

## THE LOST BELLS OF LONDON

These articles by Mr. Cook have proved most interesting yet sad reading, especially to those who retain particular links with any of the churches in question. Perhaps a few further remarks concerning St. Dunstan-in-the-East may prove acceptable.

The peals rung by the Union Scholars were written in the peal book by James Albion who came to Bath in 1754. The Bath Chronicle of 31st January, 1805, records his death as follows:—

"Albion (James) Senior. In his 78th year Mr. James Albion, sen., more than 50 years writing master in this city and one of the oldest ringers, which art he had practised many years and continued to follow it within a few days of his death. He was not more distinguished for his abilities in his profession than by his upright conduct."

On his arrival in Bath he rang a peal of Union Triples at St. James, Bath, which is the final entry in the Union Scholars peal book. During the period that James Albion was in London he took part in many peals with John Holt, including the first performance of Holt's Original. It is, perhaps, thanks to James Albion and the ringers in Bath who followed that knowledge of the early peals at St. Dunstan's has survived. The peal book is, of course, now in the British Museum.

### UNION BOB

The peal of Union Bob, now known as Oxford Treble Bob, was not only the first of Treble Bob ever rung but the first recorded peal of Major. Bob Major was not rung to a peal until 1725 at St. Brides. More interesting still is the fact that the composition was true although the necessity for internal proof was not demonstrated until 50 years later by Christopher Wells. The composition, composer unknown, was as follows:—

5120	B	W	H
—			
35264	—		
56342	—		
64523	—		
36245	—	2	2

This same peal was rung on the 250th anniversary, 27th December, 1968, at Hampton, Middlesex, conducted by F. T. Blagrove, and a peal in the same method but different composition at Stevenage, Herts., conducted by D. L. Gullick.

Connection of St. Dunstan-in-the-East with Hertfordshire is to be found in that Richard Hale, Alderman of the City of London, built and endowed the Free Grammar School of Hertford. On his death in 1620 he was buried in St. Dunstan's and a monument was set up, which not only commemorated the achievements of Hale himself but also the generosity of his granddaughter Lady Dionysius Williamson, who gave a large sum towards the rebuilding of the church after the Great Fire. Some of this was reserved until security should be given by the parish for constant maintaining and using of the organ. The organ by

"Father" Smith was removed at the rebuilding in 1818 and taken to St. Albans Abbey. The monument to Richard Hale was destroyed in the last war and the Governors of Richard Hale School erected a plaque to commemorate their founder in celebration of their 350th Anniversary 1967. "Father" Smith, a celebrated organ builder, left Germany and came to London on the restoration of the monarchy when organ playing was reintroduced in the English Church. He was elected a member of a small and highly select London club that included Isaac Newton and Christopher Wren. The latter lived in St. Dunstan's parish, his house in Love Lane being demolished in 1905.

St. Dunstan's College, Cufford, derives directly from the parish. Henry Dix mentioned in Mr. Cook's article was one of a long line of beadles. Thomas Dix, beadle from 1824 to 1869, was a member of a Huguenot family who settled in the parish in the late 17th century. Henry succeeded his father Thomas who was followed in turn by his son Arthur. L. A. G. Dix, of

the next generation, was a contemporary of mine at St. Dunstan's College.

It is disappointing that so little seems to be known about St. Dunstan's bells after 1821. I know that Mr. T. H. Taffender had strong associations with the tower before the last war and information on this period must surely reside in the records of the London County Association. By a strange coincidence this is being written on the anniversary of the last peal on the bells, 25th February, 1939. This was as follows:—

### 5024 Double Norwich Court Bob Major

- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Douglas G. Brown | 5. Clarence H. Dobbie      |
| 2. Leonard J. Fox   | 6. George J. Bulcher       |
| 3. Edwin A. Barnett | 7. Herbert E. Audsley      |
| 4. George Cecil     | 8. Philip A. Corby (cond.) |

I am sure that Mr. Cook will find some of these names a guide to further information on the blank period to which he refers.

The original plan to restore the church after the war might well have succeeded had the Rector, the Rev. Arthur G. B. West, lived to see its completion. His astonishing force of character linger long in my memory. The new bells, so wantonly destroyed, were to him but the beginning of a complete restoration.

## THE CURFEW AT LOWESTOFT

An illustrated article which appeared in the East Anglian Daily Times on February 15 makes interesting reading. Headed "Cromwell's Curfew" it had the sub-head: "Keep off Lowestoft streets after 8 p.m.—or risk the stocks!". It continues:—

Cromwell gets blamed for a whole lot of things in East Anglia. Among them the widespread damage to churches.

But one of the oddest legacies of his rule is the 8 p.m. "curfew" rung at Lowestoft. It has been sounded, apart from war years, non-stop since 1644. A warning to everyone to "clear off the streets" or risk the stocks. Or maybe worse.

Not that that sort of thing has been enforced lately. The 329-year-old custom is one which Lowestoft would hate to lose—not that many of the townsfolk know the reason for the odd bellringing each evening.

The majority who do notice it probably put it down to the vagaries of the clock tower in the Town Hall, from where it is rung every evening—except Sunday—at 8 p.m.

There is an unusual system in the bellringing arrangements. The number of strokes rung each evening is the total of the last two digits in the current year plus the number of the day in that particular month. January 31, for example, produced 104 strokes.

But back to Cromwell. He sent one Francis Jessope of Beccles to Lowestoft on June 12, 1644, with "a commission from the Earl of Manchester to disrobe the grave-stones in the parish churchyard of their brasses."

All the brass collected was sold to a Mr. John Wilde, of Lowestoft, for five shillings and was later made into a bell for the town's Chapel of Ease. It is the same bell which is still used.

The Town Hall clock is only a few years younger than the old bell. It dates back

to 1698 when it was made by Mr. Isaac Blowers, of Beccles, for £20.

The iron frame surrounding it cost another £2 12s. 6d.

Both seem to have given Lowestoft good value. Most of the old clock is still there, plus a few bits and pieces added over the years. The frame is as sound as the day it was made.

And the old bell, which cost a mere 6s., looks good enough to ring "curfew" at Lowestoft for centuries to come.

At Ashton-under-Lyne on April 13, 1914, was rung a peal of 14,000 Kent T.B. Royal.

It was on April 17, 1911, that 12,240 Treble Bob Maximus (a record at that time) was rung in 8 hours 39 minutes at Ashton-under-Lyne. James George rang the tenor.

April 18 was the date of three long peals: 12,006 Grandsire Caters at Painswick in 1737; 13,440 Double Norwich Major at Romford in 1894; and 17,824 Oxford T.B. Major at Heptonstall (10 hours 51 minutes) in 1927.

The Cumberland Youths at Shoreditch on March 27, 1784, rang 12,000 Treble Bob Royal, which stood as a record until 1911.

The first peal of Superlative S. Royal was rung at Wakefield on March 27, 1826.

The first "silent" peal of Surprise Minor (7 methods) ever rung took place at Bucknall, Staffs, on April 6, 1897. The band consisted of two pairs of brothers, an uncle and a nephew.

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