



WHO'S TINKERING WITH OUR BELLS NOW?

In preparation for the visit of two premier London ringing societies, The Bell Tower has contracted Britain's oldest manufacturing firm to conduct scheduled maintenance on our treasured bells.

Established in 1570 (during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I), the Whitechapel Bell Foundry has been in continuous business since then. It has however not always been called Whitechapel. The name has changed through the centuries, mostly to reflect the name of the bell founder who owned it at the time. The name 'Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd' did not come into use until the company was incorporated in 1968.

Senior Bell Hanger Neil Thomas from the world's most famous bell foundry, along with volunteer Tim Joiner (who visited WA 3 years ago in his then official capacity as Lord Mayor of Westminster), are currently in Perth to tinker our bells and give them the bell equivalent to a car's 100,000 k service.

Assisting them is local Steeple Keeper Henry Attfield, a member of St Martin's Society of Change Ringers. As a volunteer, Mr Attfield takes on the responsibility of the day to day maintenance of The Swan Bells.

During February and March, the Tower will be visited by two of the oldest change ringing societies in the world; The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths and The Ancient Society of College Youths. Established in 1747 and 1637 respectively, there was traditionally hostile rivalry 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 coordinated their visit to celebrate a 'first' in their histories. Both Societies current Master are Australian. Never before has anyone outside the UK been bestowed this honour.

The current Master of The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths is Peter Harrison who was born and raised in Adelaide and learnt to ring at St Peter's Cathedral. The current Master of The Ancient Society of College Youths is Phil Goodyer, an architect who was born and raised in Sydney.

These highly skilled Societies will be practising their ancient craft at The Bell Tower, Home of the Swan Bells from 19 February to 5 March. Dates and times vary for each Society

The Bell Tower is located in Perth's Barrack Square overlooking the picturesque Swan River and is open from 10am every day. The Bell Tower – Home of the Swan Bells, Perth.

**For more information visit www.thebelltower.com.au
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