

*The Weekly Journal for
Church Bell Ringers since 1911*

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Editor: Robert Lewis

2nd June, 2003 at Westminster Abbey – A Service to mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

"From Christmas Day 1066 until June 2nd 1953 this Abbey has resounded to the acclamation of the people for their Sovereign. For here is held the ceremony of coronation, the anointing and crowning, as the Monarch commits herself to lead and serve the nation. It is very public but also an intimate ritual.

"It begins with the presentation to the congregation and their formal recognition of their 'Undoubted Queen'. On this the fiftieth anniversary of the Coronation, we join Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second, Our Queen, as she again presents herself to God and we, the congregation, recognise her by thanking God for her leadership and for the values for which she stands, as Queen and as Head of the Commonwealth."

So began the Bidding delivered by The Very Reverend Dr Wesley Carr, Dean of Westminster at the service 50 years to the hour since the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen had returned to Westminster Abbey to give thanks for her reign. The service reflected upon four aspects of the coronation rite – faith, service, responsibility and respect.

Of course, on this occasion many differences in general circumstances applied compared with those of Coronation day 2nd June 1953. The weather was wet in 1953; in 2003 it was a warm and humid day. The Coronation service lasted three times as long as the fiftieth anniversary service. In 1953 the Abbey had a ring of eight bells that included two bells cast in the reign of Elizabeth I, and a tenor bell that had been recast in 1738. Today's Abbey bells are a splendid Whitechapel ring of ten (30cwt tenor) installed in 1971.

Prior to the anniversary service the bells were rung to a touch of Stedman Caters by the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers and, at service conclusion, a peal attempt of Four Spliced Surprise Royal commenced and some 3 hours and 19 minutes later was duly completed. The Order of Service was, as usual on such significant occasions, unequivocal concerning the post service ringing. "The bells of the Abbey are rung to a peal ...". The ringing commenced as Her Majesty left the Abbey and it was included in the BBC service coverage and subsequently as background in news items.

The following report appeared in *The Ringing World* in July 1993. It was based on information from the then surviving member

(concluded overleaf)



The Abbey – "faith, service, responsibility and respect"



(Founded by John S Goldsmith)

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<http://www.whitechapelbellfoundry.co.uk>ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS
WESTMINSTER ABBEY, London SW1, The Collegiate Church of St Peter

Mon Jun 2 2003 3h19 (30)

5000 Spliced S Royal

(4m: 1280 Yorkshire; 1240 each Bristol, Cambridge, London No.3; 101 com, atw)

Comp. R C Kippin

1 Richard J W Tibbetts	6 John N Hughes-D'Aeth (C)
2 David J Dearnley	7 Timothy J Billings
3 W John Couperthwaite	8 John I White
4 Christopher Forster	9 Richard H Burton
5 David Woodward	10 David C Brown

At the conclusion of the service attended by H M Queen Elizabeth II
to mark the 50th anniversary of her Coronation.

50th ANNIVERSARY — concluded

of the Coronation peal band, Jack Crampion. Sadly, Jack passed away in July 2000 aged 89. In 1953 Jack was a supernumerary member of the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers. Subsequently he served as a principal member and as conductor. On 2nd June 1993 a peal of Three Spliced Surprise Royal, in which Jack participated, was rung at the Abbey for the 40th anniversary of the Coronation.

DAVID HILLING

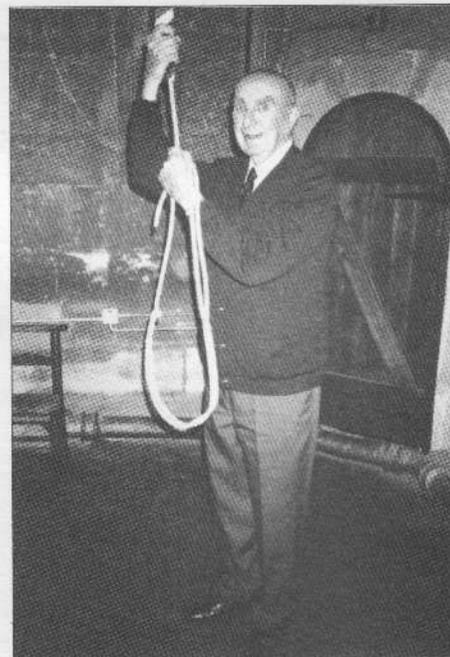
Coronation Day 2nd June 1953

All the ringers had to be at the Abbey by 7am on Coronation Day. That was what we had been informed by the Duke of Norfolk, for the ceremony was to commence mid-morning. Even at 7am the Peers and Peeresses were already in the Abbey in their ermine and regalia.

So it was slightly daunting for the ringers to walk up the main aisle from the west door past the assembled dignitaries. We couldn't take the normal short route from the west door to the tower staircase due to the scaffolding which had been erected for the tiered seating. I can remember Jack Phillips being, shall we say, the least tidy of the ringers as we processed up the main aisle and back along the north aisle!

I was standing-in for Bert Langdon who was conductor at St. Paul's Cathedral and of course busy there that day. At the Abbey Jack Waugh was the spare or ninth man, and in fact he rang in the peal attempt in place of Bill Passmore. We had to fire the bells several times at the moment the Queen was crowned. Cyril Watts was asked by the conductor Harold Pitstow to ring the tenor for this, but he wasn't confident about doing so, so Harold asked me. We had television in the ringing chamber so knew exactly when to fire.

After the Coronation we started for the peal of Stedman Triples. The BBC had planned to continue the live broadcast by showing the Abbey accompanied by the bells for about an hour and a half of the peal attempt. This gave the commentators and technicians a break after

Jack Crampion who rang in the peals for the
Coronation and the 40th anniversary

many hours of live broadcasting. Unfortunately, and probably due to tension of the occasion, the peal was miscalled after about an hour when a bob was missed. It became clear to the band that something had gone awry and that we were not to score the peal, but Harold had to keep us ringing because of the television broadcast. We continued and rang in all for about three hours before a halt was called. We descended from the tower at 6pm, 11 hours after our arrival.

The attempt was hastily rearranged with the Abbey authorities for three days later, June 5th. All went well that day and a peal was scored.

LONDON S.W.

THE ANCIENT SOCIETY OF COLLEGE YOUTHS

On Fri, June 5 1953, in 3 hours and 5 minutes

At the Collegiate Church of St. Peter in Westminster (Westminster Abbey)

A PEAL OF STEDMAN TRIPLES, 5040 changes

Tenor 28 cwt.

Alfred B. Peck	Treble	John H. Crampion	5
Horace Belcher	2	Jack A. Waugh	6
J. Frank Smallwood	3	John Phillips	7
Harold N. Pitstow	4	Cyril J. Watts	Tenor

Pitstow's variation of Thurstans' Four-part.

Conducted by H. N. Pitstow

Rung for the Coronation of Elizabeth II, Crowned in Westminster Abbey on June 2, 1953.

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