

CITY, ST GILES, CRIPPLEGATE

“Brickbats and Tiles say the bells of St. Giles” in the nursery rhyme of ‘Oranges and Lemons’

Records show that a clock was in the turret by 1649, replaced in 1682 when the steeple was raised and the clock was renewed in 1722.

There were five bells in 1552. Money was bequeathed for the upkeep of the bells in the Will of William Lamb in 1580. By 1648 there were six bells. Christopher Hodson probably added two more bells in 1668. We have no precise date for the augmentation to ten but the College Youths rang the first peal on ten on Thursday March 17th, 1726 - two men were required to ring the tenor.

John Briant of Hertford cast two new trebles and recast the treble of the existing bells in 1792. Names inscribed:-

Treble Thos. Will(a)it(t)s and Thos Smith - Churchwardens.

Deputy Wm Stains Robt Clark Nicks Browning

Tenor John Warner Contractor 1787. Robert Patrick Founder.

William Godfrey Browne and Richard Gouge Churchwardens.

Sir James Esdaile, Knt. Alderman

John Banner Deputy

Robt French William Staines & Robert Clarke Common Councill Men

The second bell recast by Warner & Sons in 1908 had the names inscribed:- Preb A Barff, Vicar, Stephen Roger, John Baddeley, Churchwardens. This firm also recast the sixth bell. The others were quarter turned, and rehung in a new frame resting on new steel girder with new floor with fittings.

All the bells were rendered useless after damage during the night of August 24-25th, 1940 by one of the first German bombs of the Second Word War.

The chime machine in the tower played a different tune on each day of the week but the instrument was destroyed in the Second World War. Although this machine was replaced it is not currently operational (2003)

Source: Church leaflets (n.d.) *The bells* (n.d.); Philip Rogers; J R Jerram, manuscript in the care of The Revd. D L Cawley; W T Cook *Ringing world* November 7, 1969, p 862; Association records.