

July 28, 1972

# THE RINGING WORLD

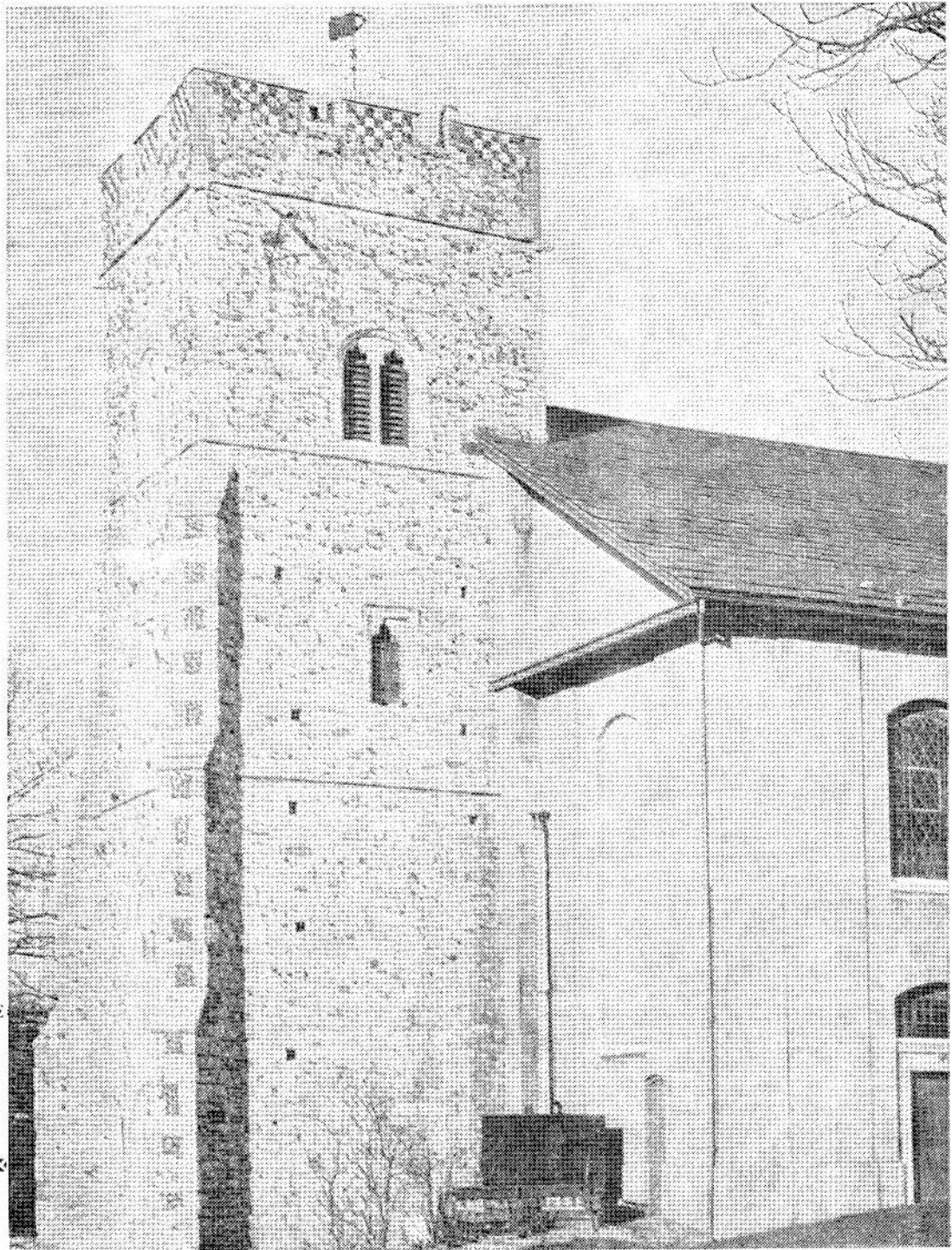
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
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OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

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64p

**St. Margaret's,  
Rochester,  
Kent**



COVER PICTURE **St. Margaret's, Rochester, Kent**

ON THE BANK of the River Medway, in sight and sound of both the Norman Keep and the Cathedral, stands the Church of St. Margaret. According to tradition the church stands above the point where St. Justus baptised the first Christian converts. The long list of vicars at St. Margaret's begins in the year 1272 with the name of William Telefus, and it is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the parish dates from that time. There was certainly a church at St. Margaret's long before 1272. The earliest mention of the church is in a charter of Bishop Gundulph between 1107 and 1108. This gave the presentation rights of St. Margaret's to the monks of the Benedictine Priory of St. Andrew in Rochester—St. Margaret's at this time stood outside the walls of the city.

The mediæval church which survived until 1823 consisted of a nave, side chapels, chancel and tower. Several paintings and drawings of the old building exist, two of which hang in the present church. The only part of the old church which survives, apart from wall monuments, is the tower, which was incorporated in the present building.

In 1823 a special vestry meeting decided to apply for a faculty to enlarge the church. This was granted and the work was completed the same year. The present nave was built to seat 1,119. Various other work was carried out between 1823 and 1900.

**THE TOWER**

The tower and belfry date from between 1458 and 1465. It is 66 feet high, built in Perpendicular style of Kentish rag and flint. The battlements command an impressive view of the whole Medway area. The original ring seems to have been one

of five bells; a sixth was added late in the 18th century. In 1896 two more bells were added, making eight in all. To make room for these extra bells, two were hung from a sub-frame above the main frame. The other six are hung in a wooden frame of somewhat doubtful construction.

**THE BELLS**

Treble.—John Taylor and Co., 1896 (3 cwt. 2 qr. in G)  
2nd.—John Taylor, 1896 (4 cwt. in F)  
3rd.—Thomas Mears, 1790 (4 cwt. 2 qr. in E)  
4th.—J. Warner, 1884 (4 cwt. 3 qr. in D)  
5th.—Thomas Mears, 1790 (6 cwt. in C)  
6th.—Joseph Hatch, 1621 (7 cwt. in B)  
7th.—Joseph Hatch, 1624 (8 cwt. in A)  
Tenor.—J. Warner, 1884 (10 cwt. 2 qr. in G)

Prior to recasting in 1884 the tenor bore the inscription: "He that rings me well, the tenor note I will truly tell. Thos. Barker and Ino Hickott Ch. Wardens 1761. Lester and Pack of London fecit."

The present condition of the frame has helped to give St. Margaret's bells a reputation in the district of being difficult to ring. The present band of ringers have taken up the challenge and are starting a programme which, it is hoped, will allow the bells to be rehung in the not distant future.

In spite of the age of the tower, little appears to be known about the ringers who have gone before or their efforts. There are no peal boards or tower records, which is strange. It is hoped that efforts in hand will bring to light some of this missing information. If any readers can help us in our efforts we shall be pleased to hear from them. Any information should be sent to the tower secretary, Mrs. C. M. Nash, 11 York Road, Rochester, Kent.

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**THE RINGING WORLD**

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**VISITOR FROM U.S.A.**

A welcome visitor to the R.W. office on July 11—Mr. Roland A. Perschon, of Pewaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A., who teaches at a public school in America—arrived in England on June 18 and returned home on July 17.

Although he did not ring until visiting England this June, he has received the R.W. for the past 12 months, his interest in bell-ringing stemming from a visit he made to these shores in 1970 with a party of Venture Scouts. At that time a tour of Whitechapel Foundry was made and the ringing at St. John's, Hackney, was watched during the weekly practice.

A friendship developed with Tony Baker, of St. George's-in-the-East, and Linda West who rings at Waltham Abbey, and this friendship has grown stronger so that Mr. Perschon has now come over to act as best man at their wedding on July 15. To ensure the bellringing "flavour" be complete Tony has given his best man a crash course in bell handling, and a quarter peal attempt with the new recruit to bellringing covering on the tenor was made at St. George's-in-the-East on July 11.

**PEAL LAST AUGUST**

During the Wilfred Williams peal tour last August a peal was rung at Stroud (Glos) and was recorded for the Llandaff and Monmouth Association. It should have been credited to the Gloucester and Bristol, and we print the details again for the sake of regularity.

**GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION.**—Stroud, Glos, St. Laurence, on Mon., Aug. 30, 1971, in 3 hr. 8 min. (20 cwt.), 5040 London Surprise Royal, composed by Peter Border: 1 Wilfred Williams, 2 Tudor P. Edwards, 3 Basil Jones, 4 Robert Dennis, 5 David E. Rothera, 6 Philip J. Rothera, 7 J. Alan Ainsworth, 8 Timothy F. Collins, 9 Ralph G. Edwards, 10 Peter Border (Conductor).

**DETERMINED ONSLAUGHT**

On a glorious day (like an oasis in a desert of bad weather) the Brant Broughton annual outing took place on June 3. Members and friends converged on the attractive village of Witham-on-the-Hill, and after two well-known members had tried the village stocks for size the enthusiastic local band of churchyard workers were serenaded by the equally enthusiastic band of ringers.

Across the A1 (not without difficulty), the band made for Greatham (an easy-moving six); then on to Cottesmore—a glorious church, the immaculate condition of which made clear the time and care given it. We were met by a churchwarden who rang in a short touch on the bells, which were a pleasure to ring.

A break for a leisurely tea at the neighbouring village of Exton, followed by some good ringing at the prettily-situated church. No resident band here, and the ringing chamber showed a determined onslaught by the local bird population and showed a marked reluctance to use the conveniently-placed chamber pot!

Edith Weston came next, where a competent performance was given on the lively six. Finally to Preston, where we were welcomed by the vicar and wound up the day's ringing with half-an-hour on the 10 cwt. six. Well-earned refreshment rounded off a first-class day before the not-too-long trip home.

K. C. V.

**LANCHESTER VISITS CUMBERLAND**

On Bank Holiday Monday the ringers of Lanchester and Shincliffe (Durham), together with others from Blaydon, Consett and Whitley Bay, visited Cumberland for their annual outing.

The first stop was Brampton, where the church has some magnificent modern stained glass. A short ride took us to Carlisle Cathedral, the belfry being reached by walking along a passage near the choir roof, giving a close view of the newly-painted woodwork; next stop was Penrith, where the bells were judged to be the best of the day.

After a short delay, due to the organiser tangling with Penrith Constabulary, we moved on to Great Salkeld. This charming village near the River Eden has a massive tower which dates from the 14th century and was evidently intended as a local stronghold or refuge during the border wars.

A long run by Brough and Barnard Castle brought the party back to Durham, the thanks of all being extended to those who helped in the arrangements.

A. C. W.

**We are in the second half of the year and are still a very long way from realising the 400 new subscribers we have asked for.**

Please help!