

The Bells



The ring of 10 bells was recast in 1993 by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in East London and the heaviest bell (the tenor) weighs 24 cwt (2,691 lb. or 1,220 kg).

The previous set of 10 bells comprised an original set of 8 cast by Richard Phelps in 1729 (the tenor weighing approx. 21½ cwt.) with two more bells being added by John Briant, a local founder, in 1787. The 7th bell was recast in 1805 and the 4th in 1812, both by John Briant. The 8th and 9th bells (the third and second heaviest, respectively) were recast by John Taylor of Loughborough in 1883, and finally the 5th was recast in 1887 by John Warner of Croydon.

The story of the Taylor recasting is intriguing and makes this tower unique in the ringing exercise: in 1868, a local ringer, John Lewis, gave two new trebles to form a 'complete' ring of twelve bells here (there is a plaque to his memory above the shelf in the Ringing Chamber). In 1881, it was discovered that the 11th bell was cracked, so money was raised for its recasting, but when the bell hangers came to remove the bell, they found that the 10th bell was also cracked. Lacking sufficient funds to recast this as well, the two treble bells installed in 1868 were sold back to the foundry to pay for the additional recasting. Thus, St Peter's is the only tower in the world which once had an English-style ring of twelve bells, but now has a smaller ring.

In 1993 after a long appeal, the old mixed ring and ageing wooden frame were replaced by a modern, diatonically tuned ring in a new steel frame, with additional foundation girders. This work cost approx. £140,000 and has provided St Peter's with a ring of bells which, unlike its predecessor, is both pleasant to listen to and easy to ring and will hopefully last another 270 years or more.

Each of the bells has an inscription around its waist. These record the major donors to the bell restoration, and are listed in a framed plaque hanging to the right of the Ringing room entrance. The casting history of each bell is also inscribed on it.

Details of St Peter's current ring of bells

Bell	Weight	Note	Diameter	Cast	Founder
1	5-1-26	G	27.25"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
2	5-3-15	F	28.38"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
3	6-2-17	Eb	30.25"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
4	6-2-15	D	31.00"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
5	7-1-9	C	32.50"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
6	8-1-21	Bb	35.00"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
7	10-1-22	Ab	38.00"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
8	11-3-17	G	40.00"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
9	16-3-9	F	45.00"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd
10	24-0-3	Eb	50.50"	1993	Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd