

FEATURE



THE DEDICATION OF THE ROYAL JUBILEE BELLS AT ST JAMES' GARLICKHYTHE

by Patricia Stoughton

01 The casting of one of the Royal Jubilee Bells at the Whitechapel Foundry, March 2012
© John Sutton

02 The Royal Jubilee Bells set out along the centre aisle of St James' Garlickhythe

03 The arms of The Worshipful Company of Vintners on the die used for the tenor bell, Elizabeth

There was an unusual line-up in the centre aisle at the church of St James' Garlickhythe on Sunday, June 17. A new peal of eight bells in ascending order. The peal that two weeks earlier had rung out from the floating belfry that led the river pageant down the Thames as part of Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

They were there for a service of Dedication before being installed in the tower above. And for many of the congregation it was the first time that they had been able to have a close look at them.

For others it was the culmination of a project that had been set in motion just over a year before. Alderman Dr Andrew Parmley, organist at St James' for thirty years and member of several City Livery companies, describes how

he was walking round Hampton Court with his Verger "when we heard the Hampton Court Clock Bell ring out as it has done for over five hundred years." This direct link with the past struck his imagination and he began to think seriously about a new peal of bells for St James' to replace the three existing bells, which had been cast at different times and were out of tune. Having recently raised a large sum to restore the church organ and confident that he could repeat the process for a new peal, he contacted Dickon Love.

Dickon Love, a well-known expert in bell ringing circles and a Past Master and Hon. Librarian of the Ancient Society of College Youths, explains in an article in *The Ringing World* in December, 2011 how "A project was conceived for a new ring of eight bells with a

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tenor of just over 9 cwt, to be cast [for St James' Garlickhythe] at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry.”

There was a structural survey to check the feasibility of the plan, particularly to make sure that the dimensions of the frame and ringing platform could be accommodated in the tower. Once it was judged possible, the order was made but it had to be made quickly because with the ever increasing price in metals, estimates were only valid for two to three weeks. The new peal of bells was priced at £180,000.

Andrew Parmley said that raising the money for the bells was much easier than it had been for the organ. As soon as word got out there was competition among potential donors, particularly among the Livery Companies, whom Andrew approached. And within a short space of time sufficient funds had been raised or pledged to go ahead with the project.

Dickon tells how the Whitechapel Bell Foundry was contacted shortly afterwards by



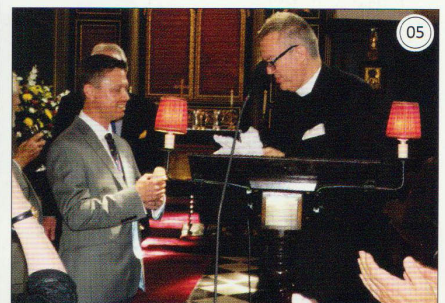
02 Bishop John Waine blesses the Royal Jubilee Bells
© John Sutton

05 Dickon Love is thanked and receives a scroll followed by a bell from the Priest-in-charge, the Reverend Guy Treweek



the Diamond Jubilee Pageant Trust who, unable to actually fund such a venture themselves, were looking for some bells already due to be cast for a City church to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee, which they could use and return later. The idea was for a herald boat with a peal of bells to lead the Diamond Jubilee flotilla down the Thames.

Andrew explains that the two City churches of “St Magnus the Martyr and St Dunstan’s had just had new bells installed so that St James’ bells were being cast at the right time. Also St James’ bells would be smaller and so safer to handle.” >



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06 The Jubilee Bells pass under Tower Bridge on their trial run, May 26, 2012
© John Sutton

07 The Jubilee Bells anchored off Battersea Park in front of the Peace Pagoda before the start of the pageant

08 The bells ring on the Belfry, during the pageant

Dickon continues "The Trust was put in touch with me, and we agreed that the Garlickhythe bells could be used for this purpose, provided the Trust covered all the costs and insurance, which they did."

The bells were cast between February and March 2012 and are named after the senior members of the Royal Family: Elizabeth, Philip, Charles, Anne, Andrew, Edward, William and Henry, whose names are inscribed on the bells together with the Royal Coat of Arms, the names of the donors and key officials of St James'. There are also a number of inscriptions giving a tangible personality to the

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bells such as: "We rang on the river Thames for the Diamond Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II"; and "Dickon Love put us here."

Most of the congregation filing to their pews on Sunday, June 17 had only managed to see the floating belfry in pride of place on





JUBILEE BELL STATISTICS BY COURTESY OF DICKON LOVE

The bells were cast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry during February and March 2012

Elizabeth: Tenor; G# ;
diametre 94 cm; 481 kg

Philip: 7th; A# ; 84 cm; 361 kg

Charles: 6th; B# ; 77 cm; 277 kg

Anne: 5th; C# ; 74 cm; 234 kg

Andrew: 4th; D# ; 69 cm; 208 kg

Edward: 3rd; E# ; 64 cm; 179 kg

William: 2nd; F# # ; 62 cm; 169 kg

Henry: Treble; G # ; 60 cm; 162 kg

television, so judging this to be an historic occasion they were delighted to approach the bells, to touch them and take pictures before they were to be hidden away in their tower.

The service, Choral Mattins and the Dedication of the Royal Jubilee Bells, was taken by Bishop John Waive, assisted by the Priest-in-Charge, the Reverend Guy Treweek. There was some fine music from the choir and the organist, Andrew Parmley. Among the hymns were the appropriate and joyful "Ring forth holy bells" to the tune of Laudate Dominum; "The sacred Bells of England" to the tune of Thornbury; and "Raised aloft within the steeple" to the tune of Abbot's Leigh.

As the church wardens and clergy processed down the aisle, they paused for the Bishop to bless the fine and delicious 'Christening' cake designed, baked, iced and decorated by Nina Hodgson. The service ended with Andrew Parmley's spirited rendering of the "Carillon de Westminster" by Louis Vierne.

Shortly afterwards, during the reception, both Andrew Parmley and Dickon Love were called forward by Guy Treweek to receive thanks and acknowledgement for their tireless work in bringing the Royal Jubilee Bells to St James'. They were each given a scroll and a small bell.

On the day of the Thames River Pageant, the floating bells were greeted by church bells along the river from Putney to Greenwich and beyond. Now, after their historic river journey, they will settle in their allotted place in the tower of St James' Garlickhythe to ring out for hundreds of years to come. ■

END NOTES

For more information see:

St James' Garlickhythe 'Wren's Lantern:' <http://stjamesgarlickhythe.org>

The Jubilee Bells on Dickon Love's excellent site:
<http://royaljubileebells.lovesguide.com>