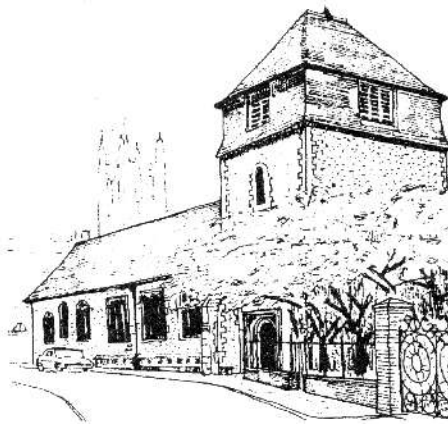


The world's worst bellfounder?

I think a spate of letters may have reached *The Ringing World* following publication of Alan Blair's most interesting article on the other bells of **Westminster Cathedral**. Certainly when I was a student living nearby in Vincent Square they were in use for various offices; one, I think for the Sanctus, another at other points during Mass and a third as a service bell. The Angelus was of course much more clearly heard on Mears & Stainbank's magnificent 52-cwt bell "Big Edward" (1910) high in the campanile. I was pleased to learn of the possibility that the bells may have been cast by **S. B. Goslin**, although Mr Buswell's findings of 29th August indicate that the horrors which he perpetrated in some towers may in fact be the work of no less august a firm than Gillett & Johnston!

I see that I wrote on Goslin in the RW of 1st June 1973, p.434; more has come to light than anticipated and in such cases a degree of repetition is inevitable. I thought at the time that Goslin might easily have qualified as the number one bad bellfounder (at least of conventional bells) and he could also have been the prime professional candidate for a similar degree in bellhanging. In his day, he was well-known as a writer on behalf of his erstwhile employers, John Warner & Sons; and they in their turn advertised his books on change and handbell ringing in their notices. Perhaps his rise in Warner's after the departure of Henry Boswell is not altogether surprising, for Goslin was none other than Robert Warner's nephew; Robert was the son of the John Warner whose name appeared upon their bells until the foundry's closure in 1925. Robert's elder brother, Charles, preceded him as Master Founder (1852-1869); after his death his sons withdrew, the bellfounding business passing to Robert Warner. In 1888, however something seems to have happened which resulted in C. B. Warner becoming head of the not inconsiderable brassfoundry and the appearance of Samuel Benjamin Goslin as an independent contractor.



St Alphege, Canterbury, the site of Goslin's earliest known work.

He seems to have had Kent connections. The earliest work of his which I know is of 1888, when he rehung the three old bells of **St Alphege, Canterbury** in a new frame for six. Influenced perhaps by **Lord Grimthorpe** (who by that time was not the flavour of the month at Warner's) he did a mini-Worcester in the tower, the upper stage of which had just been rebuilt and a new timber-framed bell stage added. A heavy trusswork descends to what is now the ringing room floor where it is carried on corbels. The bells themselves still have bearings inscribed "Goslin's Patent" on their housings, and the chiming manual has a plate marked:

S. B. GOSLIN / FOUNDER & MANUFR.
THE BISHOPSGATE ART METAL WORKS
ARTILLERY LANE, LONDON E.

In 1892 he was called into the Cathedral to attend to 'Great Dunstan' which then hung on the roof of the South-West Tower. Writing from 24 Artillery Lane and 24 Fashion Street, Spitalfields to Canon Helmore, Precentor of the Cathedral, he states that he is:

"desirous to execute the work and in such a manner that it should be satisfactory to ourselves and to bear

criticisms ... for Thirty five pounds and allow less 5 per cent for Cash payment.

"What I propose to do is to strip off the lead covering of the frame, make supply and insert new strong wrought iron ties to the frame to rehang the bell, with strong wrought iron bolts in a strong wrought iron built girder on cast iron post caps, and to replace the lead covering all in a substantial manner & your favour will be esteemed.

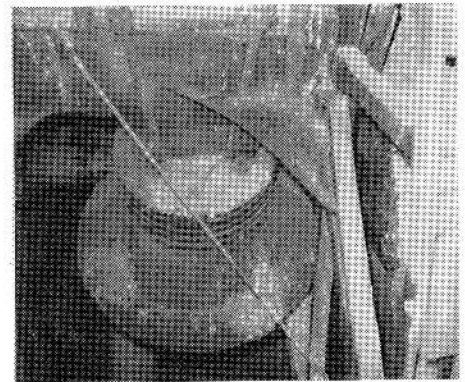
Yours faithfully
S. B. Goslin

Goslin duly carried out the work, also inserting for £5 new oak uprights in the frame. His trade-plate remained on the stock until the bell's removal in 1980 for rehousing for swinging in the other tower.

At the same time as this Goslin visited the churches of All Saints (demolished in 1938) and St Alphege concerning the augmentation of the St Alphege bells which he had rehung five years before. It was not their first visit, Goslin having to "give in and to say that I had in my previous test put down (All Saints) bell as E, when it is really C sharp." Some error!

As money came in the St Alphege bells were augmented; the present third in 1893 the second in 1894; at the same time a secondhand treble was installed. Apart from overhauling the

(continued overleaf)



The former treble at St Margaret, Canterbury, now at St Peter.

Dummy rescued by Fire Brigade during candle-lit quarter peal

It sounds unlikely, but it's true.

Cass and John Boocock and Sheila and Phillip George celebrated their 25th wedding anniversaries on the same day – October 7th. A quarter peal was arranged at Gamlingay but on arrival at the tower it was found that the lights had fused. It was a lucky coincidence that the local fire brigade had been invited to the church to practise search and rescue. John (Tower Captain) managed to find some candles but we had to ask the firemen for the matches! We were able to start the quarter while they were clambering up the tower (perfectly safely) to rescue the unsuspecting dummy. The first ten minutes of the quarter was accompanied by flashes of torch-light and shouts from up and down the turret stair. Eventually we were left in peace (and candle-light) to complete our quarter.

Thanks to Susanna (daughter of Cass and John) and Tim (Phillip's best man) for ringing with us. Here's to the next 25 years.

The ringers also wish to associate this quarter peal with the Centenary of the Ely Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers.

Gamlingay, Cambs. 7 Oct, 1260 Plain Bob Minor: Susanna Boocock 1, Cass Boocock 2, Sheila George 3, John Boocock 4, Timothy Griffiths 5, Phillip George (C) 6. £1.20

A Vicar retires – or – 'a bit of a do'

Our Vicar retired yesterday. Nothing unusual in that you may think – Vicars retire all the time. The fact is that he was 'Our Vicar' and he's been 'Our Vicar' for the past 36 years. The Reverend Peter G. Wright was installed as Vicar of Coddington with Barnby-in-the-Willows ever since it was created a Benefice in 1961 – and that's a long time in anybody's book. All he ever wanted to be was a village Vicar, and that he has been, and a very good one too.

How could we let the man who has led us spiritually for so long, and has been a friend to so many, go without some sort of celebration.

He wanted to go without any fuss. Like a nomad in the desert, he just wanted to pack up his tent and disappear into the night. The villagers, though, had different plans.

Under the subterfuge of "But Vicar, the children want to hold a farewell service for you" we arranged 'a bit of a do'.

Firstly a Quarter Peal was rung prior to the service – the very least we could do under the circumstances. While this was proceeding, other people were busy at work. A cake was placed on a table in front of the screen; the wine and the cake carefully placed to one side of the church, and his gifts and thank you's covered discreetly next to the lectern.

I didn't actually see the Vicar enter the church – but I can imagine his surprise, and I can understand why he made his apologies and left for the sanctuary of the vestry.

By now our little country church was bulging at the seams. The service began and was rousing and full of joy, because this was our way of saying thank you.

It was filled with his favourite hymns, and we recited the poem 'Blame the Vicar' by John Betjeman.

'Our Vicar' being 'Our Vicar' would not let things rest so easily though, and with a glint in one eye asked if we could deviate from the normal procedure of things. If ever he had wanted a second profession I'm sure he would have been a Conductor. This was something he enjoyed doing, and he did it with gusto. He asked if we would sing, along with the children, in that famous three part harmony – London's Burning. It took some time before we were able to calm him down and continue with the service.

The speeches were made, prayers were taken, and the gifts were given. The wine was cooled to perfection and my compliments to the Ladies for those delicious cakes.

He hasn't gone far, and we will all see him again, but things won't be the same, it was his style and his way of doing things, and we loved him for it. For our part, we were grateful for the chance to give him 'a bit of a do'. M.J.B.

Coddington, Notts. 28 Sept, 1260 Grandsire Doubles: H Geoff Wells 1, Derick Kirton 2, Neil Kirton 3, Mike Bache 4, John Draycott (C) 5, Fred Tomlinson 6. Rung to mark the Retirement of the Reverend Peter G Wright – Vicar of Coddington with Barnby-in-the-Willows for the past 36 years.

GOSLIN - continued

gudgeons and bearings and anchoring the tops of the trusswork to the walls (done in the 1920's by **Alfred Bowell** of Ipswich) the bells remain much as they were. Rung originally from the ground floor, the first floor, now an office was erected in the 1920's and the old intermediate chamber is now the ringing room. It is worth recalling the efforts of the erstwhile **King's School Society of Ringers** who in 1957 re-started regular ringing here; and of the Bells Committee of the KCACR who "nursed" the bells following closure of the Church and its conversion into a Heritage Centre - and eventually obtained permission for limited ringing on them.

Goslin's third bell, his earliest, is far from good and the lettering employed is ornamental rather than beautiful. The second bell is much better tonally and in appearance. The 18th-century treble can be called only an approximate fit. Considering how slight the frame timbers are and the age of the fittings, the bells have done very well, indeed they have a certain melancholy charm which I for one recall with affection.

1895 saw Goslin active at **Herne Bay**, where he supplied a duplicate "of the second bell at St Alphege, Canterbury, where it is much approved". Two trebles went to augment **Edenbridge** to eight; they lasted only 30 years. **All Saints, Whitstable** were rehung, apparently unsuccessfully. A small bell for **Lavenham Cemetery** was the sole 1896 output, though the six bells (then) at **Eltham** were rehung and the old eight at **Gravesend, St George**. The latter was so badly done that Warner's had to do the job properly three years later; both rings were recast in 1924. 1897 saw three bells - two in Tayside and one in North Kent. In this period he rehung in a timber frame (notable for its complete lack of lateral rigidity) the two bells at **Hinxhill, Kent** and supplied another 18th-century bell to a Kent church, St John's, Herne Bay. It was said to have come from St Paul, Southwark, wherever that was. Church and bell went in 1973. Only one bell is left from the 19th century at **Hungerford** (1899). This last bell was small, the next was not much bigger being cast for Newhaven to see the new century in. Canterbury called in 1902 (St Paul's) and 1903 (St Margaret's) where in each case he rehung the three bells badly and recast one. The St Paul's tenor was a horrible instrument, remarkable only for a reproduced mediaeval inscription; the *Kentish Gazette* of the time had this to say:

The tenor bell of St Paul's Church, inscribed *Eternis Annis Resonet Campana Iohannis* has been recast and rung in honour and memory of the King's Coronation. The work was carried out by Mr S. B. Goslin of the well known Bishopsgate Foundry and Art Metal Works, whose services in the treatment of other bells in Canterbury have several times been requisitioned. The recasting and skillful reproduction of the ornamental inscription of this bell ... (which) for a time spoke with cracked and husky voice or tone ... may it continue to speak for eternal years.

It didn't; described as 'the sound of a cannon going off' and over a tone flat it was recast and the bells rehung in 1987. The St Margaret's treble was more fortunate. After hanging derelict for 25 years (see illustration) it was removed to St Peter's, Canterbury, where, tuned by Whitechapel it forms a very acceptable treble in a chime of four. To help pay for it the bell from St Andrew's (closed 1880, dem 1956) was traded in and sold on by Goslin to Caversham Roman Catholic Church. There, with another secondhand offering this **Robert Mot** bell still hangs, but Goslin's two trebles of 1902 were recast by **Charles Carr** in 1904. They *must* have been bad. Every effort I have made to see these bells has been thwarted, the last time by an Old Bristol Ringer whose son and I were unable to

prevail upon him to go the last mile to view these monuments to campanalogical ineptitude. I believe Goslin returned to Canterbury in 1905 to remove to the Clock Tower at **Bexleyheath** the C-sharp (or E) bell from All Saints Church, also closed in 1880.

And at some point around this time, Goslin must have been supplying the three bells to Westminster Cathedral. Dare one suggest that the inscriptions on the smaller bells may be incised rather than sunken, as Mr Blair suggests, and that these two bells were taken from stock - or even secondhand?

1906 saw the Saga of **Sellindge** where Goslin's frame and trusswork remain a testimony to an all-time fiasco. Here a derelict five was restored including the recasting of the treble and second. Whitechapel reported in 1909 in quite unequivocal terms that the new bells were too light, the treble a semitone flat and the bellhanging atrocious. The report was accepted and Mears added a further treble, recast the three-year old Goslin bells and made sundry other improvements.

The firm later became re-established at Charlton, South-East London. Goslin himself lived at Wilmington in the same area. A son was later taken into partnership. In 1922 they returned to Canterbury to rehang St Martin's bells (again rehung by Whitechapel in 1987); three years later they rehung badly the threes at Luddesdowne (since augmented to a chime of six and again rehung) and Darent, again rehung for chiming in 1986. The last monument to their apparent incompetence is the ring of six at Southfleet, where after two bells were welded by Messrs Barrimar the firm of Goslin & Son refurbished the gear and rehung them on one level (they had been on two tiers) in the rehashed frame. At the dedication, all the ringers could manage was ten minutes' Doubles, and they have been chimed ever since.

A total of 14 surviving bells out of 21 so far discovered. Special thanks to **Alan Blair** for discovering the Westminster Bells, to **Ranald Clouston** and **Chris Pickford** for keeping me aware of others as well as to the late **George Elphick** for his researches into the Warner foundry. A special word to **Nick Davies**, formerly Secretary of the King's School Society, who first introduced me to Gosling's Glories!

DAVID CAWLEY

Bells by S. B. Goslin

Date	Location	Bell	Remarks
1893	Canterbury, S Alphege	3rd	Still there
1894	Canterbury, S Alphege	2nd	Still there
1895	Edenbridge, Kent	1 & 2	Both recast 1924 (G&J)
1895	Herne Bay, Kent	2nd	Still there
1896	Lavenham Cemetery	single	At Guildhall
1897	Perth R.C. Church	1 & 2	Still there
1897	East Wickham, Kent	Treble	On floor of old ch.
1899(?)	Hungerford, St John	single	Still there
1900(?)	Much Hadham	single	St Elizabeth's School - still there
1900	Newhaven RC Church	single	Still there
1902	Caversham RC Church	1 & 2	Both recast 1904 (Carr!)
1902	Canterbury, St Paul	tenor	Recast 1987 (W&F)
1903	Canterbury, St Peter	treble	From St Margaret 1968 (W&F)
1903	Westminster Cathedral	3 bells	Largest number in one place. Tenor his largest bell (3' 0 1/2")
1906	Sellindge, Kent	1&2	Recast 1909 (M&S)

* * *

With reference to Alan Blair's article p.799 and Alan Buswell's letter p.868, there is a bell at Whitechapel, 18" diameter with raised inscription S. B. GOSLIN LONDON 1897. This is to be fitted with swing chime fittings for a customer in Japan. The bell has not been tuned, and there is no cast in crown staple. The bell was purchased as redundant from the incumbent of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Brighton.

DAVID W. JACK
Whitechapel Bell Foundry

* * *

I recalled the name as I have among my ringing books one by Samuel B. Goslin. It is paper-backed, 68 pages, originally published in 1879 though my copy is a second edition of 1891. On its front cover it quotes:

THE MUSICAL HAND-BELL RINGER'S
INSTRUCTOR

Being a short historical account of
SMALL BELLS

A description of Hand-Bells, their Uses and
Purposes.

The RUDIMENTS OF HAND-BELL MUSIC

With Easy Exercises and Tunes.

by SAMUEL B. GOSLIN

Fellow of the Meteorological Society; Member of
the Society of Arts

Prize Medallist, Vienna Exhibition, 1873;

Author of "The First Steps to Bell Ringing upon
Church Bells";

"The ABC of Musical Hand-Bell Ringing";
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Part II

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY JOHN WARNER & SONS,

CRESCENT FOUNDRY, CRIPPLEGATE, E.C.

MCCORQUODALE & CO, CARDINGTON STREET,

HAMPSTEAD ROAD, N.W.

And of the Author

24 ARTILLERY LANE, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT,
LONDON, E.C. AND

24 FASHION STREET, SPITALFIELDS

Entered at Stationers Hall

Towards the end of the book he advertised other books he had written: "HOW TO AVERT OR MITIGATE FAMINES AND DROUGHTS"; "THE DIVISIONS OF ENGLAND AND WALES FOR NATURAL WATER SUPPLY" and "THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF WIND, WATER AND STEAM POWER." On another page is a list of 19 books on bell-ringing which could be obtained from John Warner and another full page for their Cripplegate foundry, which states that it had won two gold medals at the International Exhibition at Vienna in 1873.

Several inferences can be made from the above, not least that Mr Goslin must have been a versatile sort of chap.

DENIS FRITH

* * *

In response to Alan Blair's article (p.799) I do not know of anything specific regarding bells cast by S. B. Goslin.

However, a 'Samuel B. Goslin' wrote a book on the art of musical hand-bell ringing in 1879 and was described as a fellow of the Meteorological Society; Member of the Society of Arts, and prize medalist Vienna Exhibition, 1873.

He also wrote 'The First Steps to Bell Ringing upon Church Bells'.

Alan did not mention the date of the cathedral three but in 1879 in the handbell book there is no reference to him casting handbells or small bells, only references to Warner and Sons.

DAVID POBJOY