

THE RINGING WORLD

December 5, 1975

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE CENTRAL COUNCIL
OF CHURCH BELL RINGERS

Vol. LXXI No. 3371

12½p

Registered at The Post Office
for transmission as a newspaper

ST. LAWRENCE,
SEAL CHART,
SEVENOAKS,
KENT



THOSE WHO FIND this Church in the woods often ask "Where is the village?" The parish, created in 1867, is actually made up of three hamlets. To the north of the A25 is The Chart which means "common", south of the Church is Stone Street and, south again, Bitchet. St. Lawrence's Church was built by Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson, who lived close to the site of the Church, in memory of their daughter who died in 1866 at St. Lawrence, Isle of Wight. The foundation stone was laid in October 1867 and the Church was consecrated in June 1868.

The original Church was a copy of that of St. Lawrence, Isle of Wight, and was very simple. There was, at first, no transepts or tower and there was an open belfry at the west end with two bells in it. The transepts were added in 1876 in memory of the Wilkinson's third daughter who died that year, aged 14. In 1888

the tower was added, again in memory of a member of the Wilkinson family.

The original porch then became the present lych-gate, whilst the vestry and dormer windows were added in 1912. The building is of Kentish Ragstone and is lined throughout in soft yellow Speldhurst stone. The white roof of the porch is made of blocks of Otford chalk.

DETAILS OF THE BELLS

The bells were cast by Mears and Stainbank, Whitechapel Foundry, and were hung in the tower at the time it was built. The tenor bell contains the metal of the two original bells. The inscriptions on the bells are as follows:

Treble—4½cwt. My voice rings out over hill and valley.
2nd—5cwt. Lift up your heart.
3rd—5½cwt. My call is-come to church.

4th—6¼cwt. Every day I wish you well.
5th—7¼cwt. I praise God, I call the people.
Tenor—10cwt. I rejoice with the joyful, I weep with those who mourn.

The first recorded peal of Doubles was in 1894 and the first of Minor in 1900 whilst the quickest peal was rung in 1931 in a time of 2 hours 30 minutes. Approximately 50 peals have so far been rung on the bells.

In 1932 the bells were hung on ball-bearings and in 1951 the clappers were reformed and fitted with new leather baldricks. In 1972 the bells underwent a complete overhaul at a cost of approximately £800 and the clappers were fitted with Tufnol bearings.

The bells are rung regularly each Sunday for Mattins and practice is from 7.30 p.m. each Wednesday.