

Cinque Port provides Royal welcome for a six

The Cinque Port of Sandwich buzzed with activity on the morning of Sunday, 20th May. Fully-armed special squad officers in their natty all-black outfits probed around the churchyard of the Parish Church of St. Clement. No stone or daffodil was left unturned. Sniffer-dogs bustled around the area and a large contingent of "ordinary" police was much in evidence. Perhaps news had got out that the ring of six was to be dedicated and the precautions were being taken to ensure that no maverick ringers complete with ropes would gain entry - or perhaps it was because the occasion was to be graced with the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

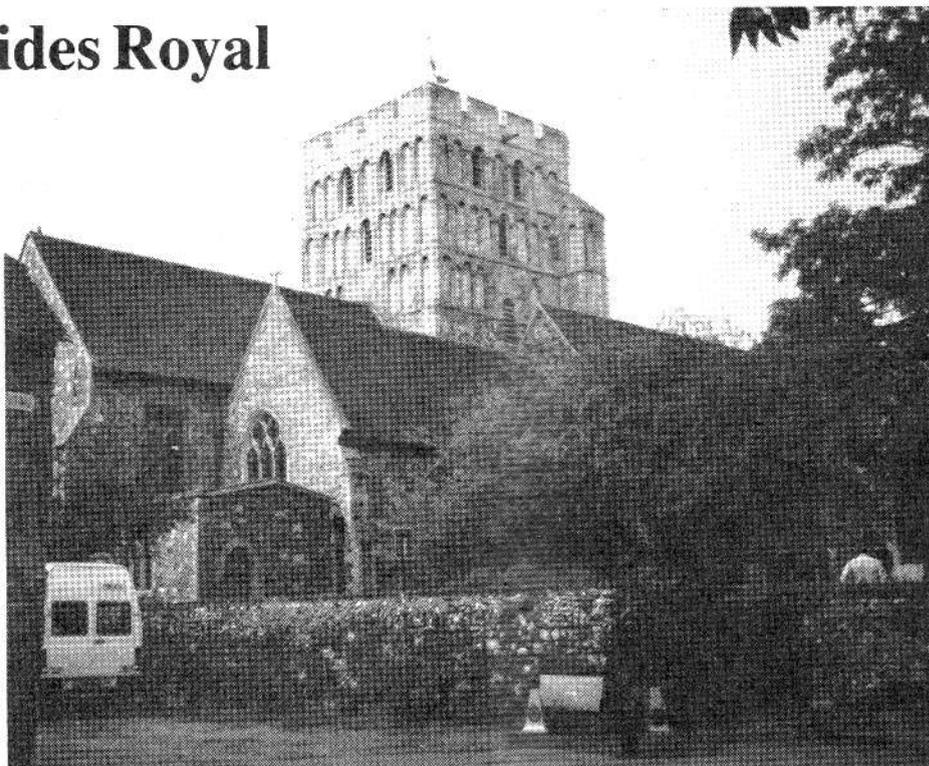
Seldom can the dedication of a ring of six have been accompanied by such pomp and pageantry. The Junior Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines played a selection of music before the service and greeted the Queen Mother's arrival with a fanfare. The Mayors of the Cinque Ports processed with a bewildering display of paraphernalia, and of course crowds gathered outside the church for a glimpse of the royal visitor.

The six bells formerly hung in St. John's, Kirkheaton, and when that church decided to replace them with a new octave, the Central Council's Bell Rescue Fund stepped in and acquired the bells, which had been cast in London in 1805.

St. Clement's, Sandwich, meanwhile was in the process of deciding what to do with their set of tubular bells which were in urgent need of repair. These tubular bells had replaced the original Sandwich bells (a John Hodson ring of 1672) which had been sold in 1866 to pay for repairs to the tower. The idea grew, and after much negotiation and hard work the project to hang the Kirkheaton six in the tower of St. Clement's was realised.

Description of the bells and the inscriptions recording their sponsors

Bell	Diam.	Inscription	Weight cwt. qr. lb.
Treble	29 in.	Pat and Charles Burch, St. George's Day, 1985	5 0 21
Second	31¼ in.	Remembering Donald N. V. Smith, 1905-1985 and Duncan R. V. Smith, 1948-1988	6 0 2
Third	32¾ in.	H.M.K., 1891-1983 Te Deum Laudamus	6 1 8
Fourth	34¾ in.	In memory of Marion and Frank Rose of Worth Court, 1990	7 1 13
Fifth	37¼ in.	The gift of John and Anthea Bragg, Mayor and Mayoress, 1990	8 2 10
Tenor	41¾ in.	Donated by Sandwich Town Council, 1990	12 1 6



St. Clement's Church, Sandwich.

So the grand Dedication Service on 20th May was arranged to welcome the Kirkheaton six. Mr. William Weston from the Yorkshire tower was present to invite the Kent tower to accept the bells. Lessons were read by Mr.



Phil Young (left), General Secretary of the Kent C.A., able to relax at last in the tower where she has organised the training of a local band.

Peter Romney, former General Secretary of the Kent CACR and currently Convenor of the Bell Restoration sub-committee, and by Mrs. Phil Young, General Secretary of the Association, who has taken on the task of training a local band. H.M. the Queen Mother was invited to unveil a plaque commemorating the Dedication of the Bells. Peter Romney and Phil Young were presented to her, and it is reported that she expressed a great interest in the whole project.

Canon David Naumann, Rector of St. Clement's, in his sermon expressed grateful thanks to all who had provided funds, help, encouragement and labour. It was a great day for Sandwich, and he made special mention of a series of articles written for *The Ringing World* in 1967 by Rev. David Cawley, whom he was delighted to welcome to the service.

Concluding a three-part article entitled "Town of Silent Towers", David had written: "It seems that the days are gone when St. Clement's bells shouted across to St. Peter's splendid octave, no doubt reminding the people of St. Mary's of their long-lost ring. Only St. Clement's is in use as a parish church today. Would it be too much to hope that one day those splendid arches in that mighty tower will resound again, possibly with the music of St. Peter's bells responding in the distance, and the music of both rings is carried on the evening air across the flats, onward and outward to the open sea?"

Well, St. Peter's tower remains unsafe and the bells unringable, but an historic Yorkshire six now sounds out across the for far too long "Town of the Silent Towers".