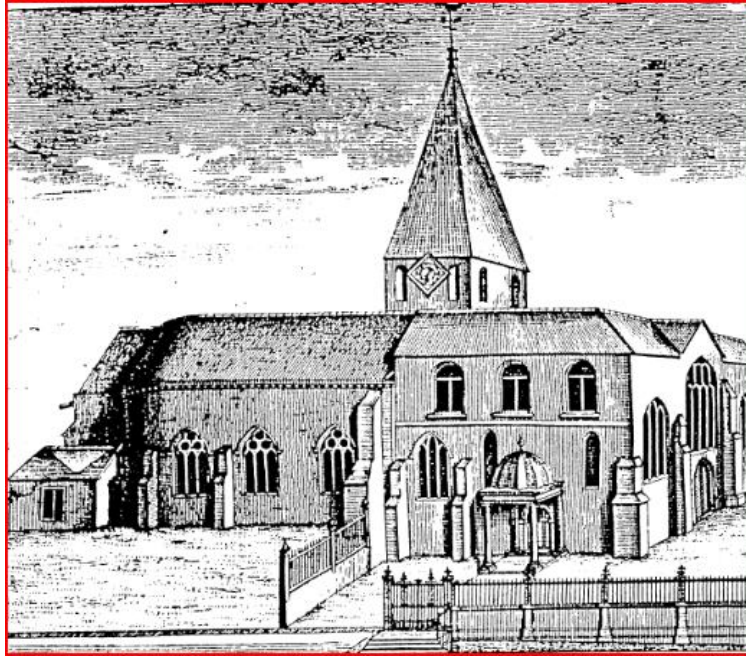


## Holy Trinity Church: The Clock

There is only one known drawing of the old Holy Trinity church. It shows a short, square tower and spire, carrying a round clock face in a diamond shaped casing.



On a wall of the present clergy vestry, (built in 1913 to mark the 150 anniversary of the opening of the new church) hangs a clock. The inscription on the face reads



"This clock with chimes on six bells was in the old spire which fell down April [1740] Repaired at the expense of the Right Honorable Lord Onslow and Cranley Anno Domini 17(91) John Russell Mayor.

The clock was Thoroughly repaired and altered to Mode in Principles with many new parts including A New Dead Beat Escapement and Chimes Barrel Music composed by Mr Wilkins. The expenses being Defrayed by subscription. Joseph Neale Mayor, Jno Smallpeice church warden. Josoph Steere clock maker Guildford AD 1845”

In addition, around the edge of the face a further inscription states:

“The new clock playing the old Chimes on Eight Bells was erected by public subscription dedicated by Henry Peak Mayor on Jan 27th 1900 W P Trench J H Wiles Churchwardens Rev Canon Grant Rector.”

These words summarise the history of the clock on Holy Trinity church tower.

The Onslows were benefactors to the church in many ways. Their generosity was acknowledged through the display of the family crest above the fine black and gold clock face. It shows an eagle standing over the supine body of a partridge with the family motto, a rebus: “Festina lente” or “On slow”. Below the clock the warning “Fugimur Imputamur; The hours fly and are rendered to our account” is displayed, painted on two broad, copper ribbons.



By June 1842 a Vestry Meeting was called "to take into consideration the expediency of Replacing the church clock and chimes." Extensive repairs and new chimes were decided upon. George Wilkins was organist of St Nicolas' church, Guildford. The chimes he composed for Holy Trinity became well known during the nineteenth century; though often called Chard Chimes after being used subsequently at Chard. The clock worked for perhaps another fifty years. However, by 1898 the rector was writing that "the clock is altogether too independent to be relied upon, the chimes are silent." Repair or replacement was again agreed but funds raised within the parish were insufficient. Only after a general appeal to the town, in 1899, could a new clock be ordered. There was discussion about putting up a second face on the south side of the tower, but this proved too expensive.

The new clock with its pulleys and weights still had to be wound weekly. The hands and chimes are now separately driven by two electric motors. The whole mechanism only has to be checked and oiled twice a year. The inscribed clock face in the clergy vestry was originally inside the spire, enabling anyone winding or resetting the clock to know the time the minute hand was showing on the external one. There was no hour hand. A similar clock serves the same purpose inside the present tower. When the face was reused as a conventional clock, (with scant regard for the damage done by screws to hold it in the clock case) it was fitted with two hands running on batteries.



*Holy Trinity Church, Tower and Clock as seen from the High Street (North side)*