

FULHAM

This riverside church and tower was built near the palace of our Patron, the Lord Bishop of London. The tower was built of Kentish ragstone. The Calendar of Patent Rolls for May 5th, 1441 states that Richard Garald and Peter Chapell, masons, were not to be taken away from their work on this building nor was there to be any hindrance of the carriage of stones from the quarry at 'Maydeston'. In 1797, battlements were added to the four-stage tower with its stair turret in the south-west angle. The history of the church's time pieces can be traced back to 1637 when the clock-man was paid 6s per annum for winding the clock. John Drake was appointed in 1655. The present clock was installed in 1883 by Gillett and Bland.

In 1549 there were five 'great bells and a lyttell bell in the steple.' The curfew used to be rung at 8 p.m. and a morning bell at 5 a.m. Bryan Eldridge of Chertsey recast six bells in 1652. Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester recast and augmented them to eight bells in 1729. These were the gift of William Skelton. The bells were brought to Fulham by water but misfortune struck when the barge sank. The bells were rescued so there were great celebrations in the "King's Arms". In 1746 Mr. Theodore Ecclestone, of Mortlake gave two more bells. The present bells are listed.

Many entries concerning bells occur in the Churchwardens' Accounts, e.g. 1587. "Paid for the Queen's Majesties being at Putney for vyttles for the ringers 2s. 8d." It was customary at burials for the tenor to be tolled in groups of 3 x 3 for a man and 3 x 2 for a woman. For the burial of a child, a lighter bell was tolled. On Easter Tuesday in 1820 the ringers had the right to claim a shoulder of veal.

The Society of Fulham Youths rang a peal on the eight bells of 10,080 changes of Bob Major which took six hours forty minutes on January 26th, 1735. The ringers were:- Thomas Warland, Edward Hudnott, John Farlar, Miles Dent, Henry Dennis, William Hudnott, Henry Holland and Samuel Walton. The Churchwarden at the time of the peal was William Souch.

The All Saints' Fulham Association of Bellringers was founded on Michaelmas Day 1871 by the Vicar, the Revd. F H Fisher, who conducted the first peal in 1879.

Work took place on the bells and the frame was strengthened by Gillett & Johnston in 1950 and the bells were rededicated at Evensong on Sunday July 9th, 1950 by the Bishop of Kensington.

Source: *A guide to Fulham Parish Church* 3rd (revised) edition 1975, pp 3 and 4; Mervyn Blatch, *A guide to London's churches* 1979, p 317; Alex Bayliss; Christopher J Pickford; H B Walters, manuscript; *Ringing world* January 18 1952 p 42 and August 10 1990 p 767; Association records.