Elloughton, St. Mary

The Church at Elloughton was built between 1250 and 1300, although it is likely that a Saxon church had previously existed on the site, and the living was owned by the Prebend of Wetwang; the first known Vicar of the Church was one Richard de Wetwang. The adjacent village of Brough was originally served by Elloughton Church, and as it was a Roman settlement it seems likely that a Christian community has long been in existence in the area. The tower was added to the Church later (between 1520 and 1530), paid for by a bequest of Richard Laikoke, a Vicar of Elloughton; the Tower is of Tadcaster stone. It is not known when bells were first installed, but certainly there were two bells hung in the tower in 1710, as recorded in the Church Wardens accounts: *for repairing the bell chamber & making a new bell wheel & gudgeon which were broken by ye fall of ye bell*

The Church was restored in 1543, the Cruciform shape was retained, and the lancet windows which exist now are probably the same as in the original Church. Today these windows contain some lovely stained glass given as memorials, although this does make the Church very dark inside.

These bells were replaced by two new bells in 1790, cast by James Harrison of Barton-on-Humber and to these a third bell was added in 1856 which was cast by John Warner and Sons of London. This was shortly after much of the Church had been rebuilt during the 1840's, although the tower was not included in this work, and in fact is the only part of the original Church extant. The cost of the rebuilding was raised by levying a rate on owners of property in the parish. All three bells were rehung in 1954 when the interior wooden framework in the tower was entirely renewed.

On 25th October 1964 an electrical fault in the tower caused a fire which destroyed the Church roof and the interior, including the organ, and brought the bells crashing to the ground. The bells were in fact melted in the heat of the blaze. Within one week of the fire work began on reconstructing the Church, and by the strenuous efforts of the parishioners the Church was ready to be re-hallowed just over one year later on 11th December 1965, with one bell recast and hung for ringing. As a part of the work the tower was strengthened and steel girders, suitable for bearing a ring of bells, were put in. The installation of the six bells at Elloughton were paid for by the generous legacy of Mrs. Barbara Taylor (who died 30th May, 1972). The remaining two original bells were recast, and three bells, which had previously been in Holy Trinity Church, Kings Square in York were recast to complete the ring. Holy Trinity had been demolished in 1936. The inscriptions on these bells have been retained, and are:

*1693 TB DEUM LAVDAMUS*

*1681 IUBILATE DOMINO PSAL*

*1659 LAVDATE IAM QVIA BONVA ET AMAENUM EST PSALLE NOSTRO*

The bells were cast and hung by John Taylors of Loughborough, and their details are as Diameter

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bell | Diameter | Weight (cwt) | Note |
| Treble | 1’ 10½” | 2-2-24 | G# |
| 2 | 2’ 0” | 3-0-9 | F# |
| 3 | 2’ 1” | 3-0-16 | E |
| 4 | 2’ 2” | 3-1-18 | D# |
| 5 | 2’ 4½” | 4-1-10 | C# |
| Tenor | 2’ 82 | 6-1-5 | B |

They were Hallowed on Saturday 15th December 1973 by the Lord Bishop of Hull.

Sound control has been fitted in the tower which, together with the ease with which the bells handle, has led to Elloughton being a popular training tower. Elloughton is one of, if not the, most popular tower for peals in the area; 61 have been rung by the Beverley and District Society alone up until the end of 1992. During the 1970's and early 1980's a band thrived at Elloughton under the leadership of Mr. Peter Church; in recent years the band has not been so strong, and for a period have not been able to ring regularly for service. However, training is underway at Elloughton and with help from members of the previous band the bells are once more proclaiming the message of the Church.

Michael J de C Henshaw

Acknowledgement: Much of the information given above is to be found in 'A brief history of St. Mary's Church Ellougton' by The Rev. M Anker, and the souvenir service brochure for the Hallowing of Elloughton bells.