



# Bellfounders' Gift Page

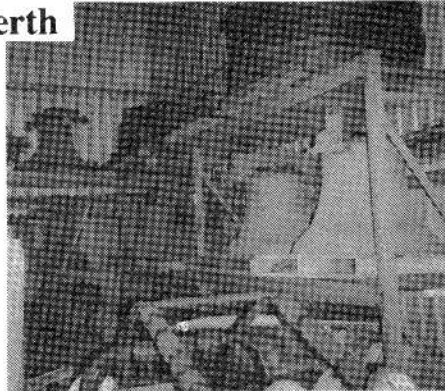


## Historic bells abandoned in Perth

I recently had the pleasure of living, working and ringing in Australia for about three months. During that time, while on a visit to Perth, I was taken to see the former bells of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, now in storage at a transport depot.

While the bells remain quite safe for the moment in the warehouse, and the transport company is apparently happy to store them free of charge, it is of course possible that this situation could change. As it is, however, the frame sides for their intended hanging are piled up in the open in the yard, open to all weathers, as there is insufficient room in the warehouse, and they have already become quite rusty. There was, incidentally, no sign of the peal boards sent with the bells.

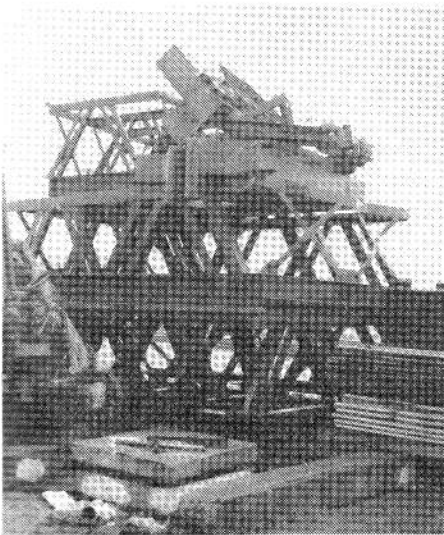
Having rung on them on numerous occasions over 25 years as a London ringer, I was saddened that such historic bells, on which the first peal of Stedman Cinques was rung, and which were, I believe, the gift of the Prince of Wales at the time to St. Martin's, should have been abandoned like this. Others, for example the SRCY, may feel even more strongly about the situation.



Ex-St. Martin-in-the-Fields bells in "action".

The actual site for the tower was, and remains, a parking lot, and at present there appears to be no long-term, let alone short-term, prospect of any progress towards building the tower. Perhaps someone closer to the (in)action could comment.

It was ironic that, the day after visiting the bells, the gospel at the service at Perth Cathedral should have been from St. Luke, Chapter 14, including verses 28-30, bringing wry smiles to the ringers' faces! R. DENNIS



Frame sides rusting and open to all weathers.

The bells, following their replacement by modern bells cast from Australian metal, were donated to Perth by the Cities of London and Westminster with royal approval, and received with euphoria at the time of Australia's bicentennial. One can only guess what would be the reaction of the two Corporations and the Palace were they to know the results of their generosity.

One is of course aware that Western Australia, as elsewhere, has suffered from the effects of world recession. Nevertheless, the state government had set aside funds long before the recession for the construction of the tower and the hanging of the bells, but presumably these funds have been used elsewhere or else forgotten about.

## Bell Rescue News

The Bell Rescue Fund has just acquired the 14 cwt six, frame and fittings from All Saints, Hamer, Rochdale. The installation was being sold for scrap under faculty to finance repairs to the fire damaged church. Thanks to the help and very ready assistance of John Taylor & Co. the Fund was able to negotiate with the Architects representing the Parish to acquire the bells as they were being taken out.

It is hoped the bells will be overhauled and hung at St. Mary's, Caterham on the Hill, Surrey.

The Fund remains responsible for the old 13 from St. Martin's, Birmingham. Over a year has gone by and the many negotiations to find a home for the bells have come to nothing. The Fund Committee meets in November to decide the next step; probably to give a deadline to dispose of the bells, complete or in part.

As ever the Fund is deeply grateful to ringers who support the Fund with loans in some cases quite sacrificially. R.J.C.

## First peal congratulations

Sandra Heddle, Eric Falla, Sally J. Gilbert, Daniel Knight, Keith F. A. Copestake, M. Ann Bailey, John A. Rhodes, Karl E. Loxton.

## At the Fire Service College

The weekend of 25th September was the occasion of the Fire Service Guild's A.G.M. and second bi-annual dinner. In the now established tradition of the Guild this was held at the Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire.

Thirty members and guests enjoyed a wonderful dinner in the College dining room. This year we were welcomed by the PMC Mr. David Worsley and Deputy Commandant Mr. Tony Salisbury with their wives. The Guild's President, Mr. George Clarke, now retired as Commandant, was at the dinner and also attended the rest of the weekend including the ringing. He has made it clear that he intends to play an active part in the Guild's meetings. As a result, at his invitation, the Guild will accept the offer of the Chief Fire Officer of Lancashire for them to visit Lancashire during May 1993.

Guild members who stayed overnight at the College had the pleasure of using the new living accommodation, which proved to be very luxurious. This set the tone for a pleasant and friendly meeting, with members now becoming well known to each other as time passes, despite living at a distance in many cases.

Ringing on the Saturday was held at Longborough, Bourton-on-the-Hill and Moreton-in-Marsh. The enthusiasm of Ringing Master Ken Baker managed to splice two quarter peals into the day: one of Minor (two methods) at the Guild tower, Bourton, and another of Grandsire Triples at Moreton. The first of these was the annual tribute to fire-fighters who lost their lives in service during the year.

The A.G.M. followed a morning's ringing. The chairman, Mike Kernan, greeted the President, who had paid his first visit to a tower during the morning. Later Mike was re-elected unopposed, as was the rest of the committee. He thanked them all for their support and for that of the membership, many of whom have to travel long distances to attend Guild meetings and committees.

Another tradition of the Guild is the service held before the A.G.M. in the Fire Service Chapel. To mark the Guild's appreciation the Chaplain will be invited to future dinners.

Mike Kernan can be proud of the results of his initiative in starting the Guild. The search continues for other firemen who are also ringers. The ringing record for this year has been good with 21 towers visited and two peals and six quarters achieved. For next year, apart from the Lancashire tour in May, the Guild will visit the Coventry area in October.

JACK PEPIATT

**Bourton-on-the-Hill, Glos.** 26 Sept, 1272 Minor (2m): Peter Knight 1, Joan Speak 2, Roger DR Brown 3, Jack Long 4, J Robert Speak 5, Ken Baker (C); 50th Q this year) 6. In remembrance of members of the British Fire Service who have paid a supreme sacrifice the profession demands. **Moreton-in-Marsh.** 1260 Grandsire Triples: Ken Baker 1, Roger D R Brown 2, Julian Morley 3, Jack Long 4, Clive Garraway 5, John A Speak 6, Kenneth Phillips (C) 7, Michael Kernan 8. On the occasion of the Fire Service Guild A.G.M.

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