Cottingham St. Mary the Virgin

The oldest part of the present building is early 14th century. Nicholas de Luda (Louth), Rector from 1361, built the chancel; a fine brass in the sanctuary records his death in 1383. The tower was completed about 1400 (and has been compared to that at North-allerton); its belfry staircase has been added as a turret on the North-East corner, rising to three quarters the height of the tower. The eight pinnacles were added to the top of the tower in 1744 at a cost of £31 17s. 6d.

The present clock, made by T. Cooke & Son, York, after being shown at exhibitions in Vienna (1870) and York (1880), was purchased for £300 in 1885. The ringers still wind the clock by hand (300 turns every 3 days); it has four faces, and chimes the hours on the tenor bell.

History of the Bells

The weight, diameter, note, year, Founder and inscription of each bell is given:

Treble 5 Cwt 30" Eb

1897 John Warner & Sons Ltd. London Four idle tongue-tied heads were we A jubilee of years unsung Till a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Doubled each head and loosed each tongue

No. 2 6 Cwt 32½" D

1897 Warner H.P.Ramsden. Rect. H.Witty W.D.Richardson Custod.

No. 3 7½ Cwt 35" C

1897 Warner I.M. Henry Wilson of Cottingham House

No. 4 9 Cwt 37" Bb

1897 Warner VICTORIA X++ Lustra Complevit Britt:Reg:Imp:1897

No. 5 10½ Cwt 40" Ab

1753 George Dalton Ebor. Joseph Meedly Joseph Russell Churchwardens

No. 6 12½ Cwt 42-i" G

1638 George I Oldfield Nottingham Sum Rosa Pulsata Maria Vocata TRFS

No. 7 15-1-18 44" F

1739 Edward II Seller Ebor. Soli Deo Gloria Tho. Mease - Vicar Joh.Heslewood Wil.Whitehead Churchwardens" on waist "Recast by John Taylor & Co. 1959 Mark Green Rector H.A.Hall H.V.Barton Churchwardens

Tenor 1 ton approx. 50" Eb

1795 James Harrison Barton Lincs. Stephen Thurlwell. Vicar John Witty Thomas Fisher Churchwardens 1795

The earliest known reference to the bells in the Church is in 1552 when there were "*iij great belles" and "one great bell sold by the parishioners of Cottingham for the sum of twentie three poundes unto one Mr. Jobsome of Hull*". As part of the reformation, representatives of the King (Henry VIII) visited the Church to inspect it; they felt that four bells was one too many, so one was sold to Alderman Jobsome of Hull. £23 was a great deal of money to look after, so it was decided that four named people should each hold £5. The bell was possibly speedily replaced but none of these four bells survives.

No. 6, cast in 1638, has a Latin inscription which translates "when I am rung I am the Rose of the world called Mary". It is sometimes referred to in the Churchwardens account book as the "*Parish bell*". A peal of 5024 Cambridge Surprise Major was rung in February 1988 to commemorate the casting of No. 6 bell 350 years earlier.

There is an item in the accounts for 1660: "*leather for the 3 bells 9d*." indicating the number of bells at that time. In 1661 a new rope was 6/-. Three days work on the third bell cost 6/-.

The bells were rehung in 1752 by James Harrison who was the grand-father of the James who cast the tenor bell; his frames were of high quality and workmanship. Paul Taylor of Messrs Taylor & Co. Belifounders, Loughborough, did not regard James Harrison of Barton as a particularly good bellfounder, and the Tenor (1795) is probably the best bell he ever cast.

In 1739 "*ye third bell*" was recast (this is now No. 7) by Edward Sellars of York. He charged £1. 8s. per cwt. for recasting the old bell and £1. 2s. per cwt for the 1½ cwt. of new metal. His bill totalled £30. 12s. 9d. Paul Taylor regarded E. Sellars of York as a good bellfounder, and No. 7 probably the worst he ever cast, being faulty in design and casting, giving a dud sound compared with the other bells; it was therefore recast in 1959 when the bells were rehung on ball bearings.

The front four bells were cast in 1897 to augment the ring to eight; the old 4 had been silent for many years. At the same time the wooden frame was replaced by the present metal one. The moving spirit behind the project was the Rector, but unfortunate-ly, the bells were not ready for Queen Victoria's Jubilee day despite promises that they would be delivered on time. The Revd. Ramsden was very annoyed and did not want his parishioners to think that it was his fault, so he had the correspondence with Warners displayed in the Post office window so that everyone could see where the blame lay.

Until this time, the bells were rung from a gallery inside the Church. With the enlarged peal, a new ringing chamber was created immediately below the bells. Access is unusual; having climbed to the level of the bells, ringers open a trap door and descend a steep ladder into the ringing chamber below.

The Ellacombe chiming apparatus was presumably fitted when the 1897 augmentation took place, but has fallen into disrepair - an indication of the continued enthusiasm of the team for change ringing since the 1950's.

History of Ringers In 1660, the Churchwardens invested 7/- in a new account book, which became the authentic parish history for 230 years, and contains many references to the bells and ringers, including the first of 1/- on May 11th 1660 when the Monarchy was restored and Charles II was proclaimed King. Also, no doubt as a sign of its loyalty, the parish arranged for the bells to be rung again on his return to London (another 1/- for the ringers) and to celebrate his coronation (2/6d).

During the time of the Civil war, Cottingham was on the side of Parliament. Was this feeling still prevalent in 1663? was that why the parish spent 3/- on having the bells rung on May 29th (the Kings birthday) but 9/- on November 5th to celebrate the capture of Guy Fawkes and the failure to blow up Parliament?

On June 29th, 1665 the parish paid the ringers 7/- for celebrating "*a victory by our fleets*". Later in the same year they were paid 5/- "*when the Duke passed through the town*". This was the Duke of York (who succeeded his brother to the throne as James II). He would be travelling between Hull and York.

In 1732 the parishioners apparently felt that there were too many days on which the bells were being rung, the result being that an excessive amount was paid to the ringers. A public meeting was held and it was decided that the bells shall be rung on the fol-lowing dates and that allowances shown "and no more" be paid to the ringers: 29th May; 6/-, 6th June; 12/-, 11th October; 6/-, 30th October; 6/-, 5th November; 12/-.

On April 11th, 1814 the ringers were paid 12/- for marking the rejoicing of the defeat of Bonaparte and the same amount in 1818 for ringing a dumb peal (muffled peal) on the occasion of the burial of the Princess Saxe Coburg. The following year when "a Princess" died (no name given) the Churchwardens apparently thought her importance was insufficient to warrant a peal being rung. Instead they paid the Sexton's wife 1/- for tolling a bell.

By ringing at Cottingham, Marion Henry became the first lady to ring with a team in the East Riding in 1938.

The following have served as Tower Captain since the ban on ringing church bells was removed in 1945:-

Fred Mason

Geoffrey Pybus

Neville Pailing

Karl Ornbo

Richard Gibson

David Mitchell

Christopher Brown

Roddy Horton

Ian Booth

A significant factor in the success of the team has been the large number of students that have made Cottingham their home tower during term time, living nearby in the University halls of residence.

Weddings are popular at St Marys' and on summer Saturdays the team is kept busy with up to 4 couples severally requesting bells to be rung on one day. Today, the team puts aside 20% of wedding money into a fund which pays for maintenance of the bells and fittings, plus ringers diaries and Beverley and District Society membership for regular members of the team.

A set of 51 Whitechapel handbells for tune ringing has been built up, and used for over 200 engagements in the last 30 years.

J Ian Booth