

## THE BELLS OF ST ANDREW'S, PRESTWOLD

### Joan Shaw

The oldest part of Prestwold Church is the tower, thought to have been built in the fourteenth century. Within are eight bells, all installed in the nineteenth century, the three latest ones cast by J. Taylor of Loughborough and donated by Hussey Packe when the church was restored in 1890. The other five bells were cast by John Briant, clockmaker and bellfounder of Hertford, in the years 1809, 1810 and 1812. Two of them were the gift of Charles James Packe jnr, two simply bear the maker's name, and the tenor bell is inscribed "The Revd C.J. Packe rector, E. Gamble and T. Somes".

<b>bell</b>	<b>weight</b>	<b>diameter</b>
treble	3 cwts 1 qtr 26 lbs (202 kg)	629 mm
no 2	3 cwts 3 qtrs 13 lbs (196 kg)	648 mm
no 3	5 cwts 0 qtrs 6 lbs (257 kg)	711 mm
no 4	6 cwts 0 qtrs 11 lbs (310 kg)	797 mm
no 5	6 cwts 2 qtrs 11 lbs (335 kg)	838 mm
no 6	6 cwts 3 qtrs 14 lbs (349 kg)	857 mm
no 7	8 cwts 0 qtrs 16 lbs (414 kg)	918 mm
tenor	10 cwts 3 qtrs 18 lbs (554 kg)	1019 mm

The ringing and bell chambers were refurbished in 1993 and the bells rehung.

In a survey of 1552 even the little chapel at Cotes was recorded as having two bells. St Andrew's was not included in the survey, but as the mother church it is safe to assume that it had at least two bells at that time, possibly more. According to John Nichol's *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* prior to 1800 there were three bells in the tower. We can't help wondering if the bells that Charles James Packe removed had been ringing out across the meadows of the Wolds since before 1552.

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## Update from Richard Bimson

The weights given above are the weights of the bells as they were recorded before the 2006 restoration of the bells by Hayward Mills Associates. When they did the work, the bells were weighed and found to be lighter.

Previous printed editions of Dove's Guide to bells listed the tenor as given above, but this was updated in the 10th edition after the work had been completed. Details of the corrected weights can be found here: <https://dove.cccbr.org.uk/detail.php?DoveID=PRESTWOLD> [copied below]. The 2006 weights should be considered to be the most accurate.

As yet I have been unable to ascertain the reason for the discrepancy as Taylors would certainly have weighed them in 1890/1 and Andrew Mills cannot recollect their being tuned when they did the work in 2006.

| Bell | Weight        | Nominal | Note | Diameter | Dated | Founder          | Turning |
|------|---------------|---------|------|----------|-------|------------------|---------|
|      | cwts-qtrs-lbs |         |      |          |       |                  |         |
| 1    | 3-0-24        |         | F#   | 24.75"   | 1890  | John Taylor & Co | R       |
| 2    | 3-2-15        |         | E#   | 25.50"   | 1890  | John Taylor & Co | R       |
| 3    | 4-3-4         |         | D#   | 28.00"   | 1890  | John Taylor & Co | R       |
| 4    | 5-3-22        |         | C#   | 31.38"   | 1812  | John Briant      | R       |
| 5    | 6-2-7         |         | B    | 33.00"   | 1812  | John Briant      | R       |
| 6    | 6-1-8         |         | A#   | 33.75"   | 1810  | John Briant      | R       |
| 7    | 7-3-12        |         | G#   | 36.13"   | 1809  | John Briant      | R       |
| 8    | 10-2-21       | 739.0   | F#   | 40.13"   | 1809  | John Briant      | R       |