

Information from Chris Pickford's survey of Worcestershire bells and clocks – draft only (this version 14 March 2022)

NB This is by no means a complete history – or anything even approaching one. It is work in progress, shared for the benefit of anyone interested to know more (along with a separate document containing source extracts regarding the bells, clock and carillon). There is a great deal more material to be added, including a summarised version of the history of the tower restoration, bells, clock and chimes in the 1860s-1870s which is extremely well documented in the Dean and Chapter archives, the Fiske papers and the Taylor Bellfoundry archives as well as in the secondary sources (e.g. press reports) extracted in the “extracts” file. In simple terms, the notes that follow just contains “bits” of the story researched and written up so far. CJP – March 2022

WORCESTER Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary

The present bells

The central tower contains a ring of twelve bells in the key of B natural with four semitone bells (also hung for ringing) and a bourdon bell (hung dead) for the clock. Details of the bells are as follows:

- | <i>Bell</i> | <i>Inscription [ornamental borders omitted here?]</i> |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : MATTHIAS</i>
<i>Opposite: THIS BELL IS GIVEN / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / IN LOVING MEMORY OF / MARTIN ABELL / A KING'S SCHOLAR / B.1840 – D.1928 / (Taylor's rectangular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 2#. | WESTLEY 20 (<i>Whitechapel-type foundry mark with three bells and initials WG</i>) 17
GROUP [space] WHITES OF APPLETON, CHURCH BELLHANGERS / (<i>border below</i>)
<i>Waist (in South Somercotes lettering): S : CLARE</i>
<i>Opposite (same lettering): THE GIFT OF / BERNARD TAYLOR</i> |
| 2. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : JUDAS JACOBI</i>
<i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 3. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : SIMON ZELOTES</i>
<i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 4. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : JACOBVS ALPHÆI</i>
<i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 5#. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : PAVLVS</i>
<i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 5. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : MATTHÆVS</i>
<i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 6. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : BARTHOLOMÆVS</i>
<i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 6b. | J : TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH A : D MDCCCLXXV
<i>Waist: S : MARCVS</i>
<i>Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928</i> |
| 7. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
<i>Waist: S : THOMAS</i> |

- Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928*
8. JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
Waist: S : PHILIPPVS
Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928 / THE WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICT / CHANGE RINGING ASSN. GAVE ME
- 9#. JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT A : D MDCCCLXXV
Waist: S : LVCAS
Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928
9. JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX
Waist: S : ANDREAS
Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928 / THIS BELL WAS GIVEN BY / MRS. E. THOMAS / AND HER SON / E.P. THOMAS
10. JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT ANNO DOMINI MDCCCLXIX
Waist: S : JOHANNES
Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928 / TO THE GLORY OF GOD / AND IN MEMORY OF / NORMAN OGILVY, PRIEST / SOMETIME RECTOR OF HANBURY IN THIS DIOCESE / BORN OCT. 6. 1839. DIED JUNE 7. 1903. / AND OF / EMILY, HIS WIFE / BORN NOV. 27. 1841. DIED MAY 12. 1926. / AND OF / ALICE, THEIR DAUGHTER / BORN MARCH 17. 1871. DIED MAY 13 1926
11. JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT ANNO DOMINI MDCCCLXIX
Waist: S : JACOBVS
Opposite: (Taylor's circular mark) / RECAST 1928 / IN MEMORY OF THE MEN OF WORCESTERSHIRE / WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR, / ESPECIALLY J. ROBERT BLAKE & EDWARD S. BLAKE, / SONS OF THE RECTOR OF ST. HELEN'S, WORCESTER.
12. JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT ANNO DOMINI MDCCCLXIX
Waist: S : PETRVS
*Opposite: THIS PEAL OF BELLS / WAS RECAST BY / JOHN TAYLOR & CO. OF LOUGHBOROUGH / IN 1928 / * * * / W. MOORE EDE D.D. / DEAN OF WORCESTER. / JOSEPH SMITH, CLERK OF THE WORKS / OF THE CATHEDRAL.*

<i>Bell</i>	<i>Founder and date</i>	<i>Diameter</i>	<i>Nominal</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	29"	1468	6	3	8
2#.	Westley Group, 2017	30½"		7	3	3
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	30½"	1308	7	1	1
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	31"	1235	7	2	20
4.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	32½"	1099	7	3	25
5#.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	33½"	1036	8	0	15
5.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	35"	980.5	8	2	19
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	36½"	922	10	0	6
6b.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	38"	871	10	2	24
7.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	39½"	823	12	0	1
8.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	43½"	733	14	3	26
9#.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	45"	692	16	1	16
9.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	48"	652.5	20	0	6
10.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	51"	616	25	2	10
11.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	57"	548.5	34	3	4
12.	John Taylor & Co, 1928	64"	488.8	48	0	2

The details of the bells given here are the correct ones. The weights given by Walters in *The Church Bells of Worcestershire* (1932) and for many years displayed in the belfry were

adjusted to appear more in keeping with the sizes of the original bells (*see* below), those for bells 1 to 5 (including the flat 4th) having been exaggerated by half a hundredweight and the tenor (quoted as 49-2-0) by a hundredweight and a half.

The main inscriptions and the dedications on the waist are copied from the old bells of 1869 and 1875. They are in the elaborate gothic capitals copied from the set of three mediaeval bells at South Somercotes, in Lincolnshire, one of which is dated 1423. The capitals are decorated with foliage, flowers and human heads and grotesque figures. The added inscriptions of 1928 are in modern Roman lettering in various different sizes. Taylors' inscription book shows the letters OE where Æ is used above [*this needs to be checked on the bells*]. In addition to the wording given above, each bell probably also bears a pattern number cast on the crown [*needs to be checked*]. The underlined portion of the inscription on the eighth bell was engraved on the bell after casting [*line break needs to be checked – also exact wording*]. The ornamental borders on the bells are repeated from their predecessors [*not mentioned in the inscription books – need to check the bells*]

The Bourdon or Hour bell was cast at Loughborough on 28 August 1868. Details are as follows:

Inscription

SVRGE QVI DORMIS ET EXVRGE A MORTVIS ET ILLVMINABIT TE
CHRISTVS / JOHANNES TAYLOR, LOVGHBOROUVGH, FVDIT ANNO
DOMINI MDCCLXVIII. / IN VSVM ECCLESIAE CATHEDRALIS CHRISTI ET
BEATÆ MARIÆ VIRGINIS IN CIVITATE ET COMITATV VIGORNIENSI

Waist: (four coats of arms – 1) England, 2) the See of Worcester, 3) the Dean and Chapter of Worcester and 4) the City of Worcester)

<i>Bell</i>	<i>Founder and date</i>	<i>Diameter</i>	<i>Hz</i>	<i>Note</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1868	76 ³ / ₈ "	436	A-16	82	3	24

The weight given here is as it is now, after retuning in 1928. The original weight was not recorded in the foundry job books for 1868 – probably because the bell was too heavy for the available scales – but in contemporary catalogues the weight was often quoted as 4 tons 10 cwt (or 90 cwt). In 1928 it was weighed in to the foundry at 90 cwt 0 qr 12 lbs and its note was B flat (nominal 464.5 or Bb-6). The bell arrived in Worcester on Christmas Eve, 1868, and it was on view in the north transept for a while before being hoisted into the tower. It was tolled for service for the first time by Lord Grimthorpe on Sunday 17 January 1869.

Like the other bells, it is inscribed in the South Somercotes lettering. The Latin inscription may be translated as “Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. John Taylor, Loughborough, cast [me] in the year of our Lord 1868. For the use of the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary in the City and County of Worcester”

The teaching Centre chime bells

In 2003 a young Coventry ringer, Jonathan Hughes, commissioned a set of eight bells to be hung for ringing in a campanile at his home at 92 Craven Avenue, Binley Woods. The bells were cast in Holland at the Royal Bell Foundry of Petit & Fritsen at Aarle-Rixtel and delivered to Coventry in November 2003. The details are as follows:

Bell

Inscription

1-7. [*Smooth castings - blank*]

8. *Waist:* IN MEMORY OF / HARRY S. FISHER / 1916-2003 / AND / PHYLLIS B. FISHER / 1920-1981

<i>Bell</i>	<i>Founder and date</i>	<i>Diameter</i>	<i>Mouldings</i>	<i>Hz</i>	<i>Note</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
--------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------	------------------	--------------------	--------------------	--------------------	--------------------

1.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	11 $\frac{5}{8}$ "	None		A	0	1	25
2.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	12 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	None		G#	0	2	1
3.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	13 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	None		F#	0	2	12
4.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	14 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	None		E	0	2	26
5.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	15 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	None		D	0	3	13
6.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	16"	None		C#	0	3	22
7.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	17 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	None		B	1	0	16
8.	Petit & Fritsen, 2003	18 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	None		A	1	1	10

The bells were cast without canons. The inscription on the tenor commemorates Jonathan's grandparents.

Sadly, Jonathan died tragically on 20 December 2005, aged only 22. The bells were never hung. After his death, the Hughes family looked for a suitable home for them and in 2010 they were donated to the Cathedral - as Jonathan had a great love of the Cathedral bells - where they have been hung on a steel "tree" frame as a computer-controlled chime in the Teaching Centre in the tower. The frame was built in 2010 by N.D.S. Engineering of Clifton on Teme to a design provided by Cathedral ringer Bernard Taylor.

History [*much more to be added*]

[*Chronological history here – leading to details (below) of the bells that existed before the installation of the Grimthorpe bells in 1869*]

The historic distribution of bells between the central tower and the leaden steeple is unclear, both before the Reformation and afterwards, and it is not until 1611 that there is definite evidence of a ring of eight bells at the Cathedral. The accounts for that year refer to "two new baldrics for the clappers of the 5 and the 7 bells". As the great bell and "the four lesser bells" are also mentioned this entry clearly provided evidence of an early octave. Even then it is not wholly certain whether the bells were in the tower or steeple (see below).

One of the Cathedral bells - the fifth of the old octave (recast in 1820) - was dated 1602. Its inscription was recorded in the books by Dr. Thomas (1736) and Valentine Green (1796). There are slight differences between the two versions, Green giving a set of initials after the date which were omitted by Dr. Thomas. The bell seems to have been inscribed:

RICARDO EDES DECANO 1602 I G B M

The initials suggest that the founder of this bell was probably John Greene of Worcester whose mark with bells and I G is found on several of his surviving bells. The bell must have been around 38" in diameter, weighing around 9 cwt and sounding the note A flat. There are no accounts or other documentation for this period and so no proof of the founder can be obtained.

The surviving C17 accounts begin in 1608 and those for 1611 to 1669 have been published by the Worcestershire Historical Society in an edition by the Cathedral Librarian, David Morrison (2018). The records are far from complete and the accounts only exist for the years 1611, 1619, 1639, 1642, 1663 and 1665-9. The most significant items recorded are as follows:

1611

Note: Extensive work was carried out on the central tower and on the old leaden steeple, *possibly* in connection with the bells

Repairs to the Church and houses of the Church

To Francis Bidle and other carpenters for five days' work about hewing the elm and about the bells 30 November 1610

Side Note: This Elm was given away to Mr Fleete the Church having no benefit by it. Bad	
To Francis Bedell and other carpenters for three days' work about mending the Bells on the same day	9s 3d
To Chadburne the Smith for nails and stirrups and keys etc. used in repairing the frame and wheels of the bells as in the bill paid 6 December 1610.	13s 4d
To Francis Bidle for making a new frame for the four lesser bells which he undertook to work by the great 21 December 1610	£3 0s 0d
To Henry Hornbee for three days working on the Tower Steeple and on the tower's other Gate and for nine pounds of solder as in the bill 22 December 1610	9s 8d
To Francis Bedell and others for hauling up the trees from the slip and for removing timber out of the tower steeple into the leaden steeple for use there 24 December	12d
To Robert Kettle for mending the clock and the chimes and for wire for the chimes and other work as in the bill paid 11 February 1611	21s 4d
Paid 23 February 1611 for Robert Walker of Whittington for free stones ready hewed at the house in Battenhall Park which as it is thought will arise to twenty loads to the use of the leaden steeple and the church the sum of three pounds and two shillings	£3 2s
To Walter Drew 3 March at the same place for six days work himself and three labourers in building up the stone work of the leaden steeple and for the carriage of 4 load of stone from Battenhall and for seven barrels of lime etc as in the bill	27s 6d
To Walter Drew 9 March for a second week's work in building up the stone work of the leaden steeple with divers labourers as in the bill	26s 3d
To Bedle the carpenter for a day's work himself and his man for trussing up the timber work of a corner of the leaden steeple that they might work safely in the stone work underneath paid 11 March 1611	2s 0d
To Walter Drew 17 March 1611 for a third weeks work in building up the stone work of the leaden steeple with the labourers as in the bill	25s 4d
To Walter Drew for work done about the leaden steeple five days and a half about the 18 and 27 of March as in the bill, paid 30 March 1611	13s 5d
To Henry Hornebee for seven days' work and a half for himself and two men on the south side of the roof of the Quire and upon the leaden steeple and for one day's work over the cloister and for two pounds of solder as in the bill paid 5 April 1611	22s 4d
To Walter Drew 7 April 1611 for a week's work about the leaden steeple for making up breaches and forcing in of arches flown out as in the bill	17s 4d
To one William Marsh for two new baldrics for the clappers of the 5 and the 7 bells 11 April 1611	6s 8d
To Walter Drew 13 April 1611 for two days' work by himself and two others on the leaden steeple as in the bill	5s 8d
To Walter Drew by my brother in my absence for four and a half days' work and for three workmen and for four barrels of lime on the leaden steeple as in the bill 20 April	20s 6d
To Walter Drew by my brother in my absence 27 April 1611 for five days' work for himself and five others about the stonework and the leaden steeple and for three barrels of lime as in the bill	27s 7d
To Robert Kettle for work done upon the chimes 12 February as in the bill	5s 0d
To Walter Drew for helping to load stone at Battenhall and for carriage of the same stone six loads	7s 8d
To Walter Drew 15 May for taking down the stone at Battenhall and for loading them, and for the carriage of them 8 loads of stone.	12s 5d
To one William Marsh 25 May 1611 for a new baldric for the great bell	4s 6d
To Richard Chadburne the smith 13 July 1611 for ironwork used in the leaden steeple, and in my lord's seat and by the plumber in nine loads. As in the bill	21s 2d
To one [blank] Bedell 16 July for mending the clap[per] of the great bell which broke in two	7s 0d
To one William Marshe for mending the baldric of the great bell on the same	

day	20d
To one Edward Philpott for work done 2 days about setting and hanging the bells in good order 16 July	3s 10d
For mending the door that goeth up to the College Steeple 10 August	4d
To Henry Hornbee for 4 days' work and a half for himself and two men on the leaden steeple and for seven pounds of solder as in the bill paid 13 September 1611	17s 2d
To Robert Kettle 21 September for mending the clock and the chimes at several times as in the bil	10s 0d
To Walter Drew for taking down, and carriage of nine loads of stone from Battenhall	11s 0d

Stray payments

In repairs of the church [<i>deleted</i>]: lent to Frauncis Bedell 8 November 1610 toward the £3 he received for mending the frame of the bells	20s 0d
---	--------

1618

Repairs to the Church

To the Goodman Gosling for mending the clock April 3 as in the bill	5s 6d
---	-------

Outside payments

Paid for two ropes one for the great bell and the other for a lesser bell which weighed forty-six pounds after 4d	15s 4d
Paid to the Smith for mending one of the clappers of the bells and putting more iron thereto	6s 0d
Paid for a rope for the quarter watch for the clock which weighed twenty-two pounds after 4d the pound and two staples 4d for the same: and two men who were helpers in the hanging of the same	8s 0d
Paid for mending the great bell that was loose in the stock and mending the wheel of one of the little bells as in the bill	9s 10d
Paid for the mending of two clappers which were broken and putting more iron to them	14s 0d

1639

Purchases pertaining to the books, lights, and bells etc.

November 26 paid for setting the 7th bell upright as in the bill	1s 0d
December 13 paid for a baldric	1s 6d
December 22 paid Abraham for oil for clock and chimes	1s 6d
February 28 paid for a bell rope for the great bell weighing 21 pounds at four pence half penny the pound	7s 10d
April 20 Paid for altering all the hammers of the chimes and mending the quarter clock as in the bill	£1 3s 0d
May 2 Paid for new casting the least bell of the ring and for supply of metal, with other work done about that business as in the bill	£5 15s 4d
May 2 Paid the carpenters for hanging the said bell, and fastening divers of the rest in the stock as in the bill	5s 4d
June 22 Paid the Sextons for oil and wire and nails for the clock and chimes	1s 9d
August 7 Paid the Ropier for piecing six of the bell ropes	1s 6d
September 2 Paid Field for wire and nails for the chimes	1s 2d
October 4 Paid Field for oil and mending the chime ropes	1s 8d

Repairs to the Church

June 29 Paid the plumber and others for carrying many sheets of new lead to the dormitory and carrying much of the old lead from the steeple to the lead house as in the bill	£1 4s 3d
July 6 Paid for 2 Fother and 48 pounds of lead for the covering of the dormitory and steeple	£22 18s 0d
July 6 Paid the same day for letting down the lead from the steeple roof, and mending the lathing and timber work as in the bill	18s 0d
Paid for casting lead for the steeple as in the bill	£2 5s 0d.

July 9 Paid for carriage of 44 sheets of lead from the lead house into the church, and for drawing them up to the roof of the steeple as in the bill	18s 4d
July 13 Paid the carpenters for mending the steeple roof as in the bill	8s 9d
Paid the plumber for laying lead on the steeple roof as in the bill	18s 3d
July 20 Paid the carpenters for work done upon the roof of the steeple as in the bill	11s 2d
Paid to the plumber for finishing the steeple roof as in the bill	£1 8s 3d

The payments for recasting the “least bell” in 1639 are significant. The bell evidently had to be replaced quite soon afterwards and the bell in use until the 1860s was dated 1641 (although the date was given as 1640 by Dr Thomas and Valentine Green) and inscribed GOD SAVE OVR KING 1641 (for the marks etc, *see* below). The identity of the founder is a puzzle.

There are bells of this period by unknown or uncertain founders at Dormston (1640), Dorsington (1640) and Hartlebury (1640). It was a time when there seems to have been no resident founder in Worcester. The date is after the last known bells by John Greene (and Richard Dawkes) but before the arrival of John Martin in 1644. Henry Bagley of Chacombe cast bells for Feckenham in 1640 and Roger Purdue of Bristol cast two for Overbury in 1641. The Cathedral bell is not by either of these founders. Another founder who can be ruled out is Hugh Watts II of Leicester who cast bells for St.Martin’s, Worcester, in 1638 and 1640 and for Hartlebury in 1641. The two bells of 1640 at Hartlebury - definitely not by Watts - might possibly be by Thomas Hancox II as suggested by Walters but they bear no confirmatory founder’s mark.

The lettering on the Cathedral treble is quite distinctive - especially the letters K, O and R - as is the figure 1 of the date which is in the form of a baluster. Similar lettering is to be found on some of the earlier C17 bells by Henry Farmer and on slightly later ones by Hancox (e.g at Droitwich St.Andrew in 1631 where the baluster character is used as a letter rather than as a numeral). The Droitwich bells, which bear Hancox’s TH maker’s mark) also bear the fleur-de-lis and the same vine border. The same lettering, fleur-de-lis and border also occur on the two Hartlebury bells of 1640.

The supposition, then, is that the Cathedral bell is by the same founder as the comparable examples at Hartlebury - perhaps Thomas Hancox II - and that the Dormston and Dorsington bells are by someone else. Did Watts cast its immediate predecessor in 1639? And did the Cathedral authorities then decide to have it recast by another founder in 1641? And what about Hartlebury? How come the bells are of two successive years were cast by different founders?

The Cathedral accounts, sadly, shed no light on the maker of the 1641 bell as the records for 1640-41 have not survived. There are, however, some accounts for 1642:

1642

The Purchases of books, lights, and relating to the bells

December 22 1641 for bell ropes, wire for the chimes and oil Mr Tomkins	13s 0d
February 12 [1641/2] for three new bell wheels and other work done necessarily about the bells H Wythe	£2 16s 9d
March 26 [1642] for a rope for the least bell Mr Tomkins	5s 7d
These following by H. Wythe	
March 26 For new casting three brasses for the bells, at 4d per pound weight and for five pounds of brass added, and waste in casting at 12d per pound all	11s 4d
For mending divers amiss about the bells, especially the Great bell, and third Treble, loose in their stocks	5s 6d

Given the nature of the times, it is extremely surprising that the tenor bell of the Cathedral should have been recast in 1648. This was, it should be noted, at about the time the old Clochium or bell tower in the Cathedral precincts was demolished. The inscription of this bell was recorded in 1736 by Dr. Thomas and later in 1796 by Valentine Green who adds the date which had been omitted by Thomas. It read:

I SWEETLY TOLLING MEN DO CALL TO TASTE ON MEAT THAT
FEEDS THE SOUL 1648

The bell - assuming it remained intact until 1830 as seems to have been the case - was measured and weighed at the Gloucester foundry by John Rudhall prior to recasting in that year (*see* below). It was a bell of 49" diameter weighing 20 cwts. 1 qr. 13 lbs. The inscription was a favourite of the Oldfields of Nottingham and used pretty much exclusively by them and so it is reasonably certain that George Oldfield I was the founder. However, local founder John Martin used another Oldfield favourite - All men that hear my mournful sound repent before you lye in ground (e.g. Severn Stoke, 1648) - and the bell might, perhaps, have been his. Again, and hardly surprisingly at that date, there are no Cathedral accounts to provide confirmation or further details.

The post-Restoration accounts include some further bell entries

1663

July 8 Paid Jacob Heape for a new clapper for the second bell, and mending the baldrics of the other bells as in the bill £1 1s 0d

1665

December 3 Paid Henry Richards for work done about the bells £1 13s 0d
December 7 Paid for half inch boards to repair the wheels 3s 0d
December 19 Paid the founder for brass and work done about the bells £2 14s 3d
May 27 Paid the carpenters for work done about the bells as in the bill 7s 6d
November 23 Paid for work done about the bells as in the bill 3s 2d

1667

September 6 Paid to Richard Walker for mending the bells and other work 13s 0d
October 5 Paid for a new wheel for the great bell £1 0s 6d
October 24 Paid to Joseph Heape for iron work done about the church and taking up the great bell 18s 6d
November 9 Paid to George Staunton for 2 pieces of wainscote in the Organ-Gallery and a cover for the font, and a plank for mending the frame of the great Bell 19s 6d

The fifth (the 1602 bell noted above) became cracked and had to be recast in 1820. The work was carried out by John Rudhall of Gloucester but no record of its inscription has been preserved.

By 1830 the tenor had become cracked and it was sent to Gloucester to be recast by John Rudhall. Rudhall's notebook contains the following entries relating to the job:

Proposals - 10 August 1830, Agreed with the Dean & Chapter of Worcester to take down the broken Tenor Bell of the Peal of 8 at the Cathedral and recast it as near the weight of the old as circumstances will permit and fit Stock, Wheel &c and hang the new bell in the Tower for £70 which includes carriage of old & new. The note of the 7th is rather above F# the stroke above on the pipe

Account of old bells received – [*insertion after note of agreement with the Dean & Chapter*] Received the Tenor Aug^t. 21, [Diameter] 4.1.0 [49"] ... w^t. 20C. 1qr. 13lb. Clap^r. 1qr. 2lb.

Measure, note and weight of new Bells when sent off and by what conveyance - 13 November 1830, Worcester Cathedral Tenor to 8, [Diameter] 4.0.6. [48¾"] ... wt. 20C 3qr

24lb Clap^r. 35½ lb, Brasses 14 lb, something sharp^r, than E pipe. Per Bridges Barge

As they existed before the Victorian restoration of the tower, the old eight bells were as follows:

- | <i>Bell</i> | <i>Inscription</i> |
|-------------|---|
| 1. | (<i>Fleur-de-lis</i>) GOD (<i>floral border</i>) SAVE (<i>floral border</i>) OVR (<i>floral border</i>) KING (<i>floral border</i>) 1641 (<i>two sections of vine border</i>) |
| 2. | No inscription |
| 3. | + I N (<i>stop</i>) H O N O R E (<i>stop</i>) S C I (<i>stop</i>) W O L S T A N I (<i>stop</i>) E P I |
| 4. | No inscription |
| 5. | [<i>Not known</i>] |
| 6. | + H O C (<i>stop</i>) O P V S (<i>stop</i>) I M P L E T O (<i>stop</i>) I H V (<i>stop</i>) V I R T V T E (<i>stop</i>) F A V E T O |
| 7. | <i>Missi De Celis Habeo Nomen Gabrielis</i> (<i>mark</i>) (<i>Royal arms</i>) (<i>cross</i>) |
| 8. | RECAST AT GLOUCESTER BY JOHN RUDHALL ANNO DOM. 1830. (<i>border</i>) |

<i>Bell</i>	<i>Founder and date</i>	<i>Diameter</i>	<i>Mouldings</i>	<i>Note</i>	<i>Cwt.</i>	<i>Qrs.</i>	<i>Lbs.</i>
1.	Thomas Hancox II (?), 1641	25¾"	3:2-2:2:2	Eb	3	2	0*
2.	Unknown, n.d.	c.28"		D	4	0	0*
3.	William Burford, c.1380	30¾"	3+:3*-1:3+:0	C	5	2	0*
4.	William Burford, c.1380	34½"	3+:3*:3+:1*	Bb	7	2	0*
5.	John Rudhall, 1820	38"		Ab	9	3	0*
6.	William Burford, c.1380	43"	3+:3*-1: 3+:1*	G	13	2	0*
7.	John Danyell's successor, c.1475	44¼"	3:3*-3:3:3	F	15	0	0*
8.	John Rudhall, 1830	48¾"		Eb	20	3	24

The three bells attributed to William Burford are all very similar in shape, mouldings and canon profile – the blank bell (no.3) having slightly different details. The inscription on the St.Wulstan bell (no.4) has contraction marks over SCI and EPI, i.e for SANCTI and EPISCOPI. This bell has plain, simple Gothic capitals. The sixth, in contract, has large and elaborate Gothic lettering, stylistically similar but with internal decoration in the letters. The seventh is inscribed with crowned Gothic capitals and blackletter smalls. It bears a fine octagonal cross, the crowned Royal arms and the so-called Brede mark. There is some uncertainty regarding the founder of the treble, but Thomas Hancox II seems to be the most likely candidate.

Five of these bells are now on display in the cloisters. Originally dispersed when the Grimthorpe bells were installed, the four ancient bells which went to Amherst Tyssen's church at Didlington in Norfolk were returned in 1968. The treble went to Holy Trinity, Shrub Hill, and came back when that church was demolished in the 1968. The fifth went to St.Mark's, Wolverhampton, but it was recast by Blews in 1871. The tenor went to Christ Church, Staincliffe, near Dewsbury where it remains. The second was stolen.

The old tenor was installed – with a new clock made by William Potts & Sons of Leeds – at Staincliffe in 1873. A contemporary Potts catalogue records that the clock and bell were given by the late Mrs. Fox, and the bell seems to have been stored at Fox's Mill at Staincliffe for a few years before it was offered to the church. The weight given above is as recorded in John Rudhall's foundry notebook in 1830, but the canons were removed when Taylors rehung it with new fittings – ten years after it was first installed – in 1883. The canons weighed 0-3-10 and so it is now reckoned to weigh 20-0-14.

The Grimthorpe bells for the Cathedral were cast in 1868-9 – the hour bell or bourdon on 28 August 1868 and the ring of twelve and the first semitone (the flat 4th) between April and September 1869. The bells were hung in the tower in the closing weeks of the year, but they were not rung or "opened" until some time later in 1870. The two additional semitones (the

flat 6th and flat 8th) were cast on 20 Jan 1875. Details of the bells were as follows:

- | Bell | Inscription |
|-------------|--|
| 1. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : MATTHIAS |
| 2. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : JUDAS JACOBI |
| 3. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : SIMON ZELOTES |
| 4. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : JACOBVS ALPHÆI |
| 4b. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : PAVLVS |
| 5. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : MATTHÆVS |
| 6. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : BARTHOLOMÆVS |
| 6b. | J : TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH A : D MDCCCLXXV / (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>)
Waist: S : MARCVS |
| 7. | (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>) / JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>border all round</i>)
Waist: S : THOMAS |
| 8. | (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>) / JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>border all round</i>)
Waist: S : PHILIPPVS |
| 8b. | JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT A : D MDCCCLXXV
Waist: S : LVCAS |
| 9. | (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>) / JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT MDCCCLXIX / (<i>border all round</i>)
Waist: S : ANDREAS |
| 10. | (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>) / JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT ANNO DOMINI MDCCCLXIX / (<i>border all round</i>)
Waist: S : JOHANNES |
| 11. | (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>) / JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT ANNO DOMINI MDCCCLXIX / (<i>border all round</i>)
Waist: S : JACOBVS |
| 12. | (<i>Tudor-flower border all round</i>) / JOHANNES TAYLOR LOVGHBOROVGH FVDIT ANNO DOMINI MDCCCLXIX / (<i>border all round</i>)
Waist: S : PETRVS |

Bell	Founder and date	Diameter	Hz	Note	Weight (1869/1875)	Nett weight (1928)
1.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	28 ⁷ / ₈ "	1727	Ab+67	6-3-19	6-3-13
2.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	30"	1511	Gb+36	7-0-22	7-0-17
3.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	31"	1394	F-4	7-2-10	7-2-4
4.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	33"	1240	Eb-6	8-3-0	8-2-21
4b.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	34 ¹ / ₂ "	1187	D+18	9-2-24	9-2-16

5.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	35 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1122	Db+21	10-1-21	10-1-12
6.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	36 $\frac{7}{8}$ "	1060	C+22	11-0-24	11-0-13
6b.	John Taylor & Co, 1875	37 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1001	B+23	11-1-6	11-0-24
7.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	38 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	924	Bb-16	12-0-0	11-3-19
8.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	42 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	825	Ab-12	15-2-11	15-1-19
8b.	John Taylor & Co, 1875	44 $\frac{5}{8}$ "	786	G+4	18-0-14	17-3-22
9.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	47 $\frac{7}{8}$ "	746	Gb+14	21-2-11	21-2-6
10.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	50 $\frac{5}{8}$ "	690	F-21	26-1-8	26-0-24
11.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	56 $\frac{5}{8}$ "	621	Eb-3	34-2-12	34-1-5
12.	John Taylor & Co, 1869	63 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	549	Db-17	50-0-0	50-0-4

The complete tuning figures for these bells were taken in 1928 prior to the recasting. The gothic lettering was in two different sizes, a smaller and simpler set being used on the seven smaller bells of 1869 (i.e. bells 1 to 6 and the flat fourth). The weights given here are those as originally recorded in 1869 (and 1875 for the two additional semitones) and the nett weights (after deducting an allowance for waste) as received back at the foundry in 1928. The records indicate that the five largest bells (nos.8-12) were cast without canons.

The installation of the new bells, clock and chimes is recorded on a brass tablet in the north transept near the entrance to the tower. It reads:

“The peal of twelve bells, with the great clock bell and an additional half-tone bell, was cast and erected by Messrs. Taylor and Comp., of Loughborough, in the year 1870, at a cost of £5,000. The subscriptions were collected and the bells designed and placed under the direction of the Rev. Richard Cattley, M.A., Minor Canon, afterwards Honorary Canon of the Cathedral. The two half-tone bells necessary for the completion of the musical chimes were presented in the year 1874 by Mr. C.W. Lea, a son of Mr. Alderman Lea, the donor of the chiming machine”

Taylor's daybook includes a copy of the invoice for the new bells, along with a separate bill to Cattley for subsequent alterations and modifications to the installation:

The Revnd. R. Cattley, The Cathedral, Worcester - 28 Feb. 1870
To peal of thirteen Bells for Worcester Cathedral wt. 221cwt 3qrs 22lbs at
£6.13s. per Cwt £1475.18.10 $\frac{1}{2}$.
Large Clock Bell wt 90Cwt at £6.13. £598.10.0.
Hangings for the whole peal; carriage; fixing including that for the large Bell also
according to specification £200.0.0.
New frame of English Oak according to specification £290.0.0.
Ropes for the 13 Bells at 10/- each £6.10.0.
Inscription and ornamentation for the large bell as per Invoice of the 19th Feb:
1869 £6.0.0.
Quail & Yates time fixing do. in the transept as per Invoice of the 19th of Feb^y.
1869 £5.6.6.
Additional oak framing for hoisting the large Bell as per estimate of the 16th
Decr. 1869 £60.0.0.
Additional oak framing and castings for hoisting the trebles £16.0.0.
Ornamentation and lettering for the peal of 13 Bells at £1.10. per Bell £19.10.0.
[Total] £2677.19.4 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Settled June 7th 1878.

The Revnd. R. Cattley, Worcester.
1871, Ap.23. To new tenor's wheel to order 9 feet diameter at 7/6 per foot £3.7.6.
August '71. To work done to five large Bells according to Contract £50.0.0.
2 Men each 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ days at 7/6 per day each £6.7.6.
1873, April. To C. Wheatley 6 days at work at Cathedral Bells at 7/6 per day £2.5.0.
Do. Fare to & from 13.1.

Settled June 7th 1878

Shortly after the bells were installed, an Ellacombe chiming apparatus fitted to enable all twelve bells to be chimed by one man. The work was done by Thomas Hooper of Woodbury, Devon, using the system devised in 1821 at Bitton (Gloucs) by the Rev. H.T. Ellacombe. The work was reported in the *Church Times* of 3 May 1872.

Then, in 1875 the two additional semitone bells were added for the chimes. These were invoiced on 11 October 1875 - a draft invoice to C.W. Lea Esq being scrubbed out and re-written for Canon Cattley - as recorded in Taylors' daybooks:

The Rev nd . Canon Cattley, London Road, Worcester - 1875, Oct 11th.	
To 2 New Bells G & B for Worcester Cathedral, weight [11-1-6 and 18-0-14 individually - as noted in the Lea invoice] 29Cwt 1qr 20lbs at £7.7s per Cwt	£216.6.0.
Hangings for D ^o with Wheels & Clappers £9 per Bell	£18.0.0.
Oak frame	£45.0.0.
Carriage & fixing	<u>£20.0.0.</u>
	[Sub-total] £299.6.0.
Inscription & ornamentation	<u>£2.0.0.</u>
	[Total] £301.6.0.

Settled Dec 7th 1875

At Easter 1893 a set of 31 handbells – cast by James Shaw, Son & Co. of Bradford – was presented to the newly formed Worcester Cathedral Guild of Changeringers by Harvey Reeves. Reeves was a native of Worcester, the editor of the ringers' newspaper the *Bell News* and a member of the committee of the Cathedral Guild.

The tenor was rehung on a new cast iron headstock by John Taylor & Co in September 1894. The original headstock – a massive wooden stock with continuous or “hoop” gudgeons – remained in the tower until the 1980s when it was lowered to the ground for display in the cloisters. The 1894 headstock was reused when the bells were rehung in 1928 and it remains in use on the present tenor.

The recasting of the bells in 1928 is commemorated on two identical brass tablets, one affixed to the panelling on the north side of the ringing room and the other on the bellframe. These are inscribed:

THE 15 BELLS IN THIS TOWER WERE RECAST / AND THE BOURDON BELL
RETUNED / BY TAYLOR & CO. LOUGHBOROUGH IN 1928. / THE
WORCESTERSHIRE AND DISTRICTS / CHANGE-RINGING ASSOCIATION/ GAVE
THE EIGHTH BELL

The present *clock* is a massive three-train movement in a cast iron flatbed frame, made by Joyce of Whitchurch in 1869. It is fitted with a Grimthorpe gravity escapement. It now strikes the hours on the Bourdon bell and the Westminster chimes on bells 7, 8, 9 and 12 of the ring. There are no external dials on the tower, but the clock drives a slave dial in the ringing room and a large dial high up on the east wall of the north transept. Inside the clock case there is a brass plate inscribed:

THIS CLOCK WAS MADE / A.D. 1869 BY J. & J.B. JOYCE / OF WHITCHURCH,
SHROP- / SHIRE, FROM THE DESIGN / OF E.B. DENISON, Q.C. / F.R.A.S.

It is interesting that the clock originally chimed the quarters on bells 4b, 6, 7 and 10 of the twelve. This was in order to follow the proper sequence for a Cambridge chime, the notes of which should be those of bells 1, 2, 3, 6 and 10 in a diatonic peal of ten. This was the reason for the provision of the first semitone bell (the flat fourth) which was not otherwise required for the ringing peal. The Taylor job book for 1869 notes it as an “extra quarter bell”.

The previous clock, made by John Steight of Pershore in 1740, was sold to the Rev. Augustus Sutton of West Tofts, Norfolk, in 1867. At that point Sutton was the possessor of the old clocks from two cathedrals – Worcester and Canterbury! After Sutton's death, the Worcester

clock was presented in 1889 by his son to the church at Market Weston, in Suffolk, where it remains in use (2007)

The *carillon machine* is the original, made by Gillett & Bland of Croydon in 1872. On the frame it is signed with “GILLETT & BLAND / MANUFACTURERS / CROYDON” within a border on the frame, with the date “A.D. / 1872” in the side panels. The machine is of the Imhof type, the hammers being re-set automatically after striking. There are two hammers per bell. The barrels are interchangeable and have small pins. Above the mechanism there is a brass plate inscribed:

THIS CHIMING MACHINE WAS / GIVEN TO THE CATHEDRAL BY / M^R.
ALDERMAN J.W. LEA, IN / THE YEAR 1870, AND MADE BY / MESS^{RS}. GILLETT
AND BLAND OF / CROYDON UNDER THE DIRECTION / OF THE REV^D.
RICHARD CATTLEY, / M.A., THEN MINOR CANON, / AFTERWARDS
HONORARY CANON / OF THE CATHEDRAL.

The installation of the carillon – and its later enhancement with the addition of two further bells in 1874 – is also recorded on the brass tablet (noted above) in the north transept near the entrance to the tower.

Visited: CJP 1968 onwards *passim*

Chris Pickford – March 2022