



# BELLRINGING TIMELINE



*Early Chinese Handbells*

*Medieval period*

There is evidence of handbells being used in China and the Middle East from very early times

924

Athelstan enacts a law requiring all Thanes to maintain a bell tower on their estates

1066

William the Conqueror invades England

1068

Curfew was introduced, coming from French words to cover the fire. People required to stay indoors. Towns and cities to toll a bell



*Bayeux Tapestry – Handbells used to ward off evil spirits at funeral of Edward the Confessor*



*William the Conqueror*



*Henry VIII*

## PRE – REFORMATION

*Civic ringing* – Different bells were rung at different times of the day. Most churches had three or four bells, not necessarily tuned to a musical scale.

*Pleasure ringing* – Local youths enjoyed ringing the bells as a form of exercise. Ringers started ringing them in order, then varying the sequence in what is known as ‘changes’.

*Religious purposes* – As a signal for worship. Many pre-reformation bells were named after saints.

1534

Henry VIII breaks from the church in Rome and establishes the Protestant Church of England.

1547

Henry VIII dies, Protestant Edward VI takes the throne

1549

Martin Bucer a German Protestant reformer visits England and complains of the recreational use of bells by foolish youths

1553

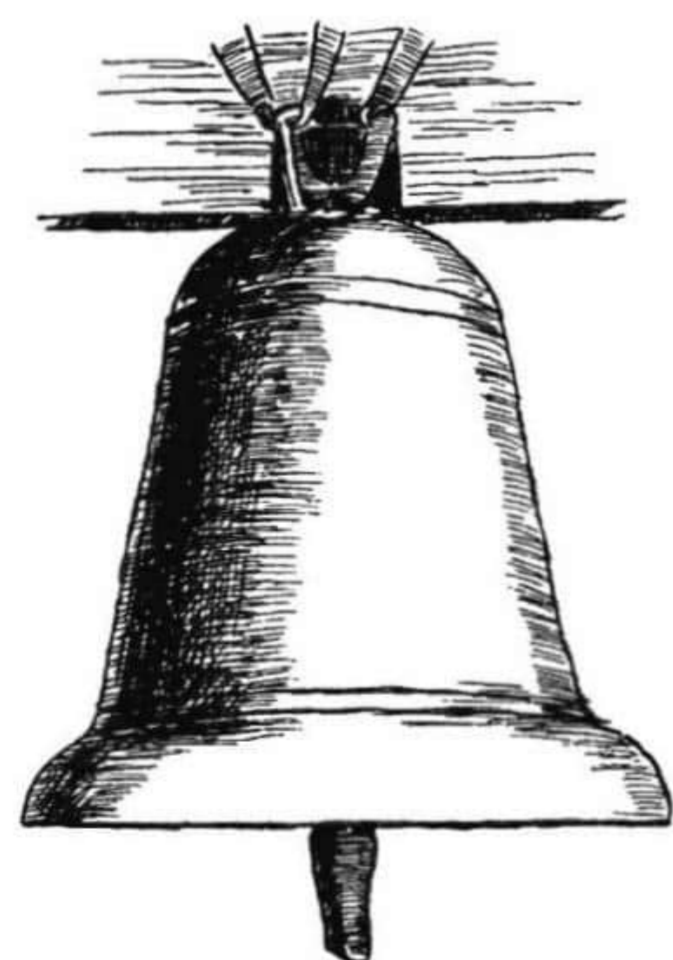
Edward VI dies. Mary I takes the throne

1554

Mary I marries Catholic Philip II of Spain at Winchester Cathedral in an attempt to reunite England with Rome

1558

Mary I dies and Protestant Elizabeth I takes the throne



*Chilworth ii*

*Pre-reformation bells are taller than their modern counterparts*



*Winchester Cathedral bells would have rung for the marriage of Mary I and Philip II*

# The Stuart & Georgian Periods

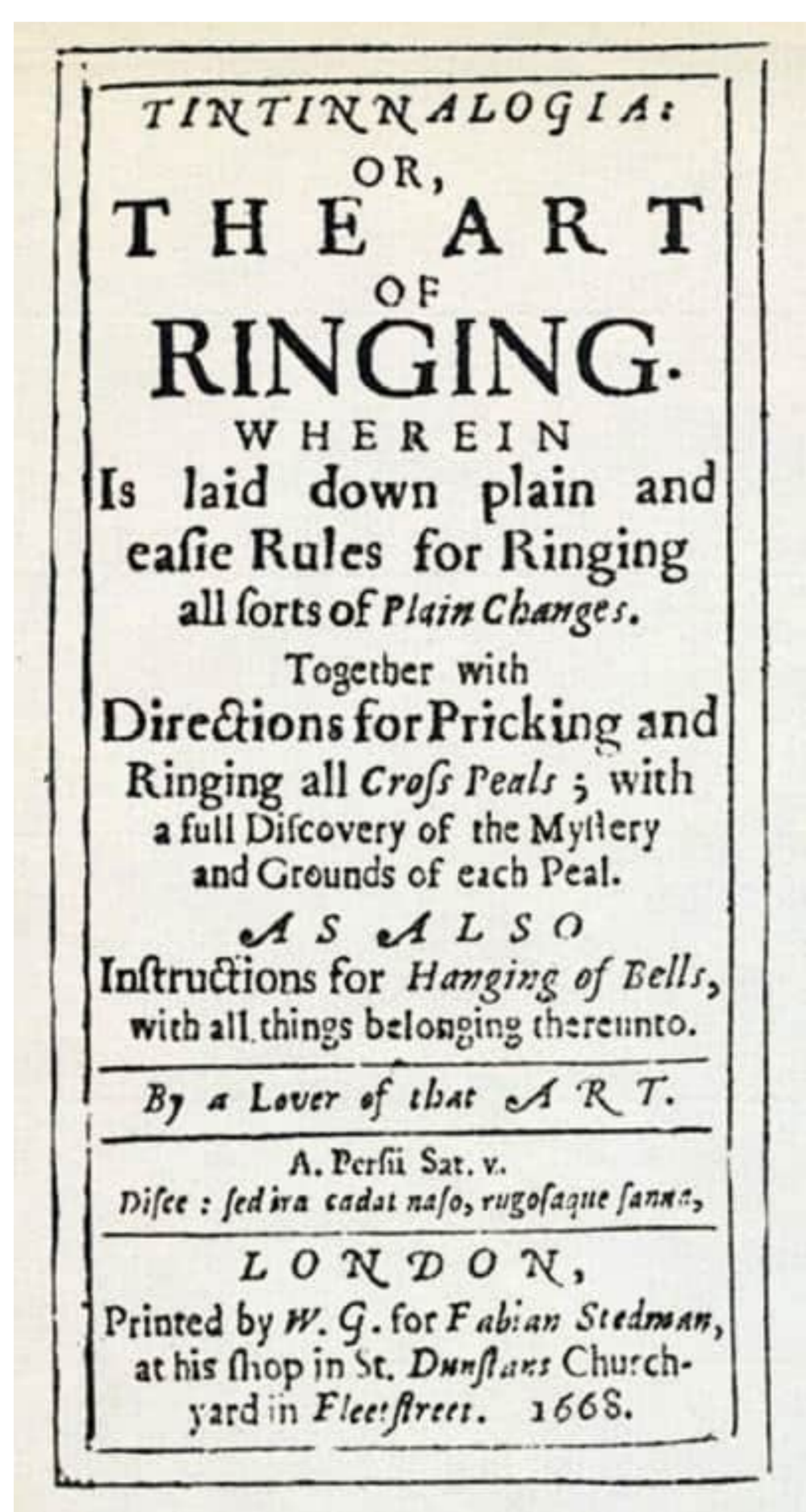


King James I (1566 – 1625)

Ancient Society of College Youths established in London. One of a number of competing groups formed to practice change-ringing



17<sup>th</sup> Century ringers



*Tintinnalogia* the first book on change-ringing, published in 1668

Ringling Competition at Basingstoke

Entries in Churchwardens' accounts at New Alresford for payments to ringers for five civic ringing days

Ringling competition at Odiham, with prizes for the winning teams

Ringling match at Barton Stacey. There was much rivalry between villages and betting by the villagers

1603

The Stuart monarchy begins. James I saw the continued rise of the Puritans, who sought to rid the Church of England of what they considered to be Roman Catholic practices

1605

Gunpowder plot – Unsuccessful Catholic plot to murder the King. Ringers were paid to ring in celebration for many years afterwards

1637



*The plotters*

1642

English Civil War breaks out. Puritan clergy subsequently come to power. No music, dancing or singing. Organs were taken out of churches

1643

Puritan Act of Parliament to ban all forms of sport on Sundays, including ringing. Only a solitary bell was permitted to call faithful to worship



Oliver Cromwell

1660

The revolution is over. Charles II becomes King. Dancing singing and music making, including bell ringing, celebrated once more

1714

George I comes to the Throne. Georgian period begins

This period saw the spread of change-ringing. Many competitions, often sponsored by the local publican. Growth of West Gallery music, also incorporating handbells

RINGING.

THIS is to give Notice to all Gentlemen Ringers, that there will be rung for at Odiham in Hampshire, on Tuesday in the Whitsun Week, Six exceeding good Hats for any Company that rings the best Round Peal to continue twenty minutes. Also Six very good Pair of Gloves for the second best and Six very handsome Ribbands for the third best Peal. Each Company to bring an Umpire, and the umpire of each winning Company to be entitled to the same Prize as the Ringers. To be decided by the Majority of Umpires. Each Company that rings to subscribe six Shillings towards the Prizes before ringing.—A good Dinner will be provided at the Bell Inn where the Prizes will be given. Each Person that rings to pay a Shilling for his Dinner and the Umpire's. To dine at One o'Clock and begin ringing at Three. Fifteen Minutes allowed between each Peal. No Odiham Man will be permitted to ring or be an Umpire.

The Bells are free for Trials any Day before the Time.

*Advert in the Hampshire Chronicle*

# The Nineteenth Century

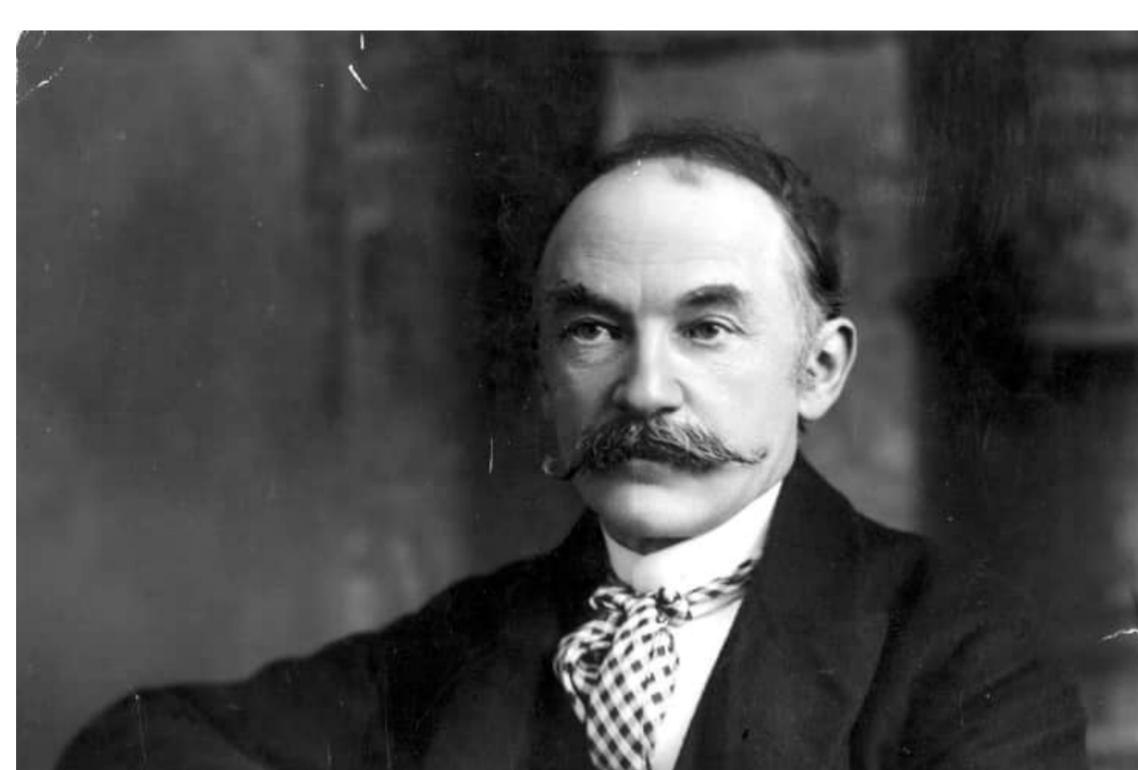


*Oxford Movement*

John Warner & Sons cast 'Big Ben'. In 1857 it cracked. Contract to replace it given to George Mears at Whitechapel, but that too cracked, resulting in its distinctive tone



*Charles Dickens*



*Thomas Hardy*

## BELFRY REFORM

*Oxford Movement led to tensions between the clergy and the ringers, with their secular and recreational use of the bells. Clergy such as Rev H T Ellacombe promoted 'belfry reform' to take back control of their belfries. They even locked the ringers out!*

Alice White rings her first peal at St Michael's Basingstoke. The first to be rung by a lady anywhere

Dinner for the Alresford ringers at the Swan. The Local ringers are encouraged to join the recently formed Winchester Diocesan Guild

Meeting of the Winchester Diocesan Ringers Guild held at New Alresford. Significant discussion about differences of opinion between ringers and their clergy

1824

Ringers enjoy high civic status. New Alresford Corporation give an annual dinner for the ringers at the Horse and Groom

1831

'Oxford Movement' originates with clergy trained at Oriel College Oxford who wish to restore liturgical traditions from before the Reformation

1837

Queen Victoria takes the throne



*Queen Victoria*

1856

1862

Temperance movement grows to combat widespread consumption of alcohol. Church of England Temperance Society formed

1865

Watercress line opens between Alton and Winchester

1869

Author and social commentator Charles Dickens attends meeting of the College Youths at St Saviour's Southwark (Southwark Cathedral)

1872

The Victorian era saw much church rebuilding due to the Oxford movement, who removed the galleries. The ousting of a church band given fictional treatment in Thomas Hardy's novel Under the Greenwood Tree

1872

Formation of National Society for Women's Suffrage to campaign for greater rights for women. Almost no women are ringers

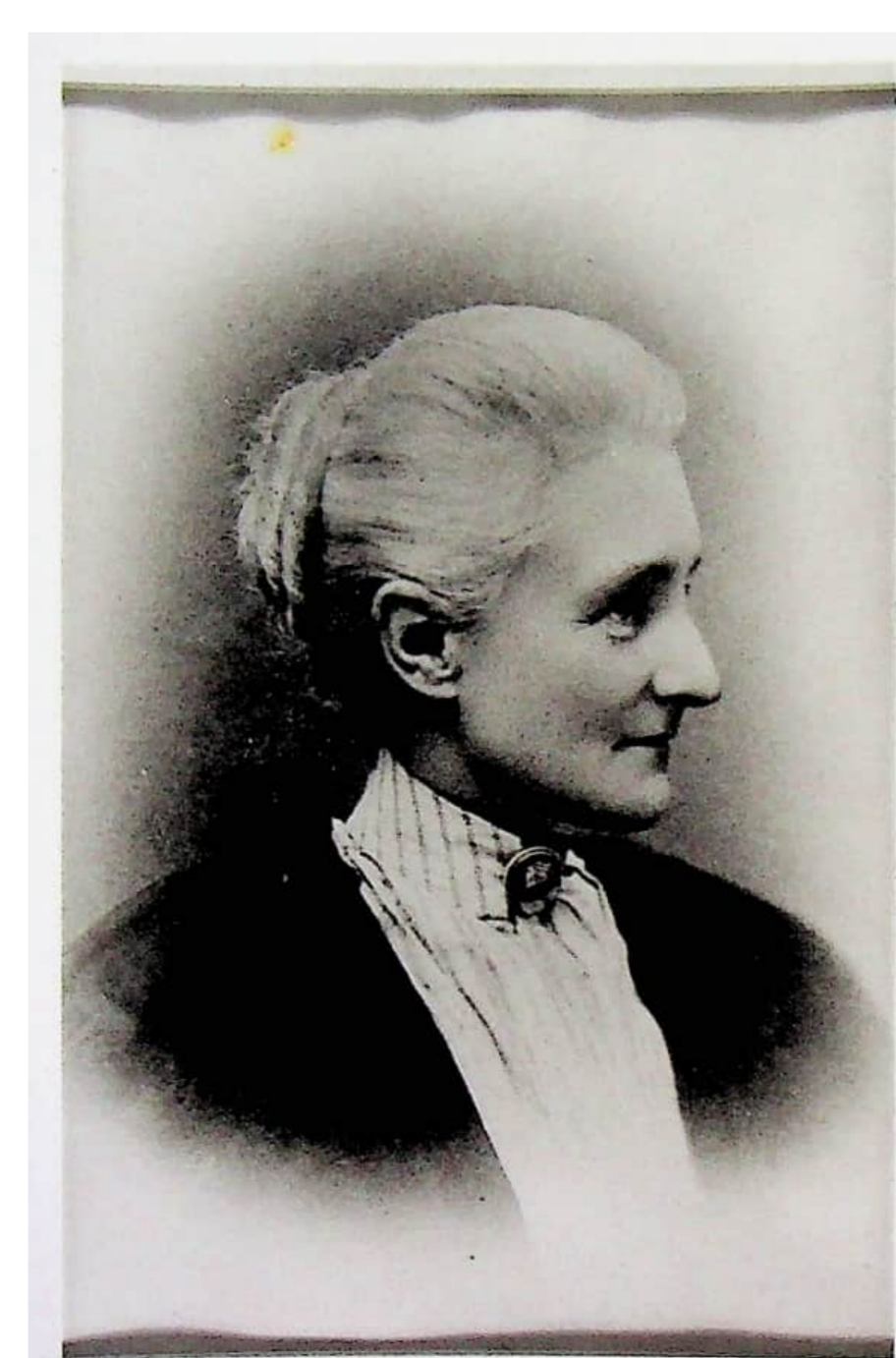
1879

Winchester Diocesan Guild of Ringers formed by clergy to promote 'Belfry Reform'

1883

Marianna Hagan, follower of the temperance movement constructs temperance hall, known as the coffee rooms, in Ropley

1896

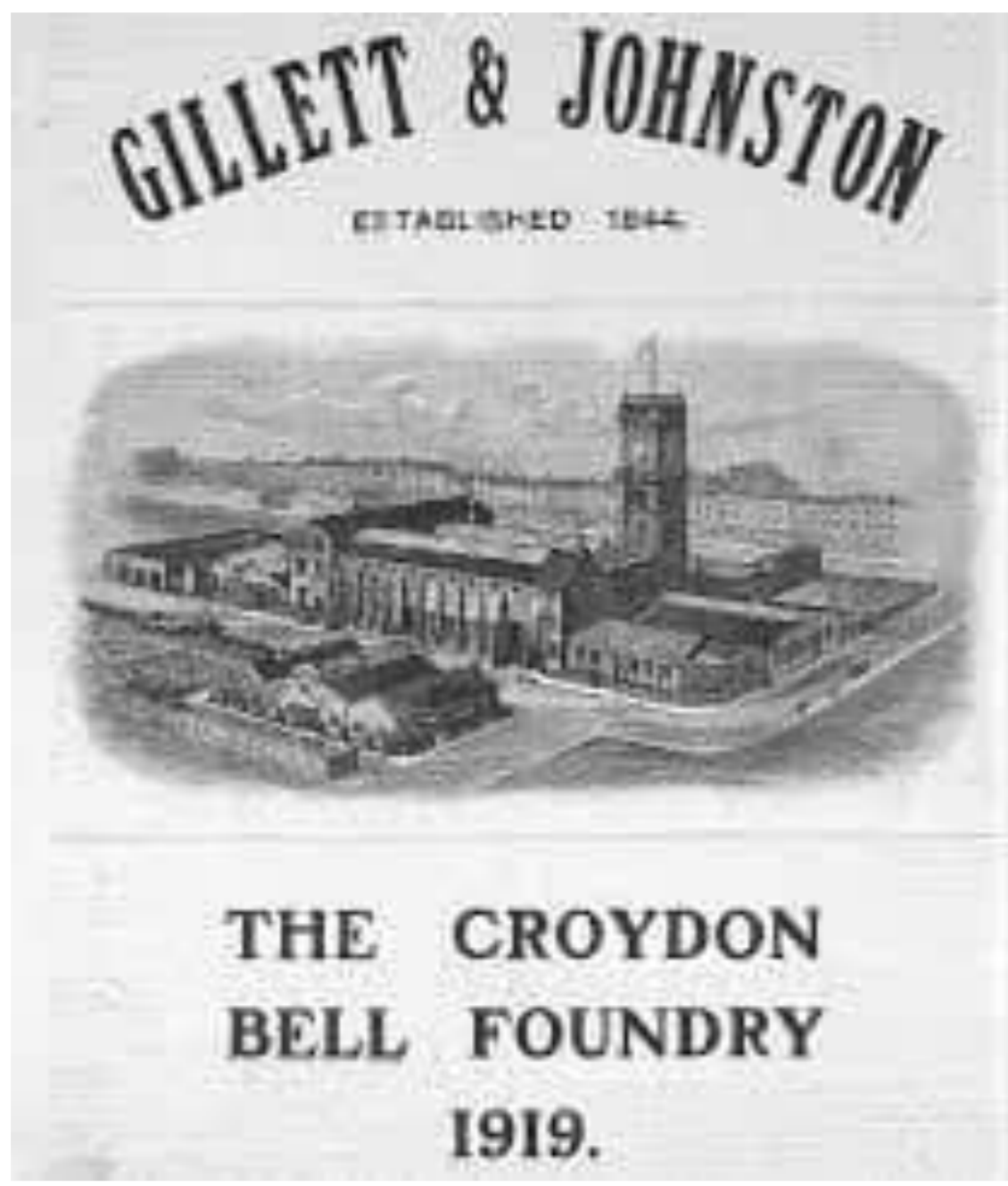


*Miss Marianna Hagen*

1897

1898

# The Twentieth Century



*Gillett & Johnston advert*



*The Longstock Ladies in WW1*

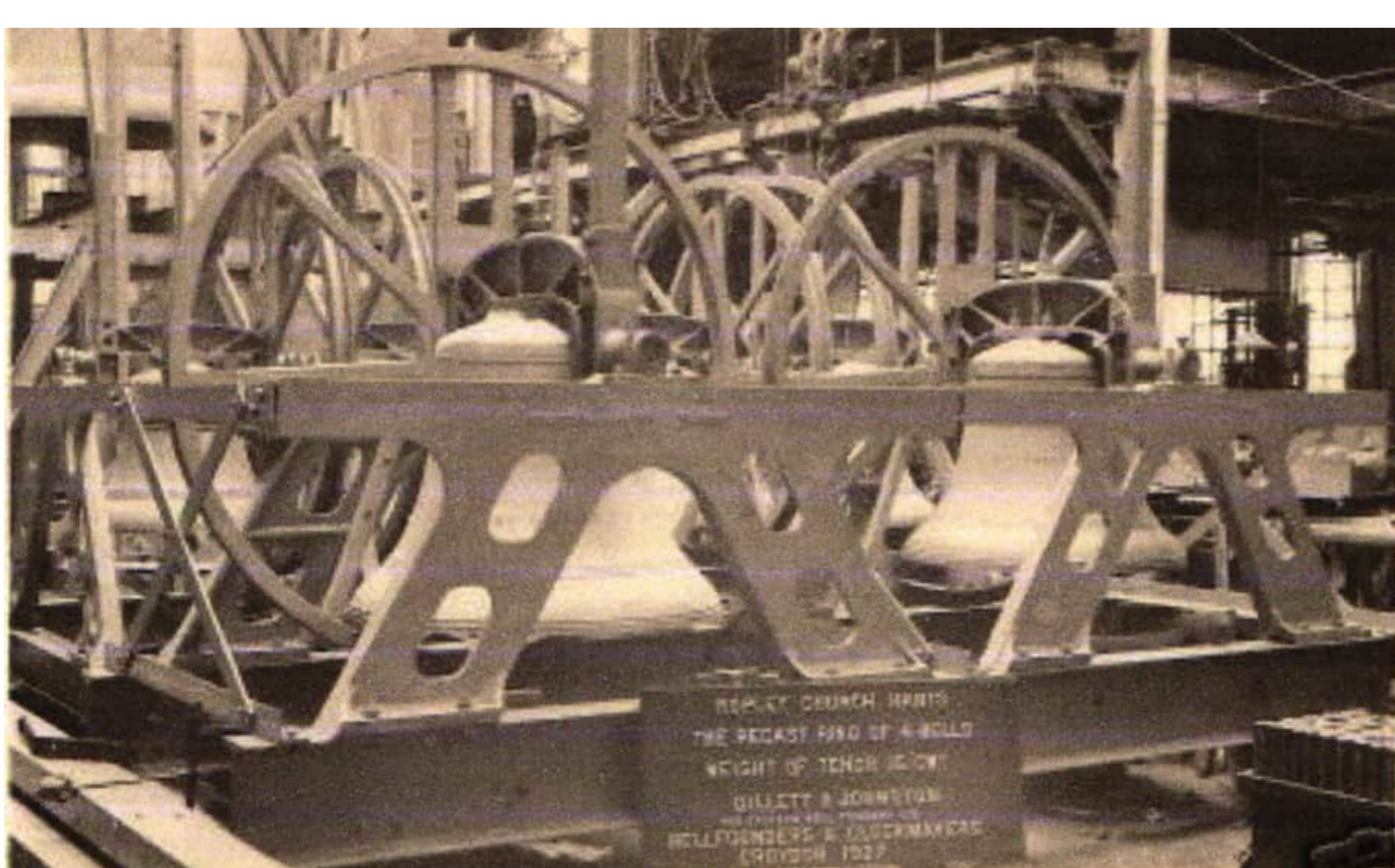
In World War 1 women take the place of men as ringers. In Longstock there was a population of 212 men and 201 women. Of the men, 75 went to war

After the war men came back to their jobs and the belfries

The Ancient Society of College youths introduce a rule to no longer admit women to the society!



*Coventry Cathedral – Controversy about Gillett & Johnston recasting its bells in 1927*



*Ropley Bells in the foundry. Also recast by Gillett & Johnston in 1927*

1906

Cyril Johnson joins the family clock making firm. Begins experimenting with modern bell-tuning, following the theories of Cannon Arthur B Simpson

1912

More women become ringers and the first all-ladies band of eight ladies ring a peal. The Ladies Guild of Ringers formed



*The 1912 Ladies Peal Band*

1914

First World War begins

1918

First World War ends

Gillett & Johnston of Croydon and Taylor's of Loughborough are the pioneers of modern bell tuning now producing 'Simpson' tuned bells. The Whitechapel Foundry still produce 'old style' bells

1927

There was much controversy about recasting the old Coventry Cathedral bells. Permission for Gillett & Johnston to recast them was only given after a court case

1927

The same year Gillett & Johnston recast Ropley bells from five into six, the gift of Marianna Hagan

1928

Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act, giving the vote to all persons, male and female, over age 21.

1945

Second World War begins. All ringing ceases. Bells only to be rung as a signal of enemy invasion

1943

The ban was lifted after much campaigning in the press by the likes of the author Dorothy L Sayers, and debates in the House of Commons



*Dorothy L Sayers – The plot of her book The Nine Taylors was about bellringing*

1945

Second World War ends

1998

Ancient Society of College Youths vote in a referendum to admit female members again