

The Church Bells of Norfolk

BY

John L'Estrange

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THE
Church Bells of Norfolk

WHERE, WHEN, AND BY WHOM THEY WERE MADE;

WITH THE

INSCRIPTIONS ON ALL THE BELLS IN
THE COUNTY.

BY

JOHN L'ESTRANGE.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NINE PLATES AND SIXTY WOODCUTS.

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1874.

TO

JOHN ROBERT DANIEL-TYSSEN, ESQ., F.S.A.,

THESE NOTES

ON THE CHURCH BELLS OF NORFOLK

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE COMPILER.

P R E F A C E .

To collect the inscriptions from nearly two thousand bells, distributed amongst seven hundred churches, was a task which, with my limited leisure, I could not have accomplished unless I had received great assistance.

At a very early stage of my labours, John Robert Daniel-Tyssen, Esq., and Amhurst Daniel-Tyssen, Esq., the Rev. J. J. Raven, D.D., and the Rev. John Henry Sperling placed their collections, not only for Norfolk but for other counties, at my disposal. The Rev. J. A. Ogle of Sedgeford copied for me the inscriptions on the church bells of his rural deanery, and the Rev. Morton Dulley of Barnby, a number of those in his neighbourhood. To these and to other gentlemen who communicated the inscriptions on the bells of their own parish churches my hearty thanks are due, as likewise in a very special manner to Mr. T. R. Tallack, who devoted the summer of 1869 to obtaining the inscriptions from the bells of a large number of churches which, on account of the difficulty of access, had been passed over by previous collectors. It will be readily understood that in a collection of inscriptions thus formed and moreover frequently

transcribed, some, nay, I fear many, errors have crept in, despite all attempts at literal accuracy, which often, owing to the ignorance or carelessness of the bell-founders, have made matters apparently worse.

I gladly take this opportunity to thank those gentlemen who have given me information during the progress of this work; among whom I would especially mention G. W. Marshall, Esq., Justin Simpson, Esq., W. C. Boulter, Esq., A. North, Esq., Mr. J. Calver, Mr. T. G. Bayfield, the Rev. W. C. Lukis, the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe, and the Rev. J. T. Fowler.

I should be indeed ungrateful were I to omit to acknowledge the kindness of the Rev. James Bulwer, M.A., who not only read and corrected the copy, but also the proofs of the first part of this book.

Mr. James Mottram gave me his table of the dedications of Norfolk churches, which I have used at p. 14, and rendered me great assistance by collating my list with Ecton's *Thesaurus Rerum Ecclesiasticarum*.

I hope I shall be excused for mentioning here that in the following pages a fuller and more accurate list of the dedications of Norfolk churches is given than can be found in any one book, or indeed in all the books which have noticed this subject. My authorities are principally the Wills preserved in the Registry at Norwich, but I have not thought it necessary to incumber my pages with references to them.

My best thanks are also due to Dr. Bensly, Secretary of the Lord Bishop of Norwich and Deputy Registrar of the Diocese, for continuing to me the privilege of access to the documents in his custody that I enjoyed under his lamented predecessor, John Kitson, Esq.; also to W. L. Mendham, Esq., Town Clerk of the City of

Norwich, for permission to search the Corporation archives; and to the Clergy and Churchwardens of the various parishes whose records I have examined.

For my woodcuts I am mainly indebted to John Robert Daniel-Tyssen, Esq., F.S.A.; but I have also to thank the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe, M.A., F.S.A., for the loan of several blocks, and for stereotypes of many others. I am also indebted for similar acts of kindness to the Rev. James Bulwer, M.A., Robert Fitch, Esq., F.G.S., F.S.A., and Llewellyn Jewitt, Esq., F.S.A. Further, I have to thank the Rev. G. W. W. Minns and Richard Howlett, Esq., for the illustrations of the Ketteringham and Great Plumstead bell inscriptions respectively drawn by themselves; and E. A. Tillett, Esq., and Walter Rye, Esq., for the plates of the St. Giles', Norwich, and Cromer bell inscriptions.

In conclusion, I feel that I owe an apology to my subscribers for the delay which has taken place in the appearance of these Notes. When I issued my circular soliciting their names in December, 1864, I had no idea that there was so much work to be done, or that my inclination to do it would decline in the same ratio as my opportunities. However, I have little doubt that even those who are interested will think *Sat cito, si sat bene*.

CORRECTIONS.

- Page 43, line 7 from foot, for *p.* 9 read *p.* 12.
46, line 12, for *T. D.* read *I. D.*
85, line 11 from foot, for *Gayton* read *Gayton Thorpe*.
85, last line, for *m̄b̄r̄l̄b̄ij̄* read *m̄b̄r̄l̄b̄ij̄*.
88, line 2 from foot, for 1647 read 1674.
132, line 3, for *Omnipiens* read *Omnipotens*.
155, line 27, for *villain* read *villain*.
155, line 29, for *villanage* read *villenage*.
193, line 29, for 4. + O : : DVS read 4. + O : : = = DVS.
206, after SANTON S. Helen, add 1.
208, line 22, after the words "of the old church" read
dedicated to Blessed Virgin Mary.

Notes on Bells and Bell-Founders.

INTRODUCTION.

NOT having any facts to add to, nor any fresh inferences to draw from, the stores of information regarding the origin of Bells, and the date of their introduction into the Christian temple, I propose to pass over this part of the subject without further notice; a course I the more readily adopt, because those who may desire such information will have no difficulty in obtaining it from any encyclopædia. The object of these pages is to record the Inscriptions on the Bells of the Norfolk Churches; to show by whom, at what time, and in what place they were cast; and by illustrations to convey, to those who rarely if ever ascend a belfry, some idea of the beauty and diversity of the bell-founders' alphabets, marks, and devices. Thus, it is hoped, some slight indication will be afforded of the religious feeling and the state of art and society at various periods of English history.

The bells existing are the principal source whence it can be hoped to obtain the materials required for carrying out this object. But here a difficulty arises; the number of ancient bells remaining is comparatively small, and this number becomes yearly less. Out of an aggregate of 1500 bells, the proportion cast before the accession of Queen Elizabeth is about one in six,¹

¹ In some localities the early bells have been better preserved than in others. The proportion of old bells in West Norfolk is much less than in the eastern division of the county. In seventeen Marshland churches, out of a total of seventy-two bells, there are only two anterior to the year 1550.

and, small as this may appear, Norfolk is richer in old bells than other counties. In Sussex, for instance, there is not more than one in ten;² in Wilts, about one in nine.³

Several causes operate to produce this scarcity of early bells. In the first place, there is the ordinary wear and tear of ages, and it has been stated, "that all bells must, from their crystalline nature, sooner or later become cracked, even though they might last five hundred years before the failure took place."⁴ If to this fair wear and tear be added the unfair usage to which bells are frequently subjected, and the unforeseen accidents which happen in ringing, &c., there is assuredly no difficulty in accounting for this comparative rareness of old bells. Change-ringing has also contributed in another way, and to a considerable extent, in reducing their number. Peals of bells, before ringing became the science it now is, consisted of fewer and generally heavier bells than is the case at the present day. To adapt these peals to the requirements of modern change-ringing, it was indispensable that the number of bells should be increased, and in some instances this was effected in a manner of which no one can complain, simply by adding smaller bells. In this way the peals at Alburgh, St. Michael Coslany and St. Giles, Norwich, grew up by degrees from four to eight, and St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, from five to ten bells. But in too many cases the increase was effected in a different and more economical manner. The old peals of three, four, five, or six, were recast into or exchanged for lighter peals of more bells, the surplus metal going a considerable way towards the abatement of the bell-founders' charges. At St. Gregory's, Norwich, five ancient bells were recast into a light peal of six in 1818. At Blo Norton and Hedenham, peals of five and six have, within the last eighty years, replaced peals of three and four, and there is evidence that many other peals cast in the

² *The Church Bells of Sussex*. By Amherst Daniel-Tyssen, Esq. Lewes: Bacon, 1864.

³ *An Account of Church Bells*. By the Rev. W. C. Lukis, M.A. London: Parker, 1857.

⁴ Papers read at the Institute of British Architects, 1855, p. 63.

seventeenth, eighteenth, and present centuries, supplanted heavier although fewer bells.⁵ Another favourite plan of remodelling a peal was to take away one or more of the larger bells and add smaller ones. Thus, at St. Martin at Palace, Norwich, in 1672, the tenor to three bells was taken away and the peal increased to five; and at Fundenhall, the second and third bells of a similar peal were recast into four with the old treble for a tenor. At Banham, the *black-letter* peal of five was despoiled of its tenor and two small bells were added, the others being chipped to bring them into tune.

Another cause, which must have contributed to some if not indeed to a considerable extent to produce this scarcity, was the spoliation of Church property which took place about the middle of the sixteenth century. It has been however too hastily concluded, from the inventories of the church goods taken in the 6th Edward VI., that only one bell, or at the most, in large parishes, two bells, were allowed to remain to the use of the parish. But the Royal Commission of 16th January, 6th Edward VI., expressly states that the great bells and saints' bells were to remain until the king's pleasure was made known concerning the same. The object of the Commissions was to prevent unlicensed sales by the parishioners, or unlawful appropriations of church goods by the lords of manors, &c.

Sir Henry Spelman bears witness to the spoliation of bells at this period. He says, "When I was a child (I speak of about threescore years since), I heard much talk of the pulling down of bells in every part of my country, the county of Norfolk, then common in memory: and the sum of the speech usually was, that in sending them over sea, some were drowned in one haven, some in another, as at Lynn, Wells, or Yarmouth. I dare not venture upon particulars; for that I then hearing it as a child, regarded

⁵ In some instances, however, the peals were not only increased in number but also in weight. The celebrated peal of St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, is a case in point, the old peal with a tenor bell weighing only 24 cwt. was replaced by the present peal of twelve bells, the tenor weighing 41 cwt. The peals at Yarmouth St. Nicholas, Lynn St. Margaret, East Dereham, and Diss, are also instances of these changes, but still the loss of *old* bells was the same.

it as a child. But the truth of it was lately discovered by God Himself; for that in the year He sending such a dead neap (as they call it) as no man living was known to have seen the like, the sea fell so far back from the land at Hunstanton, that the people going much further to gather oysters than they had done at any time before, they there found a bell with the mouth upward, sunk into the ground to the very brim. They carried the news thereof to Sir Hamon L'Estrange, Lord of the town and of wreck and sea-rights there, who shortly after sought to have weighed up and gained the bell; but the sea never since going so far back, they hitherto could not find the place again. This relation I received from Sir Hamon L'Estrange himself, being my brother-in-law." ⁶

Parkin says, that at East Barsham there is "one bell dedicated to St. Thomas . . . Here were formerly several bells which being taken out of the church, and put on shipboard, were lost (as is said) on Hunstanton sands." ⁷

Turning, from what may perhaps be regarded as mere report, to the undeniable evidence of contemporary records, we find no reason to suppose that Sir Henry Spelman, in his zeal, overstated the facts. In the inventory, indented, made between the Royal Commissioners on the one part, and the parishioners of Bodham on the other part, in the 6th Edward VI., it appears that there was only one bell in the steeple weighing 2 cwt., but "that ij belles ware carryed away by S^r Hugh Elye and William Faconer and Rychard Coste to S^r Frannces . . . knyght, weyeing by estymacyon viii^e, and this was done in the xxxviiijth yere of Kyng Henry the viijth wthout the consent of the pishⁿs."

The Tottenhill Inventory mentions "that the belles in the steaple were stolen in Seynt Valentynes even, the xiiij daye of February, A^o v^{ti} E. vj^{ti}." At Framingham Pigot there was no bell at the date of the inventory (1552); and it states, "that ij bells wer stollen abowght iij yeres past." At Holt, two bells, weighing

⁶ *The History and Fate of Sacrilige*, p. 258. London: Masters, 1853.

⁷ *Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*. By Blomefield and Parkin, vol. iii., fo. ed., p. 766.

over 22 cwt., and at Cley, three bells, weighing $28\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., had been delivered by the consent of the townships to my Lord of Rutland. At Hilborough, there was one bell estimated to weigh 14 cwt., "the other two remayneth in the hands of the lord, y^t is to say Sr Edmond knevet, now deputed." At Dilham, at Ingham, and at Wighton, the parishioners had in each case sold a bell, and instances might be multiplied to weariness. In the articles to be enquired of in the Visitation kept within the diocese of Norwich in 1556 by Bishop Hopton, is the following: "Itm yowe shall enquire of all such as haue taken anye thinge from yower church, as in pullinge downe of lead ϵ both from the Bodie of the church, and from the Chauncell, takeinge away of Bellis, roode loft ϵ , or anye other Ornament ϵ pertheyninge vnto yower saied church," &c.

On the 19th September, 1560, a royal proclamation was issued forbidding the defacing of monuments or the taking away of bells or lead, and the queen, says Sir Henry Spelman, "caused many proclamations not only to be printed, but signed them also with her own hand, and sent them in that manner (the more to manifest her zeal and restrain the sacrilege) about into the counties."⁸ This proclamation states that "the covetousness of certain persons is such, that as patrons of churches, or owners of the parsonages unappropriated, or by some other colour or pretence, they do perswade with the parson or parishioners to take, or throw downe the Bells of the churches and chapels, and the lead of the same, to their private gain, and to the spoil of the said places."⁹ Enough, however, has been said to shew that the "much talk of pulling down of bells" was no idle gossip.

Between this period and the Restoration there is no evidence of any considerable amount of spoliation having taken place. The cases met with are clearly isolated instances, occurring where the churches themselves were demolished or allowed to fall into ruin.¹⁰ In 1562, the church of St. Martin in the Baily, Norwich, was sold to the queen, and Blomefield prints a letter from the Bishop

⁸ *The History and Fate of Sacrilege*, p. 261.

⁹ *The Church Bells of Sussex*, p. 20.

¹⁰ The churches dilapidated during the reign of Elizabeth were not few in number.

of Winchester to the Mayor, dated 8th December, 1564, informing him that the "Church and the Church-yard is solde, and the Bells¹ and Leed reservyd for the Quene."² In 1564, the parish church of St. Mary in the Marsh was desecrated, and the lead, bells, &c., reserved to the use of the Dean and Chapter of Norwich.³ In 1569, the Dean and Chapter agreed to supply Clement Paston, Esq., with as much bell-metal at twenty-eight shillings per cwt., and as much lead at £8. 10s. per ton, as would amount to two hundred pounds.⁴ The Corporation of Norwich, in the 40th Elizabeth, sold all the bells of St. Etheldred's church but one.⁵

From 1640 to 1660, the churches suffered much, nor did the bells escape. It does not appear that any were removed from the towers, but more than a dozen old bells still remain, the inscriptions upon which have been either entirely or in part cut off. At Bressingham, three old bells are thus mutilated, and the parish account books show that this was done in 1644.⁶ At the neighbouring church of South Lopham there are also three bells similarly treated; of the inscription upon the fifth bell the only word left is VOCOR. At West Bradenham, of the inscription + *Virginis egregie vocor Campana Marie*, the initial cross and the words Virginis and Marie have been obliterated. At St. Michael Coslany, Norwich, the word "Ora," and at Cossey and Tivetshall, names of the saints only, have been erased.⁷

On bells cast after the middle of the 16th century it might be expected that there could be nothing objectionable; but at Stow Bardolph two of the bells, the third and the sixth, respectively inscribed, (+) NON VE(RB)O SED (V)OCE (R)ESO(NA)BO (D)O(MI)N(I) LA(VD)E(M) 1601, and (CA)E(LOR)V(M) CHR(I)STI (P)LACEAT TIB(I)

¹ There were two bells in the 6th Edward VI. estimated to weigh 5 cwt.

² Blomefield, vol. ii., p. 573.

³ Blomefield, vol. ii., p. 525.

⁴ Ledger Book 3, fo. 38, b. Penes Dec. et Capit. Norw.

⁵ Blomefield, vol. ii., p. 541.

⁶ Blomefield, vol. i., p. 46, note e.

⁷ Other examples are at Tharston, Waeton, and Pulham St. Mary the Virgin, Norfolk; Market Weston and Ixworth, Suffolk.

RE(X) (S)ONO (I)ST(E) 1612, have many of the letters filed off.⁸ The third bell has suffered more, perhaps, because it had the additional enormity of an initial cross.

Another cause which contributed in no slight degree to the present scarcity of old bells was this: as the churches fell into decay in rural districts, where the parishioners were unable or unwilling to bear the entire charge of the repairs, they petitioned the bishop to grant them his license, or faculty, to empower them to reduce the fabrics; in one case to demolish an aisle, sometimes two; in another, to desecrate a chapel or pull down a porch, and in others, to shorten the tower or take down the spire. And instances are on record in which the total destruction of a church was authorised. More generally, the petitioners thought only of selling the lead of the roof, or some of the bells, and of applying the money so raised towards the necessary repairs. The reasons assigned in these petitions to sell the bells, &c., are various, and frequently frivolous. In 1734, Lord Townshend gave the parishioners of Rainham St. Mary £100 towards the repairs of the church, which however amounted to £200. To assist them in raising the balance, leave was asked to sell the three lesser of their four bells, which they represented could be well spared. The Bishop, willing to encourage others to such generous deeds, granted the necessary permission. The peal of three bells at West Harling was by the liberality of Joshua Draper recast into five in 1726. Thirty years later, the parishioners made this an excuse for selling four of them, representing to the bishop that formerly there were but three bells and now five, and that the steeple was too weak to support five bells, they therefore craved leave to sell four of them, and to take down the spire and tower and rebuild the latter without the spire.

The parishioners of Alby, in 1767, after the usual preamble of their church being "a very antient fabrick," crave leave to sell the two smallest of their three bells, "as they are of little use, being so small, and the church at a distance from the houses." The churchyard of St. Stephen, Norwich, being too small, an additional

⁸ These are shown enclosed in parentheses.

piece of ground was purchased in 1791, and the parishioners obtained a faculty to sell four of their five bells towards defraying the expense. One very general reason given for the sale of the bells was, that the towers were too weak to carry them, and, judging from the number of instances which have happened of the fall of towers, or of the necessity to rebuild them, there seems to have been some foundation for such assertions. Very frequently, if a parish possessed a cracked bell, any necessary repairs of more than the usual annual expense were considered sufficient grounds for an application to the bishop for permission to sell it, and sometimes other bells, although sound, were included in the faculty on the pretence of their being "useless."⁹

A record of these licenses is preserved to the present time from about 1677, and it appears that over 200 were granted from that date to 1840, authorizing the sale or recasting, in round numbers, of nearly 450 bells. A considerable number, however, of these were cracked, and would have been sooner or later recast had no faculty been obtained.¹⁰ In the latter half of the eighteenth century (from 1753 to 1802) great havoc was made with the bells, 119 faculties having been granted. From the commencement of the present century to 1840, the number has been happily much reduced; indeed only twenty-nine have been issued; whilst during the last twenty-five years not a single faculty has been granted authorizing the sale of church bells. This may be partly due to the better feeling which has arisen with regard to our churches, although in part it must be attributed to the fact that, in many

⁹ Thus, at Trimingham, two *useless* bells, one being cracked, the other *unhung*; at Crostwick, one split and another *useless*, not having a clapper; and at Westwick, one being split and another never used, were sold by faculty: these are selected from numerous instances.

¹⁰ It is difficult to ascertain the precise number of cracked bells: no great error will be made if they be taken at about one-half. For instance, out of thirty-three faculties or orders granted from 1677 to 1736, a period of fifty-nine years, authorizing the sale of fifty-two and the recasting of ten bells, twenty-eight bells were said to be split. During the next sixteen years, from 1737 to 1753, thirty-three faculties also were granted, permitting the sale of fifty-seven and the recasting of five bells, and of this number twenty-eight also were cracked.

instances, bells have been sold without a formal faculty, indeed in some cases without even obtaining the verbal permission of the ordinary. It is not to be supposed that all the bells which have been thus sold were ancient, but of course the number of old bells amongst them was greater in proportion than amongst those now remaining. Of the St. Peter Mancroft peal of ten bells, dispersed in 1775, four were old. A peal of three *black-letter* bells at Blo Norton were recast in 1794, and at St. Gregory's, Norwich, a similar peal of five remained until 1818.¹ Three of the five bells at St. John's Maddermarket, Norwich, recast in 1765—82, were old. St. Paul's, Norwich, and Brandon Parva, each possessed peals of three ancient bells: at the present day there is only one at either place. A more accurate notion of the extent of the loss of ancient bells during the last one hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty years may be formed from the fact, that of nearly 150 bells of which Blomefield and his continuator make mention and have printed the inscriptions, two-thirds only remain.

Turning, however, to such ancient bells as yet remain, it will be found that the inscriptions upon them do not give very explicit answers to the questions, at what time, at what place, and by whom the bells were cast; for they are rarely dated,² and all that is usually to be learned from them is the name of the saint or patron to whom the bells are dedicated. There are, however, about a score of ancient bells in Norfolk which are inscribed with the names of the bell-founders. Thus at Salle and Trunch are or were bells respectively inscribed,

EDMUNDUS DE LENNE ME FECIT.

THOMAS DE LENNE ME FECIT.

And on bells at Ketteringham and Trimingham will be found,

Ricardus Baxter Brasyer De Norwico fecit Mc.

¹ It is believed there is not a church in the county which now possesses more than four bells cast before the middle of the sixteenth century.

² In the county of Sussex there are only four bells dated previous to 1570, and in Norfolk the only bells, yet met with, bearing a date anterior to the accession of Queen Elizabeth, are, the bell at Salhouse, dated 1481; a small bell on the cloister roof of St. Giles's Hospital, Norwich, 1547; and another at Islington, dated 1556.

Some few bells hand down the names of their donors—for instance, one at Long Stratton St. Mary :

JESU EN LE HON DE TOI SIRE JON STYRMIN FIT PERE MOI
THOMAS MADE ME.

So also the bell at Hellesdon :

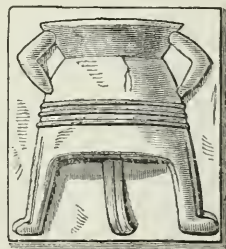
JOHNES DE HEYLESDON ME FECIT FIERI IN HONORE MATRIS
CRESTI WILLELLMUS DE NORWYCO ME FECIT.

The tenor bell at the cathedral church of Norwich has on its crown—*Orate Pro Aia Roberti Brethenham Monachi Norwici*. Bells such as these are not only interesting in themselves, but are also valuable as affording data from which a very large number of other bells can be appropriated to their respective founders or foundries.

Before the commencement of the fifteenth century, distinctive foundry marks were rarely employed, and we have only the lettering, initial crosses, and stops to guide us in appropriating bells which do not bear a founder's name. After 1400, however, most bell-founders had a mark or stamp



which they usually placed on their bells. Thus the mark of Thomas Potter, a Norwich bell-founder about 1400, was



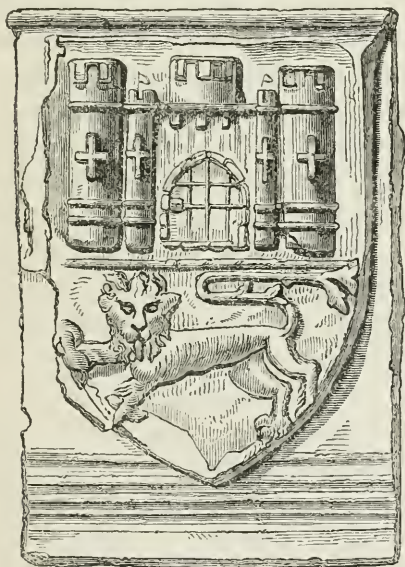
a three-legged pot; and Richard Brasyer, who succeeded him about fifty years later, placed on the crowns of his bells three shields, each charged with a coronet between three bells.

These marks are of the greatest assistance in clearing up the history of ancient bells; indeed in that respect they stand next to the founders' names. Even those marks which are not appropriated to a name have their value, for whilst the lettering, crosses, and stops, are difficult to describe in a manner to assure

identification, foundry marks are at once recognised and readily described. Thus the accurate classification of very many bells is rendered easy, whilst with bells bearing no foundry mark this can be accomplished only by a comparison of the minute details of each ornament.³ One instance will suffice. There are about a dozen bells in Norfolk inscribed in the usual black letter of the sixteenth century bearing this unappropriated mark. Conjecture was at fault as to the locality in which they were cast, until it became known that bells bearing this stamp, which admits of ready description, were numerous in Suffolk and less frequent in the adjacent counties of Cambridge, Essex, and Norfolk. The inference of course is, that in those



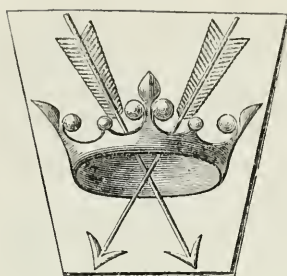
days of difficult locomotion the foundry at which they were cast was in the neighbourhood where they most abound.



The later marks occasionally indicate in another way where the bells were cast; the mark alluding to or consisting of the arms of the town where the bell-founder lived. On bells at Toft Monks and Tharston, in addition to the usual shields used by Richard Brasyer, are the arms of the city of Norwich, which were also employed by William Brend

and Edward Tooke, his successors in the seventeenth century.

³ Keeping this in mind, I have chosen for illustration in these pages not perhaps the most beautiful examples of letters on Norfolk bells, but rather those which were used by founders employing no distinctive mark.



Stephen Tonni, a bell-founder at Bury in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and Robert Gurney, a century later, used a crown pierced with two arrows in *saltire*, the arms of Bury.

It is to the bells, no doubt, that we must first refer for their own history; but the evidence from documents, such

as parochial and corporate records, wills and testaments, deeds and endowments, &c., is of the highest value, and any account of church bells must be very imperfect if both kinds of evidence be not consulted. Church accounts contribute more towards the elucidation of their history than any other documents; but, unfortunately, very few churchwardens' account-books remain, of a date anterior to the accession of King Edward VI.; and although some few account rolls of the officers of our ancient conventual and collegiate establishments have been preserved, it is rare indeed to meet with a series of entries sufficiently numerous to be of much use. The foregoing facts shewing the sources whence the information contained in these pages is derived, will probably also lessen any surprise that may be felt that the account which can be given of the bells and bell-founders of Norfolk, prior to the accession of Queen Elizabeth, is so meagre. After that period bells are almost always dated, and bear the bell-founder's name or initials; so that with the documentary aid just mentioned a much more complete and satisfactory account can be given of them.

The general character of early bell inscriptions has been briefly referred to; before, however, closing these introductory remarks it may be well to notice them somewhat more in detail, and to inquire into a few circumstances which illustrate their origin. The early inscriptions, most frequently in Latin, seldom in English, and still more seldom in Norman French, from their position⁴ and other causes, are necessarily brief, and on examination frequent repetitions will be found. In Norfolk, out

⁴ The usual place for the inscription is upon the shoulder, but it will sometimes be also found upon the crown of the bell. The early inscriptions are in capitals, and black letter was not introduced on bells till the commencement of the fifteenth century.

of two hundred and fifty mediæval bells, the names of saints inscribed upon them barely number thirty. But it must not be inferred that there is not a greater variety of inscriptions: for instance, of bells dedicated to the Holy Trinity there are eight various epigraphs, whilst in the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary there are no fewer than fourteen. The most usual dedication is to the Virgin Mary,—more than a fifth of the whole number being dedicated in her honour. Next, but at some distance, follows St. Gabriel, the archangel, to whom about twenty bells are inscribed. To St. Michael are dedicated about half that number. The name of St. Raphael occurs but twice, once on a bell by itself, and once in company with the names of SS. Michael and Gabriel. St. John Baptist stands next to St. Gabriel, but some of the inscriptions do not distinguish between the Baptist and the Evangelist. I should however suppose that St. John the Baptist is generally intended, as it seems more fitting that the name of the herald of the Gospel—of one who was a voice “crying in the wilderness Prepare ye the way of the Lord”—should be preferred. Nearly twenty bells are inscribed with the name of St. Peter, but it is remarkable that the name of his fellow-apostle, St. Paul, who is frequently associated with him in the dedication of churches, has not yet been met with on a single bell in Norfolk. About twenty bells are dedicated to the glory of Almighty God, half of that number bearing the name of the Holy Trinity, seven or eight that of our Blessed Saviour, and the others that of God the Father. SS. Thomas, Mary Magdalen, Margaret, All Saints, Katharine, Andrew, Barbara, Nicholas, and Anne, have from half a dozen to a dozen bells dedicated to each of them, whilst St. Anthony has but two, and SS. Gregory, Giles, Matthew, William, Benedict, and Lucy, have but one. “*Sancte Martine*” occurs on the crown of a bell which also bears an inscription in honour of Saint Margaret.

It has been supposed that the tenor bell was usually dedicated to the patron saint of the church. Although there are instances of this practice, examples may be named where all the old bells remain, yet none bear the same name as the church; Burlingham St. Andrew, Burlingham St. Peter, Norwich St. Giles, and Ipswich

St. Laurence are examples. Instances are also found in which the name of the patron saint of the church appears on one of the smaller bells, as on the treble at St. George's Tombland, and in the old peals of five at St. Gregory's and St. Peter's Mancroft, Norwich. It might be supposed that the same causes which led to the selection of particular saints as patrons of so many churches, would have influenced the dedications of the bells, so that some correspondence might be discovered between them. Three-fourths of the Norfolk churches are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, All Saints, SS. Peter and Paul, Andrew, Margaret, and Michael. The churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary alone amount to more than one-fifth of the whole number, and it has been already mentioned that bells bearing her name have been met with in the same proportion. After the Virgin Mary, All Saints was most frequently chosen for churches; but it is not so with bells, not so many as one-fifth of the number bearing the name of the Virgin are dedicated to All Saints. There are eighty churches in Norfolk dedicated to St. Andrew, and but fifty to St. Margaret, yet there are more bells dedicated to the latter than to the former saint. If, however, it be borne in mind that our churches were founded many centuries before the earliest bells now remaining were made, and that popular devotion in the course of ages probably in part changed and was directed to other saints, it will not be matter of surprise either to find the names of saints to whom very few churches are dedicated occurring frequently on bells, or that others, who have several churches dedicated to them, are seldom or not at all met with on church bells. For instance, St. Laurence, St. Botolph, and St. James, have each about ten churches in this county dedicated in their honour, but not one bell.

On the other hand, twenty-seven bells bearing the names of St. John the Baptist or St. John the Evangelist have been found, and there are only twenty-four churches dedicated to them in the county; and the name of St. Gabriel, who has not one church dedicated to him in Norfolk, is found on twice as many bells as that of St. Michael, to whom thirty-seven churches are dedicated. The Rev. J. H. Sperling has suggested that the dedications of the altars may have influenced those of the bells,

and finds upon examination a considerable balance in favour of altars and bells similarly dedicated. The parish guilds may also have influenced the dedications of bells, for example at Brandestone there was a bell dedicated to St. William (of Norwich), a most unusual circumstance, but it is explained by our knowing that there was a guild in the parish in his honour. The bells at Foulsham and Salhouse, the gifts respectively of guilds of the Holy Trinity and Corpus Christi, were also no doubt therefore thus dedicated. We learn from Blomefield (vol. i. p. 277), that at Eccles church, in the north chancel window, were pictures of SS. Germanus, Anthony, and Benedict, and under them, *Sanctus Germanus. Beate Antoni, ora pro nobis. Sancte Benedicte, ora pro nobis.* Two of the three bells yet remaining in the tower are ancient, and it is noteworthy that the sentences upon them are precisely those which appeared under the effigies of SS. Anthony and Benedict in the chancel window.

The name of the patron of the bell is made known to us in a variety of ways. In the earlier inscriptions the bell itself addresses us.

"Sum facta in honore Trinitatis."

"Robs Batalie mad me in ye name of ye Trenite."

"I am made in the worshepe of the Cross."

"Vocor Johannes."

"Ista campana facta est in honore sancti Andree apostoli."

"Wilelmus Schep me fecit ad laudem sancti Antonii."

At a later period rhyming verse was used.

"Virginis egregie vocor campana Marie."

"Sum rosa pulsata mundi Maria vocata."

"Hec fit sanctorum campana laude bonorum."

"Dulcis sisto melis campana vocor Michaelis."

In many cases the bell speaks not in its own name but in that of its donor, or of the faithful generally; and the dedication of the bell is indirectly learned from a short prayer or aspiration inscribed upon it.

"Sancta Trinitas salva me."

"Libera nos salva nos justifica nos O beata Trinitas."

"In caritate perfecta confirma nos Trinitas Sancta."

"Jesus Nazareus Rex Judeorum Fili Dei miserere nobis."

"Sit nomen Domini benedictum."

"Ave Maria gracia plena Dominus tecum."

"Sancta Barbara pro me Deum exora."

Verse, or at least rhythmical lines, however, are more common than prose, and we find amongst others—

“Celi regina languentibus sit medicina ”
 “Protege prece pia quos convocat Virgo Maria ”
 “Intercede pia pro nobis Virgo Maria ”
 “O Virgo virginum ora pro nobis ad Dominum ”
 “Petrus ad eterne ducat nos pascua vite ”
 “Johannes Cristi care dignare pro nobis orare ”
 “In mortis hora pro me Georgi precor ora ”
 “Quesumus Andrea famulorum suscipe vota ”

In some cases the inscription takes the form of a prayer for the bell instead of for the people.

“In multis annis resonet campana Johannis.”
 “Sonitus Egidii ascendit ad culmina celi.”
 “Munere Baptiste benedictus sit chorus iste.”
 “Fac Margareta nobis hec munera leta.”

In other instances the inscription may be supposed to be an exhortation addressed either by the clapper to the bell, or by the bell to its fellows.

“Triplex persona Trinitas nunc gaudia dona.”
 “Resona clare satis quia vox vocor hic Trinitatis.”
 “Hæc in conclave Gabriel nunc pange suave.”
 “Sanctorum meritis pangamus cantica laudis.”

It was usual, particularly with some of the later founders, simply to place the name of the saint on the bell with either *Intercede* (or *ora*) *pro me*, or *pro nobis*.

It has been already mentioned that besides being inscribed with the founder's name, a bell sometimes bears the donor's name,⁵ and examples have been given from Long Stratton and elsewhere: other instances occur at Hickling, Lessingham, and Foulsham; at the last-named place the inscription is—

FR'S GILDE SC'E TRI'TATIS FECER'T ME FIERI.

⁵ It seems very probable that the names found on the waists and crowns of bells at Bradeston and Martham in Norfolk, and Hinderclay and Barnby in Suffolk, are those of the donors or of benefactors to the casting of the bells, although the words “fecit fieri” do not occur.

At Salhouse the larger bell, no doubt a second-hand one, is inscribed—

Orate pro Aīab; Fr̄m t̄ Soror Gilde Corpis Xpi de
Oreburgh Anno Dni m^o cccc^o iiii^{xxi}.

Upon the bell at Crostwight is this unique inscription—

ASLAK IOH'ES IOH'EM ME NOPAVIT.

John Aslak was clearly the godfather at the benediction or baptism of the bell.⁶ The custom of blessing church bells is of great antiquity,⁷ and although it is said that the usage of bestowing names upon them was not general at first, it is clear that to this custom bell inscriptions owe their origin. It appears from a pontifical⁸ in the British Museum that the service commenced with the recital of the Litany, and that whilst the choir sung the antiphon *Asperges me*, the psalm *Miserere*, and psalm 145, with the five following psalms, and the antiphon *In civitate Domini clare sonant*, the bell about to be blessed was washed with holy water, wiped with a towel, and anointed by the bishop with the holy oils.⁹ Then followed another antiphon, *Vox Domini super aquas*, and several prayers, of which only the first words are given, the rubric concluding with “b̄ndicat Ep̄s signū

⁶ “On donne ordinairement le nom de *baptême* a la benediction des cloches. Ce mot est parfaitement juste, sous le rapport étymologique, puisque *baptême* vient d'un mot grec qui signifie *laver, purifier*. Mais il est tout à fait impropre dans le sens théologique. Aussi l'église ne l'a jamais employé ;”—*Notice historique et liturgique sur les Cloches*, p. 14, par M. l'Abbé Jules Corblet. Paris, 1857.

⁷ “Aleuin, auteur du viii^e siècle, assure qu'à l'époque où il vivait, on regardait comme introduit depuis long-temps déjà l'usage de bénir les cloches et de leur donner un nom.”—*Notice sur les Cloches*, p. 29, par M. l'Abbé Barraud. Caen, 1844.

⁸ Cottonian MS., Vespasian D. i. p. 127.

⁹ Paid the Suffragan for hallowing of the bells	..	..	vj ^s viij ^d .
Reward to his Clark	..	..	vij ^d .
for wyne for the Suffragan	..	..	xij ^d .
for bering Water to the bellys	..	..	ij ^d .
for shetys washyng that wer fowlyd w th the bellys	..	..	ij ^d .

Churchwardens' Accounts, Great Yarmouth, 1468.—Lib. Manuscript. Tho. Tanner, S. T. P., vol. i. p. 166a.

“And to the church of saynt Margaret aforsayd I geve & bequethe A towell of iiij yards long, & xiijs iiij^d for to do halow the medyll bell.”—*Will of Elyne Empson of Norwich, Widow, 1534-5.—Reg. Godslove, fo. 163. Cur. Cons. Norw.*

eccleie dicens Bñdicto dei prīs ꝛc Et sic finitur ista consecracio.” This MS., although very likely perfectly clear to those for whose use it was written, is not equally intelligible to us at the present day, and leaves much to the imagination. The Abbé Barraud, however, states that since the year 800 the order of the prayers and rites employed in the benediction of bells has not varied much. The missal of Gellone of the ninth century, the pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York, and the ritual of Moysac of the tenth century, the ritual of St. Lucien of Beauvais of the eleventh, the pontifical of Lyre of the twelfth, and finally the ritual of Fleury, and the pontificals of Cambrai and of Noyon of the thirteenth, are on this point almost entirely in conformity with the Roman pontifical.¹ Neither that nor the MS. in the Cottonian library, the only English pontifical known to me containing the service, makes any mention of the godfathers or sponsors. In the French rituals, however, at the conclusion of the prayers the person officiating asks “la marraine” what name she wishes to confer upon the bell; and when he has struck it thrice, in honour of the Holy Trinity, the sponsors imitate his example, and it is directed that the bell be covered with a white cloth.² In both these particulars it appears, although the Cottonian MS. is silent upon them, that the English resembled the French use.³ In one important respect, however, it adhered to the Roman use in restricting the ceremony of benediction to the bishop, whilst in the Gallie Church the officiant may be a priest.⁴ In the Roman rite the name is given to the bell when the bishop

¹ *Notice sur les Cloches*, p. 28.

² *Notice historique et liturgique sur les Cloches*, p. 12.

³ “And mem. that Sir Willm. Symys, Richard Clech, and maistres Smyth, beyng godfaders and godmoder at the consecracyon of the same bell, and beryng all o’ costs to the suffragan.”—*Churchwardens’ Accounts*, 1449, *St. Laurence, Reading*.—*Notes and Queries*, third series, viii., 90.

“For 12 elles of brysell to make cressoms for the ballys.”—*Churchwardens’ Accounts of St. Mary Hill, London*.—*Illustrations of the Manners and Expences of Ancient Times in England*. Nichols, 1797.

⁴ “J’ay esté benite par Messire Jean de la Heie Curé de ce lieu” &c.—VILLE-DIEU. “L’an 1768 J’ay été benite par M^e Jean Baptiste Berard curé et nommée Marie,” &c.—BEUVREUIL.—*Les Cloches du Pays de Bray*, par M. Dicudonné Dergny, pp. 169—185. Paris, 1863.

anoints it with the chrism.⁵ The French rituals, however, make no mention of the name in the form of consecration,⁶ and it appears in this respect the English pontifical was the same.

There can be no doubt, I think, that all our old church bells were solemnly blessed by the bishop, and had a name conferred upon them before being placed in the church towers. And that name was usually, although not necessarily nor invariably, indicated in the inscription, for several ancient bells bear no inscription but the founders' names,⁷ and others are not inscribed at all.⁸ There are also inscriptions, although but few, which do not mention or refer to any saint, as on the second bell at All Saints, Norwich:

Gallus vocor ego solus super omnia sono.⁹

On bells at Bedingham, Fritton, Martham, Norwich St. Laurence, and Great Plumstead, instead of connected inscriptions, we find the entire alphabet, or portions of it, forming no words, either entirely in capitals or minuscules, or in a mixture of both. None of these alphabet bells are dated, but Mr. Lukis prints one with the date 1641.¹ Although, for various reasons, I should not suppose the bells just cited belong to the seventeenth century, still I cannot attribute to them an earlier date than the second quarter of the sixteenth century, say 1534—1552. It appears probable that bell-founders were desirous of not giving offence by placing precatory or devotional legends on their bells, and, being illiterate and unable to suggest anything appropriate, yet not liking to see their bells without inscriptions, they placed on them the whole or portions of their type, which made a fine show and could offend

⁵ "Sancti + ficetur et conse + cretur, Domine, signum istud In nomine Pa + tris, et Fi + lii, et Spiritus + Sancti. In honorem sancti N. Pax tibi."—*Pontificale Romanum Venetijs Apud Juntas M.D.LXXII*, p. 165. Meehlin, 1845, p. 521.

⁶ "Consecrare et benedicere digneris, Domine, ad laudam tui nominis, campanam istam, per hanc unctionem et nostram benedictionem."—*Rituel du diocèse d'Amiens*, 1845, p. 90.—*Notice historique et liturgique sur les Cloches*, p. 11, n. 2.

⁷ Bexwell, Spixworth, Great Walsingham, &c.

⁸ South Elmham St. Peter, treble; East Dereham, sanctus.

⁹ The following are of this kind: "Me melior vere non est campana sub ere;" "Voce mea viva depello cuncta nociva;" and the well known "Plebem convoco, congreco clerum," &c.

¹ *An Account of Church Bells*, p. 80.

no one. The bells at Colton and Southbergh inscribed “*god amend man*” are also probably of this period. Over the cloister roof at the Hospital of St. Giles, Norwich, is a small bell dated 1547, and inscribed “*ihesus nasareuus rex iudeorum.*”

Whilst the decline of Gothic art in the sixteenth century affected the letters of the inscriptions, so that instead of the stately lombardies and graceful black-letter of a previous age, clumsy Roman type and ill-formed Arabic numerals were used, the change of religion altogether altered the sentiment of the inscriptions. The greater part, from the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the Restoration, are simply “*Anno Domini,*” or “*— me fecit,*” or “*made me.*” In some instances the rectors’ and churchwardens’ names, or those of the donors and lords of the manors, are given, as at Ketteringham, Ranworth, Woodton, &c. The bell-founders troubled themselves but little to supply the place of the old inscriptions, which the altered state of things rendered no longer applicable; and out of more than four hundred bells in the county cast between 1560 and 1660, half a dozen epigraphs only have been found, which, occurring more than once, may without doubt be said to have been suggested by the founders. These are—

“*Fili Dei vivi miserere nobis.*” 1565—80.

“*As God will so be it.*” 1593—1631.

“*Omnis sonus laudet Dominum.*”

“*Per me fideles invocatur ad preces.*” } 1600—34.

“*Tuba ad iudicium campana ad ecclesiam,*” 1636—58.

“*Omnia fiant ad gloriam Deo.*” 1610—29.

To these perhaps ought to be added the inscriptions on the third and sixth bells at Stow Bardolph, already quoted at p. 6, for although they have not been met with twice in Norfolk they occur elsewhere.

There are other inscriptions, which probably were the composition or selection of the minister, or of some one connected with the parish; these, although quaint, are usually appropriate and devout. The Attleburgh, Ludham, and Oxburgh bells furnish favourable examples. It will be noticed, however, that there is a tendency to express in the inscriptions of this period the uses of

the bell, rather than any feeling of prayer or praise. In one instance, indeed, at Elsing, there is an anathema inscribed upon a bell,—*cursed be all church robbers*. The smaller one at Salhouse bears also an unusual inscription: “*Ilee campana pertinet ad ecclesiam de Salohowse fracta et compacta Año Dño 1630.*” The fourth bell at Terrington St. Clement, although recast in the seventeenth century, has preserved the name given it at its benediction: “*Nunc Clemens Ego cano vobis ore jveundo.*” On the third bell at Walpole St. Andrew, cast in the year of King James’s accession to the English throne, “*Jacobus*” takes the place of “*Clemens.*”

After 1660, with scarcely an exception, the bell inscriptions no longer excite interest. Where they do not simply record the founders’ names and the dates (in themselves inoffensive), they degenerate into irreverent and doggrel rhyme, as—

“Henry Pleasant did me run
In the year 1701.”

“Thomas Newman did me cast:
I’ll sing his praise unto the last.”

“Pull on brave boys, I’m metal to the back,
But will be hanged before I crack.”

“We trebles came by small consent,
Our birth we hope will give content,
Twins from old Tenor, our lost old Dad,
Some we make merry and some are sad.”

“Come raise us well and ring us right,
Then all that hear will take delight.”

“I mean to make it understood,
That tho’ I’m little yet I’m good.”

A few of the inscriptions on bells cast at the Downham foundry are somewhat better; see the Marsham, Northwold, and Wiveton peals. As Mr. Sperling remarked in a recent lecture on this subject: “It is very desirable that some steps should be taken to ensure decent inscriptions on church bells in the present day; but with a few exceptions, where the clergy have taken the matter up, either nothing but the founder’s name and those of the parochial authorities, with the date, or else such rubbish as was allowed to be put up at Sherbourne only a few years since, is found.” Bell-

founders, however, do not encourage the placing inscriptions upon church bells: a charge of fourpence is made for each letter, and I know one case in which the founder declined to cast a bell with the inscription required, unless the parishioners pledged themselves either to take it, whether in tune or not with the other bells, or pay for its recasting, if necessary. And in other instances the inscriptions have been engraved or painted, instead of being cast upon the bells.

Having said thus much, it is time to come to the main object of these pages, namely, to show when, where, and by whom the church bells of Norfolk were cast.

The foundries of Lynn, Norwich, Thetford, Dereham, and Downham will first engage our attention.

THE LYNN FOUNDRY.

THE metals required for casting bells could, six centuries ago, be obtained with greater facility at Lynn than at an inland town; and it appears that the earliest bell-foundry in this county was at Lynn as far back as the thirteenth century. Mention is made of MASTER JOHN,¹ founder of bells, in 1299; of THOMAS BELLEYETERE,² in 1333; and of EDMUND BELEYETERE,³ in 1353. A person of the latter name is also noted as one of the founders of the guild of St. Giles and St. Julian, established in 1384, and held in the church of St. James at Lynn;⁴ as mayor of that burgh in 1390, 1394, and 1399;⁵ and as a burgess in the parliament holden at Westminster in the 11th year of Richard II.

The will of EDMUND BELEYETER, burgess of Lynn Bishop, was made at Lynn 9th July, 1417, and proved at Norwich 12th May,

¹ "Mag'r Joh'nes fundator Campanar' solvit die ven'is p'x ante festum Ste' Margar' in subsidii Co'itatis dj m're sterl."—*Tallage Roll, Lynn Bishop*, 27 Edward I.

² *Subsidy Roll*, 6 Edw. III., 1^g m. 3, "De Tho. Belleycete' vjs. viijd."

³ "Itm de iiijjs. solut Edo' Belyet'e sibi debit de antiq' debit p' q'ud'm campan'."—*Comp. Camii. Lynn Ep'i*, 25 and 26 Ed. III.

⁴ *The History of Lynn*, by William Richards, M.A. Lynn, 1812, p. 428.

⁵ List of Mayors of Lynn in Blomefield, vol. iv., p. 574.

1418;⁶ administration having been granted to the executors named in the testament, which unfortunately is not registered. Power was reserved to grant administration to THOMAS BELLEYETER, son of the deceased, probably the same person whose name occurs under the year 1440 in the List of Freemen of Lynn, printed in *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. vi., p. 246. In 1468 the manor of Snore Hall in Fordham was described as late of Thomas Belyetters and Margaret his wife.—Blomefield, vol. iv., p. 114.

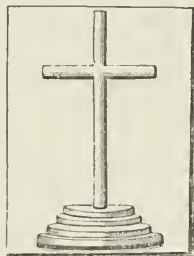
The names of several Lynn founders have been handed down to us on bells. On the tenor at Worlington, Suffolk, is—

JOHANNES GODYNGE DE LENNE ME FECIT;

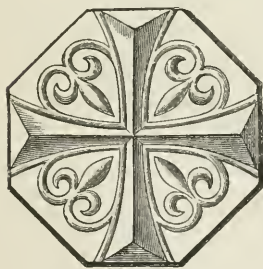
the bell at Bexwell, Norfolk, is inscribed in the same type—

MAGISTER JOHANNES RISTON ME FECIT;

and has the same initial cross here represented. This Master John Riston may be the Master John of the Tallage Roll of 1299, previously mentioned. The names of three other Lynn founders, JOHN DE LENNE, EDMUND DE LENNE, and THOMAS DE LENNE, have also been met with on bells, at West Somerton, Salle, Trunch, and Wood Rising. These founders used larger



and more ornamental letters than Godynge and Riston, with a different initial cross. The wood block opposite is the size of the original, and an etching of the inscription at Wood Rising will be found at a subsequent page.



Edmund de Lenne is probably identical with either the Edmund Belyetere of 1353, or the Edmund Beleyetere of 1417, and Thomas de Lenne with one or other of the Thomas Belleyeteres. Surnames at this date and for long after, as is well known, were capriciously assumed and

⁶ *Reg. Hyrning*, fo. 47, Cur. Cons. Norw.

applied; and it is common to find a man at one time called by the name of his trade, and at another by the name of the place in which he lived. The surname of de Lenne would not have been distinctive in Lynn itself, any more than the trade name of Bellyeter⁷ would distinguish one bell-founder from another. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that Edmund Belyeter of Lynn was at home Edmund Belyeter, and abroad, and on his bells, Edmund de Lenne.

Assuming these identities, the succession of Lynn founders, as far as our present information serves, stands thus:—

Master John, 1299.	}
Master John de Riston.	
John Godynge.	
Thomas Belleyetere, alias de Lenne, 1333.	
John de Lenne.	
Edmund de Lenne, alias Belyetere, 1353.	
Edmund de Lenne, alias Beleyeter, ob. 1417-18.	
Thomas de Lenne, alias Beleyeter, living 1440.	

Besides those already noticed, there are at Wendling two bells inscribed in the same type as the Bexwell and Worlington bells, on one of which is—

JHOANNES DE GVDDINE FECIT ME.

Guddine doubtless being a variation in the spelling of Godyng. And at Hales two bells are lettered like those at Sall and West Somerton, and these are all which have yet been found that can with certainty be appropriated to the Lynn bell-foundry.

⁷ "Belleztare, bellezeter, bellyatere, Campanarius." — *Promptorium Parvulorum*, edited for the Camden Society by Mr. Albert Way. London, 1843. The Editor adds in a note, "Campanarius is explained in the *Catholicon* to be a bell-founder." Robert Playforde of Brynton, by his will dated 24 Henry VIII., directs "that the greate bell at Oxstronde nowe beyng brokyn be new yotyn, and the belfounder to be payde all charges with" his goods.—*Reg. Alpe*, fo. 54, Cur. Cons. Norw.

NORWICH FOUNDRY.

WILLIAM DE NORWYCO, who cast the bell at Hellesdon, the inscription upon which is given at p. 10, is the earliest known Norwich bell-founder. The date at which he lived is fortunately indicated by the inscription preserving the name of the donor of the bell—John de Heylesdon: doubtless the same person who, by his will, endowed a perpetual chantry in the chapel at the east end of the north aisle of Hellesdon church, where he was buried, and where a brass still remains commemorating him as patron of the church and founder of the chantry, and records his death on the 19th April, 1384.

Two other bells by William of Norwich are at Barford church; two more at the adjoining parish of Little Melton; one at Thurne; one at Conington, Cambridgeshire; and another was, until 1863, in the cupola on the roof of St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich.



All the inscriptions are in small capitals, about five-eighths of an inch high, slightly ornamented, and have the initial-cross here engraved. Of William de Norwyco nothing more is known, unless indeed he be identical with "William Brasiere de Notyng-ham," admitted to the freedom of the City of Norwich in 1376.⁸ A few years' residence in

Norwich would have entitled him to call himself William de Norwyco.

The Records afford the next mention of a Norwich bell-founder, "JOHN SUTTON, Bellezet," admitted to the liberty of the city in 1404.⁹ He may have been the son of William Sutton, brasier, admitted as a freeman in 1392, or of John Sutton, of Boston, admitted previously, in 1389. His name has not been found upon any bell in this district.

"THOMAS POTTER, BRASYER," was admitted to his freedom in the same year as John Sutton. His name indicates "a maker

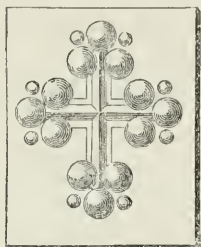
⁸ *Free Book*, closet A., press 7, No. 19, City Muniment Room.

⁹ *Free Book*.

of pots," but it is clear that he was also a bell-founder. The tenor bell at St. John Sepulchre, Norwich, is inscribed—

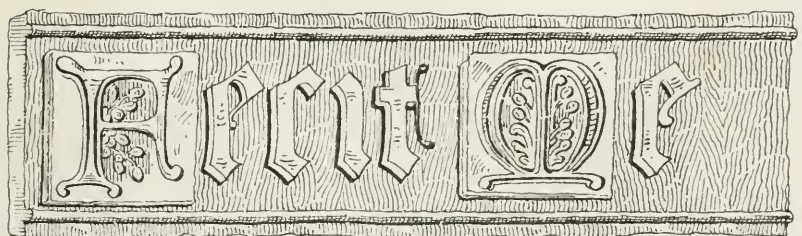
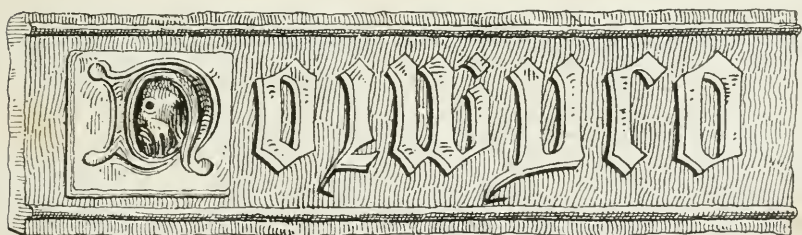
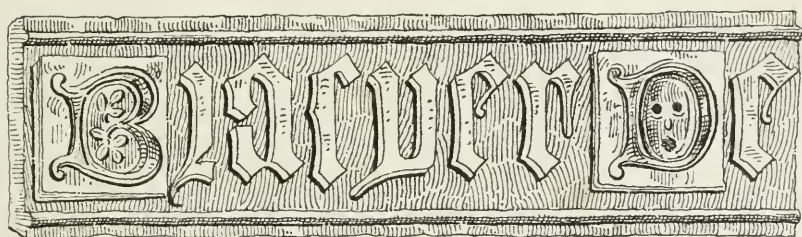
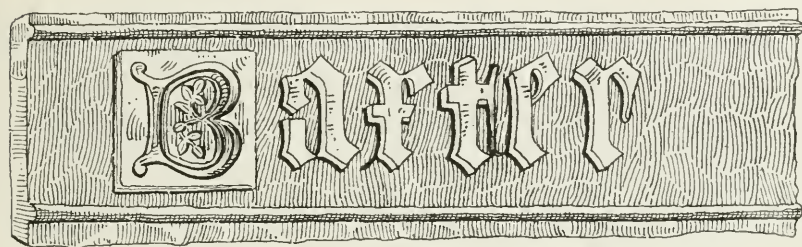
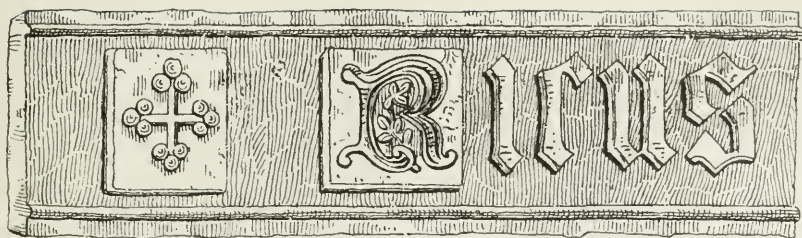
Has Tu Campanas Formasti Pottere Thomas.

His name does not appear upon any other bell, but the stops on this serve to identify several other bells as being his work. The initial cross and a grotesque face used by him are here represented.



The most remarkable of the stops, the three-legged pot, has been given at page 10. It may be intended as a rebus of his name, or simply as a trade mark, being several times found, as such, with the funeral inscriptions of other bell-founders. The brass of William Henshawe, 1519, at St. Michael's, Gloucester, had the device of a bell, and a melting-pot on three legs. In Boutell's *Christian Monuments*, p. 100, is an engraving of a slab, in the church of St. Dyonis, York, on which are incised a melting-pot and a bell, and in one of the aisles of St. Mary's church, Bury, is or was a gravestone, from which had been torn, as seen by the impressions, the brass effigies of a man and his wife, and several bells and pots; the latter not being intended for melting-pots, but for the "olla enea," special bequests of which are frequently found in early wills.

The three-legged pot is found on bells at Great Plumstead, Illington, Eaton, Witton near Norwich, and at Market Weston in Suffolk. Other bells without this mark, but inscribed with the same letters as the Eaton and Witton bells, are at St. Swithin, Norwich, Framingham Earl, and Weston. A lithograph of the inscription on the second bell at Great Plumstead will be found



under that parish. The Eaton and Witton bells have plain capital letters, and the St. John Sepulchre tenor has large *black-letters*, the initial ones being those of the Great Plumstead second bell, and much too small for the *black-letters* with which they are associated.

In addition to the inscriptions upon the bells at Ketteringham and Trimmingham, noted at p. 9, the tenor bell at Fundenhall has inscribed the name of RICHARD BAXTER, as its founder—

Sonitu Sum Sanus Mc Fecit Baxte[r] Ricardus.

It will be seen from the illustration of the fourth bell at Ketteringham, that the initial cross and capital letters used by Baxter are like those on the second bell at Great Plumstead, cast by Thomas Potter. More than twenty bells cast by Baxter are known, but I do not enumerate them here because they will be mentioned as they subsequently occur, and the illustration opposite will identify any of his bells that may afterwards be found. It is however to be observed that, in some instances, Baxter used a larger although a similar type, of which the inscriptions upon the tenor bells at Salle, Hickling, and St. Giles, Norwich, are composed, and are beautiful examples of letters. An etching of the inscription upon the tenor bell at St. Giles, Norwich, will be found at a subsequent page. The *black-letters* are from the same moulds as those on the tenor bell at St. John Sepulchre, Norwich, cast by Thomas Potter.

The accounts of Mettingham College for the year 1416-17 show us that Baxter supplied two bells to that establishment in that year,¹ and his name also occurs in a deed dated 1424, now in the church chest at Northwold.

We next find the Norwich foundry in the hands of the BRASYSER FAMILY. Robert Brasyer is mentioned as early as 1386; in 1391,

¹ "Itm solut' Ric'o Baxstere p' ij campanis & p' ferr' faciend' p' eisd'm' cu' vj^d solut' Joh'i Barkere p' campana carriand' Norwie' vsq' Metyngham lxjs viij^d."

"Computus d'ni Joh'is Wilbeye Magr' Cantar' de Metyngham," 4th Henry V.—*Mettingham Accounts*, p. 94, penes Rev. C. R. Manning, M.A., Rector of Diss, who kindly allowed me to examine these interesting volumes.

1398, and 1403, he was one of the city bailiffs, and in the last-named year was chosen one of the first sheriffs. In 1410 he was mayor, and one of the burgesses sent by the city to the parliaments of the 1st and 5th of Henry V., evidently being one of the principal citizens. His will, dated February 2nd, 1434-5, directs his body to be buried in the chapel of Blessed Mary,² on the north side of St. Stephen's church in Norwich. His occupation does not appear from his will, but Mr. Ewing, in *Norfolk Archaeology*, states him to have been a mercer. Walter Brasiere was admitted a citizen in 1389,³ Geoffrey Brasiere in 1403, and Peter Bonde Brasiere in 1404. This last was sheriff in 1424, and his name occurs in an account of the provost of Hellesdon manor, (the date of which is unfortunately cut off) as having supplied ten pounds of brass for the mill spindle; so that if not a bell-founder he was, as his name implies, a worker in brass.

He occurs as executor to Robert Brasyer in 1434-5, but his own will has not been met with, although it is referred to in that of his widow Katherine Brasyer which is dated 1457. After directing her body to be buried in St. Stephen's church next the body of her husband, she orders her executors to sell her capital messuage in Newgate, now Surrey Street, which "Peter Bonde Brasyer," her husband devised to her by his last will and testament. The first of the name, however, that can with certainty be said to have been a bell-founder, was

RICHARD BRASYER, son of Robert Brasyer and Margery his first wife, who was admitted to the freedom of the city in 1424. The original entry of this fact in the *Free Book*—

Goldsmyth
 "Riċs Brasyer fil Roċti Brasyer Belȝet"

leaves it doubtful whether he was admitted as a goldsmith or as a bell-founder. The interlining of the word goldsmith causes

² The aisle on the north side of the chancel was, says Blomefield, "called BRASIER'S chantry, or chapel, and before that the chapel of our LADY the Virgin."

³ Another of this name occurs in the *Mettingham Accounts*, 36th Henry VI.—"Itm p' mang Walteri Brasyer de Norwic' p' vij^{xx} & xvij lib' de antiquo metallo enee xix^s ix^d."—Vol. ii., p. 137.

belzeter to apply to Robert Brasyer, who, as previously mentioned, was a mercer. But in 1450, it having been ordered that the admissions should be entered under the various trades, Richard Brasyer is posted both as a bell-founder and a goldsmith. Richard Brasyer was sheriff in 1436; in 1452 and 1457 we find him employed in important civic business, in the latter year receiving the thanks of the city for his diligence; and in 1456 and 1463 he was mayor. In 1475 he made his will, directing his body to be buried in the Lady chapel in St. Stephen's church. He devised all his tenements, called "lez werkhouse," in the parish of St. Stephen, to his son Richard in fee simple, and left to him all the instruments belonging to his trade except the bells and bell-metal, which, with his other metal, called "pot metal," and the pots newly made, he directed to be sold. This will was proved in 1482 by the executor,

RICHARD BRASYER, his son by his first wife Agnes, who was admitted and sworn a citizen in 1478,⁴ was sheriff in 1495, mayor in 1510, and died in 1513. His will, dated 1505, directs that his body be "buried in the chapel of our Ladi within the churche of saint Stephen," and that his executors should buy a marble stone with his arms and an image of him and his wife, another stone with his arms and a picture thereupon for his father's grave; and he further directs them to set two images on his grandsire's grave with his arms. Two slabs still remain in St. Stephen's church, one having the effigy of Robert Brasyer (the grandfather) and his wife Christian, with an inscription, and the other the effigies of Richard Brasyer the father and Richard Brasyer the son. Four shields have been reaved from the angles of the slab, and the inscription is also lost. They remained, however, in Mackerell's time, and he describes the whole very minutely as follows:—

"The next stone is very near 10 ft. long, and 4 ft. 6½ in. broad, with the effigies of two persons in brass; there is an escutcheon at each corner of the stone, on the first, a coronet between three bells;

⁴ It'm Rie'us Brasier filius Ric'i Brasier nup' maioris p'baut lib^{te} p'ris sui & admiss⁹ est iure heredit & iur' est cora' d'ce Maiore die & Ao p'dee (viz. die ven'is p'x post Assump. 19 Ed. IV.)—*Free Book*.

on the second, the arms of Mingay; on the third, the arms of Skinner, viz., three cross-bows bent; and on the fourth, a mark, as in the margin,⁵ which is the same as that on the Communion table-cloth, and this inscription:—

“Orate pro aīa Ricardi Brasyer senioris Norwici Cibitatis olim Aldirmāni ⁊t maioris ac erīa pro aīa Ricardi Brasyer filii eius p^{de} cibitatis quōdā Aldirmāni ⁊t maioris qui ab hac luce migrabit quīto die mēsis Septeb A^o Doⁱ m cccc xiii^o quibus regnis in celestibus glīam sempit^{na}m donet deus amen.”⁶

Under this inscription a pewter shield remains upon which can still be seen traces of the merchant's mark engrāved in *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. iii., pl. xi., No. 19. It appears that Richard Brasyer's instructions were not strictly complied with, for his wife's effigy is omitted, and his own and his father's are both placed on one stone. This last Richard Brasyer had no issue, and he disposes of his foundry as follows:—“Ifm I will that oon of the conyngest men of my occupaciōn that hath be my Prentice haue the occupaciōn of my Werkhous xij monethē ⁊t A day vnder my executors to make my changē and my bargeyns that I haue to make And aftre that if it can be sold to A Reasonable Price w^t aft the beft moldis and wheightē and oder stuff longyng y^oto I wott it be sold And if thei cannot sett it I will it be lettyn with all the beft muldis and croke And all the oder instrumentē y^oto longyng for x^{li} a yere or xx^{ti} mōce as well as thei can Lett it to the pformaunce of this my last will.”⁷

The Brasyers lived at the north-east corner of St. Stephen's parish, where, says Mackerell, “now Mr. Nuthall's Brewing office

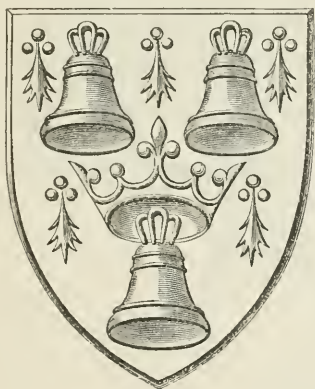
⁵ Blomefield supposes, from the mark, this communion table-cloth to have been the gift of Robert Brasyer, but Mackerell, in his MS. shows that the donor of it was one of the Richard Brasyers. This mark is apparently the same as that engrāved in *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. iii., p. 224, pl. xi., No. 18, as the mark of Robert Brasyer.

⁶ *St. Stephen's Parish in the City of Norwich, with some observations on the same.* Written by Benjamin Mackerell, MS. p. 35.

⁷ *Regr. Coppinger*, fo. 81.

is." The triangular plot of ground bounded by Red Lion Street on the east and Rampant Horse Lane and Little Orford Street on the other two sides, in King's Map of Norwich, dated 1766, is marked "Foundery;" in Blomefield's plan, 1741, it is numbered 66; and at p. 605 he says, "on the triangular Peice at Wastelgate stands a Brewhouse where antiently stood (66) A Work House."

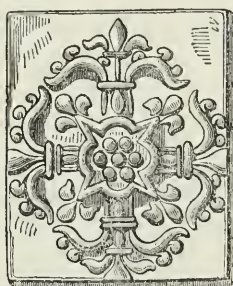
Only one bell, the fourth at St. Peter per Mountergate, Norwich, has been found bearing the name of Richard Brasyer, and this bell has on its crown, thrice repeated, the shield engraved on p. 10. About twenty-five other bells have been met with in the county stamped, generally thrice, with the same mark, but there are nearly a hundred bells which are impressed with one or other of these shields.



This coat or mark was, as just mentioned, on Richard Brasyer's gravestone in St. Stephen's church. Occasionally the arms of the city of Norwich are found with these shields, see p. 11. It would appear probable that the diapered shield, i.e., that engraved at p. 10, was the earlier form of Brasyer's mark, the ermine field being an afterthought, and added to make the mark more heraldic. This can only be conjecture, for there are but two or three of Brasyer's bells to which a precise date can be assigned. The tenor at Norwich Cathedral was cast in or about 1469; the larger bell at Salhouse is dated 1484: the first bears the large, the other the small, ermine shield.

The Brasyers used the same type, or at least the same capital letters, which Baxter used on the fourth bell at Ketteringham; but in no instance have the larger and more beautiful capital letters of the tenor bell of St. Giles, Norwich, been found associated with their mark. The Brasyers however introduced two other alphabets of a degree of beauty and excellence rarely surpassed by any alphabets of the period. These may be distinguished not only by the difference of the ornamentation but also by a difference in the size; the larger alphabet being generally reserved for tenor bells.

The three initial crosses here engraved, numbered 1, 2, and 3,



(1)



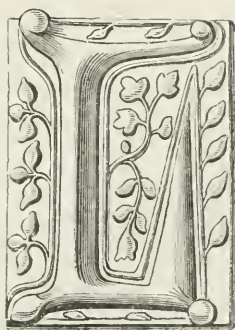
(2)



(3)

with the cross used by Potter and Baxter, and engraved at p. 26, are those usually found on bells bearing the Brasyer mark. The cross numbered 1 is used on tenor bells only;⁸ No. 2 and the cross

⁸ It should be mentioned that Nos. 1 and 2 are drawn smaller than the originals, one being about a fourth, the other about half, the actual size.



LETTERS FROM BRASYER'S SMALLER ALPHABET.

used by Potter and Baxter more frequently occur, but No. 3 is seldom found. The early bell-founders, whose bells are inscribed in capital letters, place a stop between each word, and some of the fifteenth-century founders did the same, although they used *black-letter* with a capital initial letter to each word. Baxter and the two Brasyers, however, whose inscriptions are usually rhyming



Latin verses, placed one stop only in the middle of the verse, as shown in the lithograph of the inscription on the bell at Cromer. The lion's face now engraved is the stop most frequently found, being generally associated with cross No. 2. On larger bells the face, used by Baxter on the tenor bell of St. Giles, Norwich, is seen, and on some small bells a graceful piece of foliage

occurs. On the tenor at Burlingham St. Peter, which is marked with Brasyer's small shield, the three-legged pot is found as a stop.

WILLIAM BARKER. After the death of Richard Brasyer in 1513 a break occurs in the list of Norwich founders, William Barker being admitted to the freedom of the city on St. Luke's day, 22nd Henry VIII., 1530. Occupying the same foundry as the Brasyers, he probably used the same moulds and type, and most likely the same shield with three bells and a crown. The Register of St. Stephen's parish records his death on the 18th of June, 30th Henry VIII., 1538. His will is dated but six days previously. He "bequeathed" to Elizabeth his wife his dwelling-house called "The Three Bells,"⁹ and also his "working-house with all the hole cheker thereto belonging, vpon condiçon" that she "payde to John Allen, of Norwich, Hosyar, all suche somes of money as is due by obligaçon to the sayde John Allen, for the payment of the forsayd howf." ¹

THOMAS LAURENCE, bell-founder, was admitted to the freedom of the city of Norwich, 23rd of March, 33 Henry VIII., 1541.

⁹ Henry Sydnor, of St. Stephen's parish in Norwich, Gentleman, in his will, dated 1670, mentions his "house next the Three Bells in St. Stephen's."

¹ Regr. Godsalve, p. 283.

The St. Stephen's Register records his burial on the 3rd of December, 37 Henry VIII., 1545. His name, as in the case of William Barker, has not been found on any bell in Norfolk. In *The Church Bells of Sussex* it is noted that William Culverden of Hounsdlitch, 1510—1523, mentions in his will, that he had sold the lease of his bell-foundry to a *Thomas Lawrence* of London, bell-maker.

JOHN BREND is the next bell-founder we meet with in the *Free Book*, so frequently referred to. He was admitted and sworn a citizen in 1573;¹ he had however been settled in Norwich some years, the baptism of his son Robert being recorded in the Register of St. Stephen's parish in 1565.

As early as 1564, the initials R. B. and I. B. are found associated on a bell at South Bergh. In 1565 they are again met with on bells at Colton and Knapton; and at Merton the initials I. B. occur alone in 1564. R. B., it is conjectured, stand for Robert Brend, whose name is met with in 1577 in the Register of All Saints' parish. It is singular that his initials are not found after 1565, from which date the initials of John Brend only occur. John Brend's name does not appear on any bell yet discovered, and not more than twenty are known which can be attributed to him. They are generally inscribed "Anno Domini," in Roman capitals, with the date in Arabic numerals. His figure of 5 is peculiar, frequently placed upside down, and then resembles a 2; so much so indeed, that in the *Memorials of Attleburgh* the date of the second bell of that church is given as 1281, instead of 1581, and in a note is added: "This is known by the name of the old Saxon bell." A few of John Brend's bells bear the legend "FILI DEI VIVI MISERERE MEI." He lived and died in St. Stephen's parish, and no doubt carried on his business at the old foundry. He was buried 31st July, 1582, and his will affords an instance of the rapidity with which in those days interment followed decease, for it bears date only two days previously. It contains nothing relating to his business, but we learn that he was "greatlie indetted

¹ Joh'nes Brend Belfounder no' app'ntic' admiss' ac Jur' est ciuis die Veni's x^{mo} die April' A^o xv dn'e Elizabeth Regine.

vnto diuſe men in diuſe ſomes of money,” and that he directed the ſale of the “Mansion houſe,” in which he dwelt, and of his perſonal eſtate, for the diſcharge of his debts; and if any overplus remained it was to be equally diuided between his two ſons Robert and William at their ſeueral ages of twenty-one years.

WILLIAM BREND ſucceeded his father in his occupation, removing the foundry from St. Stephen’s into the adjoining pariſh of All Saints.² It was ſituated at the ſouth-weſt end of All Saints’ Green, near the preſent reſidence of Mr. Day, the ſurgeon.³ The earlieſt notice of William Brend, as a bell-founder, is met with in the Churchwardens’ Book of St. Margaret, Norwich, for which pariſh he recast a bell in 1586,⁴ and his initials occur on a bell at Kireſtead, dated 1587. It is not however until the commencement of the ſeventeenth century that his bells were caſt in any number. They are principally met with in the eaſtern half of the county and the north-eaſt parts of Suffolk. None bear his name, but the majority of them have the initials or marks, W. B., B., W., W. I. B., (William and John Brend), or the monogram W. A. B. (William and Alice Brend), either on the crown with the arms of Norwich and Brasyer’s ſhield, or on the waſt of the bell by itſelf. He alſo uſed Brasyer’s ſhield alone. Some of his bells have no inſcription, but are merely marked with one or other of the two laſt-mentioned ſtamps; others have inſcriptions but no marks, theſe may be identified by the type he uſed. At leaſt half-a-dozen varieties of type are found on his bells, and ſome of the earlier

² 1586. John the ſonne of William Brend and Ales his wife buried the 22 of July.—*All Saints’ Register*.

³ I am indebted to W. T. Bensly, Eſq., LL.D., for extracts from leaſes of two tenements in Surrey Street, next the “Anchor” tavern, which fix the ſite of the All Saints’ foundry. By Indenture dated 12 Oct. 39th Eliz. (1597), the Dean and Chapter of Norwich demised to Robert Whitlowe the nether part of their tenement in Newgate ſtreet in the pariſh of St. Stephen, with a yard, &c., abutting upon the tenement and ground of Thomas Billiment, before of Robert Carter, on the ſouth-eaſt, “and abutteth vpon grounds of Wm. Brand bell-founder on the northe-eaſt and vpon the Queen’s highway ſouth-weſt in length one and fifty yards and one foote and in breadth at the end next the ſtreet 12 yards and in breadth at the north-eaſt end 11 yards 2 feet.”

⁴ 1586. It’ p^d for A oblygacyon betwene y^e p’iſhners of yis p’iſhe & } xij^d.
W^m Brande Conſernynge y^e new bell }

letters are excessively ugly. The tenor bell at Ketteringham, 1610, is an example of his best *black-letter* with large ornamented capitals. The first and second bells at the same church are inscribed in small *black-letter*, without capitals; whilst the third and fourth bells at Attleborough, the eighth bell at St. Andrew, Norwich, 1617, the fifth at Loddon, 1616, and the tenor at St. George, Tombland, Norwich, 1619, are specimens of another variety of *black-letter*, very poor and flat; the capitals, however, a fair imitation of those used by Potter and Baxter two hundred years before. On his later bells, he also used very good Roman letters, examples of these occur at Bergh-Apton, 1628; Walcote, 1634; and elsewhere. By far the greater number of his bells are simply inscribed "Anno Domini," and the only stock-inscriptions he seems to have had were the few following—

"Per me fideles invocatur ad preces."

"OMNIS SONUS LAUDET DOMINUM."

"AS GOD WILL SO BE IT."

Some inscriptions such as—

"It joyeth me much to goe to God's church "

"cursd be all church robbers "

"praise god on the loud cimballs"—

and others, occurring only once, I am inclined to refer to the donor or the parish clergyman.

On the 27th September, 1634, William Brend executed the following deed, which was proved as his will on the 2nd February, 1634-5:—

"To all xþian people to whome these þsents shall come gretting know yee that I Wilt Brend of the citie of Norwich Belfounder for divers good causes & consideraçon me especialy moving have granted & given vnto Alice my wife & to her heires for ever all & all manner of goods & chattels movables & imoveables scituate being & belonging or reciding to my dwelling house wheir in I now live. And all those goods tooles implements & vtensils whatsoever of & belonging to my work house or belfounding house in All Saints in Norwich aforesaide I give & bequeath vnto John

Brand my sonne provided always that y^e s^d John Brend my sonne shall honestly and truely pte & equally divide such debts & summes of money as are now equally due vnto us both betweene him y^e said John my sonne and Alice my wife. And also I give vnto Alice my wife y^e one halfe of y^e bell mettell that is now remaining in my bel-founding house. In witnesse whereof I have putto my hand and seale the seven twentie day of September in y^e yeare of our lord one thousand six hundred & four & thirtie.

By me William Brend,⁴

Sealed & dd in y^e p^sente
of Christopher Hatley
& Wifm Delphe and
possession of a silver spoone
in pte of y^e rest given to Alice
and a hammer to john Brend.”

In the Register of All Saints' parish, under the year 1634, is this entry:—"Wiffia Brend, Bell-founder, buried Decembr 1^o vnder the 4th stone in y^e body of y^e church."

JOHN BREND, 1634—1658, who carried on in the same premises the business in which he had for many years been a partner, made a complete change in the inscriptions and lettering of his bells. He gave up *black-letter*, invariably using the Roman character, discarded foundry-marks, and inscribed nearly all his bells, "JOHN BREND MADE ME," each word being one stamp. He can scarcely be said to have had any stock-epigraphs, for out of ninety bells in Norfolk, only four are inscribed—

"TVBA AD IVDITIAM CAMPANA AD ECCLESIAM;"

whilst of the old legends used by William Brend but two instances have occurred. Upon these few bells he places his initials and not his name, and uses singularly admirable letters and numerals, possessing quite the old feeling although not in the old style. As may be supposed, the period at which he lived, that of the civil wars, was not favourable for bell-founders, and not one bell of his

⁴ The seal is in wafer and appears to be a horse's head couped.

has yet been found cast in the years 1643, 4, 5, 8, 9. There are but few of his bells in Suffolk, and those mostly cast after 1650, that is to say, after the extinction of the Thetford foundry. Some bells in Norfolk have the initials I. B. and I. D., being those of John Brend and John Draper, of Thetford, from which it appears that they were sometimes associated, and on these occasions it seems probable that the bells were cast at the places to which they belonged, and not at either the Norwich or Thetford foundry. Indeed this was not unusual at this date; the tenor bell of Aylsham church, for instance, was cast in 1648, by John Brend at Aylsham.

John Brend's will, dated 1654, was proved at London in 1659, by the oaths of Elizabeth Brend and Ellen Brend the executrixes, named in the will. He disposes of his foundry as follows:—

“Item I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Brend Ellen Brend Daniel Brend Elias Brend Francis Brend and Hester Brend my children all that messuage and tenement which I now live in with the yard on the North side and the worke-house and part of the yard to the theap bushes against the end of the house so farre as I lay my clay with the two great beams and scales with all the great weights and stones with the furnace and the two paire of great bellowes the pann and duddles and all the working patterns belonging to y^e great bells and the barrells for pulling of bells out of the pit and the clayboard the said house and workhouse with the tooles aforesaid to be let and the first yeares rent beginning halfe a yeare after my decease to be paid to Elizabeth Brend my daughter she allowing five shillings for that yeare towards the reparacōns of the said house.”

The second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth years' rents were to be paid respectively to Ellen Brend, Daniel Brend, Elias Brend, Francis Brend, and Hester Brend, each allowing five shillings for repairs, and the seventh year's rents to Elizabeth Brend, and so successively to every child mentioned above. “And if default shall be made of the said yearly rent successively or any part or parcell thereof by my executors hereafter named unto any of my said children I give and bequeath the same house workehouse yard and tooles unto him or her performing the said payments as is aforesaid unto the aforesaid children successively and my minde and will is

the longest liver of all my beforenamed children from one to another to the last and the longest liver shall either give or sell the same to whome he or she please both the house workhouse yard and all the aforesaid tooles.”

The Register of All Saints records William Brend's burial, 18th Sept., 1658.

ELIAS BREND, 1658—1666. Few bells, not exceeding ten, have been found in the county bearing this name, and they are all dated from 1658 to 1660; but his initials occur, by themselves, in 1661, and in 1663 and 1664, with those of THOMAS BREND, whose initials, T. B., are found alone in 1660 and 1661.

RALPH BREND and Thomas Brend are parties to a Bond, dated 1664, preserved in the church chest of St. James, South Elmham.⁵ The treble bell of that church appears to have the initials R. B. Who Ralph Brend was I am unable to say, but Elias and Thomas Brend were both sons of John Brend, and the former died in 1666, and was buried at All Saints, Norwich. With this, the fourth generation of the Brends, the notices of them, as bell-founders, end, and we next find the Norwich foundry in the hands of

EDWARD TOOKE, 1671—1679, the second son of William Tooke, (sometime Alderman of Norwich, and Sheriff in 1650), and Elizabeth his wife. He appears to have had more occupation than his immediate predecessors, and as a foundry-mark occasionally employed the arms of Norwich city. In his will, dated 29th July, 1679, he is described as “of All Saints Parish in the City of Norwich, Bellfounder,” and he gave and devised for the payment of his debts, all his houses, tenements, workhouse, and hereditaments, and all his personal estate to his brother-in-law Richard Johnson, whom he appointed sole executor. He was buried at All Saints in October, 1679, and his will was proved on the 14th of that month.

SAMUEL GILPIN, 1679—1705, seems to have been foreman to Edward Tooke, for we find payments made to him for casting bells bearing Tooke's name, and after Tooke's death, Gilpin's name is

⁵ I have to thank my friend, Mr. G. B. Baker of Bungay, for communicating a transcript of this document from a copy made by the Rev. W. Holland.

several times mentioned in churchwardens' accounts as casting bells, brasses, &c. The fifth and tenth bells at Aylsham, and the first and second at St. Mary Coslany, Norwich, are thus known to be Gilpin's work. The Aylsham bells are dated, but the St. Mary's bells have no inscriptions whatever. A number of other bells in Norfolk, without inscriptions, resembling these last in having rectangular cannons, are no doubt also of Gilpin's casting. The treble at Toftmonks and the fourth bell at Langley, the only bells on which his name is found, are respectively dated 1701 and 1703.

CHARLES NEWMAN, 1696—1703. Out of about thirty of Charles Newman's bells, which have been noted in Norfolk, the earliest is dated 1696; yet at St. Michael, Cambridge, the tenor, dated 1684, bears his name, and this bell, the Rev. J. J. Raven informs me, was cast at Lynn. In Suffolk, at Glemsford and Cockfield, there are bells with C. Newman's name dated 1686 and 1691. He is here classed among the Norwich founders, not without some doubt, for an entry in the Churchwardens' Book of St. Laurence, Norwich, for which parish he recast the tenor bell in 1702, seems to point to Blakeney⁶ as the locality of his foundry.

HENRY PLEASANT, who was first of Colchester and afterwards of Sudbury, cast a few bells for Norfolk churches at Bracondale, Norwich, about 1705.

THOMAS NEWMAN, 1701—1744, who was undoubtedly a Norwich founder, used in the early part of his time the same ornament between the words of his inscriptions as Charles Newman had done. There is little variety or interest in his inscriptions, of which examples have been already given at p. 21. On the tenor bell at Worstead, is—

“I tell all that doth me see,

That Newman at Brakindel did new cast mee;”

and from tradition, we learn that his foundry was situated on the spot where now stands the “Richmond Hill” public-house. This is confirmed by an entry in the Churchwardens' Book of St. Laurence, Norwich, under the year 1737: “P^d for taking down the Split Bell and Cartage to Bear Street Gates 0 . 4 . 0.” It is also reported of

⁶ 1702. “For loading y^e bell vnto cart and carriage to Blakeny £1 05s. 0d.”

Thomas Newman that he was a travelling bell-founder, setting up his foundry wherever there was work, and casting bells at, or in the neighbourhood of, the places for which they were ordered. From 1716 to 1727 he appears to have been absent from Norwich altogether. Only six bells cast by him during that time have yet been met with in Norfolk; these are at Clenchwarton, Tilney, and North Runcton, dated 1720,⁷ and at Wimbotsham, dated 1726. Whilst in Suffolk but three have been found, and one of these, the fifth bell at Newmarket St. Mary, is inscribed, "Thomas Gardiner and Thomas Newman me fecit, 1719." On the tenor bell at Berdon, Essex, is, "Thomas Newman at *Cambridge* made me, 1723."⁸ At the same place, no doubt, he cast bells for Burwell, Brinkley, Histon, Madingley, and Trumpington, all dated 1723.⁹ We find him again at Norwich in 1728, for the first and fifth bells at St. Peter per Mountergate were cast by him in that year; and a bell at Pakefield, Suffolk, is inscribed, "Thomas Newman at *Norwich* made me, 1728."¹ It appears from the Poor's Rate Books² that he was not at Norwich in the third and fourth quarters of 1729; and he seems to have been in Cambridgeshire, bells at Foxton and Ickleton in that county, and Haverhill, Suffolk, being cast by him in that year. This was probably his last visit to Cambridgeshire, and it could scarcely have been a very profitable one if these four bells were the only result of it. The fourth bell at Pakenham, Suffolk, is inscribed, "Thomas Newman of Norwich made me at Bury, 1735."³ At the same place, probably, he cast bells for Kentford and Lackford, near Bury; and it is worth notice that no bell of his of the year 1735 has yet been found in Norfolk. From 1730 Newman's bells are again found in Norfolk, except in 1735, as numerous as before 1717; they also abound in Suffolk, but are

⁷ These places are near Lynn, and in the errata to *An Account of Church Bells* by Rev. W. C. Lukis, it is stated that "Charles and Thomas Newman founded at Lynn."

⁸ MS. of the Rev. J. H. Sperling.

⁹ *East Anglian*, vol. iii.

¹ MS. of the Rev. J. J. Raven.

² Preserved at the Guardians' Offices, Norwich.

³ MS. of the Rev. J. H. Sperling.

less frequent the farther we recede from his head quarters at Norwich. Newman's burial is recorded in the Register of St. John Sepulchre, Norwich, in "1745, Tho. Newman, married man, Aprill 20."

During Newman's absence from Norwich, we find JOHN STEPHENS, 1717—1727, casting bells for Norfolk and Suffolk churches. He occupied the Bracondale foundry, as appears from his being rated in the parish of St. John Sepulchre in 1720, '24, and '27. On the treble bell at Martham, dated 1717, he describes himself as of Norwich, but his name does not occur in the rate book for the year 1718. In the Register of burials for the year 1727, is this entry: "John Stephens, widower, Octo. y^e 12."

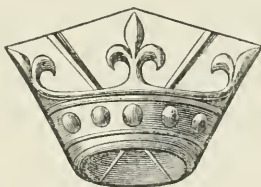
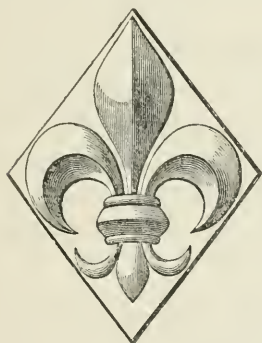
THOMAS GARDINER, 1745—1753, who had been much employed at Sudbury, casting bells for Suffolk, Essex, and Cambridgeshire churches, removed to Norwich,⁴ upon Newman's death, and occupied the Bracondale foundry. Upon some of his bells will be found impressions of coins and medals: thus on the treble at Paketfield, Suffolk, is a coin of John V., King of Portugal, dated 1745. On most also of his bells cast at Norwich are numerous impressions from a cross which was used in the Norwich foundry more than two centuries previously, being a small copy of that on the tenor bell of St. Giles, Norwich. He remained at Norwich but a few years, for we find him back at Sudbury in 1754, as appears from bells at Rattlesden and Glemsford, Suffolk. After this I have no further notice of a bell-foundry at Norwich.⁵

⁴ See Westhorpe and Mildenhall bells. Gardiner's name occurs on the Tilney bells, dated 1745.

⁵ Since p. 40 was printed off, I have found the entry of Gilpin's burial in the St. John Sepulchre Register: "1705 Sammiwill Gillpen from Lacknam Buried the 8 of June."

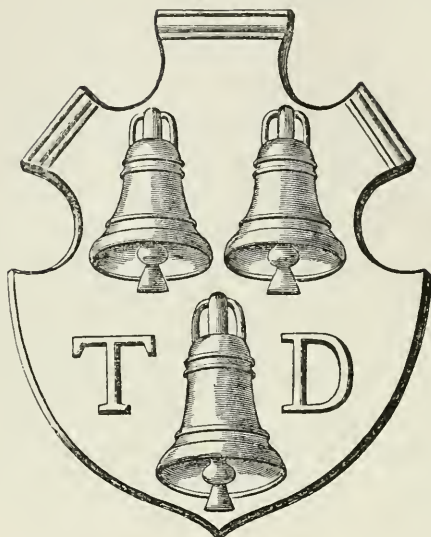
THETFORD FOUNDRY, 1577—1644.

THOMAS DRAPER (1577—1595), who was Mayor of Thetford in 1592, cast two bells for Illington church in 1577. Not more than a dozen of his bells have been found in Norfolk, and in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire they are less frequent. All, with one exception, are dated in Arabic numerals, and are generally inscribed in black-letter, *thomas draper me fecit*. But some have their inscriptions in ornamented capitals, so good as almost to lead me to suppose they are impressions from old type. Of these the larger bell at Sporle, inscribed *FECESTIS NVPTI VOCITO PVRE VENIATIS* 1593 TH. DR., is a good example. The old fifth bell at Oxburgh, having *o . christe . rex . gloria . es . tu . thomas . draper . me . fecit .* 1586. upon it, had these stops alternately between the words. The crown appears to have been



originally pierced with two arrows in saltire, of which the shafts remain, the barbs and the feathers having been apparently cut off. The similarity of this mark to that used by Stephen Tonni of Bury St. Edmund's, engraved at p. 9, suggests that John Draper had some connection with Bury; probably the Thetford foundry was an offset of the elder establishment. Thomas Draper's bells occur in the same steeples with Bury bells, and his initials and those of William Land, who succeeded Tonni, are met with on the tenor bell at Halstead St. Andrew, Essex, dated 1575, and on the fourth bell at Wattisfield, Suffolk, dated 1584.

The sixth bell at Redenhall was cast by Thomas Draper in 1588, and has on its



crown, thrice repeated, this shield, which has not been found upon any other of his bells. Draper's will was dated 1st June, 1595, and was proved on the 9th July following. He described himself as "Thomas Draper of Thetford in the Countye of Norff. and Suff. gent.," directed his body to be buried in the parish church of St. Cuthbert in Thetford,

and disposed of his foundry as follows: "Item I give and bequeathe vnto Margaret my wyef for terme of her naturall lyef the messuage wherein I now dwell heretofore called Grinnes wth all and singuler the howses yarges & other thappurtenne belonginge to the same And allsoe all that my messuage with thappurtenne scituate lyenge and beinge by the pishe Churcheyarde of St. Cutbert of Thetforde aforesayde, now vsed as my Meltinge and workinge house, w^{ch} heretofore I bought and purchased to mee myne heyres and Assignes of John Hillarye of Thetforde aforesaide deceased Item I give and bequeathe vnto the saide M^rgarett my wief All my moveable goodes what soeu; as billes, bondes, obligations, monye, plate, howshould stuffe, Implemente belonginge to howshould together with all my bell mettall & other mettall whatsoeu & likewise all the furnytüre of what kynde soever belonginge vnto or beinge in anye of my saide Messuages before bequeathed vnto her, Item I give & bequeathe the Reuision and Remaynder of bothe my abovesaide Messuages with thappurtenne vnto my sonnes videlzt Thomas, Edmonde, John, Henrye, Richard and William their heyres and assignes for ever Item I will & my mynde is, that if my sayde sonnes

shall consent together to sell the sayde messuages That then if anye of them shal bee able & willinge to buy the brothers pttres in the saide Messuages with thappurtenne^e or anye of them That they shall have them or anye of them better cheape by ffive poundes of lawful monye of England in the whole summe than any other.”⁶

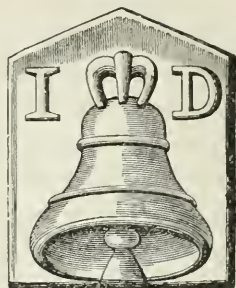
The old second bell at Cranworth, dated 1598, was inscribed with the name of THOMAS DRAPER as its founder; this must have been Thomas Draper the younger, who may have carried on the business for a time for his mother, Margaret Draper, with whom he lived.⁷ Her name has not been met with upon any bell, but it occurs in 1600 with that of her son, JOHN DRAPER, in an agreement with the churchwardens of North Lopham, to recast the second bell of that church.⁸ This bell does not remain, but the third bell at Honington, Suffolk, dated in the same year, bears John Draper’s name only. Two of his bells, dated 1601, remain, one at Chippenham, Cambridgeshire, and the other at Great Cressingham, Norfolk. After 1606 his bells are frequent in West Norfolk and Suffolk, and are also sparingly met with in Cambridgeshire. Nearly two hundred of his bells have been noted, and, whilst he thus equals in point of numbers, many think that he excels in quality, the bells cast at the Norwich foundry in the first half of the seventeenth century. His bells, however, are not so interesting to the archæologist as those of the Norwich foundry, for he seems to have had no stock epigraphs, few of his

⁶ *Reg. Holmes* (1593—6) fo. 329, Norwich Archdeaconry.

⁷ Thetford St. Cuthbert et Trinity. Con Thoma’ Draper for that he keepeth not with his wife, but remayneth wth his mother, and so have contynewed a quarter of a yeare nowe last past.—*Liber Visitat. Epi. Norw.*, 1597.

⁸ 29 Aug., 42 Eliz. John Draper of Thetford, Norfolk, bellfounder, and Margaret Draper of the same, widow, agree with John Williamson, yeoman, and Tho^s Wade, linenweaver, both of North Lopham, in the said County, to weigh and take the just weight of the second bell belonging to the church of St. Andrew, N. Lopham; and after the true weight thereof taken, to new melt and cast again the said bell, making it fit, tunable, perfect, sound, and answerable according to the science of music unto the other three bells hanging in the steeple of the said church, for the sum of four marks, and a further allowance of four pence for every pound more than the present weight, or a deduction at the same rate for every pound less. Warranty for one year and a day.—*Notes and Queries*, second series, xii. p. 208.

bells having anything more than JOHN DRAPER MADE ME upon them, generally in Roman letters. Moreover, he seldom employs a foundry-mark, only once or twice using his father's crown and arrows, and sometimes a stamp of his own, a bell between his initials.



It has already been mentioned that John Draper's initials and those of John Brend of Norwich are found together, namely, on bells at Hindolveston and Great Witchingham. At Worlington, Suffolk, on a bell dated 1614, the initials T. D. occur with those of J. Edburi; whilst at Lidgate and Hinderelay, 1621, Draper's initials are found with those of Andrew Gurney; and at Thurston, 1630, their names occur on the first and second bells. The third bell at Bildeston, Suffolk, was cast by them in 1624, as appears from the churchwardens' accounts of that parish.⁹

It appears that in 1606, John Draper recast in the parish of Wells the third bell of Beeston church, which place is not nearer Beeston than Thetford. He may have had other work at Wells at that time, or he may have fixed his foundry there before he permanently settled at Thetford. The first and fifth bells at Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, dated 1618, are both similarly lettered; one bears John Draper's name as its founder, the other is inscribed, "made at Cambridge;" and there are other bells in Cambridgeshire, probably cast by him at the same time and place. These facts, and his name being found associated with those of several other founders, leave little or no doubt that he was an itinerant bell-founder.

After 1638 I have met with only two of John Draper's bells, and in 1644 he died. His will, made in his last illness, is neither signed, sealed, nor fully dated, but was proved 1st November, 1644, by Elizabeth Draper, his widow. He disposes of his foundry, &c., as follows:—

"I will give and bequeath unto Elisabeth my wife my hous I

⁹ *Notes and Queries*, second series, vol. vi., p. 222.

DOWNHAM FOUNDRY, 1779—1833.

THOMAS OSBORN (1779—1806) who had been foreman to Joseph Eayre, of St. Neot's, was taken into partnership by Edward Arnold, who, on the death of his cousin, Joseph Eayre succeeded to his bell-foundry, knowing little or nothing about the business. Bells cast by Osborn and Arnold occur at Aylsham, Downham Market, and other places from 1773 to 1778, about which time the partnership was dissolved, and Osborn set up a foundry at Downham, his native place.³ The Hilgay bells were cast by him in 1779. A few years later, about 1782, he was associated with Robert Patrick, of London, who had a bell-foundry in Whitechapel, after the death of Thomas Lester. The tenor bell of St. John Maddermarket, Norwich, was recast by Patrick and Osborn in 1782, and the Rev. J. H. Sperling has found two or three entire peals cast by them about the same time.

About 1800, Osborn took his grandson, William Dobson, into partnership: their joint names occur on the fifth bell at Sutton St. Nicholas, Lincolnshire, in that year⁴ and in 1803, on the bells at Wisbeach St. Mary and Whittlesea St. Mary, Cambridge-shire.⁵ In 1806, Thomas Osborn died, and was buried in Downham churchyard, where his gravestone still remains.⁶ On Osborn's

³ His baptism is recorded in the Downham Market Register, on the 19th October, 1741. In 1740, Richard Osborn, joyner, was admitted to a tenement in the High Street of Downham, formerly called the Fox and Goose, abutting east on the Church Hill. Administration of the goods of Richard Osborn, of Downham, deceased intestate, was granted 15th December, 1762, to Sarah his widow. At the Manor Court held 23rd May, 1763, he was found to die seized of the premises just mentioned, and Thomas was found his only son and heir, and was admitted: at this date Thomas is described as a carpenter.

⁴ MS. collections of the Rev. J. J. Raven.

⁵ "Church Bells of Cambridgeshire," by Rev. J. J. Raven, *East Anglian*, vol. iii.

⁶ "In memory of Thomas Osborn, who died, December 6th, 1806, aged 65 years."

"In memory of Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Osborn, who died March 30th, 1807, aged 69 years."

The gravestone of Thomas Osborn's parents stands near, and is inscribed—

"In memory of Richard Osborn, who departed this life the 28th of November, 1762, aged 54 years.

"Also of Sarah his wife, who died May 10th 1797, aged 88 years."

death, William Dobson, whose name occurs as early as 1798 on the Crimplesham bells, succeeded to the foundry. Although he appears to have had extensive connections⁷—peals of eight bells cast by him in 1808, 1821, and 1823, are respectively at St. John Baptist, Peterborough, Poole, Dorsetshire, and St. George Camberwell—his finances did not prosper, his foundry being sold to Mr. Thomas Mears, of London, in the latter part of 1833. The fine peal of eight bells at Diss, cast in 1832, was probably his last peal, and certainly it is one of the best ever cast at the Downham foundry; the tenor bell at St. Neot's, however, is said to be the last single bell cast at Downham.

Dobson after selling his foundry removed to London, where for some time he obtained his livelihood in a lawyer's office. At length he was made a brother of the Charter-house; and there in 1842, he died and was buried. His wife's gravestone, with an inscription to his memory, remains in Downham churchyard.⁸

Most of the Downham bells bear merely the founder's name and residence, with the date of the year; but some are inscribed with the name of the town for which they were cast, as "Prosperity to the town of Diss." Others, again, bear the names of the rector and churchwardens, or of the principal inhabitants of the parish. Two favorite inscriptions with Osborn, were "Percute, dulce cano," and "Cum voco, venite." At Walsoken, Norfolk, and Rougham, Suffolk, we find "Venite exultemus:" at Marham and Walsoken, "The Lord to praise, my voice I'll raise."

Some inscriptions were used both by Osborn and Dobson; examples of these are—

"Peace and good neighbourhood."

"Let us lift up our voices with joy."

"Give no offence to the Church."

"Long live King George the Third."

On Dobson's bells we find the following—

"Let us sing praises unto the Lord on high."

"Fear God and honour the king."

⁷ "A list of peals of bells that have been cast at the foundry of Wm. Dobson, church bell-founder and hanger, at Downham, Norfolk," will be found in the Appendix.

⁸ Sacred to the Memory of Martha, the wife of William Dobson, who died April 5th, 1818, in the 27th year of her age. Also William Dobson, many years a bell-founder in this place, died in London, July 11th, 1842, in the 63rd year of his age.

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