

Nico J. Sorderson
1 Orchard Estate
Belbairn
Kingsley SQ8 6BS.

General Leaf
Great Bracken
Newmarket CB891
20th September 1983

Dear Mrs Sorderson

Mrs Sordery Mansfield has informed me
that she attended a WI meeting recently
at Great Bracken when you spoke about
our Church bells.

As Brack Recorder for our village, I am
always keen to gain as much information
as possible about matters of general interest,
and I wondered what you could provide
me with a written explanation of the lettering
used on the tower bell, the meaning of the
term "Prior of the tower" (p.10, and para) and
an interpretation of the reference number 63
(p.167-Inscriptions) - presumably these are the
three bells at Great Bracken - together with
anything else you feel is relevant?

The reason for my asking you to write is
that I have discovered over the years verbal
communications can be inadequately changed
or misinterpreted and, looking through my
existing records of the village, it is only these
where per has been put to paper which are
I know that over the last hundred years or
so various people have taken an interest
truly reliable.

in our Tena ball, but there is so little detail it would be really rewarding to have the voice of an expert.

I hope this request will not put you to too much trouble.

Yours sincerely

Barbara J. Buchs

(MRS. B.J. BUCHS

size, occurs with the Barnardiston lettering on the second bell at Cherry Hinton, Cambridgeshire.

In the same part of the county lie the third at Assington, and the fifth at Monks Eleigh, bearing the cross and lettering, which is shown to have been used by Peter de Weston, 1330—1348, and William Revel, c. 1356.

now recast

An unquestionably early date may be assigned to the tenor at Great Bradley, which bears the name of Richard de Wimbis. This man's name first occurs in 1303, as one of a jury for appraising the value of pledges for debt in the custody of Nicholas Pycot, Chamberlain of the Guildhall. His delivery of a bell, weighing 2,820 pounds, "every hundredweight thereof containing 112 pounds," to the Priory of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Aldgate, in 1312, has been mentioned in the Cambridgeshire book; but an additional fact has now come out, that one Richard de Wymbish was Prior of the Convent from 1316 to 1325. Mr. Stahl Schmidt suggests that relationship or fellow-townmanship may account for the employment of one Richard, when another was probably sub-prior.

Only five of his bells are known to remain, and Suffolk is most fortunate in possessing one of them. Here and at Goring, Oxon., he styles himself "Ricard"; at Burham, Kent, and Slapton, Northamptonshire, "Richard"; at Rawreth, Essex, his name is not given; but at Berechurch (now re-cast), was the full Latin "Ricardvs." The Goring third has the Norman-French "fist," and asks prayers for Peter Quivil, Bishop of Exeter, without mention of his soul, whence we may infer that the date is earlier than 1291, when the Bishop died. Three other founders bore the same surname, Michael de Wymbish, 1297—1310, Ralph Wymbish, 1303—1315, and Walter Wymbish, in 1325.

This lettering is also now rare. It remains on the third at Fairstead, Essex, and the third at S. Laurence, Norwich, both inscribed

+ VOCOR : JOHANNES, the first bearing also + PETRVS : DE : WESTON : ME : RECIT, and the other + WILCELMYS : REVEL : ME : RECIT, and on the third at Heckfield, Hampshire, which bears a charming little piece of old English:

Westminster
Abbey Treble

and Bromeswell

59. BOYTON S. *Andrew.*

Bell. John Darbie made me 1679.

1 Bell.

"Great bells iij." Return of 1553.

Davy (22 Jan., 1818), mistakes the date for 1692.

60. BRADFIELD [Combust] *All Saints.*

3 Bells.

1 Mears & Stainbank Founders London.

Bartholomew Young Church Warden 1693.

2 Recast 1869, Arthur Young Warden.

□ 34 □ 33 □ 35 □ 32.

+ ~~S~~ Sancta Maria Magdalena Ora Pro Robis.

3 □ 81 Thomas □ 82 Cheese made me 1630.

"Great bells iij." Return of 1553. Notes F#, E, D#.

"The steeple is down, but in the roof at the west end of the Isle are hung 3 bells, but I could not get to them." Davy. Diameter of Tenor 25½ in.

61. BRADFIELD S. *Clare.* Tenor. Diam. 37½ in. 3 Bells.

1 U 66 thrice.

+ Sancta □ 68 Maria □ 68 Ora □ 68 Pro □ 68 Robis.

2 Richard Ottewell Ch. Warden. W. & T. Mears, late Lester, Pack, & Chapman of London fecit 1787.

3 Charles Newman made mee 1699.

"Great bells iij." Return of 1553.

"2 bells," Davy. Notes C#, A#, G#.

62. BRADFIELD S. *George.* Tenor. Diam. 37½ in. 5 Bells.

1 H. P. made me 1695.

2 R O G 1668.

3 Robard Gvrney made me 1668.

4 Uriah Woodard & Wm. Smith Ch. Wardens.

Lester & Pack of London fecit 1764.

5 R. A. Wardens. Henry Pleasant made me 1695.

1 Recast 1891

"Great bells iij." Return of 1553.

So Davy, only mistaking "Robard" on 3 for "Richard." He notes 60 steps in the tower staircase. 1 cracked, notes of the others C#, B, A#, G#.

63. BRADLEY, GREAT, S. *Mary.*

3 Bells.

1 No inscription.

2 □ 81 De □ 82 Byri □ 82 Santi □ 82 Edmondi □ 82 Stefanvs □ 82 Tonni □ 82 me fecit □ 82 W. L. □ 81 1576.

3 □ RICARD : DE VVYMBIS : ME : FECIT.

See p. 10.

The treble probably a very old bell. C. Deedes.

"Great bells iij." Return of 1553.

No notes, Davy.

64. BRADLEY, LITTLE, *All Saints.*

1 Bell

Bell. R. G. 1652.

"Great bells iij." Return of 1553.

No notes, Davy.

65. BRADWELL S. *Nicholas.*

3 Bells.

1 U 50 thrice.

+ 61 Wat In Conclabe □ 62 Gabriel Duc Page Suabr.

7889 (p. 147)

These seem to be
jumbled
see 14 on the same page

Small letters

THOMAS CHEESE MADE

ME 1630

small letters
on plate

27

28

34½

37

40

43

48½

53

21

PLATE I.



I am not to decide on the identity of the two Stephens. The latest date of the name is 1587, which would give a range of forty-three years, a good long spell, but nothing incredible. This Reepham bell bears the seal of the cloth subsidy for the county of Suffolk, which may be applied to the history of Roger Reve, "clotheare," and a representation of the Crucifixion. Neither of these occur again. His usual marks are the crown and arrows, indicative of the borough (fig. 81), and a fleur-de-lis, perhaps with reference to his French origin (fig. 82).

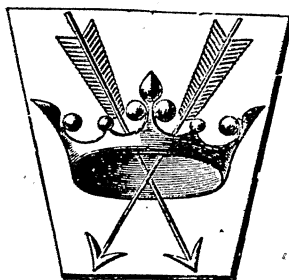


Fig. 81.



Fig. 82.

As his are the first bells which bear the name of a Suffolk town, I will take them in order of date. I know of none out of East Anglia. The Norfolk and Cambridgeshire bells are in italics, and those now recast have a dagger (†) prefixed to them:—

- 1560. Stanton, All Saints, fourth,
- †1562. Helmingham, tenor,
- †1564. Cockfield, tenor,
- „ *Stetchworth*, tenor.

The inscription on the Cockfield tenor was given me by Flanders Green, who set me bell-hunting more than forty years ago, an enthusiastic bell-hanger:—

MAHE CITYS LECTVM EVGE, MOLLEM DISCVTE
SOMNVN, TEMPLVM APPROPINQVES, ET VENERARE
DEVM.

It may be compared with the short admonition to rise early, on the Stoke-by-Clare clock-bell.

- 1566. Hargrave, tenor,