adding the speakers and digital chimes in 1992.

**Visited:** CJP, 10 September 2003

### **BIRMINGHAM – Digbeth Police Station**

The Digbeth Police Station was built in 1911 to designs from the office of Henry E. Stilgoe, the Birmingham City Engineer and Surveyor. There is a date-stone of 1911 on the main façade, and there is a clock with three skeleton dials in the octagonal corner turret on left of the street frontage of the building. The foundation stone is inscribed “THIS STONE WAS LAID / BY / MR. COUNCILLOR A.D. BROOKS / CHAIRMAN OF / THE WATCH COMMITTEE / 29<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1911 / HENRY E. STILGOE, M.INST.C.E. / CITY SURVEYOR / T. ELVINS & SONS / BUILDERS.”

The original clock was removed in 1958 when Smith of Derby installed synchronous movements in most of the public buildings in the City. It was donated to the Birmingham Museums by the Watch Committee in 1958 and it is now (2009) in the Museums Collections Centre in Dolman Street. It is a timepiece clock signed on the setting dial by “SWINDEN & SONS / BIRMINGHAM”. It has a plate and spacer frame and it is fitted with a gravity escapement and compensated pendulum. The movement is not dated but evidently dates from 1911. Its features indicate that Swinden was the supplier and that Gillett & Johnston of Croydon made it.

The Gillett & Johnston order book includes an entry dated 24 December 1911 referring to a clock of similar description supplied to Swinden & Sons, 27 Temple St, Birmingham. The clock was a No.2 Timepiece, gravity escapement, compensated pendulum, supplied with three phosphor bronze skeleton dials. The total cost was £89.10s. The order says “Our name not to appear anywhere” and “on setting dial Swinden & Sons, Birmingham”.

**Visited:** CJP (outside only) 25 February 2006; clock examined at Museums Collection Centre, CJP 10 July 2009

### **BIRMINGHAM, Fort Dunlop – see CASTLE VALE, Fort Dunlop**

### **BIRMINGHAM – Grammar School, New Street**

According to Joseph McKenna, a new clock for the newly rebuilt Grammar School in New Street was made by Humphrey Hadley II in 1707. The clock was repaired by David Hadley between 1751 and 1763 and by James Stretch from 1764. Stretch received an annual salary of £3.15s.0d. “for Winding up and taking Care of the School Clock”. An engraving of 1829 shows that the old Free Grammar School had a clock in a courtyard over the main entrance.

The new King Edward VI Grammar School was built in 1835 to the designs of Charles Barry, architect. The Whitechapel foundry daybooks show that Thomas Mears invoiced various bells for the new schools in 1837-8. The first was a bell for the New Free Grammar School on 22 July 1837. This bell was hung for ringing, and it cost £23.0.4½ (including the fittings). It weighed 2-1-27½. Next, on 27 April 1838 a further bell of 0-2-8½ was supplied

for the Elementary Grammar School. Lastly, on 20 November 1838 a bell of 0-1-18 was supplied for the Elementary Free School. The two small bells were supplied with clappers only.

The School moved to new premises on a new site near the University in Edgbaston in 1938, but part of the old chapel from New Street was re-erected in the grounds. This has a small brassfoundry bell of about 14 inches diameter in an iron bracket under a canopy on the side of the building. The bell is without any inscription or marks and has a peg argent. Its fittings include an iron bar stock, iron chiming lever, clapper and ball bearings – suggesting that it dates from the 1930s. A bell of this type is illustrated in the Barwell catalogues (type 050), so the chapel bell was doubtless supplied by Barwell in 1938.

**Visited:** CJP, HEP, RLJ, 23 June 2003

### **BIRMINGHAM – Great Western Arcade, off Colmore Row**

This arcade, which links Colmore Row and Temple Row, was constructed above the tunnel over the Great Western Railway between Moor Street and Snow Hill stations. It was built to the designs of William H. Ward and opened on 28 August 1876. With 94 shops and a covered walkway, the original building cost £60,000. The contractor was H. Lovatt of Wolverhampton, builder.

By the late 1970s the arcade had fallen into disrepair. After extensive restoration carried out for the Prudential Assurance Company by the John Madin Design Group, it was reopened on 3 October 1984. The restoration won an award from the Birmingham Civic Society.

At the time of the restoration, a new clock and chime of five small bells was installed near the entrance from Colmore Row. The clock and bells are positioned at gallery level just inside the main arcade, with the bells being hung from brackets just above the art-deco clock dial. Brief details of the bells are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inspection</b> |
|-------------|-------------------|
|-------------|-------------------|

1. *Waist: (Whitechapel mark) / 1983*
2. *Waist: (Whitechapel mark)*
3. *Waist: (Whitechapel mark) / 1982*
4. *Waist: (Whitechapel mark)*
5. *Waist: 19 (Whitechapel mark) 84 / WHITECHAPEL*

| Bell | Founder and date                 | Diameter | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|----------------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1983   | 9¼       | E    | 0    | 0    | 26   |
| 2.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, c.1984 | 9⅞       | D    | 0    | 1    | 5    |
| 3.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1982   | 10⅝      | C    | 0    | 1    | 12   |
| 4.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, c.1984 | 12⅞      | G    | 0    | 2    | 8    |
| 5.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1984   | 14       | F    | 0    | 2    | 24   |

The bells were cast at the Whitechapel Foundry who have confirmed that they supplied a light clock chime made up of stock bells to Hayward Horological in 1985. The bells are struck by internal electro-magnetic hammers. The hour bell hangs in the middle with the two smaller bells to the right and bells 3 and 4 to the left. The clock is an electro-mechanical movement by Haward Horological Ltd dated 1985 (no.22/s9) which is housed in a wooden case behind the dial.

**Visited:** CJP, 10 September 2003 and 4 March 2004: Thanks to Jimmy Whelan, Alan Pearsall and Gay Faulkner

### **BIRMINGHAM – Gun Barrel Proof House, Banbury Street**

The Gun Barrel Proof House was built in 1813-14 to the designs of John Horton for the official testing of gun barrels and completed guns. The buildings were later extended in 1883, but the main block is part of the original design and it has a splendid sculptured carving of a trophy of arms said to have been executed by William Hollins. The clock dial is in the pediment above the main entrance, flanked by rainwater heads dated 1813.

The movement is signed on the setting dial by "GAMMON / BIRMINGHAM" – i.e. William Gammon (fl.1812-1821) who had business premises in the Bull Ring. It is not dated but it evidently dates from 1813/4. It is a two-train birdcage movement of plate-and-spacer type with deadbeat escapement and rack striking. It strikes the hours on a small bell which hangs in an enclosed turret on the roof of the building.

The bell is as follows:

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. 1814

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter | Hz     | Note  | Mouldings | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|----------|--------|-------|-----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Thomas Mears, 1814 | 16¼      | 2157.5 | Db-47 | 2:2-2:2:1 | 1    | 0    | 0*   |

Although the bell does not bear a founder's name, the style of the numerals and the shape of the bell and canons indicate that it was cast at Whitechapel by Thomas Mears II – rather than by a local Birmingham brassfounder. It has canons and crown-staple. The bell was originally hung from a beam across the centre of the turret, but it now hangs towards the edge of the turret from a short timber fixed between the original beam and the outer framework of the structure. The supporting ironwork and clock hammer are fairly recent, but part of the ironwork from a previous hammer remains in place. There is no clapper in the bell.

**Visited:** CJP (with AHS tour group) 9 July 2009 and (bell access) 3 August 2009: Thanks to Roger Hancox (Proof Master) and Bill Harding

**BIRMINGHAM – High Cross or Old Cross, Bull Ring (former)**

The Old Cross or High Cross was Birmingham's original market house and town hall. The old market shelter was enlarged in 1702-3 by the addition of an upper room for meetings of the court leet. The town minute book records that "the neighbours to the market cross ... having bought a clock at their own expence" the vestry agreed on 14 July 1727 that "the said clock be handsomely put upon the said market Cross and kept in good order at the expence of the town". The Old Cross was a stone building with a cupola on the roof, surrounded by a balustrade. Engravings of the building – made shortly before it was demolished in 1784 – show clock dials on both ends of the building, and the cupola doubtless housed a bell which was used both for the clock and to indicate the start and finish of market trading. Nothing is known of the bell.

**BIRMINGHAM – Immanuel (former church), Broad Street**

This church had a complicated history. Its origins lay in the Magdalen Chapel, opened by episcopal license in 1839 as the chapel of the female lunatic asylum. The chapel was never consecrated, and after the asylum moved to new premises in 1861 the site and building were acquired for use as a new district church in the parish of St.Thomas. At first it was proposed to remodel the building for the purpose, but in the end a new church was erected on the site to the designs of Edward Holmes, architect. Built in 1864-5, the church had a tower and short spire at the south-west corner. It was consecrated on 16 May 1865 and the parish of Immanuel was formed in the following September. The church was closed in 1939 but reopened as the parish church of the united parishes of St.Thomas and Immanuel in 1941 after St.Thomas's church had been badly damaged by enemy action. It was finally closed and demolished in about 1962-3, the site being sold to the Corporation in 1968.

The single bell was removed from the church in February 1963. It was afterwards re-erected at St.Mark's, Kingstanding, where it was rehung for swing chiming by John Taylor & Co. Details are as follows:

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. J WARNER & SONS LONDON 1865.  
*Waist: (Royal arms) / PATENT*



| Bell | Founder and date         | Diameter | Hz   | Note  | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------------|----------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Warner & Sons, 1865 | 24       | 1463 | F#-20 | 2    | 3    | 8    |

**Visited:** CJP (at Kingstanding) 11 Sept 1988

### **BIRMINGHAM – Imperial Arcade (former), Dale End**

The Imperial Arcade in Dale End was built by Thomas Hall and opened at Christmas 1883. Its focal point was the clock made by William Potts and Sons of Leeds. According to Joseph McKenna the clock had a weight-driven Westminster quarter chiming movement, with a 15in. main wheel and gravity escapement. It showed the time on a carved oak dial measuring 5ft. in diameter, and weighed some 15 cwt.

The clock is mentioned in a catalogue issued by Potts in about 1885. A list of the firm's work refers to "Birmingham Imperial Arcade: Cambridge quarter clock, five bells and four automatic figures". The bells were dated but uninscribed, and were cast by an unknown maker in 1883. Their diameters and notes were 10¾" (F sharp), 12" (E), 12½" (D), 18½" (B) and 24" (F sharp). When scrapped in 1935 they weighed 0-1-4, 0-1-8½, 0-1-15, 1-2-1½ and 3-0-7 (nett). They were mounted on cast iron pillars suspended from the roof.

The real attraction of the clock was its four large automaton figures carved in solid oak. The two central figures, or "Jacks" depicted Guy, Earl of Warwick, and a Saracen adversary. These two figures stood 7ft. 6in. in height. The other two figures represented Guy's Countess and a retainer. These smaller figures were over 6ft. in height. On the hour and the quarters, the four figures would strike the overhead bells.

The Imperial Arcade was never one of Birmingham's main shopping centres, being on the edge of the town. When the clock broke down in 1904, money for its repair was not forthcoming and the mechanism fell into disuse. Some thirty years later Alderman Percy Shurmer, Chairman of the Markets and Fairs Committee, suggested that the clock should be repaired and transferred to the Market Hall. The resolution was approved by the City council and in 1935 the clock was moved to the Market Hall (*q.v.*) and the bells recast.

*Ex.inf.* Taylors and Joseph McKenna

### **BIRMINGHAM – King Edward Chambers, Corporation Street and Lancaster Place**

The King Edward Building stands on a corner site at the junction of Corporation Street and Steelhouse Lane. The name "King Edward Building" appears over the door of the main entrance at 205 Corporation Street. The building was erected in 1900-1901 and the architects were Ewen and J. Alfred Harper. It has an illuminated clock dial in the pediment facing Lancaster Place.

There is a non-striking timepiece clock here. It was described in 1995 as a "synchronous electric movement ... installed in a clock room on the roof". It is maintained by Birmingham City Council.

This clock is evidently the synchronous movement supplied by the Smith of Derby Group in 1958 to replace a Smith timepiece with pinwheel escapement put up in 1911 for the Corporation. Smith's sales ledger for 28 September 1911 shows that the firm installed a clock in an unspecified building to the order of the James Tait of the Estates Department of Birmingham City Council at a cost of £45.10.0. It had a 6ft illuminated dial with "Adams lighting apparatus". This entry clearly refers to the original clock here, although the firm's later records list it under Ruskin buildings (*q.v.*).

**Not Visited:** Thanks to Andrew Nicholls MBHI (visit notes 1995)

### **BIRMINGHAM, Kynoch Works - see Witton, Kynoch Works**

### **BIRMINGHAM - Lucas factories (former), Jewellery Quarter**

The former factory of Joseph Lucas Ltd in Great Hampton Street was built in c.1926. It was converted to flats in 2002. A Pul-syn-etic clock system was supplied for the old factory by Gents of Leicester at some date before 1946.

### **BIRMINGHAM – Market Hall (former), the Bull Ring**

In 1935-6 the old automaton clock from the Imperial Arcade (*q.v.*) was moved to the Market Hall. The five clock bells were recast by Taylors and the clock was restored by Wm. Potts & Sons of Leeds, the firm that made it in 1883. The new bells struck the hours and Westminster quarters. As recast, the clock bells were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b>                            | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|--|--|
| 1. 104 / (loop border)                 | Waist: 19 (Taylor T-bell mark) 35                            |
| 2. 106 / (loop border)                 | Waist: 19 (Taylor T-bell mark) 35                            |
| 3. 240 / (loop border)                 | Waist: 19 (Taylor T-bell mark) 35                            |
| 4. 278 / (bell and pomegranate border) | Waist: (Taylor's rectangular mark) / 1935                    |
| 5. 196 / (bell and pomegranate border) | Waist: CAST 1883 / (Taylor's rectangular mark) / RECAST 1935 |

| <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, 1935  | 12 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 2462           | D#-18.89    | 0           | 1           | 21          |
| 2.          | John Taylor & Co, 1935  | 15                               | 2194           | C#-18.41    | 0           | 2           | 22          |
| 3.          | John Taylor & Co, 1935  | 16 <sup>15</sup> / <sub>16</sub> | 1954           | B-18.97     | 1           | 0           | 6           |
| 4.          | John Taylor & Co, 1935  | 22                               | 1464.5         | F #-18.2    | 2           | 0           | 23          |
| 5.          | John Taylor & Co, 1935  | 24 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>16</sub>  | 1306           | E-16.5      | 2           | 3           | 12          |

Joseph McKenna states that the old clock from the Imperial Arcade was dismantled with great care, under the guidance of Mr. J. Woods, a representative of Potts, and sent back to its original maker in Leeds. The firm thoroughly cleaned and oiled the old clock. The dial was restored and the background finished in gold leaf, with black numerals. The figures were carefully restored to pristine condition and the bells were recast. On Friday, 13th March 1936, the clock, now in its new home in the Market Hall, was unveiled by the Lord Mayor, Ald. S. J. Grey. The clock proved an immediate attraction. Every day, but particularly on Saturday night, one would see a crowd of people gazing up at the clock, waiting for the figures to strike the bells.

On the night of the 25th-26th August 1940, the Market Hall was bombed. The clock was completely destroyed in the fire. The solid oak figures of Guy and his companions were burnt to ashes. In defiance, the sole remaining bell, the central bell, was re-hung in the burnt-out shell of the Market Hall.

*Ex.inf.* Taylors and Joseph McKenna

### **BIRMINGHAM – Midland Bank, Six Ways (former)**

In March 1958, Ron Dove noted that the Midland Bank at Six Ways had a clock of 1904 by Wm Potts of Leeds. It was a timepiece with one illuminated 3ft. 6in. dial, originally supplied to the London City & Midland Bank and set going on 9 July 1904. It had a gravity escapement and compensated pendulum. In 1958 it was replaced by a Smith of Derby synchronous timepiece movement for the Birmingham Corporation. The building was demolished for a road improvement scheme in 1980.

### **BIRMINGHAM – Municipal Bank, Broad Street**

The Municipal Bank buildings on the south side of Broad Street were designed by T. Cecil Howitt of Nottingham and completed in 1931-2. A Pul-syn-etic clock system was supplied by Gents of Leicester. The building, with its classical front with giant Ionic columns, still stands, but it is no longer used as a bank.

### **BIRMINGHAM – Museums**

A number of turret clocks from Birmingham locations have found their way to the City Museums and there are now (2009) four disused movements in the Museum Collections Centre in Dolman Street. These include the Donisthorpe clock of 1777 from St.John's Deritend (1952.S.213.0) and the Swinden / Gillett & Johnston clock of c.1911 from Digbeth Police Station (1958.S.1005) – both described in more detail under their own headings.

There are two further clocks, one from a London Hospital and another of unknown provenance. The latter (W113) is the older of the two. It is a two-train birdcage clock of the 1730s or 1740s with deadbeat escapement. It has a brass setting dial but it is unsigned and undated. The accession records have not been located and so the date and source of acquisition are unclear.

The second clock was donated by the Fulham and Kensington Hospital Management Committee in 1953 (1953.S.00287). It came from St.Mary Abbots Hospital in Marloes Road, London, and it is a two-train cast iron four-poster clock with deadbeat escapement and rack striking signed on the setting dial by "THWAITES & REED / CLERKENWELL / LONDON / 1849". The Thwaites & Reed catalogue of 1878 lists a clock supplied to Kensington Workhouse in 1848, originally with four 4ft. 6in. dials. The Workhouse later became the Hospital, and the main block of Thomas Allom's 1847 workhouse building survives and retains a clock over the main entrance. The original clock mechanism must have been removed in 1953 but quite why this clock was donated to a museum in Birmingham – or why they accepted it - is unclear.

According to the Keeper in charge of the Collections Centre there are no tower or turret bells at the Museum, but there is a set of sixteen musical handbells.

**Visited:** CJP (with AHS tour group), 10 July 2009

### **BIRMINGHAM – New Street Station (former)**

The original New Street Station was built between 1846 and 1854 at a total cost of some £500,000. The Queen's Hotel was built at the same time, the architect for the whole scheme being William Livock. The old station was demolished and replaced during a comprehensive scheme of redevelopment in 1964-5.

A catalogue issued by Thwaites & Reed, the Clerkenwell clockmakers, shows that the firm provided a turret clock for New Street Station at some date before 1902. Another turret clock for New Street Station was supplied by Joyce of Whitchurch at some date before 1892. The clock supplied by Joyce showed the time on two dials.

### **BIRMINGHAM, Oratory – see EDGBASTON, The Oratory (R.C.)**

### **BIRMINGHAM – Parish Offices, Edmund Street and Newhall Street**

The new parish offices replaced the former public office built in Moor Street in 1807. The new offices were built for the Board of Guardians in 1883-5 at a total cost of £35,000. The foundation stone was laid by E.J. Jerrett, the Chairman of the Guardians, on 15 February 1883. The architect was W.H. Ward, and the contractors were Webb & Sons whose contract was valued at £25,490. Opened in March 1885, the building housed the out-relief and out-medical departments and also contained the boardroom and muniment room. It had a clock tower over the main entrance. This has been demolished, but the building itself still stands.

An eight-day clock to strike the hours on a 12-cwt bell was ordered for the Birmingham Parish Offices from Gillett, Bland & Co of Croydon on 26 January 1884. The order was placed by Walter Bowen, Clerk to the Guardians. The clock was to have gravity escapement and compensated pendulum, showing the time on three illuminated dials. The cost of the clock and bell was £242.

The Croydon foundry records show that the clock bell (no.706) was cast on 4 March 1884 and dispatched on 9 April 1884. Gilletts also supplied an elm stock and hangings for the bell. It was as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b>    | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | Gillett, Bland & Co., 1884 | 41              | 11          | 2           | 21          |

**Buildings visited:** CJP, 17 June 2004

## BIRMINGHAM – Post Office

A catalogue issued by T. Cooke & Sons of York in 1876 states that the firm had supplied a clock for the Birmingham Post Office in 1873. This was their clock no.128, "An eight-day Timekeeper; with three dials; for the Post Office at Birmingham". This was doubtless removed when a new Post Office in Paradise Street was opened in 1891.

**BIRMINGHAM – Prudential Assurance Office (former), Corporation Street**

The Birmingham offices of the Prudential Assurance Company were built on the east side of Corporation Street in 1889-92. Alfred Waterhouse was the architect and the main contractors were J. Barnsley & Co. The offices were built in red brick with terracotta. A clock was provided by J. Moore & Sons of Clerkenwell. The buildings were demolished in about 1958-9 to make way for the Commercial Union block between Union Street and Bull Street.

**BIRMINGHAM, Queen's College – see EDGBASTON, Queen's College**

**BIRMINGHAM, Queen Elizabeth Hospital – see EDGBASTON, Queen Elizabeth Hospital**

**BIRMINGHAM, Roman Catholic Cathedral – see BIRMINGHAM, St.Chad’s Cathedral (R.C.)**

**BIRMINGHAM – Ruskin Chambers, 191 Corporation Street**

Ruskin Chambers – a large late Victorian development designed by Ewen and J. Alfred Harper – was built in 1900. It consists of twelve shop units (nos. 179 to 203 Corporation Street) with no.191 in the middle. The building has a fine ornamental pediment in buff terracotta with the date 1900 over the main central entrance.

A catalogue issued by John Smith & Sons of Derby in about 1960 shows that the firm had supplied a synchronous electric turret clock for Ruskin Buildings. The firm's records show that this took place in 1958 and that the new clock replaced a Smith timepiece originally supplied in 1911.

This may be a misidentification, however, as there is no clock on Ruskin Chambers. There is a clock on the adjoining King Edward building (*q.v.*) and the evidence suggests that the 1911 reference relates to the clock there.

**Visited:** CJP 14 August 2004

**BIRMINGHAM – St.Anne (R.C.), Alcester Street**

The mission here was founded in 1849. The present church was built in 1884 to the designs of A. Vicars of Vicars & O'Neill of London, architects. It is a brick building in the Early English style, having a north west tower with an octagonal belfry stage and a stone spire. There is no fixed access to the belfry.

There is a large bell, which is hung for slow swinging and fitted with a tolling hammer for the angelus.

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

1. *On crown (incised):* 2033  
*Waist:* MC SHANE BELL FOUNDRY. / HENRY MC SHANE & CO. / BALTIMORE, MD. / 1884.

| Bell | Founder and date         | Diameter | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------------|----------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Henry McShane & Co. 1884 | 46       | E    | 18   | 0    | 17   |

This is a rare example in the United Kingdom of the work of the American bellfounder, Henry Mc.Shane & Co of Baltimore, Maryland. A bell for "St.Anne's Church, Birmingham, England (Rev. J. Dowling)" is listed in the firm's catalogue of 1888-9. A report of the

ceremonies at the opening of the church in *The Tablet* of 19 July 1884 contains the following account of the new bell:

... One special feature is the bell, cast by MacShane and Co., of Baltimore, United States, which weighs 2,033 pounds, and measures forty-five and a half inches across the mouth. This is the first bell sent to England by this firm, though they have cast Imo [? number illegible on scan] church bells annually for the last twelve years. This bell at St. Anne's is in the key of E, and has been much admired for its clearness and richness of tone ...

The number on the crown is thus the weight of the bell – 2033lbs equates to 18-0-17. Other work from this foundry includes a chime of thirteen bells at Falkirk Old Kirk in Scotland, cast by McShane in 1926 and a former bell of 1885 at Heaton Norris in Lancashire. The bell at St. Anne's has a conical head.

It is hung in the American style with a pedestal frame (similar to *Bellframes* type 8.3.B.a) resting on two stout wooden beams. The frame castings carry the inscription "Mc.SHANE & CO. BALTO. MD.". The fittings include a horseshoe-shaped iron stock with bolted steel gudgeons, plain bearings, wooden wheel and clapper with springs. The bell is secured to its stock with a single bolt which doubles as a crown staple for the suspension of the clapper. There is a separate tolling hammer. The frame and fittings are as supplied by McShane in 1884.

**Visited:** CJP, RLJ, CJND, 24 January 2003 and CJP, CJND (ladders) 28 February 2003

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Asaph, Great Colmore Street and Latimer Street, Lee Bank (former church)**

St.Asaph's church was built in 1868 to the designs of Yeoville Thomason, architect, at a cost of £5450. Thomason contrived to fit the building into a wedge-shaped site at the junction of two roads. The builders were Messrs. Wilson & Son of Handsworth. The foundation stone was laid on 22 August 1867. The church was consecrated 8 December 1868 and in the following year a parish was created out of Birmingham St.Thomas. St.Asaph's was closed on 20 June 1949 and the building was subsequently demolished in 1957.

The architect's original designs included a tower and spire on the elevation of the building facing Colmore Row. This does not seem to have been built, however, and in about 1890 E.H. Lingen Barker noted that "the tower and spire" were "yet to be added". The completed church may have had a bellcote or temporary belfry. According to Tilley & Walters, the bells (number not stated) are said to have been supplied in 1868 by William Blews & Sons.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Barnabas (former church), Ryland Street, Ladywood**

This church was built in 1859-60 to serve an area in the west of St.Martin's parish. It was a small stone building in the gothic style, designed by William Bourne of Dudley, with an octagonal turret at the north-east corner. William Nelson of Dudley was the builder. The foundation stone was laid on 1 August 1859 by Miss Ryland, who gave the site and provided money towards the cost of the building. The consecration took place on 24 October 1860 and St.Barnabas became a parish church in June 1861.

Taylor's records show that they supplied a bell to the order of William Nelson, builder, Dudley, in 1860 for this church. It was a bell of 14½" diameter weighing 102 lbs (with a 6lb clapper), supplied with wheel, stock and fittings and a cast iron A frame. The bell left Loughborough on 25 September 1860.

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1860 | 14½      | 0    | 3    | 12   |

The church was closed under an order dated 1 December 1956 and subsequently demolished in 1957.

**Site visited:** CJP 24 August 1988

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Bartholomew, Masshouse Lane (former church)**

This church was built in 1749 as a chapel of ease to St.Martin's and consecrated in 1750. There is no record of the name of the architect, but the plans may have been prepared by William and David Hiorn who certainly submitted designs for an altarpiece in 1753. The site was given John Jennens, the Birmingham ironmaster, whose wife gave £1,000 towards the building of the church, the rest of the sum required being raised by subscription. It was built of brick with stone dressings in the Classical style, a plain rectangle in plan with a square turret supporting an octagonal cupola and weather-vane over the west front.

Additional seating was provided in 1840-41 when the church was repaired and improved under Bateman and Drury, architects, with a grant from the Incorporated Church Building Society. It became a parish church in 1847, and a further restoration took place in 1893. It was closed in 1935 after the City Surveyor declared the building unsafe. It remained empty and disused until the War, and the remains were demolished in about 1943 after the building had been badly damaged in an air raid. Some of the fittings from the church, including the organ and some fine oak carving, were salvaged for reuse elsewhere and especially to St.Bartholomew's, Allens Cross.

The church is believed to have had one large bell and one small one. It is assumed that they were sold for scrap when the church was demolished. A report in the *Birmingham Mail* in December 1936 indicates that the bells were not considered worth saving, Bishop Barnes having stated that "the bells, I am afraid, are not much use now".

There was also a clock. Dials on at least two sides of the turret are shown in an eighteenth century engraving and in a photograph of the church exterior taken shortly before its demolition. A description of the church dating from about 1890 (*Birmingham Faces and Places* Vol.6 p.35) mentions the four-dialled clock. The clock was set in order during repairs to the church in 1893

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Catherine of Sienna (R.C.), Bristol Street**

St.Catherine's mission was established in 1868 and the congregation worshipped in a schoolroom until the first parts of a permanent church in the Horse Fair, designed by Dunn and Hansom of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, were opened in 1875. Enlarged under Cossins and Peacock in 1893-6 and completed with the addition of a tower and spire in 1908-9, the original building was a large gothic revival church in red brick with stone dressings. The building was demolished in 1964 to make way for the inner ringway.

The present church in Irving Street, dating from 1963-4, is the successor of the earlier church in the Horse Fair. Designed by Harrison & Cox it is a circular building with a tall brick campanile. The tower was clearly designed to contain a bell as there is a large circular opening in the concrete floor at the head of the internal stair well. However, the sound of three heavy swinging bells is generated by an electronic system manufactured and installed by Schulmeric in 1964. Out of action for many years, the electronic "carillon" was restored by representatives of O'Byrne in 2000.

There was almost certainly a bell – probably of 1908-9 - in the old church, and it seems a pity that it was not transferred to the new one. Nothing is known of the old bell or of what became of it.

**Visited:** CJP and DLC, May 2003

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Chad's Cathedral (R.C.)**

The foundation stone of St.Chad's Cathedral – replacing the chapel erected in Water Street in 1806 – was laid on 29 October 1839. Built to the designs of A.W.N. Pugin, the Cathedral was erected between 1839 and 1841 at a cost of some £19,377. When the foundation stone was laid, Pugin is said to have vowed "Never shall I rest satisfied till I see the cross raised high above every chimney in Birmingham, and hear the sound of St.Chad's bells drowning the steam whistle and the proving of gun barrels". His later comments on the bells are below.

St.Chad's was consecrated on 21 June 1841. The building has twin towers and spires on its ritual west front and the present bells hang in the tower on the left hand side (or north west) as you face the main entrance. The left-hand or north west spire was completed first, in 1841, but a dated stone (see below) below the belfry windows in the south west tower

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter                       | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co. 1939 | 26 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1384    | 4    | 1    | 19   |

|    |                        |                                |        |    |   |    |
|----|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|----|---|----|
| 2. | John Taylor & Co, 1939 | 27 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1305.5 | 4  | 2 | 24 |
| 3. | John Taylor & Co, 1939 | 29                             | 1163   | 5  | 0 | 26 |
| 4. | John Taylor & Co, 1939 | 31                             | 1037   | 5  | 3 | 26 |
| 5. | John Taylor & Co, 1939 | 33 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 923    | 6  | 3 | 10 |
| 6. | John Taylor & Co, 1939 | 35 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 872    | 8  | 0 | 26 |
| 7. | John Taylor & Co, 1939 | 39 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 776.5  | 10 | 2 | 25 |
| 8. | John Taylor & Co, 1939 | 44                             | 692    | 15 | 3 | 6  |

The bells hang in a two-tier cast iron frame with ringing fittings provided and installed by John Taylor & Co in 1939. The top tier of the frame contains bells 3, 4 and 5 in parallel pits of lowside pattern (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.h). The other bells hang in an H frame below (type 8.3.C.e). The fittings include cast iron stocks, ball bearings and Hastings stays. There is an Ellacombe chiming hammer on the tenor for tolling.

### ***The present bells: south west (right-hand) tower***

The south west tower was evidently built to belfry level in 1841, but its spire was not added until 1856. Inside the tower there is a stone marked "T EARLY 1841" just below one of the belfry window openings. The floor to the bell chamber appears to be original and it shows no evidence of rope roles or openings for raising and lowering bells. The masonry of the walls at the level of the bell chamber is undisturbed, and there is no evidence to suggest that any beams (i.e. supporting a bellframe) were ever present.

In the bell chamber there is an angelus bell. This was obtained from a Victorian church or school in the Diocese and hung in the Cathedral tower in 1993-4. The bell is uninscribed and without marks identifying the maker, but it has a tapered peg argent with a squared hole like the bells at St.Martin, Perry Common, St.Margaret, Short Heath and All Saints, Stechford. Charles Carr of Smethwick was *probably* the founder of these bells, as the bell at Bearwood (dated 1888) with this type of argent bears Carr's name. Details are as follows:

| Bell | Founder and date | Mouldings | Diameter                       | Note   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|--------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Unknown, c.1895  | 2:2-2:3:2 | 20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | B flat | 2    | 0    | 0*   |

The bell hangs from a wrought iron bar stock between two wooden uprights fixed to the floor of the bell chamber. It has been drilled for a centre-bolt, and it is sounded by a solenoid clapper operated from an angelus tolling unit supplied and installed by John Taylor & Co in May 1994.

### ***Previous bells***

The Birmingham Roman Catholic Friendly Society presented a large bell for the new church in 1840 on condition that it should always be tolled on the death of a member of the Society – an inscription to this effect being placed on the tenor bells of 1849 and 1939 which replaced the original bell.

The original bell of 1840 may have been speedily replaced, as the Loughborough foundry records indicate that Taylors took a bell of 17-2-24 in exchange when they supplied a new bell (47<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" diameter) in E weighing 16-3-25 (or 17-0-25 with 28lb clapper) in about 1840-1. Unfortunately the entry is not dated but a Taylor advertisement in the *Leicester Journal* 23 June 1843 (also published in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, 29 July 1843) refers to the Cathedral bell - "The Catholic Cathedral Church, Birmingham, 18 cwt., one bell." - as having been cast by John Taylor during "his short residence of three years at Loughborough".

A detailed description of Cathedral in *The Tablet* of 19 June 1841 states that the "spires and towers remain to be completed" but mention that "One bell has been hung and it is intended to add others". Pugin's hopes of hearing bells here have already been mentioned above.

It is said that the large bell was originally hung in the south west (right-hand) tower and in his 1877 *Guide* the Rev. William Greaney states that the ring of five bells installed in 1849 was first hung in this tower but afterwards transferred to the north west (right-hand) tower.



However, the lack of structural evidence that the south west tower ever contained bells (see above) casts doubt on this story. It seems possible that earlier writers may have been confused by the use different terminology to describe the two towers. The tower on the geographical north is the south tower in ritual orientation, and vice versa. On balance, it seems most likely that the Cathedral bells have always been in the north west (left-hand) tower as they are now.

In 1849 a new ring of five bells (tenor 13-3-11) was installed, the original bell (received at Whitechapel as 16-3-12) being used to provide metal for the new ring. The new bells were given as a presentation to Dr. Moore when he left the Cathedral to become President of Oscott College in 1848. The Catholic Friendly Society gave permission for their bell "to be recast to suit the tone of the other bells".

The Pugin correspondence, edited by Margaret Belcher, contains two interesting letters relating to the installation of the new bells. Evidently there was some concern about the ability of the tower to withstand the strains of a ringing peal, and in November 1848 Pugin wrote in reply to a letter from John Hardman to say:

"...4. The tower at the cathedral will carry more bell metal than you are likely to get to put in it."

According to Belcher, *The Rambler* for December 1848 has a report (p.302) of a meeting held on 20 November 1848 at which a subscription was opened for a peal of bells for St.Chad's. John Moore refused to accept anything personal as a leaving present but he was happy with the idea of installing bells as an enhancement to his cathedral. Some concerns persisted, however, and in December 1848 Pugin again wrote to Hardman:

"I do not see any reason to fear the slates being injured by the bells any more than all the slate spires in France. I think you are all cracking on about this wonderful peal – which after all is but Sounding Brass [fn. Explains the biblical reference in Corinthians chapter 13]. It will be necessary to give notice to the inhabitants of Birmingham to open their windows before you begin to Ring for fear of having them Broken by the Vibration. Dom Dom. Dom Dom. Awful - & it is most surprising that such an effect should be produced by such a peal. 3 tons!!!!!!"

Details from the Whitechapel daybooks are as follows:

6 June 1849 – John Hardman Esqr for Catholic Cathedral Birmingham

To a Peal of 5 Musical Church Bells

|   |               |            |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Tenor   | 13-3-11       |            |
| 4.  | 9-3-14        |            |
| 3.  | 7-3-25        |            |
| 2.  | 6-1-17        |            |
| Treble  | 6-1-0         |            |
| Total   | 44-1-11 @ 13d | £ 269.0.11 |
| 5 Clappers  |               | £ 5.0.0    |
| 5 Stocks, Wheels, Ironwork, Brasses &c                              |               | £25.0.0.   |
| Cask  |               | 5s.6d.     |
| Mak <sup>g</sup> & fix <sup>g</sup> frame & hang <sup>g</sup> Bells |               | £30.0.0.   |

30 June 1849 – John Hardman Esq

By Old Bell 16-3-12.

Staple & dirt 17lbs

16-2-23 @ 8½d £66.5.4

There are some further entries in the daybooks for this period regarding bells for the Cathedral or for the Catholic College. These are as follows:

4 November 1848 – John Hardman Esqr. for Catholic Cathedral, Birmingham [note: the contemporary index for Nov.1848 says "Catholic College, Birmingham, 1 5½ cwt" for this entry]

|  |            |          |
|--|------------|----------|
| To a Bell                                | 5-2-7 @ 1s | £31.3.0. |
| Clapper                                  |            | £1.0.0.  |
| Stock, wheel, ironwork &c                |            | £6.10.0  |
| Hang <sup>g</sup> bell [added in pencil] |            | £3.3.0   |

31 July 1849 – Catholic Cathedral, Birmingham, per J. Hardman Esq.  
 By Old Bell 5-3-20  
 Staple and dirt 6  
 5-3-14 @ 8½d £23.6.1.  
 Charges 0.7.6

28 Sept.1849 – John Hardman Esq.  
 By a new Stock, wheel Ironwork & 1 Brass for 6 cwt Bell £6.10.0.  
 1 old stock and wheel & part of set of ironwork 2qr. 17lb. £1.

According to some sources the new bells were first rung in August 1849. Margaret Belcher, however, stated that they were hung in June 1849 and first rung on 28 June. This is confirmed by a report in *The Tablet* of 7 July 1849:

St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham. - It will be remembered that in the month of November last, it was resolved at a meeting of the Catholics of Birmingham, a report of which appeared in the Tablet, that an appropriate tribute of respect should be paid to the Very Rev J. Moore, on his appointment to the Presidency of Oscott College. A committee was appointed, and a peal of bells for the Cathedral was decided upon, the Rev. gentleman having declined to accept any pecuniary consideration. A subscription was set on foot, and the bells, to the great satisfaction of the Catholic body, were hung within the last month. The peal at present consists of five bells, but it is intended to add three more to the belfry and render the peal complete. / On the eve of the Festival of SS. Peter and Paul the bells were first rung, and right well and merrily they ushered in the feast of our two glorious apostles, to the heartfelt gratification of the Catholics, who flocked from all parts of the town to hear their first notes. They are considered by good judges admirably toned, and to the liberal Protestants of the town as well as the Catholics afforded no small degree of satisfaction.

The Whitechapel foundry records show that Mears & Stainbank visited St.Chad's to inspect the bells in December 1876. The entry in the daybook reads:

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| December 1876   |                |
| B. Hardman, Newhall Street, Birmingham, per St.Chad's Cathedral.      |                |
| To Foreman's Time & expenses Inspecting & taking pitch of Bells 1 day | 15s.0d.        |
| Journeys  | <u>£1.5.6.</u> |
|   | £2.0.6.        |

However, the job was given instead to a local firm and in 1877 the bells were augmented to eight by William Blews & Sons. Blews rehung the bells and added three trebles, the completed octave being heard for the first time on the occasion of their opening on 1 April 1877. The resulting ring was an octave in the key of F (692Hz or F minus 16.08 cents - exactly the same as their successors), as follows:

- | <b>Bell</b>                               | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|---|--|
| 1. WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS BIRMINGHAM 1877 | <i>Waist:</i> ANNULO SUO SUBARRHAVIT ME / DOMINUS MEUS JESUS CHRISTUS / [space] / STA. AGNES ORA PRO NOBIS                     |
| 2. WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS BIRMINGHAM 1877 | <i>Waist:</i> ECCE SACERDOS MAGNUS QUI / IN DIEBUS SUIS PLACUIT DEO / [space] / SANCTE GULIELME ORA PRO NOBIS                  |
| 3. WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS BIRMINGHAM 1877 | <i>Waist:</i> CHRISTUM DEI FILIUM QUI PUTARI / DIGNATUS EST FILIUS JOSEPH / [space] / STE. JOSEPH ORA PRO NOBIS                |
| 4. MEARS LONDINI FECERUNT MDCCCXLIX       | <i>Waist:</i> FIDELIS SERVUS ET PRUDENS QUEM CONSTITUIT DOMINUS / SUPER FAMILIAM SUAM / [space] / SANCTE PATRICI ORA PRO NOBIS |
| 5. MEARS LONDINI FECERUNT MDCCCXLIX       |  |

- Waist:* SACERDOS ET PONTIFEX / ET VIRTUTEM OPIFEX / [*space*] / SANCTE CEADDA  
ORA PRO NOBIS
6. MEARS LONDINI FECERUNT MDCCCXLIX  
*Waist:* AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS TECUM / [*space*] / SANCTA MARIA ORA  
PRO NOBIS
7. MEARS LONDINI FECERUNT MDCCCXLIX  
*Waist:* VOX CLAMANTIS IN DESERTO / PARATAM VIAM DOMINI / [*space*] / SANCTE  
IOHANNES ORA PRO NOBIS
8. [*blank*]  
*Waist:* IN EST PETRUS ET SUPER HANC PETRAM / EDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM /  
[*space*] / SANCTE PETRE ORA PRO NOBIS  
*Opposite:* THE CATHOLIC FRIENDLY SOCIETY / GAVE THIS BELL. THE SAME IS TO / BE  
TOLLED ON THE DECEASE / OF EVRY MEMBER / [*space*] MEARS, LONDON, 1849

| Bell | Founder and date           | Diameter         | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|----------------------------|------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 27 $\frac{7}{8}$ | 1415    | 4    | 3    | 14   |
| 2.   | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1334    | 4    | 3    | 17   |
| 3.   | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1182    | 5    | 0    | 7    |
| 4.   | C & G Mears, 1849          | 32               | 1045    | 6    | 0    | 15   |
| 5.   | C & G Mears, 1849          | 34               | 932.5   | 6    | 1    | 3    |
| 6.   | C & G Mears, 1849          | 36               | 864     | 7    | 3    | 3    |
| 7.   | C & G Mears, 1849          | 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 779     | 9    | 2    | 27   |
| 8.   | C & G Mears, 1849          | 43               | 692     | 13   | 2    | 25   |

These are the nett scrapping weights of the bells as recorded in 1939. According to a letter from Charles Carr Ltd of Smethwick – successors to William Blews & Sons – dated 5 December 1938, their records are were “not fully complete about that period, but we append such information we have: Treble 4-3-14, 2 5-0-0, 3 5-0-4, diameters vary from 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ ” to 29” etc”. The original weights of the Mears bells are given in the 1849 Whitechapel daybook entry quoted above.

The bells were hung in a two-tier wooden frame – like the original Blews frame at Erdington Abbey – which was on the “hollow square” plan with the top tier resting on the lower one (*Bellframes* type 6.S.1). The sides of the bottom frame were formed of X-braces with the bearings let into the timbers where the braces intersected. The upper frame was of standard pattern. Bells 1, 2, 4 and 6 were in the upper level, above bells 8, 3, 5 and 7 respectively. The fittings included short iron stays and pendulum sliders. All eight bells had canons.

The bells at St.Chad’s were reported as having been “recently rehung” by Charles Carr of Smethwick in 1896. Evidently this did not involve any major work to the frame or fittings. Carr’s again quoted for rehangng the bells on 25 January 1939, but under the leadership of Wilf Box the ringers were keen on persuading the Cathedral authorities to have an entirely new ring. They wanted a total replacement of the old bells rather than merely a rehangng of the existing ring. Their efforts were successful and in the *Ringng World* of 28 July 1939 it was announced that the bells were “about to be recast and rehung in a new framework by John Taylor & Co.”

The old bells were recast by John Taylor & Co in 1939 and installed shortly after the start of World War II. They were blessed on 14 February 1940 and opened and first rung on 2 March 1940. The first peal on the bells was not rung until after the wartime ban on ringng had been lifted. It was a peal of Grandsire Triples on 16 October 1943.

**Visited:** C.J.P., R.L.J., 3 January 2003 (NW tower) and 24 January 2003 (SW tower) and *ex.inf.* Taylors

**BIRMINGHAM – St.Chrysostom (former church), Park Road and Musgrave Road**  
Designed by John Cotton and built in the Soho or Winson Green area in 1887-8 at a cost of £6000 (including site and fittings). The builder was John Fell of Leamington. The foundation

It was a large brick building in the Early English style, with an unfinished tower over the porch at the north-west corner at the main entrance from Musgrave Road. An inventory dated 8 June 1915 states that the church possessed "one bell, weight not known (small)". It was without inscription, but believed to date from 1889. A small bell of similar description – hung in the tower of Bishop Latimer's church since about 1972 – is said to have come from St. Chrysostom's. Details are as follows:

1. [none]

The last service at St.Chrysostom's was held on 5 March 1972, and following its closure the church was declared redundant in 1973. It was demolished in April 1974 and the site was later sold to the City Council in 1975.

**BIRMINGHAM – St.Cuthbert (former church), Winson Green Road and Heath Street**

Tilley and Walters state (p.121) that this church possessed a single bell cast by Charles Carr of Smethwick with a diameter of 25" and weighing 3-2-10. In a letter to the Vicar of Whitnash dated 27 April 1887 Carr mentioned that he had cast "one bell towards a peal of six" for St.Cuthbert's Birmingham. The erection of this bell was reported in the *Smethwick Telephone* of Saturday 11 December 1886. A Carr catalogue of c.1891 listing bells "made since 1885" mentions "Birmingham, St.Cuthbert's, New Treble 4 cwt". The bell was most likely dated 1886.

In May 1966 the bell from St.Cuthbert's, Winson Green, was in the yard of Howard Mitchley of 63 Great Barr Street, Birmingham. It was later taken to Taylors to be used as scrap metal towards the casting of a new chime of six bells for St.Peter's, Tile Cross. On arrival at Loughborough its diameter was noted as 25" and it weighed 3-2-16.

**BIRMINGHAM – St.David (former church), Bissell Street**

A report of the opening from *The Builder* of 11 August 1865 shows that the church was a large building with clerestoried nave, aisles, transepts and chancel. The main entrance was under the tower. The tower and spire rose to a height of 150 feet, with access to the belfry

being afforded by an octagonal stair turret running up two-thirds of the height of the tower. There is no information about the bell.

A schedule of furniture in "St.David's Church, Bissell Street, Birmingham" compiled in January 1904 mentions "1 bell and rope, 1 long ladder to same". No other information on the bell has yet been found.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Edward (former church), New John Street West**

Originally built as a Presbyterian church in about 1853, this red brick building was acquired for the Church of England and licensed as a mission church of St.Stephen's parish in 1896. After restoration and furnishing for Anglican use at a cost of £1300 it was consecrated on 21 November 1898 and a parish was assigned in 1899. The church was closed after the merger of the parish with St.George's in 1949 but afterwards reopened in 1959 and used as the parish church St.George's until the present church centre was completed in 1971. It has since been demolished. No information on the bell(s) is available.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Gabriel (former church), Barn Street and Pickford Street**

St.Gabriel's church was built in 1867-8 and consecrated on 5 January 1869. Its parish was formed from parts of the parishes of St.Martin and St.Bartholomew in August 1869. The architect was J.A. Chatwin and the builders were Messrs. Wilson & Son of Soho. According to a report in *The Builder* of 16 January 1869 "... the whole of the gas fittings, the church bell, and the communion table were manufactured by Messrs. Blews & Sons, who were at the same time donors of a brass lectern, a metal reading desk, and the chairs used in the chancel". Blews was himself involved in the building of the church and took the chair on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone in October 1867.

The church was designed in the Early English style and built in brick and stone. It had a small tower and spire for a single bell. This stood on the north side of the church in the angle between the north aisle and chancel. According to Tilley and Walters the original Blews bell of 1868 – probably weighing about 3 cwt - was replaced in 1882 by a Barwell bell, 25" diameter and weighing 3-1-25.

The church was badly damaged by enemy action on 9 April 1941. It was formally closed in 1945 and afterwards demolished.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.George (former church), Great Hampton Row and Tower Street**

Known originally as St.George's in the Fields, this church was built in 1819-1822 with Parliamentary funds provided by the Commissioners for building new churches. It served an area of St.Martin's parish which was later set aside as a separate parish in July 1830. The Church was designed by Thomas Rickman and built in the Gothic style (late middle pointed) with a west tower and with cast iron tracery in the windows. It cost £12,752. The foundation stone was laid on 19 April 1820. The church was consecrated on 30 July 1822, with the formal opening taking place some six weeks later on 15 September. The chancel was rebuilt and enlarged in 1882-4 by J.A. Chatwin, and the tower was restored in 1910 and again in 1948.

The church was closed in 1959, and from this date the former church of St.Edward (*qv*) was reopened and brought back into use as St.George's temporary church. In August 1960 a faculty was granted for the demolition of the church, following a consistory court hearing on 21 July. The building was dismantled soon afterwards. The site was sold to the Corporation in 1971. By then the successor church (*qv*) was in use.

The west tower stood to a height of 114 feet and contained two bells. Tilley & Walters did not provide full details, but they noted that one of the bells was by Thomas Mears, 1839. The Whitechapel foundry records indicate that it was probably dated 1838, and this is confirmed by Ron Dove's notes. This bell was invoiced to the parish on 14 December 1838 at a cost of £39.9.10, which included the bell, its clapper and stock. On 24 November 1838 Mears had provided an estimate for adding seven new bells (the largest to weigh 13 cwt) "to complete the peal". In the event only the treble of the future peal was obtained, weighing 5-

Paul Taylor and John Oldham from Taylors examined the bells in January 1960. They found two bells hung for ringing in a wooden frame, but clocked owing to the dilapidated state of the fittings. The inscriptions were difficult to make out as the bells were covered with verdigris and grime, but they noted some details of the founders, dates and sizes of the bells. The bells were afterwards sold to Taylors for scrap – through Summerhill & Horsley (Metals) Ltd of Hanbury Works near Bromsgrove – in April 1962. The details of the bells were as follows:

There was a clock here, installed shortly after the completion of the church in 1822. A clock dial on the west face of the tower is shown in an engraving of the church dated 1829. Ron Dove noted that the clock was by Allport of Birmingham and dated 1826, but looked "very like Thwaites & Reed". The Thwaites & Reed daybooks do indeed record a clock supplied to Allport in 1826, details (with the price in code) being as follows:

[total] AbO.b.-.

The accounts from 1839 record annual payments of around £3 for maintenance and repairs, the clock being looked after successively by James Sheldon (1839-45), Mr Briscall (1845-71) and un-named makers thereafter. In March 1893 John Smith and Sons of Derby reported that they were repairing "the large clock at St. George's, Birmingham". Smith's sales ledger for 15 February 1893 records that they thoroughly cleaned and repaired the clock for £15. Potts of Leeds maintained the clock from 1939-1958. The clock, which had three dials, was still in the tower in 1960 when it was noted as an "old bedstead clock" in the centre of the clock chamber.

**BIRMINGHAM - St.George's Church Centre, Bridge Street West**

The present church in Bridge Street West was built in 1971-2 to replace the former church of St. George in Great Hampton Row, demolished in 1960. The foundation stone was laid on 24 April 1971 and the new church was licenced for worship on 13 May 1972. It was designed by R.A. Smeeton of Bromilow, While & Smeaton, and the building combines a church and hall on one site. It is built of brick and concrete with a copper-covered roof. There is no belfry and the church does not have a bell.

**BIRMINGHAM, St.John – *see* LADYWOOD, St.John the Evangelist**

St.Jude's was erected in 1850-51 with the aid of a grant of £500 from the Church Building Commissioners. Planning for the new church began in 1845. An ecclesiastical district in the parishes of St.Martin and St.Philip was created in 1845. From 1846 services for residents of the district were held in the national school in Pinfold Street. The designs for the church were approved in December 1849 and building eventually began in 1850. The finished church was consecrated on 26 July 1851. The architect was Charles Wyatt Orford of Orford and Nash. Wilson of Handsworth was the builder. When it was nearly completed, *Aris's*

*Birmingham Gazette* reported on 23 June 1851 that the building has "... no tower, but a picturesque bell turret is raised over the west gable, and a bell of very fair tone is hung in it".

Described as "truly a church for the poor", it was a large and inexpensive church in the Early English style, in brick with stone dressings. The original plans included a tower 100 feet high, but this was never built. In 1879 it was noted, again, that "there is no tower or spire, only a turret". The building was then in a poor state of repair, and a restoration took place in 1879 under Thomas Naden, architect, at a cost of £1750. A new bell turret was added in 1885 when the church was enlarged and repaired, the architect being A.T. Greening of Birmingham. The Lady Chapel was added in 1910 by E.C. Shearman.

The church was damaged in the War but repaired and restored for use in 1949. A further restoration took place in the 1960s during the redevelopment of the area, but by 1969 proposals for closure were under consideration. The parish was abolished in 1971. The last service in the church was held at Easter 1971. The building was demolished in the following August and September, with some of the furnishings and fittings being dispersed to other churches in 1972-6.

The original bell of 1851 was replaced in 1878 by a new one supplied by James Barwell. The Barwell bell was 22" in diameter and weighed 2-2-4. The firm's printed testimonials include one from the Vicar referring to this bell:

Islington Row, Birmingham,  
July 13th, 1878.

Enclosed is a cheque for bell. Allow me to thank you for the thoroughly workmanlike manner in which our order was executed.

Signed, T.G. Watton, Vicar of St.Jude's

After the closure of the church it found its way to St.Michael's, Handsworth, and it was sold to Taylors for scrap in November 1986. At that time it was noted as being a 22" bell, weighing 2-2-2.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Lawrence (former church), Dartmouth Street, Nechells Green**

This brick church was built in 1867-8. It was consecrated on 25 June 1868 and a parish was assigned from St.Matthew's, Duddleston, in the following September. The architect was J.A. Chatwin and the church was built by Charles Jones of Birmingham. The cost was largely met by a gift of £10,000 from Miss Louisa Ryland for new churches in the City. According to later nineteenth century directories the church had a saddleback tower with one bell. E.H. Lingen Barker noted in about 1890 that the tower stood above the north east vestry and contained one bell without inscription.

Of the original bell nothing is known, but Barwell's printed testimonials indicate that the Birmingham firm supplied a new bell in 1891:

St.Lawrence, Dartmouth Street, Birmingham,  
April 16th, 1891.

Enclosed please find cheque. We are much pleased with the tone of our new bell, and the change is a great improvement.

Signed, John F.M. Whish, Vicar of St.Lawrence.

The belfry was damaged in a gale on 24 March 1895 and afterwards rebuilt, with structural improvements, by Mills & Son (builders) under the supervision of H. Quick (architect). Tilley & Walters (p.121) record that Barwell supplied another new bell in February 1903. The Barwell bell was 24" in diameter and weighed 3-0-14. The bell it replaced was described as "eaten with acid and much smaller than the present one". The new bell was first rung on 8 February 1903.

The church was closed in 1951 and demolished in the following year. The site was sold to the Corporation in 1954.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Luke, Lee Bank, Bristol Road**

St.Luke's was originally built in 1841-2 as the third of the Ten Churches planned and funded by the Birmingham Church Building Society. The foundation stone was laid on 28 July 1841

and the church was consecrated on 28 September 1842. Harvey Eginton of Worcester was the architect and the builder was George Horton. It was a stone church in the neo-Norman style. It had a south west tower with stone pyramid spire and a south west stair turret. The original church was demolished in January 1899 after it had been condemned as unsafe by the City Surveyor. For some years before its demolition, St.Luke's had been kept up by means of unsightly timber shoring. Along with some of the other churches of the same period it was built with soft red sandstone exterior walls with a rubble core.

The present church of 1902-3 was designed in the Perpendicular style by Edward Mansell of Mansell and Mansell, architects, and built on the site of the old church at a total cost of £15,300 by John Barnsley & Sons. Its foundation stone was laid on 12 June 1902 and the consecration took place on 28 November 1903. A south west tower was intended, but only the lower stage was ever built. In 1907 it was reported that the church, now free from debt, "still needs an organ, a tower and a peal of bells" but funds for completion were not forthcoming. In 1973 the interior of the church was extensively remodelled for dual-purpose use. After 2003 the building was sold to the Covenant Restoration Assembly - Redeemed Christian Church of God, a church of Nigerian origin. A new St.Luke's was built in Great Colmore Street at Attwood Green, closer to the centre of the present parish. It opened in November 2007. It has no belfry or bell. Subsequently the old St.Luke's was demolished in 2018 when the bell became the property of Barratt Homes. A company representative informed Richard Grimmett in March 2019 that the firm planned to make it a feature within the housing estate being built on the site.

When examined in 1988 the bell hung in a temporary framework at the top of the structure. The frame has sills and heads, with end-posts and diagonal braces outside the end-posts. The bell was hung for ringing with fittings provided by James Barwell of Birmingham in 1903. These included a cast iron stock, plain bearings, wheel, stay and slider. Barwell removed the canons from the bell.

***Bell*** ***Inscription***

1. THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON 1842

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b>                | <b>Note</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | Thomas Mears, 1842      | 34 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | B           | 7           | 3           | 17          |

The bell was supplied through George Horton of Birmingham, the contractor for the original church. The Whitechapel foundry daybook entry of 18 August 1842 shows that Mears supplied no fittings except for a clapper. The bell cost £51.12.6 and Mears charged £1 for the clapper.

The 1903 church had no clock but there was one on the old church. It had dials on the south and west sides of the tower. Papers regarding its installation were returned to the parish in 1948 by a descendant of William Topham who had collected subscriptions when the clock was first installed in 1843. The papers show that the erection of a clock was under consideration as early as June 1842 and that estimates from a number of Birmingham clockmakers - including J.S. Watkins, John Houghton, Henry Knight, Samuel Allport, Thomas Bingham and J.E. Bagnall - were considered at a meeting on 9 September 1842.

By 17 January 1843 an order had been placed and the clock was in place by 19 March. In the event, it was made and installed by Messrs Paine of Bloomsbury, London, rather than by a local maker. It cost £100. Paine received £80 on account with the promise of the balance being paid "as soon as the clock was set up". He died shortly after the clock was installed, however, and his sons had to write several letters to extract the final payment of £20, which was not made until 8 July. The clock was not reinstated when the church was rebuilt.

***Visited:*** CJP 24 Aug 1988

**BIRMINGHAM, St.Margaret - see LADYWOOD, St.Margaret of Antioch**



**BIRMINGHAM – St.Mark (former church), King Edward's Road, Summer Hill, Ladywood**

The new church in Summer Hill was designed by George Gilbert Scott and built in 1840-1 under the auspices of the Birmingham Church Building Society as the second erected from the Ten Churches Fund. The foundation stone was laid on 31 March 1840. St.Mark's was consecrated on 29 July 1841 and it became a parish church in July 1843 when a district was assigned from St.Martin's, Birmingham. It had a tower and spire, but the spire was removed on the orders of the City Surveyor in 1890 when it became unsafe. According to later nineteenth century directories the church had one bell.

The Whitechapel foundry records show that Thomas Mears supplied a bell weighing 3-2-10 for the New Church, Summer Hill, Birmingham, on 10 May 1841. With its clapper, it cost £25.16.6. It was invoiced to "The Committee of the New Church, Summer Hill, Birmingham per Mr. D. Ledsam, Sec<sup>y</sup>".

The church was closed in September 1946 and demolished in 1947 when the parish was united with St.Paul's. The metal of the bell from St.Mark's was used towards the provision of a new bell for St.Bartholomew's, Allens Cross, in 1948. Its weight was recorded as 3-2-0 (nett) when it was delivered to the foundry. The inscription of the bell from St.Mark's is repeated on its successor. It was inscribed:

**Bell** **Inscription**

- | Don | Enscription                      |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON 1841 |

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter | Note             | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|----------|------------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Thomas Mears, 1841 | 25       | F sharp (1442Hz) | 3    | 2    | 10   |

***Not visited:*** Recast bell seen at Allens Cross CJP 26 Aug.1988

## BIRMINGHAM – St.Martin-in-the-Bullring

St.Martin's is Birmingham's ancient parish church, although little of the original building survives. Evidence in a Birmingham Borough rental of 1344-5 shows that by this date there was already a bell tower at the western end of the north aisle, properties being described in the rental as being "ex opposito Campanalis" - i.e. opposite the bell tower. The tower was encased in brick in about 1690 to give it a classical appearance and in 1781 the spire was partially rebuilt by John Cheshire, the noted Warwickshire steeple builder. The tower was re-faced in stone and given its present gothic appearance in the 1853-5 when the spire was rebuilt under P.C. Hardwick, the top stone being placed on the new spire on 22 November 1855. The church was largely rebuilt (except for the tower) to designs by J.A. Chatwin in 1873-5 and the new church was consecrated on 20 July 1875. The ringing room was raised to its present level during the 1870s restoration of the church. The church was extensively repaired after War damage, and a further programme of restoration and improvement was completed in 2003 as part of the redevelopment of the Bullring area.

### *The present bells*

The tower now contains a ring of sixteen bells in the key of C natural. The main inscriptions on each bell are in the inscription band, but on opposite sides of the bell with the name of the bell, date etc on one side and the names of donors and sponsors on the other. They are therefore given here in two parts with line breaks in the secondary inscriptions being denoted by a / mark. In addition, each bell carries its number and a band of saxifrage ornament on the lower waist.

| <i>Bell</i>   | <i>Inscription</i>  |
|---|---|
| <p>1. 1900</p> <p>2. 1901</p> <p>3. 1902</p> <p>4. 1903</p> <p>5. 1904</p> <p>6. 1905</p> <p>7. 1906</p> <p>8. 1907</p> <p>9. 1908</p> <p>10. 1909</p> <p>11. 1910</p> <p>12. 1911</p> <p>13. 1912</p> <p>14. 1913</p> <p>15. 1914</p> <p>16. 1915</p> <p>17. 1916</p> <p>18. 1917</p> <p>19. 1918</p> <p>20. 1919</p> <p>21. 1920</p> <p>22. 1921</p> <p>23. 1922</p> <p>24. 1923</p> <p>25. 1924</p> <p>26. 1925</p> <p>27. 1926</p> <p>28. 1927</p> <p>29. 1928</p> <p>30. 1929</p> <p>31. 1930</p> <p>32. 1931</p> <p>33. 1932</p> <p>34. 1933</p> <p>35. 1934</p> <p>36. 1935</p> <p>37. 1936</p> <p>38. 1937</p> <p>39. 1938</p> <p>40. 1939</p> <p>41. 1940</p> <p>42. 1941</p> <p>43. 1942</p> <p>44. 1943</p> <p>45. 1944</p> <p>46. 1945</p> <p>47. 1946</p> <p>48. 1947</p> <p>49. 1948</p> <p>50. 1949</p> <p>51. 1950</p> <p>52. 1951</p> <p>53. 1952</p> <p>54. 1953</p> <p>55. 1954</p> <p>56. 1955</p> <p>57. 1956</p> <p>58. 1957</p> <p>59. 1958</p> <p>60. 1959</p> <p>61. 1960</p> <p>62. 1961</p> <p>63. 1962</p> <p>64. 1963</p> <p>65. 1964</p> <p>66. 1965</p> <p>67. 1966</p> <p>68. 1967</p> <p>69. 1968</p> <p>70. 1969</p> <p>71. 1970</p> <p>72. 1971</p> <p>73. 1972</p> <p>74. 1973</p> <p>75. 1974</p> <p>76. 1975</p> <p>77. 1976</p> <p>78. 1977</p> <p>79. 1978</p> <p>80. 1979</p> <p>81. 1980</p> <p>82. 1981</p> <p>83. 1982</p> <p>84. 1983</p> <p>85. 1984</p> <p>86. 1985</p> <p>87. 1986</p> <p>88. 1987</p> <p>89. 1988</p> <p>90. 1989</p> <p>91. 1990</p> <p>92. 1991</p> <p>93. 1992</p> <p>94. 1993</p> <p>95. 1994</p> <p>96. 1995</p> <p>97. 1996</p> <p>98. 1997</p> <p>99. 1998</p> <p>100. 1999</p> | <p>1. 1900</p> <p>2. 1901</p> <p>3. 1902</p> <p>4. 1903</p> <p>5. 1904</p> <p>6. 1905</p> <p>7. 1906</p> <p>8. 1907</p> <p>9. 1908</p> <p>10. 1909</p> <p>11. 1910</p> <p>12. 1911</p> <p>13. 1912</p> <p>14. 1913</p> <p>15. 1914</p> <p>16. 1915</p> <p>17. 1916</p> <p>18. 1917</p> <p>19. 1918</p> <p>20. 1919</p> <p>21. 1920</p> <p>22. 1921</p> <p>23. 1922</p> <p>24. 1923</p> <p>25. 1924</p> <p>26. 1925</p> <p>27. 1926</p> <p>28. 1927</p> <p>29. 1928</p> <p>30. 1929</p> <p>31. 1930</p> <p>32. 1931</p> <p>33. 1932</p> <p>34. 1933</p> <p>35. 1934</p> <p>36. 1935</p> <p>37. 1936</p> <p>38. 1937</p> <p>39. 1938</p> <p>40. 1939</p> <p>41. 1940</p> <p>42. 1941</p> <p>43. 1942</p> <p>44. 1943</p> <p>45. 1944</p> <p>46. 1945</p> <p>47. 1946</p> <p>48. 1947</p> <p>49. 1948</p> <p>50. 1949</p> <p>51. 1950</p> <p>52. 1951</p> <p>53. 1952</p> <p>54. 1953</p> <p>55. 1954</p> <p>56. 1955</p> <p>57. 1956</p> <p>58. 1957</p> <p>59. 1958</p> <p>60. 1959</p> <p>61. 1960</p> <p>62. 1961</p> <p>63. 1962</p> <p>64. 1963</p> <p>65. 1964</p> <p>66. 1965</p> <p>67. 1966</p> <p>68. 1967</p> <p>69. 1968</p> <p>70. 1969</p> <p>71. 1970</p> <p>72. 1971</p> <p>73. 1972</p> <p>74. 1973</p> <p>75. 1974</p> <p>76. 1975</p> <p>77. 1976</p> <p>78. 1977</p> <p>79. 1978</p> <p>80. 1979</p> <p>81. 1980</p> <p>82. 1981</p> <p>83. 1982</p> <p>84. 1983</p> <p>85. 1984</p> <p>86. 1985</p> <p>87. 1986</p> <p>88. 1987</p> <p>89. 1988</p> <p>90. 1989</p> <p>91. 1990</p> <p>92. 1991</p> <p>93. 1992</p> <p>94. 1993</p> <p>95. 1994</p> <p>96. 1995</p> <p>97. 1996</p> <p>98. 1997</p> <p>99. 1998</p> <p>100. 1999</p> |

1. (Whitechapel Foundry mark) THE GEORGE FEARN BELL 1991  
THE GIFT OF THE RINGING FAMILIES / ANDERSON, BORDER, FEARN, NEWTON, PIPE.  
*Low waist: I (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
2. (Whitechapel Foundry mark) THE ALBERT WALKER BELL 1991  
GIVEN JOINTLY BY GODFREY NALL AND / OTHER CITIZENS OF BIRMINGHAM.  
*Low waist: II (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
3. THE JOHN CARTER BELL 1991 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL

GIVEN BY HEREFORD GALVANIZERS LTD.

*Low waist: III (Saxifrage ornament all round)*

4. (Whitechapel Foundry mark) THE HENRY JOHNSON BELL 1991  
GIVEN BY DR. M. C. FAULKES TO ENCOURAGE / THE ADVANCE OF SCIENTIFIC RINGING.  
*Low waist: IV (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
5. THE ROPE CROFT BELL 1990 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
THE GIFT OF THE BELL ROPE CROFT TRUST FOUNDED BY JOHN BILLINGSLEY IN 1629.  
*Low waist: V (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
6. (Whitechapel Foundry mark) THE DOUGLAS BELL 1990  
PRESENTED BY THE DOUGLAS GROUP / TO MARK SIXTY YEARS OF SERVICE 1930-1990.  
*Low waist: VI (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
7. THE MARKETS BELL 1990 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
GIFT OF BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL COMMERCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE & THE BULL RING & FLEA  
MARKETS TRADERS.  
*Low waist: VII (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
8. THE B C I BELL CAST FEBRUARY 1991 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
MARKING 175 YEARS OF BIRMINGHAM CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY & COMMERCE 1988 AND SIR ADRIAN  
CADBURY'S PRESIDENCY.  
*Low waist: VIII (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
9. THE I M I BELL CAST 1990 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
PRESENTED BY I M I PLC TO COMMEMORATE THE CENTENARY OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM.  
*Low waist: IX (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
10. *Crown: 10*  
THE CENTENARY BELL CAST 22 JUNE 1989 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
PRESENTED BY BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL TO COMMEMORATE THE CENTENARY OF THE CITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM  
*Low waist: X (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
11. THE INDUSTRY BELL 1991 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
FOSECO, C.H. TAYLOR, HAMPSON HAULAGE AND OTHER MIDLAND COMPANIES JOINTLY GAVE THIS  
BELL.  
*Low waist: XI (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
12. THE CADMAN BELL 1990 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
GIVEN BY THE CADMAN FAMILY IN MEMORY OF HENRY ROBERTS CADMAN 1900-1980.  
*Low waist: XII (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
13. SAINT MARTIN JOHN G. WESSON, RECTOR 1991 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
SUBSCRIBED BY MANY RINGERS AND THROUGH THE LABOURS OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE ST.  
MARTIN'S BAND.  
*Low waist: XIII (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
14. THE POST & MAIL BELL 1990 (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL  
PRESENTED BY THE BIRMINGHAM POST & MAIL LTD. TO COMMEMORATE THE CENTENARY OF THE CITY  
OF BIRMINGHAM.  
*Low waist: XIV (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
15. (Wheway logo) THE WHEWAY BELL (Wheway logo) 1990 (Whitechapel Foundry mark)  
WHITECHAPEL  
PRESENTED BY WHEWAY PLC TO COMMEMORATE THE BICENTENARY OF ITS ASSOCIATION WITH THE  
WEST MIDLANDS  
*Low waist: XV (Saxifrage ornament all round)*
16. THE BULL RING BELL (Whitechapel Foundry mark) WHITECHAPEL BELL FOUNDRY LTD,  
LONDON  
PRESENTED BY LONDON & EDINBURGH TRUST PLC TO THE CITY AND PEOPLE OF BIRMINGHAM,  
NOVEMBER 1990.  
*Low waist: XVI (Saxifrage ornament all round)*

| Bell | Founder and date               | Diameter                        | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1991 | 24 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  | 5    | 3    | 22   |
| 2.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1991 | 25 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>16</sub> | 5    | 3    | 9    |
| 3.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1991 | 26                              | 5    | 3    | 5    |
| 4.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1991 | 27 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  | 6    | 1    | 11   |
| 5.   | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 28 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  | 6    | 1    | 21   |

|     |                                |                    |    |   |    |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------------------|----|---|----|
| 6.  | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 30 $\frac{1}{4}$   | 7  | 1 | 9  |
| 7.  | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 30 $\frac{3}{4}$   | 7  | 1 | 11 |
| 8.  | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1991 | 32 $\frac{7}{16}$  | 8  | 1 | 1  |
| 9.  | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 33 $\frac{13}{16}$ | 8  | 2 | 23 |
| 10. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1989 | 34 $\frac{15}{16}$ | 8  | 3 | 20 |
| 11. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1991 | 37 $\frac{1}{16}$  | 10 | 1 | 1  |
| 12. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 40 $\frac{9}{16}$  | 12 | 3 | 7  |
| 13. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1991 | 45 $\frac{1}{16}$  | 17 | 2 | 1  |
| 14. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 47 $\frac{5}{8}$   | 20 | 0 | 26 |
| 15. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 53 $\frac{9}{16}$  | 28 | 3 | 3  |
| 16. | Whitechapel Bell Foundry, 1990 | 59 $\frac{15}{16}$ | 39 | 1 | 19 |

The bells are hung on two levels in a pair of entirely independent cast iron lowside frames (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.h). Bells 3, 4, 8, 12 and 14 are hung above and 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15 and 16 occupy the lower level. The bells have standard ringing fittings including cast iron stocks and ball bearings.

### ***History (and details of previous bells)***

In 1552 there were "iij bells with a clock & chyme" here. In 1547 the King's Commissioners had noted that the Guild of the Holy Cross was responsible "ffor keeping the Clocke and the Chyme" at an annual cost of £4.4s.

Since the early C17th bellropes for St.Martin's have been provided by the Bell Rope Croft Trust. This charity was apparently founded in 1629 when John Billingsley gave a plot of land - the Bell Rope Croft - specifically for the purpose, with provision for surplus income to be spent on repairs to the bells and their fittings and for the upkeep of the church. The site having gained in commercial value, the Trust now (2018) has an annual income of £18,800. Run by two trustees, the charity operates under a scheme approved by the Charity Commission on 13 February 1923. As well as providing ropes, the Bell Rope Croft Fund also paid for the entire recasting and rehangng of the twelve bells in 1928 and in 1990 gave the fifth bell of the new ring of sixteen. This is recorded in the bell inscriptions (*see below*).

A ring of six bells – probably cast by Henry and Matthew Bagley – was put up at St.Martin's in 1682. The weights of these bells are recorded in the parish books as 6-3-5, 7-1-2, 8-3-23, 10-0-8, 12-1-24 and 17-3-9 (total 63-1-15). A ring of six for Birmingham appears in the "catalogue" published by a later member of the Bagley family in 1732 and this no doubt refers to the six bells supplied in 1682. At about the same time, Bagley provided a ring of eight for Solihull (1683-6) and bells for Kings Norton, Edgbaston and Harborne.

The bells were augmented to eight by the addition of two trebles in 1706 during the incumbency of the Rev. William Dagget, who was said "to have understood the art of boxing, better than that of preaching". He was rector from 1693 until his death in 1723.

One of these bells – bearing the name of the Rector and Churchwardens of St.Martin's – still exists at St.John's church in Wolverhampton, which was built in 1759-60. It is inscribed:

M<sup>R</sup> (*coin*) WILLIAM (*arabesque border*) (*coin*) DAGGET (*border*) RECTER (*border*) / M<sup>R</sup> (*coin*) ROBERT (*coin*) HICKS (*coin*) AND M<sup>R</sup> GEORGE (*coin*) HALTHAM (*coin*) CHVRCH (*coin*) WARDINGS (*coin*) 1706 (*border*) / (*fleur de lis trail all round*)  
*Waist: (Joseph Smith's mark – twice)*

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter | Mouldings | Hz   | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|----------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Joseph Smith, 1706 | c.28     | 3:2-3:3:2 | 1329 | E+13 | 4    | 3    | 0*   |

The Wolverhampton church records show that it was purchased for St.John's in 1760 from a Mr. George Birch – possibly an official at St.Martin's at the time. The bell cost £35 1s 8d (paid to Birch on 23 January 1761) with a further 15s being charged for carriage of the bell

from Birmingham (payment dated 14 August 1760). The bell has cabled canons and it has been heavily skirted or edged (reducing its diameter from 28½" to 28") to raise its note.

A false peal of 5040 Grandsire Triples (the *Campanalogia* composition) was rung on the old eight at St.Martin's on 10 July 1753, some five years before the bells were recast and augmented to ten in 1758. The report of this peal at least provides confirmation that there were eight bells in the ring by 1753. Assuming the bell now at Wolverhampton was the treble, then the old bells were in the key of E natural (approximately 665Hz) – about right for a ring with an 18 cwt tenor.

Repairs to the spire were carried out in 1753, following a report commissioned from the architects and masons William and David Hiorn. On 21 August 1753 the churchwardens were ordered to have the steeple repaired "in the most speedy manner".

On 12 July 1757 the Vestry agreed "to recast the eight Bells and to encrease the weight of the Bells about 26 hundred". The minute book contains a further order respecting the bells on 1 November 1757 when the Vestry agreed "to give orders to Messrs Lester & Pack to Cast for the use of the said Parish eight Bells and to be of the weight of St.George's in the East, Middlesex which weight is 6T. 7C. 0q. 0l.". Thomas Lester cast a 30 cwt eight for St.George's in 1751 and, of course, provided the new ring of ten erected at St.Philip's in Birmingham in 1751. In the event, the parish adopted an even more ambitious scheme and in 1758 the old bells were replaced with a new ring of ten with a 35 cwt tenor. The opening was reported in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* of 24 July 1758:

On Tuesday last a Peal of ten bells, cast by Mr. Lister (*sic*) of Whitechapel, London, for St.Martin's Church in this Town, were rung for the first Time, which gave the highest Satisfaction, and are thought not to be inferior to any Bells in England

The weights of some of the bells were incised on the waists. According to the Whitechapel foundry records, the dimensions of the original bells were as follows:

| Bell | Diameter | Weight | Bell | Diameter | Weight  |
|------|----------|--------|------|----------|---------|
| 1.   | 30½"     | 6-2-16 | 6.   | 40"      | 11-3-6  |
| 2.   | 32"      | 6-3-27 | 7.   | 44"      | 15-2-11 |
| 3.   | 33½"     | 8-0-20 | 8.   | 46"      | 17-3-2  |
| 4.   | 35"      | 8-3-4  | 9.   | 52½"     | 25-2-3  |
| 5.   | 37"      | 9-3-12 | 10.  | 58"      | 35-0-8  |

According to John Day, eight bells were hung on a level and two of them were hung above. Day also recounts a story about the tenor passed down from some of the Birmingham ringers who were present when the new bells arrived in 1758. It is said that:

"... when the bells were in the churchyard, before they were hoisted into the tower, someone noticed a large blister on the tenor just above the soundbow. This was broken, when a large hole appeared, about 3 by 2 inches, but it did not go quite right through the bell. Some of those in power wished to send it back to the founders as imperfect, while others advised that it would be better to hear its tone first. The advise of the latter was acted upon, and a very fortunate thing it was, for I imagine there are few better bells of its weight. The Bingshams used to relate this incident, and I believe there is truth in it, but anyhow the hole is there right enough, although since the bells have been quartered, it is rather difficult to see."

Two of the original ten were recast in 1769 by Lester, Pack and Chapman - the fourth (later the sixth) and the ninth (later the eleventh). The weights were incised on the new bells:

| Bell | Diameter | Weight | Bell | Diameter | Weight |
|------|----------|--------|------|----------|--------|
| 4.   | 35¾"     | 8-2-12 | 9.   | 53"      | 27-3-6 |

The recasting of these two bells was reported in the local newspaper soon afterwards, as follows:

Wednesday the Bells at St. Martin's Church were rung for the first Time, since the Fourth and Ninth were re-cast; they are now thought to be as complete and musical a Peal of Ten, as any in England. A Subscription was opened, and upwards of Twenty Pounds already subscribed, towards two additional small bells, which would greatly add to the

melody in Ringing, and vastly increase the Harmony of the Chimes, that were at first calculated for Twelve Bells. - It is hoped the better Sort of People will encourage this Undertaking, by way of distinguishing the Mother-Church, as it does not affect the middling and lower Class. Subscriptions are taken in by the Printer. (*Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 3 July 1769)

Augmentation did not take place immediately, but in 1771-2 two trebles were added by Pack & Chapman to make a ring of twelve – the seventh ring of that number in existence at the time. Their diameters were 27½” and 29½” and according to Thomas Hedderly’s notebook the trebles weighed 5½ cwt and 6-1-26. The treble of 1772 survived until the bells were recast in 1928. According to Walters the original second – recast in 1913 – was inscribed:

ROB<sup>T</sup>. THOMPSON & JAM<sup>S</sup>. BUTTLER C<sup>H</sup>. WARDENS PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1771

Again, the work was referred to in the local papers of the day:

The two Treble Bells that are come from Mr. Pack's Foundry in London, as an Addition to the Musical Ten at St. Martin's Church in this Town, is thought will be as compleat a Ring of Bells as any in England; and will be rung for the first Time on Easter Tuesday (*Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 25 March 1771)

The two new bells were very nearly a short-lived addition to the ring. In September 1774 the Churchwardens proposed to take them down and make them available for use in the recently opened church of St.Mary in Whittall Street. This aroused fierce opposition from the parishioners and from the subscribers who had borne the cost of providing the new bells, as is clear from advertisements published in the Birmingham newspapers of the time. The extracts indicate that material appeared in both the contemporary papers, but unfortunately the story is incomplete as only the *Gazette* survives and there are no known copies of the other paper, the *Chronicle*. The extracts from the *Gazette* are as follows:

BIRMINGHAM, September 5, 1774. WHEREAS the Church-Wardens of St.Martin's Parish in this Town, have declared their Intention of taking away the two Treble Bells for the Use of St.Mary's Chapel; and have already locked them up from the Ringers for that Purpose. The Subscribers to those Bells, and other Parishioners, are desired to meet TO-MORROW Evening, at Seven o'Clock, at the House of Mr. Thomas Bellamy, known by the Sign of the Bell, in Edgbaston-Street, to consult on what is necessary to be done, to prevent so ridiculous a Scheme being carried into Execution (*Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 5 Sept 1774 p.3 c.2)

[nothing in the paper of 12 Sept.1774]

IN Consequence of an Advertisement inserted in Swinney's Birmingham Chronicle of the 1st, and this Paper of the 5th Instant, a Meeting of several of the Parishioners of the Parish of Birmingham aforesaid, and of the subscribers to the two Treble Bells in Saint Martin's Church there, was held at the House of Thomas Bellamy, in Edgbaston-Street, the 6th of this Inst. in Order to consult on Measures proper to be taken against the Church-Wardens of the said Parish, who (it evidently appeared) intended to remove the said Treble Bells from the said Church to Saint Mary's Chapel, in Birmingham aforesaid, when it was unanimously agreed to commence an Action against the said Church-Wardens, if their Design should be carried into Execution. By Order of the Meeting, THOMAS GEM. N.B. The Incorrectness of the Advertisement in the Thursday's Paper, which was inserted therein in Mr. GEM'S Absence from Birmingham, occasioned the above to be put in this. (*Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 19 Sept.1774 p.3 c.2)

WHEREAS a Paragraph in last Week's Paper has contradicted an Advertisement respecting the above, I hereby declare to the Public, that Mr. Wallin told me in the Market, that he intended taking the Treble Bells to St.Mary's Chapel; soon after that, I saw the Ropes taken off those Bells, and Orders were given that they should no more be rung; and I have further Evidence to prove that the Church-Wardens were in the Steeple consulting together about removing them, but were of Opinion that it would be necessary first to call a Town's Meeting. T. HADLEY. (*Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 19 Sept.1774 p.3 c.2)

Thomas Hadley was at the time one of the leading members of the Society of St.Martin's Youths, and he clearly acted as spokesperson for the ringers. The threat of legal action evidently did the trick, and the new bells remained in the tower.

In 1790 the ninth of the twelve was recast by Thomas Mears, the new bell being 44¼” in diameter and weighing (as incised on the bell) 15-1-17.

In 1825 the bells were rehung by Charles Oliver (senior) of Whitechapel. There is a brief contemporary reference to the work in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 10 January 1825, which noted "We are asked to state that the clock of St. Martin's church is necessarily stopped during the repair of the bells, which is in progress."

Oliver had intended to hang all twelve bells on one level but – as recalled by John Day – "... scheme as he might, he could only find room for ten on the level, and even then by having the timbers more scanty than the weight of metal warranted". A plan of c.1855 shows that the two trebles were hoisted. John Hopkins was more critical, recalling in a letter to E.J. Osborn in April 1843 that:

In the year 1825 we had Mr. Charles Oliver Senr. to rehang our St.Martin's Bells. New frame, Brasses, Gudgings &c. Unfortunately it was the worst job he ever turn'd out. Mr. Mears of London had £130 for that Job. The brasses proved to be soft, which caused the Gudgings to whare ovel, they did not go well from the Beginning. This caused our Company not to attend for any practicing for years afterwards. Had they gon well from the Beginning, I should have rung many peals on the 12, but I have to thank Mr. Oliver for it.

Hopkins added that the defects were about to be remedied, stating "We are having new brasses to them at our own Expençe" and in a further letter dated 21 February 1844 he said that "Mr. Charles Oliver Junr. [was] in Birm<sup>m</sup>. to rehang our St.Martin's Bells (that will be completed in a short time)". This work was undertaken at a cost of about £40 to £50, but John Day later recalled that Oliver "was hardly clear away from the town when the 11th failed". It was rehung by Thomas Hobday, one of the ringers.

The spire found to be unsafe in 1849, and it was rebuilt in 1853-5 under the direction of Philip Hardwick. The Taylor copy books show that John Taylor & Son submitted an estimate for rehangng the bells with new frame and fittings in December 1855 (JT 6/1/2/16 pp.73-5). Another volume (JT 6/1/3/1 p.226) includes a plan of the existing timber two-tier frame with the back ten on one level and the two trebles above. The estimated cost was £314. The estimate was for new ringing fittings including bowed gudgeons and a frame of oak with braces of cast iron. However, this was not proceeded with at the time.

Work on the bells came later, but by 1858 a subscription was being collected to pay for repairs as the following report from the *Birmingham Daily Post* of 6 April 1858 indicates:

SAINT MARTIN'S BELLS.

To the EDITOR of the DAILY POST.

Sir, - I am glad to see that the subscription for the re-hanging of this fine peal of twelve bells is progressing so favourably, so that we may hope to hear their fine musical sounds enlivening the town once more shortly. I would give the churchwardens and committee one word of advice upon the subject, that they will engage some competent person to re-hang them. There are three respectable firms competent for the job - Messrs. Taylor and Son, Loughborough; Messrs. Mears, Whitechapel, London, at which foundry they were cast, in the year 1758; and Messrs. Warner, of London. I should advise the churchwardens the next time they meet, to request one or two of the oldest ringers to attend, and they will be able to give them every information on the subject, which they cannot obtain from any other source.

I remain yours,  
A WELL-WISHER IN THE CAUSE.

April 5th, 1858.

[May we venture to say to our correspondent that the churchwardens are not in want of advice so much as money. They will forgive the advice, if it is accompanied by a subscription.—ED. *Daily Post*.]

In May 1858 the bells were rehung by C & G Mears at a cost of £92.5s. The work included new wheels, gudgeons and bearings but the old stocks and some of the other fittings were reused. Progress was reported in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* on 31 May 1858:

ST. MARTIN'S BELLS. - The public will be very glad to learn that they will this week enjoy the pleasure of once more listening to the familiar tones of St. Martin's bells. Messrs. Mears and Son, the contractors for re-hanging the bells, have exerted themselves to the utmost to execute their task, and they have been so admirably seconded by the energy of the Committee, and the liberality of the subscribers, that the bells are now nearly completed, and the first peal will most likely be rung tomorrow evening. The thanks of

the town at large are eminently due to the gentlemen who originated and have successfully carried out this long-needed act of restoration. We may add that the Committee intend to substitute for the old clock an entirely new one, which to be lighted on improved principles. Several of the most eminent clock-makers in the kingdom have sent in tenders.

In August of the same year, Mears carried out further work in the tower - including repairs to the bellframe – costing £33.14.6. The Whitechapel daybook entries for these works are as follows:

18 May 1858 - St.Martin's Church, Birmingham, *per* order W. Banks Esqr CW  
To 12 New Wheels 12 Pairs Brasses & plumber Boxes, Lining & turning 12 Pr  
Gudgeons, 1 Paid new Caps, New Wood & Leather to each Clapper, Repairing  
Ironwork & Rehangng Bells as per Estimate £92.5.0.

7 August 1858 - St.Martin's Church, Birmingham, *per* W. Banks Esqr  
To Repairing Bell frame including Timber, Ironwork & mens time £33.14.6.

Disaster struck in 1868, with two of the bells being damaged within a short space of each other. This was reported in a contemporary newspaper article of 25 December 1868:

Accident to St.Martin's Bells. We are sorry to learn that its fine peal of bells have been rendered useless for some time to come. On Christmas Day as the ringers were ringing in honour of the occasion in the afternoon, one of the gudgeons that carried the eleventh bell, which weights more than 27 cwt broke short off at the end of the stock, and the bell fell into the pit where it remains. The bell itself is not injured, but a worse calamity has happened to the fifth bell. On Sunday afternoon as the ringers were ringing the rifle corps out of church, this bell became fractured, and must be recast before it can be used again. The whole peal is said to require immediate attention.

In 1870 William Blews & Sons recast the fourth and fifth bells and provided a new wooden frame for the bells. The work is described in two contemporary reports from the *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, as follows:

THE BELLS OF ST. MARTIN. A few days ago we called attention to the fact that the full peal of the fine-toned bells of St.Martin's Church has not been heard for many months, owing to an accident to two of the bells; and after stating that a subscription had been raised for the restoration of the bells, and that the necessary work could as well done in our town as elsewhere, we ventured to hope that in the selection of tenders sent in various bell-founders, those from local firms would not be overlooked, provided their terms were as favourable as others. We now learn, with much gratification, that the committee charged with the arrangements have entrusted the contract for re-casting two bells, and re-hanging the whole peal - twelve in all - to our townsmen, Messrs. William Blews and Sons. ... (*Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Monday 23 May 1870)

THE BELLS OF ST. MARTIN. Two years ago yesterday, while the bells of St. Martin's were ringing out the merry peals, as usual on Christmas Day, the sweet tones suddenly ceased in consequence of its being found that the eleventh bell did not chime. An inspection of the bell chamber was at once made, when it was discovered that the gudgeon on which the eleventh bell swung had broken, and that the bell had fallen sideways into the framework. Since that time till yesterday the bells of St. Martin's have never been heard sending over the town their melodious clangour, though chimes have been occasionally rung on a Sunday morning or evening. Misfortunes seldom come singly in anything, and so it was found in regard to the occupants of St. Martin's bell chamber; for in a week after the accident to the eleventh bell, the fifth was found to be cracked. The peal consisted of twelve bells, a number of which there are comparatively few peals in the country - and with the exception of the fourth, which was somewhat faulty, the peal was acknowledged to be inferior to none in the kingdom of its weight. At first there were in the peal only ten bells, which were cast in 1758, by Lester, Pack, and Chapman, Whitechapel, London. It was in 1770 that the peal was increased by two; and in 1790 it was found necessary to recast the ninth, which was done by Mears and Son. From that time up to the year 1868 when the accident above alluded occurred, the bells remained untouched with the exception of the slight repairs and alterations in the frame-work necessary from wear and tear and lapse of time. Of course, it was felt that it would never do to allow the peal to remain permanently silent, and as early

as practicable it was determined to recast the fourth and fifth bells, and rehang the whole peal with entirely new frames of English heart of oak and iron. There was not a little work in this; and those who have never visited a bell chamber would be amazed to see the immense amount of wood and iron work necessary to bear the great weight and resist the vibration of the bells when ringing. In illustration this we may mention that upwards of 700 cubic feet of oak have been used in the construction of the new frames. A great improvement has been made by having the frames detached from each, and resting upon massive stone corbels, so that the vibration consequent on the ringing of the upper tier has been considerably reduced. The whole of the work has been carried out by Messrs. Wm. Blews and Sons, Bartholomew Street, who within recent years may be said to have resuscitated the art of church bellfounding in Birmingham. We believe we are correct in stating that with the Messrs. Blews it has been a matter of honour rather than pecuniary consideration that the peal should be as perfect as possible, and that the reparation of the peal of the Birmingham Parish Church bells should be carried out within the borough. This firm has been particularly successful in casting what are termed "maiden bells" - that is to say bells of the required note and weight without having to undergo alteration afterwards. This occurs but rarely, but of the two bells cast for St. Martin's (the fourth and fifth) the one came from the sand perfectly in tune and the other required but little altering. The whole peal weighs about 7½ tons, the tenor alone being 36 cwt. The total cost will be about £500. This amount will have to be raised by public subscription, and we doubt not that the public will heartily respond to the appeal that will be made by the rector, churchwardens, and committee to enable them meet the obligation they have undertaken on behalf of the parish. It is now exactly a century since the peal of twelve bells was erected. Let hope that the restored peal will on Christmas Day one hundred years hence ring out merry peals as sweetly and melodiously it did yesterday. (*Birmingham Daily Gazette*, Monday 26 December 1870)

Taylor of Loughborough also tendered for the work, but John W. Taylor later expressed his view on the awarding of the contract to Blews in a letter he wrote to Canon Cattley of Worcester on 15 July 1872:

"... I saw an account in the Architect of Blews's business being made a limited liability Company. Gas & Water "plants" were only specified, but I suppose the whole concern would be included. St. Martin's bells, Birmingham, are very unfortunate. I was obviously most shamefully treated in the matter. It was all in favour of Blews, the ringers first trying to secure Warner and then when they found he was out of their reach laying hold of me. It would not inspire the Committee with much confidence in any of us. I have friends in Birmingham who interested themselves for me. Some of them wanted me to make a claim for trouble & expenses. It was so flagrantly unfair. Had it ... [illegible] been a committee solely of ... [illegible - hallermen?] & merchants I should not have been so surprised because we know they will do almost any mean trick & put it down as they call it in the way of business. I however had every confidence that there would have been honest dealing with the Rector at the head. I was passing through Birmingham a week ago and called upon Mr Johnson who told me the bells did not go very well. ..."

The Blews frame required some further attention in the period after it was installed, but after strengthening it remained in use until 1991 – having been re-used when the bells were recast in 1928. It accommodated eight bells on one level and four above. The bells in the top frame were nos. 1-4.

In 1882 Harry Stokes of Woodbury fitted an Ellacombe chiming apparatus for the twelve bells. A few years later, the eleventh was rehung by George Day & Son of Eye, whose testimonials booklet includes a letter from the churchwarden dated 11 November 1886. A footnote to a peal rung on 22 October 1886 referring to the bells having "been rehung" by Day indicates that the work may have been more extensive.

In about 1901 James Barwell of Birmingham rehung the tenor on a new cast iron headstock and carried out other repairs in the belfry. A Barwell letter in the Shrewsbury (St. Chad) parish records, 1909 (SRO ref: P253 1048/1266) refers to the tenor of Birmingham Parish Church as an illustration of the superiority of the cast iron headstock - 'rehung in this way 7 or 8 years ago and now by repute one of the easiest going heavy bells in the country.'

The second bell was recast by James Barwell in 1913. The new bell weighed 6½ cwt and it was hung with new fittings including a cast iron headstock. By 1927 the canons had



been removed from bells 3, 6, and 7 to 12 and bells 2, 8, 9, 10 and 12 were hung on cast iron stocks. These cast iron stocks (except that of the tenor) were doubtless fitted in 1913.

Before recasting in 1928, the bells were as follows (with the weights of the bells as received at the foundry and nominals from a Taylor inspection in 1927)

- | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1772  |
| 2.          | <i>Waist:</i> 1771. / TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD / RECAST BY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF / ST.MARTIN'S GUILD OF RINGERS / A.D. 1913 / J.W. WILLINK, RECTOR / J.J. KENDALL, F.W. BLAKE, CHURCHWARDENS / J.S. PRITCHETT, PRESIDING RINGING MASTER / J.E. GROVES, DEPUTY RINGING MASTER / A.P. SMITH, HON.SEC.<br><i>Opposite:</i> BARWELL, FOUNDER, BIRMINGHAM |
| 3.          | THO <sup>S</sup> LESTER & THO <sup>S</sup> PACK OF LONDON FECIT 1758 ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 6-2-16   |
| 4.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST 1870.<br><i>Opposite:</i> REV. W. WILKINSON, D.D. RECTOR. / W.W. RIDDELL } / JOHN GOUGH }<br>CHURCHWARDENS / LAUS DEO   |
| 5.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST 1870.<br><i>Opposite:</i> REV. W. WILKINSON, D.D. RECTOR. / W.W. RIDDELL } / JOHN GOUGH }<br>CHURCHWARDENS / LAUS DEO   |
| 6.          | RICH <sup>D</sup> . DOVEY RECTOR THO FAULCONBRIDGE & RICH <sup>D</sup> . ANDERTON CH. WARDENS / LESTER PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1769<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 8.2.12   |
| 7.          | LESTER & PACK FECIT 1758 ( <i>mark – twice</i> ) YE RINGERS ALL THAT PRIZE YOUR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS ( <i>mark - twice</i> ) BE SOBER MERRY WISE AND YOU'LL THE SAME POSSESS ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 9.3.12   |
| 8.          | TO HONOUR BOTH OF GOD AND KING OUR VOICES SHALL IN CONSORT RING.<br>LESTER & PACK FECT 1758<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 11.3.6  |
| 9.          | RECAST IN THE YEAR 1790 [ <i>incised</i> ] IOHN DADLEY & HENRY PARKER CH WARDENS ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 15.1.17  |
| 10.         | OUR VOICES WITH JOYFUL SOUND MAKE HILLS AND VALLEYS ECHO ROUND ( <i>border</i> ) LESTER & PACK OF LONDON FECT 1758<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 17.3.2   |
| 11.         | RICH <sup>D</sup> . DOVEY RECTOR THO <sup>S</sup> FAULCONBRIDGE & RICH <sup>D</sup> . ANDERTON CH. WARDENS 1769 ( <i>border</i> ) / LESTER PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 27.3.6  |
| 12.         | THE REV <sup>D</sup> . RICH <sup>D</sup> . DOVEY RECTOR CARTER BARTON & CHRIST <sup>R</sup> . STIDMAN CH. WARDENS. 1758 ( <i>twelve coins</i> ) LET YOUR CEASELESS CHANGES VARY TO OUR GREAT MAKER STILL NEW PRAISE ( <i>mark</i> ) LESTER & PACK OF LONDON FECIT<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> 35.0.8  |

| Bell | Founder and date               | Diameter | Hz     | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------------------|----------|--------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Pack & Chapman, 1772           | 27½      | 1619   | 5    | 2    | 1    |
| 2.   | James Barwell, 1913            | 29       | 1464   | 6    | 0    | 9    |
| 3.   | Lester & Pack, 1758            | 30⅝      | 1379   | 6    | 1    | 21   |
| 4.   | William Blews & Sons, 1870     | 31¾      | 1218   | 6    | 3    | 21   |
| 5.   | William Blews & Sons, 1870     | 33⅞      | 1095.5 | 7    | 3    | 21   |
| 6.   | Lester, Pack and Chapman, 1769 | 35⅜      | 1012   | 8    | 2    | 15   |
| 7.   | Lester & Pack, 1758            | 37½      | 903    | 9    | 2    | 9    |
| 8.   | Lester & Pack, 1758            | 40½      | 801    | 11   | 2    | 1    |

|     |                                |     |       |    |   |    |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----|-------|----|---|----|
| 9.  | Thomas Mears, 1790             | 44¼ | 716   | 13 | 3 | 21 |
| 10. | Lester & Pack, 1758            | 46½ | 681.5 | 17 | 0 | 26 |
| 11. | Lester, Pack and Chapman, 1769 | 53  | 610   | 26 | 1 | 24 |
| 12. | Lester & Pack, 1758            | 58  | 535   | 33 | 1 | 13 |

In 1928, the bells were recast by Mears & Stainbank into a new ring of twelve in the key of C natural (517.5 hz or C minus 19 cents), as follows:

- | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | PACK & CHAPMAN, LONDON 1772.<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )   |
| 2.          | CAST 1772. RECAST 1928. M & S. LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD / RECAST 1918 BY MEMBERS & FRIENDS / OF ST. MARTINS GUILD OF RINGERS / J.W. WILLINK RECTOR / J.J. KENDALL & F.W. BLAKE CH : WARDENS / J.S. PRITCHETT, PRESIDING RINGING MASTER / J.E. GROVES, DEPUTY RINGING MASTER / A.P. SMITH HON. SEC.   |
| 3.          | LESTER & PACK, LONDON FECIT 1758.<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )  |
| 4.          | LESTER & PACK, LONDON FECIT 1758.<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST 1870. / REV <sup>D</sup> . W. WILKINSON, D.D. RECTOR. W.W. RIDDELL / JOHN GOUGH, CHURCHWARDENS. LAUS DEO<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )   |
| 5.          | CAST 1758. RECAST 1870 AND 1928 – M. & S. LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )<br><i>Waist (incised):</i> REV <sup>D</sup> . W. WILKINSON, D.D. RECTOR. / W.W. RIDDELL, } / JOHN GOUGH, } CH: WARDENS / LAUS DEO  |
| 6.          | LESTER & PACK, LONDON FECIT 1758.<br><i>Waist:</i> RICH <sup>D</sup> . DOVEY RECTOR THOS FAULCONBRIDGE & RICH <sup>D</sup> . ANDERTON CH. WARDENS. RECAST 1769.<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )  |
| 7.          | LESTER & PACK, LONDON FECIT 1758.<br><i>Waist:</i> YE RINGERS ALL THAT PRIZE YOUR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS, / BE SOBER, MERRY, WISE AND YOU'LL THE SAME POSSESS.<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )   |
| 8.          | CAST 1758. RECAST 1928. M & S. LONDON ( <i>mark</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> TO HONOUR BOTH OF GOD AND KING / OUR VOICES SHALL IN CONSORT RING   |
| 9.          | LESTER & PACK, LONDON FECIT 1758, RECAST 1790.<br><i>Waist:</i> JOHN DADLEY & HENRY PARKER, CH.WARDENS.<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON.  |
| 10.         | LESTER & PACK, LONDON FECIT 1758.<br><i>Waist:</i> OUR VOICES WITH JOYFUL SOUND / MAKE HILLS AND VALLEYS ECHO ROUND.<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON.   |
| 11.         | RICH <sup>D</sup> . DOVEY, RECTOR, THOS. FAULCONBRIDGE & RICH <sup>D</sup> . ANDERTON / CH. WARDENS. LESTER & PACK, LONDON FECIT 1758, RECAST 1769.<br><i>Waist:</i> LET YOUR CEASELESS CHANGES VARY TO / OUR GREAT MAKER STILL NEW PRAISE<br><i>Low waist:</i> RECAST 1928 – MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )   |
| 12.         | THE REV <sup>D</sup> . RICH <sup>D</sup> . DOVEY RECTOR CARTER BARTON & CHRIST <sup>R</sup> . STIDMAN CH. WARDENS. LESTER & PACK OF LONDON FECIT 1758. ( <i>Whitechapel mark</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD / THESE TWELVE BELLS WERE RECAST AND REHUNG AT A COST / OF £1025, BY MEARS & STAINBANK, LONDON, A.D. 1928, THE / COST BEING PROVIDED BY THE BELL ROPE CROFT FUND OF / THE PARISH CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM. / CANON T. GUY ROGERS, B.D. M.C., RECTOR. / J.J. KENDALL, } / F.W. BLAKE } CHURCHWARDENS. / E.G. ALBERT WALKER – RINGING MASTER. / POSSESS'D OF DEEP SONOROUS TONE THIS BELFRY KING |

SITS ON HIS THRONE / AND WHEN THE MERRY BELLS GO ROUND ADDS TO AND  
MELLOWS EV'RY SOUND / SO IN A JUST AND WELL POISED STATE WHERE ALL  
DEGREES POSSESS DUE WEIGHT / ONE GREATER POWER ONE GREATER TONE IS  
CEDED TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN.

*Notes:* Walters gives the date of the previous second as 1771 or "may be 1777" and not 1772 as reproduced on the 1928 bell. The date of recasting of the second bell was 1913 (see above) – and not 1918 as incised on its 1928 successor – and its inscription recorded the date of the original second as 1771. Walters gives the name of the churchwarden on the tenor as Sidman (not Stidman as given on the new bell) but as contemporary records refer to members of the Stidman family it is clear that this was the correct name. William Saunders also recorded the name as Stidman when he copied the inscriptions in 1892. The inscription on the eleventh – copied from the 1758 tenor - was probably intended to read "Let your ceaseless changes raise to our great maker still new praise". The final section of the tenor inscription is in verse.

| Bell | Founder and date          | Diameter                       | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 29 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 7    | 0    | 17   |
| 2.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 30                             | 7    | 0    | 0    |
| 3.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 30 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 7    | 0    | 18   |
| 4.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 31 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 6    | 3    | 15   |
| 5.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 32 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 7    | 2    | 16   |
| 6.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 33 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 7    | 2    | 17   |
| 7.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 35 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 8    | 1    | 6    |
| 8.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 39 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 11   | 1    | 11   |
| 9.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 42 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 13   | 0    | 19   |
| 10.  | Mears & Stainbank, 1928   | 46 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 17   | 2    | 9    |
| 11.  | Mears & Stainbank, 1928/9 | 52 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 24   | 2    | 2    |
| 12.  | Mears & Stainbank, 1928/9 | 59                             | 35   | 1    | 1    |

The two tenors supplied in 1928 were actually replaced in 1929, although the date 1928 still appeared in the replacement bells. The weights of the original tenors (each 1" less idn diameter) were 22-3-14 and 33-3-20. In 1928 the bells were supplied with all new ringing fittings – including cast iron stocks and ball bearings – and rehung in the old 1870 bellframe, which was repaired and strengthened. The new bells were dedicated on 8 December 1928.

The church was badly damaged by bombs in 1941, and the post-war restoration of the building - not fully completed until 1959 – was carried out alongside a scheme of major improvements. An additional semitone bell was ordered in July 1953 and the Whitechapel foundry records indicate that it was supplied in February 1954. As its inscription indicates, this bell was obtained as part of a fund-raising campaign with the intention that it would not be rung until £100,000 had been raised for church restoration and extension. Although it bears the date 1954, it was not dedicated and first rung until 2 June 1955. The new bell was hung with ringing fittings in an additional pit in the upper frame formed by the provision of an additional lowside frame casting. This addition provided St.Martin's with a light octave in F with a tenor weighing 13-0-19.

**Bell                      Inscription**

6b.      (*blank*)

*Waist:* I WAS FIRST RUNG / TO COMMEMORATE THE COMPLETION / OF THE  
£100,000 APPEAL / TO RESTORE ST. MARTIN'S / 1954 /

*Opposite: (Crown) / E II R / CANON BRYAN S.W. GREEN B.D. RECTOR / F.W.  
STEVENS } / J.P. JONES } CHURCHWARDENS*

*Low waist:* MEARS 19 (*Whitechapel mark*) 53 LONDON.

| Bell | Founder and date        | Diameter                       | Note   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|------|------|------|
| 6b.  | Mears & Stainbank, 1953 | 34 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | B flat | 7    | 3    | 12   |

In the early 1970s, the original ninth bell became cracked. It was recast in 1975 by John Taylor & Co, whose new bell was heavier than its predecessor (weighing 13-0-14 nett on deliver at the foundry in December 1975) because the ringers and church authorities had plans for remodelling the ring. The recast bell was intended to become the tenth of a lighter ring of twelve and the faculty dated 2 July 1975 specifically authorised the replacement of the existing 43" bell of 14¾ cwt with one of 45" and 16 cwt. Details of the recast bell are as follows:

**Bell                      Inscription**

9.            255 468 / (*blank*)  
               *Waist:* BRYAN D.A. WOOLLEY / RINGING MASTER  
               *Opposite:* 19 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 75

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|------|------|------|
| 9.   | John Taylor & Co, 1975 | 45       | 16   | 3    | 5    |

The old twelve were last rung at Birmingham on 31 March 1991. After their removal from St.Martin's in 1991, these bells were retuned at Whitechapel and later installed in 1997 at Escrick in Yorkshire where the tenor now weighs 34-2-10.

The new bells were cast during the period June 1989 to April 1991 and dedicated on the floor of the church on 10 July 1991. The sixteen bells were first rung on 29 August 1991.

***Clock and chimes***

As already noted, the clock and chimes here were mentioned in 1547 and 1552. In 1547 it was noted that the Guild of the Holy Cross was responsible "For keeping the Clocke and the Chyme" at a yearly cost of four shillings and four pence.

On 8 January 1760 the vestry authorised the churchwardens "to give orders for a New Clock & Chimes for the Parish Church of St.Martins". The new clock was made in 1760 by George Donisthorpe of Birmingham. This was replaced in 1859. An article in the *Midland Counties Herald* of 19 May 1859 (reprinted in the *Bell News* 1887 p.181) reported the completion of new clock at St.Martin's following the restoration of tower and spire. Work had been carried out to enable the bells to be rung for Queen Victoria's visit to open Aston Hall and Park on 15 June 1858. The money raised for this far exceeded the cost, and so it was decided to replace the clock and repair the chimes. The contract for the clock (£560) was awarded to Smith & Sons of Clerkenwell.

The new clock - described in detail in the article - was a three train movement with illuminated dials, striking the Westminster or Cambridge quarter chimes.

The 1859 clock was still in use in 1927 and remained in good going order until the 1950s. Improvements to the clock (possibly the dials) were undertaken at the time of the 1913 restoration of the church exterior, the total cost of which (£2040) was raised in a single day, as commemorated on a brass tablet in the church.

The present clock is a modern electric synchronous movement (going train only) by Smith of Derby, showing the time on dials on the all four faces of the tower. This was installed in 1957 and at that time the clock was connected to three dials only – the 9ft dial on the north face and the smaller (6ft 6in) dials on the east and west. The south dial was disused for many years but it has recently been restored as part of the refurbishment of the church carried out in 2002-3.

The chimes are said to have been made by William Worton in 1751, but the date was probably 1761 as the erection of new clock and chimes was authorised by the vestry (as quoted above) on 8 January 1760. According to Jennings, William Hutton complained in 1783 that the chimes at St.Martin's were "a bustle of confused sounds which baffle the attention". The mechanism was repaired by "the ingenious Mr. Worton" in 1797, and on 4 June the chimes were heard again. The alterations were reported in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 5 June 1797 as follows:

Yesterday the Chimes at St. Martin's church, in this town, which have been repairing by the ingenious Mr. Wotton [Worton], played for the first time in honour of the day, the new tune they have had of "God save the King." - The tunes which will now be played each day of the week, are, on Sunday, "St. George's, or 149th psalm." - Monday,

"Coldstream March." - Tuesday, "Rule Britannia." - Wednesday, "Haste to the Wedding." - Thursday, "God save the King." - Friday, "A Madrigal." - Saturday, "The Lass of Pattie's Mill."

The chimes were again repaired by Smith & Sons of Clerkenwell in 1859. At that time, the machine played tunes at 3, 6, 9 and 12, changing tunes daily. There were seven tunes, those played in 1797 and 1859 being as shown in the following table:

| <b>Day</b> | <b>1797</b>                | <b>1859</b>            |
|------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Sunday     | St.George's or 149th Psalm | Hanover – 104th psalm  |
| Monday     | Coldstream March           | Portuguese Hymn        |
| Tuesday    | Rule Britannia             | Rule Britannia         |
| Wednesday  | Haste to the Wedding       | Haste to the Wedding   |
| Thursday   | God Save the King          | God Save the Queen     |
| Friday     | A Madrigal                 | Easter Hymn            |
| Saturday   | The lass of Patties Mill   | Blue Bells of Scotland |

The chimes are no longer there. It is not known when the mechanism was removed. It had certainly ceased to be used before the restoration of the bells in 1927-8 as the estimates for the work refer only to reconnecting the hammers for the clock chimes.

**Visited:** CJP and RLJ 22 July 1989 and 3 January 2003

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Mary (former church), Whittall Street**

St.Mary's was one of two new churches built under the Act of Parliament of 1772 "for building two new Chapels, and providing Burial Places thereto, within the Town of Birmingham". A building committee had been set up in the previous year, and in December 1771 Miss Mary Weaman offered to give the site and subscribed £1200 towards the cost of the building. In November 1772 the commissioners appointed under the Act agreed on the form of the chapel – an octagonal brick building, with galleries and a circular tower – and invited architects to submit plans. In February 1773 the plans prepared by Joseph Pickford of Derby were selected and he was given the contract for building the church at a cost of over £3666. Mrs. Dorothy Weaman laid the first brick on the first day of April 1773 and the chapel was consecrated on 24 August 1774.

The church was not originally equipped with a bell. In September 1774 the churchwardens of St.Martin's (*qv*) set upon the idea of removing the recently added trebles of the ring of twelve there and making them available for St.Mary's. This led to a public outcry and aroused fierce opposition from the parishioners and subscribers. They used advertisements in the papers to expose the underhand behaviour of the churchwardens and threaten legal action if the proposal went ahead. The idea was quickly dropped, and on 31 October 1774 the commissioners ordered that a bell – not to exceed 12 cwt – should be procured by Mr. Holden and Mr. Worton.

At about this time, however, the old bells at St.Michael's church in Coventry were ring replaced with a new ring of ten, cast by Pack & Chapman and opened on 11 November 1774. Under a later minute of 7 Feb.1775 Thomas Green and Matthias Barker were appointed "to go to Coventry to treat with Mr. Villiers for a Bell for St.Mary's Chapel". From this, it seems probable that one of the old Coventry bells was secured for the Birmingham church and installed early in 1775. Certainly there was a bell in the tower by 14 March 1775 when the vestry set the fees payable to the sexton "for Ringing or Tolling the Bell at any funeral".

The clock was not installed until 1794, but provision for it was made when the church was first erected. The Commissioners' minute book includes an order of 28 April 1773 that the clock dial should be made of Halesowen stone. This probably explains the jibe by William Hutton, the Birmingham historian, whose description of the church included the comment "The clock was seldom seen to go right, but the wonder ceases if there are no works within". The dial was in the octagonal stage between the belfry window openings and

the spire. Hutton's observation was mistakenly repeated in the editions of 1806 and 1835 after a clock had been installed!

The clock was made in 1794 by George Donisthorpe of Birmingham, the setting dial being inscribed "Made by G.G. Donisthorp Birmingham. The Rev. John Riland Chaplain. Mr. Jas Timmins. Mr. Thos. Beilby Chapel Wardens 1794." In 1928 the clock was noted by P.G. Feek as being in the possession of Mr. Walter Cardall of Orphanage Road, Erdington. The Trustees' accounts show that the clock was sold to Cardell for £1 on 24 September 1926.

St.Mary's became a parish church in 1841, having until then been a chapel in the parish of St.Martin. The original classical spire was replaced by one in the gothic style in 1866 at a cost of £1,100. In 1897 the church interior was restored and modernised. The church was closed for worship from Saturday 17 October 1925 by the Bishop pursuant to the St.Mary's Church Birmingham and General Hospital Act 1925. The minutes and accounts of the Trustees appointed under the Act refer to the disposal of some of the fittings (including the clock – as above) but there is no mention of the bell. Some of the fittings were removed at the time of closure and the remainder were lost when the building was demolished to make way for an extension to the General Hospital. Demolition was undertaken by Dove Bros Ltd of Islington for £850 under contract dated 16 June 1927. The new church at Pye Hayes was built a few years later from the proceeds of the sale of the site.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Matthias (former church), Wheeler Street and Farm Street**

This was a Commissioners' church of 1855-6 designed by J.L. Pedley, serving an area of St.George's parish which became the parish of St.Matthias in July 1856. The builder was James Wilson. The church was built with a bell turret instead of the north-west tower originally intended. Its foundation stone was laid on 30 May 1855 and the church was consecrated on 5 June 1856. The church was formally closed in 1949 and demolished in 1952. The demolition contractor was Howard Mitchley of Sheldon.

The following entry in the Whitechapel foundry daybooks may refer to the bell as originally supplied for the builders of St.Matthias's church

27 May 1856     J. Wilson, Soho Hill, near Birmingham  
To a Bell 2-1-17 @ £7/18/8                      £19.1.1  
Clapper    10.6

In 1952 the bell from St.Matthias was transferred to the new mission church of St.Peter, Tile Cross, and eventually scrapped in 1968 when St.Peter's was rebuilt and provided with a new chime of six bells. The bell was:

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

1.        C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1856

| <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, 1856       | 22½             | G (1559Hz)  | 2           | 2           | 9           |

The weight given above is as received (nett) at Loughborough in 1968. It will be noted, however, that there is a discrepancy of some 20lbs between the weight originally recorded in 1856 (2-1-17) and that noted in 1968 (2-2-9) – suggesting a possibility that the two entries might not, after all, refer to the same bell.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Michael & All Angels (former church), Warstone Lane**

This church was originally built as a chapel for the Warstone Lane Cemetery (*q.v.*) in 1848. The architect was J.R. Hamilton of Gloucester whose plans for the site and buildings, dated 1846, are preserved in the City Archives. The cemetery chapel was consecrated on 8 August 1848. It was built in the Perpendicular style, with a west tower and spire. For a short while in the mid nineteenth-century it was also used as a church (dedicated to St.Michael & All Angels) with the status of a chapel of ease to St.Paul's, before reverting to use as a cemetery chapel. It was damaged by enemy bombing in World War II and demolished as unsafe in 1954 after the Corporation had taken control of the cemetery in 1951.

On 17 July 1848 C & G Mears of Whitechapel invoiced the Birmingham Church of England Cemetery Company for a bell weighing 10-0-14 costing £66.3.0 and its clapper, which cost £1.5.0.

| Bell | Founder and date  | Diameter | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------|----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | C & G Mears, 1848 | c.39     | 10   | 0    | 14   |

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Nicholas (former church), Lower Tower Street**

The foundation stone was laid on 15 October 1867 by Frederick Elkington Esq., one of the principal contributors, and the new church was consecrated on 21 July 1868. The building was designed by Martin and Chamberlain, architects, and Messrs. Webb were the builders. The total cost amounted to £4072. According to a contemporary description, the western gable of the church was “finished by a bell turret”, but the bell is not mentioned in the building accounts. Presumably it was supplied through the contractor. St.Nicholas became a parish church in 1869, serving a district formed from the parish of St.Stephen. The church was closed in 1947 and subsequently demolished in 1950. The site was afterwards sold to the Corporation in 1954.

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Patrick (R.C.), Dudley Road, Spring Hill**

This mission was established in 1873, and a permanent church built in 1895 to the designs of A.E. Dempster & Heaton. It is a brick building in the French Gothic style with the date 1894 over the main door. It was opened on 29 October 1895 by Bishop Ilsley and consecrated on 19 June 1902. It has south-west octagonal bell-turret.

The turret contains a single bell, which is hung at the level of the louvred openings. The bell is accessible by iron rungs up the inside of the turret from the west gallery.

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

1. SANCTE ♦ JOSEPH ♦ ORA ♦ PRO ♦ NOBIS ♦  
*Waist:* PRESENTED . TO . S<sup>T</sup> . PATRICKS . CHURCH . BY . / REAR . ADMIRAL .  
 TINKLAR . R. N. GOVERNOR . / OF . H . M. PRISON . BIRMINGHAM . 1894 /  
 “CHARLES CARR.” SMETHWICK . MADE . ME .

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter                       | Mouldings | Note   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Charles Carr, 1894 | 28 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 2:2-2:3:2 | E flat | 4    | 3    | 0*   |

The bell was cast and hung by Charles Carr of Smethwick in 1894-5. It has six plain canons and it has not been quarter turned. It is hung for ringing with an elm headstock, plate gudgeons, plain brass bearings in iron housings with hinged lids, a full wheel, traditional stay and slider, and clapper with independent staple. A chiming hammer is also fitted for tolling. The wooden frame has gallows ends, and the trusses consist of sills (resting on iron girders), tall endposts, heads and braces. The clapper has been refurbished quite recently, and metal tie rods have been fitted to stabilise the frame. Otherwise the bell and its fittings remain as installed in 1894-5.

According to Kelly a “fine belfry bell was presented by Admiral Tinklar” when the new church was erected in 1895. It is dedicated to St. Joseph (rather than St.Patrick), probably in honour of the Rector, Joseph Robinson, who served here from 1880 until his death in 1926. Canon Robinson was responsible for the erection of the present church, which is depicted on his memorial on the north wall of the church.

**Visited:** CJP 27 February 2004: Thanks to Canon Anthony Piercy

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Paul, St.Paul’s Square**

St.Paul’s church stands in the middle of a square in the Jewellery Quarter. It is a rectangular building in the neo-Classical style, with a western tower and spire. It was the second of the two churches built under the Act of Parliament of 1772 “for building two new Chapels, and providing Burial Places thereto, within the Town of Birmingham”. The first, St.Mary’s, was completed in 1774 and eighteen months later, in March 1776, the Trustees set about the

task of raising funds for St.Paul's "near to New Hall". A great deal of information about the new church is recorded in the notebook of Henry Kempson, who was secretary of the Trustees at the time of its construction, 1776-9.

Plans were supplied in 1776, together with a model of the proposed church, by the Wolverhampton master joiner, nurseryman, surveyor and architect, Roger Eykyn. His scheme was derived from the pattern book of James Gibbs, modified and improved under the influence of Samuel Wyatt of London who assisted as consultant architect. The builders were Standbridge & Co. The first brick was laid by Mr. Winwood on 29 May 1777 and the church was consecrated on 2 June 1779. It remained a chapel of ease to St.Martin's until a separate parish was created in 1841.

The church of 1777-9 is illustrated in William Hutton's *History of Birmingham*. The engraving shows the west end with the unfinished tower, with a low pyramid roof over the first stage, which was square with circular openings for the clock dials. Kempson's notebook is silent regarding the original bell, but the sentence of consecration in 1779 says that the Chapel had:

"... a Communion Table and Rails Pulpit Reading Desk Font Galleries Convenient seats and pews Belfry a Bell and all things else requisite and necessary".

The belfry stage and steeple were added to the tower in 1822-3 to the designs of Francis Goodwin. A contract drawing, bearing the signatures of the principal subscribers and signed on 6 August 1822 by the mason, Matthew Seaborne of Birmingham, survives among the parish records. The upper part of the tower is octagonal on the outside and circular within. The steeple cost £1097 and Seaborne undertook to complete the work by 25 May 1823. The specification indicates that the existing unfinished tower, suitably modified, was reused as the foundation for the new steeple as shown in the contract drawing.

Until 2005 the tower contained three bells, now preserved above the modern ring of ten (details below). They are as follows:

**Bell                      Inscription**

1.        JAMES BARWELL FOUNDER. BIRMINGHAM 1874.
2.        J : B. 1874.
3.        CAST BY JOHN WARNER & SONS LONDON 1858.  
           *Waist: (Royal Arms) / PATENT*

| Bell | Founder and date         | Diameter                       | Mouldings | Note    | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | James Barwell, 1874      | 27                             | 2:2-2:3:2 | F sharp | 4    | 2    | 10   |
| 2.   | James Barwell, 1874      | 32 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 2:2-2:3:2 | B       | 7    | 0    | 20   |
| 3.   | John Warner & Sons, 1858 | 45                             | 2:2-2:3:2 | E       | 16   | 0    | 0*   |

The two smaller bells were installed in 1874 as quarter bells for the new clock. The largest bell was used as a service bell, and the present Warner bell probably replaced one of similar size installed in 1823 (with the spire) or 1779 (when the church was completed). All three bells have canons. They have not been turned. The treble has been chip tuned inside, the second is a maiden bell and the tenor has been skirted or edged.

Raised to a higher position in the tower on a new steel foundation in 2005, the frame and fittings of the hour bell remain. The framework is older than the present bell and probably dates from 1823 or even 1779. The initials NH are carved on one of the braces. The frame is of relatively slight construction and it evidently required strengthening quite soon after it was installed. It consists of sills, braces, jack-braces and long heads (*Bellframes* type 6.B), with X-bracing in the outer sections. Extra timbers have been inserted between the braces at the top and bottom, and secondary jack braces were applied outside the frame. The braces were secured to the sills with iron bolts. Before it was moved the bell was hung to swing north-south and the frame stood on the floor of the bellchamber, which was renewed in 2003.

The bell was hung for ringing and its semi-derelict fittings are chiefly those supplied by Warners in 1858, with a wooden stock, strap gudgeons with stock hoops, open brass bearings with wooden covers, wheel, iron wheel stay, stay and slider. The bearing brasses



were re-set in steel plates at some time and the supporting ironwork was replaced in about 1980. The clapper was missing but its wooden top was still attached to the crown staple.

The other bells were originally hung from deadstocks in a taller wooden framework to the west of the main frame. They were sounded by clock hammers only. One of the clock bells (the second) has a cast-in clapper staple, and the other has the remains of a broken staple. Since being moved up in 2005 the bells are hung in a new steel framework but still from their original deadstocks. They are fitted with hammers to chime the quarters.

There has been a clock in the tower since at least 1852 when payments for winding up the clock first appear in the accounts. At that date the clock was under the care of Thomas Bingham, who had undertaken minor repairs to the bell in 1841-2. In June 1874 the clock was reported to be "in such a disgraceful condition, through neglect, that no amount of renovation would ever make it keep proper time again". Members of St Paul's Gentleman's Club quickly raised money for a new clock through an appeal in the prosperous Jewellery Quarter. Estimates were obtained from several firms including Joyce of Whitchurch, Smith of Clerkenwell, Gillett & Bland of Croydon, and Leeson & Son of Coleshill whose tender was accepted. The total cost was £376.1.2, of which £207 went to Leeson for the clock and £96 to Barwell for the bells. The new clock was inaugurated at a ceremony on 1 January 1875.

Leeson's three-train clock had a massive cast iron frame, and a description from a contemporary newspaper records that the clock was fitted with Denison's double three-legged gravity escapement and a compensated pendulum. The three dials were lit at night by gas. Covered for some years by solid dials, the original illuminated dials are now in use again.

In January 1875, Alfred Bennett was appointed as clock warden, an office he held until 1899. His account book includes a record of payments on account of the clock, lists of subscribers towards its upkeep and details of donations received from people viewing the clock. The wooden compartment housing the clock had newscuttings and posters of the 1880s pasted on the walls, curious relics of Bennett's time as custodian. This was, however, removed to make way for the new ringing room in 2004-5 which also necessitated alterations to the clock.

The Leeson clock had been replaced in 1947 by a synchronous movement by Smith of Derby (no.3104) with separate hour and ding-dong quarter strike units. This was positioned in the old clock room and on the girders that carried the old clock. The faculty issued for this and other work on the church on 14 April 1948 indicates that the new clock was installed as a memorial to the late W.J. Gibbons Esq.

Work on the clock followed completion of the work on the new bells in 2005. The dials are now driven direct by separate synchronous motors (controlled by radio signal) – one for each dial. These were supplied and installed by English Clockmakers of Derby. The Smith clock of 1947 was re-sited in the bell chamber to strike the hours and quarters via mechanical action.

The new bells were placed in the tower in 2005 as "the Voice of St.Paul's" and to mark the 250th anniversary of the St.Martin's Guild of Church Bell Ringers. They were dedicated in the church on Sunday 2 October prior to installation in the following week. The official opening took place on 25th November 2005.

Details of the new bells – a ring of ten in the key of F sharp (740Hz or F# plus 0.03 cents) - are as follows:

### ***Bell***

### ***Inscription***

1. 310 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05  
*Waist:* THE GRIMMETT BELL. / GIVEN BY / CHARLOTTE BIBILO & RICHARD GRIMMETT, / MASTER OF THE / ST. MARTIN'S GUILD OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS.
2. 305 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05  
*Waist:* THE MILLS BELL. / GIVEN BY / PAUL & CHRIS MILLS / DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA.
3. 148 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05

- Waist:* THE HORTON BELL. / GIVEN BY / JANET & STEVE HORTON / TO CELEBRATE / OUR SILVER WEDDING.
4. 196 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05  
*Waist:* THE MARTINEAU BELL. / GIVEN BY THE FAMILY / IN MEMORY OF / THE FIVE GENERATIONS / WHO SERVED THIS CITY AS / MAYORS & LORD MAYORS / DEO GRATIAS / 2005
5. 161 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05  
*Waist:* THE VOICE OF ST PAUL'S / GIVEN BY THE CONGREGATION / AND THE FRIENDS OF ST. PAUL'S / VICAR – REVD. TOM PYKE M.A. / FRANCES JONES } / JEAN STEVENS } CHURCHWARDENS  
*Opposite:* 'MY MOUTH SHALL SPEAK / THE PRAISE OF THE LORD / AND LET ALL FLESH GIVE THANKS / TO HIS HOLY NAME / FOR EVER AND EVER' / PSALM CXL V:21.
6. 173 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05  
*Waist:* THE BIRMINGHAM ASSAY OFFICE BELL, / CHAIRMAN OF THE WARDENS / ROGER BURMAN / ASSAY MASTER / MICHAEL ALLCHIN / (*Assay Office date letter – an embossed "f" – for the year 2005*)  
*Opposite:* (*Birmingham Assay Office mark – an anchor – and date 1773*)
7. 213 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05  
*Waist:* THE RINGERS' BELL. / GIVEN BY / MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF / THE ST. MARTIN'S GUILD / OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS / IN ITS 250<sup>TH</sup> YEAR
8. 211 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 05  
*Waist:* THE MEMORIAL BELL / PAT ROACH [*space*] THE RECTORY BAR AND RESTAURANT / 'BORN' SEPT 05 / - - - / DOROTHY EDITH GILBERT (NEE FIELD) / ALBERT WILLIAM FIELD / WILFRID BARNETT FIELD / PHYLLIS MAY FIELD / PERCY LEONARD FIELD / RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE OF BIRMINGHAM  
*Opposite:* BETTY SMITH / BARBARA GREATRIX / FRANK & ALICE SAWKILL / WILLIAM & ROSE NALL / 2005
9. 142 856 / (*Vine leaf border*) (*Taylor's circular mark*)  
*Waist:* THE COMMON GOOD BELL. / GIVEN BY THE EDWARD CADBURY CHARITABLE TRUST (INC.) / ESTABLISHED BY EDWARD CADBURY AND / THE BIRMINGHAM COMMON GOOD TRUST ESTABLISHED BY HIS / YOUNGER BROTHER, GEORGE.  
*Opposite:* THEIR SOUND IS GONE OUT / INTO ALL THE LANDS / ROMANS X:18. / 2005
10. [blank – intended to show 177 856] / (*Running vine border*) (*Taylor's circular mark*)  
*Waist:* (*Chord logo*) / CHORD / CHRIS ROSIER / GEOFF SHUTTLEWORTH / EMILY CLAYTON / ANDY CRONIN / 2005  
*Opposite:* (*Royal Bank of Scotland logo with initials RBS*) / SHAUN KELLY / STUART SANDERS / NICK OAKLEY / NEIL COOPER / HAZEL McINTYRE / 2005  
*Soundbow:* (*Acanthus border*)

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 21½      | 1868    | 2    | 2    | 6    |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 22½      | 1663    | 2    | 3    | 2    |
| 3.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 23½      | 1478    | 2    | 3    | 2    |
| 4.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 24½      | 1388.5  | 3    | 0    | 13   |
| 5.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 26       | 1247    | 3    | 2    | 14   |
| 6.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 27½      | 1110    | 3    | 3    | 23   |
| 7.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 30       | 991     | 4    | 3    | 2    |
| 8.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 32½      | 928     | 6    | 1    | 2    |
| 9.   | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 36       | 831     | 8    | 1    | 9    |
| 10.  | John Taylor & Co, 2005 | 41       | 740     | 12   | 2    | 13   |

Dumb-bells for practice have been installed above the ring, and sound control has been fitted in the belfry windows. The dumb-bells are hung with standard ringing fittings between pedestal-type free-standing framesides in the upper tier of the frame.

**BIRMINGHAM – St.Peter (former church), Dale End**

Shortly after it was opened, the church was destroyed by fire on 24 January 1831. A report of the fire in the *Northampton Mercury* of 29 January 1831 stated "the damage is calculated at about £5000. The organ is destroyed – bells down – in fact, nothing standing but the bare walls and iron frames of the windows". A report in the Birmingham papers stated that "On reaching the west end of the church, the fire communicated itself to the wood work of the belfry and tower, and after burning for some time, the cross and bell were precipitated below, carrying with them in their fall a portion of the interior masonry, including the stone staircase leading to the galleries".

**Bell**

### *Inscription*

- | Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Thomas Mears. 1837 | 40½      | 12   | 3    | 3    |

**Not visited:** Recast bell seen at St.Peter's, Spring Hill, CJP 27 July 1988

**BIRMINGHAM – St.Peter (former church), George Street West, Spring Hill**

**Bell**

### ***Inscription***

- Waist:* THIS BELL WAS REMOVED FROM THE PARISH / CHURCH OF ST PETER DALE  
END BIRMINGHAM / UNDER THE PROVISION OF THE BIRMINGHAM CHURCHES ACT

1897 / RECAST BY JAMES BARWELL AND PLACED HERE IN THE YEAR 1902 / W.H.  
PARKER M.A. VICAR  
*Opposite: (Barwell's mark)*

| Bell | Founder and date    | Diameter | Note   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|---------------------|----------|--------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | James Barwell, 1902 | 50½"     | E flat | 21   | 0    | 24   |

There were never two bells in the present tower as suggested by Tilley & Walters, who did not visit but assumed that the Barwell bell had been provided in addition to the old one from Dale End. As indicated in the inscription, the bell was cast from the bell from the previous church with extra metal to increase the weight from 13cwt to 21cwt.

The bell is hung in a composite frame of wood and cast iron (*Bellframes* type 7.C.d) with ringing fittings, including a cast iron stock, renewable gudgeons, plain bearings in iron housings with hinged covers, wheel, iron wheel stay, stay and slider, clapper (missing) with independent crown staple and an Ellacombe-type chiming hammer. The frame and fittings are by Barwell, 1902.

The interior of the building was converted to dual-purpose use under Denys Hinton and partners (architects) in 1967-9. The work was carried out by W.J. Olds Ltd at a cost of £14,000. The church was declared redundant in March 2001. It has since been sold and the property is no longer in Anglican hands. The bell is still in the tower (June 2002) pending disposal. The church later became the "New Testament Church of God the Rock" who owned the building and were using it in 2013.

**Visited:** CJP 27 July 1988 and DLC 1996

### **BIRMINGHAM - St.Peter (R.C.) (former church), St.Peter's Place, Broad Street**

The first Roman Catholic chapel in Birmingham was built in 1687-8 but razed to the ground by a Protestant mob within a couple of months of opening in September 1688. It was not rebuilt, but its brief existence is commemorated in the name Masshouse Lane where the chapel stood. After its destruction, the mass was celebrated at a small chapel in Edgbaston and the Roman Catholics did not have another permanent chapel in the town until almost a hundred years later.

The first permanent church in Birmingham was founded in 1786 when Frs. J. Nutt and J. Hawley, the priests of the mission, resolved on erecting a larger chapel. Shortly afterwards a fine structure dedicated to St.Peter was opened. It was enlarged in 1802 and 1825, and replaced by a new handsome gothic church opened by Bishop Ullathorne in 1871. The *VCH* described it as "a deliberately unassuming red-brick structure with Gothic windows and scanty dressings of stone". Photographs show that it had an octagonal turret and spire over the west end. The church was demolished in 1969

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Philip (Cathedral)**

By the early eighteenth century it was felt desirable to provide a second church in the town of Birmingham, the original parish church of St. Martin being too small for the growing population. Accordingly in 1708 an Act of Parliament was secured to create a separate parish and build a new church. A site was given by Robert Phillips and in 1709 the plans prepared by Thomas Archer were adopted by the commissioners. He chose the Italian Baroque style, and the building erected by Joseph Pedley, a stonemason from Warwick, in 1711-1715 is widely regarded as one of the finest churches of its period in the country. Although unfinished, the church was consecrated on 4 October 1715.

An inscription over the south west door records that "His Most Excellent Majesty, King George, upon the kind application of Sir Richard Gough to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, gave £600 towards finishing this church A.D. 1725". The completion of the church involved the erection of the tower which dates from 1725. The belfry stage of the tower has diagonal piers and concave sides, and the upper stages include an octagonal attic stage (with clock dials), a leaded dome and an open lantern or cupola supporting a ball and weathervane. In 1727 a faculty was obtained for erecting a west gallery on which the organ

was later placed. This was removed in 1884 when the space under the tower was opened up as a baptistry.

The church was re-pewed in 1849-50, and in 1883-4 the original east end was taken down and replaced by the present chancel designed by J.A. Chatwin in the style of the original building. St.Philip's became the Cathedral of the new Diocese of Birmingham in 1905. Recent work on the building includes the refacing of the tower in Hollington stone by P.B. and A.B. Chatwin in 1958-9 and the creation of the undercroft in 1987-8.

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

The present bells are a ring of twelve in the key of D natural (580Hz or D minus 21.74 cents).

| <b><i>Bell</i></b> | <b><i>Inscription</i></b>   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1.                 | ( <i>Floral border all round</i> ) / 6672<br><i>Waist:</i> THIS RING OF BELLS / WAS INCREASED TO 12 BY / THE ADDITION OF TWO<br>TREBLES / THE GIFT OF / FRANK B. YATES, 1949 / 1<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Gillett &amp; Johnston shield</i> ) / GILLETT & JOHNSTON / FOUNDERS /<br>LONDON |
| 2.                 | ( <i>blank</i> ) / 6673<br><i>Waist:</i> THE GIFT OF / FRANK B. YATES, 1949 / GEORGE E. FEARN / RINGING<br>MASTER / 2<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Gillett &amp; Johnston shield</i> ) / GILLETT & JOHNSTON / FOUNDERS /<br>LONDON  |
| 3.                 | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDINI FECIT 1750 / 5750<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / 1  |
| 4.                 | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDON FECIT 1750 / 5751<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / 2   |
| 5.                 | T. LESTER FECIT 1750 / 5752<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / AT PROPER TIMES MY VOICE ILE RAISE : / AND<br>SOUND TO MY SUBSCRIBERS PRAISE. / 3   |
| 6.                 | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDON MADE ME 1750 / 5753<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / 4   |
| 7.                 | PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1772 / 5754<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / 5  |
| 8.                 | THOMAS MEARS OF LONDON FECIT / 5755<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / MESSRS CLAUD JOHNSON & GEORGE STUBBS /<br>CHURCH WARDENS 1796 / 6   |
| 9.                 | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDINI FECIT 1750 / 5756<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / 7  |
| 10.                | T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1823 / 5757<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / 8  |
| 11.                | THOMAS LESTER FECIT 1750 / 5758<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1937.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>CFJ monogram</i> ) / 9   |
| 12.                | ( <i>Ornamental border all round</i> ) / RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON,<br>1937. / 5759   |

*Waist:* PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1772 / IN WEDLOCK BANDS ALL YE  
WHO JOIN WITH HANDS YOUR HEARTS UNITE / SO SHALL OUR TUNEFUL  
TONGUES COMBINE TO LAUD THE NUPTIAL RITE  
*Opposite: (CFJ monogram)* / THESE BELLS WERE RECAST FOR THE CORONATION /  
OF KING GEORGE VI CHIEFLY THROUGH THE / GENEROSITY OF SIR CHARLES  
HYDE BART. / 10

| Bell | Founder and date         | Diameter | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------------|----------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1949 | 26¾      | 1740    | 5    | 3    | 20   |
| 2.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1949 | 27½      | 1546    | 5    | 3    | 16   |
| 3.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 28¼      | 1450    | 5    | 3    | 1½   |
| 4.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 29½      | 1304    | 6    | 0    | 25   |
| 5.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 31       | 1160    | 6    | 2    | 9    |
| 6.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 32       | 1088    | 6    | 3    | 18½  |
| 7.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 34½      | 967     | 8    | 0    | 20   |
| 8.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 37⅝      | 870     | 10   | 1    | 10   |
| 9.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 41½      | 773     | 13   | 2    | 26   |
| 10.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 43½      | 725     | 15   | 3    | 24   |
| 11.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 48½      | 652     | 21   | 3    | 20   |
| 12.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1937 | 54⅝      | 580     | 31   | 0    | 21   |

The ten bells were rededicated on 1 May 1937. The dedication of the trebles took place on 12 February 1949.

When first installed in 1937 all ten bells were hung on one level in a cast iron lowside frame (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.n). Augmentation to twelve in 1949 necessitated the provision of additional lowside framework (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.m) above the main frame, and this now contains bells 7, 8 and 9 in lowside pits. There is an empty pit in the lower frame. The bells are all fitted with standard ringing fittings including cast iron stocks and ball bearings. The four trebles have button heads or flange tops.

The report of the augmentation in the *Ringling World* of 4 March 1949 described the work to the frame and fittings as follows:

"For the sake of audibility, and to allow the ropes to fall in a good circle, it was decided to hang the seventh, eight and ninth (of the twelve) in a separate frame, above the existing one, and to move the smaller bells round so that the new trebles occupy the pits previously filled by the trebles of the ten. This involved considerable work – new headstocks and fittings were required for the bells moved into larger pits"

Taylor's rehung bells 7 and 8 and carried out work to stabilise the upper frame in 1985. Further work on the bells was carried out by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in 2004.

### **Former bells and history**

The accounts for building the church in 1711-15 include a payment of £10.6s.0d. to Joseph Smith of Edgbaston "for ye bell". This bell was presumably hung in a temporary belfry until the tower was added some ten years later. It may have been quite small, as Smith's charge for the 4½ cwt bell at Hall Green in 1704 was £24.5s.6d. Assuming costs are comparable, then the bell for St. Philip's must have weighed about 2 cwt.

A second bell was purchased in 1725/6, shortly after the completion of the tower. On 11 February 1725/6 the vestry "agreed that ye present Church-wardens Doe disburst so much Mony as with Mr. Weeley's Mony for which he has given a Note will purchase A Bell of Twenty hundred weight". William Wheeley had been churchwarden in 1724-5.

In 1727, the vestry gave various orders regarding bells for the church. On 3 April "it was agreed that Joseph Smith shall receive the mettle from Mr. Bradburne in order to Cast a Bell for the parish church of St. Phillips in Birmingham to be done with all expedition". On 13 June it was "ordered that a Frame of good Timber be erected & fixed in the Steeple of the New Church for Hanging of Eight Bells, & that the Two Bells already made be hung there with all convenient speed".

In the absence of further information, it is unclear exactly what was done and when each stage of the work was completed. There are no detailed expenditure accounts, but the summary accounts for 1725-7 include an entry "By disbursements for the Bell &c £98.13.2." and in 1730-31 there is a note "Left of Smith Bill the founder £3.11.0.". What is clear is that there were rings of bells at the two churches by March 1737/8 when the vestry ruled that public ringing should take place at St.Martin's and St.Philip's alternately "as great ill Conveniences have attended the Ringing of State days & Holydays at Both Churches" and that by 1750 there were ten bells at St.Philip's. Joseph Smith was evidently the founder but the dates of the bells are not known. The sizes of the original ring is also uncertain, but if 12 cwt of metal was added when the bells were later recast then this suggests a total weight of 114 cwt and a tenor of about 26 cwt.

The old bells were taken down and recast in 1750-51, the new ones being cast by Thomas Lester of the Whitechapel foundry in London. The work is documented in various sources. On 12 February 1750/51 the vestry made the following resolutions:

Order'd and agreed That the ten Bells now being in the said Church of St.Philip all of which are untuneable and some unfit for use, shall be taken down and sold, and ten other new bells shall be purchased by ye Church wardens and hung up in the said Church.

And whereas proper Estimates have been this day produced at the said meeting of the necessary Expences in Exchanging the said Bells and hanging new Ones, with other incidental Charges, whereby it doth appear that the whole costs thereof will amount unto the Sum of two hundred and Eighty Pounds or there about.

And whereas the Sum of one hundred and fifty Pounds is already raised by Voluntary Contribution, it is therefore further Order'd and agreed, that the Remainder of ye above sum of two hundred and Eighty pounds shall be raised and levied within the said Town by ye Churchwardens for the purposes aforesaid. [22 signatures]

A further minute dated 4 June 1751 refers to the need to raise an extra £80 beyond the £280 initially estimated, the bells "proving after casting about twelve hundred Weight heavier than was at first contracted for."

The installation of the new ring of ten in 1751 was reported in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* of Monday 12 August 1751:

On Wednesday a new Peal of ten Bells, cast by Mr. Lister [*sic*], of London, for the New Church in this Town, was rung for the first Time, which proved very musical, and gave a general Satisfaction.

A further report appeared some time later in the *Oxford Gazette: and Reading Mercury* of 7 October 1751, stating:

We hear from Birmingham, that a new Peal of Ten Bells, (cast by. Mr. Thomas Lester, Bell-Founder in London) have lately been put up at St.Philip's Church in that Town, by Mr. William Lawrance, Bell-Hanger at Thame in Oxfordshire; which by all Judges is thought to be as compleat a Piece of Work as any in England

According to the Whitechapel foundry records, the dimensions of the original ten (total weight 125-3-1) – in the key of D flat - were as follows:

| Bell | Diameter | Weight | Bell | Diameter | Weight  |
|------|----------|--------|------|----------|---------|
| 1.   | 29"      | 5-3-22 | 6.   | 38¼"     | 11-0-11 |
| 2.   | 30"      | 6-1-14 | 7.   | 41¼"     | 13-2-18 |
| 3.   | 31¾"     | 7-0-10 | 8.   | 44¼"     | 16-2-9  |
| 4.   | 32¾"     | 7-2-13 | 9.   | 48¾"     | 21-0-13 |
| 5.   | 35½"     | 9-0-13 | 10   | 54¾"     | 29-0-18 |

The bells were hung on one level in a wooden frame. Sketch plans of the frame taken in the 1930s suggest that it was originally built for eight bells but later adapted to take ten.

Several of the bells were subsequently recast. Pack and Chapman recast the fifth and tenor in 1772. Notes made by the Nottingham founder Thomas Hedderly in about 1775 give the weights of the fifth (recast in 1772), sixth (later recast in 1796) and seventh (not recast until 1937) bells as 9-0-12, 11-0-3 and 13-3-11, with those of all the other bells being recorded as given above. The discrepancy regarding the sixth could possibly indicate a

recasting between 1750 and c.1775. In 1796 Thomas Mears I recast the sixth, and the eighth was recast by Thomas Mears II in 1823.

The bells were rehung "with entirely new fittings" in the old wooden frame by James Barwell in 1893. They had been in a poor condition for some time, and the restoration was followed by a revival of ringing at St.Philips until the tower was declared unsafe by the City Surveyor in 1906. A letter dated March 1907 refers to the use of "the old ringing chamber" as a choir practice room. Writing in 1908 H.B. Walters noted "the tower is said to be in an unsafe condition and the bells are no longer used for ringing". He also described the bells as "very grimy and encrusted with accumulated deposits which largely obscure the lettering".

In April 1921 the bells were open for ringing "after many years' silence" – though they had been rung twice by special permission in 1914 - and new ropes were provided. But there was little enthusiasm for ringing at St.Philip's as the bells were thought to be of inferior quality. "It was no pleasure to ring there", commented one writer in 1937 when the bells were again described as having been unringable for several years. The Coronation in 1937 provided the impetus for a complete restoration. As indicated in the inscription of the present tenor, the recasting of the bells in 1937 was made possible largely through the generosity of Sir Charles Hyde, Bart, a newspaper proprietor.

Before recasting in 1937, the old bells – as described by Tilley & Walters - were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDINI FECIT 1750  |
| 2.          | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDON FECIT 1751 ( <i>border</i> )   |
| 3.          | AT PROPER TIMES MY VOICE ILL RAISE AND SOUND TO MY SUBSCRIBERS PRAISE ( <i>border</i> ) / T : LESTER FECIT 1750  |
| 4.          | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDON FECIT 1751   |
| 5.          | PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1772 ( <i>border</i> )  |
| 6.          | MESSRS CLAUD JOHNSON & GEORGE STUBBS CHURCH WARDENS 1796. THOMAS MEARS OF LONDON FECIT ( <i>border</i> )   |
| 7.          | THOMAS LESTER OF LONDINI FECIT 1750  |
| 8.          | T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1823 ( <i>border</i> )  |
| 9.          | THOMAS LESTER FECIT 1750   |
| 10.         | IN WEDLOCK BANDS ALL YE WHO JOIN WITH HANDS YOUR HEARTS UNITE SO SHALL OUR TUNEFULL TONGUES COMBINE TO LAUD THE NUPTIAL RITE ( <i>border</i> ) / PACK & CHAPMAN OF LONDON FECIT 1772 ( <i>border</i> ) |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b>  | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | Thomas Lester, 1750     | 29               | 5           | 3           | 22          |
| 2.          | Thomas Lester, 1751     | 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ | 6           | 0           | 0*          |
| 3.          | Thomas Lester, 1750     | 31 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 7           | 0           | 10          |
| 4.          | Thomas Lester, 1751     | 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 7           | 2           | 13          |
| 5.          | Pack & Chapman, 1772    | 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 9           | 0           | 0*          |
| 6.          | Thomas Mears, 1796      | 39               | 11          | 0           | 0*          |
| 7.          | Thomas Lester, 1750     | 41 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 13          | 2           | 8           |
| 8.          | Thomas Mears, 1823      | 43 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 16          | 2           | 0*          |
| 9.          | Thomas Lester, 1750     | 48 $\frac{5}{8}$ | 20          | 3           | 0*          |
| 10.         | Pack & Chapman, 1772    | 55 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 29          | 0           | 0*          |

The bells were noted by Taylors, who visited in August 1936, as being in a key "a shade flat of D". The canons had been removed from the second and ninth. The frame was described as "oak, but of very slight construction". At the recasting, the new bells were hung some 10 feet lower in the tower.

### ***Clock and chimes***

A clock was first installed in 1730, the vestry making an order on 3 November "that a clock be put up ... with all convenient speed". The maker is not named. On 10 March 1733/4 the



churchwardens were authorised "to Imploy Humphry Hadley & his Son to Repair and keep in order the Church Clock & hands". The original clock was not satisfactory, however, and on 6 August 1735 the vestry minutes record that "the Clock at St. Phillip's Church is thought by several persons who are proper judges too weak to carry the Four hands & has for some time past been very Chargeable to the town to keep it in order & particularly the last year upwards of Eight pounds". Accordingly it was "then agreed upon that the present Church Wardens agree with Humphry Hadly the younger to make a Substantiall New Clock for the said Church".

In 1754 the parish set up chimes to play tunes on the ten bells. The erection of a set of chimes for the new bells at St. Philip's was authorised by "a general meeting of the Inhabitants of the town" on 20 May 1754, and on 27 May the church vestry authorised the churchwardens "to contract with Mr. John Whitehurst of Derby, to erect ye said Chimes, ye Price not exceeding the Sum of One hundred & forty pounds".

An observer in 1818 commented that the tunes shifted themselves automatically by means of machinery. Charles Pye's account published in 1819 provides a more detailed description. He wrote that the tower contains "... ten musical bells, and a set of chimes that play a different tune every day in the week, at the hours of one, four, seven and ten; which tunes shift themselves by means of the machinery". The chimes were put in order in 1884, having been silent for many years. According to H.B. Walters the old chime barrel was still preserved in the tower when he visited in 1908.

Hadley's clock was replaced in about 1785 by a new one made by Thomas Ore, clock and watchmaker of Great Charles Street, Birmingham (fl.1779-86).

The present clock was made by John Moore & Sons of Clerkenwell in 1851 but supplied through Samuel Allport of Birmingham whose name appears on the setting dial. The clock is mentioned in Moore's published catalogue. Its installation is documented in the vestry minutes, which show that an appeal was launched for repairs to the clock in September 1850. Estimates for repairs were considered, but the vestry decided to obtain tenders for a new clock as well.

In November tenders were received from Hurt & Wray (£365), Moore (£330 including charge of £26 for new clock room), Alfred Knight (£272.10.0), and Samuel Allport (£321). At an adjourned meeting on 20 November 1850 the vestry accepted tender of Mr. Samuel Allport of Bull Street for the entire new clock for £336.12.0, with the understanding that the clock be manufactured by Messrs. Moore & Co of London. Owing to delays the clock was not installed until June 1851.

The clock is situated in the top stage of the tower at the base of the dome. It displays the time on four 8ft dials on 5ft openings in the masonry. It is a three-train movement in a large cast iron four-poster frame, but the two striking trains have been removed. The setting dial is signed by John Moore & Sons of Clerkenwell, London, 1851, and also bears the same of "Sam<sup>l</sup> Allport, Birmingham". Moore's name also appears on the winding drums.

**Visited:** CJP and RLJ 11 August 1989; CJP 10 July 2009

### **BIRMINGHAM - St.Saviour (former church), Villa Street, Hockley**

This church was built in the gothic style in 1872-4, the architect being J.A. Chatwin. It was a red brick church with a west tower and spire. The memorial stone was laid on 9 April 1872. The completed church was consecrated on 1 May 1874 and in November 1874 a new parish was formed out of St.Matthias. The last service in the church was held on 27 May 1962, and the building was demolished some time after 1965. The parish was abolished in 1968 and in 1969 the site was sold to the Corporation.

Tilley & Walters state that Barwell supplied a bell at the time the church was built in 1874. Details were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | James Barwell, 1874     | 30              | 6           | 2           | 18          |

### **BIRMINGHAM - St.Stephen (former church), Newtown**

This church was built in 1842-4, a parish having been assigned from St.George's. It was the fourth of the "Ten Churches" planned and funded by the Birmingham Church Building Society. R.C. Carpenter was the architect, and the builder was George Horton of Birmingham. The foundation stone was laid in September 1842 and the consecration took place on 24 July 1844. The church was extensively restored in 1896 when the west front was remodelled and virtually rebuilt under W.H. Bidlake in 1909-10. After Bidlake's alterations of 1910 the church had a bell turret rising from the angle between the nave and north transept and a ventilation turret over the middle of the building.

The church suffered damage in World War II. It was closed in and demolished in 1950 when the parish was abolished. Its bell – originally cast in 1842 but recast and rehung by James Barwell in 1910 – was later removed to Christ Church, Sparkbrook (*q.v.*), where it was installed in 1953. The fittings – including cast iron stock, plain bearings, wheel, stay and slider – were provided by Barwell in 1910 and reused when the bell was rehung at Sparkbrook.

#### ***Bell***

#### ***Inscription***

1. BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM

*Waist:* CAST 1842 / RECAST 1910 / BLESSED MARY AND S. STEPHEN / PRAY FOR US

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Mouldings</b> | <b>Note</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | James Barwell, 1910     | 22              | 2:2-2:3:2        | A flat      | 2           | 1           | 7           |

There is no indication of the founder of the original bell of 1842. It was probably cast at Whitechapel, but there is no trace of a bell of this size for a Birmingham church – or supplied to George Horton, the builder of the church – in the Whitechapel records for 1842. However, C & G Mears did invoice Horton on 23 January 1844 for a bell of 1-3-27, supplied with clapper, costing £13.10.2

***Visited:*** CJP (at Sparkbrook) 28 December 1977 and 10 October 1989; Also at Loughborough (after removal from Sparkbrook) 2006-7 *passim*

### **BIRMINGHAM – St.Thomas (former church), Bath Row**

This church was built to serve the expanding district to the south west of the town. It was erected in 1826-9 to the designs of Rickman & Hutchinson in the Greek Revival style. The cost was borne by the Church Building Commissioners whose grant amounted to £15,915. The foundation stone was laid in 2 October 1826 and the church was consecrated on 22 October 1829. It became a parish church in May 1834 when a district was assigned out of St.Martin's.

The church had a tower above the portico, originally surmounted by a gilded copper cross. According to a terrier and inventory dated 1907 the tower contained "1 bell, 1 ton weight". No other information is available, but since no bell for this church is listed in John Rudhall's notebook for the period 1828-1835 it seems most likely that the bell was provided by Thomas Mears of Whitechapel – probably in 1829. The bell chamber is no longer accessible, but it is known that the bell had already been removed by December 1954 when Gillett & Johnston of Croydon visited to quote for a new clock. The empty frame may still remain in place.

The Loughborough foundry records show that Taylors bought broken metal of 17-2-11 nett from Arthur E. Milner, Metals Ltd, Birmingham, on 5 Dec.1953. It seems quite likely that this could have been the old bell from this church but proof has not yet been found. Certainly the spire was restored in the winter of 1952-3 by G. Swinnerton & Sons under Simister & Marshall, architects, at a cost of £98.12.0 and so work on the building was in progress at about the time the Milner bell was sold for scrap.

The building was largely destroyed in an air raid on Birmingham in December 1940. It was never rebuilt, but the tower and porticos still stand at the entrance to the garden of rest laid out among the ruins by the City Engineer and Surveyor in 1953-4 to commemorate the

Festival of Britain. The parishes of St.Thomas and Immanuel had been united in 1939, and Immanuel became the parish church after enemy action rendered St.Thomas's unsafe for use. Ownership of the site and buildings was transferred to the Corporation in 1958-9.

There was a clock in the tower before the church was destroyed in the War, but the mechanism was "ruined by bombing". A letter in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Monday 2 November 1846 refers to a clock being erected at St.Thomas's church "made at the manufactory of one of the first and most extensive machinist in the kingdom ... now being fitted up in the tower". This clock seems to have been replaced soon afterwards, as later records refer to a clock dated 1865. This was still in the tower in December 1954 but the representative of Gillett & Johnston who examined it then considered that it was beyond repair. The church records suggest that it was an older clock, mentioned in the accounts from 1852 and refurbished (rather than renewed) in 1865.

A public meeting was held on 29 October 1863 "to consider how the clock can be rendered more serviceable". Advice was provided by Mr. Evans of Soho, who reported that although the clock was in good order it was "all of cast iron and heavier than those now made" – i.e. it was inefficient rather than out of repair. Evans recommended repairs and improvements and also proposed a separate bell of steel for tolling, so that the main bell could be used exclusively for the clock. At an adjourned meeting on 2 November it was agreed to raise subscriptions of £25 and obtain full estimates. The accounts suggest that the work was completed in 1865 at a cost of about £12.15.10, but the details in the records are too vague to indicate what was done.

The present clock is an auto-wound timepiece by Chas H. Potts & Co. Ltd of Leeds, installed in May 1955. It is a flatbed timepiece movement with gravity escapement and endless chain type automatic electric winding.

**Not visited:** Details of clock provided by Andrew Nichols (June 2003)

### **BIRMINGHAM – Spring Hill Public Library**

A striking late Victorian building built of red brick and terracotta in the gothic style, Spring Hill Library was erected at the junction of Spring Hill and Icknield Street in 1891-3. The architects were Martin and Chamberlain and the builders were Messrs Sapcote & Sons. The building cost £4500. The foundation stone was laid by the Mayor on 13 April 1891 and the library opened in January 1893.

The library has a clock tower with illuminated dials. The clock was erected in response to a petition signed by some 600 people who felt that a public clock would be of benefit to the local community. This was accepted by the City Council's Library Committee who instructed the architect to alter his plans for the building to include a clock tower. In March 1892 the Committee accepted the tender of £185 from Messrs. Evans & Sons of Handsworth for providing a clock for "for the New Library, Spring Hill". The building accounts mention extras "for Iron platform in clock tower" (£11.3.0) and for "enlargement of clock to fit illuminated dials", and the full sum paid to Evans for the clock came to £214. This sum must have included the clock bell. The slave dial inside the main hall of the library carries the name "EVANS & SONS / HANDSWORTH".

The original clock was replaced by a synchronous electric movement by Smith of Derby – along with ten other public clocks in the City – in 1958. The clock no longer strikes, but the bell remains in position in the lantern at the top of the tower. Presumably it was too big to be removed easily when the original clock was replaced. The bell is hung from a wooden deadstock for sounding with an over-hung clock hammer. It carries no inscription or marks, and it is a flat-topped casting without a crown staple – probably by Carr of Smethwick and contemporary with the original clock:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b>  | <b>Mouldings</b> | <b>Note</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | Charles Carr, c.1892    | 37 $\frac{7}{8}$ | 3:2-2:4:2        | A flat      | 9           | 3           | 0*          |

The deadstock has been renewed during recent repairs to the tower, and new stainless steel bell bolts have been fitted.

**Visited:** CJP 16 March 2004: Thanks to Deep Hunjan and Tricia Taylor

### **BIRMINGHAM – Town Hall, Victoria Square**

The only bells here are a set of tuned musical bells installed in the refurbished organ during the major refurbishment of the Town Hall completed in 2007-8. The building itself was designed by Joseph Hansom, commenced in 1832 but not completed until nearly three decades later. The organ by William Hill was first installed in 1890.

The introduction of bells was first considered when the organ was restored by Noel Mander in 1984-5. At that time, the Whitechapel Bell Foundry received an order for a four octave set of handbells to go into the organ. This was reported in the *Ringling World* in January 1984 but the issue of the same paper of 1 June of that year (p.467) noted that "The order for the set of handbells to go into the organ at Birmingham Town Hall was cancelled".

Alterations to the instrument in 2007 included the addition of a new set of 3½ octaves of bells from the Whitechapel Bell Foundry – in fact, a set of 37 handbells, largest size 22 "C". These bells - with electrically operated hammers – are playable from the Solo and situated on top of the Swell box. Their installation was featured in an article about the refurbishment of the organ in *Organ Building* Vol.8 (2008) pp.75-77. The bells can be heard on a CD recorded by the City Organist, Thomas Trotter, during the opening recital in October 2008, and entitled *Restored to Glory*.

**Not visited:** Information from the National Pipe Organ Register and Bryan Woolley (*Ringling World* 2010 p.113)

### **BIRMINGHAM, University – see EDGBASTON, University of Birmingham**

### **BIRMINGHAM – Victoria Law Courts, Corporation Street**

The Victoria Law Courts building was built in 1887-1891 to the designs of Sir Aston Webb and Ingress Bell, the winners of the architectural competition held in 1885-6. It is an impressive display of red brick and terracotta, and there is a clock dial on the main façade with symbols of Time and Eternity alongside the dial. It is a skeleton dial with art deco numerals, not unlike those on the clock in the Great Western Arcade.

The original clock was weight driven. Ordered on 4 December 1888 by the architects, it was supplied by Gillett & Co of Croydon whose records show that it was a no.3 solid timepiece with two skeleton dials – one external dial of 7ft and an internal one of 6ft. The manufacture of the dials was sub-contracted to Starkie Gardner & Co, 29 Albert Embankment, London. The cost of the clock was £99. By 1946 the Gillett clock had been superseded by a large turret timepiece by Gents of Leicester with a skeleton dial. This, too, was subsequently replaced. By 1995 the dial was driven by a synchronous electric movement. The clock is now maintained by Birmingham City Council.

The St.Martin's Society rang a long peal of 9020 Grandsire Cinques on the twelve bells at St.Martin's church on 23 March 1887 in commemoration of the opening of the new Victoria Law Courts. On this date, the memorial stone was unveiled by Queen Victoria herself, in her Golden Jubilee year. The new Law Courts opened in 1891.

**Not visited:** Thanks to Andrew Nicholls MBHI (from notes made in 1995)

### **BIRMINGHAM – Warstone Lane Cemetery Chapel**

The designs for the cemetery were prepared by J.R. Hamilton of the Gloucester firm of Hamilton and Medland. His entry won the design competition in 1846 and the cemetery buildings were erected to his designs in 1846-8. The original gatehouse survives. The architect's plans for the site and buildings, dated 1846, are preserved in the City Archives.

The cemetery chapel was consecrated on 8 August 1848. It was built in the Perpendicular style, with nave and chancel, a west tower and spire, and ambulatories to either side of the tower. For a short while in the mid nineteenth-century (between 1854 and 1878) it was also used for services as a daughter church (St.Michael & All Angels) of St.Paul's before reverting to use as a cemetery chapel. It was damaged by enemy bombing

in World War II and demolished as unsafe in 1954 after the City Corporation had taken control of the cemetery in 1951.

On 17 July 1848 C & G Mears of Whitechapel invoiced the Birmingham Church of England Cemetery Company for a bell weighing 10-0-14 costing £66.3.0 and its clapper, which cost £1.5.0.

| Bell | Founder and date  | Diameter | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------|----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | C & G Mears, 1848 | c.39     | 10   | 0    | 14   |

### **BIRMINGHAM – Welsh Cross, High Street (former)**

There was a clock at the Welsh Cross or market hall at the north end of the High Street. The building was enlarged by the addition of an upper storey as a guard-room in 1706. The clock was probably put up in about 1706. According to the Joint Vestry minute book it was repaired in 1726 by Edward Greatrix who subsequently looked after it for the next ten years at a charge of 10s a year. The building is illustrated in a painting by Paul Braddon in the City Art Gallery which shows a clock dial facing the main street axis and a small bell in a cupola on the roof of the building. The Welsh Cross was demolished in March 1803. On 4 October 1802 the clock was advertised for sale through Thomas Greaves (clockmaker) or W Jones (builder). There is no mention of a bell in the advertisement.

### **BIRMINGHAM – Wesleyan General Assurance Society**

The Wesleyan General Assurance Society was formed in Birmingham in 1841. In the first decade of the twentieth century the Society moved to new offices in Steelhouse Lane designed by the brothers Ewan and James Harper, who did much work for the Birmingham Methodists. At some date before 1946 a Pul-syn-etic clock system was provided by Gents of Leicester for the Society's offices in Birmingham. The Society moved to new offices in Colmore Circus in 1991 and the old building was demolished.

### **BIRMINGHAM – Witton Cemetery, Moor Lane**

The site for the Birmingham City Cemetery at Witton was acquired in 1859 and the first interment took place in 1861. The grounds were laid out by Richard Ashwell of Coventry and the cemetery buildings were designed by Robert Clarke of Nottingham whose scheme won the design competition in 1860. The buildings included two chapels and the cemetery office on Moor Lane. The contract for the cemetery buildings was awarded to C. Wright, a Nottingham builder. The Anglican portion of the cemetery was consecrated on 27 May 1863.

The nonconformist or dissenter's chapel has been pulled down, but the Church of England chapel survives. It has a slender tower and a tall broach spire. The cemetery office also survives but is now privately owned. It has a square clock tower over the main entrance, with a clock dial and a tapering pyramid roof with crested ironwork and weathervane.

The Loughborough foundry records show that Taylors supplied three bells for the Cemetery in 1862-3. They were:

| Bell for           | Founder and date       | Diameter | Note           | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------|----------------|------|------|------|
| Dissenters' chapel | John Taylor & Co, 1862 | 41½      | G (786Hz)      | 12   | 2    | 9    |
| Episcopal Chapel   | John Taylor & Co, 1862 | 50⅝      | E flat (613Hz) | 21   | 1    | 12   |
| Gateway            | John Taylor & Co, 1863 | 15½      | ---            | 0    | 3    | 12   |

The two large bells bore identical inscriptions:

JOHN TAYLOR & C<sup>o</sup>.. BELLFOUNDERS LOUGHBOROUGH LATE OF OXFORD / THIS BELL WAS CAST AND HUNG IN THE MAYORALTY OF HENRY MANTON ESQUIRE A:D: 1862.

*Waist:* ALDERMAN J: H: CUTLER / CHAIRMAN. / ALDERMAN E: C: OSBORNE. / COUNCILLOR G: A: EVERITT. / COUNCILLOR J: GOODE. / COUNCILLOR T: NAISH. /

COUNCILLOR C: J: PHILLIPS. / COUNCILLOR J: WADHAMS. / COUNCILLOR W: WOOD. / MEMBERS OF THE BURIAL BOARD / COMMITTEE.

The small bell for the Gatehouse was cast on 22 February 1863. The firm's daybook contains the following entries relating to the bells:

8 December 1862 – The Burial Board of the Borough of Birmingham.  
 To one Bell for the Episcopal Chapel at the Witton Cemetery etc. 21 Cwt 1 qrs. 12 lb  
 at 1s. 2½d. per lb £144.10.4.  
 Do. For Dissenters Chapel wt 12-2-0 at 1/2½ per lb £85.2.6½.  
 Hangings for the above with framework carriage & fixing as per estimate £37.0.0.  
 [Total] £266.12.10½.  
 To which sh<sup>d</sup>. be added an am<sup>t</sup>. of £2 in consideration for delay of men [no charge]  
 Inscription to order £3.6. per Bell £6.12.0.  
 [Total] £273.4.10½.

Daybook 27 February 1873 – The Burial Board of the Borough of Birmingham.  
 To a small Bell [note in margin: "52 Iron Crook"] for the entrance gates Witton Cemetery wt. 101 lbs at 1/2½ per lb. £6.2.0½.  
 Hangings for Do. with crank roller brasses &c £2.0.0.  
 Oak frame for Do. with 2 Iron Stays & long bolts £1.10.0.  
 [Total] £9.12.0.

Paid by Draft March 14th 1863

The later foundry records include notes on the bells in the two cemetery chapels as they were in November 1956. They were both hung for ringing in oak frames, one in the tower of the Dissenters' chapel and the other in the church tower. They were as described above. Soon afterwards, in August 1957, both bells were taken down and sold to Taylors for scrap.

In August 1957, Taylors cast a new bell for Witton Cemetery, Birmingham. The new bell is:

**Bell**

**Inscription**

1. 213 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1957 \*  
*Waist:* THIS BELL WAS CAST AND HUNG IN THE / MAYORALTY OF HENRY MANTON ESQUIRE A.D. 1862 / ALDERMAN J:H: CUTLER / CHAIRMAN / ALDERMAN E:C: OSBORNE / COUNCILLOR G:A: EVERITT / DO J: GOODE / DO T: NAISH / DO C:J: PHILLIPS / DO J: WADHAMS / DO W: WOOD / MEMBERS OF THE BURIAL BOARD / COMMITTEE

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Note       | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1957 | 29¾      | C (1044Hz) | 4    | 3    | 21   |

According to the Superintendent this bell still hangs in the tower of the Anglican chapel and it still used occasionally. There is no fixed access.

**Cemetery visited:** CJP 24 January 2003: Thanks to the Superintendent and to Taylors

**BIRMINGHAM - Workhouse (former), Winson Green**

The first Birmingham workhouse was built on a site near Steelhouse Lane in 1734. This remained in use, having been taken over by the Guardians after incorporation in 1783, until it was replaced in 1852. A design competition for a new workhouse was held in 1848-9. The buildings were to be erected on a new site at the junction of Dudley Road and Western Road at Winson Green. Designed by J.J. Bateman, the new workhouse was built in 1850-2 and opened on 9 March 1852. Mr. Glenn of Liverpool was the builder. Almost all the original workhouse buildings have now been demolished.

After the demolition, the workhouse bell was donated to the Birmingham City Art Gallery and Museum. It is a small bell, say 12" diameter, with a tall peg argent. The bell has typical brassfoundry mouldings between waist and soundbow but is otherwise without mouldings. It has an incised marking "10" on shoulder. Cast on the low waist is the following inscription:

## BIRMINGHAM WORKHOUSE / BUILT A.D 1851.

No fittings remain. It is not known which part of the workhouse the bell came from.

**Visited:** Bell seen at the Museum by Heather Pickford, 18 October 2016: Workhouse information acknowledged to Peter Higginbotham

### BIRMINGHAM – Corporation

The Warwickshire Quarter Sessions minutes for Michaelmas 1671 refer to the purchase of a new bushel measure for Birmingham. The measure still exists, and it is illustrated in Ratcliff & Johnson (eds) *Warwickshire County Records* Vol.V p.174. It is inscribed

1674 / MANNOR OF BIRMINGHAM

*Opposite: (Crown) C II R*

The style of lettering suggests that this was cast by Anthony Bartlet, the Whitechapel bellfounder. Christopher Dalton has noted a similar bushel measure dated 1670 – probably also by Bartlet – at Shaftesbury Town Hall in Dorset.

### BLACKHEATH – St.James, Waterfall Lane

This church was built in 1899 as a mission church in the parish of St.Paul, Blackheath. The foundation stone was laid on 15 July 1899 and the church was dedicated on 10 November 1900. It was a red brick building with windows of cathedral glass, designed by A. Ellis, architect, of Birmingham. It cost £800. It may have had a small bell.

### BLACKHEATH – St.Paul, Long Lane

The parish of Blackheath was created in July 1869 from parts of the parishes of Rowley Regis, The Quinton and Halesowen. The church was built in the Decorated style in red brick in 1868-9 to the designs of W.J. Hopkins of Worcester. James Wilson of Handsworth was the builder and the total cost of the church and site amounted to £5600. It was consecrated on 4 February 1869. Owing to mining subsidence and structural problems, the church has been strengthened with iron tie-bars. A porch tower at the west end of the church was intended but never built. It would have had an octagonal broach spire. Instead there was a small wooden turret over the west end of the nave. This has been removed and there is no bell now.

The faculty papers state that the wooden bell tower was "originally added as a temporary measure, the intention being to build an imposing brick tower at a later date". The turret was damaged by gales in the Spring of 1947 and a faculty was issued on 10 December 1947 for removing it and "completing the gable end ... with coping stones and elevated cross to match the existing stonework". The work was carried out by the Midland Steeplejack Co, Dudley, at a cost of £470 early in the following year. The bell was apparently disposed of at that time.

There are louvred openings below the gable of the west wall. These were probably for the "sound equipment for reproduction of bells" for which a faculty was granted on 14 April 1948.

**Church visited:** CJP 25 August 1988

### BLACKWELL (Worcestershire) – St.Catherine

The present church was built in 1939-40 and consecrated on 7 June 1941. It replaced a wooden mission church of 1882 (in the parish of The Lickey) which formerly stood on the same site. The original church was built by John Collett of Balsall Heath and opened on 19 September 1882.

The new church was built by J. and A. Brazier of Bromsgrove and the architect was Herbert L. North (b.1872-d.1941) of Llanfairfechan. It was built in a Norwegian style with a central lantern tower with a saddleback roof. According to contemporary press reports the church included "almost every device of modern ingenuity" including "... radio equipment in the lantern tower to broadcast bell-ringing".

There is no bell, but recorded bells are still broadcast from loudspeakers in the tower. The architect's father was Thomas North (b.1830-d.1884), the author of several county books on church bells. One wonders what he would have thought of his son's experiments with radio equipment and loudspeakers instead of bells!

St.Catherine's is still a district church in the parish of The Lickey and it has never become a parish church.

**Visited:** CJP 25 August 1988

### **BLACKWELL (Worcestershire) – Holy Trinity Methodist Church**

Blackwell Methodist Church was built to the designs of John Cotton, architect, and opened on 25 May 1882. The contractors were Brazier & Weaver of Bromsgrove and the cost of building the church was borne by the Taylor family who owned the nearby Linthurst brick works. It closed as a place of worship in 2002, since when it has been converted for use as a workshop.

The building has an octagonal bell turret with an open arcaded belfry stage and an oak shingled spire. There is a small bell, hung for swing chiming. It is about 10 inches diameter with a peg argent and apparently without inscription or marks. The fittings include an iron bar stock, iron chiming lever, counterbalance and clapper. The bell is suspended from beams at the base of the spire.

**Visited:** CJP 7 September 1971 and (binoculars) 24 April 2003

### **BOLDMERE – St.Michael**

St Michael's church was built to serve the Boldmere district of the parish of Sutton Coldfield in 1856-7. J.F. Wadmore of London was the architect and Isaac Highway of Walsall was the builder, the value of his contract being £2665. The foundation stone was laid on 10 September 1856 and the church – then consisting of a chancel, nave and tower – was consecrated on 29 September 1858. The north aisle and the spire were added in 1871, and the church was further enlarged in 1895-6 when a south aisle was added by J.A. Chatwin. Only this aisle and the tower and spire survived a disastrous fire on 10 July 1964, which burnt out the old part of the building. This was rebuilt to a design by C.H. While when the church was restored on a smaller scale after the fire. After restoration the church was re-consecrated on 28 September 1967.

Prior to the installation of the present ring in 1906 there was a single bell by Blews – dating from 1870 when the spire was added – with a diameter of 29 inches and weighing about 5 cwt. This must have replaced an earlier bell dating from the erection of the church and tower in 1856-7. It is mentioned in a report in the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* of 23 May 1870 where it is stated that Messrs William Blews & Sons "purpose next week casting ... single bells for Boldmere, Sutton, and other churches".

The tower now contains a ring of eight bells in the key of F natural (697hz or F-3cents), as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1906 / ( <i>ivy leaf border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist: (Barwell's mark)</i>    |
| 2.          | BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1906 / + ( <i>ivy leaf border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist: (Barwell's mark)</i>  |
| 3.          | BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1906 / ( <i>ivy leaf border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist: (Barwell's mark)</i>    |
| 4.          | BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1906 / ( <i>ivy leaf border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist: (Barwell's mark)</i>    |
| 5.          | BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1906 / ++ ( <i>ivy leaf border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist: (Barwell's mark)</i> |
| 6.          | BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1906 / ( <i>ivy leaf border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist: (Barwell's mark)</i>    |
| 7.          | BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1906 / + ( <i>ivy leaf border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist: (Barwell's mark)</i>  |



8. BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM / + (*ivy leaf border all round*)  
*Waist:* TO THE GLORY OF GOD / AND IN MEMORY OF THEIR FATHER / THOMAS  
INSTON / THIS RING OF BELLS WAS GIVEN / BY HARRIET AND CHARLOTTE INSTON /  
A.D. 1906

| <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.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 27 $\frac{1}{8}$ | 1407      | F           | 4           | 1           | 9           |
| 2.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 1324.5    | E           | 4           | 1           | 11          |
| 3.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1177      | D           | 4           | 2           | 0           |
| 4.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ | 1040      | C           | 5           | 0           | 24          |
| 5.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 33 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 933       | B flat      | 6           | 3           | 6           |
| 6.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 35               | 877.5     | A           | 7           | 2           | 3           |
| 7.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ | 772       | G           | 9           | 3           | 3           |
| 8.          | James Barwell, 1906     | 44               | 697       | F           | 13          | 3           | 14          |

A complete ring by Barwell, these bells were all cast without canons. They have old-style tuning, as is shown by the following analysis of their principal harmonics as analysed by Christopher Dalton:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Nominal</b> | <b>Fundamental</b> | <b>Hum</b> | <b>Tierce</b> | <b>Quint</b> |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1.          | F + 12         | Eb - 22            | G - 40     | Ab + 12       | D - 42       |
| 2.          | E + 08         | D + 35             | F + 40     | G + 14        | C + 36       |
| 3.          | D + 03         | Db - 27            | E - 38     | F + 14        | Bb + 40      |
| 4.          | C - 11         | B - 44             | Db + 14    | Eb - 08       | Ab + 14      |
| 5.          | Bb + 01        | Bt + 15            | C + 20     | D - 32        | G + 30       |
| 6.          | A - 05         | A - 43             | B + 12     | Db - 38       | Gb - 20      |
| 7.          | G - 27         | Gb + 43            | Ab - 03    | Bb + 01       | Eb - 34      |
| 8.          | F - 03         | F + 05             | G - 27     | A - 42        | Db + 32      |

The bells were offered in April 1906 by Harriet and Charlotte Inston of Moseley in memory of their father Thomas Inston. A faculty was issued on 18 September. The cost of the bells, frame, fittings and sound deadening floor amounted to £607.11.6., less £25 allowed for the old bell. They were cast and hung by Barwell and dedicated by the Archdeacon of Aston on 22 December 1906. A contemporary report states that the bells were "installed under the personal supervision of Mr. Godden", i.e. W.H. Godden who was Barwell's foundry manager and a well-known Birmingham ringer. The bells were hung in a cast iron lowside frame (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.k, layout 8.3) with cast iron stocks, steel gudgeons, plain bearings, wheels, stays and sliders etc as supplied by Barwell in 1906.

The bells remain largely as installed in 1906, but necessary repairs and improvements have been carried out locally in order to keep the bells in ringable condition. The bearings were modified in 1946-7 when the bells were overhauled – at a cost of £55.9.2 instead of the £1200 estimated by "a firm of bell manufacturers" - by Arthur Grayson and two other members of the congregation. The clappers were re-bushed locally in 1985. In 1989 the tenor was rehung on ball bearings by the local ringers who later fitted ball bearings to the other seven bells in 1993.

The faculty for the bells also authorised a brass plate, to be erected in the ringing room, inscribed: "To the Glory of God this peal of Bells was inaugurated A D 1906 A.E.R. Bedford, M.A. Vicar, A.R. Lynex } W. Randle } Churchwardens."

In the ringing room there is a Gent "Pul-syn-etic" master clock, serial number 7435 dated 13 February 1951. This came from the power station at Feckenham in Worcestershire. It is not connected to a dial. It is simply preserved as a heritage feature.

**Visited:** CJP 10 June 1988: Thanks to Dave Reeves

**BOLDMERE – St.Nicholas (R.C.), Jockey Road**

The first Roman Catholic chapel serving Boldmere was erected in 1841 to the designs of A.W.N. Pugin. The present church was built in 1953, and when the old chapel was demolished in the 1960s its bell was retained as a memento of the earlier history of the mission. The bell is suspended between brackets above the internal main doors between the narthex and the nave. It has a clapper and it is hung from an arched wooden stock fixed to the two supporting brackets.

The bell itself is an unmarked general foundry casting, with six crudely-formed canons, with a diameter of 12 inches. It has the appearance of being a Birmingham-cast bell of about 1840.

**Visited:** Geoff Pick, 11 January 2012: Thanks to Geoff Pick and the Parish Priest

## **BORDESLEY, All Saints – see SMALL HEATH, All Saints**

### **BORDESLEY – Holy Trinity (former church), Camp Hill**

The first steps towards the building of a new church at Bordesley (in the parish of Aston) were taken with the establishment of a building committee in November 1818. By the following February the plans prepared by Francis Goodwin of London, architect, had been accepted and the committee set about raising the necessary funds to build and furnish the church. Fortunately, most of the cost was borne by the Church Building Commissioners who provided £14,246 in all, leaving only £3000 to be raised locally. The foundation stone was laid on 29 September 1820 and the church was consecrated on 23 January 1823. The builder was John Walthew of Birmingham and the cast iron window tracery was made by Wetherhead and Glover of Derby under contract to Goddington and Marshall of Birmingham who were engaged in April 1820 to provide the founders' and smiths' work for the building. Holy Trinity remained a chapel of ease until a parish was assigned from Aston in 1864.

The building is a fine Commissioners church of 1820-22 in the Perpendicular style. A writer in 1827 "regretted that the Commissioners did not allow a tower or spire", but there were turrets at each angle "terminated by dwarf spires". The lack of a tower did not prevent the committee from considering the installation of bells, and on 30 March 1822 the sub-committee was instructed to "make enquiries respecting the practicality of hanging a small peal of Bells at Bordesley Chapel, their weight and probable expence". With the building nearing completion, the Committee met on 28 August 1822 to consider letters from Mr. Drury and Mr. Mears respecting bells. They resolved "that Mr. Goodwin be requested to call and inspect the bells manufactured by Mr. Drury and give his Opinion thereon". Drury is not otherwise known as a bellfounder at this date – although a James Drury of 4 Red Lion Street, Clerkenwell, London appears in directories some thirty years earlier (1785-1790) as a "musical bell founder) - but it is interesting to find that the Committee were prepared to consider him as an alternative to Thomas Mears of the well-established Whitechapel foundry. In the event, neither of these founders secured the contract and the idea of a peal of bells was abandoned.

Two bells were obtained for the new church from John Rudhall in 1823 and these were hung within the roof space at the west end of the building, with each bell being hung in a separate frame (to swing north-south) on either side of the clock dial. The cost was borne by the Aston churchwardens who were obliged by law to provide certain fittings for the new church at the expense of the parish. The accounts from 1823-6 include payments totalling £110 to "Rudhall on acct of Bells at Bordesley Chapel" and among the surviving vouchers there are two letters from Rudhall requesting payment together with a copy of his original account dated 5 June 1823. The total cost was £197.6.3, made up of £150.6.3 for the bells and £47 for "2 Clappers, Stocks, Wheels, Frame hanging &c".

Rudhall clearly expected immediate payment, but he had to wait over three years for his money, chiefly owing to the negligence of Mr. Fowler, the Aston Churchwarden, who got in a mess with the parish accounts. He wrote twice, first on 5 October 1825 and again on 5 November 1826 after the final part of his bill had been settled. Annoyed at being paid on "a Draft at thirty days date" after such a long wait, he expressed the hope that "something for interest will yet be allowed". His plea seems to have been ignored.

The last service was held in the church on 2 January 1966 and the building was formally declared redundant on 16 April 1971. The building still stands, and it has been used for a variety of purposes since it ceased to be a church in 1971. The interior, although partitioned, remains largely intact and steps are now (2002) being taken to find secure future uses for the building.

A faculty for the removal of the bells was issued on 5 September 1974. Sold to a Mr. Paul Eaton of Shirley for £200, they had to be got out through the roof, and under the terms of the faculty Eaton was responsible not only for removing them but also "for making good any stonework or timber damaged or removed by the lifting operation".

By 1977 the bells were in the yard of Snead & Knibbs, monumental masons, in Yardley Road, Birmingham, where Richard Jones examined them. There were no fittings apart from the clappers. Both bells had canons. Details were:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | IOHN RUDHALL FEC <sup>T</sup> . J823 ∴. ( <i>nine stars</i> ) ∴.  |
| 2.          | CAST AT GLOUCESTER BY IOHN RUDHALL J823. ( <i>medallion</i> ) ( <i>star</i> ) ( <i>arabesque</i> ) ( <i>medallion</i> ) ( <i>star</i> ) ( <i>arabesque</i> ) ( <i>two medallions</i> ) ( <i>arabesque</i> ) ( <i>star</i> ) |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | John Rudhall, 1823      | 30              | 5           | 0           | 11          |
| 2.          | John Rudhall, 1823      | 46              | 16          | 1           | 14          |

A clock dial in the centre of the west front is shown in an engraving of the church published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in September 1827. In his *Recollections*, John Day noted that the clock at Bordesley chapel was said to have been made by Thomas Bingham, the Birmingham ringer, in about c.1825. Proof of this is to be found in the Aston records, where the accounts for 1825-6 include a payment of £100 to "Thomas Bingham as per contract for the Clock put up at Bordesley chapel". The vouchers include Bingham's estimate dated 8 August 1825 for the work, together with his receipt of 24 June 1826 "for a new eight day Clock with quarters put up at Trinity Chapel". Bingham had the care of the clock at £5 *per annum* until at least 1830, and his half-yearly bills for "attention to the Chapel Clock" survive among the vouchers. The original clock was still present in 1946 when Ron Dove noted an old cage clock with ding-dong quarters. The 5ft stone dial had ornamental chapters.

**Visited:** RHD 8 May 1946; Bells seen by RLJ 26 November 1977

### **BORDESLEY – Ravenhurst, Camp Hill**

Joseph McKenna notes that the probate inventory of Richard Smallbroke dated 26 July 1613 mentions a clock and bell in his home at Ravenhurst, Camp Hill. The inventory refers to "a Clock loft ... [with] a clocke with [a] great bell and all the poyse and weights thereunto belonging"

### **BORDESLEY – St.Alban the Martyr, Conybere Street, Highgate**

St.Alban's began as a licensed mission church in Leopold Street in 1865, serving an area of the parish of Holy Trinity, Bordesley. The incumbent at the time was Dr.Oldknow, the Tractarian vicar, who recruited the Rev. James Pollock, assisted by his brother Thomas, to develop the work of the new church in the district. The parish eventually became a stronghold of the Catholic tradition in the City, despite riots over ritualistic practices and sustained opposition from militant evangelicals in the early years of its history.

A parish was created from Bordesley in 1871, a larger church having erected to the designs of John Davis earlier in the year. The new church opened on Tuesday 7 March 1871. According to the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* of 8 March 1871 it was provided with a bell, given by Mr. Thomas Middlemore and "supplied by Messrs. Blews and Son, of this town". The church was "one of the cheapest" erected in Birmingham, costing only £2000. Designs for a modest bell tower on the Leopold Street church were prepared by Charles Edge in April 1874 and the small bell was placed in a central bellcote over the chancel arch. Shortly afterwards John Loughborough Pearson prepared designs for a permanent church which

It is a large brick building with a vaulted stone roof, in the thirteenth-century style much favoured by the architect. There are small turrets on each side of the west front, one of which (on the north) was built to accommodate a small bell while the other (on the south) contains a spiral stair. The architect also planned a tower and spire (170 feet high) over the south west porch, but only the lower stage (to a height of 25 feet) was erected at first. The tower was later completed to a design by E.F. Reynolds and built in 1938 through the generosity of a parishioner, James Frederick Deeming, who gave money specifically for the purpose.

| <i>Bell</i> | <i>Inscription</i> |
|-------------|--------------------|
|-------------|--------------------|

- | Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Note       | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co. 1881 | 18"      | D (2313Hz) | 1    | 1    | 25   |

Settled Apl.28/82.

**Bell** **Inscription**

- | Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Note            | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|-----------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co. 1955 | 18       | B flat (1847Hz) | 1    | 0    | 24   |

| <i><b>Bell</b></i> | <i><b>Inscription</b></i> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1                  | 1                         |
| 2                  | 2                         |
| 3                  | 3                         |
| 4                  | 4                         |
| 5                  | 5                         |
| 6                  | 6                         |
| 7                  | 7                         |
| 8                  | 8                         |
| 9                  | 9                         |
| 10                 | 10                        |
| 11                 | 11                        |
| 12                 | 12                        |
| 13                 | 13                        |
| 14                 | 14                        |
| 15                 | 15                        |
| 16                 | 16                        |
| 17                 | 17                        |
| 18                 | 18                        |
| 19                 | 19                        |
| 20                 | 20                        |
| 21                 | 21                        |
| 22                 | 22                        |
| 23                 | 23                        |
| 24                 | 24                        |
| 25                 | 25                        |
| 26                 | 26                        |
| 27                 | 27                        |
| 28                 | 28                        |
| 29                 | 29                        |
| 30                 | 30                        |
| 31                 | 31                        |
| 32                 | 32                        |
| 33                 | 33                        |
| 34                 | 34                        |
| 35                 | 35                        |
| 36                 | 36                        |
| 37                 | 37                        |
| 38                 | 38                        |
| 39                 | 39                        |
| 40                 | 40                        |
| 41                 | 41                        |
| 42                 | 42                        |
| 43                 | 43                        |
| 44                 | 44                        |
| 45                 | 45                        |
| 46                 | 46                        |
| 47                 | 47                        |
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| 77                 | 77                        |
| 78                 | 78                        |
| 79                 | 79                        |
| 80                 | 80                        |
| 81                 | 81                        |
| 82                 | 82                        |
| 83                 | 83                        |
| 84                 | 84                        |
| 85                 | 85                        |
| 86                 | 86                        |
| 87                 | 87                        |
| 88                 | 88                        |
| 89                 | 89                        |
| 90                 | 90                        |
| 91                 | 91                        |
| 92                 | 92                        |
| 93                 | 93                        |
| 94                 | 94                        |
| 95                 | 95                        |
| 96                 | 96                        |
| 97                 | 97                        |
| 98                 | 98                        |
| 99                 | 99                        |
| 100                | 100                       |

- | Bell | Founder and date        | Diameter         | Note   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------------|------------------|--------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1938 | 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ | E flat | 3    | 2    | 1    |

The Whitechapel foundry records indicate that this bell was supplied by Mears & Stainbank in October 1938. The initials in the inscription are those of the donor, Mr. W.A. Clarke. The bell hangs in a wooden frame on the fourth floor of the tower. It is fixed to a wooden beam and sounded with a counterbalanced hammer with a wooden head.

In 2002 the parish obtained a faculty for the installation of a versatile Belltron digital bell system or electronic carillon. The introduction of 'synthetic bells' has been permitted here because it would be physically impossible to install 'real bells' in the tower. The original system was replaced by a more modern version about ten years after it was first installed.

**Visited:** CJP 24 August 1988; Sam Austin, April 2004; Thanks to Chris Smith, 2020

### **BORDESLEY – St.Andrew (former church), St.Andrew's Road**

Built when Bordesley was still part of the vast parish of Aston, St.Andrew's was the fifth and last of the churches erected by the Birmingham Church Building Society through the "Ten Churches Fund". The architect was Richard Cromwell Carpenter who designed a relatively plain but sizeable church in the gothic style, much praised by contemporary architectural and ecclesiological writers. The foundation stone was laid on 23 July 1844 and the church was consecrated on 30 September 1846. A parish was assigned from Aston in August 1846.

As first built, the church had a tower and spire. The Whitechapel foundry records show that a small bell was ordered by Carpenter and invoiced on 21 October 1847 to Mr. Empson, builder, Birmingham – probably for St.Andrew's. It was 14" diameter, weighing 0-2-6½, supplied with stock and clapper etc. It cost £5.3.2.

In 1891 a set of thirteen Harrington's tubular bells was placed in the tower, these being dedicated on 17 November. This was reported in the *Birmingham Daily Post* on 18 November 1891. The cost was chiefly borne by John Corbett Esq who gave £100 towards the bell fund. At the same time, "a new flooring was placed in St.Andrew's tower and the old belfry repaired".

In the 1890s, however, the church and parish went through a period of hardship and misfortune. In 1892 it was reported that "New 6ft railing had been placed in the churchyard to protect it from desecration". The church and tower were badly damaged in a storm in 1894 and funds were so tight that only minimal repairs could be made. By 1900 the building was virtually in ruins, so much so that the Bishop described it as "a scene of desolation enough to make angels weep". By July 1900, five of the tubular bells had been stolen. At about this time the Vicar resigned in despair, and later in the year the City Surveyor condemned the church as unsafe and ordered a partial demolition.

Under the new Vicar, the Rev. John Harold Richards, a team of volunteers led by A.E. Douglas set about restoring the church – a task that was completed between 1901 and 1908. In 1901 Douglas and his team repaired the roof and the outside of the church, and the spire was removed in compliance with the request of the City Surveyor. In the following year, stained glass from Hagley was re-fixed in the east window at St.Andrew's. Further work on the top of the tower followed in 1904, the last stone of the old spire being lowered by the volunteers on 22 October. By 1905 the church had been entirely re-floored and re-seated.

The completion of the restoration was marked with a service of thanksgiving on Easter Day in 1908, when the rebuilt east window, a new peal of tubular bells and a new flag were dedicated. On this occasion "The volunteers who had removed the old spire and finished the tower restoration met on top of the tower and sang the doxology".

Tilley & Walters record that a new bell by Barwell (28½" diameter, weighing 4¾ cwt) was also installed in 1908. This bell was later rehung with new fittings by Taylors in 1977-8, at which time its details were noted as:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Note</b>    | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | James Barwell, 1908     | 28¼             | [not recorded] | 4           | 2           | 26          |

Taylors visited the belfry on 23 March 1977 and found that it contained a steel bell (20½" diameter) and a solitary tubular bell. These were scrapped when the Barwell bell was rehung in 1977-8.

Problems with the fabric resulted in a partial demolition of the church in 1977-8, the remaining parts (including the tower, north aisle and choir vestry) being restored and modernised for continued use. The work was carried out at a cost of £65,000 of which

£15,000 was spent on repairing the tower. The nave, south aisle, chancel and vestry were all demolished. The work on the tower in 1977-8 involved the provision of a new steel framework for the bell designed by B.L. Gill, the structural engineer working on the project with the architects Lancaster and Partners, and made by the contractors, Robert Bridgeman & Sons Ltd of Lichfield. Taylors provided a new cast iron stock with gudgeons and ball bearings, clapper assembly and iron chiming lever. The installation work was done by the contractors.

Unfortunately further structural problems with the roof came to light soon after the work had been completed, leading to the closure of the church in July 1982. It was declared redundant in December 1983. An order in council authorising the demolition of the church was made on 18 December 1985. Just over twelve months later the site was sold and it has since been redeveloped for housing. The bell was stolen some time during the period between the closure of the church and its demolition

**Site visited:** CJP 7 August 1988

### **BORDESLEY – St.Benedict, Hob Moor Road**

This church originated as a mission of St.Oswald's, the original iron mission room having been opened on 17 October 1898. The iron church was replaced by a brick building, dedicated on 28 March 1905, itself replaced soon afterwards by a permanent church. The present brick church of 1909-10 was built in the Romanesque style to the designs G. Salway Nicol of Nicol & Nicol of Birmingham, architects. John Barnsley & Son were the builders. The foundation stone was laid on 1 May 1909 and the new church was consecrated on 30 April 1910. A parish, legally known as Small Heath, St.Benedict, was created shortly afterwards.

The church has an open bell turret on west gable, with a single bell:

#### **Bell**

#### **Inscription**

1. 196 / Tell it out that the Lord is King \* \* \* / (*vine border all round*)  
*Waist: (Taylor's circular mark) / \* 1909 \**

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter                       | Note       | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1909 | 24 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | F (1399Hz) | 3    | 0    | 4    |

The bell is hung for swing chiming with a bar stock, wall-mounted plain bearings, clapper and independent staple and a large plywood wheel of unusual form. The wheel is probably a later replacement for the original one.

**Visited:** CJP 27 July 1988 (ladders); DLC and SEA 6 September 1995

### **BORDESLEY, St.Oswald – see SMALL HEATH, St.Oswald**

### **BORDESLEY – St.Patrick (former church), Frank Street and Highgate Street**

St.Patrick's originated as a mission church of St.Alban's, licensed in 1873. A school-chapel was licensed in October 1889 and later this became a schoolroom when the church was built. In 1894 the architect John Loughborough Pearson provided plans for a permanent church of which the nave and aisles were built with a temporary iron chancel in 1895-6. The church was consecrated on 9 December 1899. The apsidal chancel was completed in 1909-10 under the supervision of Frank L Pearson and consecrated on 16 April 1910.

The intended south-west tower was never completed, but a small bell was provided for the church in 1896. Mears & Stainbank invoiced the architect J.L.Pearson for a bell for St.Patrick's, Birmingham on 5 November 1896. They had supplied a 17" bell "with iron stock, clapper, wheel, bearings, roller and rope" and a "wrought iron frame covered with zinc hood" for £16. The exact weight of the bell is not recorded.

The church became surplus to requirements as a result of a redevelopment scheme in the early 1960s. It was demolished in about 1966, and the parish – created from St.Paul and St.Thomas, Balsall Heath, in 1900 - was abolished in 1973.

### **BORDESLEY – St.Paul, Belcher's Lane and Finnemore Road, Bordesley Green**

| Bell | Inscription  |
|------|--|
| 1.   | ( <i>blank</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> CARR'S / SMETHWICK / 1912. |

1. (blank)  
Waist: CARR'S / SMETHWICK / 1912.

The bell was cast without canons and it has not been quarter turned. It is hung for swing chiming with its original fittings of 1912 including a wooden stock, plate gudgeons, iron chiming lever and clapper with independent staple. It is suspended from a wooden cross-beam fixed to the top of two steel uprights bolted to the steel framework of the tower. Two steel plates hang down from the cross-beam and the gudgeons of the bell rotate in holes drilled in these plates.

1. [No number] / Cadbury Brothers Limited \* Bournville \* May 1916 (*border*)  
*Waist: (Taylor's circular mark)*

The Taylor daybook entry regarding the bell is as follows:

15 July 1916.

Messrs Cadbury Bros Ltd, Bournville, Birmingham.

One new works bell according to quotation 13 April 1916, note C weight 6-0-3 £58.16.0.

Headstock & bolts for ditto (no gudgeons or bearings) £1.14.0.

Inscription 39 letters @ 6d 19s.6d.

Clapper & crownstaple (loop on end of flight) £1.17.6.

[Total] £63.7.0.

Settled 6 Sept 1916

Entirely separate from the bell, the works once had a Pul-syn-etic clock system supplied at some time before 1945 by Gents of Leicester. The location and date are unclear.

**Visited:** CJP and HEP 6 March 2004: thanks to Arthur Casey

### **BOURNVILLE – Girls' Baths, Bournville Lane**

The Girls' Baths at Bournville were built in 1902-4. The architect was G.H. Lewin and the building has a clock tower to the right-hand side of the main façade. The tower has tapered buttresses to the lower stage. It is square at the level of the illuminated clock dials, and it is topped by an octagonal turret. The clock is a non-striking timepiece only.

**Not visited:** *Ex.Inf.* Arthur Casey

### **BOURNVILLE – Junior Schools, Linden Road**

The Bournville carillon is housed in the Junior Schools in Linden Road. The Schools were built in 1904-6 to the designs of W. Alexander Harvey, the architect responsible for the layout of the Bournville Estate and the design of many of the principal buildings. Pevsner describes the school as being in Harvey's characteristic early C20th Tudor style with a dash of Art Nouveau. The earliest plans for the school date from 1904. The foundation stone in the main entrance was laid on 12 April 1905 and the schools opened on 23 April 1906.

The buildings have a massive entrance tower at the south east corner, with the carillon visible on the roof and large cast iron clock dials (with the motto "CARPE DIEM" round the chapter ring and "BS" – for Bournville Schools – on the hands) on the south and east faces. The open cupola containing the carillon was rebuilt in 1934, replacing a small belfry built of brick with a short spike or spirelet and standing on the north west corner of the tower. Like the original building, the present cupola was designed by Harvey. The original belfry was a last minute addition to Harvey's original design, made after George Cadbury decided late in 1905 or early in 1906 that the school was an appropriate building in which to place the carillon.

The outline history of the Bournville carillon is as follows:

- 1906 Carillon of 22 bells provided by Taylors. Two octaves with the bass bell in F. The bottom end was not chromatic – the three semitones F#, G# and C# being omitted
- 1907 Practice clavier supplied
- 1923 15 bells added by Taylors to make the bottom end chromatic and extend the top end to give a carillon of three fully chromatic octaves. Now 37 bells in all
- 1925 5 more bells – two trebles and three bass bells in C, D and E – added by Taylors. Now 42 bells with a bass bell in C, forming three and a half octaves (omitting the lower C# and D# bells). The large bells were hung in a steel structure on the roof of the main tower
- 1934 6 more bells – three new trebles and three bass bells of A sharp, C sharp and D sharp – added by Gillett & Johnston, and 38 of the bells recast. Now 48 bells with a bass bell in A sharp – all by Gillett & Johnston except for one Taylor bell of 1906 and three of 1925.
- 1951 The two largest bells moved into a higher position in the frame by Gillett & Johnston
- 1988 Major restoration of the carillon for the Bournville Village Trust by Taylors
- 2015 The top two octaves replaced with 25 new bells by Taylors (the old bells retained for separate use)



### *The present bells*

Based on inspection of the bells, along with information in the Croydon foundry records and from an account of the new carillon published in the *Ringling World* of 3 August 1934 p.485, details of the bells as existing up to 2015 (for the replacement bells, see below) were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram) / GIVEN IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / BY HIS WIFE, E.M.C., AND SON G.C. 1934.</i><br><i>Low waist: 1</i> |
| 2.          | GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram) / GIVEN IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / BY HIS WIFE, E.M.C., AND SON G.C. 1934.</i><br><i>Low waist: 2</i> |
| 3.          | GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram) / GIVEN IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / BY HIS WIFE, E.M.C., AND SON G.C. 1934.</i><br><i>Low waist: 3</i> |
| 4.          | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 4</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 25</i>                                  |
| 5.          | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 5</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 25</i>                                  |
| 6.          | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 6</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 23</i>                                  |
| 7.          | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 7</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 23</i>                                  |
| 8.          | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 8</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 23</i>                                  |
| 9.          | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 9</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 23</i>                                  |
| 10.         | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 10</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 23</i>                                 |
| 11.         | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 11</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 23</i>                                 |
| 12.         | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.<br><i>Waist: (CFJ monogram)</i><br><i>Low waist: 12</i><br><i>Opposite: 19 T 23</i>                                 |
| 13.         | RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.   |

- Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 13*  
*Opposite: 19 T 23*
14. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 14*  
*Opposite: 19 T 23*
15. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 15*  
*Opposite: 19 T 23*
16. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 16*  
*Opposite: 19 T 23*
17. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 17*  
*Opposite: 19 T 23*
18. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 18*  
*Opposite: 19 T 06*
19. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 19*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
20. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 20*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
21. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram)*  
*Low waist: 21*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
22. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / MUSICAM DOCET AMOR.*  
*Low waist: 22*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
23. RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / ADORAMUS TE.*  
*Low waist: 23*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
24. *Crown: 4960*  
 RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / BENEDICIMUS TE.*  
*Low waist: 24*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
25. *Crown: 4961*  
 RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / LAUDAMUS TE.*  
*Low waist: 25*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
26. *Crown: 5081*  
 RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.

- Waist: (CFJ monogram) / ORA ET VIGILA.*  
*Low waist: 26*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
27. *Crown: 4963*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / PER CRUCEM AD STELLAS.*  
*Low waist: 27*  
*Opposite: T 1906*
28. *Crown: 4964*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / AUDITE ET VENITE.*  
*Low waist: 28*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
29. *Crown: 5083*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / NON CLAMOR SED AMOR CANTAT IN AURE DEI.*  
*Low waist: 29*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
30. *Crown: 4966*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / SERVITE DOMINO IN LAETITIA.*  
*Low waist: 30*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
31. *Crown: 4967*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.*  
*Low waist: 31*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
32. *Crown: 4968*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.*  
*Low waist: 32*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
33. *Crown: 5058*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / ON EARTH PEACE.*  
*Low waist: 33*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
34. *Crown: 4969*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / LIFE MEANS – LEARNING TO ABHOR / THE FALSE AND LOVE THE TRUE.*  
*Low waist: 34*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
35. *Crown: 5059*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / JESUS BE OUR SPEDE.*  
*Low waist: 35*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
36. *Crown: 5060*  
RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / PEACE AND GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD.*  
*Low waist: 36*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
37. *Crown: 5061*

- RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / RING OUT THE FALSE, RING IN THE TRUE.*  
*Low waist: 37*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
38. *Crown: 4970*  
 RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / RING OUT THE OLD, RING IN THE NEW.*  
*Low waist: 38*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, 1906.*
39. *Crown: 5062*  
 RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / PRAISE TO THE HOLIEST IN THE HEIGHT / AND IN THE DEPTH BE PRAISE.*  
*Low waist: 39*  
*Opposite: 19 TAYLOR / LOUGHBOROUGH 23*
40. *Crown: 4971*  
 RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / RING OUT THE DARKNESS OF THE LAND / RING IN THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE.*  
*Low waist: 40*  
*Opposite: JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / LOUGHBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE, 1906.*
41. *Crown: 5063*  
 RECAST BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1934.  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / WHO DIED 24<sup>TH</sup>.. OCTOBER 1922 / HIS SON GEORGE GAVE 15 BELLS / TO COMPLETE THIS CARILLON, 1923*  
*Low waist: 41*  
*Opposite: 19 TAYLOR / LOUGHBOROUGH 23*
42. 225 / GIVEN BY GEORGE CADBURY, 1906, TO THE VILLAGE OF BOVRNVILLE.  
*(border) (border) (border) / (large vine border all round)*  
*Waist: WHENE'ER THE SWEET CHVRCH BELL / PEALS OVER HILL AND DELL / MAY JESVS CHRIST BE PRAISED*  
*Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark)*  
*Low waist: 42*
43. 271 / *(Floral border all round)*  
*Waist: RING IN THE COMMON LOVE OF GOOD / \* \* \* / E.M.C. AND G.C. JUNR. / 1925*  
*Opposite: 19 (Taylor's circular mark) 25*  
*Low waist: 43*
44. GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON. / 4972  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / GIVEN IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / BY HIS WIFE, E.M.C., AND SON, G.C. 1934.*  
*Low waist: 44*
45. 253 / *(Floral border all round)*  
*Waist: BREAK FORTH INTO JOY AND SING TOGETHER / \* \* \* / E.M.C. AND G.C. JUNR. / 1925*  
*Opposite: 19 (Taylor's circular mark) 25*  
*Low waist: 45*
46. GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON. / 4973  
*Waist: (CFJ monogram) / GIVEN IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / BY HIS WIFE, E.M.C., AND SON, G.C. 1934.*  
*Low waist: 46*
47. 329 / *(Floral border all round)*  
*Waist: IN MEMORY OF / GEORGE CADBURY / WHO LOVED THE SOUND OF THE BELLS / \* \* \* / THIS BELL IS GIVEN BY HIS WIFE / ELIZABETH MARY / 1925*  
*Opposite: 19 (Taylor's circular mark) 25*

- Low waist:* 47  
 48. *Crown:* 4974  
*(Large floral border all round)*  
*Waist:* GIVEN IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / BY HIS WIFE, E.M.C., AND SON,  
 G.C. 1934.  
*Low waist:* 48  
*Opposite:* GILLETT & JOHNSTON / CROYDON.

The inscriptions on bells 1-23 are all neatly engraved or incised on the bells, the remainder are cast in relief. Bell numbers appear on the low waist on each bell (those on the four older Taylor bells being incised). There do not appear to be any serial numbers on bells 1-23 (those given below are taken from the tuning books), but the numbers are cast on the remaining bells of 1934 – mostly on the shoulder, but below the inscription band on some of the larger bells. The inscriptions of the original bells of 1906, 1923 and 1925 have been reproduced on the new ones.

| Bell | Founder and date         | Number | Diameter                         | Nominal | Note    | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs.                           |
|------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|------|------|--------------------------------|
| 1.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4937   | 6 <sup>11</sup> / <sub>16</sub>  | 7350    | A sharp | 0    | 0    | 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> |
| 2.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5078   | 6 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>    | 6950    | A       | 0    | 0    | 11                             |
| 3.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5090   | 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub>   | 6550    | G sharp | 0    | 0    | 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| 4.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4940   | 7 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>16</sub>   | 6184    | G       | 0    | 0    | 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| 5.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4941   | 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>    | 5846    | F sharp | 0    | 0    | 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| 6.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4998   | 7 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>16</sub>   | 5508    | F       | 0    | 0    | 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> |
| 7.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4999   | 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>    | 5202    | E       | 0    | 0    | 13                             |
| 8.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5056   | 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub>   | 4900    | D sharp | 0    | 0    | 13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> |
| 9.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5057   | 8 <sup>9</sup> / <sub>16</sub>   | 4626    | D       | 0    | 0    | 17                             |
| 10.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5074   | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>    | 4369    | C sharp | 0    | 0    | 20 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> |
| 11.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4947   | 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>    | 4121    | C       | 0    | 0    | 22 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| 12.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4948   | 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>16</sub>  | 3888    | B       | 0    | 0    | 26                             |
| 13.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4949   | 10 <sup>9</sup> / <sub>16</sub>  | 3668    | A sharp | 0    | 1    | 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  |
| 14.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4950   | 11                               | 3467    | A       | 0    | 1    | 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  |
| 15.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4951   | 11 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 3266    | G sharp | 0    | 1    | 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> |
| 16.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4952   | 11 <sup>15</sup> / <sub>16</sub> | 3085    | G       | 0    | 1    | 14 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> |
| 17.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4953   | 12 <sup>9</sup> / <sub>16</sub>  | 2916    | F sharp | 0    | 1    | 19 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| 18.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4954   | 13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>16</sub>  | 2748    | F       | 0    | 2    | 1                              |
| 19.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4955   | 13 <sup>9</sup> / <sub>16</sub>  | 2595    | E       | 0    | 2    | 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  |
| 20.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4956   | 14 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 2443    | D sharp | 0    | 2    | 14 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| 21.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4957   | 15 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 2310    | D       | 0    | 2    | 25 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> |
| 22.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4958   | 16                               | 2180    | C sharp | 0    | 3    | 11                             |
| 23.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4959   | 16 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 2056    | C       | 1    | 0    | 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>  |
| 24.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4960   | 18 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 1940    | B       | 1    | 0    | 26                             |
| 25.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4961   | 19                               | 1830    | A sharp | 1    | 1    | 19                             |
| 26.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5081   | 20                               | 1730    | A       | 1    | 2    | 20                             |
| 27.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4963   | 21                               | 1630    | G sharp | 1    | 3    | 24                             |
| 28.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4964   | 22 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>   | 1540    | G       | 2    | 1    | 17                             |
| 29.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5083   | 23 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 1456    | F sharp | 2    | 2    | 10                             |
| 30.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4966   | 24 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>   | 1372    | F       | 3    | 0    | 10                             |
| 31.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4967   | 26                               | 1296    | E       | 3    | 2    | 0                              |
| 32.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4968   | 27 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>   | 1222    | D sharp | 4    | 0    | 14                             |
| 33.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5058   | 28 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>   | 1154    | D       | 4    | 2    | 2                              |
| 34.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4969   | 30                               | 1090    | C sharp | 5    | 0    | 27                             |
| 35.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5059   | 31 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>   | 1028    | C       | 5    | 3    | 22                             |
| 36.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5060   | 33                               | 970     | B       | 6    | 2    | 15                             |
| 37.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5061   | 34 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>   | 915     | A sharp | 7    | 1    | 19                             |
| 38.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4970   | 36 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 865     | A       | 9    | 0    | 10                             |
| 39.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5062   | 38 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>   | 815     | G sharp | 10   | 1    | 9                              |
| 40.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4971   | 41                               | 770     | G       | 12   | 1    | 9                              |
| 41.  | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 5063   | 43 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>   | 728     | F sharp | 15   | 1    | 2                              |

|     |                          |      |                                 |       |         |    |   |    |
|-----|--------------------------|------|---------------------------------|-------|---------|----|---|----|
| 42. | John Taylor & Co, 1906   | n/a  | 46                              | 686   | F       | 17 | 2 | 10 |
| 43. | John Taylor & Co, 1925   | n/a  | 48 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  | 648   | E       | 22 | 1 | 2  |
| 44. | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4972 | 52 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>16</sub> | 611   | D sharp | 27 | 0 | 5  |
| 45. | John Taylor & Co, 1925   | n/a  | 54 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>16</sub> | 577   | D       | 30 | 3 | 2  |
| 46. | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4973 | 58                              | 545   | C sharp | 36 | 2 | 21 |
| 47. | John Taylor & Co, 1925   | n/a  | 60 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  | 514   | C       | 40 | 3 | 14 |
| 48. | Gillett & Johnston, 1934 | 4974 | 70                              | 457.5 | A sharp | 64 | 0 | 18 |

The numbering indicates a main sequence from 4937 to 4974, suggesting that it was not originally intended to recast all the Taylor bells. Only bells 1-32, 34, 38, 40, 44, 46 and 48 would have been new. Some of the smaller bells were replaced before the carillon left the works, and the tuning books give the final destinations of those which were "sold on" by the founders. The sequence of numbers (5058 to 5063) shows that bells 33, 35-37, 39 and 41 were recast as a variation to the original order.

The bells hang in four levels in a tall steel frame. The bottom section (originally containing bells 47 and 48) is now empty. The first tier contains bells 42-46. Bells 34-41 occupy the top tier. The remainder are hung in the second tier – nos.47 and 48 at the back, the small bells in two levels at the front (nos.14-23 above nos.1-13), and the others (24-33) in the remaining space in the frame. The smaller bells (nos.1-23) are hung from wooden beams. The remainder (except nos.24 and 25 which are hung from short girders bolted to the underside of the stocks of other bells) have double channel steel stocks. They are all fitted with carillon-type clappers and transmission gear. The clock bells also have hammers for the clock chimes.

The clavier is housed in a small cabin on the roof of the tower. The present clavier dates from 1988. It is built to the American standard, with pedals for the bottom two octaves (bells 25-48) and with space at the top end for the further 6 batons that would be necessary if the range of the carillon were to be extended to 4½ octaves.

The clock mechanism, the hour and quarter chimes, the practice clavier and the remains of the 1934 automatic tune playing mechanism – all mentioned or described below – are housed in the clock room on the top floor of the main tower. The clavier of the original instrument was located in this room from 1906 until 1934.

### *Replacement bells, 2015*

As noted above, new bells were cast in 2015 to replace the top two octaves (25 bells) listed above. The original bells have been retained for re-use (possibly with a practice clavier). Details of the replacement bells are as follows:

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Note*   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 8.3      | 7271    | A sharp | 0    | 0    | 19   |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 8.5      | 6863    | A       | 0    | 0    | 18   |
| 3.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 8.7      | 6478    | G sharp | 0    | 0    | 22   |
| 4.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 8.9      | 6115    | G       | 0    | 0    | 22   |
| 5.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 9.1      | 5771    | F sharp | 0    | 0    | 24   |
| 6.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 9.4      | 5451    | F       | 0    | 0    | 25   |
| 7.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 9.6      | 5145    | E       | 0    | 0    | 26   |
| 8.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 9.8      | 4856    | D sharp | 0    | 0    | 25   |
| 9.   | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 10       | 4583    | D       | 0    | 0    | 25   |
| 10.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 10.3     | 4326    | C sharp | 0    | 1    | 2    |
| 11.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 10.5     | 4083    | C       | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| 12.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 10.9     | 3854    | B       | 0    | 1    | 3    |
| 13.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 11.4     | 3638    | A sharp | 0    | 1    | 7    |
| 14.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 12       | 3436    | A       | 0    | 1    | 13   |
| 15.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 12.5     | 3243    | G sharp | 0    | 1    | 18   |
| 16.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 13       | 3061    | G       | 0    | 1    | 25   |
| 17.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 13.5     | 2889    | F sharp | 0    | 2    | 1    |
| 18.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 14       | 2727    | F       | 0    | 2    | 6    |
| 19.  | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 14.75    | 2574    | E       | 0    | 2    | 20   |

|     |                        |      |      |         |   |   |    |
|-----|------------------------|------|------|---------|---|---|----|
| 20. | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 15.5 | 2429 | D sharp | 0 | 3 | 3  |
| 21. | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 16   | 2293 | D       | 0 | 3 | 9  |
| 22. | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 16.5 | 2166 | C sharp | 0 | 3 | 15 |
| 23. | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 17.5 | 2044 | C       | 1 | 0 | 9  |
| 24. | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 18   | 1929 | B       | 1 | 0 | 18 |
| 25. | John Taylor & Co, 2015 | 19   | 1821 | A sharp | 1 | 1 | 10 |

### *Former bells and history*

Soon after the completion of the schools in 1906, Taylors provided a chime of 22 bells in the key of F. As recorded in the inscription of the bass bell, these bells were given to the village of Bournville by George Cadbury in 1906. Installation was completed on 15 October 1906.

Taylors' catalogue of c.1906 lists the Bournville bells as a chime of 22, with a tenor or bass bell of 18 cwt. W Gorham Rice, writing in 1914, states that the carillon consisting of 22 bells was "recently erected under the supervision of Mr. W.W. Starmer". William Wooding Starmer (d.1927) was an authority on carillons and from 1924 to 1927 he gave annual lectures on campanology at the University of Birmingham as part of the music degree course. According to J.R. Nichols, Starmer was also a noted organist and composer.

The diaries of Dame Elizabeth Cadbury provide further background material on the carillon. The diary records that the family had a meeting with Mr. Taylor, "the head of a large bell foundry in Loughborough" on 13 December 1905. It was recorded that Mr. Taylor was making a peal of bells for the village. The diary for 29 January 1906 records a meeting with Starmer who came to give advice about the new bells.

Starmer examined the bells before they left the foundry and according to an article in the *Bournville Works Magazine* he described them as "the finest set of bells in the country being, if not the heaviest, the most perfect as regards their excellence of tone and their musical qualities generally".

Details of the original bells were as follows:

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

1. [No special inscription]
2. [No special inscription]
3. [No special inscription]
4. [No special inscription]
5. MVSICAM DOCET AMOR
6. ADORAMVS TE
7. BENEDICIMVS TE
8. LAVDAMVS TE
9. ORA ET VIGILA
10. PER CRVCEM AD STELLAS
11. AVDITE ET VENITE
12. NON CLAMOR SED AMOR CANTAT IN AVRE DEI
13. SERVITE DOMINO IN LÆITIA
14. GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO
15. GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN
16. ON EARTH PEACE
17. JESVS BE OVR SPEDE
18. PEACE AND GOOD NEIGHBOVRHOOD
19. RING OVT THE FALSE, RING IN THE TRVE
20. RING OVT THE OLD, RING IN THE NEW
21. RING OVT THE DARKNESS OF THE LAND, RING IN THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE
22. GIVEN BY GEORGE CADBVRY, 1906, TO THE VILLAGE OF BOVRNVILLE. (*border*)

(*border*) (*border*) / (*large vine border all round*)

*Waist:* WHENE'ER THE SWEET CHVRCH BELL / PEALS OVER HILL AND DELL / MAY  
JESVS CHRIST BE PRAISED

*Opposite:* (*Taylor's circular mark*)

These inscriptions are taken from Taylors' foundry records, all the bells except no.22 having been recast in 1934. The crook numbers (given below) would have been cast on the crown of each bell. It appears from photographs that the bells also had the Taylor mark – and probably the date 1906 – on the waist, but full details are now lost. The precise wording and layout of the inscriptions reproduced on the new bells may, however, follow that on the originals. The bells were probably inscribed – like the surviving bell (no.42) in Taylor's Victorian gothic capitals. The other details of the bells are also recorded (with the later number (after 1925) added in column 2), as follows:

| Bell | 1925 | Founder and date       | Diameter | Crook | Note    | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------|------------------------|----------|-------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | 15.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 13       | 104   | F       | 0    | 2    | 1    |
| 2.   | 16.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 13½      | 171   | E       | 0    | 2    | 4    |
| 3.   | 17.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 14⅛      | 105   | D sharp | 0    | 2    | 13   |
| 4.   | 18.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 15⅜      | 106   | D       | 0    | 3    | 7    |
| 5.   | 19.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 16⅛      | 218   | C sharp | 0    | 3    | 18   |
| 6.   | 20.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 16½      | 274   | C       | 0    | 3    | 15   |
| 7.   | 21.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 17       | ???   | B       | 1    | 0    | 1    |
| 8.   | 22.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 18       | 266   | A sharp | 1    | 0    | 12   |
| 9.   | 23.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 19⅛      | 241   | A       | 1    | 1    | 14   |
| 10.  | 24.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 20⅛      | 229   | G sharp | 1    | 2    | 10   |
| 11.  | 25.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 21       | 242   | G       | 1    | 2    | 27   |
| 12.  | 26.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 22       | 278   | F sharp | 2    | 0    | 1    |
| 13.  | 27.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 24⅛      | 267   | F       | 2    | 2    | 23   |
| 14.  | 28.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 25⅝      | 262   | E       | 3    | 2    | 2    |
| 15.  | 29.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 27¼      | 150   | D sharp | 3    | 3    | 22   |
| 16.  | 30.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 28½      | 238   | D       | 4    | 1    | 14   |
| 17.  | 32.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 31¼      | 158   | C       | 5    | 3    | 7    |
| 18.  | 33.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 33⅛      | 202   | B       | 6    | 2    | 25   |
| 19.  | 34.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 34⅝      | 214   | A sharp | 7    | 2    | 3    |
| 20.  | 35.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 37¼      | 201   | A       | 9    | 1    | 23   |
| 21.  | 37.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 40⅜      | 177   | G       | 12   | 1    | 24   |
| 22.  | 39.  | John Taylor & Co, 1906 | 46¼      | 225   | F       | 17   | 2    | 17   |

The bells were hung on four levels in a tall wooden framework. The frame had tall triangular trusses at each end linked by transverse beams from which the bells were suspended. The fifteen smallest bells were hung directly from the beams. The larger bells in the two lower levels of the frame were bolted to wooden headstocks fitted with plate gudgeons resting in sockets secured to the frame timbers. Six bells (nos.5-10) were hung from the beam at the top of the frame. Below them there were two rows of bells hung from parallel beams fixed to the side of the frame – one row with four small bells (nos.1-4 - and room for more), and the other with five bells (nos.11-15). There were four bells (nos.16-19) in the next level, and three more (nos.20-22) at the bottom. The bells were all fitted with carillon-type clappers and played from a clavier. The F bell (no.13) also had an extra hammer so that it could be used as a school bell for calling the children to school. In July 1907, Taylors also supplied "a model carillon keyboard for practice purposes" at a cost of £45. The details from the invoice are recorded in the daybook for 30 July 1907 as follows:

The Trustees, Bournville Village Trust, Estate Office, Bournville, Birmingham.

The model carillon keyboard for practice purposes, according to quotation 4 February 1907 £45.0.0.

Packed and delivered, General Institution for the Blind, Carpenter Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

July 9. Bell hanger at work at bells in the school tower. Billinghamurst 12 hours (14s), fares (8s.3d.) £1.2.3.



Although hung as a carillon, the bells were also capable of being played mechanically with tune-playing machinery provided by John Smith & Sons of Derby. Smiths also supplied the original turret clock. The 1925 booklet on *The Bournville Carillon* gives details of the clock and carillon machine with a photograph of the mechanism. The clock sounded the Guildford (or Chard) quarter chimes on eight bells, and the carillon machine played a selection tunes using twelve of the available bells. There were two barrels, each with four tunes:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Barrel 1<br>(sacred tunes)  | "New Every morning is the love" (tune Melcombe – <i>Ancient &amp; Modern</i> no.4)<br>"The day is past and over" (St.Anatolius – <i>A&amp;M</i> no.21)<br>"Come, sing with holy gladness" (Ellacombe – <i>A&amp;M</i> no.341)<br>"The day Thou gavest, Lord is ended" (St.Clement – <i>A&amp;M</i> no.477) |
| Barrel 2<br>(secular tunes) | "The Country Garden" (ancient English melody, also associated with the words of "The Vicar of Bray")<br>"Will ye no come back again?" (traditional Scottish tune)<br>"The harp that once" (traditional Irish tune)<br>"Jenny Jones" (Welsh tune composed by Bardd Alaw)                                    |

In 1923, fifteen more bells were added to make the bottom end chromatic and extend the top end to give a carillon of three fully chromatic octaves. The bells were cast by Taylors in 1923 and sent out from the works on 19 January 1924. After this alteration, there were 37 bells in all. The enlarged carillon was first played on 1 May 1924 at a recital given by Antoine Nauwelaerts, the Carillonneur of Bruges. This performance was broadcast on the radio.

Details of the full inscriptions and marks on these bells can be pieced together from photographs of the new bells and from the wording on the larger bells as recorded in Taylors' records. They seem to have been as follows:

| <b>Bell</b>  | <b>Inscription</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| 1-12. ( <i>Border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> 19 ( <i>Taylor T-bell mark</i> ) 23   |                    |
| 13. 151 / ( <i>Border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> LIFE MEANS – LEARNING TO ABHOR / THE FALSE AND LOVE THE TRUE<br><i>Opposite:</i> 19 ( <i>Taylor's rectangular mark</i> ) 23   |                    |
| 14. 188 / ( <i>Border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> PRAISE TO THE HOLIEST IN THE HEIGHT, / AND IN THE DEPTH BE PRAISE.<br><i>Opposite:</i> 19 ( <i>Taylor's rectangular mark</i> ) 23   |                    |
| 15. 249 / ( <i>Border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> IN MEMORY OF GEORGE CADBURY / WHO DIED 24 <sup>TH</sup> .. OCTOBER 1922 / HIS SON GEORGE GAVE 15 BELLS / TO COMPLETE THIS CARILLON 1923.<br><i>Opposite:</i> 19 ( <i>Taylor's rectangular mark</i> ) 23 |                    |

Details of the new bells were:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>1925</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Crook</b> | <b>Note</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | 3.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 7½              | 300          | F           | 0           | 0           | 12          |
| 2.          | 4.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 7¾              | 300A         | E           | 0           | 0           | 14          |
| 3.          | 5.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 7¾              | 300A         | D sharp     | 0           | 0           | 15          |
| 4.          | 6.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 8               | 279          | D           | 0           | 0           | 13          |
| 5.          | 7.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 8               | 279          | C sharp     | 0           | 0           | 12          |
| 6.          | 8.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 8½              | 259          | C           | 0           | 0           | 16          |
| 7.          | 9.          | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 9               | 258          | B           | 0           | 0           | 17          |
| 8.          | 10.         | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 9½              | 280          | A sharp     | 0           | 0           | 19          |
| 9.          | 11.         | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 10              | 281          | A           | 0           | 0           | 25          |
| 10.         | 12.         | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 10½             | 102          | G sharp     | 0           | 0           | 26          |
| 11.         | 13.         | John Taylor & Co, 1923  | 11              | 228          | G           | 0           | 1           | 4           |

|     |     |                        |     |     |         |    |   |    |
|-----|-----|------------------------|-----|-----|---------|----|---|----|
| 12. | 14. | John Taylor & Co, 1923 | 12  | 103 | F sharp | 0  | 1 | 16 |
| 13. | 31. | John Taylor & Co, 1923 | 29½ | 151 | C sharp | 4  | 3 | 7  |
| 14. | 36. | John Taylor & Co, 1923 | 39  | 188 | G sharp | 10 | 3 | 3  |
| 15. | 38. | John Taylor & Co, 1923 | 43  | 249 | F sharp | 15 | 1 | 1  |

J.R. Nichols refers to these improvements in his book *Bells Thro' the Ages* (1928). He wrote: "The Bournville carillon is contained in the belfry at the school, and when first erected in 1906 consisted of 22 bells, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Cadbury. Recently the carillon has been completed to three full chromatic octaves by Mr. George Cadbury, junr., and now consists of 37 bells. There are three separate mechanisms, viz., 1) the carillon of bells in the belfry, 2) the playing mechanism or clavier, 3) the clock and its chime-barrel ... [so] provision is thus made for playing either automatically (from the chime-barrel) or by a carillonneur (*sic*), from the clavier. The weights of the Bournville bells range from 21 lbs (*sic*) for the smallest, to 17 cwts. for the largest, with a total weight of approximately 6 tons. All were cast by Messrs. Taylors." The book includes a photograph of the carillonneur, Mr. Clifford Ball, at the clavier of the enlarged instrument.

Nichols also mentions that there were several recording on the bells on gramophone records in the "His Master's Voice" series (numbers B507-9 and C586). On these recordings, made in 1915, the carillon was played by Harry Withers, the first Bournville Carillonneur. At the time, this was the only carillon music available on record. Another distinctive feature of the Bournville carillon was the existence of a practice clavier, enabling the carillonneur to practice "without annoyance to the local public" on a keyboard connected to steel bars instead of bells.

Just two years later, in 1925, a further augmentation took place – again by Taylors. This involved adding five more bells – two trebles and three bass bells in C, D and E – to create an instrument of 42 bells with a bass bell in C. The new bells were:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | (Border all round)<br>Waist: 19 (Taylor T-bell mark) 25   |
| 2.          | (Border all round)<br>Waist: 19 (Taylor T-bell mark) 25   |
| 3.          | 271 / (Floral border all round)<br>Waist: RING IN THE COMMON LOVE OF GOOD / * * * / E.M.C. AND G.C. JUNR. / 1925<br>Opposite: 19 (Taylor's circular mark) 25  |
| 4.          | 253 / (Floral border all round)<br>Waist: BREAK FORTH INTO JOY AND SING TOGETHER / * * * / E.M.C. AND G.C. JUNR. / 1925<br>Opposite: 19 (Taylor's circular mark) 25   |
| 5.          | 329 / (Floral border all round)<br>Waist: IN MEMORY OF / GEORGE CADBURY / WHO LOVED THE SOUND OF THE BELLS / * * * / THIS BELL IS GIVEN BY HIS WIFE / ELIZABETH MARY / 1925<br>Opposite: 19 (Taylor's circular mark) 25 |

Details of the new bells were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>1925</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Crook</b> | <b>Note</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | 1.          | John Taylor & Co, 1925  | 7"              | 299          | G           | 0           | 0           | 13½         |
| 2.          | 2.          | John Taylor & Co, 1925  | 7½              | 300          | F sharp     | 0           | 0           | 12¾         |
| 3.          | 40.         | John Taylor & Co, 1925  | 48½             | 271          | E           | 22          | 1           | 10          |
| 4.          | 41.         | John Taylor & Co, 1925  | 54              | 253          | D           | 30          | 3           | 8           |
| 5.          | 42.         | John Taylor & Co, 1925  | 60½             | 329          | C           | 40          | 3           | 17          |

The augmentation involved the rearrangement of the bells. The three large bells had to be hung in a new steel framework on the roof of the main tower, as there was no room for them in the original belfry turret. A new clavier was provided. By 1925 there was also a

separate practice clavier – an exact replica of the carillon keyboard, but with hammers striking steel bars tuned to the notes of the bells – in the Schools. This was for silent practice, enabling the player “to practice without annoyance to the public”.

Most of the Taylor bells (38 in all) were recast in a major re-vamping of the carillon carried out in 1934 at the instigation of George Cadbury Jun. The cupola on top of the tower was rebuilt to accommodate the enlarged instrument. Gillett & Johnston not only recast all except four bells – the original bass bell of 1906 and the three heavy bells added in 1925 – but also added six more bells (including the 64 cwt bourdon) to give a carillon of four octaves. An account of the work appeared in the *Ringling World* of 3 August 1934 (p.485) following a private demonstration of the new instrument at the Croydon foundry. Installation at Bournville took place in the following autumn.

The bells were rehung in an entirely new steel frame with a new hand clavier, illustrated in Gillett catalogues of the period. The 1934 clavier (replaced in 1988) had pedals for the bottom octave and a half (bells 29 to 48). The firm also provided a new electric clock (striking the hours and Westminster quarters) and an electro-pneumatic tune-playing mechanism.

In 1951, Gillett & Johnston were commissioned to rehang the two largest bells (nos.47 and 48) higher in the frame to improve their audibility on the green. As originally installed, they were behind and below the playing cabin on the roof of the tower. At this date, the clock chimes were altered and the Chard or Guildford chimes (used from 1906 until 1934) were reinstated. The present Synchronome control unit for the main clock may have also been installed at this date. The clock is fitted with a night silencer.

A major refurbishment of the carillon took place in 1988. The work was carried out by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough, who fitted new clappers, renewed the transmission system and provided a new clavier.

As already noted, the top two octaves (25 bells) of the 1934 Gillett & Johnston carillon were replaced by John Taylor & Co in 2015. The project was initiated by Jayne Cadbury to mark Trevor Workman's 50th Anniversary as carillonneur at Bournville, the original “top end” having always been considered a weakness in the instrument. The work included the renewal of the crown staples, bell bolts and clappers. The Gillett & Johnston bells have been kept with the intention that they will be used to form a small two-octave carillon to be used for demonstration purposes at ground level in Bournville.

**Visited:** CJP, HEP and RLJ 6 March 2004 and CJP (with AHS tour group) 11 July 2009:  
Thanks to Ray Aldington and Arthur Casey

### **BOURNVILLE – Bournville Almshouses (The Quadrangle), Mary Vale Road**

The Bournville Almshouses and Cadbury Institute were built in 1897-8 to designs by Ewan Harper. The buildings are grouped around a quadrangle with a clock tower in the centre, and the main gatehouse is flanked by a chapel and the hall of the institute. Over the main entrance there is “18 RC 97 / Bournville / Almshouses” and a brass tablet inside the building records that the buildings were erected by Richard Cadbury JP in 1898.

In 1899, Smith of Derby supplied a chiming clock for the “Cadbury Institute & Cadbury Almshouses, Moseley Road, Bournville, Birmingham”. The clock is described in the firm’s ledgers under 12 May 1899 as a “Large clock with four 2ft.6in dials striking hours and ding-dong quarters on 2 bells weighing together 2½ cwt”. It cost £105, plus an extra £5.10.0. for gas apparatus. There is no trace of any matching bells in the Loughborough foundry records, and it seems likely that Smiths either used bells from stock or from another founder.

The clock is a three-train flatbed movement with pinwheel escapement, signed on the setting dial by John Smith & Sons, Midland Clock Works, Derby, and dated 1899. It displays the time on four illuminated dials. The clock was refurbished and converted to a timepiece in 1958, when the two bells were sold.

When the clock was again refurbished through the generosity of the Cook & Wolstenholme Charitable Trust in 2007 two new bells were supplied to replace the ones that had been previously sold. These were supplied by Taylors Eayre & Smith of Loughborough and bear the name of J.B. Joyce & Co of Whitchurch (part of the Smith of Derby Group) who

carried out the work on the conversion to auto-wind and overhauled the clock. They also fitted a night-silencer and the clock only strikes between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. Details of the new bells are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | 107 999 / [ <i>blank</i> ]<br><i>Waist:</i> J. B. JOYCE & CO / 2007<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Taylor's Eayre &amp; Smith mark</i> ) |
| 2.          | 241 999 / [ <i>blank</i> ]<br><i>Waist:</i> J. B. JOYCE & CO / 2007<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Taylor's Eayre &amp; Smith mark</i> ) |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b>     | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Hz</b> | <b>Note</b> | <b>Mouldings</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | Taylor's Eayre & Smith 2007 | 16              | 2353      | D+2.71      | 2:2-2:3:2        | 0           | 3           | 26          |
| 2.          | Taylor's Eayre & Smith 2007 | 19              | 1868      | Bb+3.1      | 2:2-2:3:2        | 1           | 2           | 11          |

Both bells are flat-topped castings, tuned on the true-harmonic system. They are bolted to the underside of the wooden lintel to a wide opening in the inner wall of the upper floor of the clock tower building. New hammer-work was provided in 2007. The work is recorded on an inscribed plaque on the side of the building which states "Clock refurbished / and bells / replaced 2007"

There is a small brassfoundry bell (about 10 inches diameter) in a wrought iron frame on the gable end of the old chapel building (now the warden's accommodation) facing into the quadrangle.

**Visited:** CJP and HEP, 5 August 2004 and CJP (with AHS tour group) 11 July 2009: Thanks to Arthur Casey and Dick Humphries

### **BOURNVILLE – Rowheath Sports Pavilion**

In July 1923 John Smith & Sons of Derby provided a tower timepiece (i.e. non-striking) clock for the Sports Pavilion at Bournville. It had two 3ft. 6in. solid dials. This was the Rowheath or Roeheath Sports Pavilion, originally owned by Cadburys but now privately run.

**Not visited:** *Ex.Inf.* Arthur Casey and Smiths of Derby

### **BOURNVILLE – Ruskin Hall, Linden Road**

Ruskin Hall was built in 1902-5 as part of the complex of buildings on the village green. It was intended as the cultural centre of the neighbourhood. W.A. Harvey was the architect. Extensions took place in 1927-8 and at the rear in 1958. There is no clock here, but this brief entry is included on account of the possibility of confusion with Ruskin Chambers in Birmingham (*q.v.*) where there is a clock.

### **BOURNVILLE – St.Francis of Assisi, Linden Road**

The original mission room at Bournville, then in the parish of Selly Oak, was opened in 1913. A district was assigned in 1915 but work on a permanent church could not commence until after the Great War. The plans were prepared by W. Alexander Harvey who was the consultant architect to the Bournville Estate and who also designed the 1913 building now used as the parish hall. The church was eventually built in 1924-5. It is a Byzantine-style building in brick, linked to the hall by an arcaded walkway. The foundation stone was laid on 12 July 1924 and the church was consecrated on 21 November 1925. Bournville became a separate parish in 1926.

There is no bell, but the church stands opposite the school buildings housing the Bournville carillon. The original scheme included a tall tower or campanile on the north side of the church, at the back of the courtyard between the church and the parish hall, but this was never built.

**Church visited:** CJP 26 July 1988

## BOURNVILLE – St.Lazar (Serbian Orthodox), Bournville

This church was built in 1965-8 for the community of Serbs who had fled from Yugoslavia after the Second World War and settled in Birmingham. The building of the church was led by Father Zebic, priest to the Serbian community from 1956 until the 1990s. Designed in the ancient Serbian style, the church was built by Serbian craftsmen using many materials imported specially from Yugoslavia. More recently, in 1986-7, St.Lazar's Cultural Centre has been built alongside the church.

The south west tower contains a swing chime of three bells in A flat (822Hz or Ab minus 18.04 cents), the largest having a diameter of 37 inches. According to Taylors' records, the inscriptions are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | 161/ JOHN TAYLOR & CO. * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 1967 *<br><i>Soundbow.</i> + ОВО ЭВОНО ЛАРУЈУ СВОЈОЈ УРКВН ЛАЗАРНИИ Y / БЕРМННГАМУ<br>БЕРНИИИ ПАРОВНЈЕ СВ. КНЕЗА / ПАЗАРА НЗ КОВЕНТРНЈА, ВУСТЕРА N<br>УЕПТЕХАМА  |
| 2.          | 213 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 1967 *<br><i>Soundbow.</i> + ОВО ЭВОНО ЛАРУЈУ ХРАМУ СВ. КНЕЗА ПАЗАРА Y / БЕРМННГАМУ<br>БЕРНИИИ СРПСКЕ ПРАВОС ЛАВНЕ ПРКВЕ / СВ. САВЕ У ЛОНИОНУ 1967 Г.   |
| 3.          | 201 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. * FOUNDERS * LOUGHBOROUGH * 1967 *<br><i>Waist:</i> + ЭВОНА ОСВЕТНЛН НА ПБЕТН 10/23 АЛРНЛА 1967 ГОИИИЕ /<br>АРХНЈЕРЕЈСКН ЗАМЕНК ЗА В. БРНТАННЈУ ПРОТ. СТАВРОФР / МНЛОЈЕ<br>ННКОЛНЪ N ПАРОВ БЕРМННГАМСРН ЈЕР. МНЛЕНКО ЗЕБНЪ.<br><i>Soundbow.</i> + ОВО ЗВОНО ПРНЛАЖУ СВЈОЈ ПРКВН ЛАЗАРНИИ Y БЕРМННГАМУ /<br>БЕРНИИИ СРПСКЕ ПРАВОСЛАВНЕ ПАРОВНЈЕ СВ. КНЕЗА ЛАЗАРА ИЗ /<br>БЕРМИНГАМА И ОКО ЛНЈЕ |

| <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, 1967  | 26              | 1232           | Eb-17.49    | 3           | 1           | 19          |
| 2.          | John Taylor & Co, 1967  | 30              | 1036           | C-17.46     | 4           | 3           | 24          |
| 3.          | John Taylor & Co, 1967  | 37              | 822            | Ab-18.04    | 9           | 1           | 23          |

They are hung in a steel frame with swinging fittings, including cast-iron headstocks of normal ringing type, ball bearings, timber wheels etc, but without stays and sliders.

**Not visited.** *Ex.inf.* Taylors (not visited)

## BRANDWOOD – Brandwood End Cemetery, Woodthorpe Road and Broad Lane

The Cemetery at Brandwood End (Kings Heath) on the south east edge of the city was laid out in 1897-8 and opened with the consecration of the Church of England chapel and burial ground on 13 April 1899. Originally developed by the Kings Norton and Northfield Urban District Council, the cemetery has been maintained by the City Council since 1911.

The Cemetery buildings include a lodge dated 1897 and the chapels of 1898. The buildings are by J. Brewin Holmes, architect. Holmes won the competition to design the new buildings for the cemetery in 1896 and was afterwards engaged to superintend their construction. The contract (£5600) was awarded to E.J. Charles in July 1897, the foundation stone was laid on 30 April 1898 and work was completed early in 1899. The buildings are in a free Perpendicular style in bright red brick and terracotta. The chapels are linked by a *porte-cochere* which carries a pinnacled tower and octagonal spire.

The minutes of the Cemeteries Committee include a resolution dated 12 December 1898 "that the tender of Messrs Carrsh (*sic*) Ltd be accepted at £14.19.0. fixed for a bell 1¾ cwt in weight subject to design being approved". The chapel bell was evidently supplied by Charles Carr of Smethwick.

The two chapels were closed in 1988 and the nonconformist chapel was afterwards badly damaged by fire in 1995. The buildings are now in a very poor state owing to vandalism and decay. The bell remains in the tower – and the bellrope still hangs from

ceiling of the *porte-cochere* – but owing to the condition of the buildings inspection of the belfry has not been permitted.

**Site visited:** CJP, 23 June 2003

### **BRANDWOOD – St.Bede, Bryndale Avenue**

The original church here was a pre-fabricated building of 1960, which became a district church in 1963 when an area was created from Kings Norton. Brandwood became a separate parish in 1969. There was neither a bell nor provision for one in the original church, which was later destroyed by fire. It has been replaced by a new church built to the designs of K. Fisher, architect, consecrated on 28 June 1994.

**Church visited:** CJP 26 July 1988

### **BURNEY LANE, Christ Church – see WARD END, Christ Church, Burney Lane**

### **CASTLE BROMWICH – St.Clement, Green Lane and Clevedon Avenue**

This is a modern brick church licensed for worship on 21 January 1967 and serving a new parish formed in 1968. It is a dual-purpose building of 1965-8 designed by Bromilow, While & Smeaton, architects. It was erected by W A Lennox & Son (Builders) Ltd at a cost of £16970. There is no bell or provision for one.

**Church visited:** CJP 9 July 1989

### **CASTLE BROMWICH – St.Mary and St.Margaret (Parish Church)**

Castle Bromwich was a chapelry in the parish of Aston until 1878 when a separate parish was created. The Aston churchwardens' accounts record some expenditure on Castle Bromwich church and parish from 1651 to the later nineteenth century but separate accounts for the chapelwardens also exist for the period 1640 to 1804.

The church itself is an early Georgian building by Thomas White of Worcester, but ingeniously encasing an earlier timber-framed church which was only rediscovered within the eighteenth-century fabric when the building was restored by C.E. Bateman in 1891-3. An inscription inside the building records that "This Chappel was begun to be rebuilt in the year of our Lord 1726 and finished in the year 1731". The tower was built a couple of years earlier under a contract dated 18 January 1724/5. The builder was Thomas Clear alias Smith of Castle Bromwich, mason, and the contract specifies that the parapet was to be made by Mr. White of Worcester, carver. Most of this work was paid for by Sir John Bridgeman of Castle Bromwich Hall.

### **Present bells**

The tower now contains a ring of eight bells in the key of A flat (tenor 815.5hz).

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1.     2-1.5 G&J.S / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 16  
      *Waist:* PATRONS: RICHARD 7TH EARL OF BRADFORD / LORD OF THE MANOR OF CASTLE BROMWICH / ROBIN 19TH VISCOUNT HEREFORD, / 13TH BARONET OF CASTLE BROMWICH
2.     2-2 G&J.S / (*Vine leaf border*) 20 (*Taylor's circular mark*) 16  
      *Waist:* CBBRP TRUSTEES: / DAN HARRIS (TOWER CAPTAIN) / STUART M. STANTON  
      JEAN WILLIS / WILLIAM DARGUE  
      *Opposite:* RECTOR / REVD GAVIN DOUGLAS OBE
3.     IOHN THORNTON : THOMAS SADLER : TRVSTEEES : 1717 / 7090  
      *Waist:* (*Gillett & Johnston's trade mark*) / RECAST 1952 BY / GILLETT & JOHNSTON / CROYDON  
      *Opposite:* ALLEN STEPHEN FODEN / VERGER SINCE 1908
4.     IOHN BANNER : ROLAND BRAWBRIDGE : TRVSTEEES : 1717 / 7091  
      *Waist:* (*as treble exactly*)  
      *Opposite:* THOMAS MARSHALL STEERE / CHURCHWARDEN 1946 TO 1951
5.     WILLIAM SADLER : ISAAC SADLER : TRVSTEEES : 1717 / 7092

- Waist:* RECAST BY CHARLES CARR / SMETHWICK 1893 / (*Gillett & Johnston's trade mark*) / RECAST 1952 BY / GILLETT & JOHNSTON / CROYDON  
*Opposite:* CLIFFORD JOHN SHAW / CHURCHWARDEN SINCE 1952
6. IOHANNES BROOKE : S : T : B. IOHN CHETTOCK : CHAPPEL WARDEN : 1717 / 7093  
*Waist:* (*as treble exactly*)  
*Opposite:* KENNETH JAMES GREEN / CHURCHWARDEN SINCE 1952
7. S<sup>R</sup> IOHN BRIDGEMAN : BARONET : 1717 / 7094  
*Waist:* (*Gillett & Johnston's trade mark*) / RECAST 1952 BY GILLETT & JOHNSTON / FOUNDERS, CROYDON  
*Opposite:* GEORGE ERNEST TOMLINSON / CHURCHWARDEN 1949 TO 1952
8. DEO LAUS / 18 AD. 93 / I CELEBRATE THE WEDDING DAY / OF GEORGE OF YORK AND PRINCESS MAY / 7095  
*Waist:* FOUNDED BY CHARLES CARR / SMETHWICK / (*Gillett & Johnston's trade mark*) / RECAST 1952 BY / GILLETT & JOHNSTON / FOUNDERS. CROYDON  
*Opposite:* HENRY NICOLL FORBES / RECTOR SINCE 1921

| Bell | Founder and date                   | Diameter | Hz     | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------------------|----------|--------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 2016             | 25½      | 1633   | 4    | 1    | 9    |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 2016             | 26       | 1529   | 4    | 1    | 11   |
| 3.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1952 (no.7090) | 27       | 1359   | 4    | 1    | 14   |
| 4.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1952 (no.7091) | 28¼      | 1223   | 4    | 2    | 16   |
| 5.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1952 (no.7092) | 29½      | 1087   | 5    | 0    | 0    |
| 6.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1952 (no.7093) | 31⅛      | 1019.5 | 5    | 3    | 12   |
| 7.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1952 (no.7094) | 34       | 917.5  | 7    | 2    | 16   |
| 8.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1952 (no.7095) | 38¾      | 815.5  | 10   | 3    | 14   |

The bells were cast without canons. They are hung in a composite six-bell frame of 1893 by Charles Carr of Smethwick (*Bellframes* type 7.B.b, layout 6.21). In 1952 two cast iron lowside pits (*Bellframes* type 8.3.A.m) above the existing frame were added by Gillett & Johnston to allow a future augmentation to eight but these remain unoccupied. The fittings are also mainly of 1893 with ball bearings of 1952 by Gillett & Johnston. They consist of elm headstocks, plate gudgeons, ball bearings, wheels with iron wheel stays, and traditional type stays and sliders. When the new bells were hung Gillett & Johnston inserted wooden blocks in the headstocks of the bells which had previously had canons (i.e. nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5). The recast bells were dedicated on 22 November 1952.

### ***History and previous bells***

There is no record of the number of bells at Castle Bromwich chapel in 1552. The chapel wardens' accounts from 1640 contain numerous references to the bells but there is no clear indication of the number of bells in the tower until 1694 when three ropes were purchased. Together with a mention of the second bell in 1645, this evidence suggests that there were only three bells during the second half of the seventeenth century.

The account show that the bells were rehung by Joseph Hall in 1657 at a cost of £6, and related payments indicate that this probably involved the provision of a new frame. Details recorded in the accounts for 1657 include:

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| payd to Joseph hall for hanginge the beles            | £6.0.0.  |
| pd for Carying the braces                             | 5s.      |
| For ... our saupitt                                   | 4s.      |
| For takinge downe the frame                           | 2s.6d.   |
| Gregory for settinge banckes and fillinge the saupitt | 1s.10d.  |
| Paid John Wall for Ieorne for the bells               | 2s.      |
| William Sadler for timber                             | £3.17.4. |

This may have been the Joseph Hall who later worked on the bells at All Saints, Derby, in 1670 and at Lichfield Cathedral between 1670 and 1673.

In 1671-2 one of the bells was taken to Lichfield to be recast. The founder is not named in the accounts, but it was almost certainly Richard Keene of Woodstock who cast a heavy ring of six bells at the Cathedral for Bishop Hackett in 1670. The payments include:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| spente when we agreed with the bellfounder                                   | 1s.6d.  |
| spente when we toocke down the bell  | 6d.     |
| Spente when we went to Leachfield the first time                             | 2s.3d.  |
| Given to ye bellfounders man   | 6d.     |
| Spent when we brought the bell home againe                                   | 3s.5d.  |
| Paide to the bellfounder for casting the bell                                | £5.8.0. |
| Given to his man   | 6d.     |
| For carrying of the bell and fetching it home againe                         | 5s.     |
| Paide for 36 foote of bordes for the bell wheles                             | 3s.9d.  |
| For the carpenters worke and tackinge down the bell and geating it up againe | 6s.6d.  |

Other references in the accounts include a payment in 1664 "for stopping out the piggones", and in 1693 John Vale (who also worked frequently on the bells at Aston) repaired the gudgeons and provided new brasses for the bells.

In 1717 the old bells were recast and augmented to five by Joseph Smith of Edgbaston. Again, the work is documented in the accounts:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1716                                       |           |
| Pd to Thomas Waldron goeing to Edgforston  | 6d.       |
| Pd Mr. Cox for the Artackles for the Bells | 10s.      |
| 1717                                       |           |
| Paid Smith for Casting the Bells           | £9.14.9.  |
| Paid for five Bell Roapes                  | 7s.6d.    |
| 1718                                       |           |
| paid Joseph Smith for Casting the Bells    | £12.16.0. |

Details of Smith's bells of 1717 were as follows:

- | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | IOHN ( <i>coin</i> ) THORNTON ( <i>coin</i> ) THOMAS ( <i>coin</i> ) SADLER ( <i>coin</i> ) TRVSTEEES ( <i>coin</i> ) 1717<br>( <i>floral border</i> )   ( <i>border all round</i> )<br><i>Soundbow: (narrow border all round)</i>   |
| 2.          | IOHN ( <i>coin</i> ) BANNER ( <i>coin</i> ) ROLAND ( <i>coin</i> ) BRAWBRIDGE ( <i>coin</i> ) TRVSTEEES 1717<br>( <i>coin</i> ) ( <i>floral border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> )   ( <i>border all round</i> )<br><i>Soundbow: (narrow border all round)</i>                                   |
| 3.          | WILLIAM ( <i>coin</i> ) SADLER ( <i>border</i> ) ISAAC ( <i>coin</i> ) SADLER ( <i>coin</i> ) TRVSTEEES ( <i>coin</i> ) 1717<br>( <i>coin</i> ) ( <i>floral border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> )   ( <i>border all round</i> )<br><i>Soundbow: (narrow border all round)</i>                   |
| 4.          | IOHANNES ( <i>coin</i> ) BROOKE ( <i>coin</i> ) S ( <i>coin</i> ) T ( <i>coin</i> ) B IOHN CHETTOCK ( <i>coin</i> )<br>CHAPPEL ( <i>coin</i> ) WARDEN 1717 ( <i>two coins</i> )   ( <i>floral border all round</i> )<br><i>Soundbow: (narrow border all round)</i>                     |
| 5.          | S <sup>R</sup> ( <i>coin</i> ) IOHN ( <i>coin</i> ) BRIDGEMAN ( <i>coin</i> ) ( <i>floral border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> ) BARONET ( <i>coin</i> )<br>( <i>border</i> ) ( <i>coin</i> ) 1717 ( <i>border</i> )   ( <i>border all round</i> )<br><i>Soundbow: (narrow border all round)</i> |

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter                        | Mouldings | Hz     | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Joseph Smith, 1717 | 26 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  |           | --     | Eb   | 3    | 3    | 3    |
| 2.   | Joseph Smith, 1717 | 27 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>16</sub> |           | --     | Db   | 3    | 3    | 9    |
| 3.   | Joseph Smith, 1717 | 28 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>  | 3:3-3:3:2 | 1062.5 | C+26 | 4    | 2    | 0*   |
| 4.   | Joseph Smith, 1717 | 30 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  |           | --     | Bb   | 5    | 1    | 0    |
| 5.   | Joseph Smith, 1717 | 34 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  |           | --     | Ab+  | 7    | 1    | 4    |

The bells did not remain in the tower for long, as within eight years of their casting the old tower was taken down and replaced by the present one built by Thomas Clear alias Smith in 1725. The contract required the builder "to take down the bells now hung and being within the said steeple safe without hurt or damage".



The later accounts provide little information on the bells, although in 1785 John Williams was paid £5.16.5 "for new hanging the bells" and William Cowper received £5.12.10 in settlement of "his bill for work done at the Bells &c".

Details of the old frame and fittings recorded by E. Denison Taylor of Loughborough on 31 August 1893 show that the bells were hung in a frame for six. Taylor considered it to be "much older than the church and ... very badly decayed & rickety". It was arranged round the staircase which occupies much of the space in the south west corner of the tower. The treble hung to swing north-south in the eastern side of a pair of pits on the south side of the tower. The other bells swung east-west in two long parallel pits – one (to the north) containing bells 3 and 4, and the other housing the second and tenor. The rope circle was anti-clockwise.

The next major work came in 1893 when the bells were thoroughly restored by Charles Carr of Smethwick. The work was carried out after the architects, Bateman & Bateman, had obtained quotations in September 1893 from four firms (Taylors, Barwell, Warner and Carr) for a range of options – a) rehangng five bells, b) rehangng five bells and adding a tenor to make six, c) rehangng five bells and adding a treble to make six, d) rehangng five bells and adding two tenors and a treble to make eight, and e) rehangng five bells and adding two trebles and one tenor to make eight. The correspondence and estimates, along with the architect's cost comparisons, are among the parish records.

It was thus at this time that the present composite frame and many of the existing fittings were installed. The bells were also augmented to six by the addition of a new tenor bell. The six bells were opened on 21 December 1893. John Buffery was the bellhanger, and Messrs. J.J.W. and C.H. Carr represented the firm at the opening.

The augmentation necessitated lowering the note of the original third bell by a semitone. The inscription suggests that this was done by recasting, but in fact a new bell cast by Carr was substituted and the old bell was preserved intact by the bellfounders. It was later rehung as a clock bell at the British Rail works in Derby where it is still in use in the suite of railway buildings adapted and restored for Derby College in 2008-10. The clock there was made by Whitehurst of Derby in about 1839, but the bell cannot have been transferred until after 1893.

Details of the two new bells were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 3.          | WILLIAM SADLER ISAAC SADLER TRUSTEES. 1717.<br><i>Waist:</i> RECAST BY "CHARLES CARR" / GOLD MEDALLISTS. / SMETHWICK. / 1893.  |
| 6.          | ( <i>blank</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> DEO / 18 AD 93 / LAUS / I CELEBRATE THE WEDDING DAY / OF GEORGE OF YORK AND PRINCESS MAY<br><i>Opposite:</i> FOUNDED BY "CHARLES CARR" / GOLD MEDALLISTS. / SMETHWICK, |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b> | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 3.          | Charles Carr, 1893      | 29¼             | 3           | 2           | 18          |
| 6.          | Charles Carr, 1893      | 39¾             | 8           | 2           | 0           |

These weights are as recorded in the rededication service sheet of 1952, but the bells seem rather light for their size and differ from the details given by Tilley & Walters who noted that the new bells of 1893 weighed 6½ and 11¼ cwt. Carr's bells were cast without canons, as is clear from their headstocks.

The restoration of the bells in 1952 was made possible through a legacy from Mrs. Lucy Williams, the widow of John Williams, for many years a local ringer. The recast bells were dedicated on 22 November 1952.

A clock is mentioned in the accounts as early as 1661. The present clock is a two-train movement in a cast iron flatbed frame bearing the date "AD 1908". The setting dial bears the name of "Swinden & Sons, Birmingham". It has gravity escapement and compensated pendulum. According to a brass plate over the tower arch, the clock was presented by Sarah Smallwood in 1907. The Gillett & Johnston ledgers show that it was

made at their Croydon works and supplied at a cost of £115 through Swinden & Sons of 27 Temple Street, Birmingham who placed the order for the clock on 10 April 1908.

**Visited:** CJP 30 December 1977 and 9 July 1989

### **CASTLE BROMWICH – St.Wilfrid (R.C.), Shawsdale Road, Firs Estate**

The mission here was established in 1959 and the church was built in 1965. The church has a tall brick tower alongside the main entrance. It has a single bell hung dead for chiming with a solenoid clapper.

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1. 182 701 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1964 \*

*Soundbow: (seven crosses - spaced evenly)*

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Note    | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1964 | 30½      | 1036    | C-17.46 | 5    | 2    | 15   |

On the side of the tower facing Shawsdale road there is a clock dial with individual white marking divisions at five-minute intervals. The clock is a synchronous timepiece supplied and installed by Smith of Derby in 1973

**Not visited:** *Ex.inf.* Taylors and Smiths

### **CASTLE BROMWICH – see also HODGE HILL, St.Philip and St.James; SHARD END, All Saints**

### **CASTLE VALE - Fort Dunlop**

Fort Dunlop was built in 1916 as a tyre factory. It remained in use until the early 1980s after which it fell into disuse. The whole complex has now been redeveloped for commercial and residential use, the official reopening taking place on 1 December 2006. A Pul-syn-etic clock system was supplied for the old factory by Gents of Leicester at some date prior to 1946.

### **CASTLE VALE – St.Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, Reed Avenue**

This is a modern church and hall serving a new parish formed from Curdworth in 1966. The church was designed by John P. Osborne and Sons and dedicated on 7 September 1973. Consecration took place in 1990. There is no bell

**Church visited:** CJP 9 July 1989

### **CHELMSLEY WOOD – St.Andrew, Pike Drive**

This is a modern church serving a new parish formed from Coleshill, Marston Green and Tile Cross in 1972. It is an ecumenical church for an Anglican and Methodist partnership, licensed for worship on 20 May 1972. It is a brick building with a lantern over the altar. There is no bell.

**Church visited:** CJP 9 July 1989

### **CHELMSLEY WOOD – St.Augustine, Anglesey Avenue**

There is no permanent church in this parish, but in 1989 a congregation from this area of the parish of Kingshurst met for regular worship in a house (no.3 Anglesey Avenue) on a modern housing estate. There was no bell.

**Church visited:** CJP 9 July 1989

### **CHERRY ORCHARD, Epiphany – see HANDSWORTH, Epiphany, Cherry Orchard**

### **COFTON HACKETT (Worcestershire) – St.Michael & All Angels**

Cofton Hackett was a chapelry of Northfield until it became a separate parish in 1866. The church is mediaeval with a double bellcote with pinnacles on the west end of the nave. The bellcote probably dates from the sixteenth century. A plate inside the church indicates that

the west wall was restored in 1852 – also the date of one of the bells – although further restoration took place in 1861 under the supervision of the Worcester architect, Henry Day. Until 2012 there were two bells in the turret. Sadly, one of them was stolen in an audacious and risky theft on the night of 29/30 October. The bell from the northern aperture (the C bell) was stolen, and now only the smaller one (A flat) remains. Unusually, the larger bell had a higher note than the smaller one. The bells were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | <i>Waist:</i> W <sup>M</sup> BLEWS & SONS BIRMINGHAM 1852            |
| 2.          | + 1717 ( <i>arabesque border</i> ) ( <i>Richard Sanders's mark</i> ) |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b>    | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Mouldings</b> | <b>Note</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | William Blews & Sons, 1852 | 21"             | 0:2:2:2:1        | C           | 2           | 1           | 0*          |
| 2.          | Richard Sanders, 1717      | 19¼"            | 2:1-1:3:2        | A flat      | 1           | 3           | 0*          |

The Blews bell was the earliest known example of the firm's work by some fifteen years, and (since some sources give the date as 1862) the date has been confirmed by first-hand inspection. The lettering is Roman – not Gothic. Both bells had canons and they have not been quarter turned.

In 1820, the Worcestershire antiquary Dr. Peter Prattinton (b.1771-d.1840) recorded the inscription of the predecessor of the 1852 bell as "Beniamin Fitter CW 1717". It was evidently also cast by Sanders, like its surviving contemporary. A presentment dated 8 July 1717 reported "two of the bells crackt" and also "the want of a Ladder to go up to the Bells". There were "ij smale bells in the steeple" here in 1552.

At the time of my inspection in July 1994 the bells were hung for swing chiming with wooden stocks, strap gudgeons and stock hoops, plain bearings (fixed to wooden blocks in the walls of the turret) and iron chiming levers. The fittings had apparently been renewed some time in the twentieth-century, and evidently since 1892 when William Saunders noted that the Sanders bell had "a rotten ½ wheel – dangerous" while the other bell had an "iron lever – good".

The turret was repaired in 1994 by W.A. Lennox & Son (Builders) Ltd of Barnt Green under the supervision of S.T. Walker & Partners, architects. The work involved stonework repairs and the insertion of new stone corbels in place of the wooden blocks supporting the bells. The bells were rehung with new fittings by Arthur Berry, these consisting of wooden stocks, plate gudgeons, ball bearings, iron chiming levers, clappers suspended from independent staples, and new supporting ironwork. Some of the work was also undertaken by Ben Davis, the Worcester stonemasons, under sub-contract to Lennox.

As noted above, the Blews bell was stolen in 2012. In 2013-4 a replacement bell was cast by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough and hung with new swing-chiming fitting similar to those in use before (i.e. hardwood stock with plate gudgeons, ball bearings, iron chiming lever and clapper with independent staple). Details of the new bell are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | 687 310 / [ <i>blank</i> ]<br><i>Waist:</i> ST. MICHAEL'S COFTON HACKET BELL / CAST OCTOBER 2013 / TO REPLACE THE 1852 WILLIAM BLEWS BELL / STOLEN IN 2012<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</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  | 21"             | 2:2:2:3:2        | 2074      | C-16        | 2           | 1           | 18          |

**Visited:** CJP 10 June 1981, 25 August 1988 (ladders), 22 July 1994 (scaffolding) and 24 April 2003 (binoculars); Thanks to Simon Adams for details of the new bell, March 2014

**COTTERIDGE – St.Agnes (former church), Pershore Road, Cotteridge**

Unlike many of the other new churches of its date, its tower was actually built. Funds for the upper portion, which cost £450, were collected by Mrs. Pelham Lane. It is stated in contemporary reports that the tower was designed with "a belfry for six bells". However, the projected ring never materialised.

The bell from St. Agnes – said by the Diocesan Surveyor to have been a small school bell of about 12" diameter – was disposed of when the church was demolished as it was considered unsuitable for reuse. It is believed to have dated from 1903.

**COTTERIDGE – The Cotteridge Church, Pershore Road South**

It is a Tudor gothic building in red brick with stone dressings, with a north-west tower and octagonal spire on the left hand side of the Pershore Road façade. During the conversion work I was able to see inside the tower and spire. There is neither a bell nor any provision for one in the tower.

**COTTERIDGE – *see also* BILLESLEY COMMON, Holy Cross**

**DERITEND – St.Basil (former church), Heath Mill Lane**

The church has a bellcote which originally contained a single bell, as follows:

1. BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM A.D. 1911

| Bell | Founder and date    | Diameter         | Mouldings | Note   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|---------------------|------------------|-----------|--------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | James Barwell, 1911 | 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ | 2:2-2:3:2 | E flat | 2    | 2    | 0*   |

The church was closed in 1970 and formally declared redundant in 1979, but it has remained in ecclesiastical ownership and since the 1970s the building has been used for social and community projects. The bell was removed in April 1978 and afterwards installed at St.Saviour's, Saltley. The bell was hung for swing chiming with a Barwell wooden headstock fitted with plate gudgeons, plain bearings, full wheel and clapper with independent staple. The headstock remained in the turret after the bell had gone and it was still there in 1988.

**Church visited:** CJP 11 September 1988 and bell examined (at Saltley) CJP 27 July 1988

### **DERITEND – St.John the Baptist (former church), Deritend High Street**

The church at Deritend was founded in C14th as a chapel of ease to Aston. An agreement of 1381 refers to the use of the recently-built chapel of St.John the Baptist by the inhabitants of Deritend and Bordesley. The minister was traditionally elected by the parishioners. It was not until 1890 that Deritend became a separate parish and benefice.

By 1734 the mediaeval chapel was in a ruinous state, and a brief was issued to raise some £1643 to rebuild it. The church was rebuilt in 1735-6 as a rectangular brick building with tall round-headed windows. A brick tower of two stages and topped with a balustrade and urns was added – or completed - in 1762.

In 1548/9 "the Chapell lyinge at Dyrettende nexte the towne of Birmyngham" possessed "Two belles by estimacion there m<sup>l</sup> weight" (i.e. 10 cwt). These bells evidently hung in the square bell turret with pyramid roof and weather-vane shown in earlier illustrations of the building. Nothing else is known of the bells, or of the original belfry of the 1735 church.

In September 1775 the local newspaper reported plans to install bells at the Chapel. The following report appeared in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, Mon. 25 September 1775:

We hear that the Inhabitants of Deritend and Bordesley are encouraged by many of their Friends in Birmingham, to solicit their Assistance in order to enable them to purchase a Clock and a Ring of Bells to compleat the Chapel in Deritend. - We doubt not but the Subscription will meet with that Success due to o laudable an Undertaking.

A ring of eight bells by Robert Wells of Aldbourne was installed in 1776 by Samuel Turner of Whitechapel. The weight of the tenor was quoted as 11-2-14 in 1913, but when the bells were removed it was found to weigh 10-2-16 (nett). The opening of the bells was reported in the *Coventry Mercury* of Monday 5 August 1776:

On Tuesday last, at the opening of a new peal of eight bells at Deritend Chapel, a compleat peal of 5040 Bob Major was rung by the St. Martin's Youths of Birmingham, in 3 hours and 5 minutes. The above bells were cast by Mr. Wells in Wiltshire, & hung by Mr. Samuel Turner in London; which afforded the highest satisfaction to a very great concourse of people assembled on that occasion

A report in *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* of the same date says that the bells "were cast by Mr. Robert Wells of Aldbourne, in Wiltshire, and are pronounced by Judges (for their Weight of Metal) to be as musical a Peal as any in the Kingdom". Turner, the bellhanger, is not mentioned in the reports in the Birmingham papers. These do, however, indicate that the opening took place on the Monday and that the peal of Bob Major was rung on the day after.

The bells were hung in a double jack-braced wooden frame of 1776 (*Bellframes* type 6.D). There were four bells (3, 4, 8 and 7) in parallel pits in the middle, with two bells on each side at right angles swinging mouth-to mouth and north-south – 1 and 2 on the west side of the tower, and 5 and 6 on the east. The fittings were partially renewed by Blews in 1872, repaired by Barwell in 1895 and again repaired by Barwell in 1913. The fourth had a wooden stock with hoop gudgeons and the seventh and tenor had Barwell cast iron stocks. The sixth was on ball bearings by 1929.

The church was closed in 1936 and by 1939 plans were in hand for demolishing the building in connection with a road widening scheme. The advent of war put a stop to these plans, but the fate of the church was sealed when it was badly damaged by bombing in 1940. The bells were removed in June 1944 when the building was demolished. Taylors did the removal at a cost of £41.15.0. The bells were taken to Bishop Latimer's church, where

they were stored for some years before being recast towards a new ring of eight there in 1957-8.

The inscriptions of the old bells were recorded by Tilley & Walters (p.119) and they have been partially reproduced on the Bishop Latimer's ring (now at Perry Barr)

**Bell** **Inscription**

1. WE ARE PLACED HERE BY SUBSCRIPTION IN THE YEAR MDCCLXXVI THO: COX MINISTER
2. HEALTH & HAPPINESS TO ALL OUR WORTHY SUBSCRIBERS. R WELLS. FECIT MDCCLXXVI
3. R. WELLS. ALDBOURNE FECIT
4. MAY THE TOWN OF BIRM<sup>M</sup> BE EVER HELD IN ESTEEM FOR ITS MANUFACT<sup>S</sup>. R. WELLS FECIT
5. R. WELLS. ALDBOURNE FECIT MDCCLXXVI
6. WISDOM TO THE COUNCIL OF THE STATE & SUCCESS TO THE BRITISH FLEET. R. WELLS. FECIT. MDCCLXXVI.
7. MAY GREAT BRITAIN EVER STAND UNRIVALLED IN HER COMMERCE. R. WELLS F. MDCCLXXVII.
8. R. WELLS. OF ALDBOURNE FECIT MDCCLXXVI.

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter                       | Hz   | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 27 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 1505 | 5    | 0    | 25   |
| 2.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 28 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1420 | 5    | 1    | 25   |
| 3.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 29 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 1261 | 5    | 2    | 24   |
| 4.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 31                             | 1138 | 6    | 0    | 1    |
| 5.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 32 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1010 | 6    | 2    | 21   |
| 6.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 34 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 938  | 7    | 2    | 13   |
| 7.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 37 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | 841  | 8    | 3    | 24   |
| 8.   | Robert Wells, 1776 | 40 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 757  | 10   | 2    | 16   |

These are the nett weights of the bells as received at Loughborough in November 1957 prior to recasting for Bishop Latimer's church. The bells were in the key of F sharp (757Hz = F sharp plus 39.35 cents). Taylors recorded the inscriptions at the same date, confirming them to have been as given above. A slight alteration (the inscription on the old fifth being used on the third of the new ring) was made when the bells were recast for Bishop Latimer's church in 1957.

The bells had been popular with the Birmingham ringers and many peals were rung at Deritend by the St.Martin's Youths from the late eighteenth. Interest waned in later years, for the reasons explained in a report of the last peal on the bells which was rung on 9 June 1937. It was stated that "The bells, a tuneless peal of eight, ... have been silent for some five years, chiefly because, with so many modern peals in the vicinity, they were not considered to be worth ringing". This is a rather sad epitaph to Deritend's lost peal.

The church clock of 1777 by George Donisthorpe of Birmingham was given to the Birmingham Science Museum by the City Engineer & Surveyor's Public Works Department in 1952 and it is now (2009) in the Museums Collections Centre (1952.S.213.0). This clock was highly commended by William Ludlam (1717-1788) – a distinguished eighteenth century engineer and mathematician - who wrote to John Holmes in 1779 stating that "Donisthorpe of Birmingham (the best maker of church clocks I know) made an excellent clock for Deritend Chapel in Birmingham".

The clock – which was restored in 1907 – is a large plate and spacer movement with extended barrels. The trains are of just two arbors (instead of the usual three or four) and the clock was designed to run at a slow beat (2 seconds pendulum) using light weights to minimise friction. The movement itself is narrow although the overall size of the clock with the winding drums is quite deep. The clock has a pinwheel escapement and countwheel striking but the original pallets, pendulum and some other parts are now missing. Cut on the

**Visited:** Clock examined, CJP (with AHS tour group) 10 July 2009

The church at Dorridge was originally built as a chapel of ease known as St. Philip the Evangelist, Packwood. It was opened on 19 November 1878. Payne and Talbot were the architects, and J. Smallwood & Co were the builders. As a result of an alteration to the boundaries in 1895 Dorridge transferred to the parish of Knowle, and in 1896 the building was enlarged by the addition of a new chancel, organ chamber and vestry dedicated on 16 June 1897. The architect for the extension was J.A. Chatwin. It was intended to rebuild and enlarge the nave and add a tower, but this was never done. Dorridge became an independent parish in 1966. A church hall was built in 1971, and in 1985 a new link was constructed between the church and hall.

**Bell** **Inscription:**

- | Bell | Founder and date      | Diameter         | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-----------------------|------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | James Barwell, c.1896 | 12 $\frac{7}{8}$ | E    | 0    | 2    | 0*   |

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.

|             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b> |
|-------------|--------------------|

- | Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Mouldings | Hz   | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1813 | 23       | 2:2-2:3:2 | 1760 | A    | 3    | 0    | 6    |

This public library in Duddeston and Nechells was built in at the junction of Lingard Street and Saltley Road in 1891-2. Pevsner described the building as "a typical vigorous example of the

red brick and terracotta school for municipal building at the end of the C19th". Jethro A. Cossins and Peacock were the architects and the contractors were Messrs W. and J. Webb. The cost of the building was £3700. The foundation stone on the south side of the building was laid by Alderman Johnson, the Chairman of the Free Libraries Committee, on 13 April 1891 and the library was opened by the Mayor on 5 June 1892.

There is a tower above the entrance with terracotta sculptures (designed by Cossins and Peacock) in all the tympana and classical detail on the gables. The tower was built to accommodate a clock, and in October 1891 the City Council's Public Libraries committee accepted the tender from Messrs Smith of Derby to provide a clock at a cost of £123. The clock was to strike the hours and sound one blow at the half hour.

Smith's sales ledger for 7 February 1892 contains the following entry relating to the clock and its 5 cwt clock bell:

The Birmingham City Council

New turret clock for Lingard St Library with four 4ft.6in. illuminated dials and striking hours on 5 cwt bell £123

A further entry on 29 Oct. 1892 refers to the provision of a "gas apparatus adjuster" for £1.3.0 for the Bloomsbury Library clock. There is no further information on the bell, but a search in the records of the Loughborough Bell Foundry indicates that it was not cast there as Taylors did not supply any bells to Smiths between 1888 and 1893. At that date, Smiths certainly obtained some of their clock bells from Charles Carr of Smethwick.

The original clock was replaced by a synchronous electric movement by Smith of Derby – along with ten other public clocks in the City – in 1958. There is no clock bell now, but the bar from which a bell was once hung remains in position in the top stage of the tower.

**Visited:** CJP 25 February 2006: Thanks to Stuart Murdoch, the Community Librarian at Bloomsbury Library, for providing information on the present installation.

### **DUDDESTON - St.Anne (former church), Cato Street**

The church was built in 1868-9 and consecrated on 22 October 1869 and a parish was formed from St.Matthew's in the following December. It was a red brick building in the gothic style, designed by J.A. Chatwin. It was later restored by J.G. Dunn in 1889. According to directories of the 1870's the church had a bellcote with one bell. In 1882 St.Anne's received a new clock and a new bell, the old bell (weighing 0-2-0) being sold to the Taylors for scrap. The clock was given by Mrs. Austin of Cato Street, Duddeston. The bell was presented by Kenneth S. Austin Esq. in commemoration of his daughter's marriage and rung for the first time on Christmas Day, 1882.

| <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, 1882  | 27 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | D sharp     | 4           | 1           | 5           |

Taylors' records indicate that the bell was hung with a wooden stock fitted with bowed gudgeons. The bell carried the maker's name and date, with the inscription "Alice Madeleine Austin. Married 28<sup>th</sup> October 1882". It was forwarded from the works on 6 December 1882.

Details of the invoice are recorded in the daybook:

Kenneth S. Austin Esq, 104 Cato Street, Birmingham. 1882, Dec 6th.

To one new bell 4-1-5 at £6.6. per Cwt

£27.1.1½.

Inscription

6s.0d.

Fittings as per est. Nov 2/82

£11.0.0.

Journey to inspect

£1.1.0.

[Total] £39.8.1½.

Settled Mar 16/83

The church badly damaged by enemy action in 1941 and for the duration of the war the congregation worshipped in the Dollman Street mission church (in Ashted). The Bishop issued an order deferring restoration in October 1945. The church never reopened and the



remains were demolished in about 1951 when the parish merged with St. Matthew, Duddeston. The site was sold in 1956.

### **DUDESTON – St. Matthew, Great Lister Street, Nechells**

This was the first of the proposed ten churches (of which only five were built) funded by the Birmingham Church Building Society. It was built in 1839-40 to the designs of William Thomas of Leamington. The foundation stone was laid by Lord Calthorpe on 12 October 1839. The consecration took place on 20 October 1840 and a parish was assigned from Aston in January 1842. The church was built in brick in the gothic style, and originally stood at the centre of a group of buildings including the school and parsonage of the same date. It has a west tower, which originally carried a 125 foot spire renovated in 1900 but later removed.

The poor condition of the fabric led to the closure of St. Matthew's for services in 1991, and the building was later restored and converted for combined secular and ecclesiastical use as St. Matthew's Centre in 1993-4. The church was formally declared redundant in April 1994 and the part retained for religious use was afterwards designated as a parish centre of worship in May 1994. The official name of the parish is now Nechells St. Matthew.

The bell was hung under a covered shelter on the roof of the west tower at the time of my visit in 1988. In this position it would have originally been level with the sound openings in the spire. It was hung for ringing in a wooden frame (*Bellframes* type 6.Q) with iron spacers in the ends. The frame was probably erected in 1840 by the carpenters who did the woodwork for the new church. The bell was rehung with new fittings in about 1900 – probably by Barwell and contemporary with the restoration of the spire – and these included a wooden stock, plate gudgeons, plain bearings in iron housings, wheel, stay and slider and clapper with independent staple.

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

1. JOHN TAYLOR BELL FOUNDER LOUGHBOROUGH & OXFORD A : D: 1840

| <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, 1840       | 24¼             | F sharp     | 3           | 0           | 0*          |

The bell was afterwards rehung by Taylors in October 1993 – but not weighed – and placed in a new tower at the east end of the remodelled church. It is hung 'dead' and sounded by an electrically-operated solenoid clapper.

A new clock was put up in 1883-4 during the restoration of the church by C.E. Edge, architect. This clock displayed the time on four large dials at the belfry stage and struck the hours on the bell. Although converted to direct drive by Smith of Derby in 1979, the movement still bears the original setting dial inscribed "H. PALMER / BIRMINGHAM / 1883". When first installed the clock was connected by wires with the Chief Central Clock at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in order to show the correct Greenwich time. This was under an agreement with the Corporation dated 3 December 1883, which lists the conditions and shows that the authorities were anxious to ensure the accuracy of "certain church and other clocks situated in conspicuous parts of the Borough". It was fitted with an electromagnetic regulator. The clock remains in the tower of the original church building/

**Visited:** CJP 27 July 1988 and 25 February 2006: also *ex.inf.* Taylors

**DUDESTON – *see also* NECHELLS, St. Catherine; NECHELLS, St. Clement; NECHELLS, St. Joseph (R.C.)**

**EDGBASTON, Chamberlain Clock Tower, Five Ways – *see* BIRMINGHAM**

**EDGBASTON, Christ Church - *see* SUMMERFIELD, Christ Church**

### **EDGBASTON – Church of the Redeemer (former Baptist church), Hagley Road**

Although it is not known to have had a bell, the Church of the Redeemer warrants inclusion in this survey on account of its exceptionally fine tower with louvred belfry window openings. Costing £17,340 it was probably the most lavishly built and furnished of the nonconformist churches and chapels in the City. It was built in 1882 and designed by James Cubitt, whose plans were illustrated in *The Building News* of 21 December 1883. It was a large cruciform church with a lantern tower over the crossing. It was demolished in 1975.

### **EDGBASTON – Congregational Church (former), Francis Road**

This church was built in 1855-6 to the designs of Yeoville Thomason. The foundation stone was laid on 11 September 1855 by the Rev. John Angell James who also preached at the opening on 8 October 1856. Messrs. Barnsley of Birmingham were the builders and the church cost £5000. It was built in Hollington stone with Bath stone dressings and designed in the Decorated gothic style. It had a substantial west tower and spire (170 feet) with pairs of louvred belfry windows. There was a clock dial below the belfry windows in the west face of the tower. Nothing is known of the clock, and it is unclear whether or not there was a clock bell. The church was still flourishing in 1957, but it was later demolished to make way for road improvements at the Five Ways interchange

### **EDGBASTON – Holy Child Jesus (RC Convent), Sir Harry's Road**

The convent was established in Edgbaston in 1936 for the sisters of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. The sisters ran a school which continued to operate under their leadership until 1986. The school changed its name to Priory School in 2001.

The Croydon foundry records show that Gillett & Johnston supplied a small bell (no.6476) for the Convent of the Holy Child Jesus at Edgbaston in 1947. The bell had engraved inscriptions and moulding wires:

| Bell | Inscription  |
|------|--|
| 1.   | GILLETT & JOHNSTON, CROYDON, 1947. [ <i>no serial number on the bell</i> ]<br><i>Waist:</i> CORNELIA / IN MEMORIAM / 1846-1946 |

| Bell | Founder and date                   | Diameter | Mouldings | Hz   | Note  | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Gillett & Johnston, 1947 (no.6476) | 14¾      | 2:2-2:2:2 | 2456 | Eb-23 | 0    | 3    | 11   |

This inscription shows that the bell was hung to mark the centenary of the foundation of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, a Roman Catholic religious organisation founded in England by Cornelia Connelly (now the Venerable Cornelia Connelly) in 1846.

Being no longer required, the bell was sold. It has since become the fifth of a very light ring of eight at "The Last Tower" at Tulloch in the Highlands district, Scotland. This is a privately-owned campanile. It was purchased with other bells from different sources in 2011 but the ring wasn't installed until 2015. Following retuning, it now weighs 0-2-24 and the nominal is 2323hz (D-20).

***Not visited:*** *Ex.inf.* Gillett & Johnston and (2015) Matthew Higby and Peter Bevis

### **EDGBASTON, King Edward VI Grammar School – see BIRMINGHAM**

### **EDGBASTON – Oratory Church of the Immaculate Conception (R.C.), Hagley Road**

This Roman Catholic mission was established when the Fathers of the Oratory settled here in 1849-50. The first church designed by M. Viollet-le-Duc was opened in 1853 and enlarged in 1858 and 1861 by Henry Clutton. The present one, designed in the Italian Renaissance style by E. Doran Webb, was built as a memorial to Cardinal Newman between 1903 and 1909. The nave and aisles were opened in 1906 and the church was completed in 1909. It was consecrated on 23 June 1920.

There is no bell at the church. There is, however, a clock bell in the original mission buildings adjoining and a house bell inside the building.

The clock dates from 1852 and it is contemporary with the original Oratory buildings on this site. The dial is high on the north wall of an enclosed courtyard to the west of the original chapel. The clock weights fall in an enclosed wooden weight shaft on the outside of the building and the bell hangs in a wooden box high on the wall above the clock dial. The dial itself (4ft. 6in. diameter) has a glass centre and a black chapter ring with gilded Roman numerals.

The clock movement is positioned immediately behind the dial and housed in a room on the top floor of the house. It is a two-train clock in a chair frame (with extended barrels) of cast iron components, with anchor recoil escapement and maintaining power. It strikes the hours and also sounds a single blow at the half hour. The clock is similar to those of the period made by John Whitehurst III of Derby – who may have been the actual maker – but it carries a brass plate inscribed “ROSKELL / LIVERPOOL / 1852”.

The clock was evidently supplied by William Roskell of Liverpool, who subsequently bought Whitehurst’s business in 1857-8. Roskell (born in 1812) was the son of Robert Roskell of Liverpool, a noted maker of watches and chronometers, and came from an old Roman Catholic family. He may have secured the commission for this clock through a relative, Richard Roskell (born 1817), who became Bishop of Nottingham in 1853 and had connections with the Catholic community in Birmingham.

The clock bell is inaccessible without scaffolding, but a partial view can be obtained from inside the building through the hold in the brickwork for the clock hammer. The visible part of the inscription band is entirely blank. It is a conventional bell with canons and mouldings 2:2-2:3:2. It is about 18 inches in diameter, weighing a little over 1 cwt, and it is hung from a wooden stock with traditional supporting ironwork. The canons are of Whitechapel type and the bell may have been supplied through Roskell by Charles and George Mears in 1852. The foundry records show that Mears supplied two bells to Whitehurst – one of them weighing 1-0-10½ - in May 1852, but none direct to Roskell.

The house bell hangs from a steel bracket mounted on an inside wall in the main ground floor corridor within the Oratory buildings. It is used as an Angelus bell and hung for swing chiming with a bar stock, iron lever, clapper and staple etc.

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

1.            359 / TAYLORS • FOUNDERS • LOUGHBOROUGH • ENGLAND • 1929 •

| <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, 1929  | 11½             | F (2844Hz)  | 0           | 1           | 17          |

This bell was cast for Zwolle in Holland where Taylors installed a carillon of 40 bells in 1929-31. Although it is a perfectly good bell, it evidently proved unsuitable for use at Zwolle. It was supplied from stock to the Oratory by John Taylor & Co in July 1935. Taylors also provided a clapper and crownstaple and altered the old headstock of a previous bell to suit. The work cost £9.11.2. In 1937 Taylors also supplied a sanctuary bell (gong).

There is also a clock dial on the main street frontage of the building to the Hagley Road. The clock is now driven by a synchronous electric motor and it has a slave dial inside the Upper Hall. The external dial is old and the clock may have been operated mechanically at one time.

**Visited:** CJP and SMA, 2 December 2005; also *ex.inf.* Taylors and John Smith & Sons of Derby

#### **EDGBASTON – Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Vincent Drive**

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was first built in the 1930s. The architects of the original buildings were Lanchester and Lodge who have also been responsible for later additions up until the 1960s. The prominent clock tower of 1933-8 has a large dial driven by an impulse movement. The original clock for the Hospital was a Pul-syn-etic system supplied by Gents of Leicester.

Queen's College originally occupied premises in Paradise Street in the City, where a chapel dedicated to St. James was consecrated in 1844. This building, designed by Bateman and Drury, was in use as a chapel until 1940 and was still standing in 1955 when it was being used as a furniture store. The College moved to Somerset Road in 1923, and a new chapel was built in 1939-40 to designs by Holland W. Hobbiss. It was dedicated in 1947.

**Not visited:** *Ex.Inf.* John Taylor & Co (GAF visit, with ladders, March 2003)

St. Augustine's was the third new church erected in the ancient parish of Edgbaston in Victorian times, built for the residents of the Rotton Park district which was developed by Joseph Gillott, the pen manufacturer, in the 1860s. Gillott gave a site, and in 1864 a local committee was established to oversee the erection of the church. Plans prepared by J.A. Chatwin were adopted in 1866 but the scheme proved too costly and the plans had to be modified. In August 1867 William Partridge of Birmingham contracted for erecting the first part of the church for £5500. The foundation stone was laid on 12 October 1867 and the church was consecrated on 2 October 1868. The parish was established in 1889.

Nothing is known of the bell(s) used between 1868 and 1913 when the present one was installed. The belfry now contains a single bell hung for swing chiming between two east-west beams on the south side of the tower. It is fitted with a steel channel-section stock, plate gudgeons bolted to the underside of the stock, plain bearings in iron housings, iron chiming lever and independent staple. The bell was cast without canons.

1. BARWELL FOUNDER BIRMINGHAM 1913  
*Waist: (Barwell's mark)*

In 1936, the Vicar – the Ven. J.H. Richards, Archdeacon of Aston – installed “gramophone bells” in the tower temporarily to ring out for Christmas and at the New Year. The experiment was warmly welcomed by the *Birmingham Post*, but less well received by the *Ringling World*, which published an account on 1 January 1937 (p.7).

Equipment comprises:

One B.S.R. 20 Watt U.D.O. Amplifier... complete with Valves, and mounted in Oak Cabinet with Twin Turntable and Pick-ups. Four Weatherproof Heavy Duty Exponential Flare Type

Moving Coil Loud Speakers. Four Special Weatherproofing Protecting Grills, as described below. Price of the above Equipment complete and ready for installation £66.9.0. Nett  
For Permanently Wiring Power Point in Vestry for amplifier, and Wiring from Amplifier to Loud Speakers in the Steeple £3.0.0. Nett.

Regarding fixing the Loud Speakers, we understand that in our Mr. Silverton's opinion, these should be sufficiently well secured now, and the only addition that we suggest is a special Cloth Metal Grill to be placed in front of the Loud Speakers, and to take the place of the wooden louvres in the Steeple which have been removed. We are supplying the four necessary Grills in the above Price, and they will afford ample protection for the Loud Speakers.

We understand that Messrs. Grafton & Co are charging the Church for the erection of the Loud Speakers, so this amount will be known to yourselves.

The above includes for the complete installation and there will be no further costs necessary

This is of some interest as an early example of the use of recorded bells.

**Visited:** CJP 26 August 1988

### **EDGBASTON – St.Bartholomew (Parish Church), Church Road**

Edgbaston was originally a dependent chapelry of Harborne (Staffordshire). There is a mention of a chapel here in 1279 and it was not until after the Reformation that Edgbaston became a separate parish. Apart from the west tower, few parts of the present church are older than the nineteenth century, the building having been enlarged several times between 1810 and 1889 to cater for the growing population of the parish. In its present form the church is largely the work of J.A. Chatwin who was responsible for major alterations between 1885 and 1889.

The west tower is believed to have been erected at the cost of Margerie Middlemore, the widow of the Lord of the Manor. It dates from around 1530 but shows signs of having been altered and repaired in the seventeenth century – possibly to rectify damage sustained during the Civil War. A brief to raise £800 for repairs to the church was circulated in 1658 and further funds were sought in 1684-5. Repairs to the tower seem to have been completed by about 1685 when new bells were installed.

### ***Present bells***

The tower now contains a modern ring of eight bells in the key of G (802.5 = G+40.4)

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>  |
|-------------|---|
| 1.          | 340 / ( <i>floral border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> A.D. 1927 / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF / WILLIAM Mc CANDLISH ILIFFE / BY HIS WIFE FLORENCE ILIFFE<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> )  |
| 2.          | 341 / ( <i>floral border – intersected by waist inscription</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> A.D. 1927 / TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD / GIVEN BY MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION / "ADESTE FIDELES" / CANON STUART BLOFELD * VICAR / JOHN BELLISS } / J. STALEY GOOD } CHURCHWARDENS / SIDNEY FREEMANTLE * SEXTON<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> )   |
| 3.          | 150 / CAST BY. T. PYKE. BRIDGWATER 1781<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / RECAST 1927  |
| 4.          | 245 / ( <i>blank</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> TO.THE.GREATER.GLORY.OF.GOD. / CRESSWELL.STRANGE.VICAR. / JOHN.CHARLES.HOLDER. BART. } / ELKANAH.MACKINTOSH.SHARP. } CHURCH / WARDENS / GEORGE.STREET.SEXTON<br><i>Opposite:</i> CAST BY CHARLES CARR. LIM <sup>D</sup> . / SMETHWICK. / OCT <sup>R</sup> . 1898. / ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / RECAST 1927 |
| 5.          | 151 / MATHEW ( <i>arabesque border</i> ) BAGLEY ( <i>border</i> ) MADE ( <i>border</i> ) MEE ( <i>border</i> ) ( <i>border</i> ) 1685 ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / RECAST 1927  |

6. [no number – 158 used] / HENRY (*arabesque border*) BAGLEY (*border*) MADE (*border*) MEE (*border*) (*border*) 1685 (*border*)  
Waist: (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1927
7. 236 / MATHEW (*border*) BAGELY (*border*) MADE (*border*) MEE (*border*) (*border*) 1685 (*border*) (*border*)  
Waist: (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1927
8. 247 / FEARE (*arabesque border*) GOD (*border*) AND (*border*) HONOVV (*border*) THE (*border*) KING (*border*) 1685 (*border*) (*border*)  
Waist: (*Taylor's circular mark*) / RECAST 1927

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter         | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 24 $\frac{7}{8}$ | 1607    | 4    | 1    | 6    |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 25 $\frac{7}{8}$ | 1515    | 4    | 3    | 2    |
| 3.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 27 $\frac{1}{8}$ | 1348.5  | 4    | 1    | 22   |
| 4.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 1202    | 4    | 1    | 24   |
| 5.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 29 $\frac{5}{8}$ | 1071    | 4    | 2    | 26   |
| 6.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 30 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 1009.5  | 5    | 2    | 0    |
| 7.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ | 901     | 7    | 1    | 16   |
| 8.   | John Taylor & Co, 1927 | 38 $\frac{3}{8}$ | 802.5   | 10   | 0    | 14   |

The bells are hung on one level in a cast iron lowside frame installed by John Taylor & Co in 1927. They are fitted with modern ringing fittings including cast iron stocks, ball bearings and Hastings stays. There is also an Ellacombe chiming apparatus with a manual in the middle chamber of the tower. The new bells were dedicated on 3 April 1927.

Over the door into the tower stairs there is an old clapper from the previous tenor mounted on a board with the dates "1685-1927", although in fact it dates only from Carr's restoration of the bells in 1898.

In the east window of the south aisle there is a stained glass window erected in about 1895 to commemorate William Henry Maxwell Blews (the Birmingham bellfounder) and his wife Frances who were married here in 1860. William died on 30 January 1887 and his widow, Frances, on 29 December 1894.

### **Former bells**

In 1552 there were three bells, two sacring bells or small bells and a handbell. The church suffered serious damage in the Civil War. Dugdale's account suggests that the church was "utterly demolished by the Parliamentary forces in the late wars, when they garrison'd Eggebaston-house". It is claimed that Col. John Fox and his men sold the bells. After the Restoration the parishioners began to rebuild the church but they had been unable to complete it. In 1683 the cost of the remaining work was estimated at £430, "besides the casting of the bells and the mounding of the churchyard".

In 1685 a new ring of five bells was installed by Henry and Matthew Bagley and in 1781 the treble was recast by Thomas Pyke of Bridgwater. Visiting in July 1891, H.T. Tilley and William Saunders found a ring of five bells – four by Bagley and the treble by Pyke. They were hung in a wooden frame with three parallel pits (for bells 1, 4 and 5) and two pits end-to-end on one side for bells 3 and 4.

In 1898 the bells were rehung and augmented to six by Charles Carr of Smethwick who also recast Pyke's 1781 treble. Details of the bells before the 1927 recasting were as follows:

### **Bell                      Inscription**

1. Waist: TO. THE. GREATER. GLORY. OF. GOD. / CRESSWELL. STRANGE. VICAR. / JOHN. CHARLES. HOLDER. BART. } CHURCH / ELKANAH. MACKINTOSH. SHARP. }  
WARDENS / GEORGE. STREET. SEXTON  
Opposite: CAST. BY. CHARLES. CARR. LIM<sup>D</sup>. / SMETHWICK. / OCT<sup>R</sup>. 1898.
2. CAST. BY. T. PYKE. BRIDGWATER 1781.

3. MATHEW (*arabesque border*) BAGLEY (*border*) MADE (*border*) MEE (*border*) (*border*) 1685 (*border*)
4. HENRY (*arabesque border*) BAGLEY (*border*) MADE (*border*) MEE (*border*) (*border*) 1685 (*border*)
5. MATHEW (*border*) BAGELY (*border*) MADE (*border*) MEE (*border*) (*border*) 1685 (*border*) (*border*)
6. FEARE (*arabesque border*) GOD (*border*) AND (*border*) HONOVVR (*border*) THE (*border*) KING (*border*) 1685 (*border*) (*border*)

| Bell | Founder and date     | Diameter                       | Nominal | Note     | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Charles Carr, 1898   | 27 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1439    | F        | 4    | 1    | 13   |
| 2.   | Charles Carr, 1898   | 28                             | 1273    | E flat   | 4    | 3    | 22   |
| 3.   | Matthew Bagley, 1685 | 28 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1143    | D flat   | 4    | 1    | 1    |
| 4.   | Henry Bagley, 1685   | 30                             | 1076    | C        | 4    | 3    | 25   |
| 5.   | Matthew Bagley, 1685 | 31 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 944     | B flat   | 5    | 2    | 5    |
| 6.   | Bagley, 1685         | 35                             | 850     | Ab+39.95 | 7    | 0    | 26   |

These are the nett weights of the bells as received at Loughborough in 1927. Carr quoted the weights of the treble and second as 4-1-10 and 4-3-23 respectively. Although the second bore no indication that it was recast in 1898, E. Denison Taylor noted that it was by Carr when he inspected the bells in 1919 on account of its similarity with the treble. Tilley and Walters also refer to the recasting of this bell "though the fact is not stated thereon".

The bells were hung in Carr's frame of 1898 with four parallel pits (containing – from north to south - bells 5, 6, 1 and 2) and two transverse pits to the west for bells 3 and 4. They had standard Carr ringing fittings. They all had canons, and the four old bells had been quarter turned.

According to their catalogues, John Smith & Sons of Derby provided a new synchronous electric turret clock for this church in about 1960. The clock was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Sapcote, and a faculty for the installation of "a synchronous electric non-striking clock showing the time on one four-foot skeleton dial on the north bellchamber window" was issued on 22 February 1957. The clock cost £178. In 1988 the original mechanism was replaced by a new control unit in the church.

**Visited:** CJP 27 July 1988

### **EDGBASTON – St.George, Calthorpe Road**

This church was erected by Lord Calthorpe in 1836-8 at a cost of £6000 to provide additional church accommodation for the growing population of the parish. The architect was Joseph John Scoles of London and the builder was John Hiley of Birmingham. The foundation stone was laid on 17 August 1836 and the completed church was consecrated on 28 November 1838. St.George's became a separate parish in July 1852. The original building was a modest one, later extended in 1856 by Charles Edge who added a chancel. The church was extensively rebuilt and enlarged by J.A. Chatwin in 1884-5 when the lower stages of a tower – actually used as an organ chamber – were erected at the east end of the south aisle.

The octagonal turret at north-east corner of nave belongs to the original church of 1837-8 and contains a single bell hung for ringing. Details are as follows:

#### **Bell                      Inscription**

1. THOMAS MEARS FOUNDER LONDON 1838.

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter                       | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Thomas Mears, 1838 | 23 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> | G    | 2    | 3    | 17   |

The Whitechapel daybooks for 16 May 1838 show that the bell was ordered by Mr. Whorrell of 1 Suffolk Street, Birmingham, and invoiced to the Rt.Hon. Lord Calthorpe at a cost of £20.18.3, including the clapper costing 12s. The remaining fittings and framework were

The original wooden framework of 1838 remains in use. It consists of two separate trusses with endposts, long heads, braces between the heads and posts and low horizontal members between the braces. The bell is hung to swing diagonally (north-west to south-east) in the turret at the level of the louvred window openings.

**Visited:** CJP 26 July 1988

St.Germain's has the distinction of being the only church in the City built during the Great War. Replacing an iron mission room first opened as the City Road Mission in 1896, it was erected in 1915–17 in a brick Romanesque style to a design by E.F. Reynolds. Collins and Godfrey of Tewkesbury were the contractors, and the cost of the church was about £8400. The foundation stone was laid on 3 July 1915 and the consecration took place on 29 September 1917. A parish was assigned from St.Augustine's, Edgbaston, in 1920.

**Visited:** CJP 26 July 1988 (binoculars)

This church was built for Lord Calthorpe in 1850-2 to the designs of Samuel Sanders Teulon, the Victorian 'rogue architect' who worked extensively for the Calthorpe Estate. Some of the earlier papers refer to the building as St. Augustine's, but when the church was opened it was dedicated to St. James. The builder was Robert Roebuck of Laceby, Lincs, whose contract for building the church for £3691 is dated 24 October 1850. Roebuck was unable to complete the contract as he got into financial difficulties and then died. The church was finished by John Winteringham of Grimsby. The total cost of amounted to £4097. The church was consecrated on 1 June 1852. It became a parish church in July 1852 when a district was assigned from Edqbaston.

**Bell** **Inscription**

- | Bell | Founder and date        | Diameter                       | Mouldings   | Note    | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Son, 1852 | 34 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 2:2-1-1:3:2 | A sharp | 8    | 1    | 13   |

The architect's specification required the contractor to "provide and fix a proper bell with Carriages and appurtenances ropes &c for same to be approved by the architect" and the



building accounts include a payment to "J. Taylor & Son for Bell £78.9.10". Taylors' records show that the bell for "St. Augustine's, Edgbaston" was cast on 12 March 1852 and despatched from the works on 17 March. The fittings included "bowed gudgeons" (i.e. hoop gudgeons). The invoice details are as follows:

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| S.S. Teulon Esq, Archt. 1852 March 26 <sup>th</sup> .  |                   |
| To the New Bell for St. Augustine's Church Edgbaston w <sup>t</sup> [with clapper 17lbs] 8-2-2 @ |                   |
| £6/15 [per cwt]  | £57.9.10.         |
| New Oak frame & Ironwork   | £10.0.0.          |
| New hangings   | £8.0.0.           |
| Fixing   | <u>£3.0.0.</u>    |
|  | [Total] £78.9.10. |

Paid June 12<sup>th</sup> 1852.

The firm's catalogue of 1870 contains a list of bells cast since 1825, and this includes an entry for "Edgbaston, Warwickshire, (St. Augustine's) 1 bell 8 cwt".

The last service in the church took place on 2 January 1973. The building was declared redundant in 1974 and afterwards acquired by the Birmingham Bible Institute who originally planned to restore it. The works were never completed, however, and since 1980 the condition of the church has gradually deteriorated. After many years of uncertainty the building is now (2002) undergoing conversion into flats. The bell will probably be removed and sold during the course of this work.

**Visited:** CJP 28 July 1988

### **EDGBASTON – St. Mary and St. Ambrose, Pershore Road**

The original mission church on Pershore Road, dedicated to St. Ambrose, was licensed in 1885. A permanent church was built in red brick and terracotta in the Decorated style in 1897-8, the architect being J.A. Chatwin of Birmingham. Lord Calthorpe gave the site and the cost of building the church was chiefly met by the Misses Stokes of the Hawthorns, Edgbaston, who contributed £6000 for the purpose. Thomas Collins of Tewkesbury was the contractor. The foundation stone was laid on 13 September 1897 and the consecration took place on 28 September 1898. The tower and spire (150 feet high) were added shortly afterwards, the gift of the Misses Stokes of Edgbaston, and completed by Easter 1899. A parish was assigned from Edgbaston in 1903.

The north-west tower contains a set of eight tubular bells in the key of C natural installed in 1899. Like the tower and spire, the bells were donated by the Misses Stokes. The bells hang in a vertical timber frame in two rows of four, with the even-numbered bells in one row and the odd-numbered ones in another. They are chimed from a plucking manual in the ringing room. There is no manufacturer's name on the bells or on the chiming manual, but Harrington, Latham & Co of Coventry were doubtless the makers.

The dimensions of the bells are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Length</b> | <b>Diameter</b> |  | <b>Bell</b> | <b>Length</b> | <b>Diameter</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|--|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1.          | 63"           | 3¾"             |  | 5.          | 78½"          | 3¾"             |
| 2.          | 65"           | 3¾"             |  | 6.          | 81"           | 3¾"             |
| 3.          | 69¼"          | 3¾"             |  | 7.          | 86½"          | 3¾"             |
| 4.          | 73½"          | 3¾"             |  | 8.          | 94"           | 4"              |

The bells were repaired locally in 1965.

**Visited:** CJP 23 August 1988

### **EDGBASTON – St. Monica, Harrison Road, Metchley**

This was an iron mission room in the parish of St. Bartholomew's, built in 1890-91 and opened on 12 October 1891. It was built during the incumbency of the Rev. Canon Cresswell Strange at the suggestion of Miss Harriett Cope who bore most of the cost. A photograph of c.1930 shows a small bell in an open cote over the west end of the building, and a parish brochure of the same period states that "The Church Bell was originally the old Fire Bell from Harborne Fire Station". The mission church was still in active use until May 1969.

Carr's catalogue of c.1891 shows that the Smethwick firm supplied a pair of bells to the Harborne Fire Brigade at around this time, these being hung on a single bar stock for simultaneous ringing to give an easy-to-distinguish fire alarm. It is unclear whether one of these bells – or their predecessor – was hung at St. Monica's.

### **EDGBASTON – St. Paul's Convent School (R.C.), Vernon Road**

The Convent has a chapel with tall red brick tower built in the Byzantine style to the designs of Harrison & Cox in 1938. The tower has twin openings in the bell stage, but there is no bell. Taylors quoted for a single bell in a range of sizes between 5 and 12 cwt in 1938 in response to a request from the architect for prices "for a bell and bellframe suitable for angelus and sanctus bell ringing" but no order was ever placed.

**Chapel visited:** CJP 26 May 1988

### **EDGBASTON – University of Birmingham, Chamberlain Memorial Tower**

The founding of the University in Birmingham was a key element of Joseph Chamberlain's vision for the City. He had originally envisaged developing the Mason College buildings for the purpose, but a gift of £50,000 from Andrew Carnegie, the American industrialist, brought with it a condition that the money should be spent on buildings. Carnegie also made it clear that he would like to see a campus-style university with lavish buildings like those of the new universities in North America. From this developed England's first 'red-brick' University and its fine complex of buildings.

The charter was granted in 1900 and in July of the same year Lord Calthorpe donated the Edgbaston site for the new university. The first buildings on the campus were erected soon afterwards, the architects being Sir Aston Webb and E. Ingress Bell whose original scheme included a modest tower over the main building at the centre of the complex. The main builder was Thomas Rowbotham. The first phase of construction was completed in 1906 and the new University was opened by King Edward VII in July 1909.

The site is dominated by the tall clock tower. In November 1905 it was reported that an anonymous gift of £50,000 – presumably Carnegie's – had been made to the University, "... to be applied in the erection of a tower." Eventually a modified design based upon the Mangia Tower at Siena in Italy, was accepted. Built of red Accrington brick with Darley Dale stone dressings, the tower stands to a height of 327 feet. In honour of the University's first Chancellor, it was named the Chamberlain Tower. A carved inscription round the top of the lower stage of the tower records:

: THIS : TOWER : COMMEMORATES : THE : FOUNDDING : / : OF : THE : UNIVERSITY :  
THROUGH : THE : INITIATIVE : / : AND : ACTIVE : ENCOURAGEMENT : OF : ITS :  
FIRST : CHANCELLOR : / : THE : RIGHT : HONOURABLE : JOSEPH : CHAMBERLAIN :

The tower was built in 1907-9 by Waring White of London whose tender (£14,189) was selected from the seventeen submitted. Thomas Rowbotham evidently bore no grudge about his failure to secure the contract for this phase of the University, as he made the very generous gift of some £2000 for the clock and bells for the new tower. The original electric lift, installed by Otis, still remains in use.

The tower was built from the inside without the use of scaffolding. This had the advantage of keeping down the cost, but the lack of external pointing resulted in water penetration. This had to be remedied soon after the tower was built, and in 1914 Thomas Rowbotham was engaged to point the tower at a cost of £710. Again no scaffolding was needed, as the workmen operated from hanging cages. The tower has since been restored again in 1957 and in 1985 when a major refurbishment took place at a cost of £250,000.

The clock was made in 1908 by the Whitchurch firm of J. B. Joyce, although installation was not completed until after the official opening of the University in July 1909. It is recorded that on the opening day a workman was employed to operate the hands of the clock manually with a cranking handle! A contemporary account of the clock was given in the *London and Provincial Magazine* for February 1909:

"...The frame was made in one solid casting weighing half a ton, and divided into three separate trains - the hour train, the train operating the quarter-hour Westminster chimes, and the general driving train. The escapement is after the pattern connected with the late Lord

Grimthorpe, the double three-legged gravity, and the wearing parts are jewelled as in a watch, which is noticeable in conjunction with the fact that the main wheels are 24in. in diameter, and weigh close on 1 cwt. each, The pendulum, which is 15ft. long, goes through to the floor below; it weighs 4cwt. and beats with a swing of two seconds' duration each way. The clock will go for a week on one winding, and an automatic arrangement throws the chimes out of gear during the night hours. The hour bell, weighing over 6 tons, and the quarter-hour chimes (4 tons) were cast by Messrs. Taylor, of Loughborough'. The total weight of the clock and bells when installed will exceed 20 tons. The cogged wheels in the mechanism, in addition to the bushes and pivot holes, are all of gun metal, polished and lacquered, and, needless to say, exactly fitting in with one another."

As noted in this account, the bells were cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough. Details of the inscriptions are as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | 131 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. + FOUNDERS + LOUGHBOROUGH + 1908 + / ( <i>border all round</i> )   |
| 2.          | 232 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. + FOUNDERS + LOUGHBOROUGH + 1908 + / ( <i>border all round</i> )   |
| 3.          | 132 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. + FOUNDERS + LOUGHBOROUGH + 1908 + / ( <i>border all round</i> )   |
| 4.          | 286 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. + FOUNDERS + LOUGHBOROUGH + LEICESTERSHIRE + 1908 + / ( <i>border all round</i> )  |
| 5.          | 283 / + THE : CLOCK : & : CHIMES : IN : THIS : TOWER : ARE : THE : GIFT : OF : M <sup>R</sup> . : THO <sup>S</sup> . : ROWBOTHAM : J.P : BUILDER : OF : THE : UNIVERSITY : FROM : 1902-9 + ( <i>border</i> ) / + PROSPERITY : TO : ALL : BENEFACTORS + ( <i>border</i> ) + JOHN : TAYLOR : & : CO. + FOUNDERS + 1908 + ( <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.          | John Taylor & Co, 1908  | 34 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>16</sub> | 1008           | B+35.1      | 9           | 1           | 4           |
| 2.          | John Taylor & Co, 1908  | 37½                             | 898            | A+35.05     | 10          | 3           | 26          |
| 3.          | John Taylor & Co, 1908  | 42 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>16</sub> | 800            | G+35        | 15          | 2           | 0           |
| 4.          | John Taylor & Co, 1908  | 55 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub>  | 600            | D+36.95     | 35          | 1           | 20          |
| 5.          | John Taylor & Co, 1908  | 83½"                            | 401            | G+39.32     | 121         | 2           | 11          |

The notes of the bells are as nos. 1, 2, 3, 6 and 10 of a ring of ten in G. All five bells have flange-tops, those on the two largest bells having a pattern or border round the edge. The hour bell, also known as "Big Joe" on account of its association with Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), ranks as the eleventh heaviest in Great Britain.

The bells were rehung in June 1981 by John Taylor & Co following the partial disintegration of the webbing of the steel grillage on which they were hung. The framework consists of four parallel main girders spanning the tower from north to south. The hour bell hangs in the middle, with no.1 to the west, no.2 to the north, no.3 to the south and no 4 to the east. Their deadstocks are formed from paired back-to-back steel channels resting on the main girders, those of bells 2, 3 and 5 being raised from the girders on pedestals. They are all fitted with external clock hammers (with two on the fourth quarter bell).

The clock is a three-train movement by Joyce of Whitchurch, 1908-9. It has a cast iron flatbed frame. The going train has a double three-legged escapement and drives four large dials (17 feet 6 inches wide). The clock strikes the hours and Westminster quarters. The present electrical drive system powering the original clock was fitted by Smith of Derby in 1982.

**Visited:** CJP, HEP, RLJ, 23 June 2003: Thanks to Christine Penney and Joe McKenna

### **ELMDON – St. Nicholas**

Elmdon church was rebuilt in 1781 at the expense of Abraham Spooner, the lord of the manor, who died in 1788. Spooner was a Birmingham iron manufacturer who bought the Elmdon estate in 1760. As well as erecting the new church he also rebuilt the Hall, which

was begun in 1785. The demolition of the hall in 1948 has left the church almost alone in the park and near to Birmingham Airport.

The new church was designed by John Standbridge of Warwick whose plans survive among the faculty papers at Lichfield. It has an apse at the east end, a nave of three bays and a west tower, all built in stone with simple gothick window tracery. The faculty was issued on 7 January 1781. Only the north side of the church is in its original form, the south side having been altered in 1972 when the building was enlarged by the addition of a new worship area and parish hall.

The bells come from the previous church which had "two belles" in 1552. A watercolour in the Aylesford collection shows that the old church had a timber-framed tower with a tiled pyramid roof, all heavily covered with ivy. A faculty for removing "a small leaden spire of no great ornament" was granted in May 1706.

The bells are as follows:

**Bell                      Inscription**

1. IESVS (*floral border*) BE (*vine border*) OVR (*crown*) SPED (*floral border*) 1631  
(*crown*) (*medallion border*) (*fleur de lis*) (*pair of figures*)
2. HENRICVS (*fleur de lis border*) BAGLEY (*border*) ME (*border*) FECIT (*border*) 1675  
(*border*)

| Bell | Founder and date    | Diameter                       | Nominal | Note     | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------|----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Thomas Hancox, 1631 | 23 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1504    | F#+27.87 | 2    | 2    | 9    |
| 2.   | Henry Bagley, 1675  | 26                             | 1254    | Eb+13.15 | 2    | 3    | 12   |

The bells hang in an oak frame which was probably installed when the church and tower were rebuilt in 1780-1. It is clearly the work of a carpenter rather than a bellhanger. It has two parallel pits, and the trusses consist of sills, long heads and braced posts. The bells were re-hung with new fittings by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough in 1972, and the fittings include wrought iron stocks, ball bearings and iron-chiming levers. Both bells have had their canons removed and have been quarter turned.

**Visited:** CJP and JCE 26 June 1976

**ELMDON HEATH – St.Francis of Assisi, Moat Lane and Cornyx Lane**

Serving a newly developed residential district of Solihull, this building was erected as a dual-purpose mission church and community centre. Work began in July 1939 and the foundation stone in the west wall was laid on 23 September of that year, but construction work came to a halt in January 1940. Permission to recommence building was eventually obtained in March 1949 and the church was completed in 1949-50. It was designed by Leslie T. Moore and opened on 25 February 1950. Bragg Bros Ltd of Solihull were the builders and the total cost of the church and furnishings came to £10,973.

In July 2004 it was reported that the church had been closed by order of the Bishop, and by November 2005 demolition was imminent. The bell – which had been repaired by Soundweld in November 1998 after it became cracked in the crown - has been taken down and transferred to Solihull parish church where it will be hung at a sanctus bell.

The church had a brick chimney turret rising above the angle between the chancel and vestry at the east end of the building, with a single bell:

**Bell                      Inscription**

1. *Waist:* M. & S. LONDON.

| Bell | Founder and date        | Diameter | Note             | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------------|----------|------------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Mears & Stainbank, 1949 | 15       | E flat (1292 Hz) | 0    | 3    | 1    |

The bell is a flat-topped casting with moulding wires arranged 0:2-2:3:2. It is undated, but the foundry records show that it was ordered in August 1949. It was given to the church by Mrs. P.W. Harrison. It was hung for swing chiming with fittings supplied by Mears & Stainbank in 1949, consisting of a wrought iron stock, iron chiming lever with

**Visited:** CJP 12 November 1988 (binoculars); *Ex.Inf.* Clive Day (Solihull)

This church was built in 1900-1901 on a large site off Slade Road given by the Wyrley-Birch family. Some sources name V.S. Peel as architect, but according to the foundation stone laid on 18 July 1900 the architect was R.B. Morgan and T. Johnson was the builder. This is confirmed by the building accounts which show that Morgan, as architect, gave his services gratuitously. The total amount of Thomas Johnson's bill amounted to £2006.

There is a bell under a tiled canopy projecting from the east end of the church. It hangs between two beams secured to the main brackets supporting the canopy. It is hung for swing chiming with a wrought iron stock, one end of which is extended through the wall of the church so that the bell can be rung from inside the sanctuary.

1. C. CARR, 1875.

Close inspection has confirmed that this bell was cast by Charles Carr of Smethwick in 1875, making it the earliest known example of his bellfounding work by some ten years. No other bells by Carr earlier than 1885 are known. It was probably supplied from stock when the church was built in 1901. It has six plain canons. The fittings include a small metal wheel on the end of the stock inside the church.

### ERDINGTON – Bus Terminus, Sutton Road

**Not visited:** *Ex.inf.* Andrew Nicholls MBHI (from notes made in 1995)

The Cottage Homes at Erdington were built in 1898-1901, by Franklin Cross and Nichols for the Aston Union. Designed in the Queen Anne style, the buildings are grouped around a green with a free-standing clock tower in the middle of the drive. The clock was presented by W.J. Adams, the Chairman of the Building Committee. It clock was supplied by Smith of Derby and invoiced to William Lee & Son of Aston, the builders, on 19 May 1900. It cost £38. It was a timepiece turret clock with two dials (3ft 6in diameter).

**ERDINGTON – Gunter Road School, Pype Hayes**

The Gunter Road Council School was built for Birmingham County Borough Council and opened in 1930. It was renamed in 1954 as the Gunter County Primary School. In July 1930 John Smith & Sons of Derby supplied an electrically-wound timepiece for the school with

four skeleton dials (4ft diameter) at a cost of £100. The original clock was exchanged (like that at Thornton Road School at Washwood Heath) in March 1938 for a new synchronous movement.

### **ERDINGTON – Library**

Erdington Free Library was built in 1905-6, partly funded by a generous gift of £5000 from the Scottish American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie who supported the establishment of libraries in the United States and in Great Britain. The architect was John P. Osborne whose designs for the library and adjoining Council House were published in the *Building News* in 1905. In the event only the library was built, the opening taking place on 2 July 1907.

The original designs included a tall brick clock tower over the main library entrance, with an ornamental top stage with pairs of corner columns on each side of the clock dials. The clock tower, however, was omitted from the scheme as executed.

### **ERDINGTON – St.Barnabas (parish church)**

Erdington was one of the hamlets in the ancient parish of Aston. Several of the other hamlets had chapels of ease for the convenience of the inhabitants living at a distance from the parish church, but no such provision was made at Erdington until the present church was erected in 1822-4. The site was given by Earl Howe, and the cost of the building was largely borne by the Commissioners for Building New Churches through a grant of £5348 towards the total expense of £5621. The architect was Thomas Rickman, who designed a plain gothic building typical of the Commissioners' churches of the period. It has cast iron window tracery. The foundation stone was laid on 11 June 1822 and the consecration took place on 23 July 1824. A parish was formed out of Aston in April 1858. The church was enlarged under J.A. Chatwin in 1882-3, and a major reordering of the interior took place in 1985-6. The church was badly damaged by fire on 4 October 2007, but the bells were unharmed. They were out of use while the church was under repair, but rang out again for the rededication service on 16 December 2012.

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

The church has a tall west tower of 1822-4, containing a ring of eight bells in the key of F natural (704Hz or F plus 13.69 cents):

- | <b><i>Bell</i></b> | <b><i>Inscription</i></b>   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1.                 | 206 / RING ON, JOYOUS BELLS ; NEVER SLUMBER, / ( <i>border all round</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / * 1903 *  |
| 2.                 | 172 / LET US HEAR EACH MESSAGE YOU BRING, / ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / * 1903 *   |
| 3.                 | 151 / AND OUR HEARTS, O'ERFLOWING WITH GLADNESS, / ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / * 1903 *  |
| 4.                 | 143 / MUST BREAK INTO MUSIC AND SING ; / ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / * 1903 *  |
| 5.                 | 131 / SING PRAISES TO GOD, OUR CREATOR, / ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / * 1903 *   |
| 6.                 | 147 / SING PRAISES TO JESUS, OUR KING, / ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / * 1903 *  |
| 7.                 | 208 / SING PRAISES TO THEE, HOLY SPIRIT ; / ( <i>border</i> )<br><i>Waist:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) / * 1903 *   |
| 8.                 | [175] / RING ON, BLESSED BELLS, EVER RING ! / ( <i>vine border</i> ) MARY PROCTOR RYLAND<br><i>Waist:</i> THIS PEAL OF EIGHT BELLS / PRESENTED TO ERDINGTON CHURCH / BY THOMAS RYLAND / OF THE REDLANDS, ERDINGTON, / IN MEMORY OF HIS DAUGHTER, / MARY PROCTOR RYLAND, / WHO DIED 2 NOV: 1903.<br><i>Opposite:</i> ( <i>Taylor's circular mark</i> ) |

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 26¾      | 1411    | 4    | 3    | 12   |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 27¾      | 1324    | 5    | 0    | 8    |
| 3.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 29¾      | 1179    | 5    | 2    | 22   |
| 4.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 31½      | 1056    | 6    | 0    | 6    |
| 5.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 34¼      | 938.5   | 7    | 1    | 27   |
| 6.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 35½      | 884.5   | 7    | 3    | 17   |
| 7.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 39¾      | 792     | 11   | 0    | 9    |
| 8.   | John Taylor & Co, 1903 | 44½      | 704     | 15   | 1    | 15   |

As stated in the inscription on the tenor, the bells were given by Thomas Ryland of Erdington in memory of his daughter, Mary Proctor Ryland, who died on 2 November 1903. They were the first modern ring in the City of Birmingham, being tuned on the Taylor true-harmonic system commercially developed by the founders in 1896.

The bells are hung in a two-tier cast iron frame of 1903-4. Seven of the bells are in an H-frame on one level (*Bellframes* 8.3.C.e), all swinging north-south. The fifth is hung in a lowside frame (*Bellframes* 8.3.A.h) above the rest and swings east-west. The fittings include cast iron stocks, ball bearings and Hastings stays. Bells 6 and 7 were rehung on ball bearings by Taylors in 1946 and the remainder by the same firm in 1959.

### ***History and previous bells***

A list of bells for Commissioners' churches among the Whitechapel foundry records indicates that the original bell for "Erdington near Aston Warwickshire" was provided by Thomas Mears II of London between 1818 and 1828. This is confirmed by documents preserved among the Aston parish records, the churchwardens being obliged by law to obtain certain fittings for the new chapel at the expense of the parish.

The Aston accounts for 1827-8 include a payment of £106.6.6. to Mears, and among the surviving vouchers there are various bills relating to the installation of the bell at Erdington. The bell and its fittings arrived from London by canal at Pickford's Wharf in Birmingham on 8 April 1825, and the carriers sent a notification to the churchwardens stating "This day arrived under your address, Goods as at foot ... [bell etc. total weight 14C 2Q 0lb]; they remain here at your risque, and beg you will order them away at your earliest convenience". Robert Roberts, the Aston bellringer and parish clerk, took charge of the matter and his account for 1824-5 includes:

Paid on account of Erdington Chapel"

Paid for the Carriage & delivery of the bell from Mears (see acct) £2.6.5.

Paid expences of Winding & placeing the bell in the bell chamber 18s.8d.

[and expences in connection with the opening of the chapel]

His ringing bill for the same period also records a payment of £1.10s. to the Aston ringers "For Ringing upon the consecration of Erdington Chapel" on 23 July 1824. The bell, it will be noted, was installed some nine months after the opening of the chapel.

The other bills include one from Thomas Job to the Wardens of Aston for "63ft 7 Cube timber to Bell frame, Car<sup>ge</sup> Labour &c Included" for Erdington Chapel. The cost was £33.10.3, and Job's bill was paid on 12 June 1826. Thomas Mears sent in his account dated 2 April 1825, as follows:

The Parish of Aston, Dr To Thomas Mears

To 1 Church Bell 12C 2qr 27lb @ 16d per lb £95.2.8.

Clapper fitted £1.8.0.

Stock, Wheel, Iron Work & Brasses Complete £9.10.0.

£106.0.8.

Letter from Thomas Mears, Whitechapel, 20 Feb. 1826

Gentn. I have herewith sent you my acct. for the Bell sent to Erdington Chapel which I hope has given satisfaction. A remittance of the amt. Will oblige,

Gentn.

Your obedient Servt.

Thos. Mears

The single bell in use from 1825 to 1903 was therefore as follows:

| Bell | Founder and date   | Diameter | Note      | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|--------------------|----------|-----------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | Thomas Mears, 1825 | c.42     | F# approx | 12   | 2    | 27   |

Later, the church possessed a set of tubular bells hung against a window on one side of the tower. These were put up in 1890 at a cost of £180. They were doubtless made by Harrington, Latham and Co of Coventry who were the main manufacturers and promoters of tubular bells.

A faculty was granted on 22 December 1903 for the removal of both the old bell and the set of tubular bells and for installing a new ring of eight. The tubular bells were purchased by John Bagnall and installed in 1904 at Water Orton where they were used for some years. The Mears bell seems to have been scrapped. The new bells were cast on 13 December 1903 and dedicated on 21 February 1904. Taylors' catalogues of the period include testimonials from the church architect (Jethro A. Cossins), the Vicar (the Rev. F.S. Swindell) and Thomas Ryland (the donor) regarding the work.

The clock is a two-train movement with deadbeat escapement by W.F. Evans & Sons of Soho. A stone tablet in the church records that it was presented by Sarah Perry in memory of her husband Frederick Perry who died on 1 September 1897. It has copper convex dials (4ft 6in) on the north and west sides of the tower.

The present clock replaces the one installed at the expense of the parishioners soon after the church was completed. The accounts show that the original clock was installed by Thomas Bingham of Birmingham, apparently in 1826. The vouchers are missing, but the clock seems to have cost £45, implying that it was a two-train movement and less expensive than the quarter chime clock he provided for Bordesley in 1825. Bingham had the regular upkeep of the clock until at least 1837-8.

**Visited:** CJP 22 July 1989

**ERDINGTON – St.Chad's Church Centre, Stoneyhurst Road**

The original wooden mission church here was licensed on 8 December 1914. The building was enlarged in 1949 and further developed after a conventional district was established on 16 March 1965. The new buildings were designed by Denys Hinton & Associates and built in 1966-7 by Walton & Gilmore (construction) Ltd for £15,499. The building was licenced for divine service on 13 May 1967, and St.Chad's is now used by a local ecumenical partnership between the Anglican and Methodist churches.

There is a single bell, which is hung from a steel bracket on the end wall of the old church hall and sounded by trigger-action clapper.

| <i><b>Bell</b></i> | <i><b>Inscription</b></i> |
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| 97                 |                           |
| 98                 |                           |
| 99                 |                           |
| 100                |                           |

1. 207 105 / (*blank*)  
*Waist: 19 (Taylor's rectangular mark) 67*

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter | Nominal | Note    | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|----------|---------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1967 | 14       | 2325    | D-18.01 | 0    | 2    | 8    |

This bell was supplied to the order of Denys Hinton & Partners, architects, in 1967. It replaces a previous bell inscribed "J. WARNER & SONS LONDON 1873". The old bell was 14" in diameter and weighed 0-2-0 (nett) when received at Loughborough on 13 April 1967.

**Visited:** CJP 9 July 1989 and (ladders) 7 October 1989: Thanks to Mr. Wood, Churchwarden

**ERDINGTON – St.Margaret Mary (R.C.) *see* PERRY COMMON, St.Margaret Mary (R.C.)**

**ERDINGTON - St.Mary and St.John (R.C.), Gravelly Hill North**

This church was built in 1936-7 to replace the original mission church opened in 1922. It was consecrated on 2 July 1953. The present tower or campanile at the north-west corner



of the building was added in 1961-2. The architect for the new tower was G.B. Cox, and the tall figure of St. John in *ciment fondu* on top of the tower was commissioned by Allied Artists and designed by Raymond Kings in 1962.

The tower contains a large bell hung for slow swinging:

**Bell**

**Inscription**

1. 117 254 / (*Birmingham ornament*)  
*Waist:* SANCTA MARIA, MATER DEI, SANCTE JOANNES, EVANGELISTA, / ET TU /  
 ORATE PRO INSTAURATORE REVMO ET ILLMO / BERTRANDO GOULD PAROCHO  
 1927- [*blank*]  
*Opposite:* JOHN TAYLOR & CO. / FOUNDERS / LOUGHBOROUGH / 1961  
*Soundbow:* (*seven crosses - evenly spaced*)

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter                       | Note       | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1961 | 47 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | F (692 Hz) | 18   | 1    | 17   |

The bell hangs in a steel frame (similar to *Bellframes* type 8.1.B.d). It has a cast iron horseshoe stock with ball bearings, counterbalanced clapper and full wheel. The frame and fittings were supplied by Taylors in 1961. There is also an electrically-operated tolling hammer.

**Visited:** CJP, RLJ and CJND, 24 January 2003 and *ex.inf.* Taylors

**ERDINGTON – SS.Thomas and St.Edmund (R.C.), Erdington Abbey**

The original Roman Catholic church at Erdington was "erected by the zealous exertions of several gentlemen" and opened for worship on Sunday 9 April 1842. It was afterwards used as a school. The building still stands at a short distance to the south of the Abbey.

The present church was designed by the architect Charles Hansom and built for Fr. Daniel H. Haigh who used his inherited wealth to finance the building. The foundation stone was laid on 16 May 1848. The church opened in January 1850 and it was consecrated by Bishop Ullathorne on 11 June 1850. The Abbey was built to the south of the church between 1880 and 1904.

The church has a north-west tower which carries a tall broach spire. There is also a small octagonal turret for the Angelus bell on the south side of the nave. Both contain bells.

**The present bells**

The octagonal turret over the vaulted oratory (originally the porch) at the south west angle of the church contains the original Angelus bell. The turret has a newel staircase to belfry level – with holes through the steps for the bellrope – and the bell hangs at the level of the louvred openings. The frame is arranged so that the bell could swing east-west.

**Bell**

**Inscription**

1. JOHN TAYLOR & SON FOUNDERS LOUGHBOROUGH 1849. / + SANCTUS + SANCTUS + SANCTUS.

| Bell | Founder and date        | Diameter                       | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Son, 1849 | 26 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | F    | 3    | 3    | 10   |

The lower band of inscription is in Gothic capitals and the bell has patterned canons. It has not been quarter turned.

The bell was originally hung for ringing in a cast iron A-frame (*Bellframes* type 8.3.C.a) with elm headstock, strap gudgeons (without stock hoops), plain bearings, traditional wheel, metal spur stay and rest. The original frame and fittings were provided by John Taylor & Son in 1849. They remain largely intact, although the wheel is now longer intact and the ground pulley has been removed. The supporting ironwork was partially replaced in 1998 when an electrically operated tolling hammer and Angelus unit was installed by Peter Darkins of Traditional Tower Clock Services, Matlock, Derbys at a cost of £2060.

In the north-west tower there is a ring of eight bells in the key of F natural (692Hz or F minus 16.08 cents).

**Bell**                      **Inscription**

1. 210 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT / FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. / \* \* \* / S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PRAY FOR ENGLAND.
2. 173 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THE MEEK / FOR THEY SHALL POSSESS THE LAND. / \* \* \* / S. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY PRAY FOR ENGLAND.
3. 195 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN / FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED. / \* \* \* / S. MARY MAGDALENE PRAY FOR ENGLAND.
4. 158 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE / FOR THEY SHALL BE SATISFIED. / \* \* \* / S. TERESIA PRAY FOR ENGLAND
5. 153 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL / FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY. / \* \* \* / S. ZITA PRAY FOR ENGLAND.
6. 147 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THE CLEAN OF HEART / FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD. / \* \* \* / S. JOSEPH PRAY FOR ENGLAND.
7. 188 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS / FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD. / \* \* \* / S. FRANCIS OF SALES PRAY FOR ENGLAND.
8. 205 / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. \* FOUNDERS \* LOUGHBOROUGH \* 1950 \*  
*Waist:* BLESSED ARE THEY WHO SUFFER PERSECUTION / FOR JUSTICE' SAKE / FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. / \* \* \* / S. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY PRAY FOR ENGLAND

| Bell | Founder and date       | Diameter                       | Nominal | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 26 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1383    | 4    | 1    | 0    |
| 2.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 27 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 1306    | 4    | 2    | 21   |
| 3.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 29                             | 1164    | 5    | 0    | 26   |
| 4.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 31                             | 1037    | 6    | 0    | 7    |
| 5.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 33 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 924     | 7    | 0    | 26   |
| 6.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 35 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> | 871     | 8    | 0    | 27   |
| 7.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 39 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 777     | 11   | 0    | 6    |
| 8.   | John Taylor & Co, 1950 | 44 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | 692     | 15   | 3    | 16   |

The bells hang in a two-tier cast iron frame with H-section castings in the lower level and lowside castings above (*Bellframes* type 8.3.D.a – or 8.3.C.e below and 8.3.A.h above). Bells 3, 4 and 7 are in the top tier. The fittings include cast iron stocks, ball bearings and Hastings stays. The frame and fittings were supplied and installed by John Taylor & Co in 1950. There was once an Ellacombe chiming apparatus but the hammers have now been removed.

**Previous bells**

A large bell for Erdington Abbey was supplied by Taylors on 7 October 1848. The order was placed by Charles Hansom, architect, of Bristol. This bell was presumably hung in the west tower and when quoting for additional bells in September 1877 Taylors noted "they have one of our bells, tone exactly E". As originally supplied, this bell was as follows

| Bell | Founder and date        | Diameter                       | Note | Cwt. | Qrs. | Lbs. |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.   | John Taylor & Son, 1848 | 43 <sup>7</sup> / <sub>8</sub> | E    | 12   | 3    | 14   |

Shortly after the original bell was hung in the tower, a smaller bell was supplied to the order of the Rev. D.H. Haigh of Erdington. Dated 1849, this still hangs in the polygonal turret on the south side of the nave, as described above.

The Rev. Daniel Haigh had plans to complete a ring of bells as early as November 1848 when Taylors provided an estimate for five more bells and additional framework. However, this hope was not realised until 1877 when a new ring of eight was installed. Taylors were again invited to tender for the work, but the contract went instead to a local firm, William Blews & Sons of Birmingham, whose bells were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Inscription</b>   |
|-------------|--|
| 1.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN / SPIRIT FOR THEIRS IS THE / KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PRAY FOR ENGLAND   |
| 2.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THE MEEK FOR THEY SHALL POSSESS / THE LAND<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY PRAY FOR ENGLAND  |
| 3.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN / FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. MARY MAGDALENE PRAY FOR ENGLAND.   |
| 4.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER / AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE FOR / THEY SHALL BE SATISFIED<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. TERESIA PRAY FOR ENGLAND                               |
| 5.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL / FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. ZITA PRAY FOR ENGLAND  |
| 6.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THE CLEAN OF HEART FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. JOSEPH PRAY FOR ENGLAND   |
| 7.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS / FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE / CHILDREN OF GOD.<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. FRANCIS OF SALES PRAY FOR ENGLAND                           |
| 8.          | WILLIAM BLEWS AND SONS, FOUNDERS BIRMINGHAM 1877<br><i>Waist:</i> BLESSED ARE THEY WHO SUFFER / PERSECUTION FOR JUSTICE' SAKE / FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF / HEAVEN<br><i>Opposite:</i> S. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY PRAY FOR ENGLAND |

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b>    | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Hz</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 27¾             | 1460      | 5           | 0           | 15          |
| 2.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 28½             | 1367      | 5           | 0           | 6           |
| 3.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 29⅝             | 1193      | 5           | 0           | 22          |
| 4.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 32⅜             | 1077      | 6           | 2           | 20          |
| 5.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 34⅝             | 964       | 7           | 2           | 11          |
| 6.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 36¼             | 895       | 8           | 2           | 7           |
| 7.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 40"             | 792       | 11          | 2           | 4           |
| 8.          | William Blews & Sons, 1877 | 44"             | 704       | 14          | 2           | 8           |

These are the nett weights of the old bells as received at Loughborough in February 1950. The bells were in the key of F natural (704hz = F plus 13.69 cents)

The bells were solemnly blessed on 20 January 1878. They were given by Francis Genders of Erdington in fulfilment of a promise – made in 1860 when he emigrated to New Zealand – to present a peal of bells to the church "if he was successful in life". He returned to England in 1877 and died at Erdington on 13 February 1891. His gift of bells is recorded on an inscription carved on the south-east pier of the tower at the west end of the nave.

+ / IN PACE. / Of your Charity Pray for the Soul of / FRANCIS GENDERS, / Who gave a  
peal of eight bells to this Church. / He died in the Lord. February 13th. 1891. / May he  
rest in Peace.

The Blews bells were hung in a two-tier wooden frame – like the old frame at St.Chad's – with bells 1, 2, 4 and 6 in the top tier and bells 3, 5, 7 and 8 below (*Bellframes* type 6.S.1). They were hung on the "hollow square" plan, with the treble over the tenor, second over the third, fourth over the fifth and sixth over the seventh. The fittings were overhauled by Blews in 1883 and reopened on 15 January with a peal.

The original bells were recast in 1950 on the occasion of the centenary of the church. The new bells were first rung on 10 June as a prelude to the centenary celebrations and the first peal (Lincolnshire Surprise Major) was rung on Saturday 17 June. A report of the restoration of bells appeared in the *Ringling World* 30 June 1950 p.410.

**Visited:** C.J.P., R.L.J., 3 January 2003 and *ex.inf.* Taylors

### **ERDINGTON – Sir Josiah Mason's Orphanage,**

Founded in 1862 by Josiah Mason (b.1795-b.1881), the Birmingham pen manufacturer and philanthropist, the orphanage offered a refuge for poor children of the district. The buildings were designed in the Romanesque style by J.R. Botham and built at a cost of £60,000 in 1868 and enlarged in 1874. When completed the orphanage was a large three-storey building in red brick with two towers, one in the middle of the entrance front and one on the west side. On his death in 1881 Mason, who was knighted in 1872 for his charitable work, was buried in the chapel.

One of the towers contained the clock and bells. Papers in the Orphanage archives show that Mason took a personal interest in this aspect of the building, and – wishing to support industry in Birmingham where his own fortune had been made – ensured that the order for the bells went to firms with local connections. The clock itself was ordered from a Croydon firm, Gillett & Bland. One of the principals of the firm, Charles Bland, came from Birmingham. William Blews & Sons of Birmingham supplied the bells under sub-contract to Gillett & Bland.

An undated draft letter regarding the scheme shows that Mason undertook to provide Blews with "pure Electric deposit Copper for this purpose at the same price he is now giving for copper" so that the bells would "have a high class tone". This letter, dating from late in 1870, also indicates that Blews originally suggested bells of 3, 3½, 4, 5¼ and 7½ cwt for the Cambridge chimes. Mason wanted one of the bells to be used as an alarm and for ringing "so that a boy may ring it" and also hoped that the bells might "play 5 or 10 minutes to chime into chapel".

The order for the clock and bells was placed in November 1870 and it was originally hoped that the clock would be started on 23 February 1871, this being "the natal day of the founder of the Orphanage, Josiah Mason, aged 76". The papers refer to a plate with a commemorative inscription being affixed to the clock to record this. In the event, however, installation was delayed and the clock was not finally completed until well into 1873.

An article in *The Builder* of 1 April 1871 reported that "The firm of William Blews & Sons, of Birmingham, have cast a peal of bells for Mr. Mason's Orphanage, at Erdington." The bells were reported to be "composed of Mason & Elkington's pure deposit copper, with a slight admixture of tin." It was stated that "the large bell, which weighs 9 cwt., will strike the hours; and the other four, respectively weighing 6cwt., 5cwt., 4cwt., and 3cwt., are intended to chime the quarters." The report noted that the Orphanage clock was "now being constructed in the factory of Messrs. Gillett & Bland, of Croydon, Surrey," and the account also gives the inscriptions on the bells:

Hour bell, "I call upon the orphans' trustees to be faithful;"

four-quarter bell, "Josiah Mason, born February 23, 1795, age 76, 1871;"

three-quarter bell, "These five bells are made of Mason and Elkington's electro-deposit copper;"

two-quarter bell, "2 Timothy, chap.3, verse 15;"

one-quarter bell, "James, chap. 1, verse 27"

The weights of the bells are of interest. Gillett & Bland had originally specified a bell or bells of 12½ cwt and their estimate was based on this. As noted above, Blews suggested a Cambridge chime with an hour bell of 7½ cwt and a total weight of 23¼ cwt. The details given in the newspaper indicate a total weight of 27 cwt. The actual weights of the bells removed in 1964 (see below) were heavier still (37 cwt), and it is clear that the original set was replaced soon after installation. The minutes of the Management Committee and Trustees tell the full story.

At the Trustees' annual meeting on 29 July 1871 "The Bailiff reported that the clock and bells placed in the Tower of the Orphanage had not been completed according to the contract". A sub-committee was set up to deal with the matter, and at the annual meeting on 27 July 1872 the Management Committee informed the Trustees that:

"In reference to Trustees Minute 46 we have to report that a very lengthy and prolonged correspondence took place between our solicitor and Messrs. Gillett & Bland as to the Orphanage Clock and Bells and the non-completion of their contract. Whilst this correspondence was going on, viz<sup>t</sup>. on the 20<sup>th</sup> April the clock stopped in consequence of the breaking of the line to the going weight of the Turret Clock. Ultimately an agreement of reference of the whole matter to Mr. E.T. Loseby of Friar Lane Leicester was signed on the 4<sup>th</sup> June and on the 12<sup>th</sup> June Mr. Loseby the Arbitrator and Mr. Gillett one of the Contractors and Mr. Mountain on the part of the Orphanage, and that subsequently Mr. Loseby made a report containing certain suggestions not as a formal award which suggestion Messrs. Gillett & Bland have promised to comply with and have already taken some steps towards the necessary alterations."

The matter was left in the hands of the arbitrator, and at the next annual meeting on 22 February 1873 it was reported that "under his direction the bells have been recast and the clock taken down and altered". The Management Committee minutes show that Gillett & Bland had finally accepted responsibility for putting the clock right in August 1872 and that the clock was set going again on 15 January 1873 after being re-fixed in the tower. Blews had delivered the second set of bells in the middle of November 1872.

The Trustees were still not satisfied, however, and – perhaps aware of Mason's personal interest in the scheme and the trouble he had taken at the outset to specify exactly what he required from the clock - resolved to take further action. The minutes of 22 February 1873 stipulated:

That with respect to the report of Mr. Loseby this meeting is of opinion

1. That the hour bell should be put in harmony with the others at the cost of the contractors
2. That the Trustees should pay a sum not exceeding ten pounds if Messrs. Gillett & Bland will provide heavier hammers thicker cord barrel regrooved and a second click or spring to the winding ratchet as recommended in Mr. Loseby's report
3. That the original guarantee of twelve months should run from the time the clock is finished
4. That louvres be put into the Bell room windows at the cost of the estate and that Mr. Loseby's offer to furnish the angle and distance apart be accepted
5. That the Finance Committee be authorised to pay Messrs. Gillett & Bland one hundred pounds on account of their original contract and a further sum of one hundred pounds when the amount payable for the weight of the bells has been agreed upon
6. That the question of allowance to Messrs. Gillett & Bland beyond the five pounds be deferred until the other points are disposed of

The eventual outcome is recorded in the minutes of the Trustees' meeting on 23 February 1874 when the Management Committee stated "We have to report that having ascertained that the new bells were too heavy for the clock we made an arrangement with Messrs. Gillett & Bland to supply for £50 a new and larger clock in exchange for the one existing at the date of the last meeting. This has been recently completed to our satisfaction". The Management Committee minutes indicate that the new clock was set going on 24 January 1874. By April 1874 Gillett & Bland and Blews had been paid for their work

After the closure of the orphanage the bells were sold to Taylors by James Guest & Son as scrap metal in May 1964. The actual inscriptions are not recorded and the date of the bells is noted as 1871 in the records, although the replacement took place in November 1872. Another source gives the date as 1873. It seems likely that the bells were actually cast in 1872 but retained the inscriptions and date given on the original set. The other details of the bells (nett weights) were as follows:

| <b>Bell</b> | <b>Founder and date</b>      | <b>Diameter</b> | <b>Hz</b> | <b>Cwt.</b> | <b>Qrs.</b> | <b>Lbs.</b> |
|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1.          | William Blews & Sons, 1871/2 | 26½             | 1348      | 3           | 3           | 12          |
| 2.          | William Blews & Sons, 1871/2 | 27⅞             | 1188      | 4           | 0           | 18          |
| 3.          | William Blews & Sons, 1871/2 | 29⅜             | 1070      | 4           | 2           | 4           |
| 4.          | William Blews & Sons, 1871/2 | 38¼             | 802       | 9           | 3           | 16          |
| 5.          | William Blews & Sons, 1871/2 | 43⅛             | 720       | 14          | 2           | 3           |

The bells were a standard Cambridge or Westminster chime, in a key slightly sharp of F natural, with the hour bell being a little sharp in relation to the others. Evidently any action taken in relation to the Trustees' resolution of February 1873 failed to solve this problem.

In the records at the Croydon works the date of the clock is given as 1872 in one file and as 1873 in another. It was a no.2 Westminster quarter chiming clock with a two-seconds pendulum and gravity escapement. It had four dials, each 5 ft. in diameter, three of which were illuminated. The clock was overhauled by Gillett & Johnston of Croydon in 1933 when a night silencer was fitted for the chimes and again by the same firm in 1954.

The orphanage closed in 1963 and it was demolished in 1964, but Sir Josiah Mason is commemorated by a bronze bust on a stone pedestal at the junction of Orphanage Road and Chester Road. This was placed here in 1952 to replace the portrait statue of Mason erected in 1885 outside the Mason Science College in the City and removed in 1951.

**ERDINGTON – *see also* PYPE HAYES, St.Mary; STOCKLAND GREEN, St.Mark**