

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MILLICENT

We often hear the church bells ringing but only rarely do we actually see the bells, *writes Mark Elvers*. The bells are mounted in a wooden frame high above the ringing chamber and only accessed for maintenance or putting on the muffles for special occasions such as The Holy Innocents. While removing the muffles at the end of last year I became intrigued by the inscription on the tenor bell which reads 'In Loving Memory of Millicent 1900-1931'. Who was Millicent and why did she die at such a young age?

There is a tremendous resource created by Dickon Love called 'Love's Guide to The Church Bells of Kent', which records that the bell was originally cast for St Paul's Church, Penge in 1866 by John Warner & Sons and recast by Gillett and Johnston in 1933. The bell came to St Michael and All Angels' in 1974 when St Paul's, Penge was demolished and rebuilt in 1978 as a modern structure without bells. The bell weighs 6-1-24 and is tuned to the note of C. In 1979, the original six bells from St Michael and All Angels' were recast by the Whitechapel foundry into seven smaller bells to complement the bell from Penge and subsequently rehung in January, 1980.

The online genealogy website ancestry.co.uk allows us to search historic birth, marriage and death records and searching for Millicent, 1900-1931, Penge yielded Millicent Scott-Hopkins as a likely candidate. Could I find a living relative who could confirm that she was the Millicent on the bell?

Millicent Scott-Hopkins had a son on November 29th, 1921 named James Sidney Rawdon - Sidney after her father and Rawdon after her husband. James joined the British Army in 1939 before retiring in 1950 to become a farmer. He was an MP from 1959 to 1979 and under Margaret Thatcher's Government led the British Conservative Group in the first directly-elected European Parliament.

He was an MEP from 1973 to 1994 and appointed Knight in 1981. He died on March 11th, 1995. James married Geraldine Hargreaves in 1946 and they had four children.

Unfortunately, I was unable to trace current contact details for any of them.



Photo: Mark Elvers

Millicent's father was Dr John Sidney Turner, born in 1843 who, following the death of his first wife in 1893, married Emily Jane Barry in 1895. Emily was born in 1861 in Calcutta, India and was the daughter of Dr John Boyle Barry.

The family appear on the 1901 and 1911 census as living at 81 Anerley Road, Anerley with their daughter Millicent. Dr Turner died in January, 1920 just two months after Millicent's engagement to Lieutenant-Colonel Rawdon Scott-Hopkins was announced. Mrs Turner died of a heart attack on June 21st, 1933. The article in the Norwood News, available from the British Newspaper Archive, says:

Mrs Turner has been identified for many years with St Paul's Church, Hamlet Road, which she attended with unfailing regularity and her love for the church was demonstrated in many ways. When the organ was restored, she made a generous contribution towards the cost and recently she provided a new bell as a memorial to her daughter, Mrs Scott-Hopkins, who died two years ago. Mrs Turner suffered a grievous loss by her daughter's passing and had never really recovered from the shock.

The Norwood News also records that Mrs Millicent Barry Scott-Hopkins died suddenly of heart failure at home in Cranleigh, Surrey on Thursday, June 4th, 1931. She is buried in the family grave at St John the Evangelist, Shirley.

Millicent's wedding captured the hearts of the local people '*with the church crowded to its utmost capacity by friends who came to rejoice with and admire the bride*'. She was christened, confirmed and married at St Paul's Church.



The Wedding Party, October 27th, 1920, at St Paul's Church
Photo: Everitt, Upper Norwood/Norwood News

In Loving Memory of Millicent, February 16th, 1900 - June 4th, 1931.