



Bell No.1 (Treble)

Dove Guide details

Weight: 6cwt-1qt-0lbs;

Nominal: 1477.0 Hz;

Note: F#;

Diameter: 28.63";

Cast: 1869 by John Taylor & Co. Loughborough;

Canons removed.

The corner stone of Mirfield Parish Church tower was laid by Capt. Ingham on October 19th 1867. The bells were cast by Taylors of Loughborough in 1869 and installed in the tower on October 15th 1870. First rung on July 15th 1871 the bells would have been used for the first wedding in the church of Elizabeth Gertrude Ingham on October 19th 1871.

Much of the history of the work done on St Mary's bells was compiled by two tower captains, first by A. Robinson between 1908 and 1983 and later S. Wooller in the 1980's. A. Robinson's grave headstone in the shape of a bell is in the church graveyard. Major work on the bells was carried out in 1934 and 1983. It is notable that records show that up to the 1920's new ropes were made locally in Birstall and Gomersal. In 1934 Taylors replaced the plain bearings for roller bearings (which we now use), various clappers were replaced, including No.10, wheels were repaired and pulley boxes and bell frame corner brackets put on; at a cost of £238. We had a gudgeon shear this year on No.5 bell and it happened in 1956 too. No. 6 bell had the same problem in 1974. In 1983 Taylors put new cast iron headstocks on No.1 and No.4 bells and re-tuned them. Also in 1983 on August 22nd, Taylors provided a full inspection of the bells and quoted £7,560 plus VAT for a full bell restoration. This restoration was not acted upon.

Here is a small section of Taylor's inspection report of 1983:

'The bells were cast at a period during which much development was taking place with regard to the profiles of bells in relation to their diameters and their corresponding weights and the notes which they sound. In the peal at Mirfield the four largest bells follow basically the shape which was later adopted as the correct shape for bells. The three largest bells were also cast with flat heads, as is modern practice. In the case of the seven smallest bells the bell shapes vary considerably and 3rd, 4th and 5th bells in particular are of a very squat shape and are very heavy for their diameters. The two smallest bells are quite long in the waist and also heavy for their diameters. The seven smallest bells were cast with canons upon their heads. Canons are loops of bell metal which were cast on the heads of bells at the time of founding for the purpose of suspending them from their headstocks by means of metal strap fastenings.

Tonally the bells leave a great deal to be desired. The larger bells are only somewhat sharp of being in correct tune but the smaller bells are very wild in respect of the five internal harmonics of a bell which are brought into relationship when the bell is tuned. In the case of the treble and 4th bells which are at present at our works it is proposed that these be tuned and that they be brought down slightly in tone and corrected as far as is possible.'

In the photograph of No. 1 bell can be seen the metal headstock (canons removed).