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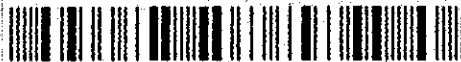
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THE USE OF CHURCH BELLS  
IN THE DIOCESE OF LINCOLN

1536 - 1799

Submitted for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy in the  
University of Loughborough

John R Ketteringham, B.A

1990

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Lettering and stop used on bells cast in 1423 for St Peter's Church, South Somercotes, Lincolnshire.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AASR	<u>Associated Archaeological Societies Reports and Papers</u>
Cocks Bucks	Cocks A H <u>The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire</u>
D&C	Dean and Chapter Muniments
Gee and Hardy	Gee H and Hardy W J (Eds) <u>Documents Illustrative of English Church History</u>
Ketteringham	Ketteringham J R <u>Lincoln Cathedral - A History of the Bells, Bellringers and Bellringing</u>
LAO	Lincolnshire Archives Office
LCS	Bradshaw H and Wordsworth C (Eds) <u>Lincoln Cathedral Statutes</u>
LRL	Lincolnshire Reference Library
LRS	Lincoln Record Society
Morris	Morris E <u>History and Art of Change Ringing</u>
North Beds	North T <u>The Church Bells of Bedfordshire</u>
North Leics	North T <u>The Church Bells of Leicestershire</u>
North Lincs	North T <u>The Church Bells of the County and City of Lincoln</u>
North Northants	North T <u>The Church Bells of Northamptonshire</u>
Sanderson	Sanderson J (Ed) <u>Change Ringing : The History of an English Art</u>

## GLOSSARY

- AUGMENTATION : the addition of extra bells to those already existing in a Ring.
- BAND : a group of bellringers.
- BEARINGS : swinging bells are hung from two bearings on either side of the HEADSTOCK and bolted to the bell frame (see diagram on page 74).
- BELL COTE : a small turret housing one or two bells sited on the roof of a Church.
- BELL METAL : consists of about 20% tin and 80% copper. Bell metal can easily be adapted for use in casting guns and bell founders have often also carried on the trade of gun founding as well.
- CALL : in CHANGE RINGING a command by the Conductor usually in the form of a "Bob" or "Single" which alters the structure of a METHOD being rung.
- CALL CHANGES : the bellringers are instructed verbally the order in which to sound the bell they are ringing.
- CATERS : changes rung on nine bells invariably with a tenor COVERING
- CHANGE : the production of one ROW from the preceding by the interchange of selected pairs of adjacent bells.
- CHANGE RINGING : the ringing of swinging bells by sequential permutations according to the model of various METHODS.
- COMPOSITION : a specification of CALLS for a particular METHOD which produces a particular number of CHANGES.
- COVER : to remain in the last position of the CHANGES whilst all the other bells are changing according to the METHOD.
- DOUBLES : changes rung on five bells.

EXERCISE : used to refer to the fraternity and practice of CHANGE RINGING.

EXTENT : the number of different CHANGES possible on a given number of bells.

HEADSTOCK : the wood or metal structure to which the bell is fastened and on which are mounted bearings, wheel and stay for full-circle ringing.

INSCRIPTION : words or symbols cast on to a bell by imprinting in reverse on the outer mould.

MAJOR : changes rung on eight bells

METHOD : a specific pattern of CHANGES forming the basic instructions for CHANGE RINGING

PEAL : generally the length of the EXTENT of the changes possible on seven bells (ie 5040) but on eight bells and above a minimum of 5000 changes is required for a Peal COMPOSITION.

RECAST : to melt down a bell and cast it again usually imitating the original shape and markings.

RING : a set of bells hung for full circle ringing in the English manner.

SLIDER : the sliding location for the STAY on a bell hung for full circle ringing.

STAY : the lever attached to the HEADSTOCK which engages with a movable location known as the SLIDER allowing the bell to be set.

TENOR : the largest bell with the lowest note in a RING of bells.

TREBLE : usually the smallest bell with the highest note in a RING of bells.

TRIPLES : changes rung on seven bells invariably with the tenor COVERING

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My greatest debt is to Dr Gershom Knight and his staff at the Lincolnshire Archives Office who have given me so much good-humoured assistance.

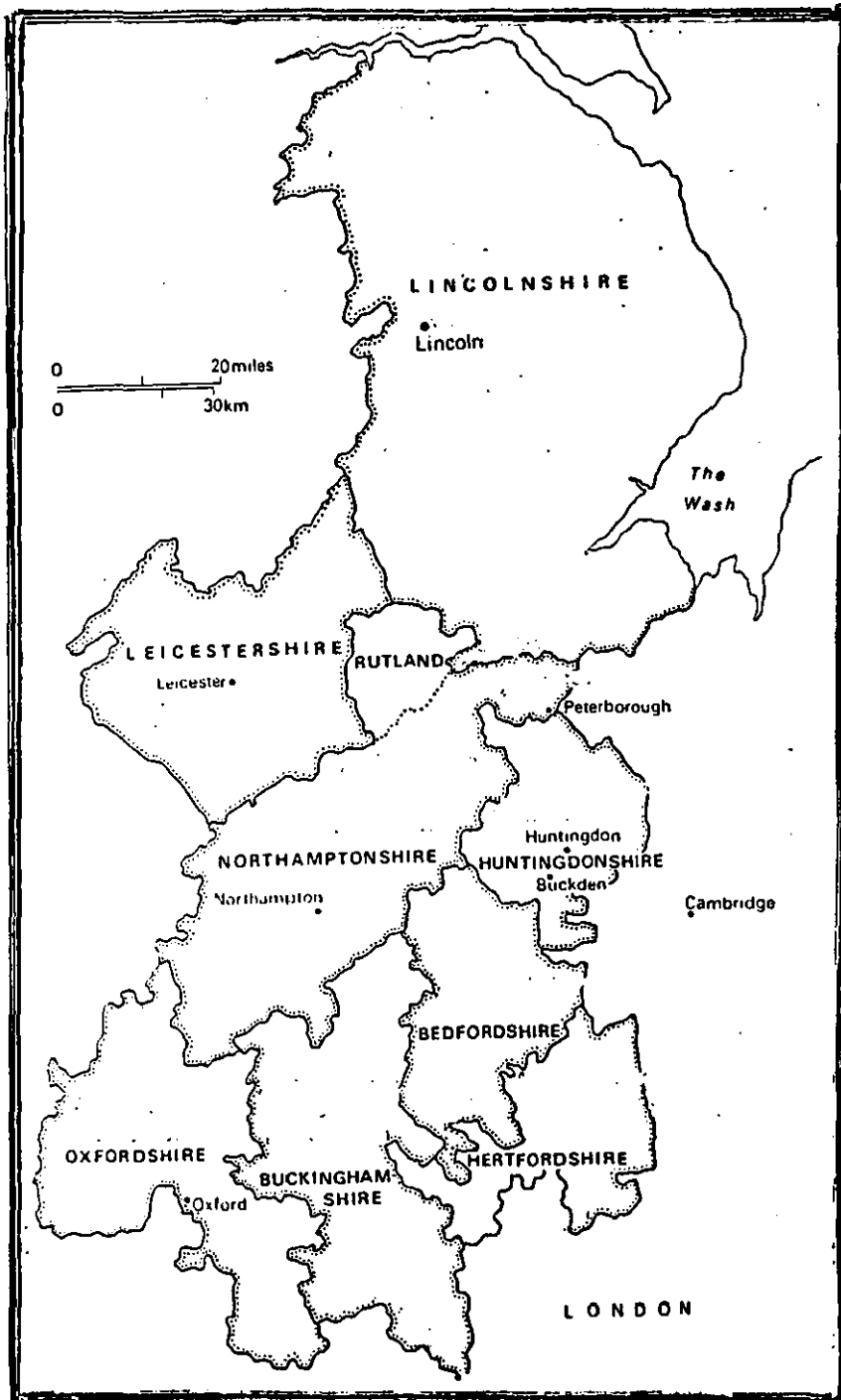
I also acknowledge with gratitude the assistance of the staff at the Lincoln Central Library and of the Sibthorp Library at Bishop Grossteste College, Lincoln, without whose assistance in obtaining essential books this thesis would have never reached completion.

Dr Paul Cattermole supplied evidence of early change-ringing which will appear in his forthcoming book and Revd Canon Dr J E Swaby gave advice on the state of the Church in Lincolnshire during the Interregnum. Revd Canon F W Felstead supplied details of early peals rung in the Diocese and J Henry Wilson MA gave me much valuable evidence from Wills proved in Lincoln from his, as yet, unpublished transcripts. I acknowledge copies of relevant newspaper reports from Cyril Wratten, Secretary of the Central Council of Church Bellringers and David Cubitt.

I am very grateful to David Vale ARIBA for the diagrams which appear on pages 72 and 73 and acknowledge permission received from the Syndics of Cambridge University to use the slightly amended Maps taken from Bowker M The Henrician Reformation which appear on pages 11 and 52.

George Dawson BSc and many others have given advice and encouragement in a number of ways and Professor Maurice Barley, Dr Dennis Mills, the Revd. Canon John S Nurser, Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral, and Dr Simon Pawley read and commented on the text.

Finally, I acknowledge the encouragement and assistance of my research supervisor, Dr Marilyn Palmer.



1. The Diocese of Lincoln on the Eve of the Reformation.

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, bells have played an important part in the everyday life of the community by signalling the hours of the daily offices, ringing in celebration of the major Feasts of the Church, and serving to announce occasions of joy, danger or mourning to those within their hearing. It is, therefore, surprising that the subject has received very little attention from academics and even in the official histories of the great churches of this country the bells are usually dismissed in a few lines and the bellringers are rarely mentioned at all.

Several pamphlets have been published describing the bells of individual churches but these usually record only the inscriptions and ornamentation on individual bells together with a record of their sizes, weights and little else.

The most extensive use of bells in the Christian Church was in the religious houses and the 'Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation' compiled c970-975<sup>1</sup> included rules for bellringing which make it clear that almost every movement was signalled by the ringing of a bell. For example Rule 20 reads<sup>2</sup> :

'When the bell is rung the brethren shall go and put on their day shoes: none but the ministers should presume to do this before the bell is heard...'

In the secular cathedrals and larger churches there were very elaborate rules for bellringing before and during the services. Bells were also rung to mark the canonical hours and it is clear that, before the Reformation, the ringing of bells was a very familiar sound which enabled those whose duty it was to attend services to be present at the proper time. At the same time the bells were a useful time signal to the laity when clocks were a rarity.

As Dr Rock<sup>3</sup> has commented :

'The ringing for the canonical hours let the world know the time by day and night; and in those large churches where such custom was followed, the several bells, as well as the ways in which they were rung for that purpose, told the precise Service which was then about to be chanted'.

The Prayer Book of 1552 dispensed with most of the ceremonial of the medieval church and it was decreed that churches were to be deprived of all but essential ornaments and vestments. Commissioners were appointed to sell surplus church furniture and included bells in their inventories. Undoubtedly the intention was to remove all bells from the churches except that which was required to summon the people to hear a sermon or for specific secular purposes. However, the early death of Edward VI and the restoration of the ancient liturgy during the reign of Mary I led to the retention of most church bells. The return to Protestantism on the accession of Elizabeth I meant that the liturgical use of bells ceased once more

ca. 1600

161



but, contrary to expectation, documentary evidence indicates that heavy expenditure was incurred in recasting and augmenting rings of bells at this time. It is this apparent anomaly which this thesis attempts to explain as it affected the diocese of Lincoln which, on the eve of the Reformation, stretched from the Humber to the Thames and included the counties of Bedford, Buckingham, Huntingdon, Leicester, Lincoln, Northampton, Oxford and Rutland with part of Hertfordshire (see map on page 11).

The following questions form the framework on which the thesis is constructed :

i Why were bells considered to be of such importance that they were retained in churches after the accession of Elizabeth I?

ii Why was the number of bells in a church tower often increased when only one bell was required to satisfy Canon Law?

iii Who provided the bells and who funded their maintenance?

iv When were the bells rung and who rang them?

During the sixteenth century when liturgical bellringing ceased the ringing of church bells purely for pleasure increased. This "pleasure" ringing was an important factor which helps to explain the retention of bells in churches. This unpaid voluntary ringing increased rapidly as "change-ringing" spread. The early history of "pleasure" ringing as opposed to the sacred use of bells has been outlined in this thesis using some information supplied by Dr Paul Cattermole which will be

included in his forthcoming work Church Bells and Bellringing, a Norfolk Profile

The popularity of bellringing as a recreational activity led to improvements in bell hanging and in the musical properties of bells. During the eighteenth century bellringers took great pride in the technical quality of the bellringing which adds a musical element and bands of ringers competed against each other, as they still do, in much the same way as musicians compete in Music Festivals. This was, of course, entirely for the pleasure of the ringers and the attitude of Church and laity to the use of church bells for "pleasure" ringing has been examined using published sources including contemporary newspapers.

Much of the material used in this thesis has been obtained after a close examination of the archives of Lincoln Cathedral and in particular the Chapter Acts and Accounts of the Common Fund. A number of churchwardens' accounts have also been examined and from these it has been possible to extract information about ringing on particular occasions and the amounts paid to the ringers.

The payments for bellringing recorded in churchwardens' accounts have been particularly useful in trying to make sense of the confusion caused by the rapid changes in religious emphasis during the sixteenth century. A study of this source suggests that often bells were rung, not as required by Injunction, but according to the

interpretation put on "official" doctrine by the incumbent, patron or churchwardens.

A number of wills which have been deposited in the Lincolnshire Archives Office have revealed the sources not only of payments for ringing at funerals and obits but also for the maintenance and provision of bells.

### PREVIOUS LITERATURE

A number of works on Church Bells were published in the late nineteenth century and these have proved to be useful secondary sources. The following are relevant to this thesis :

- Cocks A H The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire  
(1894)
- North T The Church Bells of Bedfordshire  
(1883)
- North T The Church Bells of Leicestershire  
(1876)
- North T The Church Bells of the City and County  
of Lincoln (1882)
- North T The Church Bells of Northamptonshire  
(1878)
- Owen T M N The Church Bells of Huntingdonshire  
(1899)

Another more recent publication which has been consulted is :

- Sharpe F The Church Bells of Oxfordshire  
(1949-1953)

Most of these as well as recording the inscriptions on the bells of the county concerned include details of the bells as recorded by the Edwardian Commissioners in 1552/3 and extracts from churchwardens accounts.

Relevant publications by the writer are :

Lincoln Cathedral - a History of the Bells, Bellringers and Bellringing (Lincoln 1987)

"Bells and Ringers of Lincoln Cathedral" in The Ringing World 19 August 1983 pp 684-5

"Lincoln Cathedral Bells and Ringers" in Lincolnshire Life December 1984 pp 18-21

"The Bells and Bellringers of Lincoln Cathedral" in The Ringing World 5 April 1985 pp 300-2, 24 May 1985 p 453-5, 2 August 1985 pp 662-4

"The Lincoln Bellfounders; The Lady Bells" in The Ringing World 22 November 1985 p 996

"Great Tom" in the Annual Report of the Friends of Lincoln Cathedral 1985/6

"The Oldest Bell in Lincolnshire" Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology Newsletter No 53 July 1987

The following two theses have been written with bells as the research subject :

Cattermole Dr P 'Church Towers and Bell Frames in South-East Norfolk' (University of London 1985)

Eisel Dr J 'Bells of Carmarthenshire and Breconshire' (University of Wales 1984)

Both theses are concerned with the detailed examination and recording of bells, bellframes and towers and have no relevance to the subject of this thesis.

A dissertation by T S Jennings discusses the importance of bellringing as a source of income to the Church and discusses also the cost of maintenance and provision of bells :

Jennings T S 'Campanological Activities and their effect on the Parish Church Budget between 1500 and 1714' (Portsmouth Polytechnic 1984/5)

Although other works on bells and bellringing are cited in the Bibliography there is no one work which can be seen as relating to the subject of this thesis.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Symons, Dom Thomas (Trs and Ed) Regularis Concordia Anglicae Nationis Monachorum Sanctimonialiumque passim
2. Ibid p 15
3. Rock D The Church of our Fathers Vol III pt 2 p 143

The way in which a bell was rung every three hours to signal the canonical hours is similar to the way in which the passage of time is marked at sea by a ship's bell, the difference being that at sea each "watch" lasts for four hours (except the two "dog" watches which last for two hours each).

Information from Dr D R Mills.

## CHAPTER I

### BELLS AND THEIR USE ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

This chapter describes the way in which bells were used by the Christian Church in England immediately before the Reformation and the important part which bells played in the lives of the religious and the laity.

#### 1. Bells in the pre-Reformation Church in the Diocese of Lincoln

Bells played an important part in medieval life. The daily round of prayer and praise in the religious houses and secular cathedrals was regulated by signals from the bells. Although the principal use of bells was as a call to worship, they also marked the canonical hours and emphasised the most solemn parts of the Services.

In 1552 Bishop Latimer commented<sup>1</sup> :

'...if all the bells in England should be rung together at a certain hour, there would be almost no place but one bell might be heard there...'

In the same year a Commission had been appointed to record church goods and the table on page 43 shows that about seventy per cent of church towers contained 3 or 4 bells and it was very rare indeed for a church tower to contain a single bell. At the larger parish churches such as Louth, Boston and Grantham there were often five bells. Although this data was collected some twelve

years after most of the religious houses had been dissolved it is clear that if church and monastic bells were to be rung at the same time Latimer's statement must have considerable truth. The map on page 33, which records the distribution of parish churches and religious houses in Lincolnshire on the eve of the Reformation, emphasises the fact that most people would live or work within the sound of bells.

At the larger churches including Lincoln Cathedral<sup>m</sup>, the collegiate church at Tattershall<sup>m</sup>, and St James' parish church, Louth<sup>m</sup>, there were very precise rules governing the way in which the bells were to be rung.

This elaborate but distinctive bellringing not only enabled the listener to tell easily how much time was available before the service was due to commence but also enabled the laity to mark the passage of time when clocks were rare.

It was usual for the cathedrals to have two rings of bells. At Lincoln<sup>m</sup> the five 'Lady Bells', with a tenor of about 17 cwt, hung in the central tower and were rung to announce and, at certain points during, the daily Services. In the south-west Tower there was another ring of five bells with a tenor of about 36 cwt which were rung on the great festivals, on visitations or at the funeral of a dignitary of the Cathedral. In the north-west Tower hung a large bell known as "Great Tom" weighing about 3 tons 9 cwt which was used as an hour bell and tolled to

announce the death of a dignitary and other events.

The late Revd. Canon P B G Binnall<sup>e</sup> commented that :

'the Cathedral Statutes make it clear that Mass must have been in progress continuously during the morning hours of every day at Lincoln'

and he could well have added that at least one bell would be heard for the greater part of the daylight hours.

## 2. Superstition and Custom.

Bells were regarded with such importance that, before being hung in the Church tower, they were baptized and given the name of a Saint<sup>r</sup>.

The earliest inscribed bell in Lincolnshire which was cast c1300 for the Church at Gautby is typical<sup>e</sup> :

+ VOCOR IHOHANNE [I am called John].

and one of three very ornate bells (see page 2) at South Somercotes which are the earliest dated bells in Lincolnshire (1423) is inscribed:

VOCOR MARIA

Two other interesting early inscriptions are :

Gunby S Nicholas c1400 :

IN YE NAM OF YE TRYNYTE NICHOLAS BEL MEN CAL ME

Gunby S Peter c1400 (in Latin) :

I AM OF SWEET SOUND : I AM CALLED THE BELL OF GABRIELL

The belief<sup>r</sup> that bells had the power to quench fires, drive away the plague and thunderstorms and indeed the devil himself originated as a call to the people to come



to church to pray for deliverance from danger.

There are several records of payments in existence<sup>10</sup> for ringing during thunderstorms, typical being one at Spalding in 1519 :

'Pd for ryngyng when the Tempest was iijd'

In a sermon<sup>11</sup> now in Lincoln Cathedral Library and dated c1403, the miraculous powers of bells when rung during the processions on Rogation Day were described as follows :

'Also in these processions baners and crossis ben borne and bellis rong [that] the spyritis that flye above in the eyer as thyke as motis in the sonne scholde flee a wey from us [on]...heryng the bellis ryng...almytti God that is kyng of kyngis hathe bellis for his clarions and for his trumppis...the spyritis that flyethe on lofte in the eyer dredythe moche more Cristis clarions and his tromppytt is that ben the bellis, and Cristis baners that ben the crossis a reysed...'

### 3. Bell related income and expenditure

The high regard with which bells were held and the income derived from bellringing immediately before the Reformation is well illustrated by the Accounts<sup>12</sup> for the parish church of St James, Louth which have survived. In 1500 the expense of maintaining the bells amounted to 17s 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d but the income derived for ringing the "great bells" at funerals in the same year totalled £3 0s 8d.

The corresponding figures for the following years were as follows :

Accounting Year	Receipts			Payments		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
1501/2	3	6	0		5	5
1502/3	3	7	4		18	10
1503/4	3	16	4		14	2
1504/5	4	8	4		12	2
1505/6	5	14	4		15	10
1506/7	4	19	0		9	2
1507/8	5	10	0		9	9
1508/9	3	7	4		8	8
1509/10	4	17	0	2	11	2

It is clear that the income derived from bellringing was generally far in excess of the expenditure on maintenance.

When the magnificent spire at Louth was built during the period 1500 to 1515<sup>129</sup> at a total cost of £305 7s 5d three existing bells were recast and three new ones cast thus providing Louth with the only known ring of six bells in the County. The fact that the parish was prepared to spend money on bells whilst building the spire is dramatic confirmation of the importance of bells at this time not only for the part they played in religious life but as a valuable source of income.

A very important source of funds for the maintenance and provision of bells was from bequests. John Moote, whose will<sup>130</sup> was proved on 9 July 1507 left 4d 'to the reparation of the belles' at Spilsby and in 1512 Richard Leyfley left 10d '...for the maintenance of the bells' at Ewerby. Most bequests were worded in the same way but at this time wills were usually made in anticipation of

imminent death and bequests were often made to ongoing projects. In 1530 there seems to have been work in progress on the bells at the Church of St Swithun, Leadenham and the following bequests<sup>14</sup> were made in that year :

John Bugge	'To the upholdyng of the bellys'	3s 4d
Robert Hodgeson	'To the bellys...'	4d
Ralph Landesdale	'To the bellys'	8d
Robert Kyrton	'To the reparacions of the bellys'	3s 4d

At Gedney Fen in 1531 it appears that a new bell frame was required and Thomas Wylson bequeathed<sup>23</sup> 40s for

"reparacions of the bellys, bell frame and other things that hath most nede abowte the bell fraym".

This was a substantial sum and probably paid for a completely new frame and fittings. Similarly 20s left by John Austyn<sup>24</sup> in 1531 for '...the makyng of the gret bell...' at Little Steeping probably means that he provided a tenor bell for use with the existing medieval bell.

It was not only money that was bequeathed. Sometimes it was the income from the sale of goods or property and John Sawyer alias Smith in 1523, left to the bells<sup>15</sup> at Thurlby '...a strike [one bushel] barley'. In 1523 Robert Goodrike left '...half a hundred weight of olde metal' to the bells<sup>16</sup> of Spilsby and in 1524 John Compton left 'oon quarter of wheite' to the bells<sup>17</sup> of South Willingham. In 1537 Edenham bells<sup>21</sup>, under the will of Ralph Bucke received the income from a 'seame [eight

bushels] of barley'. A particularly interesting bequest<sup>27</sup> is that of John Taylor of Great Cotes who, in 1530/1, instructed that :

'...my best cote [was] to be sold and the money thereof to be devyded in thre...the thyrd parte to the bellys'

#### 4. The bellringers and their payment

Requests were made not only to pay for the maintenance and provision of bells but to fund the ringing itself.

At the parish churches the bells were rung by the parish clerk or deacon as part of their normal duties. If the bells were rung to mark a death it was usual to pay a small fee which varied according to the number of bells rung. Sometimes payment was in food and drink. It was also customary for the bells to be rung to mark the obit (anniversary) of a benefactor and instructions for the way in which this was to be done are often contained in wills. On 2 June 1526 the will<sup>28</sup> of Thomas Rudde of Quadring was proved and he instructed that 'iijd [was] to [be paid] to the deacon for ryngyng' and 'id to the belman [on the] yer day wych shal be kepte on Sanct bonyface day' John Halton, alderman of Lincoln, in 1527 instructed<sup>29</sup> that at his obit the belman was to receive iiijd 'for goyng through the citie and 'to the clerke of [St Bennetes] for ryngyng iiijd'

When Thomas Sygrave of Stowe Grene made his will<sup>30</sup> on 4 February 1525 he instructed that 'iijs iiijd be yerly

·  
distribute att my obbyt to the bell ryngers and to pore  
pepull in mette and drynke as custome is of the same  
parych..." Thomas Foldington of Barholm on 22 June 1530  
willed<sup>26</sup> to the ryngers 'a penny worth of brede and a  
gallan of ale' for ringing on the 'Thuresday in the fyrst  
hole weke of Lent...' The bellringers at Croft were to  
have for ringing on John Hawburgh's obit 'in brede and ale  
iiijd' as instructed in his will<sup>25</sup> made on 18 July 1530.

On 2 January 1531/2 John Austyn of Little Steeping  
willed<sup>17</sup> to 'the ryngers [of Halton Hologate] iiijd' and  
the ringers at Halton were to be paid iiijd for 88 years  
for ringing at an obit for himself, wife and all his  
children.

At Lincoln Cathedral the Lay Sacrist was in charge of  
the ringing and assisted when required. The  
Candlelighter also assisted with the ringing but it was  
the "third bellringer" who was responsible for most of the  
bellringing and was paid 40s per annum for this duty. He  
received additional payment for ringing at obits and for  
"watching over the Cathedral at the hour of dining" which  
brought his total income in 1527 to 61s 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d<sup>27</sup>.

As was stated above, when a dignitary of the Cathedral  
died it was customary to ring the large bells in St Hugh's  
Tower and the following bequests<sup>20</sup> seem to be in payment  
for this :

1359 Richard de Whitewell Canon of Lincoln to 'the ringers of the peal of bells xld'

1382 Geoffrey le Scrope Canon of Lincoln 'to the ringers vjs viijd'

## 5. Secular Bellringing

Although before the Reformation bells were used mainly for liturgical purposes, there were also important secular uses. Soon after bells were hung in church towers it was realised that they were a convenient and effective means of calling people together quickly. At Moulton, Northamptonshire when the inventory<sup>30</sup> of 1552 was completed the "great bell" was then described as a clock-bell but it was originally :

'ronge whan any casualtyes shall chaunce and for y<sup>m</sup> gatheryng together y<sup>m</sup> Inhabytants of y<sup>m</sup> sayd towne to y<sup>m</sup> courte & other theyr necessaryes'.

This is a particularly good example of the use of a church bell to call people together in time of danger and to the moot court which would be held in the church.

A bell at Lois Weedon<sup>31</sup>, Northamptonshire has the following interesting inscription (translated) which probably means it was used as a fire bell :

I AM A GUIDE TO WANDERERS BY NIGHT A BITTER ENEMY TO FIRES

Church bells were also used to announce when gleaning could commence and there are very many records of this use from within the diocese as at Gretton and Stretton<sup>32</sup>, Northamptonshire. At Watford<sup>30</sup> the 1552 inventory records that "one m'ket bell" hung in the church tower and

at Warkton<sup>33</sup> the local baker used one of the church bells to signal that his oven was available for general use after baking for the day had been completed! The curfew was also rung during the reign of William I (1066-1087) and continued in many places as a signal that work had finished for the day. Royalty came to expect bells of the churches which they passed on their "progresses" to be rung and at Thame<sup>34</sup> in 1530 ijd was 'pd to the Rynggers when the King passed thro the Town'. In 1541 1d was 'paid for Ale for rynging when the King's gre came through the town'. Fines were levied for not ringing on such occasions. Bells were also used to announce and celebrate victory in battle.

On the great religious festivals, and certain other occasions of rejoicing, it was customary for all the bells in a church to be rung and, because of the primitive fittings then in use, a large number of ringers were required to sound the larger bells. At Lincoln Cathedral the servants of the canon in residence were required to assist<sup>35</sup> but at the parish churches assistance from young men living in the parish was utilised.

An interesting instance of all the bells being rung to announce a death was at the parish church of St Mary de Castro, Leicester in 1509 which record<sup>36</sup> a payment of 1s 2d 'to the ringers of all the bells for our King Harry the Seventh the which deceased the 25th April'.

Although the subject of secular bellringing and bellringers will be discussed in greater depth later in this thesis, it is important to bear in mind that from the time bells came to be hung in Church towers they had a secular as well as liturgical use.

## 6. Bellringing on the eve of the Reformation.

In order to understand the impact of the Reformation on bells and, in particular, the introduction of the 1552 Prayer Book, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the situation as it was on the accession of Henry VIII. For this reason considerable evidence has been presented in this introductory Chapter.

There can be no doubt of the important part which bells played in the liturgy of the medieval church but the superstition and customs surrounding bells and bellringing influenced the thought and actions of the laity. Bells were rung in time of danger from fire and storm, to drive away disease or any calamity which could be blamed on the 'devil'. Many wills included a bequest for the maintenance or provision of bells and, no doubt, at least in part this was occasioned by the belief that the saint in honour of whom the bell was named would intercede for the soul of the benefactor. Bequests to the bellringers for ringing at funerals and obits probably had a similar intention.



For some time prior to the English Reformation there had been calls for a "purification" of Christian Worship and it can be seen that much of the income for the provision and maintenance of bells was derived from what the reformers would regard as "superstitious" practices. Whether this source of income would continue after the invocation of the saints to intercede on behalf of a benefactor came to be regarded as superstitious and no longer an acceptable part of Christian worship will be examined in Chapter III.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Corrie G E Sermons by Hugh Latimer Vol I p 498
2. Ketteringham p 39-40
3. Historical Manuscripts Commission Report on the Manuscripts of Lord de L'Isle and Dudley Vol I p 181
4. Dudding R C First Churchwarden's Book of Louth pp 13-14
5. A complete account of both bells and bellringers at Lincoln Cathedral has been published by the author (see Bibliography).
6. Binnal P B G 'Notes on the Medieval Altars and Chapels in Lincoln Cathedral' p 68.
7. Coleman S N Bells : Their History, Legends, Making and Uses pp 84-89
8. The inscriptions reproduced in this Chapter are taken from North Lincs pp 277-764
9. See Caxton, William The Golden Legend Vol I p 105
10. Cox J C Churchwarden's Accounts from the Fourteenth Century to the close of the Seventeenth Century p 212
11. Owst G R Preaching in Medieval England c1350-1450 pp 202-3
12. Dudding op cit pp 1-12, 15-124.
13. Foster C W Lincoln Wills Registered in the District Probate Registry at Lincoln Vol I p 31
14. Ibid p 150, 151 and 156
15. Ibid p 102
16. Ibid p 116
17. Ibid p 145
18. Dudding op cit pp 181, 183
19. Foster op cit p 169

20. Ibid pp 8, 13
21. Ibid Vol II p 82
22. Ibid p 57
23. Ibid Vol III p 47
24. Ibid p 196
25. Ibid p 25
26. Ibid p 11
27. Ibid p 99
28. Ibid p 1
29. LAO D&C A/2/21 fols 13 and 37.  
LAO D&C Bj/2/4 fol 21  
LAO D&C Bj/2/11 (unfoliated)  
LAO D&C A/2/8 fol 27  
LAO D&C A/2/8 fol 31v
30. North Northants p 155
31. Ibid p 328
32. Ibid p 153
33. Ibid p 156
34. Sanderson p 31-2  
Sharpe F The Church Bells of Oxfordshire Vol IV p 413
35. Ketteringham p 40
36. North Leics p 212



2 Parish Churches and Religious Houses in the County of Lincoln in 1535. (From the Valor Ecclesiasticus)

CHAPTER I I  
BELLS AND UPHEAVAL  
THE MONARCHY AND CHURCH

The English Reformation commenced with the dissolution in 1536 of monasteries valued at under £200 per year and the effect of this on bellringing in the Diocese is discussed in this chapter before moving on to consider bells in the context of the later reforms which took place during the reign of Henry VIII. The short reign of Edward VI introduced much greater restrictions on the use of bells by the Church and, although liturgical use was in part restored during the reign of Mary I, it was again forbidden on the accession of Elizabeth I.

**1. The Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Lincolnshire Rising**

Bells were an essential part of life in the religious houses and their sound was heard at regular intervals throughout the day and night. When, in March 1536, an Act was passed by Parliament at the behest of Henry VIII authorising the Dissolution of Monasteries with a yearly value of less than £200<sup>1</sup> the reason given was that "...manifest sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living is daily used and committed..." The following table distinguishes between religious houses in the Diocese of Lincoln below and above the demarcation line<sup>2</sup> :

County	Under £200	Over £200
Buckingham	8	1
Bedford	3	6
Huntingdon	5	2
Leicester	8	4
Lincoln	39	11
Northampton	7	5
Oxford	8	4
<u>Total</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>33</u>

Table 1. Annual value of Religious Houses  
in the Diocese of Lincoln c1536.

Although the Henrician Reformation had only a minor impact on bellringing in the churches the Dissolution of the Monasteries did, of course, mean that the regular signals from the religious houses ceased. As will be seen from the map on page 52 the religious houses were well distributed throughout the diocese and, although such bell ringing was meant as a signal to those within the walls, a large part of the population must have lived or worked within their sound and this enabled them to mark the passage of time. Even the smaller religious houses had bells and few people would be unfamiliar with their sound at regular intervals throughout the day.

The inventory<sup>23</sup> for the Priory at Legbourne recorded :

'In the Stepull two belles  
The great bell weyng cc.  
The secunde bell weying cc'

Legbourne housed a Prioress and 14 nuns and the fact that even such a small establishment had two bells confirms the important place which bells played in the daily life of

the religious houses.

Seventy-nine per cent of the religious houses in Lincolnshire were threatened with closure and this together with certain changes in religious worship which were introduced in the same year led to fears that the remaining religious houses were to close. All this led to considerable unrest and the seeds of the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Rebellions had been sown.

The importance of the Lincolnshire Rising here is as an illustration of the way in which church bells were used to call people together. The grievances of the rebels were listed<sup>4</sup> and included a request 'that no more religious houses be suppressed' and

'that five heretic bishops, including Cranmer, Latimer, and Longland, bishop of Lincoln, be deprived and punished'.

The King's reaction was predictably violent and his reply to those assembled in the Chapter House at Lincoln contained the following famous paragraph<sup>5</sup> :

'How presumptuous, then are ye, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, and of least experience, to take upon you, contrary to God's law and man's law, to rule your Prince whom you are bound to obey and serve and for no worldly cause to withstand?'

It is the evidence of the use of bells which was recorded<sup>6</sup> at the subsequent inquiry which is of interest here.

'Robert Sotherby of Horncastle, Linc...On Tuesday 3 Oct Davy Benet Weaver rang the common bell of Horncastle telling deponent and William Bywater, churchwardens that he did it by command of the Commons.

Thomas Smythe of Spyllsby, mercer....That on Tuesday 3 Oct at 8 pm Robert Leeche of Fulleby came to Spyllsby with a hundred persons and rang the bells and sware the master of the college his brother and servants.

William Wilson of Alforthe milner...The first stirring of their town was by the ringing of the common bell which he thinks was done by the vicar who had been at Louth on the 2nd and there promised to ring it. It was rung 4 Oct between 5 and 6 in the morning.

Nicholas Melton of Lowthe shoemaker alias Captain Cobbley...Then one Hale rang the common bell and the keys were delivered to [him] to keep'

Yet again church bells played an important part in calling people together but the Lincolnshire Rising and its counterpart in Yorkshire achieved nothing and may even have led the King to dissolve the greater monasteries earlier than he had intended. In fact, this followed soon after the trial of the Northern rebels<sup>o</sup> and, in the course of only three years, monastic lands were transferred to the laity and monastic buildings were left to ruin or as a useful source of building materials.

At the height of the Dissolution, in 1538, the following Injunction was enacted<sup>o</sup> :

'the knolling of the "Aves" after service and certain other times, which has been brought in and begun by the pretence of the Bishop of Rome's pardon, henceforth be left and omitted, lest the people do hereafter trust to have pardon for the saying their "Aves" between the said knelling as they have done in time past'.



Although this Injunction was concerned with the strengthening of the King's position as head of the English Church it can also be seen as the first move towards liturgical change and the removal of ceremonial bellringing from religious worship.

At a Visitation to Lincoln Cathedral by Bishop John Longland (Confessor to the King) on 4 October 1539 he issued an Ordinance<sup>12</sup> headed :

'CONCERNING THE BELLRINGERS OF THE CHURCH'

and ordered that :

'...certain ringing of the bells viz (1) one called "Tinnacio"... (2) another at Prime... (3) a third commonly called The Prayer Bell, which used to be sounded while the Prayers were sung for the King at High Mass..." (4) a fourth which used to be rung daily at compline (5) and a fifth, called Le Cope bell, have been for some time... omitted to the diminution of divine service... [These] ought to be observed... at the proper times, according to custom, under penalty of one penny to be applied to the fabric of the cathedral as often as they shall fail'.

It seems probable that in the fifteenth century during a time of continual feud between successive Deans of Lincoln Cathedral and the Canons bellringing had been neglected. The importance with which bells were held at this time is emphasised by the fact that the Bishop, whilst preoccupied with the dissolution of the greater monasteries, should make this lengthy and very precise Ordinance.

The burgesses of Lincoln must have anticipated the 'Entree unto lyncolne on Tuesday the ix daye of August 1541<sup>11</sup>' of the King with some apprehension. However:

'...bells were Ronge not onlye in the Contrye at all Churchys where his grace cam so sone as they had a sight of hys trayne and so in lyke mann' there in lyncolne & dyvise plac's adjoynynge'

No doubt some monastic bells were used to replace cracked bells or to augment existing bells in the parish churches. Monastic bell metal could well have been acquired to provide additional metal for use in later recasting but there is little documentary evidence for the transfer of bells from the religious houses to local churches. There are, however, some local traditions that could have a factual foundation. At Moulton, Northamptonshire there is a tradition<sup>12</sup> that two bells were acquired from Northampton Priory at the Dissolution. As the Prior became the Vicar of Moulton in 1540 there could well be truth in the tradition. At Peterborough the Monastery became the Cathedral when the See was created in 1541 and the ten bells were retained. Although the exact weight of these bells<sup>13</sup> is not known they were exceptionally heavy and a peal of ten bells was cast from the heaviest four in 1709. The tenor of this ring weighed about 33 cwt which suggests that the tenor of the monastic ring weighed in excess of four tons, a clear indication of the size of bells at this time.

Thornton Abbey was suppressed in 1539 and re-founded as a college of secular canons. It would appear that the bells were retained and in 1545<sup>13</sup> Sir Robert Williamson 'dwelling within the College...clerk' gave 'for the bells vs and to xx ryngers vis viiid'. The number of ringers suggests a heavy peal of bells but, unfortunately no inventory exists from the time the College was, in turn, suppressed in the reign of Edward VI.

It is known<sup>14</sup> that eight bells were removed from Osney Abbey and hung in the tower of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford in 1546.

In 1463 the bells<sup>15</sup> in the "outer steeple" of Crowland Abbey were recast "in order that they might be brought to a state of more perfect harmony" and there is a tradition that these bells were taken to Pinchbeck at the Dissolution because this was the only tower in the district large enough to contain them. Although this is possible there is no documentary evidence in support.

Raven<sup>16</sup> comments that monastic bells were useful for casting cannon and in Lincolnshire metal used for this purpose was valued at £832. Elphick<sup>17</sup> points out that bell and gun founding were allied trades. The Bury bellfounders<sup>18</sup> used as their foundry mark a shield bearing a crowned bell, the keys of St Peter the crossed arrows of St Edmund and a cannon with ball. Robert Mot, who established the Whitechapel bellfoundry, is known to have cast cannon at the time of the Spanish Armada.

There are many instances of bells being sold to private individuals for export as the following grant<sup>17</sup> dated 13 September 1540 confirms:

'John Dymocke. Licence to export 20,000 weight of bell metal, bought of the duke of Suffolk to be delivered to the said John at the port of Boston'.

It was eventually realised<sup>20</sup> that such exported bell-metal could be purchased by unfriendly foreign powers and :

'Noe p'son or p'sons shoulde from henceforthe carry or convey any brasse, copper laten, bellmettall, gunemettall, ne shroffe metall, into anye part or parts beyonde the sea upon payne of forfeytyre of the said metall'.

The greater part of the money accruing from the Dissolution went to the King's Treasury but some did help to provide funds for the founding of six new dioceses. In 1541 Northamptonshire and Rutland were transferred from the Diocese of Lincoln into the new See of Peterborough and in 1542 Oxfordshire formed the nucleus of the new See of Oxford. The final reorganisation of the Lincoln Diocese by Henry VIII came with the transfer in 1550 of St Albans to the Diocese of London.

## 2. The Edwardian Reformation

The Henrician Reformation, therefore, had little effect on the use of bells by the Church in England except in monastic foundations and Bishop Langland's Ordinances of 1539 stressed the important place which bells still had in the Church. Although Henry VIII was opposed to any move towards protestantism during his lifetime he arranged for a Regency Council with a strong Protestant bias to act during the minority of his son Edward VI. This suggests that Henry had recognised that the break with Rome had paved the way for further changes and Injunctions issued to the Cathedrals in 1548<sup>21</sup> ordered Midnight Matins to cease and to begin in future 'at vj of the clocke in the mornynge or nere thereupon'. The observation of the Canonical 'Howres, Prime, Deriges, or Commendacions' was to cease 'but every man [was] to saie the same as he haith tyme or is disposed'.

Churches were to celebrate 'onelie one Masse...at ix<sup>th</sup> of the clocke before none'. 'Evensonge and Complyne...' was to begin in Summer at 3 pm and in the Winter at 'two of the clocke, or half an howre after'.

Although bells are not specifically mentioned it is clear that many of the occasions when bells were rung no longer existed and there would be much less bellringing.

When, in 1549, the first Prayer Book in English was published it was, essentially, a translation by Cranmer of

the Latin liturgy and bellringing was unaffected but in 1552 a further Prayer Book was issued and this was much more Protestant in character. It is at this time that bells were finally divorced from the liturgy. It was decreed that Cathedrals and Parish Churches were to be deprived of all but the minimum furnishings including bells required by the new Prayer Book. Commissioners<sup>22</sup> were appointed to implement the sale or destruction of surplus church furniture. Any bells not hung in the church and surplus bell metal was also to be sold but :

'...they and everye one of them do safely kepe unspoiled, unembesiled and unsold all suche bells as do remayne in everye of the said Churches and chapells and the same to conserve until our pleasur be therein further knowne'.

The following table showing the percentage of bells by number in the Diocese of Lincoln has been produced from figures given in the surviving Inventories<sup>23</sup> produced by the Commissioners. :

Number of Bells :	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sanctus
C : Buckingham	1	18	42	30	9	-	-	61
o : Huntingdon	-	14	43	32	9	2	-	71
u : Leicester	3	17	55	14	9	1	1	54
n : Lincoln	1	26	65	6	1	1	-	79
t : Northampton	3	22	45	28	2	-	-	84
y : Oxford	1	27	45	24	3	-	-	44
Average	2	21	51	20	5	1	-	66

Table 2. Percentage of bells in church towers in the Diocese of Lincoln c1553

Although not all Inventories have survived and more exist in some Counties than others there is enough data

available to show that about seventy per cent of churches possessed three or four bells and the majority also had a Sanctus Bell. The latter was hung separately to the other bells either in the tower or sometimes in a bell-cote outside the church on the chancel gable. It was rung three times when the priest recited the Sanctus (Holy; Holy; Holy) so that a listener was aware that the most solemn part of the Mass had been reached.

There seems little doubt that the intention was to sell all bells surplus to those required for specific purposes; as a call to listen to a Sermon; to attend a public meeting or perhaps for use as a fire bell. Local custom or necessity would influence the number of bells retained but the table above shows that a considerable sum of money could be raised by selling surplus bells.

Bells had not been installed in church towers to remain silent and, as we have seen, they were rung at frequent intervals throughout the day and night to celebrate the many festivals of the pre-Reformation Church. Had the sale of bells surplus to the requirements of the 1552 Prayer Book been implemented immediately, as was the case with other furnishings, an important feature of English life would have been removed.

It is surprising that the Commissioners deferred the removal of bells and there is no written evidence to suggest the reason for this. However, it may be that bells were considered to be a more sensitive subject than

images and vestments because many had been provided by individuals either directly or as the result of a bequest. Relatives might easily have been led to violent reaction. Perhaps the deferment was due to the following comment by Martin Bucer, a formidable Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University<sup>24</sup> :

'...bells are not to be rung except when the people are to be warned of the sacred assembly and called to it, or to necessary public gatherings. Also that they are to be rung with different sounds so that the people may know to what they are being called. For at present they confuse the sound of the bells so that the people cannot tell to what matter they are being called, whether to sermons or other sacred assemblies, or to pray for the sick, or to some matter of public business'.

In this passage Bucer points out that bells were needed as a call to worship, to instruct the people to pray for the sick and as a call to a meeting such as the following recorded in the Lincoln Chapter Acts and dated 13 April 1549 :

'[The Dean and Chapter] also decreed that the Bellringers should ring on each Chapter-day, or at least tinkle one bell by way of warning to the members of the Chapter'.

Medieval bellringing was performed in such a way that each bell or combination of bells rung enabled the listener to identify the service which was about to take place. Bucer suggests that this form of bellringing could be adapted in the Reformed Church to enable people to gather together for particular purposes.

Few places actually had time to bring the new Prayer



Book into use before the early death of the King and few bells were removed from the churches. The way was clear for the reintroduction, on the accession of Queen Mary, of the traditional bellringing. At Leverton the Churchwardens Accounts<sup>25</sup> for 1556/7 confirm that the traditional bellringing on All Hallows Eve had been restored :

'It pd for the full contention of the ryngers vpon alhallow nyght xixob'

It pd for the full payment of the ryngers vpon psalmes nyght over & besyds towe & twentye pencs gatheryd of the paryshones xiiijd'

In fact, it seems probable that, at most churches, bellringing had continued unaltered much depending on the attitude of the incumbent and patron.

### 3. Non-liturgical bellringing

In a sermon preached by Bishop Latimer<sup>22</sup> before the King in 1552 he told of a bishop who was offended because the tenor bell could not be rung during his visitation. This is an important confirmation that, although liturgical bellringing was condemned, it was expected that bells should continue to be rung on other occasions in accordance with established custom :

'I heard of a bishop of England that went on visitation and as it was the custom, when the bishop should come, to be rung into the town the great bell's clapper was fallen down, the tyal was broken, so that the bishop could not be rung into the town. There was a great matter made of this, and the chief of the parish was much blamed for it in the visitation. The bishop was somewhat quick with them, and signified that he was much offended. They made their answers, and excused themselves as well as they could: It was a chance," said they, "that the clapper brake, and we could not get it mended by-and-by; we must tarry till we can have it done: it shall be amended as shortly as may be." Among the other, there was one wiser than the rest, and he comes to the bishop: "Why, my lord," saith he, "doth your lordship make so great a matter of the bell that lacketh his clapper? Here is a bell," said he, and pointed to the pulpit, "that hath lacked a clapper this twenty years. We have a parson that fetcheth out of this benefice fifty pound"

The most frequent occasion on which a bell was rung at this time was to summon the people to church to listen to a sermon as the following two entries in the Churchwarden's Accounts<sup>24</sup> for Melton Mowbray Parish Church show :

1547 'Itm pd to ij Ryngers wch rong to ye S'mon when the bisshop of lincoln was here ijd'

1553 October 'Itm payd to John Hynmane & to Robert Bagworth for rynginge of ye great bell for master latimore sarmon ijd'

The tenor bell was rung to summon the people to church to listen to a sermon and no doubt the bishop mentioned by Latimer was annoyed because the people could not be called to hear his sermon!

Bells continued to be rung to announce royal "progresses" as at Wing in 1570<sup>27</sup> 'when the quene was here

viijd' and at Great Marlow in 1593 when although no payment is mentioned to the ringers John Black was paid 8d 'for mendynge the belle when the Quene came'.

Payment for ringing at funerals continued to be made in accordance with a bequest as described on page 26. Ringing at a funeral was also requested by the relatives of the deceased and in 1554 the Churchwardens of St Martin's Leicester drew up a scale of charges<sup>as</sup> as follows :

For three bells	8d
For four bells	20d
For five bells	4s

The same account records the following interesting payments in 1547 :

'Itm p<sup>d</sup> to the ryngers for Kinge Henry the eyght xijd  
Itm p<sup>d</sup> to the belman the same tyme ijd'

The latter entry records the payment for ringing a handbell in the tower as a summons to the people to go to church to hear Mass for the King's soul.

#### 4. Bells after the Henrician and Edwardian Reformation

Before moving on to examine the tremendous advance of secular and "pleasure" bellringing which took place in the late sixteenth century this chapter concludes with a brief appraisal of the effect on bellringing of religious change during the twenty-two year period from the Dissolution of the Monasteries to the accession of Elizabeth I.

A very large number of monastic bells were destroyed during the three years from 1536 to 1539 and the regular signals which came from the religious houses ceased. Although this was a sound which had been a familiar part of daily life for many centuries, of greater significance to most people was the threat of the cessation of the sound of bells from their own parish church towers. Had Edward VI lived for only a little longer it seems very likely that this would have been the case but, in fact, apart from purely liturgical use, most bellringing continued although under a different name. The early morning "Ave" bell became the Morning Bell and the bell at St Ives used for this purpose was inscribed<sup>24</sup> ARISE AND GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS. The mid-day Angelus continued in many places as a time signal to workers in the fields.

The shift of emphasis from religious to secular "pleasure" bellringing commenced during the reign of Edward VI and this is confirmed by Bucer's condemnation of "foolish youths... who find entertainment...in the empty sound of the bells (see page 75)". "Pleasure" bellringing will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Gee and Hardy p 257
2. Bowker M The Henrician Reformation p 107 (See Note 30 below)
3. LAO MCD 163
4. Hill F Tudor Lincoln p 49
5. Letters and Papers of Henry VIII Vol XI p 302/3.
6. Ibid p 387/9
7. Ibid p 389
8. Stephenson and Marcham Sources of English Constitutional History p 317
9. Gee and Hardy p 280
10. Cole R Chapter Acts 1536/47 p 27/9
11. Allen T The History of the County of Lincoln Vol II p 343 quoting British Museum Additional Manuscripts 6113 fol 1796.
12. North Northants pp 339, 366
13. LAO LCC Wills 1545 I/193
14. Sharpe F The Church Bells of Oxfordshire Vol III p 236
15. North Lincs p 374
16. Raven J The Bells of England p 193
17. Elphick G Sussex Bells and Belfries pp 121, 122 and 124
18. Morris Bells of All Nations p 37-9
19. Letters and Papers of Henry VIII Vol XVI p 98.
20. Gee and Hardy p 328
21. LCS Vol III p 583-596.  
LAO D&C A/3/6 fol 288.
22. North Lincs p 26

23. Compiled by the author from information contained in :

Cocks Bucks

North Beds

North Leics

North Lincs

North Northants

Sharpe F The Church Bells of Oxfordshire

Lomas S C The Edwardian Inventories for  
Huntingdonshire

Note : Only 15 Inventories survive for Bedfordshire and these give an equal number (5) of towers containing three, four and five bells. These have not been included in the table because of the danger of distorting the results. (See Note 30 below)

24. Whitaker E C Martin Bucer and the Book of Common Prayer  
pp 138, 140

25. North Lincs p 511

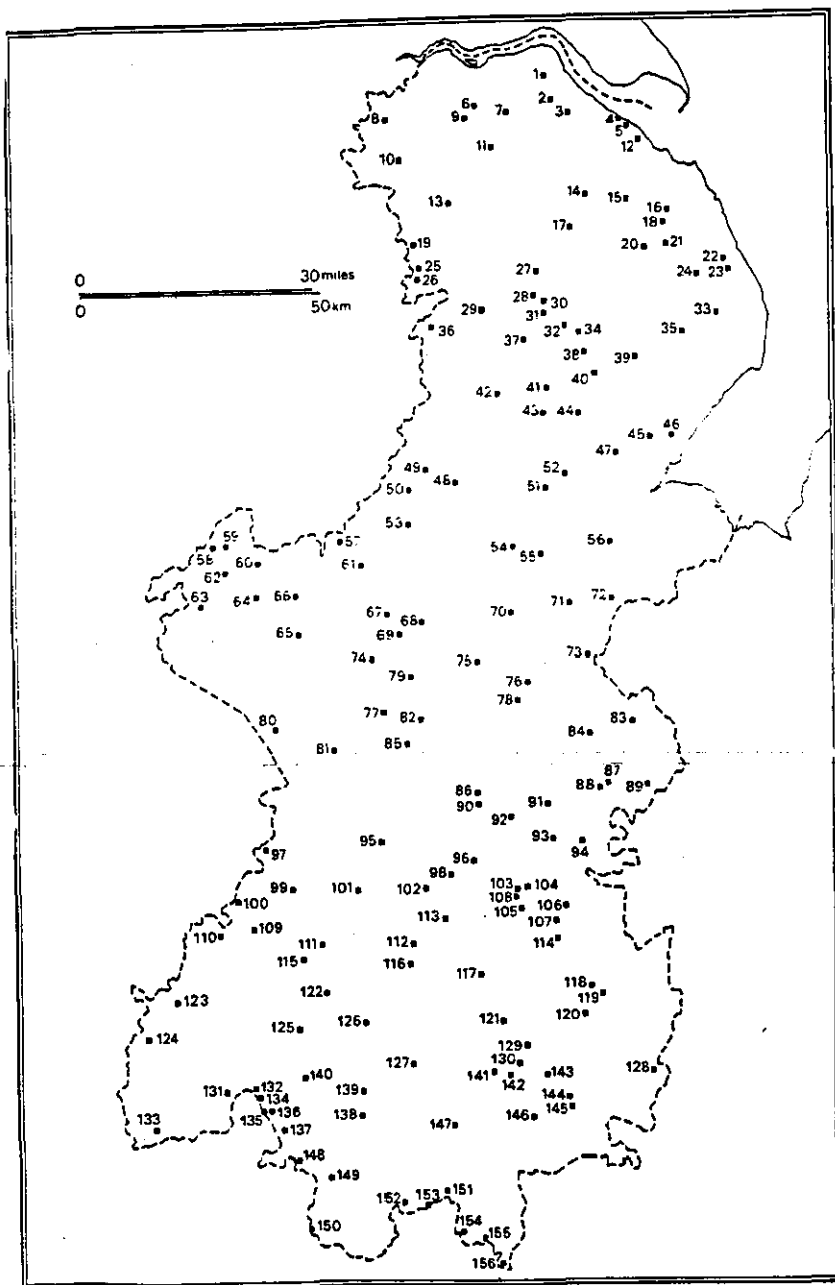
26. Demaus R Hugh Latimer p 271

27. Cocks Bucks p 469, 625

28. North Leics p 247

29. Ibid p 204

30. Hertfordshire has not been included in Tables 1 and 2 because only part of the County was in the Diocese of Lincoln.



3. The Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln on the eve of the Reformation.

- |                 |                     |                    |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Thornton      | 53 Croxton          | 105 Elstow         |
| 2 Newsham       | 54 Vaudey           | 106 Northill       |
| 3 Nun Cotham    | 55 Bourne           | 107 Warden         |
| 4 Grimsby       | 56 Spalding         | 108 Caldwell       |
| 5 Wellow        | 57 Dalby            | 109 Chacombe       |
| 6 Thornhoime    | 58 Breedon          | 110 Wroxtton       |
| 7 Elsham        | 59 Langley          | 111 Biddlesden     |
| 8 Hirst         | 60 Garendon         | 112 Bradwell       |
| 9 Gokewell      | 61 Kirby Bellars    | 113 Tickford       |
| 10 Axholme      | 62 Gracedieu        | 114 Chicksands     |
| 11 Newstead     | 63 Heather          | 115 Brackley       |
| 12 Humberston   | 64 Ulverscroft      | 116 Snelshall      |
| 13 Willoughton  | 65 Leicester        | 117 Woburn         |
| 14 Orford       | 66 Rothley          | 118 Hitchin        |
| 15 North Ormsby | 67 Owston           | 119 Wymondley      |
| 16 Alvingham    | 68 Brooke           | 120 Temple Dinsley |
| 17 Sixhills     | 69 Launde           | 121 Dunstable      |
| 18 Louth Park   | 70 Stamford         | 122 Chetwode       |
| 19 Heynings     | 71 Deeping St James | 123 Cold Norton    |
| 20 Maltby       | 72 Crowland         | 124 Bruern         |
| 21 Legbourne    | 73 Peterborough     | 125 Bicester       |
| 22 Hagnby       | 74 Noseley          | 126 Hogshaw        |
| 23 Markby       | 75 Fineshade        | 127 Aylesbury      |
| 24 Greenfield   | 76 Fotheringhay     | 128 Herford        |
| 25 Torksey      | 77 Dingley          | 129 Markyate       |
| 26 Fosse        | 78 Cotterstock      | 130 Flamstead      |
| 27 Bullington   | 79 Bradley          | 131 Eynsham        |
| 28 Barlings     | 80 Lutterworth      | 132 Godstow        |
| 29 Lincoln      | 81 Sulby            | 133 Clanfield      |
| 30 Stainfield   | 82 Pipewell         | 134 Rewley         |
| 31 Bardney      | 83 Ramsey           | 135 Osney          |
| 32 Topholme     | 84 Sawtry           | 136 Oxford         |
| 33 Thwaite      | 85 Rothwell         | 137 Littlemore     |
| 34 Stixwold     | 86 Irthingborough   | 138 Thame          |
| 35 Spilsby      | 87 Huntingdon       | 139 Notley         |
| 36 Eagle        | 88 Hinchingsbrooke  | 140 Studley        |
| 37 Nocton       | 89 St Ives          | 141 Ashridge       |
| 38 Kirkstead    | 90 Higham Ferrers   | 142 St Margaret's  |
| 39 Revesby      | 91 Stonely          | 143 Redbourn       |
| 40 Tattershall  | 92 Melchbourne      | 144 St Albans      |
| 41 Catley       | 93 Bushmead         | 145 Sopwell        |
| 42 Temple Bruer | 94 St Neots         | 146 Kings Langley  |
| 43 Haverholme   | 95 Northampton      | 147 Missenden      |
| 44 Kyme         | 96 Harrold          | 148 Dorchester     |
| 45 Boston       | 97 Catesby          | 149 Ewelme         |
| 46 Freiston     | 98 Lavendon         | 150 Goring         |
| 47 Swineshead   | 99 Canon's Ashby    | 151 Little Marlow  |
| 48 Grantham     | 100 Clattercote     | 152 Medmenham      |
| 49 Newbo        | 101 Sewardsley      | 153 Bisham         |
| 50 Belvoir      | 102 Ravenstone      | 154 Burnham        |
| 51 Sempringham  | 103 Bedford         | 155 Eton           |
| 52 Bridge End   | 104 Newnham         | 156 Ankerwyke      |

## CHAPTER III

### BELLS AND THE REFORMED CHURCH

The Prayer Book of 1552 dispensed with most of the ceremonial of the pre-Reformation Church, including liturgical bellringing but, for reasons already discussed, most church bells survived until the accession of Queen Elizabeth I. Although the Act of Uniformity of 1558 confirmed the use of the 1552 Prayer Book with slight amendments and condemned the use of bells except the one bell required for use as a signal on certain occasions, no further move was made to remove bells surplus to ecclesiastical requirement and the ringing of bells for pleasure or for exercise continued to increase.

#### 1. Bells in Elizabethan England

After the death of Mary I, bewildered by frequent changes of religious emphasis, most people accepted the doctrines ordained by the State. As Bishop Jewel declared<sup>1</sup> :

'This is our doctrine, that every soul, of what calling soever he be - be he monk, be he preacher, be he prophet be he apostle ought to be subject to King and magistrates'.

The Act of Uniformity of 1558 provided for the use of a revised version of the Second Edwardian Prayer Book<sup>2</sup>. At this point bellringing as part of the liturgy "officially" ceased and this was confirmed by Injunctions<sup>3</sup> issued at the same time :



'No one without a just and urgent cause shall use any walking in the church nor shall depart out of the church and a ringing and knolling of bells shall be utterly forborn except one bell at convenient time to be rung or knolled immediately before the sermon'.

In 1566 "Advertisements" issued by Archbishop Parker<sup>4</sup> ordered :

'...that when any Christian body is in passing that the bell be tolled and that the curate be specially called for to comfort the sick person, and after the time of his passing to ring no more but one short peal, and one before the burial, and another after the burial'.

The use of church bells as a purely secular recreation and for other more serious secular purposes will be explained in Chapter IV but at this point it is stressed that, if the bells hung in church towers had been required only for religious purposes, all but one bell would have been removed. This had clearly been the intention during the reign of Edward VI but, in 1551, Martin Bucer, although an extreme Protestant, had, as has already been seen, confirmed that church bells were required for secular use. It is this, coupled with their recreational use which had increased since the death of Edward VI, which accounts for their retention at a time when other church ornaments were being removed and sold.

A further factor to be borne in mind is that the Queen is said to have liked the sound of bells and there are certainly numerous entries in churchwardens' accounts in London and the Home Counties of payments for bellringing at churches which the Queen passed on her many

"progresses". Morris<sup>m</sup> quotes the following significant passage :

'Now began all over London the ringing of bells; but the bells, to hear which crowds upon crowds were seen hurrying, were those of Shoreditch, those bells long maintained their celebrity, and were such great favourites with Queen Elizabeth that she never passed them without making a halt to listen to their music - the people all bareheaded kneeling around her'.

One of the best known of all "changes" to bellringers in which the "odd" numbered bells sound first followed by the "even" bells in the following manner :

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is known as "Queens" and it is thought that this originated as an acknowledgement of the Queen's interest in bells.

Anthony Wood, the Oxford antiquarian and bellringer, records<sup>d</sup> the following incident which took place on 17 November 1561:

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

Queen Elizabeth I was proclaimed on 17 November, which was also the Feast day of St Hugh of Lincoln, and many payments are recorded in churchwardens' accounts for

bellringing on that date. At St Martin's Leicester<sup>7</sup> in 1558 the Churchwardens 'pd for ale to the Ryngers when the queenes grace was pclaymyd viijd' and at All Saints, Loughborough<sup>8</sup> in 1584 the Churchwardens :

'...pd to the Ringers on St Hew Daye iijs iiijd'

At Market Deeping<sup>9</sup> the Churchwardens' Accounts record the following payment made in 1587 :

'Itm pd to ye ringers on the coronation day iijs vjd' and there are many more similar entries in churchwardens' accounts.

17 November 1588 was a Sunday and the Tuesday following was kept as a holiday to celebrate the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The Market Deeping<sup>9</sup> Accounts for 1588 record that the ringers were :

'Pd for bread & drinke on St Hughes daye & the two days following xvjd'

The celebrations<sup>10</sup> included 'sermons, psalm-singing and bonfires' but, of course, there could be no such celebration without bells!

Ringling to celebrate occasions of personal rejoicing appears to have been arranged directly between the individual concerned and the ringers. For this reason there are few existing records of such transactions. However the following extract from the Churchwardens' Accounts for All Saints, Loughborough<sup>11</sup> dated 1588 confirms that such ringling did take place :

'Agreed at this Account that every marriage haveing or requiring to have the bells rung, shall paye vjd to the poremens boxe and vjd towards repairinge of the bells and the churche and the clarke to receyve'

Two interesting payment<sup>12</sup> appear in the Churchwardens' Accounts for 1570 at Louth :

'Pade to xxvj Ringers that day that the Lord President came to toune xiiijs ixd

Pade to the Ringers when the Lords came to the towne vijs'

The Lord President was Sir Henry Sydney but there is no record of a visit by him to Louth at this time. However, Louth had a heavy ring of six bells at that time and the fact that twenty-six ringers took part indicates that all the bells were rung for some time and that the visitor was of some importance.

Bequests continued to be made to the bellringers who rang at funerals, typical being one by William Harrison of Kirton-in-Holland<sup>13</sup> who in 1592 left 'to the ringers a barrell of beare and xijd in bread'.

## 2. Bellringers and the Church.

Although, officially, bellringing as an integral part of Christian worship finally ceased with the issue of a revised version of the Second Edwardian Prayer Book in 1558, in the Reformed Church there was still a requirement for some non-liturgical religious bellringing. A bell was to be rung to summon the people to hear a sermon, on the passing of a parishioner so that the people could pray

for the departing soul and before and after a funeral service so that listeners could pray for the deceased.

At Lincoln Cathedral the bellringers who had the responsibility for sounding the bells on these occasions were granted "patents" and became known as "Patent Ringers" in order to distinguish them from the Company of Ringers which will be discussed in Chapter IV. They were also granted other patents and in most respects carried out similar duties to present day vergers.

At Lincoln the Injunction banning "superstitious" bellringing does not seem to have been enforced. The Will of Thomas Grantham<sup>14</sup> "parsonne of Waltham, preiste" who died 17/18 November 1558 contained the following clause :

'I geve and bequeathe for the knolling of the ave bell in the Cathedral Church of Lincolne to have the bell knolled according to the olde use and custome for twentie yere vili xiijs iiijd that is to saie vjs viiij a yere'

Surprisingly, the Chapter Acts on 23 March 1559/60<sup>15</sup> ordered that the Ave bell was to be rung at 6 am, 12 noon and 6 pm.

The Dean, Francis Mallett, continued to use the ceremonial of the Catholic Church and no doubt the "Patent Ringers" continued with the elaborate bellringing ordained by Bishop Longland in 1536 until the Dean's death in 1570.

In the parish churches the clerk or verger, as part of his normal duties, would be required to ring the sermon, passing or funeral bell.

A mid-sixteenth century document<sup>16</sup> exists relating to Loughborough Parish Church and is headed :

'Thes dootes follo'ng longs to ye bellmans offyys in ye cherch.

It ferst to ly in ye cherch and to go at viij of ye cloke at night in whinter & somer to ring corfir & then to go to bed.

Also to help to reng to sarvys if ned be.

Also to go every ffryday a bowt ye towne to bed pray for all crestan soles as of costo has be yowsed at vj of ye klok in somer & vij of klok in wenter'.

The bellman was in most respects the equivalent of a modern verger but he had to sleep in the church so that he was able easily to ring the curfew at eight in the evening on weekdays and seven o'clock on Sundays and Holidays. He also had to ring a handbell throughout the town each Friday morning at six in summer and seven in winter to bid the people pray for all Christian souls. He was also responsible for blowing the organ, lighting the candles and sweeping the church!

At most churches the Morning Bell, which replaced the call to 6 am Matins, was rung and was the signal for the days work to start. It is referred to in the following extract from the Minutes<sup>17</sup> of the Boston Assembly dated 12 October 1554 :

'All defaulters on the church assessment who continue to refuse to pay are to be called by a general citation 13s 4d of this money is to be given to two persons to help ring the morning and evening bell, and he who takyth the profit of the bells also to ring'

### 3. The Church and recreational bellringing

By the mid-sixteenth century groups of young men had been formed with the sole purpose of ringing bells for their own amusement or as a physical exercise. They also rang in return for payment to celebrate births, marriages or other similar events. Bells were also rung to celebrate the return of the Lord of the Manor or other local dignitary from a journey or to welcome important visitors to the village or town. In fact, many excuses were found then, as now, for the bellringers to ring bells for amusement or payment!

Bishop Wordsworth recorded<sup>19</sup> the following incident which demonstrates the interest in bellringing by the "gentry" and in the Universities as a physical exercise :

'Bellringing was an amusement which had not been unknown in the earlier days. Thus, Sir Symonds D'Ewes in 1618, on the morning of St Thomas' day amused himself by taking the rope from the hands of the susizer at St John's, whose duty it was to ring, and pulled till he fell down the stairs exhausted and was stunned'

As already recorded (see page 55) Anthony Wood also mentions bellringing by Fellows of Lincoln College, Oxford for exercise.

Such bellringing had, of course, no religious significance but, although the bells were legally the responsibility of the incumbent, it is obvious that he would not interfere with a sport in which the gentry generally and perhaps his patron in particular either took part or actively encouraged. As will be shown the gentry greatly encouraged the considerable recasting and augmentation of bells which took place in the second half of the sixteenth century.

#### 4. Technical changes in bellringing

The advances in technology which took place in the sixteenth century led to improved bell fittings which enabled the bellringers to achieve much greater control of the bell. Diagrams illustrating the points made in this Section can be found on pages 72 and 73.

Early bells were sounded by striking with an external hammer or by a rope attached to the clapper. In both cases the bell remained stationary and there was always a danger of cracking the bell if the clapper or hammer remained too long in contact. A more satisfactory method of sounding the bell was by means of a rope attached to a lever which moved the bell through a small arc enabling the internal clapper to strike it. This is termed "whole-pull" ringing. With the extension of the lever, first to a quarter wheel and eventually to a full wheel, the bell, when properly handled, could be swung through a



full circle ("half-pull" ringing).

Early bells tended to have a long waist but eventually it was realised that a shorter, wider shape required much less effort to ring and this, combined with the introduction of the three-quarter and whole wheel enabled the speed at which the bell turned to be varied. This, in turn, enabled the ringers to vary the order in which the bells sounded.

With the introduction of the stay and slider, which prevents the bell from being thrown over the balance, and also to be set mouth upwards, the way was clear for the unique English "Art and Science" of change-ringing to develop.

## 5. Elizabethan bell restoration

Many pre-Reformation bells were unsuitable for full circle ringing because of their shape and size and the metal of the largest bells was used to augment the number of bells in a ring. This, in turn, increased the attraction of recreational bellringing especially as the opportunity was taken to bring the bells into tune with one another.

In 1593, the five "Lady Bells" which hung in the central tower of Lincoln Cathedral were recast. The Constitution of the Cathedral<sup>17</sup> confirms that there were four bells in this tower c1260 and in 1455<sup>20</sup> it would appear that a fifth bell was added. In June 1593<sup>21</sup> :

"...the 5 bells in the Lady Steeple were new cast and in September next was new cast the Clock bell weight of which bell is 16 cwt six pounds".

The bellfounder at the same time recast a bell in St Hugh's Tower and added two new bells to the two existing bells at the neighbouring Church of St Michael on the Mount. The smallest of the "Lady Bells" was later recast but the inscriptions<sup>22</sup> on the other four bells were as follows :

CUM VOCE SONORA THOMAM CAMPANA LAUDIT  
[The bell praises Thomas with a sonorous call]

SUM ROSA PULSATA MUNDI KATERINA VOCATA  
[I being rung am called Katherine the rose of the world]

IN MULTIS ANNIS RESONAT CAMPANA JOHANNIS  
[For many years John's bell resounds]

SUM ROSA PULSATA MUNDI MARIA VOCATA  
[I being rung am called Mary the rose of the world]

These were typical inscriptions found on pre-Reformation bells and the bellfounder appears to have copied them without thought for their possible "superstitious" interpretation. On new bells inscriptions of this period were usually worded in such a way that they would not cause offence to Catholic or Puritan. At Benniworth, Lincolnshire<sup>23</sup> only the date of casting was inscribed : ANNO DOMINI 1577 and at Healing<sup>24</sup> the bellfounder added his initials : ANNO DOMINI 1573 I B. At Horkstow<sup>25</sup> in 1578 the inscription consisted simply of the letters M L K and there are several examples of letters of the alphabet being used in this way with no

apparent meaning.

Gradually it became fashionable to use inscriptions consisting of mottoes which did not favour any particular shade of religious opinion. In Lincolnshire<sup>24</sup> the most popular inscription as shown by surviving bells from the period was : JESUS BE OUR SPEED. Other popular inscriptions were : GOD SAVE OUR QUEEN and GOD SAVE HIS CHURCH. A particularly interesting inscription appears on a bell cast in 1585 for Passenham<sup>27</sup>, Northamptonshire : A TRVSTY FRENDE IS HARDE TO FYNDE.

The inscription<sup>28</sup> on a bell cast in 1589 for Burgh-le-Marsh suggests that the donor was a keen participant in recreational bellringing : WILLIAM PAVLIN CHIMED SO WELL HE PAYD FOR CASTING OF THIS BELL. Although a little vague the inscription on a bell cast for Silk Willoughby<sup>29</sup> c1590 was no doubt intended to record the generosity of the donor : BE HOLD SE THE PIRSON WIFES ACT OF SILK WILOIBE.

Bequests continued to be made towards the cost of repair or casting of bells and Richard Carter<sup>30</sup>, Alderman of Lincoln, in 1582 was so determined to have the Cathedral bells rung at his funeral that he left :

'to the reparacions of the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgine St Mary of Lincoln so that I may have a peal ronge in St Hughes steeple, And in respect thereof I give to the bellringers beinge then present and ringinge iiis iiijd'

In the following year (1583) Thos Cartwright<sup>32</sup> vicar choral left 'to the [Cathedral] bellringers every one of

them iijjd'. Unfortunately he doesn't specify the number of bellringers but, in 1589, Stephen Christopher<sup>32</sup> of the Baile of Lincoln, yeoman, is rather more informative and leaves :

'to the foure belringers within the same church xijd a pece and to the foure deputies for making my grave vjd a pece'

He instructed that he 'was to be buried within the Cathedrall nere unto the west dore of the same' and the "deputies" were probably assistant "patent ringers" with other duties within the Cathedral hierarchy.

When William Harrison<sup>33</sup> of Kirton-in-Holland died in 1592 he left 'to the ringers a barrell of beare and xijd in bread' and this eventually became a common form of bequest to the bellringers.

The patrons of livings were often manorial Lords and examples of their interest in bells, as represented by their generosity, are not hard to find. Thus, at Dalby-on-the Wolds<sup>34</sup>, Leicestershire, the lord of the manor, Sir Andrew Noel provided a bell on which was inscribed : ANDREUU NOUEL ESQUIER ANO D 1584 and at Fenny Drayton<sup>35</sup> GEORGE PUREFIE ESQUIER paid for the casting of a bell in ANNO D 1596. At Nosely<sup>36</sup> a bell was inscribed THOMAS HEZELRIG ESQUIER MADE ME in 1596 and in 1601 at Skeffington<sup>37</sup> the inscription reads WILLIAM SKEVINGTON ESQUIER GAVE ME and these provide further examples of the interest in bells of the gentry.

Although bells were provided by individuals in many cases the cost was often met by subscription. At St Martin's Parish Church Leicester<sup>30</sup> a list of donations contained in the Churchwarden's Accounts for 1585/6 is headed :

'Reseaved of the pishners of S Martins for the charges and castinge of the forr [treble] bell as followethe:'

to which is appended a record of donations received from the Mayor and nine Alderman of 6s 8d each. Twenty one Common Councillors gave 3s 4d each and there were a number of individual donations ranging from 1s up to 5s making a total of £11 18s 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. In 1585<sup>37</sup> at All Saints, Loughborough the Churchwardens :

'Receved of the Townsmen of this parishe towards the payment of the Castinge of the great bell, as maye appeare by a Bill collected of every paretie, which have already payd whiche is in Toto vli vjs ijd'

Although the main purpose of recasting and augmenting bells at this time must have been because bellringing was growing in popularity as a recreation practised by a comparatively few young men, there was no difficulty in obtaining the money for this work. This confirms that the sound of bells still had a place in the affections of English men and women.

## 6. Bellringing at the close of the Tudor period

It is impossible to say with certainty when emphasis finally moved from religious to secular bellringing. Officially this came with the Injunction of 1558 but, as has been shown, the ban on so called "superstitious" bellringing was not always obeyed. Much depended on the attitude of the incumbent or patron but it is clear that at the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603 bands of young men existed who regarded the ringing of bells entirely as a recreation or physical exercise.

The advance of science and technology during the sixteenth century led to the improvement of fittings which enabled the ringer to achieve greater control of the movement of the bell. Now that the need for large bells which could be easily distinguished one from another had ceased greater attention was paid to their musical qualities. There are several references in the Edwardian Inventories to bells 'of a cord' or 'of a ring' and it may be that more attention to the tuning of bells was being paid by the early sixteenth century. At All Saints, Loughborough in 1586 the Churchwardens<sup>40</sup> paid :

'to John Wever for his two dayes chardges when he went to Nottingham for them that came to prove the tune of ye bells'.

A new tenor bell was cast in that year and it would seem that the other four bells were tuned to match it. This bell was recast in 1613 and its weight was increased

by about 5 cwt. This meant that one of the bells had to be tuned to the new bell. Tuning at this time was a rather crude affair and pieces of metal were chipped off at strategic points. This is recorded in the Churchwardens' Accounts as follows :

'Item pd for Bread and Beare when the Bell was taken downe to be chipt xviiijd.

Item spent in bread and bere when the Bell was had up aft<sup>r</sup> she had been chipt to them w<sup>ch</sup> did help viijd'

Clearly the tuning of bells had become of considerable importance.

The young and enthusiastic bands of bellringers who had rung bells to celebrate the numerous festivals of the pre-Reformation Church continued this pleasurable activity after the Reformation as a secular pastime. Many of the gentry, some of whom were patrons of the churches in which the bells hung, took part in the ringing and, with their support, it is not surprising that bellringing, although no longer required for liturgical purposes, continued as a popular recreation.

The Queen appears to have liked the sound of bells and may have regarded it as a harmless recreation which absorbed the energies of young men who might, perhaps, have turned their attentions to more disruptive pastimes.

Although it is often said that secular "pleasure" or recreational bellringing is a unique English phenomena this is not so. Secular groups of bellringers developed in many European countries but it was only in England that

full circle bellringing was practised and bells rung in order rather than haphazardly. This unique English art will be explained in detail in Chapter IV.

As was said above it is impossible to say that religious change, although introduced by Injunction took place on a certain date and many people had lived through, or had close relatives who were acquainted with, the upheavals which took place during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. They must have been very confused and Dawley<sup>41</sup>, in the following passage, puts in perspective the feelings of people at this time :

'People stole into the churches at night to pray, occasionally burning a candle stub on the feasts of Our Lady and the Saints; they paused before the ruined churchyard crosses to utter the familiar intercessions. During the services they fingered their beads and could not keep their hands from the sign of the cross or penitent "knockings" upon the breast.

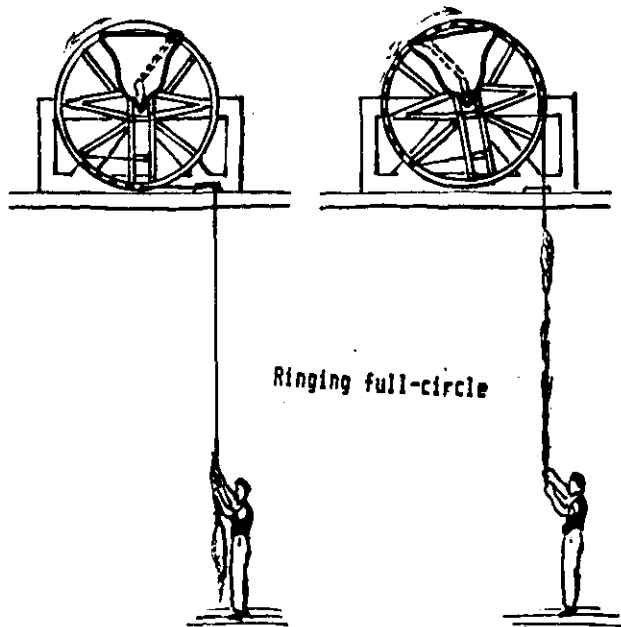
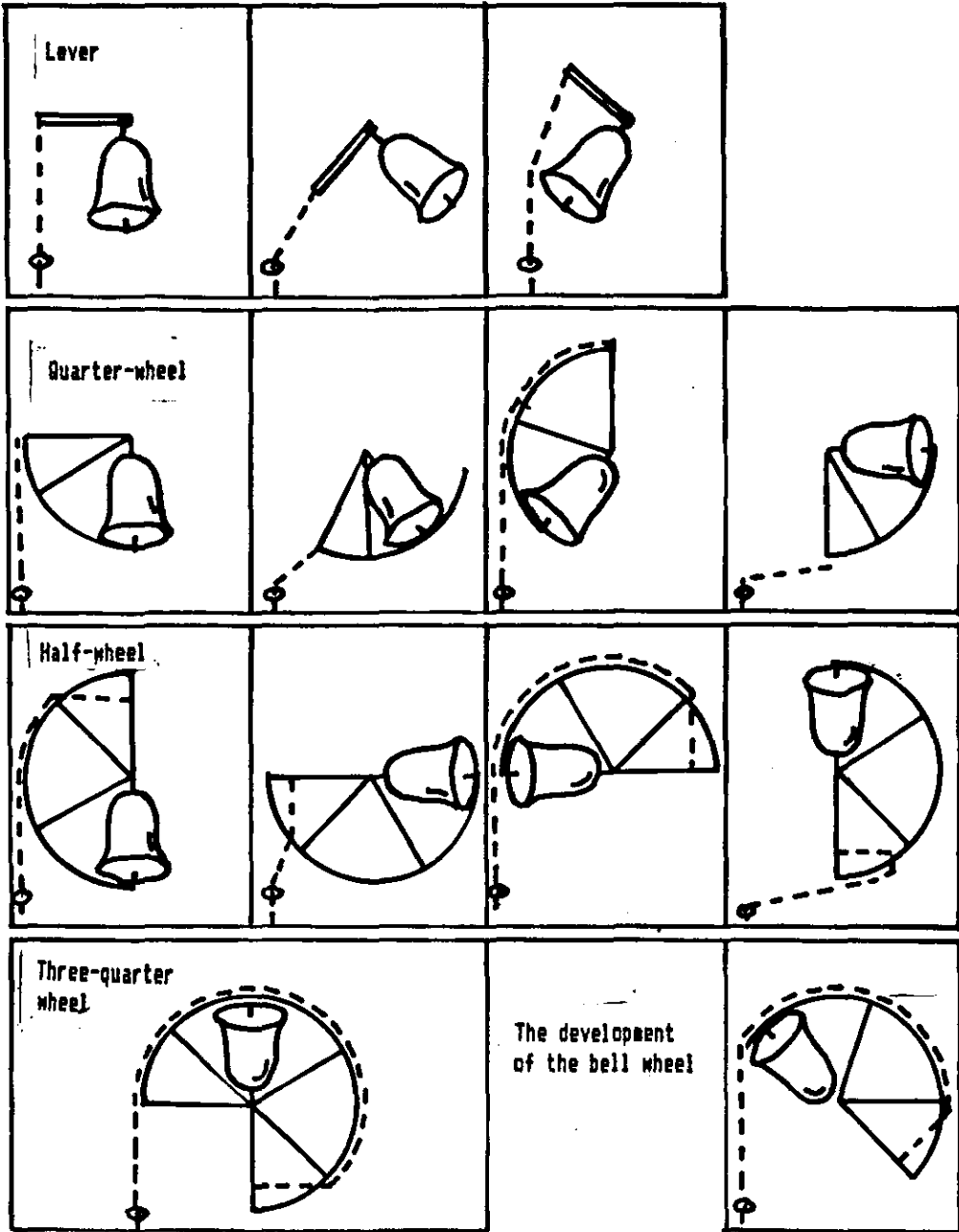
Through many a darkened village on the eve of All Soul's the bells of the Parish tolled the forbidden remembrances of the departed, and by the time the churchwardens arrived at the church they found either the belfry ropes stilled or a group gathered there too formidable to restrain'.

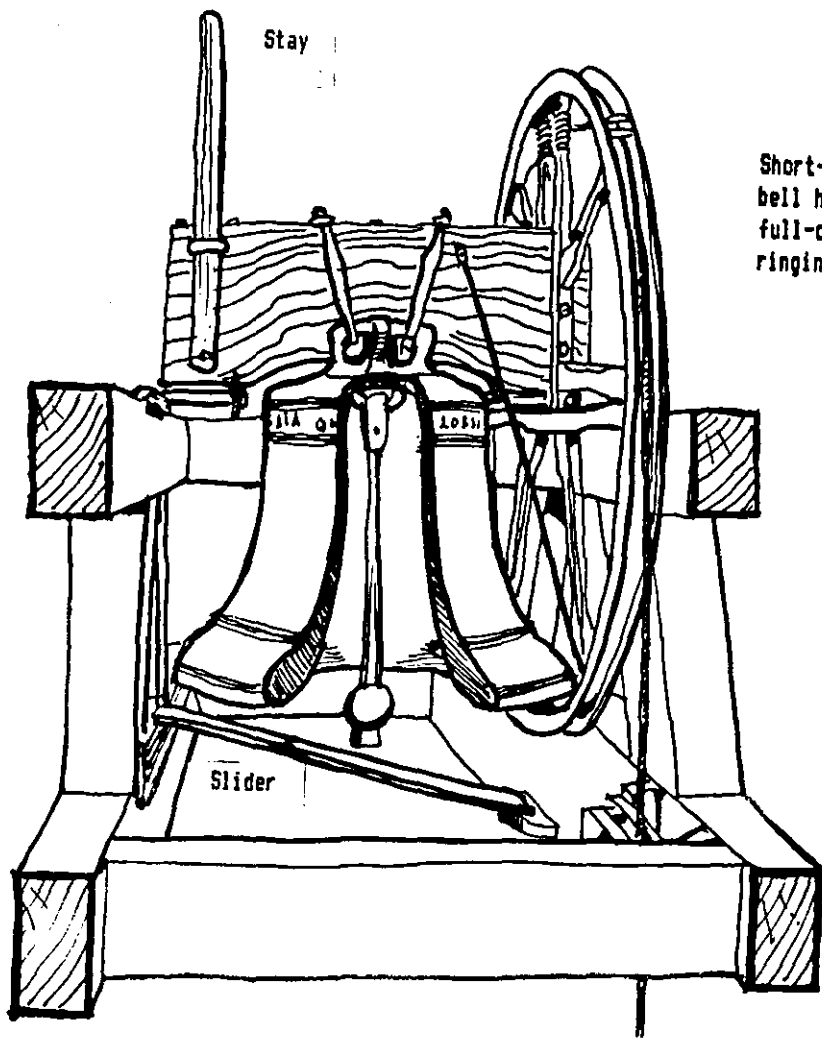


## NOTES AND REFERENCES

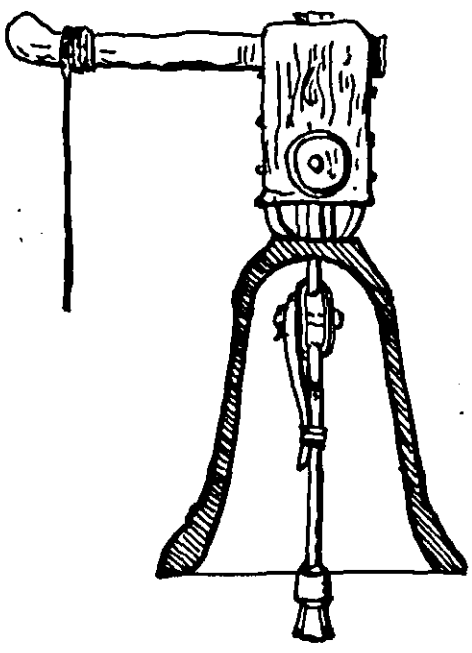
1. Trevelyan G M Illustrated English Social History Vol 2 p 76
2. Cross C Church and People p 129
3. Emmison F G P Elizabethan Morals & the Church Courts p 111.  
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9. North Lincs p 380-1
10. Neale J E Queen Elizabeth p 300
11. North Leics p 232
12. Bayley W S Notices of Louth p 52
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14. LAO LCC Wills 1558/I/212
15. LAO D&C A/3/7 unfoliated
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17. Clark P & J (Eds) The Boston Assembly Minutes 1545-1575 p 14
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19. LCS I pp 364-389 LAO D&C A/2/1
20. LAO D&C A/2/34 fol 52v
21. LAO D&C Bij/3/2 (unfoliated)
22. North Lincs p 518.

23. Ibid p 312.
24. Ibid p 447.
25. Ibid p 464.
26. See note 8 Chapter I
27. North Northants p 359.
28. North Lincs p 341.
29. Ibid p 747.
30. LAO D&C Wills III/154
31. LAO D&C Wills III/210
32. LAO D&C Wills III/205
33. LAO LCC Wills 1592/579
34. North Leics p 169
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36. Ibid p 257
37. Ibid p 280
38. Ibid p 205
39. Ibid p 229
40. Ibid p 232/3
41. Dawley P M John Whitgift and the English Reformation p 119

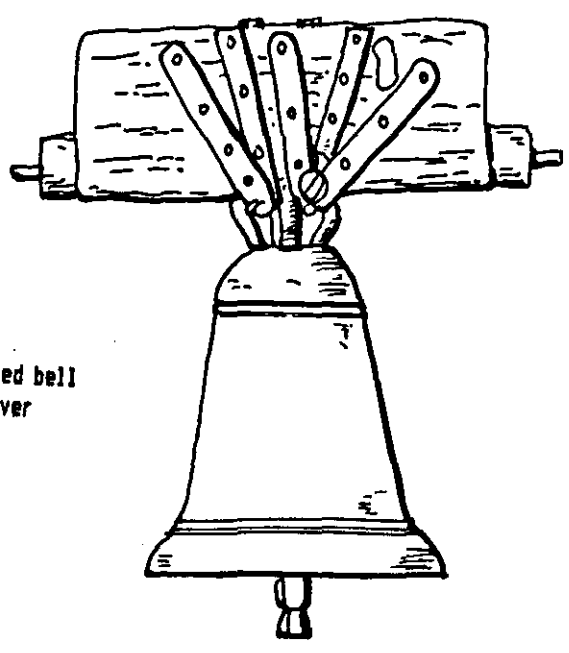




Short-waisted bell hung for full-circle ringing



Long-waisted bell rung by lever



## CHAPTER IV

### SECULAR BELLRINGERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHANGE-RINGING

Bellringing had been regarded as a pleasurable exercise for some time before the Reformation and eventually societies of bellringers were formed whose members met together for practice in much the same way as any other sport. Therefore, when change-ringing developed in the early seventeenth century groups of "pleasure" ringers already existed and the new "Art" very quickly spread from East Anglia to Oxford via London and thence to the major towns.

#### 1. Secular Bellringing Societies

The earliest record of an organised secular group of bellringers is contained in a grant dated 8 March 1255<sup>1</sup> which reads as follows :

'Know all men that we have granted the Brethren of the Gild of Westminster, who are appointed to ring the great bells, that they and their successors shall receive annually out of our Exchequer 100 shillings, fifty at Easter, and fifty at Michaelmas, until we provide a like sum for them payable out of lands for the said ringing. And that the brethren and their successors for ever enjoy all the privileges and free customs which they have enjoyed from the time of Edward the Confessor to the date of these presents'.

Although nothing more is known of these bellringers it is clear that they were laymen who were well paid for their campanological activities. Morris<sup>2</sup> mentions a grant to the Guild of Saddlers of the right to ring the bells of St

Martin le Grand [Strand, London] but these Gilds cannot be regarded as bellringing societies as they existed primarily for other reasons than the practice of bellringing.

Exactly when bellringers started to meet to practice the Art purely for pleasure is impossible to say. The following extract<sup>3</sup> from Stow's Survey of London suggests that practices were taking place in the mid-fifteenth century at St Michael's, Cornhill, London :

'As I have often heard my father report, upon St Jame's night, certain men in the loft next under the bells, ringing of a peal, a tempest of lightning and thunder did arise...for fear of whereof they all fell down... One of the ringers lived in my youth whom I have oft heard to verify the same to be true'.

Bucer in his 'Censura' of 1551<sup>4</sup> criticises the use of bells for amusement as follows :

'For to what decency or order in religion, to what discipline and edification in faith might that abuse of bells, so common and excessive, be appropriate, for which superstitious and wealthy men pay foolish youths a substantial reward and find entertainment meanwhile in the empty sound of the bells and the unseemly stories which they recount when they are in their cups and away from home. And they never arrange more audaciously for the clanging of the bells day and night than on their superstitious festivals, as the day of Souls and the feasts of the Conception and the Presentation of Mary, of George, and other divines of whom more is known by way of fable than by way of true history. And what reason is there to make this din with the bells by night and day, at times when no-one thinks of church? There ought not to be any other use for this sound than that the people should prepare themselves and come to the sacred assembly, or to other public gatherings'.

which clearly confirms that, in Cambridge, bells were being rung extensively for pleasure at that time.

The Constitution of the "Schollers of Chepesyde" is dated 2 February 1603 and the twenty-fifth rule states :

'[that if any] offence [is given] to any other Company ... he so offending shall pay such fine...as..shall be thought fitting'.

which suggests that other Companies of Bellringers existed at that time in London<sup>5</sup>. All the ringing Societies founded in the seventeenth century had similar Constitutions (or Ordinances) and, in common with the Craft Guilds on which they were modelled, they were concerned with the welfare and social life of their members. The rules of the Constitutions of the craft guilds which, for example, had regulated the admission of apprentices were adapted to provide for the maintenance of the bells and other bellringing matters. The only Constitutions<sup>6</sup> which survive are those for the London based Societies mentioned above, the Gild of the Society of St Stephen's Ringers, Bristol and the bellringers at Lincoln Cathedral.

It would appear that the formal Constitution of ringing Societies was an urban phenomenon but rural ringing societies should not be overlooked. They did exist but on a much less formal basis and the rules dating from the early seventeenth century painted on the tower wall at Scotter<sup>7</sup> are probably typical :

'You ringers All who heare doe fall  
And doe cast over a bell  
doe forfeit toe the Clarke therefore  
A Groute I doe you tell  
& if you thinck it be to little  
& beare A valiant minde  
y more you give unto him then  
you prove to him more kinde'

These rules were formulated before stays were in general use and this, together with the primitive fittings then in use, would mean that only by very skilful handling would it be possible to ring in a complete circle and not "cast over a bell".

## 2. The Lincoln Cathedral Company of Bellringers

The Company at Lincoln Cathedral is the earliest which has survived to the present day and appears to have been founded soon after the extensive restoration of the bells which took place in 1592/3. The earliest evidence of the Company's existence is contained in the Accounts<sup>69</sup> for 1595 :

'John Sandie and the other bellringers in the aforesaid Church by way of a new grant in the writing under seal by the Chapter to pay 20s per annum at the rate of 10s at the Feast of the Nativitie and 10s at the feast of St John Baptist now paid within the terms of the account'.

There are several interesting payments to this secular band of bellringers amongst which are the following<sup>69</sup> :



1599  
 'Paid through the hands of John Piborne  
 to the Ringers on St Hughs Day vjs viijd'

'To the ringers ringing on the nativity xs'

1603/4<sup>e</sup>  
 Paid to the ringers for 'their labour  
 on St Mary's day 6s 8d  
 and on St James day 6s 8d'

On 28 March 1612<sup>r</sup> the Chapter Acts record that it was 'agreed to pay the bellringers 6s 8d for ringing for the coronation of the King'. Six months later, on 18 October 1612, "The Company of Ringers of St Hughe Bells and Our Lady Bells" was granted a constitution by the Dean and Chapter and it would appear that the Rules (Ordinancies) of the Company formalised the earlier Company<sup>12</sup>.

The Dean at the time of the foundation of the Company, Laurence Stanton, died soon after and his successor, Robert Parker, issued Letters Patent dated 23 September 1614 confirming the Ordinancies and awarding an Annuity of 40s to be paid :

'on the ffeaste of the Nativitie of Our Saviour Jesus Christe commonlie called xpeffimas daye and the ffeaste of the Nativitie of saincte John Baptist commonly called mydsomer Daye by even and equal portions'.

In return the Company undertook to ring 'Saincte Hughe Bells and our Ladye Bells...on solempne ffeastes and good occasions'. This was the first of the twenty eight lengthy Ordinances and also required members to attend meetings called by the Master or be fined 12d.

The Ordinances make no mention of ringing on Sundays and there is little doubt that the Company, after fulfilling their obligation to ring on certain occasions were able to ring when they wished. In fact the Letters Patent gave the Company :

'...ffree libertie power and authoritie; at all tymes Couenient for ever hereafter, to haue free accesse libertie ingresse and regresse; at theire wills and pleasures, to ringe the saide Bells, to thintent the saide Bells maye be well and commendable runge'

The Letters Patent in addition to the 'solempne Dayes' on which the Company is to ring add :

'for the Kinge his moste excellent maiestie, the cominge in of the Judges and at the returninge home of maister Deane or of the residentiaries of the saide churche...'

Although the "Royal" occasions are not specified it was traditional to ring on the anniversary of the accession and coronation of the Sovereign. The bells were also rung for the service attended by the Judges of Assize.

In the Letters Patent the Company promised :

'...to gyve notice of theire ringinge the said saincte Hughe Bells from tyme to tyme before they ringe the same (except at such tyme or tymes as they use ordinarilie to be rung)'.  
'

### 3. The Lincoln Ordinances

As was stated above the Rules of the seventeenth century bellringing Companies followed the general pattern of the craft Guilds and the "Ordinances, Constitutions and Agreements" of the Lincoln Cathedral Company of Bellringers are a very good example and the full text is included as an Appendix to this thesis. The numbers in square brackets below refer to the Rule number.

The Master was elected after "foure sufficient men" had been nominated [3] and he was to have custody of the "common stock" for "one whole yeare". The Master appointed two Wardens who were allowed 5s annually for :

'running vvp and downe and loss of their tyme in sommoninge the companye to all assemblies over and besides their Dynners on the ffeaste daye'.

The Wardens were also required [6] to :

'sweepe and make cleane the Chappell or hall belonginge to the companye as also the steeple wherein the bells do hang and the steeple wherein the saide companye doe vse to ringe.'

The annual grant of 40s from the Dean and Chapter was to be paid into the common stock and the Master was [8] :

'vppon the Sondaye next after their ffeaste daye, in the... ringers Chappell... betweene the howers of One and three of the clocke in the after noone... give a... accompte... of... all... thinges... he shall receyve...'

The Master appointed a Past-master as deputy [11] and twelve "Associates" [9] to assist him in deciding disputes. A member of the Company was 'appointed to keepe the dore [19]' and was not to allow anyone 'to go vpp into the steeple' without permission of the Master or deputy. There were strict Rules concerning lateness [20], disobeying the Master [7] or refusing office [5] and fines for these offences ranged from 12d for being 15 minutes late to 13s 4d for refuseing office.

Members were to act [7] :

'honestlie, modestlye, orderlie, quietlie and in good and comelie manner'

but if they

'revile or abuse anye of the companye either by vndecent or raileinge wordes or speaches, or otherwise wronge them... to forfeit to the vse of the companie, for the first offence ijs vjd and also to acknowledge their faulte before the maister of the Companye and the saide companye'.

On a second occasion the fine was 3s 4d but if there was a third infringement in addition to a fine of 6s 8d the offender was expelled from the Company.

The Master could lend out money on security [22] and 'a reasonable sum from the stock' to 'a brother falling into sickness, lameness or poverty'. On the death of a member the Company was [13] :

'to goe to the Churche...and to ringe a peale or twoe at the leaste at the saide St Hughe Bells'.

Much importance was attached to the annual meeting of the Company which was to be held on 'the Sondaye next after the ffeaste of St Luke the Evangelist...' and was followed by a dinner to which :

'...everye brother... being married shall bringe his wyfe to dynner and paye xvjd the Cople and everye widdower and batcheler to paye viijd... and everye one of them beinge absent... shall forfeit... [to] the maister xijd and to thuse of the company xijd'.

The dinner was complete with [21] :

'...musitions that shall serve and attend on the Companye on their ffeaste daye, and shall yearly haue for their paines ijs vjd and their dynners'.

Although the Ordinances seem to be mainly concerned with the welfare and social activities of the Company they also included rules specific to the maintenance [23] of the bells and the :

'maister... and some other principal man [was] alwaies before the ringinge of everye peale [to] go vp to the saide Bells... [and see] that they may be runge without danger...'

Three members in turn were to help [18] the Master and Wardens "to take up the Clappers". Presumably this meant the hammers used for the clock chimes which would have to be removed before ringing commenced to prevent damage to the fittings.

At Lincoln the Ringer's Chapel has been associated with the bells since its foundation in 1234 as the Chantry of Bishop Hugh de Wells. After the founding of the Company of Ringers the Chapel became the equivalent of a Gild Hall and is described [6] as "the Chappell or Hall belonging to

the Company".

#### 4. Members of the Company and their payment

Unfortunately little is known of the members of the Lincoln Cathedral Company at this time apart from the 38 founder members and the six Assistants whose occupations and signatures were appended to the Ordinances of 1612. The following is a breakdown of their occupations :

Shoemaker	8	Innkeeper	1
Taylor	5	Maltster	1
Yeoman	3	Carpenter	1
Butcher	3	Gardener	1
Blacksmith	2	Tanner	1
Painter	2	Upholsterer	1
Brasier	2	Haberdasher	1
Scrivener	1	Mason	1
Joiner	1	Plumber	1
Locksmith	1	Scrivener	1

The "Assistants" included the Clerk of Works and the Master of the Choristers who appears to have become an active ringer and was Master in 1621 and 1634. Of the others, one is described as a "gentleman" and the remaining four are not described.

The majority of the ringers were artisans or tradesmen and probably self-employed. The first Master, Robert Sandie<sup>11</sup>, was a scrivener and may have written the Ordinances the original of which still survives<sup>12</sup>. James Yorke<sup>13</sup>, whose father, Henry, was one of the original members and Master in 1618, published a work on heraldry in 1640. His name is inscribed over the altar in the Ringer's Chapel as one of the members in 1634 and his portrait appears on the title page of the book (see page

95). Both Henry and James Yorke are described as blacksmiths.

In addition to the grant of 40s a year from the Dean and Chapter the Company received additional payment for ringing on occasions not mentioned in the Ordinances when requested by the Dean and Chapter. Amongst these is the annual celebration of the failure of the "Gunpowder Plot". Ringing on Royal Anniversaries and to celebrate victory in battle was common. The following are a few early payments to the Cathedral Company :

1617<sup>14</sup>  
'Item paid to the ringers of  
St Hughes bells on the fifth  
of November and the xxiiij of  
March for Candles & oyle ijs vjd

1620<sup>14</sup>  
'Januarij 24  
Item payde to the Bellringers  
of St Hughes for ringing on  
the Kinges Day ijs vjd

1666<sup>15</sup>  
June 8  
'Given to the Ringers who Rang  
for the news of beating of the  
Dutch Fleet 10s 0d

July 4  
'Given to the Ringers by order  
of the Dean & Chapter for  
ringing upon the thanksgiving  
day for the victory over the  
Dutch 10s 0d

There are regular payments for "candlemoney" and "oyle" such as the following :

1622<sup>4</sup>  
'August 2 Item payde to the  
Bellringers of St Hughes  
Bells for candlemoney                    ijs vjd

In 1621 John Becke, "citizen and Alderman of the Citye of Lincoln" gave by his will<sup>4</sup> :

'to the Companye of the Ringers of the Church bells within the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Marye of Lincoln vis viiid.

There is no mention of ringing at his funeral and it appears that the bequest was a mark of appreciation for ringing of the Cathedral bells.

#### 5. The development of change-ringing

When, in the medieval church, more than one or two bells were rung they were sounded in no particular order. In fact, on the great festivals when all the bells at a church were rung they would be clashed together as in present-day continental practice.

As bell fittings improved it became possible to raise bells to the mouth-upward position and it is most likely that when, after the Reformation, bellringing became a popular recreation bells were raised in order and rung in sequence for a short time and then lowered to the mouth downwards position.

In time, and as rings of bells were increased to five or six instead of sounding the bells continually in the order 12345 "call-changes" were introduced. In this form of ringing a "conductor" instructs the ringers which bell



to "follow" ie strike after. Ringing in this way is still very popular in the West Country where a high standard of bellringing is achieved.

"Change-ringing" requires the bells to ring in a different order or "change" at each stroke and it is possible on four bells to ring 24 different changes, 120 on five bells and 5040 changes on seven bells. The simplest way of producing continuous changes is called, in ringing terminology, "plain hunting" and the bells ring in order in the following way :

1234  
2143  
2413  
4231  
4321  
3412  
3142  
1324  
1234

In order to ring more changes than those produced by the Plain Hunt it is necessary first to compose a suitable "method" and then to introduce "calls" known as "bobs" and "singles". A "peal" to a ringer consists of at least 5000 changes and, according to the number of bells and their weight, lasts about three hours.

The length of a peal is based on the extent of the changes possible on seven bells which is, as stated above, 5040. When peal-ringing was first practised eight bells was the least number accepted as a true "peal" and the largest bell was always rung last in the "change". This accounts for the number of augmentations to eight bells

which took place during the eighteenth century. Eventually peals on five and six bells were accepted and consisted of 42 "extents" on five bells and seven extents on six bells.

It seems unlikely that the origin of change-ringing will ever be found but the earliest developments appear to have been towards the close of the sixteenth century. The first certain evidence is contained in a sermon preached by Thomas Adams in 1614 at Willington, Beds. which included the phrase "Some ring the Changes of Opinion". This implies that change-ringing was established in Bedfordshire at that time<sup>17</sup>.

The earliest book on change-ringing was published in 1668 and entitled Tintinnalogia<sup>18</sup>. It was written by Richard Duckworth an Oxford undergraduate who became Junior Bursar of Brasenose in 1662. Duckworth appears to have been instituted rector of Tolland, Somerset in 1671. In the book Duckworth states that :

'Within these fifty or sixty years last past changes were not known or thought possible to be rung'.

The book continues :

'...Cambridge Forty-eight, for many years was the greatest Peal that was Rang or invented'.

and this suggests a date of about 1610 for the beginnings of change-ringing.

As far as is known the earliest surviving written changes are those in the Halesworth Churchwardens Book

which begins in 1611<sup>19</sup>. A column of figures for the "Plain changes on four bells" is dated 1621 and it has been suggested that there is a connection between these figures and the work done on the bells at Halesworth by William Brend between 1611 and 1621.

Another important item concerning early change-ringing is in a collection of documents recently deposited in the Norfolk Record Office<sup>20</sup>. The papers relate to the Doughty family of Hanworth and the Hevenyngham family of Ketteringham and these include a single sheet on which is written down various changes including "Cambridge Forty-Eight". The paths of various bells are marked out in exactly the same way as present day ringers do when learning a method.

Other papers in the collection suggest that the changes were written down by William Doughty who went up to Caius College, Cambridge on 9 June 1609 and there is evidence amongst the papers which confirm that he was a mathematician. The papers in the collection also relate to the Hevenyngham family of Ketteringham and it is interesting to note that, when the tower at that church was rebuilt after collapsing in 1608, the bells were increased from three to five.

All the evidence available suggests that change-ringing developed in the early seventeenth century in East Anglia as a mathematical exercise by undergraduates at Cambridge University and was possibly exploited by the bellfounders

to persuade the "gentry" to increase the number of bells in the towers of the churches under their patronage.

Whatever the reason the Societies of bellringers enthusiastically practised the new Art and as Dr Paul Cattermole has recently commented<sup>20</sup> :

'There seems no doubt that in the seventeenth century as now the production of changes suitable for ringing was a fascinating pastime for those with mathematical interests and numerous scraps of paper containing written changes must have passed between composers and ringers'.

## 6. The spread of change-ringing

Throughout the seventeenth century the art of change-ringing developed and many eminent men became interested in the art. The London based ringing society "The Ancient Society of College Youths" was founded on 5 November 1637 and amongst the first members were Lord Brereton, Sir Cliff Clifton, the Marquis of Salisbury and Lord Dacre. The Master in 1684 was Sir Henry Tulse who in the same year was also Lord Mayor of London.

As has already been stated the support of the gentry undoubtedly led to the augmentation of rings of bells which encouraged the rapid spread of change-ringing as did the publication of Tintinnalogia in 1668. It is clear that change-ringing was being practiced in Cambridge, Oxford and London in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. However, Duckworth gives details of a number of "methods" and amongst these are Tendring's Six-score and Reading Doubles which suggests that change-ringing was

also being practised in Essex and Berkshire.

In 1677 Fabian Stedman published Campanalogia<sup>21</sup> and the following are the names of the some of the "methods" which he included :

Cambridge Bob  
Oxford Single Bob  
Oxford Treble Bob  
Oxford Riddle  
Nottingham Mixt Peal  
Nottingham Single Bob

In 1702 a collection of methods also named Campanalogia<sup>22</sup> was published and amongst these were the following :

Horbury Delight  
London Delight  
London Scholar's Pleasure

A rather curious manuscript<sup>23</sup> deposited in the Bodleian Library, Oxford contains several documents the earliest of which is dated 1655 most of which are verses in praise of the ringers at St Pauls Bedford and in particular their leader Oliver Palmer. Their importance so far as the history of change-ringing is concerned is that there are several sets of changes written in Hebrew!

There is definite evidence that by c1660 change-ringing was practised in Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Bedford, Cambridge, London, Nottingham, Oxford and Reading. There is also evidence from figures appearing in the Churchwardens' Accounts for Standish, Gloucestershire and on the woodwork of the ringing chamber at Moulton, Northamptonshire that change-ringing was practised at

those places<sup>24</sup>. It would, therefore, be a reasonable assumption that in the majority of the large towns in East Anglia and the Home Counties change-ringing was being practiced before the close of the seventeenth century.

The earliest change-ringing in the Diocese of Lincoln appears to have been in Bedford and Northamptonshire. In Lincoln itself change-ringing was probably not practised until after the restoration of the bells in the south-west tower of the Cathedral in 1704 and more likely until the installation of a peal of eight bells in the tower of the new church of St Peter-at-Arches in 1728. In Lincolnshire the earliest full peal was rung at Boston in 1738 and it may well be that the earliest change-ringing in the county spread from Norfolk towards the end of the seventeenth century.

## 7. The importance of change-ringing

Recreational bellringing was well established by the close of the sixteenth century and as a result many rings of bells had been increased in number. In most cases this was from three to five bells. No doubt ringing as a sport would have continued as it has in the West Country by the practice of "call changes" but the introduction of "change-ringing" led to a much wider interest in the Art and attracted those who saw it as a mathematical as well as a physical exercise. At that time scholars were drawn from the middle and upper classes and they had great

influence which helped to make the Art "respectable".

Although only one bell was strictly necessary for ecclesiastical purposes, bellringing, far from disappearing as might have been expected increased in popularity. This was undoubtedly because change-ringing added additional interest to what had been virtually a purely physical exercise.

The construction of "methods" and composition of "touches" to enable more changes to be rung is too wide a subject to be explained here. However, the important point is that these require a certain dexterity which would be an ideal exercise for the student of mathematics. The ringing of these "touches" supplied mental interest but the physical effort required to ring the bells was still present.

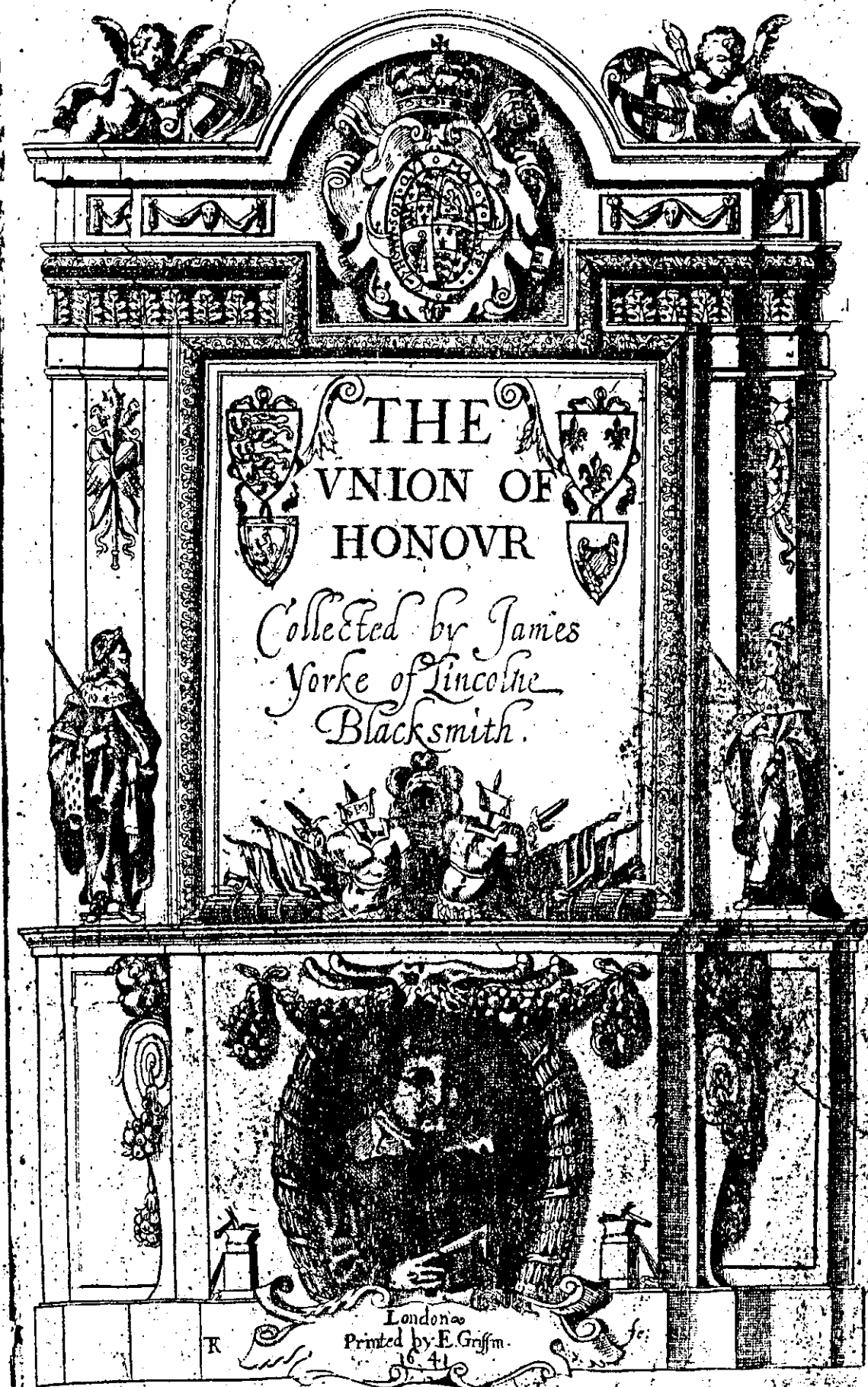
It can readily be appreciated that the "Art and Science" of change-ringing had much to offer and its rapid spread throughout England is not surprising.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Calandar of Patent Rolls Henry III 1247-1258 p 403
2. Morris op cit p 68
3. Sanderson op cit p 33
4. Whitaker E C Martin Bucer and the Book of Common Prayer p 138
5. Morris op cit p 71
6. The Constitution of the 'Company or Society of Saint Stephen's Ringers, Bristol' is published in Smith T English Gilds p 288-93 which also contains a large number of Constitutions of Craft Gilds including the Fullers, Tailors and Tylers of Lincoln on which the Ordinancies of the Lincoln Cathedral Company of Bellringers are probably based.
7. Personal visit by the writer to the tower.
8. LAO D&C Bj/3/8 fol 316v
9. LAO D&C A/3/9 fol 84
10. LAO D&C Dv/1.
11. LAO D&C Bj/1/7 (unfoliated)
12. Robert Sandie appears to have died on 16 January 1632 and his estate was valued at £16 2s 4d
13. The Union of Honour containing the Arms, Matches and issues of the Kings, Dukes, Marquesses and Earles of England...inscribed to King Charles I and dedicated to Henry Frederick the son of Thomas Howard second Earl of Arundal.
14. LAO D&C Bj/1/7 (unfoliated)
15. LAO D&C Bj/1/8 (unfoliated)
16. LAO LCC Wills 1621/II/187
17. Sanderson op cit p 40



18. Tintinnalogia or the art of Ringing  
By a lover of the Art, London 1668.  
Printed for Fabian Stedman at his Shop in  
Dunstan's Churchyard in Fleet Street.
19. Clouston R W M and Pipe G J W Bells and  
Bellringing in Suffolk p 35
20. Norwich County Record Office AYL 175 I am greatly  
indebted to Dr Paul Cattermole for much of the  
information on early changeringing contained  
herein which will appear in his forthcoming book :  
Church Bells and Bellringing, a Norfolk Profile
21. Campanalogia or the Art of Ringing Improved  
Printed by W Godbid for W. S. and are to be  
sold by Langley Curtis in Goat Court,  
Ludgate Hill 1677
22. Campanalogia Improved by J D & C M members  
of the Society of London Scholars. Printed  
for George Sawbridge at the Three Flower-de-Lucas  
in Little Britain 1702.
23. North Beds p 27.
24. Sanderson op cit p 58.



Title page of *The Union of Honour* by James Yorke (London 1641)

## CHAPTER V

### BELLS AND TURMOIL

Despite the tremendous religious and political upheavals of the seventeenth century "pleasure" ringing increased in popularity. Laudian change, Civil War, extreme Puritanism, Restoration and Jacobean Revolution had little lasting effect on bellringing. Change-ringing developed and spread throughout East Anglia and the Home Counties but bells in connection with the Church continued to be used only to announce a sermon or lecture; to signal the passing of a Christian soul or to announce a funeral.

#### 1. Bells and Religion in the seventeenth century

The various Canons, Injunctions and Orders existing when James I succeeded to the throne were formed into a coherent Code and the resulting Canons were sealed by the King on 6 September 1604. This basic Protestant code of ecclesiastical law included the following Canons<sup>1</sup> which mention bells and bellringing

Canon 14 was essentially a re-enactment of a Canon of 1215 and required :

'The Minister [to] resort to the Church morning and evening and, warning being given to the people by the tolling of a bell, say or sing the Common Prayers'

Canon 88 which, again, was confirmation of an earlier Canon (this time of 1250) required that :

i. In every Church or Chapel there shall be provided at least one bell to ring the people to Divine Service and to toll at Funerals.

ii. No bell or bells in any Church or Chapel shall be rung or tolled contrary to the direction of the Minister'.

These two Canons still form part of the Canon Law of the Church of England.

Canon 67<sup>th</sup> confirmed the customary ringing of a bell to mark the passing of a Christian soul :

'[When any person] is passing out of this life, a bell shall be tolled, and the minister shall not slack to do his last duty. And after the party's death there shall be rung no more but one short peal and one other before the burial and one after the burial'.

No doubt John Donne (1572-1631) was inspired by this order to write the following well known lines<sup>3</sup> :

'And therefore never send to  
know for whom the bell tolls;  
It tolls for thee'.

After the Civil War the Puritans forbade bellringing on Sunday except for one bell which was used to summon the people to church as the following order made on 6 September 1654 by the Commonwealth Committee at York<sup>4</sup> confirms :

'Ordered that henceforth all persons that soever shall forbear to ringe any bells within this city or liberties thereof on the Saboth day save only one bell at a church to call the people to sermon or funerall, or such occasions, and that notice thereof be given to severall churchwardens and parish clerks in the Citty whoe are required to observe the same'.

A bell was also rung as a summons to attend a lecture as the following extracts from the Churchwardens'

Accounts<sup>m</sup> at Louth show :

1655	It paid to the Clarke & Sexton for ringing the lecture bell for 2 years	13 4
	It to Robt Holmes & William Fenwick and others for ringing the bell to the lectures 11 days at 4d a day	3 8
1656	There are similar entries recording a total of 33 lecture days the total payment being	11 0'

The passing bell seems to have had a particular fascination for the Puritan theologians and in a sermon<sup>e</sup> delivered at the funeral of Lady Read of Wrangle in 1652 Edmund Pinchbeck said :

'...true it is whilst the sound of a passing bell is in our ears...[the audience will think about death but then]...just like the doves and daws in the steeple in the beginning of a Peale they seem in a kind of affright to betake themselves to their wings and fly aloft but presently the bells are no sooner ceased but they return again to their holes and are as secure as they were before'.

James Shirley (1596-1666)<sup>7</sup> expressed a similar sentiment in the following lines :

'How, How chimes the passing bell  
Theres no music to a knell'

The most common inscriptions on bells cast during the Puritan ascendancy reflect this same theme :

MY ROARING SOUND DOTH WARNING GIVE  
THAT MEN CANNOT HEAR ALWAYS LIVE

ALL MEN THAT HEAR MY MOURNFUL SOUND  
REPENT BEFORE YOU LIE IN GROUND

WHEN YOU HEAR THIS MOURNFUL SOUND  
PREPARE YOUR SELF FOR UNDER GROUND

Other common inscriptions are :

I SWEETLY TOLING MEN DO CALL  
TO TASTE OF MEATS THAT FEEDE THE SOUL

PRAYSE YE THE LORDE

John Bunyan was a bellringer at Elstow near Bedford and the fourth bell in that tower is still known as "Bunyan's Bell". After he became a strict Puritan he turned against bellringing believing it was a sinful pursuit and he expressed his thoughts whilst watching ringers in action as follows<sup>66</sup> :

'Now, you must know that before this I had taken much delight in ringing, but my conscience beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered; wherefore I should go to the steeple house, and look on it, though I durst not ring. But I thought this did not become religion neither, yet I forced myself, I began to think, How, if one of the bells should fall? Then I chose to stand under a main beam, that lay overthwart the steeple, from side to side, thinking there I might stand sure, but then I should think again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me stand in the steeple door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough; for, if a bell should then fall, I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding.

So after this, I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go farther than the steeple door; but then it came into my head, How if the steeple itself should fall?'

Bunyan gives a very clear account of the attraction of "pleasure" ringing and, as change-ringing spread, the sound of bells was probably heard more frequently in Puritan England than at any time since since the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

## 2. "Political and "Pleasure" Bellringing.

Bellringing to celebrate religious festivals ceased during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and, during the seventeenth century, the celebration of political events tended to take its place. The Gunpowder Plot of 1603 was intended to blow up the House of Lords at the State Opening of Parliament. The plot was alleged to have been organised by the Roman Catholics and its failure has been celebrated on 5 November ever since. Payments for bellringing on this anniversary appear in Churchwarden's Accounts regularly and Cox<sup>7</sup> records some twenty-four Churches in Buckinghamshire and North<sup>10</sup> mentions thirteen Churches in Bedfordshire where ringing on 5 November was still taking place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The custom of welcoming the nobility to a town or village by ringing the Church bells continued and at St Martin's, Leicester the Churchwardens' Accounts for 1617-18 contain the following note<sup>11</sup> :

'If the sackiston shall Ringe at any tyme when any nobleman cometh to the toune he must have ijs vjd from the churchwardens if he have nothings sent him from the Inn where they lye'.

Such bellringing continued during the Civil War which erupted in 1642 and the Churchwardens' Accounts for Loughborough<sup>12</sup> record the following payments :

1642	'Pd to the Ringers for his majesty	10s 0d'
	'Pd to the same when prince Rupert went to Leicester	1s 0d'
	'Pd to the same when prince Rupert came to view the Trayne band	1s 0d'
	'Pd to the Ringers when the King was here another tyme	5s 2d'
1645	'It payd to ye Ringers when ye King's Maty came by	2s 6d'

The compliment was also paid to the Parliamentary Commander :

1646	'Spent on ye Ringers when S <sup>r</sup> Thomas Fairfax passed by	1s 0d'
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Similar payments appear in churchwardens' accounts throughout England and reflect the progress of the Civil War. The Church tried to please both Puritans and Royalists, as did many parish officials, and bells were rung whenever the generals of either side passed through towns and villages.

Although not in the Diocese, the following payments to the ringers at St Edmund's Salisbury<sup>13</sup> in 1648 after the capture of the king and at the height of the Puritan ascendancy provides particularly useful evidence of the confused state of bellringing at this time. The ringers were paid 5s for ringing on the King's birthday and 8s on Coronation Day but more incongruous was the following :

'Ringing the Race day that ye Erll of Pembroke his horse woon the cuppe 5s 0d



There is ample evidence, then, to confirm that the Civil War had virtually no effect on bellringing and in addition to the payments to bellringers recorded above there is other evidence of the continuance of bellringing during the Interregnum. The Mayor<sup>14</sup> of Boston requested that the bells be rung on Lady Day 1657 to celebrate his election to office and this is a typical example of secular bellringing during the Interregnum. At Great Marlow the Churchwardens' Accounts<sup>15</sup> after recording the payment in 1651 of 1s for 'defaceing of the kinge Earnee [Arms] and six months later the payment of 16s 'To the Paynter...for y<sup>m</sup> setting vp of ye Statte Arms' record a payment of 5s to the ringers on 5 November 1652 but perhaps this was to celebrate the defeat of the Roman Catholics rather than the escape of King James from the "Gunpowder Plot".

When Oliver Cromwell was declared Lord Protector in 1657 bells were rung in celebration in much the same way as they had been for the Coronation of the Monarch and at Loughborough<sup>16</sup> the ringers were paid :

'On that day when the Lord Protector  
was installed 3s 0d'.

A particularly interesting account of secular bellringing during the Interregnum is provided by the Diary<sup>17</sup> of one Leonard Wheatcroft, yeoman, who was parish clerk and registrar of Ashover from 1650 to 1663. On the morning of his marriage which took place on Wednesday 20

May 1657 he records that his

"chosen ringers, Henry Poursglove, Giles Low, John Bower and Jonathan Street, with flying colours tied to the wrist of their hands caused the merry bells to ring aloud so that at last many came and went with me to fetch the bride".

The marriage actually took place at the house of Justice Spatman in Winster and, as was usual at this time, was a secular occasion. The use of church bells would, therefore, be seen as having no religious or "superstitious" significance.

Two years earlier Wheatcroft had journeyed on horseback to London and

"at our departure many friends came to take leave of us, and as sorry to part with us as with a friend now dead, then did they cause the merry bells to change their notes..."

Wheatcroft's account confirms that bellringing for pleasure continued to take place during the Interregnum and the latter entry suggests that change-ringing had spread by 1650 into rural Derbyshire.

After the death of Oliver Cromwell and the resignation of his son Richard preparations for the Restoration progressed rapidly. At Great Marlow<sup>18</sup> the large sum of 10s was paid to the 'Ringers for ringinge at y<sup>m</sup> pclaiminge y<sup>m</sup> Kinge y<sup>m</sup> 9th of May 1660' and on 23 April 1661 the same ringers were 'pd vppo[n] the day of the king's comeing into England 5s 0d' but on 23 April 1663 they only received 1s 0d on 'the day of the Kings Crownation'. At Louth<sup>19</sup> the Corporation generously paid

10s to "ye ringers at ye Curration" and no doubt similar payments were received by most bellringers at this time.

On 20 December 1662 State Holy Days were established. Special prayers were incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer<sup>20</sup> for use on :

30 January Execution of Charles I

29 May Restoration of the Monarchy

5 November Escape of James I from the  
Gunpowder Plot

The anniversary of the Accession of the Sovereign was also marked by a special Service and these four days were regarded as Festivals of the Church until 1859. As stated above (see page 101) bellringing continued on 5 November until at least the close of the nineteenth century but Cox<sup>21</sup> only records two Buckinghamshire churches and North<sup>22</sup> eight Bedfordshire churches where ringing to celebrate the restoration of the Monarchy was still being observed at that time. The Rules for the ringers at Lincoln Cathedral still include the Accession of the Sovereign as one of the days on which ringing is to take place.

### 3. Bells and Bellringing during the seventeenth century

The diarist, John Evelyn, recorded<sup>23</sup> a visit made to Lincoln Cathedral in August 1654 as follows :

'...the soldiers had lately knocked off all or most of the brasses which were on the gravestones, so that few inscriptions were left. They told us that they went in with axes and hammers and shut themselves in till they had rent and torn off some barge-fulls of metal and so hellish an avarice possessed them that they did not even spare the monuments of the dead'.

Although every item of value was removed bells were again spared. This may have been simply because of the difficulty of access or, as during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it may have been realised that bellringing was a harmless sport which would occupy young men who might otherwise prove troublesome.

The growth of pleasure ringing and in particular the introduction of change-ringing led to an increase in the amount of bellringing and no doubt this was the reason for this country becoming known as "the ringing Isle". This expression first appears in a manuscript<sup>24</sup> dedicated c1658 to one Oliver Palmer the leading bellringer at St Paul's Bedford :

'...Say are not Bells of a diviner Birth  
Fiddles are made by men, but of ye earth.  
Englands ye Ringing Ile may I divine?  
Palmer's the second Englands Palmerine'

Bells were recast and rings augmented even though the only connection with the church was the tower in which the bells hung. An Annex to this Chapter shows the number of

bells known to have been cast during the period 1634 to 1664 in each County within the Diocese of Lincoln. It is clear that bellfounding very quickly recovered after the upheaval of the Civil War when, no doubt, bellfounders turned to gunfounding<sup>23</sup> which was an allied trade (see page 40). The average demand for church bells each year remained reasonably constant despite the strictures of extreme Protestantism.

Contrary to popular belief, most Puritans did not condemn music and the Arts out of hand but places of worship must contain nothing to distract from the purpose for which they existed. Therefore, images; paintings; stained glass; liturgical bellringing and, indeed, anything which could be seen as a distraction was dispensed with but, as John Cotton said<sup>24</sup> :

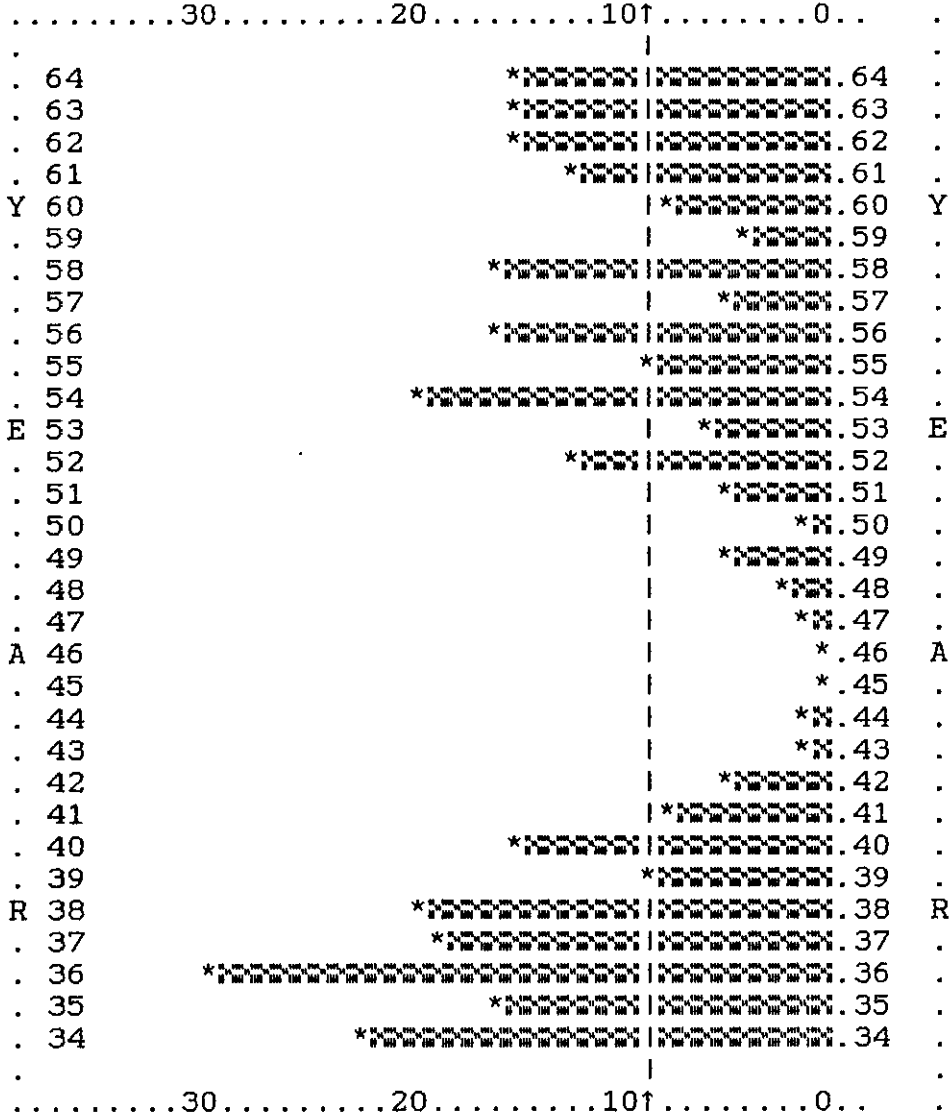
'Nor do we forbid the private use of any instrument of musick there withal [whilst instrumental music is banned in the worship of the Church]'

Perhaps this distinction between music performed in church and privately helps towards a better understanding of the way in which the use of church bells for recreation was allowed to continue at the height of the Puritan ascendancy. The evidence of Bunyan clearly demonstrates that bellringing had become a very attractive and addictive recreation. Wheatcroft confirms that even wedding ringing was allowed to continue and other evidence quoted above confirms that church bells were used on a wide variety of secular occasions.

The evidence presented in this Chapter clearly demonstrates that the upheavals which took place during the seventeenth century had very little effect on bellringing which continued in much the same way as it had done since liturgical bellringing finally ceased in 1559. So long as bellringing had no religious significance except as a summons to a lecture or sermon, it was tolerated by the Puritans. Bells were rung in connection with politically motivated State Services, to celebrate victories in battle, elections, horseraces and in connection with local custom. But bellringing or any other activity which could be seen as profaning the "Lord's Day" was suppressed and, on Sundays, only one bell was used as a call to service.

ANNEX<sup>27</sup>

1. BELLS CAST IN THE DIOCESE OF LINCOLN 1634-1664



NUMBER OF BELLS CAST

↑ = Average

2. LIST OF BELLS CAST IN THE DIOCESE OF LINCOLN  
1634-1664

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ln</u>	<u>Hs</u>	<u>Le</u>	<u>Bd</u>	<u>Bs</u>	<u>Total</u>
1634	4	2	6	1	6	22
1635	4	6	1	3	2	16
1636	7	3	6	5	9	30
1637	3	1	5	5	5	19
The First Bishop's War (1638)						
1638	7	-	3	5	5	20
1639	3	1	1	3	1	9
The Second Bishop's War (1640)						
1640	4	-	6	-	5	15
The Grand Remonstrance (1641)						
1641	2	-	3	3	-	8
First Civil War (1642-1645)						
1642	1	1	3	-	-	5
1643	-	1	-	-	-	1
1644	1	-	-	-	-	1
1645	-	-	-	-	-	-
1646	-	-	-	-	-	-
1647	1	-	-	-	-	1
Second Civil War (1648)						
1648	2	-	-	-	-	2
Execution of the King (1649)						
1649	-	-	-	1	4	5
1650	-	-	-	1	-	1
1651	3	-	-	-	2	5
1652	1	-	2	3	6	12



Cromwell appointed Protector (1653)

1653	1	1	2	2	1	7
1654	2	1	2	10	5	20
1655	1	1	2	4	1	9
1656	4	-	5	4	3	16
1657	1	-	2	-	2	5

Death of Cromwell (1658)

1658	2	3	3	2	6	16
1659	-	-	4	-	-	4

The Restoration of the Monarchy (1660)

1660	-	2	2	3	1	8
1661	1	4	1	2	3	11
1662	4	-	3	2	6	15
1663	5	-	4	3	3	15
1664	4	-	2	-	9	15

KEY Ln = Lincolnshire      Le = Leicestershire  
 Hs = Huntingdonshire      Bd = Bedfordshire  
 Bs = Buckinghamshire

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Archbishops' Report on The Canon Law of the Church of England pp 117 and 187.
2. Harford G Prayer Book Dictionary p 115
3. Gardner and Healey John Donne Selected Prose Devotions upon Emergent Occasions No XVII 1624
4. York City House Book B 37 fol 60v
5. LAO 7.5 Louth St James Parish Churchwardens Accounts 1624/1683 p 248
6. Thomason Tracts E 679(10) British Library  
'The Fountain of Life or Life in its derivation from Christ' p 31

'In a Sermon Preached at the funeral of that honourable Lady, the Lady Jane Reade, the relict of Sir John Reede [sic] (Sometimes whilst he lived) of Sorangle [sic] in Lincolnshire, Knight by Edward Pinchbeck BD'.

7. Shirley J Poems p 66 : The Passing Bell - 1646
8. Bunyan Grace Abounding p 15
9. Cox Bucks p 278/9
10. North Bucks p 113
11. North Leics p 207
12. North Leics p 234
13. Swayne Churchwarden's Accounts of Salisbury pp 218 and 225/6
14. Bailey J F The Assembly Books of Boston Vol III p 277
15. Cox Bucks p 488
16. North Leics p 234
17. Parfitt G and Houlbrooke R (Eds) The Courtship Narrative of Leonard Wheatcroft pp 36 and 84
18. Cox Bucks p 490/1
19. Goulding R W Louth Old Corporation Records p 107.

20. Harford op cit pp 761/2.
21. Cox Bucks p 279
22. North Beds p 111
23. Francis P John Evelyn's Diary p 102
24. North Beds p 26.
25. The following extract from a letter dated 26 July 1645 from the King's Council concerning the bells at St James Church, Boarstall which appears to have been disused confirms that bell metal was used as a source of gun metal:  

'Whereas there is a very great want of bell-metal for casting of ordnance for his Ma<sup>ty</sup>'s service...this want may be sypply'd by ye bells taken down in that church; we pray you to send hither to Oxford...all y<sup>r</sup> said bells...'
26. Cox Bucks p 321
26. Davies H The Worship of the English Puritans Appendix B
27. The sources for the information from which these tables have been compiled are listed on page 16.

## CHAPTER VI

### BELLRINGING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the eighteenth century there was a neglect of religious observance which was exacerbated, in the parishes, by pluralism and, in the cathedrals, by non-residence. Almost the only use of church bells was for some form of "pleasure" ringing.

The many augmentations of rings of bells which took place during the eighteenth century were initiated by the development of more complicated methods of change-ringing and when peal ringing became popular rings of eight bells were in demand. By the close of the century "pleasure" bellringing had become established as a part of English life in a way which was unknown in any other country but the bells had almost no religious significance and, as will be shown, were rung in competitions, for peals, to welcome visitors to towns in return for payment or simply for the ringers own amusement. Unfortunately, bellringers achieved a reputation for disorderly conduct and bells had very little connection with the church.

## 1. Bells in daily life in the eighteenth century

The pattern of bellringing established in the seventeenth century continued into the eighteenth century. Emphasis continued to be on politically established State Services which had replaced the religious festivals and other occasions entirely secular in character. For example, in 1721 the City Church of St Peter-at-Arches Lincoln was rebuilt at the expense of the Corporation and a band of ringers was formed in 1728 to ring the new bells. The Corporation paid them a salary of £2 each half-year to ring on the following occasions<sup>1</sup> :

Kings Birthday  
Accession  
Coronation  
Queen's Birthday  
Prince of Wales Birthday  
Michaelmas Day  
Holy Rood [or Holy Cross]  
29th May  
and two Assizes

Michaelmas Day (29 September) was the quarter day when rents were paid and, in Lincolnshire it was regarded as a holiday and bonfires were lit. The Monday after Holy Cross (14 September) was known as Audit Monday at Lincoln Cathedral and was a special ringing day. It seems to have had a similar significance in connection with the auditing of the Corporation Accounts and all the above occasions when St Peter's bells were to be rung were, in effect, secular occasions.

Local customs also arose, some of which were rooted in the ancient liturgy of the Christian Church. In most places a bell was rung in the early morning long after early morning Mass ceased and became the signal to start work for the day. The Pancake Bell was originally the call to confession in preparation for Lent and became the signal for housewives to meet on Shrove Tuesday to use up excess fats and other ingredients in preparation for the Lent abstinence. The Gleaning Bell was rung as a signal that harvest had been gathered in and gleaning could commence. A bell was rung in many places as a signal that assistance was required to fight a fire and many other local customs arose which confirm that bells still had an important part to play in daily life during the eighteenth century<sup>23</sup>.

Often, at this time, payment for bellringing was made, not in money, but in beer and at Blunham<sup>24</sup> in 1728 the Churchwarden's Accounts record the following :

'Paid at John Gilbert's for bear for the ringers King georg procleam <sup>25</sup>	00 01 00
Paid for bear at John Gilberts for the Ringers at King georges Crownation	00 02 06'

At St Peter-at-Arches, Lincoln<sup>26</sup> a "Jack" was presented to the newly formed band of ringers in 1728 by Alderman Bullen, a brewer, during his Mayoral year. This leather jug contained 22 pints and accompanied the City Ringers when they went to ring at the Cathedral for use at "The Great Tom" public house eventually being left there as

security for beer money!

The following extract from the Diary<sup>m</sup> of Mrs Scrope the wife of the son of Sir Francis Scrope who was visiting Charles White, a barrister, who lived in the Cathedral Close gives an indication of the attitude and status of the ringers at Lincoln :

'10 August 1785 - We had not been in Mr. White's house many minutes before our arrival was discovered, and the Minster bells struck up, to the great danger of the steeple, which is out of repair, insomuch that the Dean sent the ringers word after half an hour's ringing, that they had done enough for a compliment, and that he was sure the newcomers would be sorry to occasion any harm to the Cathedral'.

The custom of welcoming royalty and the nobility to a town<sup>e</sup> by the ringing of the church bells was, during the eighteenth century, extended to anyone arriving by coach. However, it was not the church but the visitor who was expected to pay for the privilege! When the Prince Regent was welcomed to Belvoir Castle in this way by the ringers at Melton Mowbray<sup>r</sup> he refused to pay. It is said that when he next appeared in Melton the towns people threw snowballs at him!

There seems to have been very little restriction on the amount of bellringing at this time and it became a nuisance when bellringers allowed their enthusiasm to get out of hand. For example, the Churchwarden's Accounts for All Saints, Stamford<sup>e</sup> contain the following two entries in 1715 :

28 April 'Itm under noe more than one shilling per bell be at any tyme hereafter allowed upon any occasion for ringing within the said parish'

6 Dec 'It is ordered that neither the Clerk nor Sexton permit any person to ring without the consent of the Minister and Churchwardens or two of them upon any occasion whatever under penalty of each offending two shillings and six pence to be deducted out of their salary for each offence'.

The Lincoln Corporation Minutes<sup>7</sup> record that on 23 August 1796 :

'The Rector of St Peter's is requested to take steps to prevent the ringers of the church from ringing so frequently for gentlemen coming to town and on other occasions'.

An interesting comment<sup>10</sup> on bellringers in the eighteenth century is contained in the following account by one Z C van Uffenbach who visited England in 1710 :

'That the English performed poorly on all instruments but the organ, yet they pride themselves on their chimes, and aim at an artistic style of ringing; but we could not fancy the clatter, rather we were annoyed to hear it so often: for the scholars or young students mount the towers and ring when they please, often for hours together. Accidents often happen in bell-ringing, some students being struck, or falling down and breaking leg and arm'

Payments for ringing to celebrate victory in battle were common as at Stewkley<sup>11</sup> in 1706 where Marlborough's victory at Ramillies on 23 May is recorded in the Churchwarden's Accounts as follows :

"to the ringers for the great victory over the ffrench forces 3s 0d'

At St Peter-at-Arches Church, Lincoln<sup>12</sup> on 22 May 1782 the Churchwarden's Accounts record :



'Paid the Ringers on Account of Admiral Rodney's Victory over the French fleet in the West Indies on the 12 of April 10s 6d'.

In 1793<sup>12</sup> the ringers at Lincoln Cathedral were paid for the :

'taking of Valencia                    10 0

and on 14 April 1794 :

'Lord Hows Victory                    1 1 0

There were many other occasions when the ringers were paid to help celebrate elections, horse races and the like but Royal events were still particularly popular. On 27 August 1765 the ringers at St Peter-at-Arches were paid<sup>12</sup> '...at the birth of a Prince 10s 0d' which was to celebrate the birth of the future King William IV.

Ringling on "official" occasions either for payment by the Church or by the civic authority to celebrate secular or political occasions increased but "religious" bellringing became almost extinct. However, during the eighteenth century new elements influenced the "pleasure" bellringing.

## 2. Competitive Bellringing

During the eighteenth century the use of church bells for Ringing Matches became popular but paragraph 5 of Rule 10 of the Ordinances (see Appendix) of the Lincoln Cathedral Company of Bellringers dated 1612 shows that this use of church bells was taking place at least by the early seventeenth century.

Ringing Matches were often organised by the landlord of a local inn with the object of encouraging custom<sup>14</sup> and when a new peal of bells was installed at Brant Broughton in 1792 the Nottingham Journal<sup>15</sup> carried the following advertisement :

'RINGING  
on Monday July 23

A new Peal of SIX BELLS will be opened at Brant Broughton in the county of Lincoln.- The tenor fifteen hundredweight in the Key of F sharp. Cast and hung by T Osborn, of Downham in Norfolk.

SIX HATS will be given to the company who ring the best round peal for the space of thirteen minutes.

THOMAS OSBORN begs to inform Churchwardens and others, that his stay here will be near a fortnight. Orders sent to him at Mr Thomas Aalsebrooks the Red Lion, Brant Broughton either in the casting or hanging branches will be executed in the best manner, and on the most reasonable terms.

Brant Broughton July 12 1792'.

On Saturday 11 August 1792 the Norwich Mercury reported the opening as follows<sup>16</sup> :

'A new peal of bells was opened at Broughton in Lincolnshire on Monday last when the Beckingham ringers rang the best peal and obtained the prize from many competitors - A very numerous assemblage of amateurs in the science of ringing bestowed great commendation on Mr Osborn, whose well-earned credit as a Bell-founder will suffer no diminution by this last exertion of his skill'

Sometimes these Matches would end in disharmony as was the case when a new ring of bells was opened at Hathern, Leicestershire on Friday 20 July 1792<sup>17</sup>. The Sileby ringers were judged to be the winners but the Barrow ringers did not accept this and a series of very strongly

worded advertisements appeared in the Leicester Journal the last of which was dated Friday 26 October 1792!

Both these competitions took place in mid-July and were no doubt part of the village hay-making holiday celebrations.

### 3. The introduction of peal ringing

By the close of the seventeenth century change-ringing had progressed to a high standard and mathematically inclined bellringers had applied themselves to the production of compositions with the ultimate aim of ringing "peals" which consisted of at least 5040 changes. As with any sport, the competitive element is important to bellringers and, to some, this was present in Ringing Matches but the ringing of peals introduced an additional element by which bellringing achievement could be measured.

The first fully authenticated successful peal was rung at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich on 2 May 1715 but it was only achieved after two previous unsuccessful attempts and there is evidence that an attempt had been made in London in 1689/90 but this is unconfirmed.

A list of peals<sup>18</sup> rung in the Diocese during the eighteenth century appears at Annex B to this Chapter and a comparison with Annex A which lists all known complete rings of bells cast from 1600 to 1799 gives an indication of how the number of six and eight bell rings increased.

The Table does not show the large number of rings of six bells which were augmented to eight.

There is no doubt that peal ringing influenced the augmentation of rings of bells particularly to eight. The reason for this is that initially only peals on eight bells were recognised and of the 59 peals recorded in Annex B there is only one on five bells and one on six bells. The first peals in the Diocese were rung at St Margaret's Church, Leicester in 1731, 1732 and 1738. A complete ring of six bells was cast for this Church in 1633 and was augmented to eight by adding two trebles in 1711. In 1738 these two bells were recast and two more added to make ten, a clear indication of the enthusiasm for change-ringing at this church<sup>17</sup>.

In the eighteenth century, peals were not numerous by present day standards but the effort required was much greater and many unsuccessful attempts were made.

#### 4. Ringer's Rules

Competition and peal ringing were, of course, entirely secular activities and Bellringer's Rules which survive from the eighteenth century confirm that most bellringers of the time considered that the tower in which the bells hung was not part of the church. At Stow<sup>20</sup> after fines for ringing in coat, spurs or hat, which are common to all rules of the time the Rules which are dated 1770 continue  
:

'All you who hath a mind to Larn to Ring  
Must to the Sexton Admission money bring 2s 6d

These articles observed Strict must be  
or your expelled this Society

Two Nights a Week Sirs, you must meet, or  
pay this Forfiture to us without delay 2d

When you Round peals can Ring, you must pay  
down to be a change man Sirs, Just  
half-a-crown 2s 6d'

There are similar Rules at the neighbouring Church of  
Haxey<sup>21</sup> and in 1793 when the three bells at Clee<sup>22</sup> were  
recast the following Rules were drawn up :

'Orders to be kept by ye ringers in ye town of  
Clee, in ye County of Lincoln, from the 27 day of  
Nov. 1793 with ye consent of ye Rev J Stockdale,  
vicar, Richd Rawson Churchwarden.

Any person yt shall ring a bell with his hat upon  
his head shall forfeit and pay 6d to ye use of ye  
ringers

Any person yt shall ring a bell with his spurs on  
shall pay 6d to ye use of ye ringers

Any person yt shall ring a bell, and break a stay,  
shall make it good and forfeit 6d for ye use of ye  
ringers

Any person yt shall pull a bell of her stay and  
cannot set her on again shall forfeit 6d for the use  
of ye ringers

Any person or person leaving ye rope on ye floor to  
forfeit 2d for ye use of ye ringers

Any person or persons who shall swear or lay  
wagers, etc in ye ringing room shall forfeit for  
every offence 3d to the use of ye ringers

Any person who shall read any of these orders with  
his hat upon his head shall pay 6d to the use of ye  
ringers

Clee printed by George Parker, in ye yeare 1793'

These Rules make no mention of the Church which was regarded simply as a building with a tower capable of containing bells.

However, at Grantham<sup>233</sup> a lengthy set of Rules which appear to date from the mid-eighteenth century include the following :

'If any like to smoke or drink  
They must not do so here  
Good reason why - just let them think  
This is God's House of Prayer.

The Sabbath-day we wish to keep  
And come to church to pray  
The man who breaks this ancient rule  
Shall never share our pay.

And when the bells are down and ceased  
It should be said or sung  
May God preserve the Church and King  
And guide us safely home'.

The recognition by the Grantham ringers of the tower as part of the church was unusual at this time but no doubt they were not the only bellringers who still recognised the true purpose of both church and bells.

##### 5. Church and Bells in the eighteenth century

In the late sixteenth and during the seventeenth century the gentry had supported the recasting and augmentation of bells but, in the eighteenth century, their interest moved away from the Church, perhaps to their estates and houses. Amongst the clergy plurality was common and in many rural parishes poorly paid and often uneducated curates were left in charge. As a

result many rural churches were neglected and, in the poorer parishes, bells were sometimes sold to raise money for church repairs. Bishop Seaton commented in 1753<sup>24</sup> :

'...noblemen and gentlemen will squander vast sums in the gratification of private luxury and vanity...and never consider that much smaller sums bestowed...in honour of religion would gain them the admiration of a whole country'.

Churches in Lincolnshire where bells were removed are recorded below. All were very small churches in sparsely populated parishes and most of the bells were cracked. Usually one bell was left to fulfill the requirements of Canon Law.

Date	Church	Synopsis of Faculty
6 May 1743 <sup>25</sup>	Sutterby	Sell two broken bells leaving one and repair church.
24 Apr 1752 <sup>26</sup>	Lusby	Sell one broken bell leaving one and shorten church
28 May 1757 <sup>27</sup>	Driby	Sell two broken bells leaving one and repair church.
27 Dec 1763 <sup>28</sup>	Dalby	Sell two largest bells leaving one small bell.
24 May 1766 <sup>29</sup>	Saleby	Sell two cracked bells leaving a large bell and a Sanctus bell. Rebuild steeple.
14 Jun 1766 <sup>30</sup>	South Willingham	Sell small bell and repair church
28 Aug 1772 <sup>31</sup>	Humberstone	Sell two cracked and useless bells leaving one and repair church.
13 Jul 1799 <sup>32</sup>	Fulletby	Sell two useless bells leaving one.

Table 3 Faculties for the removal of bells approved in the County of Lincoln during the eighteenth century.

It is stressed that these were all small churches in rural areas. The situation was very different in the towns and in the fashionable districts many churches were rebuilt or restored. The advance of change-ringing and the introduction of peal ringing resulted in the augmentation of many rings of bells to 6 or 8.

The Table<sup>33</sup> below shows the make up of rings of bells in Buckinghamshire in the years 1553; 1638; 1714 and 1750 and this demonstrates how the number of towers containing 5, 6 and 8 bells increased over this period :

		Number of bells								Total number of	
		*	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	Bells	Churches
Y	1553	7	8	22	57	41	13	-	-	452	148
e	1638	11	19	12	44	31	34	2	-	481	153
a	1714	-	17	15	59	28	69	14	3	789	205
r	1750	-	17	16	57	25	64	24	4	816	207

Table 4. Make-up of rings of Bells in Buckinghamshire 1553-1750

\* not known

The Table shows that, in Buckinghamshire, by 1638 ten rings of four bells and thirteen of five bells had been augmented. Twenty-one rings had been increased to five bells and the remaining two formed the first rings of six bells in the county. By 1714 the growth in population had led to the building of 52 new churches with bells. There had been an increase of 35 five bell towers, 12 new rings of six bells and the first three rings of eight bells. Thirty-six years later in 1750 there had been an increase of one eight bell tower and there were ten new



rings of six bells but the rings of five had decreased by five.

Occasionally a wealthy admirer of bellringing paid for bell restoration or augmentation but subscription was by far the most usual way by which the provision of new bells was financed and in 1754 the Churchwardens' Accounts<sup>34</sup> at Loughborough record :

'Recd of the Subscribers for recasting 5 of the bells and for all materials necessary for them as follows £111 4 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>'.

and, in 1790, when a treble bell was added to the existing four at Beckingham a subscription list was opened. This was recorded on the bell<sup>35</sup> :

BY SUBSCRIPTION THOS OSBORN FECIT  
THE REVD RICHD HACKET RECTOR 1790

The subscription list<sup>36</sup> was made up as follows :

No of Subscribers	Amount given	Total Subscribed
	£ s d	£ s d
1 The rector	5 5 0	5 5 0
1 Churchwarden	4 4 0	4 4 0
1	2 2 0	2 2 0
1	2 0 0	2 0 0
15	1 1 0	15 15 0
16	10 6	8 8 0
<u>4</u>	5 0	<u>1 0 0</u>
<u>39</u>		<u>38 14 0</u>

The total cost of the new bell and fittings was £40 19s and the balance was paid from parish funds.

Although not in the Diocese of Lincoln the following two accounts of the "christening" of new bells in the eighteenth century are included here as evidence of the

way in which church bells had lost any religious significance. These were not isolated instances but no similar evidence has been found for the Diocese of Lincoln<sup>37</sup>.

When new bells were cast for Selborne in 1735 the diarist, Revd Gilbert White, described<sup>38</sup> the celebrations which included fixing the treble bell mouth upwards and filling it with punch and the Revd Dr Samuel Parr, who was an authority on bells and Vicar of Hatton, added six bells to his church in 1809. He records<sup>39</sup> this as follows :

'My peal of bells is come. It cost a great sum of money...I believe that my Norwich friends would have honoured me, as a country parson, if they had seen the harmless but animated festivity of my village on Friday last. A new tenor bell had been given them by my pupils, my friends, and myself; and we have no inconsiderable share in the charges of some of the old bells, which have been recast and enlarged. My orthodoxy has endowed all of them with scriptural appellation. The great bell has inscribed upon it the name of Paul; and it is now lying upon our green. It holds more than seventy-three gallons. It was filled with good ale, and was emptied too on Friday last. More than three hundred of my parishioners, young and old, rich and poor, assemble; and their joy was beyond description...'

In 1817 Dr Parr gave two trebles to complete the octave and this is a good example of bell restoration and augmentation to satisfy the enthusiasm for change-ringing which he described as follows :

'It so happens from my youth upwards, even to this hour I have been a distinguished adept in the noble art of ringing; that I have equal delight with Milton in the sound of bells...'

The "christening" of new bells in the way described by White and Parr before being hung in the tower was very

common at this time.

At Lincoln Cathedral<sup>40</sup> the ringers took bread and beer into the ringing chamber and would go out on to the West Front to throw bread down on to the pedestrians. Beer was a common drink at this time and the comparatively primitive bell fittings of the time would mean a continuing demand for refreshment. Unfortunately towards the close of the eighteenth century ringers acquired a reputation, often deserved, for drunkenness. The Lincoln Chapter Acts<sup>41</sup> dated 19 September 1808 record that :

'...the present set of ringers being a self appointed body and disorderly from want of regulation and control it is decreed that at every ensuing audit the Dean and Chapter shall appoint one of them the Head Ringer, who is to preserve and divide the Money, and to be the responsible person amongst them and that on the occasion of any vacancy the Residentiary in residence shall appoint a new ringer.

Also that William Downs shall be dismissed from the present set of Ringers for drunkenness'.

As Treveleyan says<sup>42</sup> :

'Drunkenness was the acknowledged vice of Englishmen of all classes...among the common folk ale still reigned supreme'

and, although such behaviour is not to be condoned, the christening of bells as described above was clearly accepted by the clergy and it seems that the bellringers were reflecting the standards of the time.

## ANNEX A<sup>3</sup>

### COMPLETE RINGS OF BELLS CAST IN THE DIOCESE OF LINCOLN 1600-1799

[There are many rings of bells which may have been cast complete but which have since had bells recast and cannot, therefore, be definitely identified]

Church	No of Bells	Year Cast
Marston Mortaine, Beds	5	1610
Wymeswold, Leics	5	1611
Frampton, Lincs	4	1620
Metheringham, Lincs	4	1620
Monks Risborough, Bucks	5	1621
Quainton, Bucks	5	1621
Arnesby, Leics	4	1624
Holywell, Hunts	4	1625
Houghton, Hunts	4	1626
Asfordby, Leics	5	1630/31
Belgrave, Leics	4	1631
Elton, Hunts	5	1631
<b>Leicester St Margaret</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1633<sup>1</sup></b>
Leverton, Lincs	4	1635
Spaldwick, Hunts	5	1635
Great Barford, Beds	5	1636/7
Uffington, Lincs	4	1640
Stevington, Beds	4	1654
Staunton Harrold, Leics	6	1656
<b>Leicester St Martin</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1657<sup>2</sup></b>
South Kilworth, Leics	4	1659
Clifton Regis, Bucks	5	1664
Barton S Mary, Lincs	4	1666
Mentmore, Bucks	5	1668/9
Hillesdon, Bucks	6	1681
Hough-on-the-Hill, Lincs	5	1683
Great Easton, Leics	4	1684
Weston Underwood, Bucks	6	1685
Glentham, Lincs	4	1687
Flitton, Beds	5	1687
Lavendon, Bucks	5	1689
Lillingstone Lovell, Bucks	4	1693
Penn, Bucks	5	1702
Bitteswell, Leics	4	1706
Netherseale, Leics	5	1707
<b>High Wycombe, Bucks</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1711</b>
Heighington, Lincs	4	1713
Butterwick, Lincs	5	1713
Thurlby, Lincs	5	1713/4
Peckleton, Leics	6	1714

Wrangle, Lincs	6	1714
Croft, Lincs	5	1716
Billingborough, Lincs	5	1717
Horncastle, Lincs	6	1717
Maids Moreton, Bucks	5	1717
Chicheley, Bucks	6	1718
Shabbington, Bucks	5	1718
Whaplode, Lincs	5	1718
Frampton, Lincs	5	1719
Biggleswade, Beds	5	1721
<b>St Ives, Hunts</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1723</b>
Hemingford Grey, Hunts	6	1724
Sutterton, Lincs	5	1725 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Louth, Lincs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1726</b>
Anstey, Leics	5	1728
<b>Lincoln St Peter-at-Arches</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1728</b>
Bourne, Lincs	6	1729
Winterton, Lincs	5	1734
Scremby, Lincs	4	1739/40
Fulbeck, Lincs	6	1743
Spilsby, Lincs	6	1744
Witham, Leics	4	1744
<b>Bedford, St Paul</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1744</b>
Wigtoft, Lincs	5	1750
Claydon, Bucks	5	1752
Farnham Royal, Bucks	6	1752
<b>Grantham, Lincs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1752<sup>4</sup></b>
Westborough, Lincs	4	1752
<b>St Neots, Hunts</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1753</b>
Hemingford Abbots, Hunts	5	1754
Loughborough, Leics	6	1754
Morton, Lincs	5	1755
Linford, Bucks	6	1756
Stamford S Michael	6	1762
<b>Gainsborough, Lincs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1764</b>
Warboys, Hunts	5	1765
Market Deeping, Lincs	6	1766
Long Crendon, Bucks	6	1768
Willoughby, Lincs	6	1769/70
Appleby Magna, Leics	6	1769
<b>Holbeach, Lincs</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1770<sup>5</sup></b>
Lutton, Lincs	5	1770
Bassingham, Lincs	5	1770
Welton, Lincs	6	1769 <sup>6</sup>
Cardington, Beds	6	1772 <sup>7</sup>
West Keal, Lincs	5	1772
<b>Aylesbury, Bucks</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1773</b>
Redbourne, Lincs	6	1774
<b>Dunstable, Beds</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1776</b>
Tilsworth, Beds	5	1776
Linslade, Bucks	5	1781
<b>Buckingham</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1782</b>
Denton, Lincs	5	1782

Somersham, Hunts	6	1782
Quordon, Leics	5	1784
Rothley, Leics	5	1784
Eletsoe, Beds	5	1786
Biddenham, Beds	6	1787
Leighton Buzzard, Beds	8	1787/8
Tydd St Mary, Lincs	5	1788
Brant Broughton, Lincs	6	1792
Toddington, Beds	8	1792
Gedney, Lincs	5	1794
Godmanchester, Hunts	8	1794
Swineshead, Lincs	8	1794
Hartford, Hunts	5	1796 <sup>a</sup>
Sleaford, Lincs	8	1796
Navenby, Lincs	6	1797
Coleby, Lincs	5	1798
Harmston, Lincs	8	1798/9
Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincs	6	1798
Saltfleetby All Saints Lincs	5	1799

### NOTES

1. In 1711 at St Margaret's Leicester two bells were added to make eight and in 1738 two more to make ten.
2. In 1781 the ring of six bells at St Martin's Church Leicester was recast into eight and in 1787 two bells were added to make ten.
3. At Sutterton a treble bell to make a ring of six was added by subscription in 1784. In 1797 one bell was added by subscription and another was given by John Cabourn of Sutterton to increase the peal to eight. Cabourn was a bell-hanger and said to have been a keen change-ringer.
4. At Grantham several bells were recast in 1775 and two trebles added to make the first ring of ten bells in the Diocese
5. At Holbeach the cost of recasting the bells in 1770 was met by subscription and among those mentioned was William Stukeley the antiquarian.
6. These bells were unsatisfactory and were recast in the following year (1770).
7. At Cardington six bells were cast in 1772 and two more added in 1775 by Samuel Whitbread.
8. A treble bell was added in 1799 to make a ring of six bells.

ANNEX B<sup>10</sup>EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PEALS RUNG  
IN THE DIOCESE OF LINCOLN

Sources .

Leicester, St Margaret	23. 2.1730	Grandsire Triples	CR/NM 2. 3.1730
Leicester, St Margaret	27. 2.1731	Grandsire Triples	CR p 239
Leicester, St Margaret	9. 3.1738	Grandsire Triples	NM 20. 3.1738
Boston, Lincs	7.12.1738	Grandsire Triples	BN Vol IV p 202
.			CCJ 20.2.1773
St Neots, Hunts	30. 3.1756	Grandsire Triples	NM 27.5.1782
Lincoln S Peter Arches	20. 6.1756	Grandsire Triples	Peal Board
High Wycombe, Bucks	28.12.1757	Plain Bob Triples	BN Vol II p 364
Lincoln S Peter Arches	13. 8.1758	Plain Bob Triples	Peal Board
Bedford St Paul	11. 5.1761	Plain Bob Major	RCY
Grantham, Lincs	23. 4.1764	Grandsire Triples	CB Vol V p 427
Gainsborough, Lincs	24. 5.1768	Grandsire Triples	SY/CB Vol V p 427
Gainsborough, Lincs	19. 5.1769	Plain Bob Major	SY/CR p 254
Holbeach, Lincs	26. 6.1771	5040 Changes ?	CCJ 6.7.1771
Lincoln S Peter Arches	13. 8.1771	Plain Bob Major	DM 20.9.1771
Holbeach, Lincs	?. 6.1772	Plain Bob Major	CR p 216
.			NM 10.7.1772
Uppingham, Rutland	25. 3.1773	Grandsire Triples	SY/BN Vol 14 p 337
Holbeach, Lincs Shrove Tuesday	1773	Plain Bob Major	CR p 216
.			NM 10.7.1772
Boston, Lincs	8. 2.1773	Grandsire Triples	BN Vol V p 202
.			CCJ 20.2.1773
Leicester St Margaret	3. 5.1773	Grandsire Triples	CR p 303
Denham, Bucks	9. 5.1773	Plain Bob Major	CY
Leicester St Margaret	21. 1.1775	Grandsire Triples	CR p 303
Grantham, Lincs	19. 9.1775	Grandsire Caters	SY/CR p 254
Spalding, Lincs	1. 1.1776	Doubles	CCJ 13. 1.1776
Leicester St Margaret	20. 1.1776	Grandsire Triples	LNJ 27. 1.1776
Sibsey, Lincs	10. 3.1776	Minor	PB/CCJ 30.3.1776
King's Norton, Leics	28. 5.1776	Grandsire Triples	SY/CR p 254
Leicester St Margaret	12. 8.1776	Grandsire Caters	LNJ 17. 8.1776
Dunstable, Beds	20. 8.1776	Plain Bob Major	JCY
Leicester St Margaret	25. 2.1777	Grandsire Caters	BN Vol II p 160
.			CB Vol VII p 303
Aylesbury, Bucks	8.12.1777	Grandsire Triples	NM 22.12.1777
Caythorpe, Lincs	10. 6.1778	Grandsire Triples	SY/CR p 254
Lincoln S Peter Arches	25. 2.1780	Grandsire Triples	CB Vol 8 p 219
King's Norton, Leics	3. 9.1781	Grandsire Caters	LNJ 8.10.1781
Leicester, St Martin	12.11.1781	Grandsire Triples	LC 13.11.1781
Uppingham, Rutland	1. 4.1782	Grandsire Triples	LNJ 6.4.1782
Leicester St Martin	16. 5.1782	Plain Bob Major	LC 24. 5.1782
St Ives, Hunts	21. 5.1782	Plain Bob Major	NM 27.5.1782
Anstey, Leics	26. 9.1782	5 Methods Doubles	DM 3.10.1782
Long Crendon, Bucks	25. 1.1783	Plain Bob Major	RM 31.2.1783
Leicester St Margaret	4. 3.1783	Grandsire Triples	LC 7. 3.1783

Huntingdon	11. 4.1783	Grandsire Triples	BN 3.9.1910
Humberstone, Leics	11. 5.1783	Grandsire Doubles	LI 10.5.1783
Leicester St Martin	? 3.1784	Grandsire Triples	NM 8. 3.1784
Leicester St Martin	? 2.1785	Grandsire Triples	LNJ 19. 2.1785
Leicester St Martin	7.11.1786	Treble Bob Major	LNJ 11.11.1786
Leicester St Martin	6. 9.1787	Grandsire Caters	Sibson Mss
Newport Pagnell, Bucks	24.12.1789	5040 on 8	NM 26.12.1789
Leicester St Martin	5. 7.1790	Grandsire Triples	LNJ 30. 8.1790
Leicester St Margaret Shrove	Tues 1792	Grandsire Triples	LJ 2. 3.1792
High Wycombe, Bucks	8. 4.1792	Grandsire Caters	CB Vol 7 p 471
Hinckley, Leics	29. 8.1792	Grandsire Triples	LJ 31.8.1792
Hinckley, Leics	? 1.1793	Plain Bob Major	Sibson Mss
Hinckley, Leics	? 5.1793	Grandsire Major	ABG 3.6.1793
Long Crendon, Bucks	25.11.1793	Plain Bob Major	LRSM 6.12.1793
Leicester St Margaret	27.12.1793	Grandsire Triples	LJ 3. 1.1794
Holbeach, Lincs	18. 1.1794	Plain Bob Major	LRSM 31.1.1794
Leicester St Martin	26. 5.1795	Plain Bob Major	Sibson Mss
Godmanchester, Hunts	22. 3.1797	Treble Bob Major	CCJ 1.4.1797
Denham, Bucks	15. 9.1799	Grandsire Triples	BN Vol II p 448

## SOURCES

ABG = Avis' Birmingham Gazette	BN = Bell News
CB = Church Bells	CCJ = Cambridge Chronicle and Journal
CR = Morris History and Art	CY = College Youths Peal Book
DM = Derby Mercury	JCY = Junior College Youths Peal Book
EJO = E J Osborne Mss British Museum	LC = Leicester Chronicle
JCM = Jopson's Coventry Journal	LNJ = Leicester and Nottingham Journal
LRSM = Leicester Rutland and Stamford Mercury	NC = Norfolk Chronicle
NM = Northampton Mercury	
PB = Peal Board in tower	Sibson Mss = Information from a Manuscript compiled by a Mr T Sibson and supplied by Mr F T Blagrove
SY = Information from the Peal Book of the Sherwood Youths Nottingham supplied by George Dawson BSc	



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. LAO L1/4/1/1 Corporation Accounts 1764-1787.  
'The Ringers Days appointed by the City' are recorded on the inside front cover.
2. A section on local bellringing customs appears in the "County" books on bells as follows :

Cocks Bucks	pp 271-280.
North Beds	pp 85-116.
North Leics	pp 98-123.
North Lincs	pp 147-262
North Northants	pp 123-162
Owen Hunts	pp 51-58
3. North Beds p 135
4. A full account of the Lincoln "Jack" appears in Ketteringham p 70
5. Hill Georgian Lincoln p 14
6. Bettey J H Church and Community p 116
7. North Leics p 250
8. North Lincs p 669
9. LAO L/1/1/1/7 p 844
10. Wordsworth C Social Life in the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century p 165
11. Cox Bucks p 574
12. LAO L/1/4/1/1 unfoliated
13. LAO D&C Bij/1/3 unfoliated
14. Morris E History and Art pp 557-566 gives examples of Ringing Matches in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Lancashire.
15. Information from Mr. G Dawson, BSc
16. Information from Mr. D Cubbitt.
17. Information from Mr. C Wratten, Secretary, Central Council of Church Bellringers.

18. I acknowledge information from Revd Canon K Felstead who has made a study of the subject from which the list of peals has been compiled.
19. see North Leics p 202.
20. North Lincs p 689
21. North Lincs p 445
22. North Lincs p 359
23. North Lincs p 421
24. Sykes N Church and State in England in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Century p 283 quoting Porteous B The Works of Thomas Secker with Life (London 1811) Vol V p 408/9
25. LAO Faculty Book I p 55
26. Ibid p 83
27. Ibid p 185
28. Ibid p 274
29. Ibid p 289
30. Ibid p 295
31. LAO Faculty Book II p 55
32. LAO Faculty/4/51a
33. The information from which this Table has been compiled has been extracted from Cox Bucks in which is recorded items concerning bells contained in the Inventories of 1552/3; the Records of the Visitation of the Bishop of Lincoln 1637/8; Manuscript collections of Browne Willis taken in 1714/5 and updated up to 1750.
34. North Leics p 235
35. North Lincs p 306
36. LAO Misc Dep 146/6

37. Revd A Gatty writing as late as 1848 after describing 'the profane christening' of a new bell which had been filled with alcohol and then 'liberally dispensed to the good-humoured bystanders', continues :  
  
'...the festival proceeds, and if timely arrested, no evil can arise from it - indeed, the bells ascend in due course to their lofty settlement, with more hearty good wishes from the people than if it had not taken place...'  
  
Gatty A The Bell p 28.
38. Ingram T Bells in England pp 38/9
39. Tilley H T and Walters H B The Church Bells of Warwickshire pp 168 and 169
40. Lincoln Leader 'My Hobby - Privileged Peeps in Lincoln (No 16)' Newspaper interview with Mr William Stiles who became a ringer at Lincoln Cathedral in 1857.
41. LAO D&C A/3/16 p 245
42. Treveleyan G M Illustrated English Social History Vol 3 p 46
43. The sources for the information from which this Annex has been compiled are listed on page 16.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions reached in this thesis are introduced by the following summary of political and ecclesiastical events which had a bearing on the subject.

The Henrician Reformation caused monastic bellringing to cease, but it had little effect on other liturgical uses of bells<sup>1</sup>. However, the Commissioners appointed in 1552 to compile inventories of church goods included bells and the intention was undoubtedly to remove all but the one bell required to summon the people to services, but the early death of Edward VI and the accession of Mary I prevented this. Mary restored much of the ceremonial of the pre-Reformation Church and this included the liturgical use of bells<sup>2</sup>. It was not until 1558, after the accession of Elizabeth I and the introduction of a revised Prayer Book, that bellringing as part of religious ceremonial finally ceased<sup>3</sup>. However, the prevailing attitude of incumbents or patrons influenced the interpretation of national injunctions to suit local opinion and much officially banned ringing on Church festivals still took place.

During the seventeenth century considerable restoration and recasting of bells took place at a time when it might be expected that expenditure, on what, to the Puritans, could well have been regarded as unnecessary items of

church furniture would be limited<sup>4</sup>. In fact, many rings of bells were augmented at this time but bellringing was almost entirely divorced from the Church. As has been shown church bells were used for a variety of purposes and many local customs arose<sup>5</sup>.

The reason for the continued extensive use of rings of church bells to an extent which far exceeded either the requirements of Canon Law or necessity has been considered in depth. It is clear that the introduction and development of change-ringing<sup>6</sup> in the early seventeenth century and the attraction which the Art holds not only as a recreation but as a physical and mental exercise was largely responsible. The introduction of competitive bellringing which included ringing matches and peal<sup>7</sup> ringing added an additional element to "pleasure" bellringing.

The demand for an increase in the number of bells in a ring from the usual three to at least four or five grew as change-ringing became established and during the eighteenth century as peal ringing became popular, there was a demand for rings of eight bells. This led to the recasting of many of the large bells which had been a feature of the medieval church. There was often enough metal available from which to cast several smaller bells and thus increase the number of bells in a ring. At the same time greater attention was paid to the musical properties of bells and as Jennings comments<sup>8</sup> :

'a burgeoning interest in change ringing with its emphasis on homophonically conceived kaleidoscopic patterns of sound was a by-product of seventeenth century scientific and artistic musical development. The entirely new concept demanded greater tunability and an increased number of bells per tower to satisfy aural, aesthetic and mathematical conditions'.

Tuning of individual bells was achieved by chipping metal from the bell at strategic points but this was not very satisfactory and the required standard of "tunability" was more readily achieved by casting or recasting the required number of bells at the same time by one founder. All the known complete rings of bells cast for church towers in the Diocese of Lincoln from 1600 to 1799 are listed in Annex A to Chapter VI and from this the table below has been produced.

Although bells have, over time, been recast there is sufficient evidence available to assess the affect of pleasure ringing, change-ringing and peal-ringing on the number of complete rings of bells :

No of Bells	1600/ 1624	1625/ 1649	1650/ 1674	1675/ 1699	1700/ 1724	1725/ 1749	1750/ 1774	1775/ 1799
10								1
8					1	4	5	8
6		1	2	2	5	3	11	6
5	4	4	2	3	12	5	8	10
4	3	5	3	3	6	2	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>

Percentage of rings of five and more bells :  
 57      50      57      63      73      82      95      100

Table 5. Complete rings of bells cast from 1600 to 1799

When "pleasure" ringing consisted of round ringing and "call" changes bellringers were content with four bells. However, although change-ringing<sup>e</sup> can be practised on four or even three bells, "scientific" ringing is both easier and more satisfying when five or more bells are used. Table 5 clearly demonstrates that, as change-ringing spread, so the percentage of rings containing five or more bells also increased and this accelerated as peal-ringing became popular. The casting of a complete ring of bells was, of course, much more expensive than adding bells to existing rings but money seems to have been readily available to finance such work. There is an intangible affection for bells in England which does not exist elsewhere and this must have contributed to the continued use of bells despite the upheaval of the Reformation and Puritan ascendancy. This factor may well have had a bearing on the readiness with which money was found to finance the provision of new bells and the recasting of others.

Although, as has been shown, church bells continued to be used extensively during the eighteenth century it is emphasised that almost the only connection with the church was the tower in which the bells were hung. Drunkenness amongst bellringers was common and it was not until the reforms<sup>f</sup> of the mid-nineteenth century initiated by the Oxford Movement that church and bellringing were reunited and bellringers achieved recognition as church workers -

the major objective of the diocesan and national bellringing societies founded at this time.

The principal aim of this thesis has been to explain the continued use of church bells after liturgical use ceased but, at the same time, attention has been drawn to the important part which bells have played in the development of the Christian Church in England - a subject which is invariably overlooked by ecclesiastical historians. There have been numerous academic studies of other aspects of ecclesiastical history, but no comprehensive study of bells, bellringing and bellringers has ever been researched (see page 17) and this thesis attempts to fill a significant gap in ecclesiastical history for the period from the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536 to the close of the eighteenth century.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Chapter II Section 4 p 48
2. Chapter II Section 3 p 46
3. Chapter III Section 2 p 57
4. Chapter III Section 5 p 63
5. Chapter VI Section 1 p 116
6. Chapter IV Section 5
7. Chapter VI Section 3 p 121
8. Jennings T S "Campanological Activities" p 21
9. For an account of the reforms of the mid-nineteenth century see Ingram T Bells in England Chapter 2



## APPENDIX

\*ORDINAUNCIJES Constitutions and Agreementes to be observed performed faithfullie and kept by all and every one of vs the seuerall parson and parsons mentioned and named in a schedule hereunto annexed named and agreed vppon by vs the saide parsons and every one of vs the Eighteenth Day of October in the yeare of our Lord god One Thousand sixhundredth and twelue and in the yeare of the reigne of our Sovereigne Lord James by the grace of god of England Scotland ffraunce and Ireland Kinge defender of the faith &c that is to saye of England ffraunce and Ireland the Tenth and of Scotland the Sixe and ffortieth videlicet.

THE FIRST ordinaunce is that whereas by the grace of god it is concluded condiscended and fullie agreed that wee the saide parties and everie one of vs shall and will at all tymes and from tyme to tyme for ever hereafter accompanye and ioyne together in one Societie had fellowship for the ringinge of Saincte Hughe Bells and our Ladye Bells with in the Cathedrall Church of the blessed virgin Marye of Lincoln On solempne ffeastes and dayes and otherwise vppon good occasions, And that wee the saide parties and eueryone of vs shall and will vppon everie lawfull warninge to be given vnto vs and everie one of vs, or notice given at our houses or places of aboade by the wardens of the Companye for the tyme beinge or one of them make our personall appairance at the saide Chathedrall Church of Lincoln and there to staye, and notto departe from thence vntill wee haue runge and performed and discharged suche other service as shalbe appoynted by the maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge, or his deputie vppon paine of forfeytinge for everie such defaulte Twelve pence, except the maister of the Companye for the tyme being or his deputie doe gyve vs leave to departe or be absent.

And also that everie one of vs shall always forever hereafter vppon everie lawfull warninge or notice gyven to vs by the saide wardens, or one of them as aforesaide make our pasonall appairance at suche hower tyme and tymes place and places, as the Maister of the Companie for the tyme being, or his deputie shall appointe for the hearinge and determyninge of such matters, and makeinge of such orders as shalbe thought fitt and necessarie for the good, quiett, benefitt and profitt of the saide companie, vppon payne of forfeytinge to th vse of the compaye for everie such defalte, xij<sup>d</sup>

2. The second ordinaunce is that the maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge, shall and will yearelye, and everie yeare for euer hereafter alwayes on the Sondaye next after the ffeaste of St Luke the Evangelist, make or cause to be made a generall and solempne meeting and ffeast daye, And everie brother of the saide Companye being married shall bringe his wyfe to dynner and paye xvj<sup>d</sup> the Cople, and everie one of them beinge absent, hauinge notice gyven vnto them before the saide ffeaste daye where the ffeast is to be held shall forfeit to the vse of the M<sup>r</sup> and the saide Conmpanye ij<sup>d</sup> whereof the maister shall haue xij<sup>d</sup> and to thuse of the companye xij<sup>d</sup>

3. The third ordinaunce is that the said Companye shall yearelye and everie yeare, after this firste election alwaies on the saide Sondaye being the ffeaste daye, after dynner, for ever hereafter at the same place, where the ffeaste is held and made, out [of] foure sufficient men to be named of the saide Companye elect and choose one to be maister of the said Companye for one whole yeare next following his election by the most voyces of the saide companye then assembled and present at the saide election.

And he to haue the custodie and keepeinge of the common stocke with all some and sommes of money which shall at any tyme during his yeare be gyven to the vse of the saide companye for ringinge or otherwise, togeather also with those constitutions or ordinaunces, he puttinge in sufficient securitie to the maister which was for the yeare then ended and to one other of the saide companye, that shalbe nominated and appointed by the saide companye, for the discharge thereof and of all other thinges that shalbe committed to his charge: at the departure out of his saide office.

And that the saide maister newlie elected shall presentlye after he is elected to that office make choyce of twoe of the companye to be wardens for and duringe his yeare, And they the saide wardens after their election to that office, shall vppon and by the appointment of the saide maister or his deputie, gyve warninge vnto the companye, for the doinge of such service as shalbe appointed by the maister or his deputie during his yeare.

And that the saide wardens for the tyme beinge shall haue a yearlye ffee of x<sup>s</sup> allowed vnto them, to be paide quarterlye out of the companyes common stocke, towards their charges of runinge vpp and downe, and loss of their tyme in sommoninge the companye to all assemblies, over and besides their Dynners on the ffeaste daye of free cost, without payinge anye thinge therefore, the saide ffee of x<sup>s</sup> to be equallie diuided betwixt the saide wardens.

Provided alwaies that the maister of the companye shall not make choyce of anye of the companye that haue been maisters of the companye or that haue borne the office of an Associate to be wardens of the saide Companye.

4. The fourth ordinance is that as well the wardens for the tyme beinge, as also the whole companye of ringers shall obey the m<sup>r</sup> of the companye for the tyme beinge, and attend vppon him yearlye, at all and everye such tyme and tymes, as they shalbe warned or notice gyven at their dwellinge howses or place of aboade, by the wardens or one of them, aswell to ringe, at the saide Cathedrall Church, as also to doe and accomlishe all other such reasonable thinges as shalbe by the saide maister gyven to them in Commaundment, for the releife, profitt, quiett, good order or continewance of the saide companye, everye one offending herein to forfeite to the vse of the companye for everye tyme they shall offend ij<sup>s</sup> vj<sup>d</sup>

5. The ffifth ordinance is that if anye of the saide Company (other than such haue been maisters of the Company or suche as haue been Associats of the saide Company) shall refuse to take vppon them the office of a warden, beinge chosen to that office by the maister, shall forfeite to the vse of the saide companye xiiij<sup>s</sup> iij<sup>d</sup> vnlesse he then procure some one of the Company to serve in that office, and to doe and performe all suche seruice and duetie as by the saide wardens are to be done and performed for and duringe their yeare.

Provided alwaies that this Ordinaunce, or anye other order made or to be made, shall not bynde anye of the Company, to serve in the office of a warden oftener than one yeare duringe his or their beinge of the Company (except he or they so to be chosen be willinge and agreable thereunto)

6. The sixth ordinance is that the wardens of the Company or one of them shall and will yearelye and everye yeare for ever hereafter when and so often as neede shall require, as well sweepe and make cleane the Chappell or hall belonginge to the companye as also the steeple wherein the Bells doe hange, and the steeple wherein the saide companye doe vse to ringe, And likewise that they shall attend on the m<sup>r</sup> of the company to oyle the Bells and doe suche other service aboute the Bells as the maister of the companye shall appoynte, And also to laye the Chyme hammers vpp before they ringe, and to laye them downe after their ringinge vppon payne of forfeytinge to thuse of the saide companye for everie defaulte vj<sup>d</sup>

And further if they do neglect their dueties, and doe not gyve warninge vnto the companye or givenotice at their houses to ringe, or to meete the maister at every hower, tyme and tymes, places and places for the purposes aforesaide in the ffirste ordinance mencioned and expressed, beinge appointed or required by the maister of the saide companye so to doe, Then they and either of them so offendinge to forfeite to the vse of the companye for everye suche defaulte vj<sup>d</sup>

7. The seventh ordinaunce is, that everie one of the saide Companye be at all tymes hereafter at their meetings to ringe or otherwise at their owne ffeastes and at everie other place where they shall be invited, or goe of their owne likeinge, shall and will vse and behaue themselves honestlie, modestlye, orderlie, quietlie, and in good and comelie manner, And likewise shall and will be ordered in their placeinge or setting downe by the maister of the saide Companye, for that purpose vppon paine of forfeytinge for everie such offence, to the vse of the Companye ij<sup>m</sup> vj<sup>d</sup>

And further if anie of the saide Companye shall at any meetinge in the presence of the maister of the companye, or in the steeple, or in anye other place or places revile or abuse anye of the companye either by vndecent or railinge wordes or speaches, or otherwise wronge them or anye of them by naye acte or deede being sufficientlye proved, everie one so offendinge, to forfeit to the vse of the companie, for the first offence ij<sup>m</sup> vj<sup>d</sup>, and also to acknowledge their faulte before the maister of the Companye and the saide companye.

And for the second offence to forfeite to the vse of the companye iij<sup>m</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup> and to acknowledge their faulte as above saide, And for the third offence to forfeit to the vse of the Company vj<sup>m</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> and then to be dismissed and put forthe of the saide companye, and to haue no parte or portion of the stocke or of anye other some or sommes of money, or of anye other thinge or thinges whatsoever, belonginge vnto the saide Companye but clearlye to loose the benefitt thereof, and of everie parte and parcell thereof.

8. The Eight ordinaunce is that the Maister of the saide companye shall yearelye and everie yeare for ever hereafter, vppon the Sondaye next after their ffeaste daye in the Chappell now called the ringers Chappell or hall, in the saide Cathedrall Church of Lincoln, betweene the howers of One and three of the Clocke in the after noone of the same daye, make and gyve vpp vnto the saide Companye, or the greatest parte of them assembled together, a true and iuste accompte of every some and somes of money, and of all and everie thinge and thinges whatsoever he shall recyve to and for thuse of the saide Company for by and duringe his yeare as also of all suche payments as he shall disburse for the vse of the saide Companye, And further shall paye and deliver vnto suche parson or parsons, to whome he shall stand bound to and thuse of the Companye all suche some and sommes of money, as vppon his saide accompte shall then be found due, and wherewith he may be iustlye charged, his layinges out and payments for the vse of the saide companye, alwayes allowed vnto him vppon his saide accompts.

9. The nyenth ordinaunce is that everie one of the Companye that hereafter shalbe elected and chosn to be maister of the companye shall alwaies for ever hereafter vppon the accompte daye to be made next after his or their election to that office, nominate and choose Twelve of the Companye to be Associates vnto him for his yeare,

And that all such contouersies ambiguities and questions, as shall happen to arise or growe amongst the saide Companye in everie of their seuerall yeares shalbe ordered determined agreed and adiudged by the maister of the saide Companye for the tyme beinge, and his twelve Associates, or the greatest parte of them, the maister of the companye alwaies beinge one of the greatest number.

10. The tenth ordinaunce is that the maister of the companye for the tyme beinge, or his deputie, shall alwayes from tyme to tyme for ever hereafter (yf it be his pleasure) appoynte every one of the saide Companye, at which Bell everie of them shall ringe,

And if anye of them shall at anye tyme, refuse to ringe at suche Bell so [assigned] to them, or anye of them appointed as aforesaide, they and everie of them refusinge, to forfeite to thuse of the saide Company for everie such refusall and offence vj<sup>d</sup>

And also that in their ringinge of anye peale, they nor anye of them, shall or will deliver their, or anye of their stringe or stringes, to anye straunger or straungers, or to any other (except to some of the saide companye) duringe the continewance of the saide peale, or shall slacke their ringinge thereof, or cease anye peale, without the licence of the maister of the companye for the tyme beinge or his deputye or shall by talke or otherwise make anye such noyse that anye peale maye be disordered, vppon paine of forfytinge to thuse of the Companye for everye such defaulte xij<sup>d</sup>

And further if anye of the saide company shall see anye straunger or straungers, take a bell stringe, and attempt to ringe amongst the saide companye at the saide St Hughe bells without the consent of the maister of the companye, or his deputie, and do not, presently gyve notice vnto the maister of the saide Companye or his deputie, of suche straunger and straungers so attemptinge to ringe, without the maisters consent, to forfeite for everye such offence iij<sup>d</sup>

And likewise if anye of the saide Companye, shall at anye tyme or tymes hereafter, either ioyne take parte or ringe with anie parson or parsons in contempt or againste the saide Companye, or shall directlye or indirectlye attempt goe aboute or procure anye of the saide companye to ioyne take parte, or ringe anye match, in or with any parson or parsons whatsoever againste the saide companye, every one soe attemptinge ioyninge, takeinge parte, goinge about procuring or ringinge as aforesaide shall forfeit and paye to the vse of the companye for every such offence xx<sup>m</sup>

11. The Eleauenth ordinaunce is, that the maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge, shall make choyce of some one of the companye, that hath been maister of [the] Companye, to be his deputye, in the tyme of his absence or being out of Towne.

12. The Twelveth ordinaunce is that everye one of the companye absentinge themselues from ringinge, shall not send anye deputie to ringe for them, with out the assent and consent of [the] maister of the companye, or his deputye vppon payne of forfeytinge iij<sup>d</sup>

13. The Thirtenth ordinaunce is, that if anye of the saide Companye doe departe this worlde, That then the Companye lyvinge, shall haue lawfull warninge to be present to solemnize the buriall of their brother and breethren so dyinge, and to goe to the Church with everye brother so dyinge and to ringe a peale or twoe at the leaste at the saide St Hughe Bells

And everye Brother of the saide companye makeinge defaulte shall forfeit to the vse of the company xij<sup>d</sup>

And if he or they so dyinge be not of habilitie to bestowe anye cost, for his or their breethren paynes, That then the maister of the companye shall disburse ij<sup>m</sup> vj<sup>d</sup> at the leaste out of the common stock,

And that at the next meetinge of the saide companye, there shall some other sufficient man be chosen and admitted in his place, so departinge this worlde, And that euerye such parson and parsons as shalbe chosen in his and their place so dyinge, shall haue such equall parte and portion of all suche some and somes of money as shall at any tyme or tymes after his or their election and admittance to the companye, be given vnto the companye for ringinge.

14. The fourtenth ordinaunce is, that the yearelye ffee of ffortye shillings which is graunted to the saide companye and their Successors by the right worshipfull the Deane and Chapter of the saide Cathedrall Church, shalbe in the keepinge of the Maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge, to increase and make a stocke for the vse of the saide companye, And that, that stocke, shall not be divided or broken at any other tyme, but when anye of the companye shall departe this world,

And that then, there shall not anye other diuision be made of the saide stocke, to anye of the companye, but onelie for that parte or portion of such brother and brethren so dyinge, that the wyfe, Childe or Children of everye brother so dyinge, from the dayes of their seuerall admittance and enterance into the saide Companye vnto the daye of their seuerall deathe.

And if anye of the saide Company so dyinge, haue neither Wyfe, Childe, nor children, Then that parte or porcion so to euerye one of the Company so dyinge, beinge due shalbe paide by the maister of the companye for the tyme beinge to such parson and parsons as everie one of them so dyinge shall gyve and bequeathe the same vnto.

And if suche brother or brethren so dyinge, haue neither wyfe childe nor children, nor doe gyve or bequeathe the same to anye parson or parsons, That then everie suche parte, portion, some and somes of money, as shalbe founde due to everye of the brethren so dyinge, to be employed and put to suche vse as the maister of the companie with the consent of the twelve Associates of the saide companye, or the greatest parte of them shall then agree and appointe, So alwayes as the maister be one of the greatest nomber, and that the imployments and agreements so by them to be made, be made to the vse, good and benefit of the saide companie, and to no other vse, end, or purpose.

Provided alwaies, that yf at anye tyme or tymes hereafter, there be not other money sufficient gyven, or come to the handes of the maister, to paye the Clarke of the Companye his ffee, the wardens their ffee, to paye for oyle and lightes, and other necessarye disbursments concerninge the companye, That then it shalbe lawful for the maister of the companye, to paye suche ffees and duties forthe of the saide stocke, anie things before in this ordinance conteyned, to the contrarie notwithstandinge.

15. The ffiftenth ordinance is that if it shall please Almightye god, to visitt anie of the the companye, either with sickness or lamenes, or if anye of the saide companye shall fall into pouertie, and shall want mayntenaunce,

That the the maister of the companie, shall gyve and disburse out of the common stocke, to everie suche brother and brethren of the saide companie, as shall happen to be sicke, or in want as aforesaide, suche reasonable some and somes of money as the maister of the companye, and his twelve Associates, or the greatest parte of them (so that the maister be one of the greatest nomber) shall thinke fittinge, and appointe to be given.

16. The sixtenth ordinance is, that if anye of the companye shall at anye tyme hereafter receyve anye money, that shall be sent or given to and for the vse of the saide companye for ringinge and shall deteyne and keepe it from the maister of the saide Companye, everye one of the saide companye so offendinge, shall forfeite to the vse of the saide companye for everye suche offence xx<sup>s</sup>

17. The seauententh ordinance is, that if anye of the companye shall at anye tiyme or tymes hereafter reveale, disclose, or make knowne to anye parson or parsons whatsoever (other then to the saide companye) anye secrett or secretts or other matters in question that shall be amongst the saide companye, and tendinge or concerninge the saide companye, every one so offendinge, to forfeiyt to the vse of the company xij<sup>d</sup>

18. The Eighteenth ordinance is, that the maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge shall alwayes make choyce of three of the companye (besides the wardens) to helpe him to take vpp the Clappers, And that he shall first begin and take the first three that are sett downe and nominated in the schedule hereunto annexed, and so orderlie by three and three as their names be sett downe in the saide schedule, vntill all the companye have served in that busines.

And when all the companye haue so helped the maister Then the maister to begin and take them that first helped him, and so take everye one of them to helpe in that service, in suche order and forme, as before is mentioned, when and so often as the maister for the tyme being, or his deputie, shall cause them to be warned or called for that purpose,

And if anye of the companie shall refuse to helpe the maister or his deputye as before is mentioned, everye one so offendinge shall forfeit to the vse of the companye for everye such offence and refusall xij<sup>d</sup>

19. The Nyeententh ordinaunce is, that if anye of the Companye shall at anye tyme or tymes hereafter, take or procure anye parson or parsons whatsoever, to goe vpp into the steeple, when the saide companye shall meete and be there to ringe, with out the licence of the maister of the Companye, or his deputie, every one so offendinge shall forfeite to the vse of the companye iij<sup>d</sup>. And likewise if he that shall be appointed to keepe the dore, shall permitt or suffer any parson or parsons whatsoever (other then the saide companye) to go vpp into the steeple, without the licence of the maister or his deputie as aforesaide shall forfeite for every such offence to thuse of the companye iij<sup>d</sup>

20. The Twentieth ordinaunce is, that the saide companye and everye one of them and will at all and everye tyme and tymes for ever hereafter vppon everye lawfull warninge to be given vnto them, or notice gyven at their houses or place of aboade, by the wardens or one of them appointed for that purpose, or their deputie, make their parsonall appairance, at the saide Cathedrall Church of Lincoln at everye suche hower tyme and tymes as aforesaide,

And if anye of them be negligent and slacke and doe not make their appairance at such hower tyme and tymes to them appointed as aforesaide, be reason whereof the residue of the companye beinge then assembled and mett together shalbe forced to stave by the space of one quarter of an hower after suche hower tyme or tymes as they shall haue warninge to appeare at, as aforesaide (the greate Bell in sainte Hughe steeple being tolled before the watche haue strooken the saide quarter) everye one of the companye so offendinge to forfeit for everye such offence to the companye xij<sup>d</sup> except the maister of the companie for the tyme beinge or his deputie doe gyve them licence to be absent.

21. The one and Twentieth ordinaunce is, that the musitions that shall serve and attend on the Companye on their ffeaste daye, shall yearely haue for their paines ij<sup>s</sup> vj<sup>d</sup> and their dynners on the saide ffeaste daye and the same to be paide forthe of the Companyes comon stocke.

22. The twoe and Twentieth ordinaunce is, that the maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge, shall yearelye and everye yeare for ever hereafter lend vnto and amongst the saide companye, the one halfe of suche somme of money (beinge the Companies common stocke) as he shall receyve at his entrance to that office, Prouided alwaies that everie one of the saide companye vnto whome the maister shall lend anye parte or porcion of the saide stocke of money shall gyve the maister of the saide companye sufficient securitie for the payment thereof againe vnto the saide maister sixe dayes before the Sondag next after their ffeaste daye, vppon which Sondag, the maister is to make and gyve vpp his accompte vnto the saide companye.

23. The three and twentieth ordinaunce is, that the maister of the companye for the tyme beinge, and some other principall man of the saide companye, shall alwaies before the ringinge of everye peale at the saide sainte Hughe Bells, goe vp to the saide Bells, and see and be sure (so farre as they can by diligent care and searche discerne or perceyve) that the saide Bells and all other thinges to them belonginge or apparteyninge, be parfitt and in fitt case, that they may be runge without daunger, vppon payne of forfeytinge to the vse of the saide companye for every tyme that he shall neglect to doe ij<sup>s</sup> vj<sup>d</sup>

24. The foure and twentieth ordinaunce is, that if anye of the Companye for the tyme beinge, beinge lawfullie warned, as before in these ordinaunces is diuerse tymes menconed, shall at anye tyme or tymes (hower or howers) hereafter make defaulte of appairaunce as before in these present ordinaunces is menconed and declared, And also if anye of the saide Companye doe make anye breatch of anye ordinaunce or forfeiture of anye fyne or fynes in everye or anye of these present ordinaunces constitutions and agreaments mentioned and sette downe.

That then or at anye tyme after it shalbe lawfull to and for the maister of the saide Companye for the tyme beinge, to Commence and prosecute suite againste them the saide parties, and every one of them so offendinge for the recoverye of the saide ffyne or ffynes, so by everye or anye of them to be forfeited or lose, And to take the same and the charges expended in lawe for the recoverye of the same, to and for the vse of the saide Companye, And also that suche fyne fynes and charges of lawe so to be expended, shall not be remitted or released to them or anye of them so offendinge.

25. The ffyve and Twentieth ordinaunce is, that if at anye tyme or tymes hereafter anye of the saide Companye shall make breatche of anye one of the ordinaunces nowe made, or hereafter to be made accordinge to the tenore and true meaninge of these present ordinaunces constitucons and Agreamentes, And be therefore sewed by the maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge, The charge of everye suche suite, so by the maister to be commensed and prosecuted againste everye of the saide Companye so offendinge as aforesaide, shalbe allowed vnto the maister of the saide companye for the tyme beinge vppon his Accompte.

26. The six and twentieth ordinaunce is, that the maister of the companie for the tyme beinge shall not commence or prosecute anye suite againste anie of the saide companie for anye fyne or fynes that they and everye or anye of them shall forfeit or loose by makeinge breatche of anye of these present ordinaunces or of anye clause in them and everie or anie of them conteyned and declared, Except the maister of the companie for the tyme beinge, before he shall commence or prosecute anye suche suite, shall in the presence of the saide companie or Sixe of them, make demaund of suche parson or parsons of the saide companie so offendinge, everye suche fyne or fynes as they and everye or anye of them shall forfeite or loose.

27. The seaven and twentieth ordinaunce is, that the maister of the companie for the tyme beinge shall for his parte well and truelye keepe and parforme all these present ordinaunces which on his parte are to be kept and parformed, and also shall paye vnto the vse of the saide companie vppon his accompte daye all such fyne and fynes som and somes of money as he shall forfeit and loose by reason of the breatche of these orddinaunces or anye of them for and duringe his yeare of beinge maister.

28. The eight and twentieth ordinaunce is, that the maister of the companie for the tyme beinge shall not prosecute or commence anye suite againste anye of the companie for anie fyne or fynes by them or anye of them to be lost and forfeited by reason of the breatche of anie of these present ordinaunces, or of anie clause in them or anie of them conteyned, without the assent and consent of the Twelve Associats of the saide companie for the tyme beinge, or the greatest parte of them, Anye thinge before in these present ordinaunces or anye of them conteyned to the contrarie in anye wise notwithstandinge.

And for the true and better performaunce of all and everye these present ordinaunces constitutions and agreaments, and of all and everye other things and things in them and everye of them conteyned mentioned and declared, Wee the saide John Hillarye, John Clarke, John Gowland, William Gynne, Richard Evans, William Lamyng, Henrye Blackbolurne, Henrye Yorke, George Kettle, Richard Hasselwood, Thomas Baker, Thomas Allys, Stephen Stafford, William Thixton, Thomas Tubb, Anthonye Varley, John Watson, Thomas Betney, John Peachie, Bartholomew Davye, John Davie alias Cayton, Edward Whipp, John Jameson, John Toller, Xpofer Benson, Xpofer Stevenett, Thomas Willson, Robert Huddlestone, Walter Meeres, Humphrey Thornton, Henrye Harrison, Hierome Holland, Robert Kyle, Riginald Bartrom, William Holdon, Peter Hasselwood and John Cooke alias Whitfelde in this present schedule hereunto annexed named and menconed

Doe hereby ioyntlie and euerie one of us seurallie by and for himselfe and our successors for diuerse especiall considerations vs movinge coveunte promis and graunte to and with Robert Sandye nowe elected and nominated maister of the companie of Ringers of St Hughe Bells in the Cathedrall Church of the blessed virgin Marye of Lincoln, and to and with his successors hereafter succeedinge in the saide roome or place of maister of the saide companie of ringers by these presents in manner and forme followinge

THAT is to saye that wee the saide John Hillarye [all 37 names repeated]...and John Cooke alias Whitfeild shall and will at all tymes and from tyme to tyme for ever hereafter stand to abyde obey observe perform fulfill and keepe and also paye All and singular Covenantes grauntes ordinaunces constitutions Articles, lawes, Decrees, orders and paymentes conteyned declared or mentioned in these present ordinaunces constitutions and Agreementes

AND as well to condissend, agree vnto, paye beare and peaceablie vndergoe all paines, decrees, penalties, Alaies, fyne, fynes, and forfeitures therein conteyned And to suffer all other thinges to be done for the recoverye of the same to the vse aforesaide as also to abide, obey, observe, parforme fulfill and keepe all and singular other Acte and Actes, decrees, lawes, orders and Agreementes whatsoeuer now made and for ever hereafter to be made by the maister of the saide companie for the tyme beinge, and the saide companie, or by the maister of the saide companie and the twelve Associates for the tyme beinge, the maister of the companie beinge agreable and consenting there unto

IN WITNESS whereof wee the saide parties aforementioned haue hereunto put our handes and seales the day and yeare first aboue written'.



'A SCHEDULE conteyninge in it as well all the names of the ringers nowe elected nominated and chosen for the ringinge of Saincte Hughe Bells within the Cathedrall Church of the blessed virgin Marye of Lincoln, As also of the names of suche parsons, as the saide Companie shall nominate and make to be fitt and necessarie: to be Assistantes vnto their companie, to ring with them as occasion shall serve

The names of the Companie of Ringers

Robert Sandye, scrivener  
John Hillarye, brasier  
John Clarke, Joyner  
John Gowland, vpholster  
William Gvne, Taylor  
Richard Evans, haberdasher  
William Lamyng, Inholder  
Henrye Yorke, blacksmythe  
George Kettle, tayler  
Richard Hassellwood, paynter  
Thomas Baker, Blacksmythe  
Henry Blackborne, tayler  
Thomas Allys, malster  
Stephen Stafford, mason  
William Thixton, carpenter  
Thomas Tubb, cordiner  
Anthonye Varley, cordiner  
John Watson, yeoman  
Thomas Betney, tayler  
John Peachie, plumber  
Bartholomew Davye, tayler  
John Davye, alias Cayton, Butcher  
Edward Whipp, gardiner  
John Jameson, gardiner  
John Toller, butcher  
Xpofer Benson, tanner  
Xpofer Stevenett, locksmythe  
Thomas Willson, brasier  
Robert Huddleston, cordiner  
Walter Meeres, yeoman  
Humphrey Thornton, cordiner  
Henrye Harrison, cordiner  
Hierome Holland, cordiner  
Robert Kylne, butcher  
Riginald Bartrom, yeoman  
William Holdon, cordiner  
Peter Hassellwood, painter  
John Cooke, alias Whitfeild, cordiner

The names of the Assistants to the Companie

William Dighton, gentleman  
Mr Peter Walter, clearke.  
John Parker, clearke of the woorkes  
William ffreeman  
Edward Chapman  
Thomas Stanley, Mr of the Coristers'.

Letters Patent of the Dean  
and Chapter to the  
Company of Ringers 1614

TO all xpian people to whome this present writyng shall come Roger Parker doctor of Divinitie Deane of the Cathedrall Church of the Blessed Virgin Marye of Lincoln and the Chapter of the same send greetinge in our Lord god ever lastinge

Whereas Robert Sandye, John Hillarye, John Clarke, John Cowland, Richard Evans, William Lamyng and the residue of their companye have ioyned together in one Sositie and ffellowship for ever hereafter for the Ringinge of Sainte Hughe Bells and our Ladye Bells within the saide Cathedrall Church, as by certaine Ordinaunces and Agreements vnder their handes and seales, bearinge Date the Eighteenth Daye of October in the yeare of our Lord god One Thousand six hundreth and twelve and in the yeare of the Raigne of our soveraigne Lord James by the grace of god of England Scotland ffraunce and Ireland kinge defender of the faith &c. That is to saye of England ffraunce and Ireland the Tenth and of Scotland the fyve and fforteth more plainly appeareth.

Now know ye wee the saide Deane and Chapter of the saide Cathedrall Church allowinge their good entents and meaninges and being desirous to be furnished with apt and able men for the purpose aforesaide; Doe by these presents gyve and graunte vnto the saide Companye and their Successors, suche as the saide Companie and their Successors from tyme to tyme shall thinke and approve to be good ringers, and of honest behaviour, and by them to be named and chosen, and none others ffree libertie power and authoritie; at all tymes Couenient for ever hereafter, to haue free access libertie ingresse and regresse; at their wills and pleasure, to ringe the saide Bells, to thintent the saide Bells maye be well and commendable runge

And that noe other parson, or parsons, shall at anye tyme or tymes hereafter Ringe the saide sainte Hughe Bells without speciall licence had and obtayned from someone of the Canons Residentiaries of the said Cathedrall Church

And that the Clarke of the Woorkes, and the maister of the Companye for the tyme beinge, and in the absence of the maister, Then the Clarke of the woorkes and the maisters lawfull deputie, shall be present with suche parsons as shalbe so permitted to ringe at their ringinge

Provided alwaies that such parsons so permitted to ringe or some of them, shall put in sufficient securitie by some able mans promis and worde beinge of sufficient Abilitie vnto the Clarke of the woorkes for the tyme beinge, for the makeinge good, reparinge amendinge and vpholdinge of the saide Bells and of all and euerye other thinge and things belonginge vnto the saide Bells as shalbe broken impaired decayed or anye wayes hurte in by or with their ringinge the saide Bells

And moreover that if anye suche parsons, or parsons, so permitted to ringe shall disorder or misbehaue themselues, or will not be directed by the Clarke of the woorkes and the maister of the Companye, and in the absence of the maister of the Companye, then by the saide Clarke of the woorkes and the maisters lawfull deputie; for the well vsinge and orderlye ringinge of the saide Bells

That then it shalbe lawfull for the Clarke of the woorkes, the maister of the Companye and his deputie, and in the absence of the maister, the Clarke of the woorkes and the Maisters deputie, and for euerye or anye of them to expulse and put suche parsons (permitted to Ringe) forthe of the steeple, and to restraine tham from ringinge, anye thinge before written to the contrarie notwithstandinge

And in consideration of the paines that the saide Companye and their successors shall take in this their ringinge Wee the saide Deane and Chapter doe by these presents gyve and graunte vnto the saide Companye and their Successors One yearely Annuittie or stipend of ffortie shillings of lawfull money of England, to be paide yearlye by our Receyvour of our Church Revenewes for the tyme being, vnto the Maister of the saide Companye for the tyme beinge, to and for thuse and behoofe of the saide Companye and their Successors for ever at twoe vsuall ffeasts on tearmes in the yeare, That is to saye at the ffeaste of the Nativitie of our Saviour Jesus Christe commonlie called xpenmas daye and the ffeaste of the Nativitie of saincte John Baptist commonlie called Mydsomer Daye by even and equal portions.

And further we doe also graunte vnto the saide companye and their successors The vse (as occasion shall require of the one Chappell scituate and beinge with in the dore that leadeth vpp to saincte Hughe steeple to bee their meetinge place to conferr make and maintaine good orders as well for the good and carefull orderinge of the saide Saincte Hughe Bells, and well ringinge of them as also for the peaceable carriage of them selves amongst them selves one to another, And for the mainteynaunce of lovinge Amytie and Vnitie to be continued amongst them, and for the good reformation and pacifyinge of controuersies and disorders amongst their saide companie (if anye suche happen to be) the key whereof to remaine in the custody of the Clarke of the woorkes.

And the saide Companye of Ringers for them and their successors doe promis to gyve notice of their ringinge the saide saincte Hughe Bells from tyme to tyme before they ringe the same (except at suche tyme or tymes as they vse ordinarilie to be runge

That is to saye Vppon solempne Dayes, for the Kinge his most excellent maiestie, the comeinge in of the Judges, and at the retourninge home of maister Deane or the Residentiarie, after anye longe absence) to some one of the Canons Residentiaries of the saide Church, and obtayn leave of them, or some one of them for that ringinge (Except as before is excepted) yf anye of them shall then be abideinge in the Close of Lincoln, and in their absence, to gyve notice of their ringinge, to the Clarke of the woorkes of the saide Cathedrall Church for the tyme beinge at his dwellinge howse in the Close, Baile, or Cittie of Lincoln.

And moreover that the saide Companye of Ringers and their Successors shall from tyme to tyme hereafter, ringe the saide saincte Hughe Bells, when the saide Deane and Chapter or anye of them shall require them, vppon lawfull monition or warninge gyven to the maister of the saide Companye for the tyme beinge; to gather the saide Companye together, And that the saide Companye and their Successors, or anye of them doe not at anie tyme attempt the Ringinge of the saide saincte Hughe Bells, (except before they ringe the same) the Clarke of the woorkes with the maister of the companye for the tyme beinge, and some other principall man of the saide Companye with them see and be sure (so farre as they can by dilligent care and searche discerne or perceyve) that the saide Bells be perfitt and in fitt case to be rung without danger.

In witnesse whereof wee the saide Deane and Chapter haue to these presents put our Common Chapter seale the Three and Twentieth day of September in the yeares of the Raigne of our soueraigne Lord JAMES by the grace of god of England Scotland ffrance and Ireland kinge defender of the ffaithe &c That is to saye of England ffrance and Ireland the Twelveth and of Scotland the Eight and fforteth 1614

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