

# St Paul's Bells Project Update

June 2018

The 12 bells of St Paul's have hung in the Cathedral's north west tower since 1878. Over the years the bells have rung out for coronations, jubilees, royal births and other great national and City occasions including the annual Lord Mayor's Show. After 140 years of near constant use, the bells and their frame were beginning to show signs of significant deterioration — posing the real risk of the bells in time falling silent. In partnership with ringers, City Livery Companies, the City of London and other supporters, we are therefore renovating the bells and the frame — enabling the bells to ring out again well into the next century.



The second largest bell, the 11th, lowered from the tower prior to being loaded onto a waiting lorry

## Progress summary

After significant planning and extensive preparatory work, the 12 Cathedral bells were removed from the tower on the 8th and 9th June, and were transported to Taylor's Bell Foundry in Loughborough for overhauling.

## Project background

The Bells Project is a complex programme of works involving a number of specialist contractors collaborating closely. Key project activities are as follows:

- Removing the bells from the tower and transporting them to the Bell Foundry
- Extensive cleaning of the bells to enhance their appearance and sound
- Significant overhauling of the bell frame to increase safety
- Replacement of deteriorated bell headstocks, clappers and wheels
- Conservation and upgrading of the bell Ringing Room
- Return and rehang of the bells.

## Project update detail

The restoration plan went out to tender and the contract was awarded to John Taylor of Loughborough — the UK's last remaining bell founder. Decant of the bells was scheduled for January 2018 but significant unforeseen challenges were experienced. When installed in the late 1870s, the bells were winched into place inside the north west tower. In the intervening years the construction of the Kitchener memorial in the chapel below meant that this was not a viable extraction route — especially for the bigger bells.

It was therefore necessary to develop a way to lower the bells down the outside of the tower. Given the size of the bells (the second largest ring in the country) this was new territory for Taylor's and the other specialist contractors. An extraction method was eventually designed using a scaffold at the level of the bells with a lifting beam to raise the bells from the frame and to lower them down the Cathedral's west front. The complex and unknown nature of this process led to unexpected delays in the decant.

The extraction went without a hitch, and over two days all 12 bells were lowered to the ground, loaded onto a flatbed lorry — to the interest of visitors and passers by — and transported to Loughborough.

Although received by Taylor's later than anticipated, the company still sufficient time to renovate and clean the bells over the next three months in time for their return in September. We anticipate that they will ring officially for the first time on 1st November, marking both All Saint's Day and the 140th anniversary of their dedication.

## Project finances

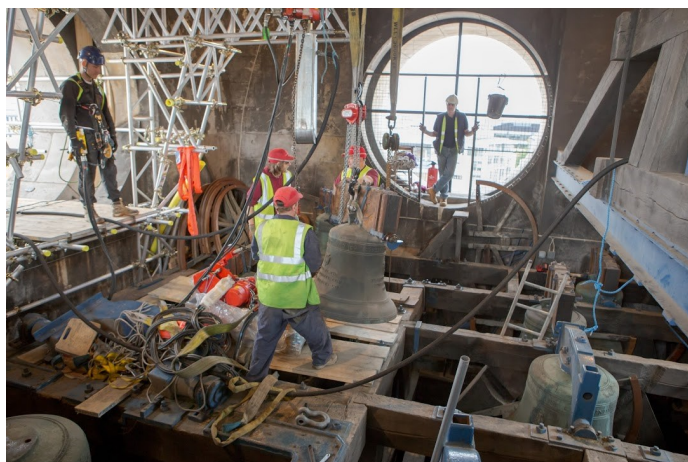
The total project cost is £410k and we fortunate to have secured the necessary funding from the following sources:

A J & J Frost	£30,000
Ancient Society of College Youths	£30,000
Clothworkers' Company	£30,000
Corporation of London	£30,000
Drapers' Company	£30,000
Fishmongers' Company	£30,000
Grocers' Company	£30,000
M C Faulkes & A R Heward	£30,000
Merchant Taylors' Company	£30,000
P & G Rogers	£30,000
St Paul's Cathedral Ringers	£30,000
Turners' Company	£30,000
Other support (combined)	£50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£410,000</b>

## Your support

We are extremely grateful for your commitment to St Paul's Bells Project, which has enabled this vital work to go ahead. On behalf of the Cathedral Chapter, the ringers and our community, sincere thanks for your generous support.

# The Bells Project in pictures



⇒ The bells were hoisted from their frame

⇒ A lifting beam supported the bells onto an exterior scaffold



⇒ Each bell was winched very slowly down the west front of the Cathedral



⇒ A waiting lorry took the bells to the Taylor's Bell Foundry in Loughborough in two journeys



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