

Some notes on the Kildwick bells

The earliest bells

When the first bell or bells were installed at St. Andrew's is not known. However almost the earliest of the surviving church account books, dating from 1672-3, records that a set of three bells were rung, from the ground, and that there were four bell-ringers including the sexton.

The ringers only appear to have received payment for ringing on 29 May, the anniversary of the day king Charles II returned to England from exile, and on 5 November, the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot. Nevertheless the bells must have been in regular use because each year's accounts contain a litany of necessary repairs. The need for money to mend the bells themselves or their wheels, for hanging them, for oil to grease them, for bell collars and for bell ropes was a continual refrain. Much of the repair work appears to have been done by the local blacksmith.

Bells were not only used to summon parishioners to church. The church itself had no clock and it is likely that the sexton rang the bell at fixed times in the morning and in the evening, to signal the start and end of the working day.

The bells were also rung in celebration – for example to commemorate the Duke of Marlborough's victories at Blenheim, Ramillies and Oudenarde, together with a rather curious ring for the accession of Queen Anne in 1704 two years after it actually happened. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 was also honoured, as was the accession of George I in 1714, and the defeat of the forces of the Old Pretender at Preston in 1715. Perhaps it was the heavy usage, especially during the war which forced the church to spend no less than £5 on them in 1707-8.

The 1780 set of six

In 1779/80 a set of six bells was cast for St. Andrew's church by the company of Pack and Chapman at the famous Whitechapel foundry in London. The bells were hung in a wooden frame and were as follows:

Bell	Note	Weight (approx) cwt / kg
Tenor (6)	G	10 / 500
Fifth	A	8 / 400
Fourth	B	6 / 300
Third	C	5.5 / 280
Second	D	5 / 250
Treble (1)	E	4.5 / 228

Each bell was inscribed with the name of the maker and the date, plus the following:

Bell	Additional inscription
#6	Rev. Mr. J. Dehane, Vicar, Robert Spencer and John Booth, churchwardens
#5	William Lee and Francis Stirk, churchwardens
#4	Samuel Slack, churchwarden
#3	Peter Smith, churchwarden
#2	John Watson, churchwarden
#1	William Cockshott, churchwarden

These bells were rung from inside the tower, a floor having been installed in 1780 for that purpose.

Some early peals

Sets of bells, such as those in Kildwick, can be rung in many different sequences. Using a set of 6 bells, for example, a total of 720 sequences (or “changes”) are possible ($6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 720$).

The first two peals on the set of six at Kildwick were both rung on the same day – 6th May 1780. These were followed by a further peal on 29th May 1782, a Treble Bob Minor; and another was recorded on 7th September 1800.

Throughout the nineteenth century change-ringing became popular among teams of bell-ringers and local associations, including the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers, were formed to ensure standardisation of phraseology and change ringing methods and rules.

In 1891 the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, defined a *peal* as being 5040 changes on a set of seven bells ($7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 5040$) or in excess of 5000 changes on sets of 8 bells or more. A set of six bells could ring a full a full peal by ringing seven different extents of 720 changes (forming a total of 5040 changes).

The first recorded peal on the six bells at Kildwick was rung on September 18th 1896, when 7 extents of different methods (the differences between each of the methods being the order in which the changes are rung) were rung in three hours and two minutes.

This feat was recorded on a Peal Board hung in the bell-tower.



It was also reported in the local press.

KILDWICK.

CHANGE RINGING.—The ringers of St. Andrew's Church, Kildwick, met on Friday night at 6.30 to ring a 5040 on the bells, and were successful in so doing, going through seven 720. of minor in the following different methods:—Kent treble bob, Violet, Duke of York, Oxford, Woodbine, New London Pleasure, and Plain Bob in 3 hours and 2 minutes. The first six were conducted by John Boddy, the last by John Hill. Treble C Brown, 2nd S. Tillotson, 3rd J. Boddy, 4th C. Law, 5th W. Holmes, tenor J. Hill (weight of tenor 10 cwt). The above performance being a record in change ringing at this tower the ringers are anxious to have a peal board erected in honour of the event, to record the same and other peals that may be rung in the future. The ringers have been round the parish for subscriptions for new ropes and cork carpeting for the floor (so as to give a good reception to the Airedale Association of Change Ringers, which meet here on Saturday, September 10th), raising about £6, but still require about £4 more. The churchwardens not being in a position to help them, they hope that all lovers of the old parish bells will help forward the subscription to the above object so as to form a stimulus in the art of change ringing in the Old Lang Kirk of Craven.

Subsequent peals – both reported on the peal board – were rung on March 8th 1897 (in 2 hours and 57 minutes) and November 9th 1901 (in 3 hours and 2 minutes).

1914 – a full octave

In June 1914 the original Kildwick bells were sent away to be recast at the Loughborough foundry of John Taylor and Company.



The photograph above shows the six old bells ready to be taken away. The men shown in this photograph are believed to include Christopher Brown, Charles Law, and John Hill – three of the men who rang the 1896 peal.

At the same time as the old bells were recast, two new bells were added in order to create a full octave (F to F'), which enabled more complicated methods to be rung. The new treble bell was paid for by Mr. James Bairstow, and the new tenor bell by Mr. J.W. Ackroyd (in memory of his late brother Richard Ackroyd).

The weights and notes of the bells are:

Bell	Note	Weight (approx) cwt / kg
Tenor (8)	F	15 / 785
Seventh	G	10 / 535
Sixth	A	8 / 425
Fifth	B	6.5 / 350
Fourth	C	5 / 275
Third	D	4 / 225
Second	E	3.5 / 200
Treble (1)	F'	3.25 / 175

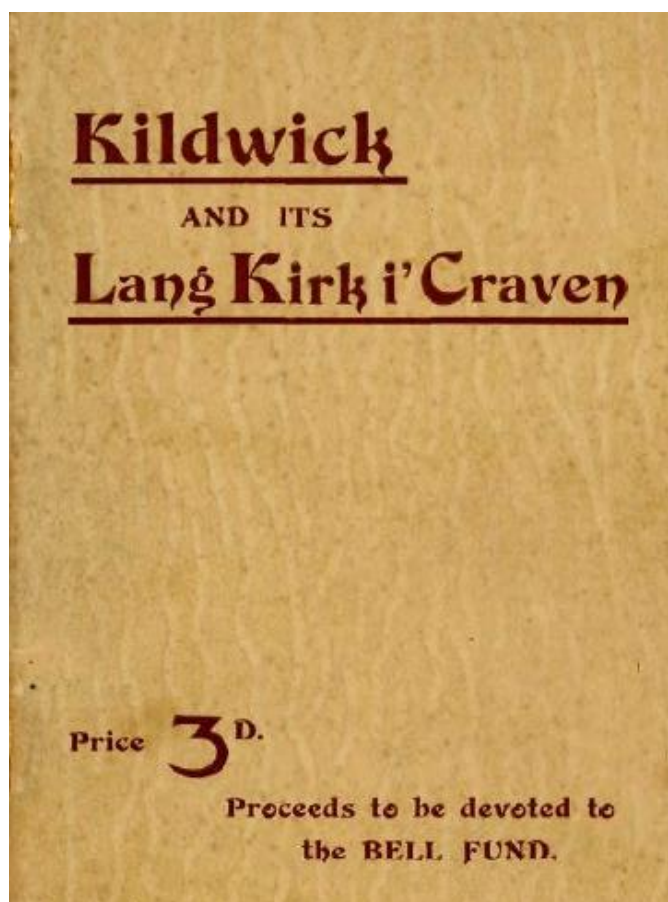
They bear the following inscriptions (for the six recast bells the 1780 inscriptions were retained with additional biblical quotes added):

Bell	Inscription
#8	R.B.A. Obit 1907. 1914
#7	Revd. Mr. J. Dehane, Vicar, Robert Spencer. John Booth, c.w.s. 1780 'Grant Him that he may find mercy in that day'
#6	William Lee, Francis Stirk, c.w.s. 1780 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty'
#5	Samuel Slack, c.w. 1780 'Acknowledge my sins unto thee'
#4	Peter Smith, c.w. 1780 'Brethren pray for us'
#3	John Watson, c.w. 1780 'Hail, that are highly favoured'
#2	William Cockshott, c.w. 1780 'Let thy Priests be clothed with righteousness'
#1	'The Old ring in the New. The False ring in the True'. 1914

Note: c.w. = churchwarden

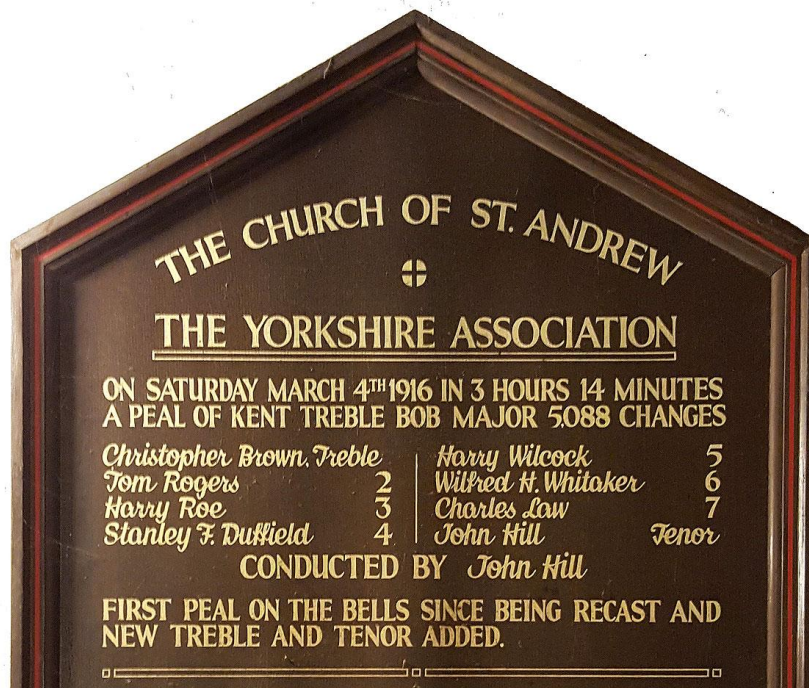
The bells were returned at the end of October and re-hung, mounted in a cast-iron frame. They were dedicated by the Bishop of Knaresborough on the 28th.

The full cost of the new bells came to £620, a sizeable sum. Over £200 was provided by J.W. Ackroyd and James Bairstow, with a further £280 from other donors in the parish. The remainder was raised by various fund-raising activities including, for the first time, the production of a booklet describing the church and its features, written by the vicar, which was sold for 3d.



The full sum was paid off by the end of February 1916.

The first peal on the new set of eight bells, 5088 changes of Kent Treble Bob Major was rung on March 4th 1916 to commemorate the birthdays of J.W. Ackroyd and the former bell-ringer William Law.



Note: “Stanley F. Duffield” is an error. It should be Stanley Duffill.

This was quite a feat and likely to have been a first peal on a set of eight bells for any of the ringers. Amongst their number were Christopher Brown, Charles Law and John Hill, all of whom had rung peals on the set of six bells, but for the other five members of the team it would probably have been their first peal.

Kent Treble Bob was a favourite method in the local area in the early 20th century. It was also known as “Yorkshire Glory”.

The photograph below shows John Hill (right), who conducted the first eight-bell peal from the tenor bell, and Harry Wilcock who handled number 3. It was taken on an allotment behind Mary Street.



On Sunday September 11th 1922 muffled bells were rung at Kildwick Church in memory of J.W. Ackroyd, the donor of the large Tenor bell, who had recently died.

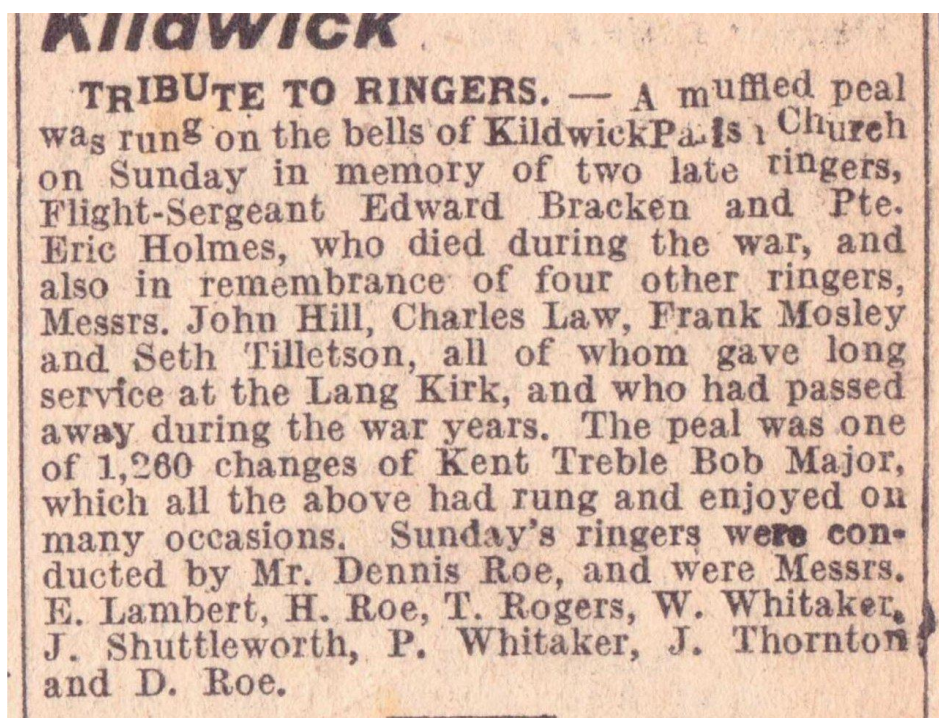
Some notable ringers

John Hill

John Hill was born in Starkey Lane Farnhill on 11th July 1875. His father, Anthony Holmes Hill, was a coal agent. John himself became a canal warehouseman.

John was part of both teams that rang the peals on the six bell set at Kildwick in 1896 and 1897, and was both conductor and ringer (taking the tenor bell) when the first peal on the new set of eight bells was rung in 1916.

He died on 26th January 1940, aged 64. Because this was war time St. Andrew's bells were silent but, once the war had ended, an appropriate tribute could be made.



A [biography of John Hill](#) was written as part of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers project.

Tom Rogers and Wilfred Whitaker

Boyhood friends Tom Rogers and Wilfred Whitaker took up bell-ringing in 1913, when they were both just 12 years old, and remained ringers at Kildwick for most of their lives. Both were members of the team that rang the first peal on the new bells in 1916.

Wilfred Whitaker moved out of the district in 1982 to live with his daughter. He had a good send off from Kildwick with a special ringing evening when, in addition to his friends from Kildwick and neighbouring towers, his son Philip travelled from Germany to join in.

Tom Rogers rang the second bell in the 1916 peal – typically the spot given to the youngest ringer in a team, although he continued to ring the second or third, from choice, all his life.

On 15th June 1990, on the evening of his 90th birthday, he was invited to the tower at St. Andrew's where all his ringing friends were waiting to celebrate his birthday on the bells and he took over the second bell for a short time. Sadly this was his last ring at Kildwick. He died at the end of 1991 having been a bell-ringer at Kildwick for 78 years.

An [article about Tom Rogers and Wilfred Whitaker](#) was published in the Bradford Telegraph and Argus in 1980.

William Mosley

William Mosley was born on the 27th July 1877, in Farnhill, and was baptised in Kildwick Church the following October. The family lived at various addresses in Starkey Lane and he continued living there after he was married.

Quite when he joined the St. Andrew's bell-ringers is unclear but a newspaper report says he was a member "from being a boy".

William Mosley was called up shortly after the introduction of conscription in April 1916. He joined the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) and was given the rank of Gunner.



There are no known records of William's military career, but it is certain that he was killed in action on the 2nd June 1917. He was buried in the La Laiterie Military Cemetery, where his is one of 571 graves maintained at that site by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

On 3rd June 2017, to mark the centenary of William Mosley's death in service, the Kildwick bells rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples in his memory.

A [biography of William Mosley](#) was written as part of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers project.

Stanley F. Duffill

One of the ringers of the 1916 peal, Stanley F. Duffill was later conscripted, captured and held as a WW1 PoW. He died in a hospital in Belgium on 13th November 1918.

The Kildwick bell ringers rang a quarter peal in his memory on 13th November 2018.

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This photograph is included here for no good reason other than it's a nice photograph. It was taken in the bell-tower at St. Andrew's, probably some time in the 1950s, and shows the headmaster of Kildwick school, George Bottomley, with some of the pupils: Gerald Rishworth, Michael Sharpe, Susan Shuttleworth, Marlene Thompson, Irene Rishworth, Delyce Holmes, Alison Hagar, Penelope Ward and Susan Wragg.

These days a group of 12 "MiniRingers" from the school meet each Thursday and do a variety of different bell-ringing activities.

Acknowledgement

The Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group would like to thank Chris Wright, the current "tower captain" at St. Andrew's Kildwick, for his help with this article.

The first section "The earliest bells" was derived from unpublished notes compiled by the late Michael Baumber and donated to the History Group by his sister.