

DARTMOOR SHEEP BELLS, PART III

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THE first part of this paper appeared in vol. lxx of our Transactions, on pp. 297—298; the second part will be found in vol. lxxi, on pages 329—330. Since writing these I have seen four other bells, of which two are in my possession.

WHITE BRONZE SHEEP BELLS

<i>District</i>	<i>Inscription</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Diameter at Mouth</i>	<i>Height without suspension</i>
15. Rundlestone	none	none	3 ins.	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins.
16. Princetown	W K	none	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins.
17. Ugborough	none	none	3 $\frac{5}{8}$ ins.	2 $\frac{3}{8}$ ins.

15. This is a small bell, of approximately the same size as No. 5; it still has its iron collar attached. There is a moulding at the rim and another at the dome. The brass loop for the clapper is of iron. The collar is secured by a split pin, the ends of which are coiled. It is 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, and bell and collar together weigh 15 ounces.

This bell, which was given to me by my friend Mr. Jonathan Hext of Mis Tor Farm, is interesting, as its story while in the hands of three generations of its owners is known.

The bell was once in the ownership of the family of Rachel Hext, wife of William Hext. Whether the Hexts ever used it as a sheep bell is not known, but the presence of the iron collar, and the wear of the rim of the bell by the clapper are sufficient proof that it has served that purpose. Presently, however, it found another use: William kept a night school for the children of the neighbourhood; and the bell rang to call the children to the school. School time was 7 p.m. and the fees were a penny a week.

From William, school and bell alike passed to his son John. John lived in the north end-house of "Red Cottages," near Rundlestone. The Red Cottages have now been renamed "West View"; they were built to house workmen employed at Foggintor Quarries, and are somewhat over a hundred years old.

These night schools must have done good work in their time, but they had their limitations. It is said that during reading lessons, mainly if not entirely taken from the Bible, when difficulties arose with biblical names unsuited to the Dartmoor speech, John Hext adopted the expedient of telling

his class, "*We will call this Merrivale*" or some equally familiar local name. And it is said that a lady who conducted a dame-school, with even greater simplicity, instructed her class, when similar difficulties arose, to "*Call it Jerusalem, 'tis a beautiful word.*"

By the passage of time the bell became the property of Mr. Jonathan Hext, the son of John. It now enjoyed honourable retirement after a career of varied usefulness which probably commenced in or about the year 1780. On the 11th April, 1942, Jonathan Hext, then aged seventy-eight, very kindly gave the bell to myself; and I hope to arrange that it be preserved as a memorial of those Dartmoor men whom it has served.

16. This bell was given to me by Mr. Lord of Princetown; he does not know its history. It has seen considerable wear, and the loop for the suspension of the clapper has been worn through. This loop has always been in iron, and was cast into the metal of the bell. The loop for the clapper of No. 15 may also have been at all times in iron; it is inserted and rivetted in holes drilled in the bell.

No. 16 is not a good specimen of the founder's art; there are in it two holes caused by gas cavities. It is inscribed "W K," the style of lettering being similar to that adopted for No. 3, date 1785, and No. 2, date 1778.

I find that both these bells, 15 and 16, give the note F, 16 an octave lower than 15.

17. Mr. Amery Adams found, on Ugborough Moor, Butterdon Hill, a bell of the same type as those already described under the heading of *White Bronze Sheep Bells*.

YELLOW BRONZE CUP BELLS.

A yellow bronze cup bell from E. Devon was described in Part II. I have since found a Dartmoor example.

18. A cup bell from Rudge, Lustleigh, of yellow metal throughout, the bell and its suspension loop in one casting. The iron loop for the attachment of the clapper has been worn through, and the ends bent over to overlap and so become once more serviceable.

The suspension loop by which the bell was attached to the collar is much worn, and the upper part is missing. The diameter at the mouth of the bell is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the height, without any part of the top boss is $2\frac{1}{16}$ inches. It bears neither date nor inscription. In the presence of a rectangular suspension loop it resembles No. 14.

Bells Nos. 15, 16 and 18 are figured on Plate 33.

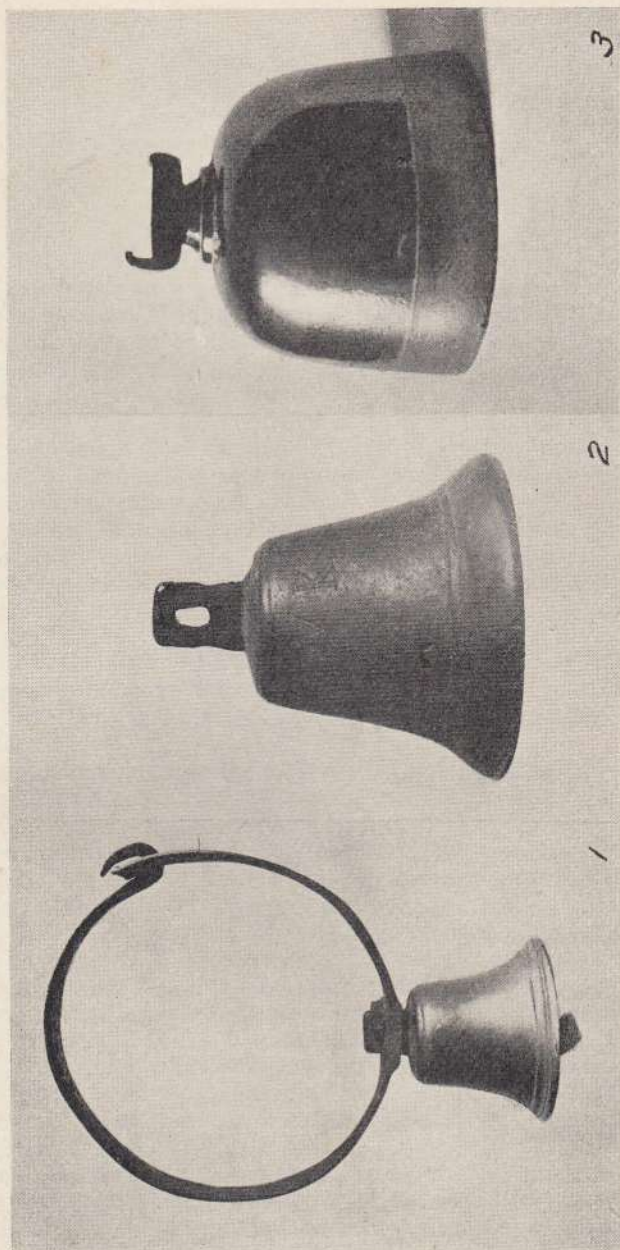


FIG. 1. (15) RUNDLESTONE. FIG. 2. (16) PRINCETOWN. FIG. 3. (18) LUSTLEIGH. R. H. WORTH.