

## CLERKENWELL

There were four bells in 1552 and five in 1700. The bells were rung at elections of Churchwardens. It was customary for a bell to be tolled at burials in the following way: 3 x 3 for a man, 3 x 2 for a woman and 3 x 1 for a child.

The tower housed the products of various founders: by William Fownder (known as William Dawe who operated in London from 1384 to 1418) whose bell was believed to have belonged to the Benedictine nunnery dedicated to St. Mary. It was inscribed: O PRESUL PIE NICOLAE NOBIS MISERERE. Another London founder cast a bell inscribed: WILLIAM CARTER MADE ME 1615, GEORGE TRAPPES AND NICHOLAS DAY CHURCHWARDENS. Another bell was by Thomas Bartlet in 1621. Six bells were here by the time Thomas Mears recast them into a ring of eight - the fourth and sixth were maiden bells - in 1791 for an oak frame. This foundry recast the second bell in 1801, the fourth in 1837 and the third in 1904. Gillett & Johnston recast them for the present ring (the first ringing peal in the county of London to be Simpson tuned) which was rededicated by the Bishop of Stepney on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1929. William Gillett, founder of Gillett & Johnston, first set up his business in Clerkenwell before moving to Croydon in 1844.

The first peal was rung by the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths in 1791, 5120 changes of Bob Major conducted by William Jones. The church is depicted on the Society's certificate of membership. The London County Association, formerly the St. James's Society, was founded here in 1824.

Other ringing societies sampled the eight bells by the ringing of peals. One of the peal boards shows that the Westminster Youths on Monday December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1800, rang 5040 changes of Grandsire Triples, with 103 bobs and 2 singles in three hours fifteen minutes, the ringers being: Richard Mills, Thomas Humphries, John Truman, William Palmer, William Williams, John Hints - conductor, John Jagers and John Leach. Joshua Bird and Thomas Woolcot were Churchwardens at the time of the peal.

The Misses G Bailey, F Faulkner and M Prockson were the first lady ordinary ringing members of the Middlesex County Association for Clerkenwell in 1930.

Source: Mervyn Blatch, *A guide to London's churches* 1979, p 329; David W Struckett, *Dictionary of Campanology* 1985, p 83; J A Trollope, manuscript, *History of London Ringers and Ringing*; H B Walters, manuscript; Whitechapel Bell Foundry records; *Ringling Peals* - Gillett & Johnston Catalogue; *Ringling World* December 21, 1945 p 522 and February 20, 1970 p 126; Association records.