

NORWOOD (GREEN)

Known by the postal address of Norwood Green, it is not to be confused with the Norwoods of South London.

According to the parish magazines of the mid-1890's there had been pre-Reformation bells. Also, the Churchwardens' Accounts show entries relating to the bells and payments, e.g. the ringers were paid 5s.0d for ringing the bells on May 29th, 1684 'being the birth day of the King.'

Details of the previous bells are:-

Treble - a small bell inscribed:

THOS SWAIN MADE ME J753

2nd bell: weighed 2cwt 3qrs 24lbs. Inscribed:

ALTHOUGH I AM BUT SMALL I WILL BE HEARD AMONGST YOU ALL
R C J749

Then the Revd J L MacDonald placed the order and received the bell of 3cwt 0qrs 3lbs, inscribed:

Shoulder

MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS LONDON

Waist

JUBILATE 1887

REV: J.L.MACDONALD, RECTOR

3rd bell was inscribed:

RICHARD PHELPS MADE THESE FIVE BELLS 1718

Incised IOHN IENYMS ESQ:

The old 4th bell weighed 4cwt 0qrs 16lbs, and was inscribed:

RICHARD PHELPS LONDINI FECIT 1718 I W

Then A Welch, Churchwarden placed the order and received the bell of 4cwt 0qrs 14lbs, inscribed:

G MEARS & CO. FOUNDERS, LONDON 1862.

The old 5th bell was inscribed:

T. MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1819

The old 6th bell weighed 6cwt 0qrs 0lbs, 33 ins. diameter in A sharp, and was inscribed:

RICHARD : KNIGHT : AUSTAIN : TOLLY : CHURCHWRDENS:

THOMAS : SWAIN : MADE : ME : J772 (medallion)

We have no precise details of how many bells existed or when the original wooden bell cote was built - some time between the 16th and 17th centuries. When it became unsafe for the bells to be rung, this ancient timber structure was dismantled in 1895 and the present 9 ft square brick tower was built alongside the entrance to the church on the south side. Dedicated on Wednesday July 1st, 1896, the bells were rehung in the new iron frame in time to join in the nation's celebrations for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897. Fixed to one of the walls of the ground floor ringing chamber is the Ellacombe Chiming Apparatus circa 1895, used when it became unsafe to ring the bells in the bell cote.

The oldest peal board in the ringing chamber is constructed of wood, dated 1909. Various commemorative cards record notable occasions also displayed but the peal rung in 1988 is unique, not only because it was the first to be rung by six lady officers of the Association currently serving in their posts but the details are embroidered in cross stitch - one of the few such boards of this composition in the London Diocese.

On the subject of celebrations - for the Centenary of Dedication of the Tower a successful quarter peal was rung on July 1st, 1996: the Centenary Service was conducted by the Revd. John O Hereward, a bellringer, and when the time came for his address he promised not to repeat in full the original Victorian sermon of over 2,000 words, but he did state that his main reason for being a bellringer is because, "It is the loudest way I know of to praise the Lord."

Source: Parish magazines 1894 to 1897; Whitechapel Bell Foundry records; H B Walters, manuscript; Valerie M Payne; Association records.