

AN HISTORIC OCCASION

Westminster Abbey Bells Dedicated

As bellringers everywhere will know, the old ring of eight bells from Westminster Abbey have been recast and two trebles added, the work having been done by the Whitechapel Bellfoundry and the cost met by a legacy from Dr. Eric Perkins in memory of his brother, Rev. Dr. Jocelyn Perkins, Minor Canon and Sacrist of the Abbey and superintendent of the belfry from 1899 to 1958.

The ceremony of dedication took place on Tuesday, November 9, in the presence of H.M. the Queen and before an invited congregation. It was conducted by the Dean of Westminster (Very Rev. Dr. E. S. Abbott). After an introductory and explanatory talk by the Dean, he invited Her Majesty to sound the 7th bell (the Elizabeth Bell), by striking it with a special 2lb. gold and ebony mallet, which she did, declaring the bell "sound and clear and of good workmanship."

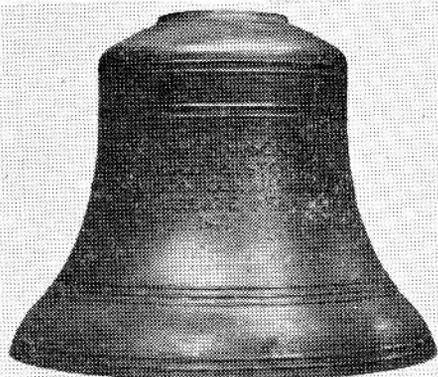
Then came the sounding of the Jocelyn Bell (the treble) by Mr. Richard Perkins, grandson of the late Rev. Dr. Jocelyn Perkins, and he was followed by Lord Hodson, representing the Lord Chancellor, Sir Robert Grant-Ferris (chairman of Ways and Means, and representing the Speaker of the House of Commons) and Councillor John Wells (Lord Mayor of Westminster) who sounded the Laetatus Bell (the 9th).

The Precentor and Mr. H. N. Pitstow then struck the Jubilate Bell, the mallet in the case of the last three bells being of silver and ebony.

Prayers of dedication were said by the Dean, after which the directors of the Whitechapel Foundry (Mr. William and Mr. Douglas Hughes) were presented to the Queen by the Dean as also was Mr. Pitstow, who in turn presented the team of ringers, standing by the bells, viz.: Messrs. John Phillip, John Crampion, George W. Cecil, Michael P. Moreton, Rodney B. Meadows, William J. Rawlings, G. William Critchley and Alan J. Frost.

Her Majesty returned to her central position before her bell, two verses of the

National Anthem were sung and the procession of church dignitaries then escorted the Queen from the Abbey.



The Jubilate Bell (the 2nd) which was struck by the Precentor and Mr. Harold Pitstow and whose names are cast on the bell.

Many ringers were present at the ceremony, and handbells (rounds on 10) were rung at the commencement by those who were later presented to the Queen.

The bells will now be hung in the west tower, and ringing will recommence early this month.

It is estimated that 400-500 were present at the ceremony, and a few minutes before Her Majesty entered, pandemonium seemed to reign, vergers, officials and robed clerics endeavouring to control the congregation. The group of ringers were standing near the bells, and some young people appeared to be jumping about everywhere. However, at a given signal, when the handbells were brought into use, and the chaos was quelled, the smoothness of the procession and the serene presence of the Queen, smiling and looking lovely in a red outfit which exactly matched the robes of the Dean and the many clergy, made the scene one never to be forgotten.

We understand that the Lord Mayor of Westminster struck the bell with such force that the ebony-handled mallet cracked, but

subsequent users were able to carry out their striking without mishap.

An amusing incident occurred on the morning of the dedication. A foundry worker was dusting the Elizabeth Bell and an old lady asked him how often the church bells had to be taken down for cleaning and dusting.

The original 5th and 7th of the old eight bells which were cast at Whitechapel in 1583 and 1598 respectively, during the reign of Elizabeth I, have been preserved in the belfry for daily service tolling.

The inscriptions on some of the old bells have been recast on the new ones for the sake of historical record. New inscriptions have been cast on four, called the "Elizabeth" Bell, the "Laetatus" Bell in honour of the City of Westminster and the High Court of Parliament, the "Jocelyn" Bell and the "Jubilate" Bell.

The inscriptions read:—

Elizabeth R
 Salva Sit Regina, Gaudet Collegium
 (Be The Queen safe, The Collegiate
 Church rejoices)
 Laetatus Sum
 Floreat Civitas Floreat Senatus
 (I was glad (Ps. 122.1)
 Prosperity to the City
 Prosperity to Parliament)
 Sacrist Jocelyn
 Omnia Honeste Et Secundum Ordinem
 (All things decent and in order
 1 Cor. 14. 40)
 Jubente Simpson, Conjubente Pitstow
 Jubilate Aera
 (Simpson gives the word, and Pitstow
 joins in:
 Ring out, ye Bells)

Gloucester and Bristol Association ANNUAL DINNER

The Old Bell Hotel, Malmesbury, Wilts, was the venue for the Gloucester and Bristol dinner, and this proved an excellent choice. Despite warnings of fog, the night was quite clear, and the 68 members and visitors found no difficulties in travelling and enjoyed a very good meal.

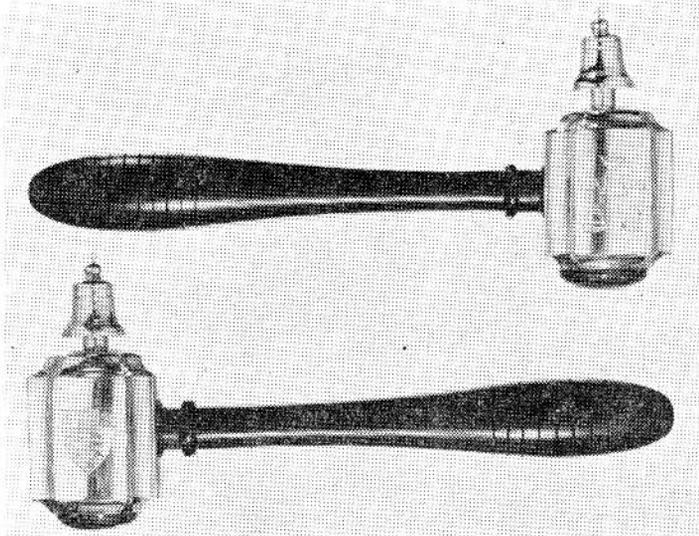
After the loyal toast, proposed by Miss E. M. Bliss (chairman), Mr. W. B. Cartwright (master, Worcestershire Association) proposed The Gloucester and Bristol Association in fine style, mentioning a few of the old stalwarts no longer with us, and assuring Mr. Cyril Wratten that full support would be given him and wishing him well during his term as secretary of the Central Council. The association was urged to try to reduce the number of towers with no membership.

IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

In his reply the ringing master (Mr. W. F. Scudamore) thanked Mr. Cartwright for his help in times of trouble, and then, in humorous vein, dealt with an imaginary dossier on Mr. Cartwright.

Mr. Cyril Wratten had done much research on the history of the visitors and made good use of what he had discovered, starting with the Rev. T. Beaghen (vicar of Malmesbury), then to the Archdeacon of Cheltenham (Ven. G. F. Hutchins), Mr. W. B. Cartwright, and the new boy to us, the Ven. F. S. Temple (Archdeacon of Swindon), who replied to the toast. The stories of his uncle (an Archbishop of Canterbury) and his grandfather (an Archbishop of Dublin) and of how he himself got on with the ringers at a previous parish were very interesting and, at times, amusing.

Greetings from The Ringing World Editor were conveyed to those present by the chairman. Thus ended a most enjoyable evening. C. R.



The two mallets which were used during the ceremony. On each the date 9 Nov. 1971 is inscribed on the bell, whilst the Westminster Abbey Arms appear on the obverse with the Whitechapel Crest on the reverse of the mallet head.