

CHURCH NAVE AND BELL REPAIRS 1933

Christopher Wren Tradition Re-Called



Work, which according to tradition, gave Christopher Wren his taste for architecture, is now being carried out at East Knoyle's beautiful old parish church, namely, the re-roofing of the nave of the church. It is said that when Christopher Wren's father, the Rev Christopher Wren, was rector of East Knoyle, the church was re-roofed and while the work was in progress, the young Christopher, then a schoolboy at Westminster, took a delight in clambering about the roof, and so was instilled in him an appreciation of fine architecture.

Hand in hand with this work is proceeding another important improvement, the re-hanging of the church's peal of six bells. These bells have not been touched since they were first hung 200 years ago, and it is hoped that when they are again in place, they will continue to serve the church for a further 200 years.

The work owes much to the enthusiasm of the Rector, the Rev E Cross, who is in his first year at East Knoyle, having previously been Chaplain to the Bishop of Salisbury. He has appealed for £350, and will actually want more than this, as it is intended to replace the boiler as soon as possible. During the past eight or nine weeks, generous donations have brought in £225 and it is anticipated that the fund will be greatly assisted by a sale of work, livestock, produce, &c., which will take place on Saturday next in the grounds of Knoyle House, kindly lent for the occasion by Lady Pembroke.

The re-roofing of the nave has already been three-quarters completed, and, as was originally the case, old stone tiles are being used. The church was re-roofed last in 1876 when as many of the old stone tiles as were useable were used, and the work completed with a span, on each side of the roof at the apex, of small red sand-faced tiles. These latter were recently found to be all badly broken, and two experts gave it as their opinion that the roof would not last another winter. The work is being done by Linzey & Son of Salisbury and Trowbridge.

The bells do not require re-casting, but they will have to be fitted with new bearings throughout. They require quarter turning and retuning, with some stiffening to the very fine old oak frame in the tower. There will be new wheels for the ropes and three new headstocks. All six bells have been removed from the tower and sent to London where they necessary work is being carried out by Messrs Mears & Stainbank who recently restored the bells of Yeovil Parish Church and are engaged in similar work at Sherborne Abbey. The bells are all sound, but sadly out of tune, the clappers having made deep dents. It is hoped to have the bells re-hung in seven or eight weeks' time. Some idea of the history of the bells can be gained from their inscriptions, which are as follows:



No 1: William Cockey, Bell Founder 1726



No 2: H.G. and W.S. Ch.Wrs. 1726 W.C



No 3: William Cockey, Bell Founder 1726
Mr Nics Williams and Mr Antony Burbidge Ch.Wrs



No 4: William Cockey, Bell Founder 1726
God Preserve the Church



No 5: Robert and James Wells, Oldborne, Fecit 1794



No 6: James Mears, London 1839
W Wigmore and W.B. Compton Churchwardens

It will be seen that the four oldest bells are by Cockey, the fifth by Wells, and the last by the firm at present carrying out the work. Another very interesting item of work being done is the removal and cleaning of the old church clock, which is very similar in structure to the old clock at Salisbury Cathedral. It was made by Gray of East Knoyle. After cleaning it will be placed on view.

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