Eastrington, St. Michael

St. Michaels Church Eastrington, is believed to be 11th or 12th century in origin, though most of the remaining fabric is chiefly of the 15th century Gothic style. The Church has a West tower, in which the bells are hung.

Prior to 1923, the tower contained only three bells. In his book entitled 'History of Eastrington Parish Church', the Rev. W.G. Dunbar, Vicar from 1883 to 1897, describes these bells to be "*of very powerful tone*".

Of the three bells the great bell had no date on it, but was evidently a very ancient bell of unknown origin. Rev. Dunbar write that it was supposedly sold to Eastrington from one of the Monasteries, probably during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII in about 1537 or in the reign of Edward VI. Other sources claim the bell came from St. Mary's Abbey, York (Baring Gould in Oddities of Yorkshire) or that it came from Ripon and that an Abbot sold it to purchase a hogshead of wine and put a wooden bell in its place. This bell was inscribed *'Sum Rosa Pulsata Mundi Mariavocata*' or 'Being struck I am called Mary the Rose of the World'. Above the rim was a circle of roses.

The second bell was dated 1663 and was reputed to weigh one ton with the inscription *'Soli Deo Gloria, Pax hominibus*' translated as 'To God Alone be Glory, Peace to men'.

The third bell was dated 1718 with the inscription *'Populum voco deum laudare*' or 'I call the people to praise God' and was said to weigh half a ton.

In 1923, the three bells were recast by Gillett and Johnston of Croydon to form the present ring of six as a thanksgiving for the return of men from the parish who served in the Great War of 1914 to 1919.

The bill from the foundry for the work gives the cost as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| To recast your existing bells into a ring of six and rehang with all new fittings in a new metal frame inclusive of masonry and cartage.  Constructing a new floor to belfry and providing rope guides – all per our estimates |  | 450 – 0 - 0 |
| To put inscriptions on bells – 77 letters at 6d per letter |  | 1 – 18 - 6 |
| To supply brass plate and engraving |  | 6 – 5 – 0 |
|  | nett | 458 – 3 – 6 |

The inscription on the old three bells are repeated on the 2nd, 3rd and tenor of the recast ring. These bells and the remaining three bells all bear the inscription *'Gillett and Johnston AD 1923’*

The brass plate described in the bill is now fixed to the wall at the base of the tower.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Treble | E | 26” | 3-3-4 |
| 2 | D | 27 7/8” | 4-1-9 |
| 3 | C | 30 ½” | 5-1-12 |
| 4 | B | 31 7/8” | 6-0-8 |
| 5 | A | 35 1/16” | 8-0-1 |
| Tenor | G | 38 15/15” | 10-2-1 |

The bells were dedicated by the Bishop of Hull on 2nd April 1923 and shortly afterwards on Saturday 21st the first peal on the bells was rung in three hours exactly. This was 5040 Minor, being 1440 Oxford Treble Bob, 2880 Kent Treble Bob and 720 Plain Bob, and was rung by a band consisting of three ringers from Hemingbrough, two from Selby and one from Howden.

Simon Hartley