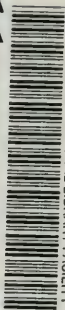


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Bell-founders in Lancashire and  
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*Bell-Founders in Lancashire and Cheshire  
and the Adjacent Counties, in the  
Seventeenth and Eighteenth  
Centuries.*

A PAPER, READ BEFORE THE  
HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE,  
6TH MARCH, 1890.

BY

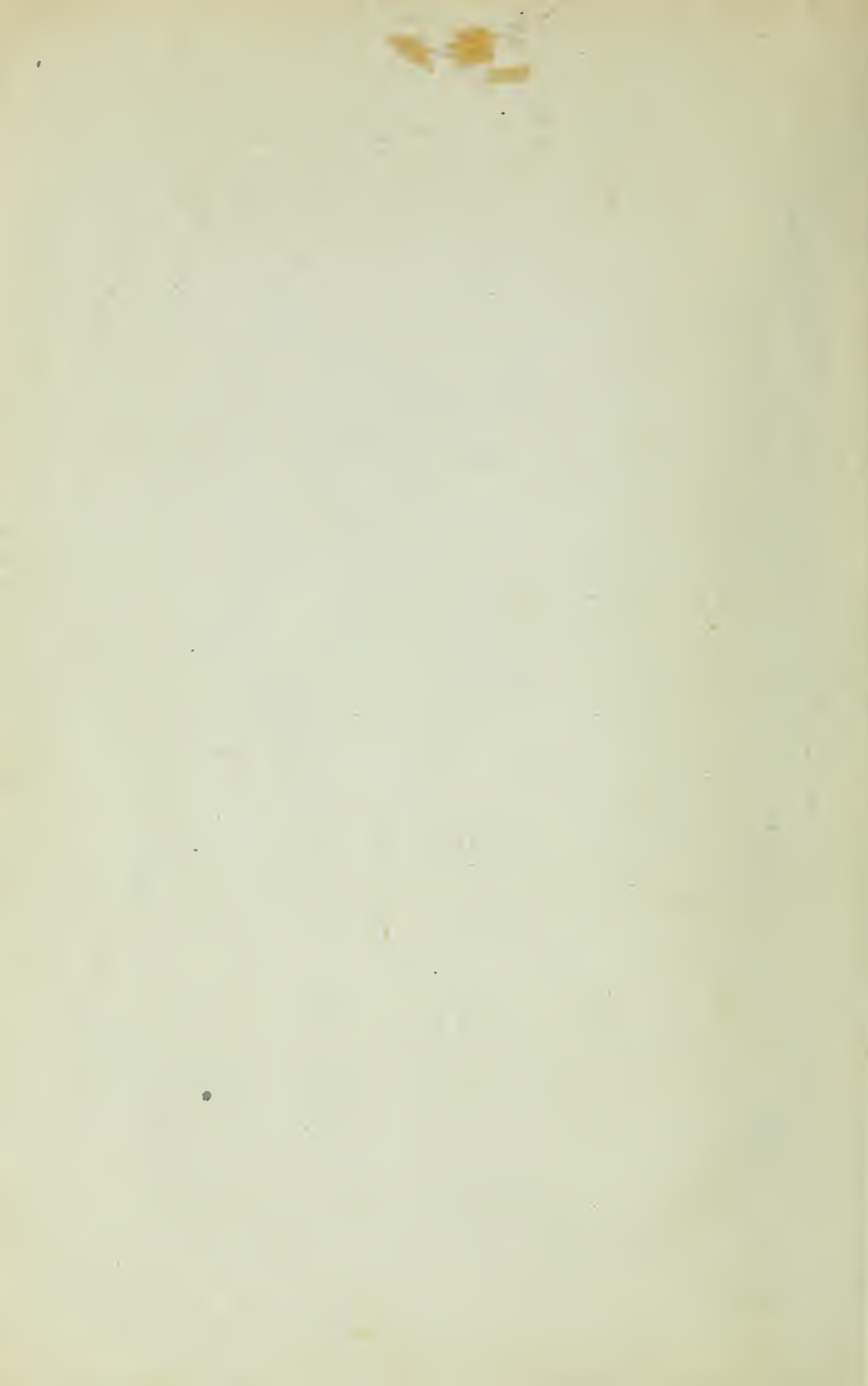
J. P. EARWAKER, M.A., F.S.A.

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BELL-FOUNDERS IN LANCASHIRE AND  
CHESHIRE AND THE ADJACENT  
COUNTIES, IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

By J. P. Earwaker, M.A., F.S.A.

THE history of the bells, which hang in the towers of our churches, has always excited the attention of antiquaries, and much has been written and printed concerning them. In not a few instances the church bells of a particular county have been carefully examined and a full description of them printed, together with any inscriptions which they may bear, or any marks by which it is possible to identify the bell-founders who cast them. Thus there are volumes relating to the bells of Northamptonshire, of Somersetshire, of Kent, and other counties, whilst quite recently Mr. Lymans has published one on the church bells of Staffordshire. So far, however, no one has been at the trouble of writing an account of the bells of either Lancashire or Cheshire, so that there is a very interesting field open to anyone having the requisite leisure and love for his subject. But although we have no special book dealing with these two counties, yet in most of the volumes relating to the history of places in Lancashire and Cheshire, which

have been published of late years, the inscriptions on the bells have been printed as a matter of course, as well as occasional extracts from the old churchwardens' accounts showing where the bells were cast, &c.

In this paper I am anxious to direct attention to the fact that during the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries there existed two bell foundries, the one in Lancashire and the other in Cheshire, which seem to have been held in good repute, and which were largely employed in casting bells for the various churches in the two counties, and also probably for those in other counties as well. These two bell foundries were situate, the one at WIGAN, in Lancashire, and the other at CONGLETON, in Cheshire, but until quite recently little, if anything, has been put on record concerning them. This is more especially the case with regard to Wigan, (although Mr. Sinclair, in his *History of Wigan*, has a few references to this subject,) but Mr. Head, in his recently printed *History of Congleton*, has given several interesting particulars about the Congleton bell foundry, which I shall make use of.

Unfortunately there are very few sources of information from which any particulars can now be gleaned relating to these two foundries or to those who worked them. The most important of these sources of information, however, are the old churchwardens' accounts belonging to the different parishes (where these happen to be preserved), municipal and corporate accounts, a few old wills, and an occasional note in the parish registers. Had the churchwardens' accounts been more carefully preserved, much information of interest would have come down to us, but their loss, together with the fact that such a large number of the old bells have been recast since the 17th century, and consequently



the marks and inscriptions, which they bore, destroyed, make the few facts which can be recovered about these two local bell foundries all the more valuable.

In mediæval times CONGLETON possessed two places of worship, under the mother church of Astbury, called respectively the Higher and the Lower Chapels. The first of these is now represented by the present Congleton church, but the latter has totally disappeared. At the time of the Reformation its revenues were confiscated, and in 1566 it is stated that there were then no lands or tenements belonging to it; that it was then converted to no use, "but stands upon the bridge end.... "and the foundations of the said chapel form part "of the foundations of the said bridge." It was evidently a small chapel built on the end of the bridge crossing the river Dane, on which Congleton stands, and it is indeed sometimes spoken of as the Bridge Chapel. When Camden visited Congleton in 1586 he states there was only one chapel, which would be the Higher Chapel, there. How the Lower or Bridge Chapel was utilized during the latter half of the 16th century is not known, but early in the 17th century, part of it was used as a "store house "for the town's use," and the remainder was used as a bell foundry.

The earliest mention of this Congleton bell foundry, which I have so far met with, is in the Wilmslow churchwardens' accounts under the year 1602.\*

Spente in taking down the Great Bell . . .	vs viij <sup>d</sup>
Spente at Congleton in casting of the Great Bell . . . . .	ix <sup>s</sup> iiij <sup>d</sup>
Item, for carrying of the Great Bell to Congleton and home . . . . .	vij <sup>s</sup> iiij <sup>d</sup>
Item, paid for the Bell . . . . .	xj <sup>li</sup> x <sup>s</sup> [£11 10s.]

\* *East Cheshire*, vol. i. p. 104.

It is clear that the Congleton bell foundry cannot have been long established prior to this date, for in the same churchwardens' accounts for 1587, there are entries of a bell being re-cast at Nottingham, and it is not likely that the Wilmslow churchwardens would have sent all the way to Nottingham, had there been at that time, 1587, a foundry at Congleton, within ten miles of them.

The next entry relating to Congleton has reference to the great bell of Nantwich, which weighed 20 cwt. and 6olbs., or just over a ton, and which as appears from an entry in the Wilbraham MS. Journal (quoted by Mr. James Hall in his *History of Nantwich*, p. 119), was cast at Congleton in the year 1608. This entry shews that the foundry must have been one of some importance to have been able to cast a bell of that size. The bell-founder's name is also given, which lends additional interest to this extract.

The Great Bell of this town of Nantwich being new Cast the 17th day of Nov. in the year of our Lord 1608 and being of the weight of 2,300lbs. (*i.e.* 20 cwt. 6olbs.) was cast at *Congleton* by *George Lee*, the churchwardens being . . . . whose names were set upon the Bell and this verse and these letters.

HÆC CAMPANA SACRA FIAT TRINITATE BEATA.



The meaning of the above letters is not at all clear, and it is possible that they may have been misread. This bell no longer exists. In the following year, 1609, the fourth bell at Nantwich was re-cast, and most probably at the same foundry.

This is the only instance in which I have met with the name of GEORGE LEE as the then bell-founder at Congleton. In 1612 some of the bells



of Prestbury, in Cheshire, were re-cast at Congleton, as shewn in the following extract from the churchwardens' accounts.\*

1612.	For making a new bell and [re] casting	
	the old . . . . .	xlii [£40]
„	Charges at Congleton at the casting of	
	the bells . . . . .	xxs iiij <sup>d</sup>

Again too, the churchwardens' accounts of the parish of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, at Chester, shew that in 1617 they had a small bell cast at the Congleton Foundry. Yet strange to say, in that very same year, some brasses for the great bell in the same church were cast at Wigan.

Pd. for casting the Antom bell and the brasse	
wayeing fourscore and 12 <sup>li</sup> , and a halfe, and a	
brasse for the fourth bell beinge caste w <sup>th</sup> it, all	
vnder one after ij <sup>d</sup> a pound for castinge . . .	xv <sup>s</sup>
Spend uppon our selves goinge to Congerton w <sup>th</sup>	
the Tanton bell and cominge whome [home]	
and beinge there . . . . .	iiij <sup>s</sup> vj

In 1623 the churchwardens of the same parish wished to have another bell re-cast, and so they appear to have seen the bell-founders from Congleton and from Holt, co. Denbigh, finally deciding to employ the latter. One of the many entries in this year's accounts relating to the bells and the bell-founders, is

Bestoed vppon Congerton Bellfounders . . . . .	ij <sup>s</sup>
--	-----------------

In 1628 and 1629 other of the Wilmslow bells were also cast at Congleton.†

Spent in going to enquire for the bell caster at	
Congerton . . . . .	j <sup>s</sup>
Spent when wee went to Congerton to procure	
the bell ffounder to come unto Wilmslow to	
vewe our bell, of our horses and ourselves . . .	ij <sup>s</sup>

\* *East Cheshire*, vol. ii. p. 223. In 1576-1580 some bells for Prestbury seem to have been cast at Chesterfield, in Derbyshire.

† *East Cheshire*, vol. i. p. 107.

Spent of the bell founder and his man when hee did take the tune of our Bell, of there horses and ourselves ... ..	x <sup>s</sup> iiij <sup>d</sup>
Spent when wee did take downe the Bell forth of the top of [the] Steeple, of workmen and our- selves in meate and drinke ... ..	iiij <sup>s</sup>
Spent when wee did bring the Bell unto Conger- ton to be cast and staying untill it was cast, of horses and ourselves ... ..	xvj <sup>s</sup> ij <sup>d</sup>
Paid for leadinge the bell unto Congerton in and home againe ... ..	vij <sup>s</sup> viij <sup>d</sup>
Paid unto the Bellfounder for castinge the bell the sume of fourteene pound and twelve pence	xiv <sup>li</sup> xii <sup>d</sup>
Spent when wee did meet the Bellfounder to looke uppon the newe bell ... ..	xx <sup>d</sup>

There are further entries in the Wilmslow church-wardens' accounts for 1629, as follows:—

Spent when wee went unto Congerton to see our bell cast, of ourselves and horses ...	xiiij <sup>s</sup> viij <sup>d</sup>
Paid the Bell founder for metle when hee cast the Bell ... ..	3 <sup>li</sup> 12 <sup>s</sup> 0 <sup>d</sup>

Then again, a year or two later, another of the Prestbury bells was cast at Congleton, as shewn by the following extracts of the year 1631.\*

1631. Paid to the bell founder for castinge the first bell and for 62 <sup>li</sup> of mettle w <sup>ch</sup> was added to it ... ..	ix <sup>li</sup> xij <sup>s</sup>
Spent at Congleton about the castinge of the said bell ... ..	xviij <sup>s</sup> viij <sup>d</sup>

In none of these entries is there any mention of the bell-founder's name, which is unfortunate. But according to some extracts from the town accounts of Congleton, given by Mr. Head in his *History of Congleton*, p. 167, PAUL HUTTON was the bell-founder there in 1631.

1631. Payd to John Newton ffor leadinge the great bell from the over Chappell to the lower Chappell [to be recast] ... ..	1 <sup>s</sup> 6 <sup>d</sup>
---	-------------------------------

\* *East Cheshire*, vol. ii. p. 223.

Payd to Paul Hutton, Bell founder, in  
p[ar]te of the debtt owinge him by the  
towne for the greate Bell ... 3 5 0

Then again, in 1635, he cast a peal of bells for  
Brereton Church, which is quite near to Congleton.  
These extracts are from the Congleton town's  
accounts.

1635. Payd to Peter Hodgkinson for one pottle  
of Sacke and one pottle of Claret wyne  
that was bestowed upon the Lord Brere-  
ton at the castinge of Brereton Bells... 0 4 0  
,, Paid to Mr. Paul Hutton for foure score  
and fouer pounds and a halfe of mettall  
in the 2 bells w<sup>ch</sup> they weyghed more  
after they were [re]cast... 4 10 0  
,, Paid for waste of mettall in the great bell  
being 13 hundred weight and a halfe... 3 2 6  
,, Spent upon them who helped to gett  
downe the bells and to gett them up  
again ... 0 2 6  
,, Payd Mr. Paull Hutton for the little bell... 4 10 0  
,, Paid to Mr. Paul [Hutton] w<sup>ch</sup> was agreed  
to give him 40<sup>s</sup> for the new castinge of  
the great bell, that is 30<sup>s</sup> in money and  
10<sup>s</sup> w<sup>ch</sup> he owed of townes rent for the  
lower Chappell... 1 10 0

Mr. Head also states that he cast three bells for  
the church of Astbury, which is also quite near to  
Congleton. Two of these bear the dates of 1639  
and 1647 respectively.

The next bell-founder at Congleton bore the name  
of OLDFIELD, and it is not improbable that he may  
have been a descendant or relation of Henry Old-  
field, the well-known bell-founder of Nottingham,  
at the end of the sixteenth century. In an in-  
teresting document, dated 1595, which I printed in  
the *Local Gleanings Magazine*,\* some few years

\* *Local Gleanings Magazine*, 1879, pp. 109-10. In the document there  
printed. Henry Oldfield, of Nottingham, bell-founder, agreed to keep in repair  
"two newe bels lately cast by ye said Henrie, that is to say the first and  
"ye second bels now hanginge in the steeple at ye chappell at Congleton  
"foresaid."

since, I shewed that this Henry Oldfield was connected by marriage with Congleton, his wife being Mary, daughter of Richard Spencer, of Congleton, gentleman, who was on several occasions mayor of the town. It is possible that he was descended from the Cheshire Oldfields, and that one of his sons or grandsons had settled in Congleton as a bell-founder. Anyhow his name occurs in 1658 and later, as follows :—

1658.	Received of Mr. Ouldfield for Rente for the Ould Chapel	...	...	...	o	10	o
1668.	Received from the Belfounder	...	...	...	o	7	6
1670.	Received from William Newton for Rent due from Mr. Ouldfield for the ould Chappell the somme of	...	...	...	o	5	o
1677.	Received from Mr. Oldfeld the Bell- founder	...	..	...	...	o	7 6

I have not yet met with any references to any bells having been cast at Congleton during Mr. Oldfield's time, and after this date his name ceases to be met with in the town's accounts. In 1682 the name of "Mr. NOONE, bell-founder," occurs as paying £1 8s., and in 1708 there is the following entry :—

1708.	Rec <sup>d</sup> from GABRIEL SMITH for the casting of a bell...	...	...	...	...	o	7	o
-------	---	-----	-----	-----	-----	---	---	---

This is the last entry of any bell founding at Congleton, but a few years earlier, in 1705, I find from the Goosetrey churchwardens' accounts, that one of the bells now existing there had been cast at Congleton by Mr. GABRIEL SMITH. It bears the following inscription and letters :—

GOD SAVE HIS CHVRCH 1705

G S

with the names of the two churchwardens.\* The

\* See the *History of Sandbach, co. Chester*, 1890, pp. 230 and 249.

“great bell” at Alderley was in the year 1706 sent to Congleton, and was there re-cast by Mr. Gabriel Smith.\*

Soon after this date this foundry must have been given up; for in 1720 the five bells from the Higher Chapel at Congleton were re-cast into six, by Abraham Rudhall, of Gloucester, which is strong evidence that the Congleton bell foundry had ceased to exist. Again too, in 1730, there is an entry in the Congleton Corporation minutes to the effect, that “the old chapel at Dane Bridge End shall, at “the Corporation’s charges, be converted into a “workhouse for the poor.”

There is one curious fact about these Congleton bell-founders, and that is that there is not the slightest reference to any one of them in the lists of wills now preserved at Chester, and though the names are distinctive enough, there is no will of any George Lee, Paul Hutton, — Oldfield, — Noone, or Gabriel Smith to be found between the years 1600 and 1750. Nor are there any wills of any persons of any of these names connected with Congleton at all! I have not yet examined the Astbury or Congleton Registers.

Before finally leaving Cheshire, reference may be made to CHESTER and some bell-founders, who are said to have been living there in the sixteenth century. In an article contributed to the *Cheshire Sheaf* in 1879,† Mr. Thomas Hughes, F.S.A., states that in 1551 the Treasurer’s accounts of the Dean and Chapter of Chester, record the payment of £34 for a bell weighing eighteen hundred pounds, at 38s. the hundred, to Mr. William Aldersey and Seth Rosomgreve. He then adds, “we had several

\* Churchwardens’ accounts of the parish of Alderley.

† The *Cheshire Sheaf*, vol. i. pp. 151-2, Jan. 22nd, 1879.



"founders settled at Chester, both long before and  
 "after Edward the Sixth's reign; Mr. Seth Rosom-  
 "grave, who was himself one of that craft, may have  
 "melted his weighty acquisition on the spot. One  
 "Simon Montford was a Chester founder at the  
 "date of the dissolution of the monasteries, as were  
 "others of his family before and since that date."\*  
 I am not able to confirm or disprove these state-  
 ments, but in the absence of any authority for them,  
 I am a little sceptical as to their accuracy. I have  
 never met with any "bellfounders" at Chester,  
 although several "founders," or "brassfounders"  
 occur in the eighteenth century.

I find in *Harl. MSS.*, 2177, in a series of ab-  
 stracts of the old churchwardens' accounts of  
 Trinity Parish in Chester, now lost, that in the  
 year 1600 a new bell was cast by "Robert Orrell,  
 "bellfounder," but it is not stated where he lived.  
 The name is a well-known Lancashire one.

We now come to the Lancashire bell foundry at  
 WIGAN. The business appears to have been in the  
 hands of a family named SCOTT, which was one of  
 old standing in the town, and to whom there are  
 many references in the parish registers, &c. The  
 will of JOHN SCOTT, of Wigan, brazier, dated  
 26th December, 1646, was proved at Chester on the  
 25th January, 1647-8.† The will itself is not of  
 much interest, but in the schedule of debts owing  
 to him there are the following entries, which shew  
 that he was a bell-founder.

\* It is also noted that in 1558 the churchwardens of Childwall, in Lanca-  
 shire, sold one of their church bells to "John Plymmer, of Chester."

† In it he mentions his wife Ellen, his daughters Mary and Alice, his grand-  
 daughter Elizabeth Scott, daughter of Richard Scott, his son Rauffe Scott,  
 who had then a wife and two children, and his grandson John Scott, son of  
 the said Rauffe.



Item, owing to me by Mr. Edmund Molyneux and Christopher Robie late churchwardens att Holland <sup>li</sup>iiij which is yett in arrear and unpaid to me of the some of <sup>li</sup>xxij for a Bell, of which <sup>li</sup>iiij I have received in wheate 6<sup>s</sup> so remaineth. <sup>li</sup>iiij <sup>s</sup>xiiij<sup>s</sup>

Item, oweing to me and William Gardner brazier by William Laithwaite and Thomas Marshden panmakers for a small hundredweight of plate at <sup>d</sup>vij pound ... .. <sup>li</sup>iiij <sup>s</sup>v<sup>s</sup>

In the inventory of his effects, which is a long one, there are many items of "brasse" such as "item, in old pot brasse 3<sup>ccc</sup> and <sup>li</sup>xxiiij [324lbs.] "at sixe score to the hundred and at 5<sup>d</sup> the pound "<sup>li</sup>viiij."

Item, in bell brasse one C and a halfe and 8<sup>li</sup> weight at 6<sup>d</sup> the pound... .. <sup>li</sup>iiij<sup>li</sup>

Item, in old lead ... .. <sup>s</sup>xx<sup>s</sup>

Item, in new brasse pots 3<sup>ccc</sup> and a halfe and 5<sup>li</sup> [355lbs.] weight at 6<sup>d</sup> ob. the pound ... .. <sup>li</sup>xj <sup>s</sup>x<sup>s</sup> <sup>d</sup>vj<sup>d</sup>

Item, more new pot brasse 23<sup>li</sup> weight ... .. <sup>s</sup>xij<sup>s</sup>

Item, in liverpoole 2 dozen of old pot brasse ... .. <sup>s</sup>x<sup>s</sup>

The earliest bell of which I have at present any record, as being cast at Wigan, was probably cast by this John Scott in the year 1647. This is a bell now in Trinity Church, Warrington, which formerly hung in the old Market Hall or Court House at Warrington, and which was taken down a few years since and removed to the church. It bears the following inscription and initials in small capitals.\*

EX DONO JOHANNIS BOOTH  
COLONELLI ET RECTORIS  
EMPORII DE WARRINGTON

ANNO DOMINI

1647

C.S. J.B. G.J.

W. I. S.
-------------

\* *Warrington Church Notes*, by W. Beamont, p. 152. But in *Walks about Warrington towards the beginning of the present century*, the same author gives this inscription somewhat differently, as "Donum Johannis Booth Colonelli et Rectoris hujus Emporii de Warrington, 1647," that is, "the gift of Colonel John Booth, governor of this market town of Warrington."

The above mark stands for John Scott, Wigan.

On the 27th November, 1649, there is an entry in the Liverpool Corporation Records that there was "some conference with the bell-founder of "Wigan about the casting of 2 bells."\*

Again, in 1657, the Wilmslow churchwardens' accounts contain the following entries†:—

Item, spent when wee did meete concerning the sendinge of the bells unto Wigan to be caste, of ourselves and those w <sup>ch</sup> came from Wigan concerning the same    ...    ...    ...    ...    o    2    o
Spent when the Bells were brought from Wigan...    o    3    o
Item, paid unto the bell founder with that which hee had rec <sup>d</sup> before, the summe of    ...    ...    18 <sup>li</sup> o    o

This bell still exists in the tower of Wilmslow Church and bears the initials

W.
I. S.

One of the bells still remaining in the tower of Taxal Church, co. Chester, has this lettering and date <sup>W.</sup><sub>I. S.</sub> 1656, showing that it, like the Wilmslow bell just mentioned, had been cast at Wigan by John Scott.‡

Some years ago I met with a bell in one of the Welsh churches in the Vale of Clwyd, which showed by the initials and date that it too had been cast at Wigan, but unfortunately I have mislaid the note I made about it.

Mr. GEOFFREY SCOTT appears to have succeeded Mr. John Scott as a bell-founder at Wigan, but I have not been able to ascertain the exact relationship between them. He was casting bells in 1657, as shewn by the following entries from the church-

\* *Liverpool Municipal Records*, vol. i. p. 212.

† *East Cheshire*, vol. i. p. 112.

‡ *East Cheshire*, vol. ii. p. 541.

wardens' accounts of the parish of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester.\*

1657.

Payd for carrying of the broken bell mettles to WIGAN, staying there till the bells were new cast and bringing them to the church againe ...	3	0	0
Spent when we went to Wigan to see the bells cast being foure dayes out horses and men ...	1	0	0
Payd to GEFREY SCOTT the bell-founder for casting of foure bells, with their brasses ...	25	0	0
Spent in drinke amongst his workemen & given them in Barrages ...	0	15	8
Spent on the Belfounder & his soñe in Chester they being here six dayes to see the bells hanged & to chipp them to make them tunable ...	0	9	4

1658.

Imprimis, Spent when we agreed with the Bell-founder for casting of the great bell ...	0	2	0
Payd to the bell founder for casting of the great bell, he being at all charges of taking it downe out of the Steeple, carrying of it to Wiggan & back againe to hange it vp & fitting the Irons and head Stock to it ...	12	0	0
Spent on the Belfounder & seuerall of the Gentm: of the parrish when they were about the consultation of the tunableness of the Bells & in drinke to the Ringers ...	0	3	4

In the Wigan churchwardens' accounts for 1662 there is an entry of a payment of £5 9s. 6d. to "Jephraie Scott for casting the bell steppes and "overweight."†

He made his will in 1665, as "Jefferey Scott of "Wigan Bell Founder," and it was proved at Chester on the 27th June in that year. He desired to be buried at Wigan Church amongst his ancestors. He mentions his house in the Mill gate, and refers to Alice his wife and William his son, his son

\* Copied from the original accounts, kindly lent to me by the Rev. H. Grantham, Rector of St. Mary's.

† *History of the Church and Manor of Wigan*, by the Rev. G. T. O. Bridgeman (Chet. Soc. N.S., vol. xvii. p. 552).

Roger, and his younger children Charles Scott, Margery Scott, and Mary Scott. "Such goods as "shall be fit for my son William's trade" were not to be valued in his inventory. These included "the work house ballis dudle and work loomes." In the inventory of his goods, debts, &c., the following items have a special interest, shewing that he did a good business in bell casting.

Item, in clay moulds	...	...	...	...	1 <sup>li</sup>		
Item, owing by the churchwardens of Bevington							
[? Rivington] for bells casting...	...	...	...	...	11	15	0
Item, owing by the churchwardens of Great							
Neston ..	...	...	...	...	21	7	0
Item, owing by the churchwardens of Trafford	...				3	5	0
Item, owing by the churchwardens of ffearfeild							
[Fairfield]	...	...	...	...	2	19	0
Item, owing by the churchwardens of Hefeild							
[Heyfield]	...	...	...	...	2	10	0
Item, owing by the churchwardens of Salford	...				2	10	0

WILLIAM SCOTT appears to have succeeded his father as a bell-founder, and the following entries occur in the Wigan churchwardens' accounts in the year 1677.\*

Paid unto William Scott for kesting [casting] the	li	s	d
first bell ...	10	10	0
Pd unto William Scott for overweight of the newe			
bell being six score and nineteen pounds at 1s			
y <sup>e</sup> pound	6	19	0
Pd William Scott for kesting the bell steps and			
overweight	4	2	0
Itm, spent at the agreement for kesting of the			
newe bell	0	2	6
Itm, spent of the workmen at y <sup>e</sup> kesting of y <sup>e</sup>			
bell	0	3	6
Itm, spent of ye weighing of y <sup>e</sup> newe bell	0	2	6

In 1682 more of the Wilmslow bells required re-casting, and once more they have the work done at Wigan.†

\* See *The History of Wigan Church*, Chetham Society, N.S., vol. xvii. p. 553.

† *East Cheshire*, vol. i. p. 117.

Spent when we agreed with Mr. Scott about the bells	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	8	6
Paid for carriage of the Bells and spenses [expenses] at Wiggan	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	8	4
Paid to the Bellfounder for casting the bells and spent the same time	...	...	...	...	...	...	38	0	0

In 1684 the Prestbury churchwardens had one of their bells cast at Wigan, and the following entries occur in the accounts of the churchwardens.\*

When Mr. Scott the Bellfounder came to Prestburie, when we agreed with him for the casting of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Bell	...	...	...	...	...	...	00	04	06
Paid for carrying the s <sup>d</sup> bell to Wiggan and recarrying to Prestburie	...	...	...	...	...	...	00	15	00
Pd Mr. Scott the Bellfounder for casting the Bell afores <sup>d</sup> and for one hundred and twelve pound of mettle	...	...	...	...	...	...	18	00	00

Mr. William Scott was still carrying on his business at Wigan in 1692, when these entries occur relating to a bell at Denton, near Manchester.†

1692. [Pd] William Scott for the new Bell being 226 lb, the old 223 lb at 6 <sup>d</sup> a pound for casting and 12 <sup>d</sup> a pound for new	...	...	...	...	...	...	05	14	06
ffor carriage of y <sup>e</sup> Bell to and from Manchester	...	...	...	...	...	...	00	01	00
ffor expenses in wayinge [weighing] y <sup>e</sup> Bell old and new	...	...	...	...	...	...	00	01	00
ffor spent at hanging y <sup>e</sup> Bell by order of y <sup>e</sup> Chappell Warden	...	...	...	...	...	...	00	01	00

In 1694 the Wigan churchwardens' accounts shew that the fourth bell was taken down and recast by Mr. William Scott, who was paid £20 for casting it, and £11 7s. for additional metal, amounting to eleven score and seven pounds.‡

The will of William Scott, of Wigan Wood-

\* *East Cheshire*, vol. ii. pp. 227-8.

† Booker's *History of Denton Chapel* (Chet. Soc.), p. 116.

‡ *History of Wigan Church*, p. 587.



houses, brazier, was made 9th June, 1702-3, and proved at Chester on the 11th May, 1703.\* He mentions his wife Ann Scott, but does not appear to have had any children, and no other persons of the name of Scott are mentioned. It is probable that with him the trade of bell founding, which had been so long in the family of Scott, came to an end. The last bell, probably cast by him, of which I have any note was the great bell at Chapel-en-le-Frith, in Derbyshire, which was re-cast at Wigan on the 6th August, 1701.†

It is probable that the trade of bell casting was continued at Wigan by other hands, for in 1717 a new bell, ordered by the churchwardens of that town, was cast by RALPH ASHTON, bell-founder there, at a cost of £49 7s. 6d. including the cost of the new metal, which exceeded the weight of the old metal to which it was added.‡

A few years later, when a new set of five bells was ordered for the parish church of Wallasey, in Cheshire, the sum of £60 11s. 7d. was "pade to" the bell founder LUKE ASHTON of Wigan." These five bells remained in the tower of that church until the disastrous fire of 1857, when they fell to the ground, and were much damaged and broken. The inscriptions which they bore were as follows§:—

1<sup>st</sup> bell. Luke Ashton in Wigan made us all 1723.

2<sup>nd</sup> bell. Gloria Deo in Excelsis. 1723. Wiggan.

3<sup>rd</sup> bell. John Robinson, Joshua Young Churchwardens  
1723. Wiggan.

\* I have also full abstracts of the wills of James Scott, of Wigan, Alderman, 1696, and Geoffrey Scott, of Wigan, pewterer, 1699, the latter of whom was the son of the former.

† *The Reliquary*, vol. vi. (1865-6), p. 67.

‡ *History of Wigan Church*, p. 618.

§ Kindly sent, with other information about the Wallasey bells, by Mr. W. C. A. Pritt, of Wallasey. The account of these bells by Mr. Pritt was printed, subsequent to the reading of this paper, in the *Cheshire Sheaf* for April, 1891.



4<sup>th</sup> bell. Let us sound to the honour of Christ and to the glory of All Saints.

6<sup>th</sup> bell. I to the Church the living call and to the grave do summons all. Memento Mori 1723  
Mr. Thomas Arson.

These bells were also ornamented with a crowned "G. R." on the waist, a band of oak leaves round the top, and another of roses round the rim.

Mr. Luke Ashton was probably the last of the Wigan bell-founders, for in 1732 the bells of Wigan Church were sent to Gloucester to be recast by Mr. Abraham Rudhall of that place, which would hardly have been the case had there been any good foundry in that town. I have in vain searched for any wills of this Ashton family.

I would only add that for quite a hundred years or more, during the whole of the 17th century, the town of Wigan appears to have been the home of a large number of persons who carried on the trade of braziers, pewterers, &c. This is shewn by the lists of wills, now preserved at Chester, where their names occur. The families of Forth or Ford,\* Marsden, Orrell, Banks, Baldwin, Boyes, Cooper, Markland, and Harvey† may be mentioned, and it is noteworthy that in 1669 Edward Markland, of Wigan, describes himself as "founder," but he was probably a "brass-founder," and not a "bell-founder."‡

\* Thus, in the year 1617, in the churchwardens' accounts of the parish of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester, there is the following entry :—

Pd to Robert Fource of Wignine for castinge of towe brasses for the greate Bell wayeinge severtene pound at vjd a pounce, and iij li and a halfe of there owne brasses at xijd a pound, the whole some is .. .. . xlijs

† I have full abstracts of the following Wigan wills in addition to those of the Scott family already noted, John Harvey, of Wigan, brazier, 1614 (a very long will); Edward Markland, of Wigan, founder, 1669; William Fairbrother, of Wigan, founder, 1726; and Robert Orrell, of Wigan, brazier, 1734.

‡ I recently examined the will of "William Terrey, of Chester, founder," proved at Chester in 1728, and found from internal evidence that he was a "brassfounder."

*Balliol  
Rampside  
Lep 26<sup>th</sup>  
1734  
John of  
+ ...  
1669  
Edward Markland  
1726*

Before concluding this paper I would like to refer to a few instances of bell-founders in the counties adjacent to Lancashire and Cheshire, which I have met with from time to time.

Thus, in the year 1669, the "great bell" at Nantwich, already referred to as having been cast at Congleton in 1608, was re-cast, but this time at WELLINGTON, in Shropshire.

"Our Great Bell in Nantwich, being above 2000<sup>li</sup> [*i.e.*, about a ton] in weight, chaunced to be cracked, and was cast anew at Wellington in Shropshire by one Clitheroe an<sup>o</sup> 1669, which cost the parish near 30<sup>li</sup>."<sup>3</sup>

In the year 1636 the bells belonging to St. Nicholas' Church, Liverpool, required attention, and the following interesting minute relating to them occurs in the Liverpool Corporation accounts, shewing that they were sent to WALSALL, in Staffordshire, to Thomas Hancock, the bell-founder there.

[13 Oct. 1636.]

Whereas heretofore as appeth by ancient Records, There hath beene a Ringe [of] Bells, w<sup>th</sup>in this Towne, and some of them have beene taken downe and otherwise Converted, And whereas alsoe there hath beene since (to witt) in or about seaven yeares laste paste three other Bells intended to bee suteable to the said Bell, But by negligence of one ROBT<sup>e</sup> OULDFIELD, a *Bell founder* who caste or made the said three Bells of such Base Mettall that they were altogether disonante or disagreeinge to the said firste Bell and altogether dislikeinge to the whole Corporac<sup>o</sup>n. The said Mr Maior w<sup>th</sup> the full assente consente and goodlikinge of the Aldermen, Ballives and Burgesses of the same Corporation Agreed and concluded w<sup>th</sup> one THOM<sup>s</sup> HANCOCK of WALSALL in the County of Stafford, *Bell founder*, to Alter and Chaunge the said Bells for fower other more Consonante and Tuneable, for w<sup>ch</sup> Exchange the said Corporation is to give and Allowe unto the said Hancock two pence for evy pounce, and the said Bellfounder Hancock to allowe Ten pence the pound for evy pound waighte of the Oulde Bells ov<sup>r</sup> and above the

\* Roger Wilbraham's MS. Journal, quoted by Mr. James Hall in his *History of Nantwich*, p. 198.

waighte of the said fower New Bells. And for the further Explanacon hereof the firste of the New Bells weigheth after the rate of five score and Twelve pounds to the hundred, five hundreth one quarter and Twenty poundes. The Second sixe hundreth and fourteene poundes. The Third Eight hundreth, and the Fourth Nyne hundreth and Three quarters, w<sup>ch</sup> is in the whole Two Thousand Nyne hundreth Thirty and fower poundes. And the Ould Bells exchanged as aforesaid weigheth Three Thousand and fifty one poundes.

Early in the 17th century there appears to have been a noted foundry at HOLT, in Denbighshire, a few miles from Chester. The following entry occurs in the registers of Wallasey, co. Chester.\*

1624. M<sup>em</sup> that vppon the Seventeenth day of June Año Dñi 1624 the first Bell belonging to this Church was new cast by WILLIAM CLIBBERY Bellfounder at y<sup>e</sup> Holt at the Towne of Lyncs: The new Casting whereof Cost 7<sup>li</sup> & 12<sup>d</sup> [£7 1s.] That is to say 4<sup>li</sup> 10<sup>s</sup> for Casting it and 5<sup>1s</sup> for ffifty-one Pound of metall that was added vnto it.

HENRY BIRD, } Churchwardens  
GEO. WALKER, } for that yeare.

In 1623 and again in 1632, the churchwardens of the parish of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, at Chester, decided to have their bells cast at this foundry. In the former year, as already noticed, they appear to have rejected the Congleton bell-founders in favour of those at Holt, the following entries being found in that year's accounts.

Spent vppon the Bell founder	...	...	...	vj <sup>d</sup>
Spent vppon the Bellfounder for to agree w <sup>th</sup> him				xx <sup>d</sup>
Bestoed vppon Congleton Bellfounders	...	...		ij <sup>s</sup>
Pd when we agreed w <sup>th</sup> the Bellfounder	...	...		ij <sup>s</sup>
Pd for takeinge downe of the belles	...	...		ij <sup>s</sup> vj <sup>d</sup>
Pd at the Hoult in castinge the two biggest great				
belles	...	...	...	xvj <sup>s</sup>
Pd to WILLIAM CLIVERIE [Cliverie] bellfounder				
for Castinge the Belles all newe	...	...		xij <sup>li</sup>

\* *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. xxxv. p. 75. See also Mr. Pritt's paper on the Wallasey Bells in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, April, 1891.

Then again in 1632 are these entries\* :—

Pd for takinge downe the greate bell & spentt att borroweing the windles att the Minster and for sendinge to Holtt for the belfounder	... ... ...	iiij <sup>s</sup> xj <sup>d</sup>
Pd for Carriage of the bell to the houlte and backe again	... ... ...	xxij <sup>s</sup>
Pd to WILLIAM CLIVERY [Clivery] for Castinge of the greate bell	... ... ...	vj <sup>li</sup>
Pd for a hundred & odd weight of newe mettall that was added to the bell more than the weight was before	... ... ... ... ...	v <sup>li</sup>

A few years later, in 1640, the following entry occurs in the parish register of Cerrigydrudion, in North Wales.†

“The lesser bell caste by Mr. CLIVERY of Holt for 2<sup>li</sup> 5<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup>

In conclusion, I will only add that I shall at all times be much obliged for any references to original documents, churchwardens' accounts, bell inscriptions, &c., &c., which may in any way add to this account of the Bell-founders of Lancashire and Cheshire and the adjacent counties.

\* From the original accounts lent me by the Rev. H. Grantham.

† The Rev. D. R. Thomas's *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*, p 534.





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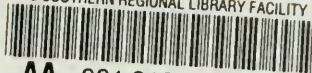
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