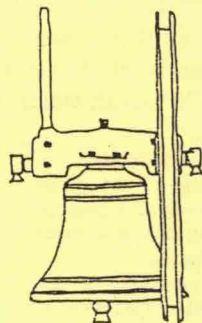




ST MARY ABBOTS, KENSINGTON

THE BELLS

There have been bells at the Church of St Mary Abbots since before the beginning of the 18th Century; information available records that there were six heavy bells at this time. Details before this are sketchy. In 1772, the tower of the old church was rebuilt and the bells were recast by Janaways of Chelsea and augmented to eight. Some of the Janaway bells are still rung today because when the church was rebuilt in 1879, five of the bells were incorporated into the fine ring of ten bells which are rung today. Details are as follows:



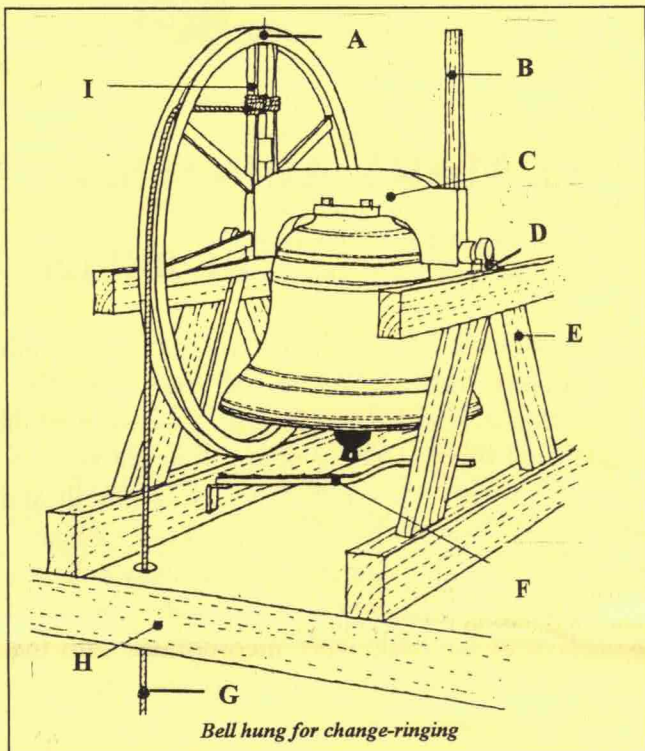
Bell	Diameter	Note	App Weight (cwt)	Date	Founder
Treble	2'5"	F	6.2.4	1879	John Warner & Sons
2	2'6½"	Eb	7.0.4	1879	"
3	2'7"	Db	6.3.7	1879	"
4	2'9"	C	7.0.0	1772	Thomas Janaway
5	3'0"	Bb	8.3.0	1772	"
6	3'1½"	Ab	10.2.0	1772	"
7	3'4½"	Gb	12.2.21	1879	John Warner & Sons
8	3'7½"	F	14.3.0	1772	Thomas Janaway
9	4'½"	Eb	21.0.0	1772	Thomas Janaway
Tenor	4'7"	Db	32.0.0	1879	John Warner & Sons

HOW ARE BELLS RUNG?

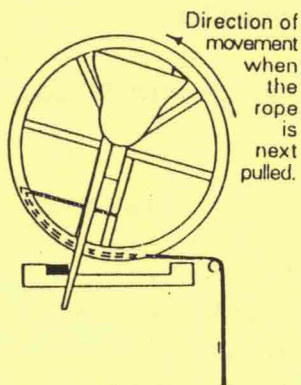
English church bells are not rung mechanically. Each bell is rung by one person who has had to be trained in the skill of handling a bell.

A bell starts with its mouth facing down. Then by pulling the rope it is swung higher and higher until it can be rested with its mouth facing up.

- A - Wooden Wheel
- B - Stay
- C - Headstock supporting Bell & attaching it to Wheel
- D - Bearing
- E - Framework
- F - Slider (fixed at one end)
- G - Rope to Ringing-Chamber below
- H - Floor of Belfry
- I - Spoke with Rope attached

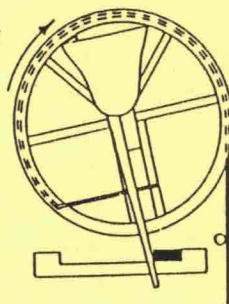


From this "up" position the bell can be rotated full circle first one way and then the other. Only the rope is used to perform these operations.



The bell is now 'up' at 'hand stroke'.

Direction of movement when the rope is next pulled.



The bell has swung right round and is now 'up' at 'back stroke'.

For each rotation, the bell sounds just once. Bells can weigh from a few pounds to over 4 tons, but ringers do not need to be especially fit and strong - its all technique.

RINGING CHANGES

When the bells sound down the scale they are ringing ROUNDS. A CHANGE is when the bells ring in an order other than rounds. When bells are rung full circle it is possible to control the speed of the bell's movement and so the order in which the bells sound can be altered as little or often as required. (examples are shown using 6 bells for simplicity)

“Call Changes” The bells start ringing ROUNDS and only change the order in which they ring when given an instruction. They continue to sound in the new order until a further instruction is given.

Example:	<u>Instruction</u>	<u>The change which is rung</u>
	start	1 2 3 4 5 6 (ROUNDS)
	3 & 4 swap	1 2 4 3 5 6
	2 & 4 swap	1 4 2 3 5 6

This could continue for as long as you like. Each time you ring the new change again and again until an instruction to swap is given. It is conventional to start and finish ringing ROUNDS.

“Method Ringing” The bells sound in a different order every single time. i.e., every CHANGE will be different. The system of arranging the CHANGES to be rung is termed a method. This consists of a predetermined sequence of CHANGES which every ringer has to learn. There are many methods; they vary from the simple to the very complex. **Example:**

<u>Plain Hunt</u>	<u>1 2 3 4 5 6 (ROUNDS)</u>
swap all pairs	2 1 4 3 6 5
swap middle pairs	2 4 1 6 3 5
swap all pairs	4 2 6 1 5 3
swap middle pairs	4 6 2 5 1 3
swap all pairs	6 4 5 2 3 1
swap middle pairs	6 5 4 3 2 1
swap all pairs	5 6 3 4 1 2
swap middle pairs	5 3 6 1 4 2
swap all pairs	3 5 1 6 2 4
swap middle pairs	3 1 5 2 6 4
swap all pairs	1 3 2 5 4 6
swap middle pairs	1 2 3 4 5 6 (ROUNDS)

This only produces 12 different CHANGES. A similar pattern which varies the rule every twelfth CHANGE is called Plain Bob Minor (see right). The pattern achieved by drawing a line to join up all the 2s is what the ringer actually learns. You don't have to be a brilliant musician or mathematician to be a ringer, but a sense of rhythm helps. In most church towers you can find a very wide cross-section of people of all ages and from all walks of life. Why not come and find out more?

123456
 214365
 241635
 426153
 462513
 645231
 654321
 563412
 536142
 351624
 315264
 135246
 135264
 312546
 321456
 234165
 243615
 426351
 462531
 645213
 654123
 561432
 516342
 153624
 156342
 513624
 531264
 352146
 325416
 234561
 243651
 426315
 462135
 641253
 614523
 165432
 164523
 615432
 651342
 563124
 536214
 352641
 325461
 234516
 243156
 421365
 412635
 146253
 142635
 416253
 461523
 645132
 654312
 563421
 536241
 352614
 325164
 231546
 213456
 124365
 123456

THE ST MARY ABBOTS GUILD OF BELL RINGERS

The St Mary Abbots Guild was founded in 1896 and was very active in its early years. Records show that there was regular ringing from the outset and that outings took place as well as an annual dinner. The Guild flourished until the Second World War but seems to have faded afterwards. A revival began in the early 70s and since that time there has been a strong band at St Mary Abbots. The bells are rung every Sunday morning and usually in the evening as well. On Thursdays the practice welcomes ringers of all abilities and covers anything from "rounds and call-changes" to "eight-spliced surprise royal". The social side is not neglected either, and members of the Guild often go out together to ring peals and also enjoy a biennial dinner and an annual holiday.

With a declining population in central London in recent years, it has become necessary to cooperate on times of service ringing and practices. Many towers do not have a "local" band but rely on ringers from far and wide. Our members come from all over the London area; from Highgate, Mitcham, Acton, Dulwich and even as far as mid Kent. The Guild also takes on responsibility for 2 other London churches and whilst our headquarters is at St Mary Abbots we are also the band for St Luke's, Chelsea and St Stephen's, Westminster. The bells of all these churches are rung every Sunday. Details of Guild Officers and Kensington ringing times are below:

Guild Officers

Ringing Master: Peter Harrison Tel: 079 0097 4457
pete@28smith.com
Secretary: Rachel Titmuss
-rt-@live.co.uk

St Mary Abbots Ringing Times:

Sunday: 8.45 - 9.30am
5.30 - 6.30pm (quarter peal)
Thursday: 7.30 - 9.15pm

If you are interested in ringing at St Mary Abbots, then please visit us on a Sunday morning or Thursday evening, or telephone one of the officers.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

November 2008