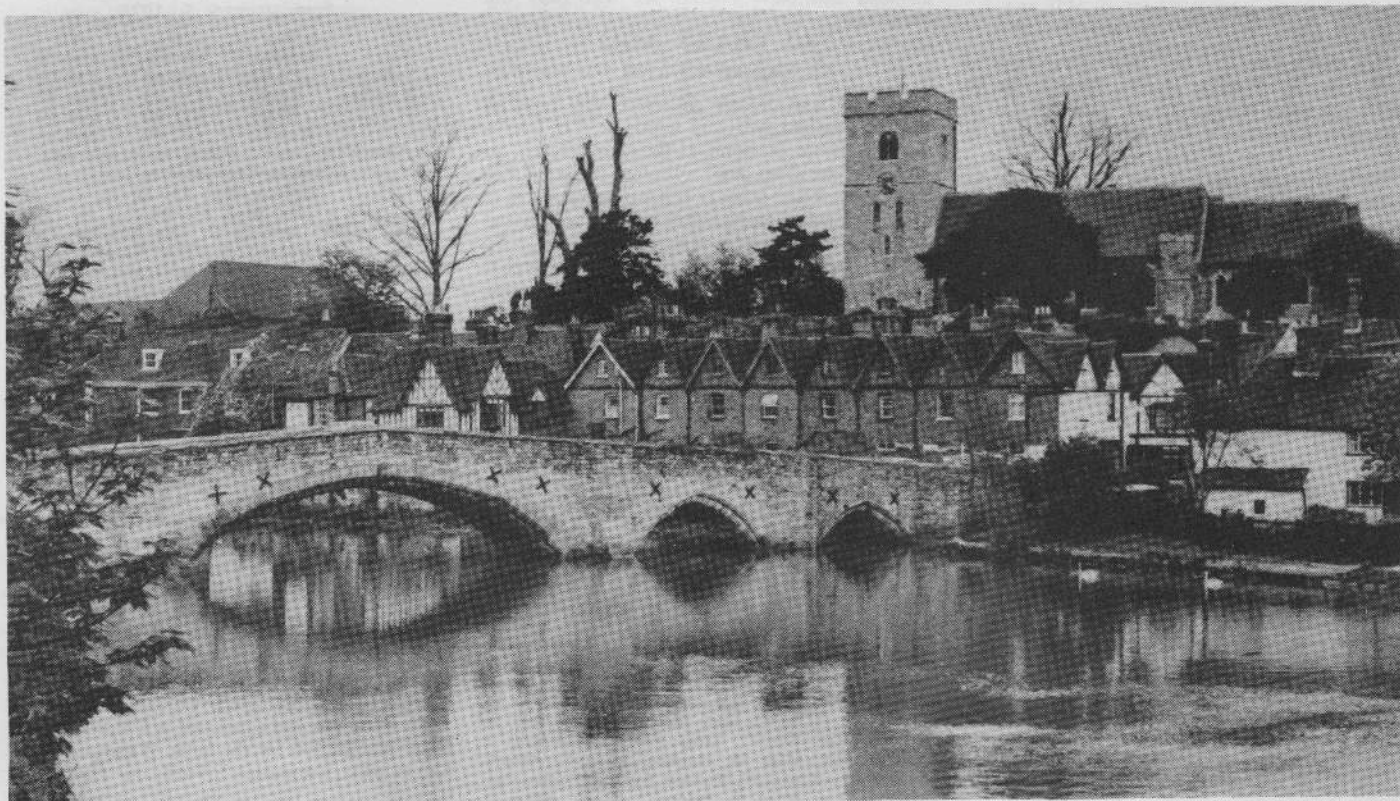


# THE RINGING WORLD

18p weekly

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE CENTRAL COUNCIL  
OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS



## SS. Peter and Paul, Aylesford, Kent

Sheltered from northerly winds by the immense outcrop of chalk on the North Downs known as Blue Bell Hill, Aylesford nestles serenely on a bend of the River Medway. The site is very ancient. Skirting the course of the prehistoric track of the Pilgrims' Way are clusters of long-denuded long barrows of Neolithic date. There is probably no other village in Kent which has been photographed and painted more often than Aylesford. The focal point of allure is the 14th century stone bridge crossing the river, and the parish church of Ss. Peter and Paul which dominates the panorama from a crest of high ground.

This Norman Church, containing remnants of Saxon stonework, was enlarged during the 14th century to its present basic design. This two-gabled building, with twin north and south naves, contains many features to delight the visitor and the bells themselves present a fascinating and distinguished history. Their

resonant message accompanies our way of life and worship, and are thus a vital and traditional means of expression enjoyed by Christian communities.

In the year 1518, Thomas Cossington bequeathed the sum of 20 shillings for a treble bell to add to the existing three bells.

About 1621-22 one of the bells was found to be damaged and was recast or replaced and in 1629-30 the third bell was recast. It was again recast in 1632-33 and another bell was similarly recast in 1633-34. The great bell, or tenor, was recast in 1640-41 at Ulcombe by William Hatch and again in 1641 all four bells were rehung by John Best. From the high incidence of damage, which in consequence necessitated recasting, it can be inferred that the practical aspects of bell-founding and hanging were not adequate to the demands of the bell ringers. None of these bells survive today, except as metal in subsequent recasting.

The oldest two existing bells are the fourth and the fifth, which were fashioned at Southwark. The fourth bell, of 31" diameter, weighs 5 cwt. 3 qr. 14 lb., and is inscribed: "Michael Darbie made me 1652 T Madgin". In about 1885, this bell was quarter-turned and

new holes drilled for the mounting bolts.

The fifth weighs 6 cwt. 3 qr. 21 lb. with a diameter of 33", and is inscribed: "Michael Darbie made me 1652 I Bogherst".

With a diameter of 39", the seventh bell, weighing 10 cwt. 1 qr. 20 lb., bears the Croydon mark of Gillett & Co., the bellfounder. It is inscribed:

"Robert Kemsley }  
Phillip Graye } Churchwardens  
God save King Charles ye 2d 1661"

The eighth (the tenor) is 13 cwt. 2 qr. 7 lb., with a diameter of 43". Here we find the inscription: "Anthony Bartlet made Mee 1666". Notice the spelling of "me". The "n's" in Anthony are reversed. There is a further inscription: "Cap' Ward Liveftenant Long Two Of His Matis Hoymenn". A hoyman was a sailor who served on a hoy. His Majesty's Hoymen were officers and men who served on Navy transports delivering messages and stores to the Fleet. A hoy was a small cargo-vessel used for short coastal journeys. Invariably single-masted, a hoy had four sails, a loose-footed mainsail on a gaff, a square topsail, a triangular foresail and a jib set on the bowsprit. The date  
(Continued overleaf)

**AYLESFORD, KENT**—continued

on the bell, 1666, gives us the clue for these were the days of the second Dutch Wars.

Captain Thomas Ward and Lieutenant Long may have been local men, who served King and Country in their hour of need, and had survived the holocaust of battle. What better way to thank God for their deliverance, than by providing their Church with a new bell? This bell was recast by Gillett & Co., of Croydon in 1885, preserving the original inscription.

**STILL FIVE BELLS**

In the year 1682 there were still five bells at Aylesford. Three of these were rehung.

The sixth bell weighs 8 cwt. 1 qr. 12 lb. on a 36" diameter. It is inscribed:

"R. Phelps fecit  
Thomas Goodman } Churchwardens 1708"  
John Tayler

It appears that this bell was recast from at least two earlier bells. It was again recast in 1885, the work being done by Gillett & Co. of Croydon. Each of the five bells was rehung in 1709.

New ropes were purchased annually for the five bells between 1693 and 1713. The old ropes, if not too badly worn, were used by the churchwardens on their respective small-holdings as plough traces.

By the generosity of Mr. H. A. Brassey, three new bells were provided in 1885. In consequence, the ring of bells was increased from five to eight and a new oak frame provided to support the hanging. A complete new set of fittings was provided for each bell and in addition an Ellacombe chiming apparatus was installed. By this means, the possibility was created for tunes in the key of F to be played from the base of the tower by manipulating a series of ropes.

The first bell weighs 4 cwt. 0 qr. 24 lb., with a diameter of 26", the second 4 cwt. 1 qr. 4 lb. with a diameter of 27", and the third with a 28" diameter weighs 4 cwt. 3 qr. 0 lb. These three new bells were cast by Gillett & Co., Croydon, and bear the founder's mark around the neck, and the inscription:

"Henry Arthur Brassey gave me  
Cyril Grant Vicar 1885  
John Monson Shaw } Churchwardens  
James Cole

**SPECIAL SERVICE**

on Saturday, 19th December 1885 a special service was held for the dedication of the new bells and following prayers, a short "peal" was rung. The Rev. Canon Jelf preached an appropriate sermon based on the text in Zechariah 14, 20. In the evening a peal of Kent Treble Bob Major of 5,008 changes was rung in exactly three hours by a company of College Youths.

With the ringing facility restored and enlarged, a company of Aylesford bellringers was re-established. A peal of Grandsire Triples (Holt's six-part) was conducted by A. Moorcroft on Monday, 5th August, 1889, when 5,040 changes were rung in 3 hours 4 minutes. The first recorded peal by an Aylesford band was conducted by T. M. Durban on Thursday, 19th February, 1891 when Grandsire Triples (Holt's ten-part) was rung in 2 hours 50 minutes. Since then, constant practice by an enthusiastic team has achieved a standard in campanology which has won wide acclaim.

During September 1978 the sixth bell collapsed from its mounting. Extensive repairs at Whitechapel Foundry, London, provided a new headstock and bearings, a new stay and clapper, with repairs to the old wheel.

**25 YEARS AGO**

**Taken from The Ringing World for September 3, 1954**

An unexpected honour was accorded the Universities Association at Hereford. When they set out for their first tower they found the route had been sign-posted by the A.A. with "U.A. Tour" in large black letters. The U.A. felt that they were the first ringing tour to come to the notice of a national motoring association.

Mr. P. Price, who was Dominion carillonneur at Ottawa, was appointed Professor of Campanology and University Carillonneur to the University of Michigan, U.S.A.

There were three Roberts in a peal at Carbis Bay, but none could claim relationship, Margaret A., who rang her first peal, Frederick J., and the Rev. Arthur S., who was the conductor.

**40 YEARS AGO**

**September 1, 1939**

As the war clouds gathered, the Leading Article finished with the words — "Let everything possible be done, if the worst befall, to keep our art alive, and, although it may suffer severe shock like other of the minor pleasures of life, there will then be better prospect of revival when happier times come again."

One of the first casualties of the war was a peal ringing tour in Bedfordshire and Northants, which had to be abandoned as most of the participants had had their holiday leave cancelled.

At Bushey, Herts, Harold Cashmore called the first peal of Spliced Stedman and Erin Triples. There were 300 changes of method.

Three brothers, Wilfred, Ernest and Harold White, rang their first peal together at Bruton, Somerset. Also taking part was Thomas White, their father.

Like many other historic buildings, the soft stone of the tower of Ss. Peter & Paul's Parish Church at Aylesford has suffered depreciation from the effects of atmospheric pollution. Because of the effects of normal wear, all the bells need rehanging. This is necessary to avoid

This photograph of the ringers was taken by M. N. Pring. (L. to r.) back row: J. Parker, Rev. A. T. Goodrich (vicar), Miss P. Leggett, Mrs. J. McCormack, Miss M. Hughes, Miss L. Affleck, W. Linkstead, Mrs. C. Bartlett (now at Eynesford). Middle row: Miss S. Pring, J. Vigar, Miss C. Parker, M. Taylor, M. Pring (captain). Front row: N. Smelt, P. Stubbings, C. Parker.



Penmark House, Woodbridge Meadows, Guildford, GU1 1BL

The official Journal of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers

(Founded by J. S. Goldsmith, proprietor and editor until his death in 1942)

EDITOR: C. W. DENYER

**Committee**

R. F. B. Speed (Chairman), 88 High Street, Hillmorton, Rugby, Warks., CV21 4EE, D. A. Bayles, H. W. Egglestone, A. Stubbs, Mesdames J. S. King and A. Newing, J.P.

**POSTAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

From January 1, 1979

|          | 3 months | 6 months | 12 months |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1 copy   | £3.50    | £6.40    | £12.00    |
| 2 copies | £6.80    | £11.70   | £21.80    |
| 3 "      | £9.60    | £17.50   | £31.40    |
| 4 "      | £12.20   | £22.60   | £41.30    |

Additional copies, £10.00 each per year

Overseas (Annual only):—

Surface Mail £12.20

Air Mail £17.00

Remittances, payable to The Ringing World, should be addressed to The Ringing World, Penmark House, Woodbridge Meadows, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 1BL (Tel. [0483] 69535).

**Officers of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers**

President: Edwin A. Barnett

Vice-President: The Rev. John G. M. Scott

Hon. Secretary: Cyril A. Wratten

19 Ravensgate Road, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham.

Librarian: W. T. Cook

47 Manor Road, Sidcup, Kent DA15 7HU

the possibility of another bell falling from its mounting. A moderate sum of money is required to restore and maintain the fabric and even in these days of economic difficulty, we are confident that many will search their conscience and prepare their pockets. Only in this manner can our historic heritage be preserved as an identity to be appreciated by future generations.

The total amount estimated is £20,000 for the tower and £9,000 for the bells. If anyone would like to make a donation towards our fund would they please send them to our tower treasurer Mr. J. McCormack, 17, Woodlands Road, Ditton, Maidstone, Kent.