

Bell From Blitzed Plymouth Church Is Now At New Plymouth

Obtained by the city of Plymouth, England, for presentation to the Westtown school, New Plymouth, to commemorate the former pupils of the school who died on service in the Second World War, a memorial bell from a blitzed Plymouth church arrived at its destination on Tuesday.

The bell is a heavy piece. It stands about 2ft 6in high, weighs more than 4cwt, with a clapper, at present detached, weighing 20lb. It had to be very heavily incased for handling and transport, the whole package weighing about half a ton. According to the inscription on the bell it was cast by W. Parnell and Son in 1845 and is therefore 102 years old.

A bronze plate has been affixed to the bell. Upon this has been engraved a coat of arms of the city of Plymouth and the following inscription: "In memory of scholars of the Westtown school, New Plymouth, New Zealand, who died in the war 1939-1945, this bell from the Church of St. Michael, Devonport, Plymouth, England, which was destroyed by enemy action on April 22, 1941, is presented to the Westtown school at the instance of the Rt. Hon. Isaac Foote, Lord Mayor of Plymouth, on behalf of the citizens of Plymouth by the vicar and wardens of the Church of St. Michael, November 2, 1946."

A special ceremony was held at Plymouth on the day that the bell was handed over for shipment.

Arrangements for the hanging of the bell in a belfry or tower at the Westtown school have yet to be made in consultation with the Taranaki Education Board's architect. It is expected that a special event will be made of the unveiling and dedication of the memorial.

Mr. E. H. White, of the Home and School Association, through whom the negotiations from the New Plymouth end have been carried out, expressed great pleasure yesterday at the receipt of the bell. It is said to have a beautiful tone. Around the edge of its mouth it bears some minor signs of damage received when the church was destroyed.