

CHURCH BELLS OF LONDON.

ST. DIONIS' AND ALL HALLOWS'.

During the eighteenth century five peals are all that are known to have been rung at St. Dionis' and it is not until November 26th, 1850, that we have any account of another. On that date the Cumberlands rang 5079 changes of Stedman Caters, and two years later, on November 22nd, 1852, the College Youths rang a similar length of the same method.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the character of the City of London had entirely changed. From being largely residential it had become almost entirely commercial. Outside, enormous suburbs were growing up with vast populations and scanty church accommodation, while the City, with its dozens of wealthy churches, was almost entirely deserted on Sundays.

The diocesan authorities were faced by the problem raised by so great an excess of material and money where it was not needed, and so great a deficiency where vast numbers of people were living without the means of public worship. Of late years the problem has become even more acute, but as early as about 1875 an attempt was made to adjust the balance. From the point of view of the spiritual needs of the Church and people it seemed that the only right thing to do was to sell the churches that were no longer needed, and, with the money, build others in the new districts; and an Act for the union of benefices was passed by Parliament.

There is, however, another side to the question. The City churches are the property of the parishes, and there was and is a natural and right objection to desecrate ground that had been consecrated to the service of God for, perhaps, a thousand years and to pull down buildings, some of them of great artistic merit and which, as a whole, form one of the most striking architectural features of London. The process of demolition, therefore, was slow and only those of lesser value were at first threatened. St. Dionis' was one of the earliest, and a scheme to sell the church and unite the parish and benefice with the neighbouring parish of All Hallows, Grasschurch, was finally approved by the vestry on April 28th, 1876.

Among the resolutions adopted was one that the parishioners, having received intimation that the bells of St. Dionis' Backchurch could be made available, recommended that it be a part of the scheme that such bells be presented to the church of the united parishes. This was included in the Order in Council, and, when St. Dionis' was pulled down, the bells were hung in the tower of All Hallows.

That parish, although it possessed a fine tower, had taken little interest in its bells and possessed only two. And now, after hanging in their new home for nearly sixty years, mostly silent, the bells are once more homeless. All Hallows, in its turn, has been pulled down, and the future of the bells is as yet uncertain.

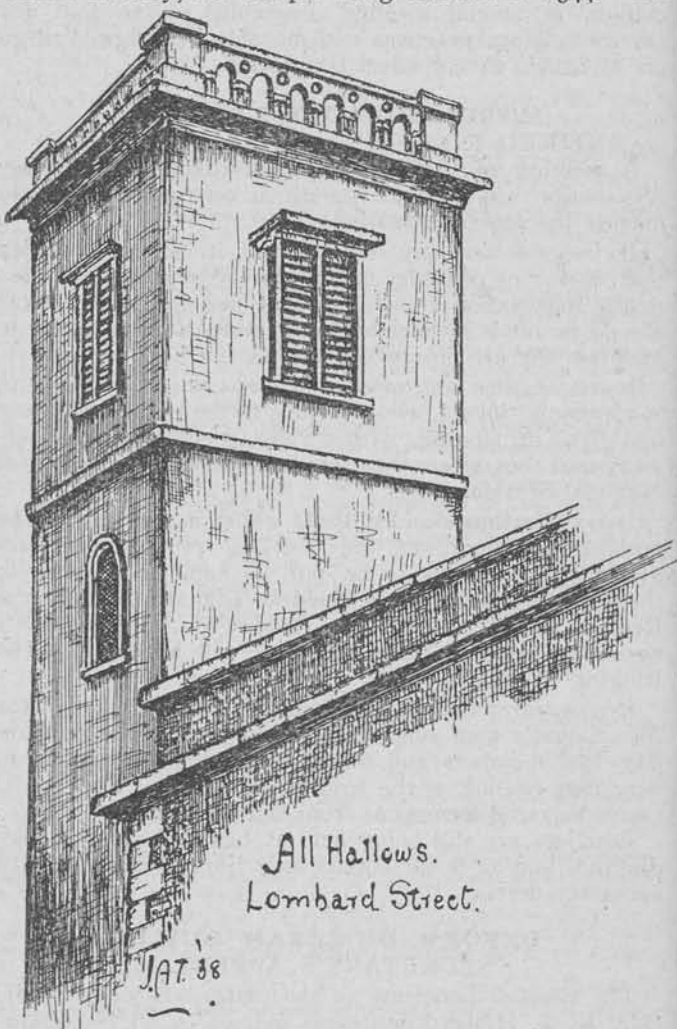
Out of the sum received from the sale of St. Dionis', after money had been allotted to the restoration of All Hallows and other objects, a new church of St. Dionis' was built at Parsons Green, Fulham. To it many of the fittings were removed, including the font given by Sir Henry Tulse.

ALL HALLOWS, LOMBARD STREET.

'Then by the four corners, so called, of Fenchurch Street in the east, Bridge Street on the south, Grass Street on the north and Lombard Street on the west is one

fair parish church called All Hallows, Grass Church in Lombard Street; I do so read it in the evidences of record for that the grass market went down that way when that street was far broader than it now is, being straitened by encroachments.'

So wrote John Stow in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The church had been rebuilt in the early part of the sixteenth century, the steeple being finished in 1544. The



All Hallows.
Lombard Street.

'fair stone porch' was brought from the lately dissolved priory of St. John of Jerusalem, near Smithfield, as well as the frame in which the priory bells had hung. One Warner, a draper of the parish, bought the priory bells, intending to give them to All Hallows, but he died before the transaction could be completed, and his son and heir refused to carry out his father's intention; 'and so,' says Stow, 'that fair steeple hath but one bell, as friars are wont to use.' In the inventory made in the reign of Edward VI. the number is given as 'ij in the steeple,' one of them probably being a saunce bell.

The church was much damaged in the Great Fire and was rebuilt by Wren in 1686-1694 at a cost of £8,058 15s. 6d. Two bells, a large and a small one, were placed in the tower and no effort was made by the parish to obtain a ringing peal, until St. Dionis' was pulled down, when All Hallows received the bells from that tower as the parish church of the united parishes.

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ARCHDEACONRY OF STAFFORD SOCIETY

PROPOSED MEMORIAL TO THE LATE MR. T. J. ELTON.

The autumn meeting of the Society for the Archdeaconry of Stafford was held at Brewood on Saturday last. In typical autumn weather, members began to assemble soon after 2 p.m. and the bells were set going to Grandsire and Stedman Triples, Plain Bob and Kent Treble Bob Major, while rounds and set changes were also rung for beginners. Despite the difficulties of transport, quite a good muster put in appearance. One unfortunate incident happened, and that was a stay got bent and, be it noted, not by one of the aforesaid learners! However, ringing continued until service time.

The Rev. C. Broughton Thompson (Vicar) delivered an excellent address, in the course of which he said he hoped that ringing would never die out and be substituted by mechanical means, also that ringers should keep up their practices and be ready to ring for peace. He spoke of himself as being especially fond of bell music.

Mrs. Mollie Winterton (daughter of Mr. J. Perry, the esteemed captain of the local band) presided at the organ, and right ably did she manage it.

A very nice tea was provided in the Jubilee Hall—through the generosity of some kind friends. This was followed by the business meeting, presided over by the Vicar. Apologies for absence were received from the Rev. C. H. Barker, clerical secretary and treasurer; Mr. B. G. Key, Ringing Master, who is on active service; Messrs. J. Warrilow, C. Wallater, T. Benton, W. Peart and W. A. Walker.

On account of lighting restrictions, it was resolved that the next meeting, which was to have been held at All Saints', West Bromwich, in January next, should not take place. Also, for the same reason, the dinner arrangements for November should be cancelled.

A letter was received from Mr. W. A. Walker, towerkeeper at St. Matthew's, Walsall, stating that a suggestion was being made for the placing of a memorial tablet in St. Matthew's belfry to the late Mr. Thomas J. Elton, who for many years acted as captain in that tower, and who had done valuable work for the society in the cause of change ringing. Members and friends are invited to send subscriptions to Mr. W. A. Walker, 7, Birmingham Road, Walsall, which will be gratefully acknowledged by him.

A vote of thanks to the Vicar for his address and use of the bells, to the organist for her assistance, to Mrs. Dumbell and her helpers in preparing and serving tea, was received with applause.

Handbells were then brought into use to the tune of Grandsire Triples and Caters, Bob Major, Stedman Doubles and Triples. Thus ended a happy gathering in spite of the difficulties which had to be overcome.

CHURCH BELLS OF LONDON

(Continued from previous page.)

The Order in Council provided that the two bells from All Hallows should go to the new church of St. Dionis' which was being built at Parsons Green, Fulham, but the churchwardens disregarded the order and disposed of them to St. Paul's, Southwark. The authorities of St. Dionis' appealed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as the legal owners of the property of the demolished church of St. Dionis' Backchurch, offering to give £50 as an act of grace if they could have the bells; but the Commissioners disclaimed all responsibility in the matter, as they had belonged to All Hallows. Eventually, they gave to St. Dionis', Parsons Green, a bell that had formerly been at St. Michael's, Bassettshaw, and the vicar and wardens of the former church renounced all claims.

All Hallows stood on a site where land is as valuable as almost anywhere in the world and several efforts were made to sell it and use the money for building churches elsewhere. These efforts had always been defeated until lately, when serious structural defects occurred in the building and the east wall had to be taken down for safety. It was then decided to pull the church down and to build another in a new neighbourhood at Twickenham, to which the fittings, including the very fine carved woodwork, will be transferred.

As I have said, the bells are for the present without a home. Although the church stood in the centre of the City, it was so hemmed in by high buildings that it was almost entirely invisible. Nowhere from the street could more than one top corner of the tower be seen. It was impossible to get a photograph of it, and so I made a sketch which is shown in this article.

MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION.

HINCKLEY DISTRICT'S FIRST WAR-TIME MEETING.

The first war-time meeting of the Hinckley District of the Midland Counties Association was held at Kirkby Mallory, Leicestershire, on Saturday. The back five bells were raised in rounds and Grandsire Doubles rung before 3.30. Other members and friends having arrived, Stedman Doubles, Plain Bob, Double Court, Kent Treble Bob and Cambridge Surprise Major were rung until service time. The attendance was only 14, many, no doubt, being prevented by their duties from attending, particularly those employed in farming. One member, engaged in dairy farming, can see no prospects of service ringing during the winter months.

The Rector (the Rev. E. Mills) conducted the usual M.C.A. form of service, which began with the ringers' hymn, 'Lifted high within the steeple.' In the course of his address, the Rector said that owing to the difficulties of catering in a small village at these times and also to the school being in use for a large number of evacuated children, in addition to their own, he was very reluctantly compelled to cancel the tea, but he hoped, on the return of happier days, to have the pleasure of again welcoming the district ringers and to be able to resume the usual teas. The Rector spoke of the work ringers could do at this time to help bring in the Kingdom of God. Bells, he said, ring out a message of invitation to everyone within hearing. There was room for everybody to work for the Kingdom, each in their own particular way. He was sure ringers would do their part by giving their services gladly.

After service a short meeting was held, Mr. A. Ballard, district chairman, presiding. The Rector was thanked for his address and for the use of the bells. Thanks were also expressed to the lady organist.

The invitation of the Rector of Sharnford to hold a ringing meeting there on October 21st was accepted. The next item—roll call of towers represented—was arranged so that the time of Sunday service ringing at each tower was stated. These were: Burbage, 10.20 a.m.; Croft, 10.20 a.m. and 2.50 p.m.; Hinckley, 10.30 a.m. and 2.45 p.m.; Kirkby Mallory, 10.30 a.m. and 2.40 p.m.; Peckleton, no ringing; Sharnford, 10.30 a.m.; Market Bosworth, 9.45 a.m.

In cases where no afternoon ringing is mentioned, the present evening services are to be shortly altered, and consequently no times could be stated, as these times are given so they may be of use to visiting ringers.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

A discussion followed on how to maintain meetings and interest in ringing.

It was learned that one group of four towers near Hugglescote propose to hold a Saturday afternoon practice at each tower in turn on, perhaps, the first Saturday in each month.

It was agreed that meetings should be held as frequently as possible, preferably in weeks when use could be made of moonlight, and that, whenever possible, tea should be arranged followed by a social.

It was pointed out that as ringing in the towers would be severely restricted during the winter months, it was important that the social side should receive more attention.

Groups could also be arranged to practice handbell ringing. Some literature would be most useful for many bands.

It was agreed that each tower should ascertain if their bells would be available for Saturday afternoon ringing and that reports should be made at the Sharnford meeting, when the place and date of the next practice meeting could be decided.

The secretary asked all towers to take at least one copy of 'The Ringing World' in order to inform themselves of the meeting arrangements and so help both the paper and his postages.

Further ringing was indulged in until darkness compelled members to proceed homewards. One party, who, it was alleged, had brought jugs in their gas mask cases, tarried on the way. Quantities of chips and 'cobs' were requisitioned, together with some 'pre-Budget' refreshment.

When these were preparing for the road, much hilarity was caused by the efforts of two well-known members to reduce the lighting efficiency of their new rear lamps, purchased, it was claimed, especially to attend the meeting, and which gave much better illumination than is permitted even for headlamps. Two thicknesses of notepaper was found to reduce the 'searchlight' effect. Even then, one proposed to cycle backwards. He said he could see *much* better.

DEATH OF A DOVER RINGER.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Charles R. Mellway, of Dover, who passed away on September 25th after a long illness.

The deceased gentleman, who joined the Kent County Association in 1894, was at the time leader of the band at Borden, near Sittingbourne, and did excellent work in that tower and the neighbourhood. Thirty-five years ago he moved to Dover, and from that time had been a member of the St. Mary's band. The funeral took place on September 27th and was attended by Messrs. H. Whitehead and S. A. Hill, representing the association.

EALING.—On Sunday, October 11th, at St. Mary's Church, for a civic service, a quarter-peal of Grandsire Triples (1,260 changes) in 47 minutes: J. A. Trollope (conductor) 1, J. E. Churchill 2, P. E. Clark 3, P. Rowe 4, A. M. Stacey 5, E. C. S. Turner 6, A. Harding 7, F. Miller 8.