

SHOREDITCH, ST LEONARD

The church is renowned from the nursery rhyme, 'Oranges and Lemons'. The old tower was 70 ft high and contained five bells. It is recorded that the sound of the bells gave pleasure to Queen Elizabeth I when she journeyed from Hatfield to London. In 1713 a storm blew down one part of the steeple, exposing the bells. These were sold in 1739 for the eight bells for the new church. They were cast by Thomas Lester, being the first ring he had undertaken on his own account since the death of Phelps and he was so pleased at the honour conferred that he gave a gift to the parish - recorded on one of the benefaction boards.

The curfew was rung at 8.00p.m in 1846.

VP: To give all the details of the previous bells would take up so much room that I have included the names only, as below.

Names inscribed on previous bells:-

Treble Mr W M Simpson, Mr. Josh Teale, Churchwardens in 1823.

4th bell Rev. Dr. Denne, Vicar, Wm Carpenter and George Denzell, Churchwardens 1756, with four coins.

Tenor Mr Wm Jennings, Mr Robert Prior, Churchwardens in 1820.

The eight bells were augmented to ten in 1765: in 1805 the two trebles were added: in 1913 John Warner & Sons recast the four smallest bells and rehung them in a new two-tier steel frame of Warner's 'Battleship' design. In 1968 John Taylor rehung the twelve bells, refurbished and cast a new sharp 2nd to provide a light eight, this bell being the gift of the Drapers' Company. The old tenor is displayed in the south aisle in the church in a purpose built frame with rope and wheel.

In 1805 the Society of Cumberland Youths raised the money for the two new bells to be added to the existing ten but the amount for the cost had to be raised all over again as the appointed treasurer absconded.

The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths takes its name from His Royal Highness William Duke of Cumberland. In 1746 the bells were ringing as the Duke was passing by upon his return to London after crushing the Jacobite uprising. The Society of Royal Cumberland Youths, associated with this tower, rang long length peals and many other peals, particularly during the 18th century. The last peal on the old bells was Shoreditch Surprise Major, rung on March 14th, 1994 before eight of the bells went to Bunbury Cathedral, near Perth, Western Australia. After much fund-raising efforts, the present bells were dedicated on Sunday November 6th, 1994 by The Rt. Revd. Richard Chartres, Bishop of Stepney. The first peal was rung the next day in memory of Harry Colburn whose memorial service took place whilst the peal was in progress.

Source: Church guide 1975, p 2; H B Walters, manuscript; J R Jerram, manuscript - in the care of The Revd. D L Cawley; *Daily Telegraph* March 16, 1994; *Ringling World* May 14, 1943 p 212, February 14, 1969 p 118, September 2, 1994 p 871, November 25, 1994 p 1159 and December 23/30, 1994 p 1254.