Hedon, St. Augustine

*Hedon, the king of Holderness,*

*Foursquare it dominates the little town;*

*Foursquare against the winter frown,*

*And autumns weeping heavens of despair;*

*Foursquare against the fiery wings*

*that herald the days end of things –*

*The smoking bivouac of the crowning night.*

*The King of Holderness,*

*and like a Kings its battlemented crown.*

The present Church occupies the site of an earlier one, the evidence of which exists today, and is dated 1180-1190. St. Augustines is a cruciform structure, consisting of the chancel, with the vestry on its South side, North and South transepts, the nave with North and South aisles, and a central tower. The length of the Church is 165 feet internally, the transept 103 feet, the chancel 53 feet and the tower is 129 feet to the top of the pinna-cles.

The existing tower, which certainly replaces an earlier one, appears to have been commenced in building about the year 1427, and was completed within 10 years. It is crowned by a bold para-pet, consisting of a tier of cuspal openings over a similar tier of cuspal panels. From the parapet rise eight tall and eight short crocketted pinnacles.

A few years before the building of the tower was commenced a subsidy was levied upon the town towards 'the new making' of the bells. They were cast in 1422-23. About 30 years later some change was made in the ring. From the 18th century the ring consisted of six bells, but in 1929 these were recast and at the same time two new trebles were cast, thus making the present ring of eight. The inscriptions on three of the bells date from 1686, two from 1687, one from 1776 and two from 1929. The relevant information is:

Treble 4-2-11 E William Lambert White 1929 John Taylor of Loughborough

2nd 4-3-03 D# Elizabeth White 1929 John Taylor of Loughborough

3rd 5-3-18 C# Eustace Roper, Richard Gibson Churchwardens (this bell, the treble of the original six bears the date 1776, but not the maker)

4th 6-3-05 B Wind them and bring them and I will ring for them (this probably means that the bell was used to announce births, marriages and deaths), dated 1687.

5th 7-2-18 A William and Philip Wightman made mee 1686. The gift of Charles Duncomb to the Corporation of Hedon in Yorkshire

6th 9-1-06 G# William and Philip Wightman made mee 1686. The gift of Charles Duncomb to the Corporation of Hedon in Yorkshire

7th 12-3-15 F# William and Philip Wightman made mee 1686. The gift of Charles Duncomb to the Corporation of Hedon in Yorkshire

Tenor 17-1-10 E The gift of Charles Duncomb to the Corporation of Hedon in Yorkshire, 1687. SS. Ebor

On 17th October 1929, after the original six had been recast and bearing the added inscription 'Recast 1929' the bells were rehal-lowed and the two new bells dedicated. The original form of service used is kept in the files of the Holy Trinity Church in Hull whose ringers opened the bells. A competent authority has stated "*The beauty of Hedon bells is their clarity, no one bell dominates any of the others. Whereas in many peals the bells resound and overlap others, the Hedon bells remain clear and separate*".

It would be inappropriate not to mention the last time the bells were rung prior to being taken down for recasting, and subsequently rehung on steel girders in a steel frame. This "Farewell peal" took place on the evening of Whit Sunday, 19th May, 1929, there were only four bells used and the ringers were George Smith, H. Horseman, E. Norrison and C. Sheppard.

B H Ward