



ANCIENT SOCIETIES SWING INTO PERTH

This week one of the oldest change ringing societies in the world will arrive in Perth to ring our bells, hailed as "the most beautiful sounding in the world" by recent visitor Tim Joiner – former Lord Mayor of Westminster.

The ancient Societies have incredible history and The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths is no different. It is believed that in April 1746 the Duke of Cumberland (second son of King George II) passed Shoreditch Church on his return from the Battle of Culloden. An ancient society known as the London Scholars was ringing at the time. Battle victory was hailed, and consequently it became very popular to use the name Cumberland.

It is not known if in fact The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths (the word 'Royal' was added in the 1870's) descends from the London Scholars, but their formation was recorded as 6 September 1747. It was a star-studded list of ringers including greats such as; John Reeves, George Gross and William Shipway, all very famous in their time. Records of their early performances still exist in the ringing chambers of London's churches.

Each Society has a Master who acts as a Chairperson at meetings and is responsible for organising the ringing at all society ringing events.

For the first time in its long, long history the Society has an Australian Master. Peter Harrison was born and raised in Adelaide and learnt to ring at St Peter's Cathedral. Coincidentally another soon to visit Society also has an Australian Master - The Ancient Society of College Youths.

Traditionally hostile rivalry existed between the Societies. During their early years this extended beyond a sneer or comment in passing, to the lobbing of bricks through belfry windows whilst the other Society was ringing. The Societies have put their antagonistic past behind them and have coordinated their visits to celebrate this 'first' in their histories.

The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths will arrive in Perth Saturday 19 February and depart Wednesday 23 February. During that time they have scheduled two peals (three and a half hour non-stop performances by one set of ringers) and another ringing at The Bell Tower.

You can hear this highly skilled Society performing their ancient craft on...

- **Sunday 20 February, noon - 2.00pm**
- **Monday 21 February, 9.30am – 1.00pm**
- **Tuesday 22 February, 1.30pm – 5.00pm**

Don't miss the chance to hear these extraordinary performers at The Bell Tower – Home of the Swan Bells.

For more information visit www.thebelltower.com.au

Media enquires, interviews & photo opportunities please contact: Gina Church at ginachurch@westnet.com.au or 0409 299 220