



# Bell Ringing at The Church of St. Kyneburgha Castor

## The Bells.

Bell	Weight in Cwt-qr-lb	Dia. inches	Note
Inscription. - Symbol -O- indicates Coin set in Inscription Band			
Treble	4-0-16	25 ½	G
<b>OMNIA FIANT AD GLORIAM DEI</b> (Let all be done to the Glory of God) <b>XP 2000 AD AΩ</b> (Christ - 2000 Year of our Lord – Beginning and End) <b>Rector William Burke. Ringers, William Baxter, Edward Baxter</b> <b>Diana Burke, Tony Evans Capt. Lis Freeman, Yvette Halewood</b> <b>MANTON &amp; DAVID BAXTER, SPEECHLEY FAMILY</b> <b>CHARLES WINFREY &amp; FAMILY</b>			
No.2	4-0-22	26	F#
<b>UNTOUCHED I AM A SILENT THING, BUT STRIKE ME AND I SWEETLY SING</b> <b>Church Wardens Brian Goode &amp; Theo Hensman. Ringers, Maggie Noble,</b> <b>Anna Reed, Stephen Reed, Beverley Rigby, Virginia Sheldon, Trevor Vercoe</b> <b>COOK FAMILY, CARLY &amp; BOBBY FREEMAN,</b> <b>GRIFFIN FAMILY, RP &amp; NM WINFREY</b>			
No.3	4-0-17	27 ¼	E
<b>HENRICVS BAGLEY -O- NOS -O- FECIT -O- 1700 -O-</b>			
No.4	4-0-21	28 ¼	D
<b>HENRICVS BAGLEY -O- NOS -O- FECIT -O- 1700 -O-</b>			
No.5	4-3-14	30 ½	C
<b>HENRY BAGLEY OF ECTON MADE ME 1700</b>			
No.6	6-0-16	32 5/8	B
<b>HENRY BAGLEY OF ECTON MADE ME 1700</b>			
No. 7	7-0-19	35 7/8	A
<b>CANTATE DOMINO CANTICTVM NOVVM</b> (Sing unto the Lord a new song) <b>HENRICVS BAGLEY DE ECTON NOS FECIT. 1700</b>			
Tenor	10-0-9	39	G
<b>I TO THE CHVRCH THE LIVING CALL AND TO THE GRAVE DO SVMMON ALL.</b> <b>HENRY BAGLEY MADE ME 1700</b>			

The first record of bells at Castor was in 1552 when there were five. In 1700, these were replaced by a set of 6 bells, which are well known as a fine example of the art of Bell Casting. They were cast as a set by the Master Bell Founder, Henry Bagley at his foundry at Ecton near Northampton in 1700. There are very few complete sets of bells, still in use, which are of such an age and were all cast together.

Henry Bagley is famous for casting the fine set of 8 bells for Lichfield Cathedral in 1670. He trained his nephew, Henry Penn, who started his own Bell Foundry in Peterborough, where he cast the set of 10 bells for the Cathedral in 1709. These bells remained in the Cathedral until 1831, when they were split up. The largest of the Henry Penn bells still remains, but is now only used for chiming.

In 1700 the village with the help of Earl Fitzwilliam funded our new peal of 6 for Castor were hung in an oak frame, and remained there until 1900, when they were rehung in new cast iron frame supported on steel girders, new ringing fittings, canons removed and cast iron headstocks were also fitted. This work was carried out by John Taylor of Loughborough. The same firm also carried out the next major modernisation, in 1968, when the headstocks were fitted with ball bearings.

Our Millennium Project, to install 2 more bells to give us a ring of 8, was successfully carried out in October 1999. The two additional lighter bells, cast by Taylors of Loughborough, were hung in an extended frame, which was fitted by Hayward Mills, assisted by our volunteers Steve Reed, William and Edward Baxter. The cost of £16,000 was raised by the village in only ten days. This work was completed in time for the Dedication on Oct 17<sup>th</sup> 1999.

We rearranged and redecorated the Ringing Chamber. The major contributors to the fund and the Millennium Ringers are listed on the Commemorative plaques, which are mounted in the Ringing Chamber and by the organ in the Church.

In the last few years, the frame has been stripped and repainted, the floor of the ringing chamber has been treated for woodworm and the clapper of each Bagley bell has been rebushed. For the installation of the new Taylor bells, various hatches had to be provided for access and for lifting and some other alterations to the Ringing Chamber were also carried. Maintenance work is an ongoing challenge, however it is essential, if Castor is to maintain its reputation of having one of the finest peals in the Diocese.

## **Bell Ringing.**

Full circle Bell Ringing is an art form, which has been practised for over three hundred years. It is practised extensively in Britain and English speaking parts of the World. There are around 6000 rings of bells, which are set up for Bell Ringing, as we understand it, and the vast majority of these are in Britain. In most parts of the World bells are hung so that they swing through a short distance, or not to move at all and they are usually hit with a hammer. A collection of bells hung for sounding in this way is known as a Carillon and used for playing tunes. In Britain bells are generally hung for full circle ringing, which allows for greater control of the timing of the bell and the art of Change Ringing to develop.

Also mounted on the wall in the Ringing Chamber is the traditional set of Ringer's Rules, such as "Any Ringer bringing Ale to the tower shall be fined one shilling, and any ringer swearing shall be fined as the majority see fit. All fines to be spent on oil and candles", 4th March 1879. Visitors are welcome, but may only view the upper levels and the bells with a qualified guide.

You may notice the Angelus bell rings for the offices of the day, at 7.30, noon and 6.00. The bell strikes 3, 3, and then 9, that is for calling to pray, for the world, the church, the village, and themselves. The Sanctus bell is rung three times when communion is celebrated at the Prayer of Consecration, and 30 times for a Baptism. In the event of the death of a parishioner the tenor (the largest bell) is tolled, appropriately inscribed "I to the Church the living call and to the grave do summon all". It is tolled twice before and after the knell, thrice for a man, twice for a woman and once for a child the same but on the Angelus bell. The knell is tolled for each year on this earth. When the ringers are requested to ring for funerals, the bells are "Half Muffled", that is one side of the bell's clapper has a thick piece of leather attached. This causes the bell to sound clear and loud on one strike, and the next will be a muffled sound which enhances the harmonics of the bell. The effect produced is an unusual sound which many find very moving.

For beginners it does not take that long before you will begin to feel a sense of achievement, as you are able to ring and join in "rounds" successfully, for the first time. Ringers of all abilities are welcome, and needed. Mastering this art, which can only be achieved in stages, and requires some patience to reach the levels to ring any of the more complicated methods you may hear discussed.

## **The Castor Band.**

The Castor Band currently consists of around 11 regular ringers and in addition we have an Associate Group, who we are able to call on for the occasional help. Our Tower Officers are, Captain Julian Burton, Deputy Tower Captain Stuart Weston, Ringing Master David Banks, and our Steeple Keeper is Edward Baxter.

We ring every Sundays for Morning Service 9.35-10.10, and for other additional services, also special occasions such as weddings and funerals. Our practice night is Monday, from 7.40 to 9.00, when we are joined by ringers from other towers around Peterborough. We also have regular social events.

We also host the Ringing School which teaches beginners, and lapsed ringer up to method ringing. It was established in 2006 by Tony Evans. Installed in the ringing chamber is a Ringing Simulator which allows the bells to be rung when "tied", silently, the sound transmitted only to the ringing chamber. One to eight ringers can ring with the simulator and review their performance without disturbance. It operates every Saturday 10.00-12.00, any one is welcome between those times. David Teal is the manager 07860 308081.

As there is always maintenance to be done, we are always grateful for any donations. In addition, we are always on the look out for new or lapsed ringers, so if you think you might like to have a go, or just come and see how bell ringing is done, then either come along on a Monday practice night, or even Sunday service ringing, or telephone William Baxter on 01733 380597 or 07860 495633. We will be very happy to welcome you.