

WORCESTER All Saints by Chris Pickford

The present bells

There is a ring of twelve bells in E flat, plus an additional semitone bell and a disused sanctus bell

Bell

Inscription

1. [Whitechapel, 1977 – inscription to be obtained, but partial wording is: Roger Oakes and William Gill, Churchwardens of St. Peter's 1661]
2. [Whitechapel, 1977 – inscription to be obtained, but partial wording is: Taylor & Sons, Founders, Loughborough 1858]
3. WHEN YOU US RING, WE'LL SWEETLY SING, T (bell) R (scroll border)
4. SO FOLLOW TRUE MY BROTHER STRING A (bell) R 1752 (arabesque border)
5. GOD PRESERVE THE CHURCH A (bell) R 1750 (border of crosses)
6. PROSPERITY TO ALL OUR BENEFACTORS A (bell) R 1750 (border of crosses)
- 6b. MEARS & STAINBANK, FOUNDERS, LONDON
Waist: REV. C.N. WRIGHT, M.A., VICAR / SIMEON STOTT } / GEORGE
BATTERSBY } CHURCHWARDENS / A.D. 1905.
7. Crown: (arabesque border) . A : R : (bell)
GOD . SAVE . THE . KING (border) M^R. IOH^N : HANDY (border) IVNR. (border)
1692 (border)
8. RECAST BY ABEL RUDHALL 1753 (border of crosses)
9. GEO : FAYTING : RECTOR (border) ROB^R. MILNER GENT (sprig) FRA :
CHETLE : GENT : C^H : 1692 :
10. GOD : SAVE : THE : KING : (arabesque border) 1692 : A : R . (bell) (bell) (border)
ANT : HILL : ÆDITIMVS (border)
11. ABR^A. RVDHALL (fleur-de-lis) OF . GLOVCESTER . (bell) . CASTE . VS : ANNO : DOM :
1692 (arabesque border)
Waist: (Royal Arms)
12. ALL SAINTS MAY WE BE : HENRY WATKINS & WILLIAM WATKINS CHURCH WARDENS.
THOMAS MEARS & SON OF LONDON FECIT 1805. (border)

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Mouldings	Hz	Note	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	Whitechapel, 1977	24 $\frac{1}{8}$				4	1	1
2.	Whitechapel, 1977	25 $\frac{3}{4}$				4	2	10
3.	Thomas Rudhall, 1773	26 $\frac{7}{8}$		1574.5	G+7	4	3	2
4.	Abel Rudhall, 1752	28 $\frac{3}{4}$		1417	F+24	5	3	23
5.	Abel Rudhall, 1750	29 $\frac{7}{8}$		1261	Eb+23	5	1	24
6.	Abel Rudhall, 1750	30 $\frac{1}{2}$		1184	D+14	5	2	19
6b.	Mears & Stainbank, 1905	32 $\frac{1}{2}$	2:2-2:3:2	1144?	Db?	5	2	2
7.	Abraham Rudhall I, 1692	31 $\frac{1}{8}$		1049.5	C+5	5	2	9
8.	Abel Rudhall, 1753	34 $\frac{1}{4}$		932.5	Bb	6	2	21
9.	Abraham Rudhall I, 1692	37 $\frac{1}{4}$		830.5	Ab	8	1	19
10.	Abraham Rudhall I, 1692	39 $\frac{1}{4}$		785	G+2	9	3	23
11.	Abraham Rudhall I, 1692	45 $\frac{5}{8}$		698	F+1	13	2	6
12.	Thomas Mears & Son, 1805	50 $\frac{3}{4}$		622	Eb	20	1	1

Canons removed from back ten (probably in 1914), and also from the semitone bell (in 2010).
Trebles cast with flat tops.

[bell details / frame and fittings – to be added; but noting that bells 5 and tenor still have their 1966 and 1934 stocks]

Lowside frame by Whitechapel Bell Foundry 1973, originally for ten bells but set out for future augmentation to twelve (*Bellframes* plan 12.4). Semitone bell hung below in a single-pit steel frame ...

There is also a sanctus bell, in use until the rehangings of the bells in 1972-5 but now kept on the western window ledge in the ringing room

Bell

Inscription

COME A WAY MAKE NO DELAY (*bell*) (*three coins*) / MICHAEL PERRY
CHURCH WARDEN * 1741 *

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Mouldings	Hz	Note	Cwt.	Qrs.	Lbs.
1.	William Brooke, 1741	14			Eb	0	2	14*

The bell retains its Barwell swing-chiming fittings of 1914, including timber stock, plate gudgeons, iron chiming lever etc.

History

In 1552 there were five bells here, plus a sanctus bell – “v belles a sanct bell a cloke and chymes”.

Six by Abraham Rudhall I, 1692, of which four remain; Rudhall 1705 list “In the City of Worcester – All-Saints 6”, also in the 1715 list

Augmentation to eight by Abel Rudhall, 1750. Rudhall 1751 list “City of Worcester – All Saints 8”

The octave was complete by the early weeks of 1750/51 and the first peal on the bells – and the first known peal in Worcestershire – was rung. This was reported in the *Gloucester Journal*, 5 February 1750/51, although the exact date is not stated.

We hear from Worcester, that the whole Peal of Grandsire-Triples containing 5040 Changes, was lately rung in Three Hours and One Minute, at the Parish Church of All-Saints in that City, by a Society of Ringers, who never attempted it before

Augmentation to ten, 1752 – Rudhall 1788 list “City of Worcester – All Saints 10” and in the 1831 list (which gives tenor weights) says “All Saints, Worcester, 10 20 [cwt]”

The first in the county, and probably the 32nd ring of ten in England. By that date there were already ten bells at several other churches in the Midlands including the early tens at Derby All Saints (1678) and Lichfield Cathedral (1688). Those in the neighbouring counties included Hereford Cathedral (1697), Warwick St.Mary (1703), Shrewsbury St.Chad (1712), Cirencester (1713), Painswick (1731) and Birmingham, St.Philip (1750). After All Saints came Birmingham St.Martin (1758), Coventry St.Michael (1774), Shrewsbury St.Mary (1811), Aston (1814), Stroud (1815), Bromsgrove (1816), Dudley (1818), and Wolverhampton (1827)

Sixth recast by Abel Rudhall in 1753 - Abel Rudhall's probate inventory includes a list of "dubious debts" 1742-1759 drawn up after his death on 8 February 1760. This includes "1753 10 July, 16, Parish of All Saints Worc^t. Due upon Acct. Settled £11.4.0

Peal of Caters rung on 4 January 1759, seven years after the augmentation. The reports do not state that it was the first on the ten bells or the first of Caters in the tower

Treble of ten – the bell is undated – was recast by Thomas Rudhall in 1773. Bill extant "Mr. Moore. Churchwarden of All Saints. / To Tho^s. Rudhall Dr. / To recasting Treble Bell £8.0.0. / Gloucester, April 27th, 1773. / Sir, Please remit me the above as soon as possible & you'll greatly oblige, Yr. most h^{ble}. ser^t. / Tho. Rudhall."

Comment on the musical quality of the bells in details of a peal reported in *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, Thurs. 5 January 1792:

If a defect in the tenor, which produces a discord at all times, was to be repaired, All Saints Church might boast of as fine-toned and musical a set of bells, as can be found in any other city in England, the Metropolis only excepted.

Tenor recast by Thomas Mears & Son of Whitechapel in 1805, and reckoned to be 23 cwt

The bells were rehung by Thomas Paul of Bristol in 1812, as shown by the following advertisement from the *Worcester Herald* of Saturday 12 September 1812:

CHURCH BELL HANGING. THOMAS PAUL, CHURCH BELL HANGER and CHIMEMAKER, (Agent to Mr. Mears Bell, Founder, London) BEGS to inform the Gentlemen Churchwardens of the city of Worcester and it's vicinity that he has just completed the Hanging of All Saint's and St. Martin's; those gentlemen who may want their Bells Cast or Re hung, and choose to employ him, may depend on having their work executed in masterly style, with dispatch, and on the most reasonable terms. Any number of Bells Cast and Hung in six months and the Old Bells not taken away until the New ones are Hung and approved. ☞ Bells put in Harmonious Tune. Address THOS PAUL, at the Talbot Inn, Sidbury. An early application is recommended as his stay in Worcester will be short.

Peal of Grandsire Triples on Monday 7 September 1812 – noted in the same paper (and also reported in *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, Thursday 10 September) as "the first rung since re-hanging the bells by Thos. Paul of Bristol"

Peal on 3 October 1825 noted as "the first peal on the bells after re-hanging" – report in *Worcester Herald* 8 Oct 1825 refers to "The excellent peal of ten bells at the church of All Saints, in this city, having been entirely re-hung, were, on Monday, opened by the youths of St. Martin's, Birmingham, who rang a complete peal ..."; Church accounts for 1829 record a payment to John Clarke "for Cleaning down the tower and helping to get the back bells out"; Peal on 7 January 1833 noted as the first peal on the bells after another re-hanging [no report cited – claim based on inference from 1829 reference?]

By 1884 the belfry was showing signs of neglect, and at the AGM of the Worcestershire & Districts Association on 14 July 1884 a band from Bromsgrove arrived to attempt a peal and found the ropes in a poor state and the tenor clapper on the floor

Fame of the bells – quote Rev. B. Arthure, Rector from 1860 to 1910, who wrote some lines on the bells [quoted – see RW 1972 p.154]

But All Saints was also noted for its tower sway - In 1911, for instance, the rector wrote: "When the full peal of ten bells is rung, the tower sways very perceptibly from the top to the foot, causing even the ink in my vestry inkstand to shimmer."

By the early C20, the bells were in a poor condition. An article in the *Bell News* of 12 February 1898 (p.511) noted that they were "unringable" and the writer criticised the authorities and ringers for letting such a famous peal of bells deteriorate into such a state. In the "Our Church Bells" series, the entry for All Saints appearing in the *Bell News* of 17 June 1905 (p.169), the following description was given:

Worcester, All Saints. Ten bells; believed to be by Rudhall. No dates given. Tenor 24 cwt., diameter 4ft 2in. Timber frame. Bells go well. All the bells clocked every Sunday, No repairs for a long time past. No answer to ropes and methods. Occasional ringing on Sundays and festivals, but there is no band attached to the church, and the rector discourages ringing as it causes dust in the vestry below. Ringing is further troublesome, because it involves untying the ropes from all the clappers, which annoys the old tower-keeper

Restoration of tower and bells, to cost £400, begun July 1913 (WDCC 1914 p.199 – record for Nov.1912 to Nov.1913); Restoration of tower £650, restoration of belfry £140 (WDCC 1915 p.196 – record for Nov.1913 to Nov.1914)

Whitechapel inspection book 22 May 1914 with frame plan and other details of installation

Barwell letter of 25 June 1914, stating that the firm had just been given the order for rehanging the bells at All Saints, Worcester, in the autumn (in Redditch parish records – 850 Redditch St.Stephen 8825/24/ii). All rehung on cast iron stocks etc. Sanctus bell also rehung

Tenor rehung on cast-iron headstock by Mears & Stainbank in 1934. The invoice to the PCC, dated 1 December 1934 reads:

To lifting the Tenor bell clear, and removing the broken parts. Providing and fitting a new cast iron headstock fitted with steel gudgeons, also gun-metal bearings. Providing and fitting a new oak wheel with iron wheel braces, a new stay, slider and runner-board. Fitting the new bearings to the framework, refitting and rehanging the bell ready for ringing, also refitting the clapper with a new pin, as per estimate £40.5.0.

Inspection by Jack Fidler for Taylors, 10 April 1950

Rehung on ball bearings by Taylors (proceeds from sale of St.Helen's bells) in 1951 and the frame strengthened; Bill for rehanging the ten bells (£490) and new bellropes (£32), total £522, 28 September 1951. Statement of account for St.Helen's bells (£1000 as per offer of 8 March 1951) less £450 paid in cash, charges for photography and plaster casts £10.10.0, and account for rehanging All Saints £522, leaving a balance of £17.10.0 payable to the parish

Taylor rehanging of third by local ringers, with new headstock supplied by Taylors, 1966; Bill for new cast iron stock for the third bell (£29.8.0) dated 23 March 1966

[Description of frame and fittings prior to 1970s rehanging, including tuning (all tuned 1-2 skirted and chipped inside, 3, 4, 8 and 9 skirted, 5-6 "chiselled" inside, 7 chipped inside, 10 tuned lightly at rim); Weights before tuning found to be 4-3-4, 6-0-16, 5-2-21, 5-3-0, 5-2-26, 7-0-2, 8-3-14, 10-1-4, 13-2-22, 21-1-4]

Accounts of the 1972-5 restoration – based on dedication service sheet account, 5 July 1975
“July, 1972: An appeal to restore the bells and tower was formally launched. To save money, the bellringers undertook to do as much of the work as possible themselves. The Faculty authorising them to commence was eagerly awaited; August 6th, 1972: The Faculty was received and the bells were rung for the last time after Evensong. The next day, the ropes, wheels and clappers were removed. The six smallest bells were lowered two weeks later. By September 16th, all the bells were on the ground floor; After three more weeks, the remains of the old bell frame had been cleared. The bells remained in the church until December 29th, 1972; on that day they were loaded onto a lorry and taken to the bell foundry in London; The clock mechanism was then moved up into the old bell chamber so that the new bell frame could be placed lower down in the tower. The ringers also carried out this work and the clock was set going again in March, 1973; The bells were tuned in the summer of 1973, but a national shortage of steel delayed work on the frame. Meanwhile, the ringers had other work to do; In September, 1973, they renewed the electrical wiring and lighting in the tower. Then they cut eleven holes in the tower walls to receive the main girders; some two months work; February 16th, 1974: The bells, fittings and most of the frame were delivered. A small army of helpers had the bells unloaded and taken in the church and the six main girders in position in the tower, all in one day!; The new frame had then to be erected and the girders concreted in. After seven weeks, the frame was ready to receive the bells. Hanging the bells took another two weeks; May, 1974: The bells were now ready to be rung, but no ringing could take place until the unsafe parapet was removed; Inside the tower, there was still work to be done. The next twelve months were spent in restoring the ringing chamber. The ceiling and floor were renewed and the room redecorated and refurnished; April, 1975: The parapet was removed from the tower. Funds do not permit its replacement as yet but at last the bells can be safely rung. Now, after two years and eleven months, they will be heard once again proclaiming their witness to the Christian faith over this City

Augmentation to twelve using metal from two redundant bells, being 3’-10” and 2’-8” in diameter from St.Peter’s (John Martin 1661) and Worcester (Astwood) Cemetery (Taylor 1858). Bells dedicated on 6 November 1977

Addition of semitone bell (flat 6th), obtained from St.James, Wardle, near Rochdale, Lancs (Manchester Diocese). It had been removed by Fred Pembleton in 2003. It was acquired for All Saints in 2008-9. Cleaned, retuned and canons removed at Whitechapel in 1910. Hung in fabricated frame has been designed by David Beacham and made by Jim Wheeler at NDS Engineering, of Clifton-upon-Teme (or “was made by NDS Engineering...”). Neil Sparey (NDS) did not make it himself. It has been installed in the clock chamber directly above the 6th. Work done locally, but Bill Berry was responsible for hoisting the bells into the tower early in 2011.

In 1552, “A cloke and chymes with all thinges thereunto belongyng”. There was a clock when the church was rebuilt in 1742.

The present clock – by Smith of Derby, 1897. Smith of Derby Sales Ledger, 22 Oct.1897 – new church clock with ding dong quarters and one 7ft illuminated dial, £122

Illuminated dial on north face of tower. Originally struck the hours and ding-dong quarters. Installation commemorated on a brass plate in the base of tower (north wall):

THE CLOCK IN THE TOWER OF THIS CHURCH / WAS ERECTED BY PUBLIC
SUBSCRIPTION AS / A MEMORIAL TO BISHOP HENRY PHILLPOTT D D / AND

DEDICATED ON ALL SAINTS DAY 1897 / BY C W DYSON PERRINS ESQ
MAYOR OF THIS CITY / B ARTHURE M A RECTOR / T JAMES AND F J HALL
CHURCHWARDENS / C E PIPE SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE

The official inauguration of the clock was performed by the Mayor, and noted in the *Worcester Diocesan Church Calendar* for 1898 (p.207). In his account of the Church Clocks of Worcestershire, P.G. Feek noted that an illuminated clock obtained by subscription in 1889 as a public recognition of Bishop Phillpott's generosity to the City and parish. It cost £270, and the City Corporation agreed to meet the annual cost of illumination. It was erected without chimes.

Smith of Derby publicity leaflet for synchronous electric direct-drive conversion of hand wound clocks, n.d. [covering letter dated 24 May 1963] (SBTRO ref: BRR 57/3/16/2/1), includes "Worcester All Saints Church" in list

Stat.11 Georgii II, c.5, 1738. An Act for taking down and rebuilding the Church of the Parish of All Saints in the City of Worcester

For full account of rebuilding, *see* Whitehead article – and for description Pevsner / Brooks Replacement of balustrading and urns 1995 (not 1992 as Brooks & Pevsner)

Access to all levels of the tower by spiral stair in the SW corner

Visited: CJP and Nicholas Cronin 4 March 1970: Thanks to David Beacham, John Slater and David Franklin