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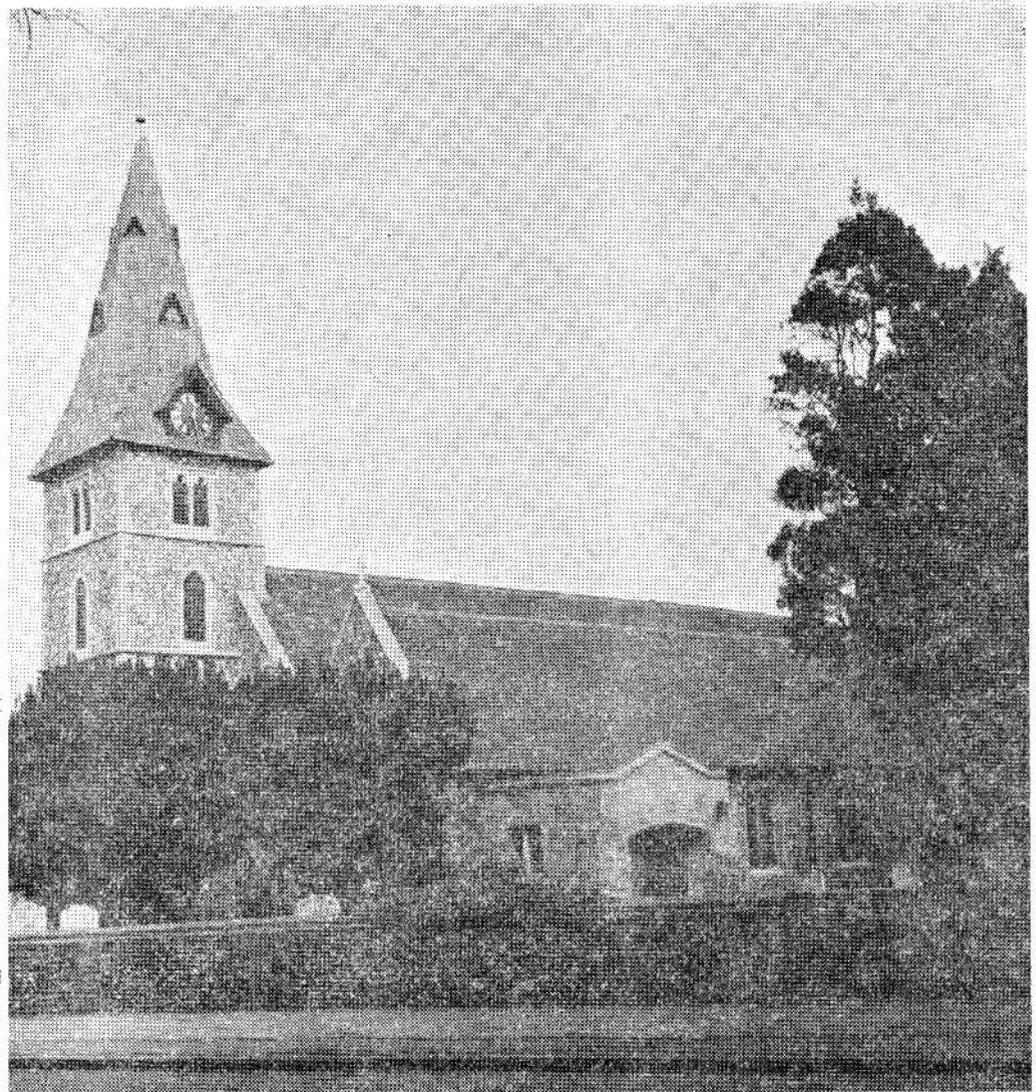
# THE RINGING WORLD

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ST. MARY  
THE VIRGIN,  
HAYES,  
KENT



COVER PICTURE

## St. Mary the Virgin, Hayes, Kent

DURING ITS LONG HISTORY Hayes has had a variety of names, all meaning "heath". The heath, or common as it is now called, remains virtually unspoiled despite the rapid increase in the population of Hayes during the 20th century. Today, the Parish Church and the common are reminders of the time when Hayes was a small village community, very different from the rush and bustle of modern times. It is fortunate that, despite its close proximity to London, some beautiful countryside is still within easy reach, and this is undoubtedly one of the factors that has brought Hayes into the London commuter area.

It is believed that a church has stood on the present site since Roman times, but the present building dates from circa 1200. Only the lower part of the tower and the west wall remain of the original building, the rest having since been rebuilt or restored. The original low tower was heightened in the 14th century and a spire added. This was blown down in 1703 and replaced by a low, squat spire which was later given an embattled stone coping at the base. The present spire of oak shingles, overhanging the tower, was erected in 1861. It had to be extensively re-shingled in 1950 after war damage.

William Pitt, later to become Earl of Chatham, lived at a big mansion called Hayes Place opposite the church. William Pitt the Younger was born there in 1759 and was baptised at St. Mary's. At the age of 24 years he became Prime Minister, the youngest man ever to have held that office. Pitt the Elder died at Hayes in 1778 and these two great statesmen are remembered by a memorial built into the north wall of the church. Hayes Place was demolished in 1933, the last owner being Sir E. A. Hambro of the famous banking family. Apart from the memorial mentioned above, several street names, near the church, bear witness to the memory of these men.

Before 1552 there were three ringing bells and a saint's bell. The saint's bell disappeared and the other bells were replaced by the following: a tenor bell, cast by Robert Mot in 1602, the fifth bell by John Hodson in 1670 and the fourth by T. Mears in 1832. Three trebles, by Mears and Stainbank, were added in 1882 and the remainder recast by the same foundry in 1900 to form the present ring of six, the tenor of which weighs 8 cwt. 1 qr. 26 lbs. Because the tower is so small the foundry had no choice but to hang the six bells in a two-tier frame. The treble, second and third bells are hung in a wooden frame, above which is a cast iron frame supporting the fourth, fifth and tenor bells. The ascent to the bells from the ground floor ringing room is somewhat perilous, a 40ft. vertical iron-rung ladder providing the only means of access. There is no intermediate floor and the bells are thus rather loud in the ringing room, but they handle easily following the installation of rope guides. The bells were rehung by the Whitechapel Foundry some ten years ago.

As is true of most towers, the local band has had mixed fortunes over the years. During the early part of this century an accomplished Treble Bob and Surprise band was in existence, but by the '50s the bells were mostly silent. A new band was formed, largely as a result of the help given by the neighbouring band at West Wickham. At present the bells are rung twice on a Sunday and at the Tuesday practice by an enthusiastic band, methods up to spliced surprise often being accomplished. Several members hold office in the Kent County Association and five of the band belong to either the Cumberlands or Ancient Society of College Youths.

In 1971 the local band rang a peal of Cambridge S. Minor (at West Wickham) as a "welcome home" to Suzanne Smith, daughter of the tower captain, from V.S.O. in Uruguay. This was followed by a peal of 7-Surprise Minor (again at West Wickham) in 1972. The latest goal took the form of a peal attempt at Hayes, Middlesex, on the morning of 10th February, 1973, and a sponsored peal in aid of the church organ fund at Hayes, Kent, in the afternoon.

The Plain Bob major in the morning was slow to settle down (largely due to nerves!) but the last hour contained some very good ringing. Four minor methods were chosen for the sponsored peal and, despite the flashing of cameras and the distraction of having an audience, a good peal was brought round. It is hoped that details of the fund-raising methods and the sum raised will be published in a later issue.

Visitors are always welcome for service ringing and Tuesday practices—the church is about half-a-mile from the main line station and is easily accessible from Bromley.

### THE RINGING WORLD

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### FARNHAM DISTRICTS

The Farnham District A.G.M. was held at Worplesdon on January 27. There was a variety of ringing both before and after the meeting, conducted by the ringing master, Mr. W. J. Couperthwaite. In the Guild form of service the rector of Worplesdon, the Rev. Francis Palmer, spoke of the three T's—Teamwork, Training and Temptation, which affect everyone, but especially ringers. After the service the fourth T (tea) followed in the Memorial Hall.

The Guild master, Mr. D. Parsons, was elected to take the chair at the business meeting. Several new members were elected, and it was pointed out that new members did not have to pass any part of the rector's test, since the scheme was purely voluntary.

The district master detailed the district performances of 1972. He noted that there was a slight increase over the total for 1971. He also called for all members to attempt to improve their striking and was sure that the way to do this was firstly to improve one's handling and secondly to get "out and about" to other towers, ringing different bells with different ringers.

The secretary reported on the success of the district outing to Oxford and also on the meetings of 1972. She called for increased attendance at the meetings, and asked tower captains to encourage members to attend.

The treasurer called for prompt payment of subscriptions for the current year and pointed out that all the district officers came from just three towers and reminded members in time for next year that it would be possible to have a more representative set of officials.

The district officers elected for the current year were: Master, W. J. Couperthwaite; assistant ringing master, T. Page; secretary, Miss S. J. Tate-Mitchell; treasurer, B. White.

After some discussion it was decided that in future the nomination meeting and the A.G.M. would be held at Aldershot and Farnham respectively, since experience seemed to indicate that many more members would attend those meetings than had attended since the "roving A.G.M." was introduced.

It was decided that the district outing for 1973 should be to the Bristol area in view of the facility for travel in that direction afforded by the M4.

The meeting concluded by sending best wishes to the Editor of the R.W. for a speedy recovery after his recent heart attack. Finally a vote of thanks was proposed to the Worplesdon ladies for providing the tea and to the rector for the use of the bells.

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