



The Memorial Bells in the 21st Century



The Memorial Bells were returned for repair to the place where they were first cast in 1921. Taylors of Loughborough is one of the oldest bell foundries in the UK.

Restoration of the Bells

In 2017 the Cathedral secured a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to allow the World War I Memorial Bells to be cleaned and repainted. Consequently, in January 2018, the bells once again fell silent and left Bradford, for Loughborough, but this time by road, not rail, where the necessary work was carried out by Taylor and Co, the Bell Foundry that originally cast the peal of ten Memorial Bells nearly a hundred years ago in 1921. The clappers, crown staple assemblies, sliders, runners and rollers (all important parts of the bells and their mechanism) were restored.

Funding raised by
The National Lottery

and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



Heritage, People and Community

The Heritage Lottery Fund's support also provided an opportunity for volunteers from the community and local schools to get involved at the Cathedral, working with educators and heritage professionals to use archive materials and find out more about bell ringing, the World War I Memorial Bells and the history of the Cathedral and its people in times of adversity, war, peace, remembrance and commemoration. Some of the stories they discovered, most notably the forgotten story of the amazing Joe Hardcastle, feature in this exhibition.



Children from Lapage Primary School, Year 5, learned about bell ringing, the Memorial Bells and Bradford Cathedral's long history at the heart of our city.



Home Again

In March 2018 the Memorial Bells returned home to Bradford fully refurbished and restored to their former glory. They rang out across the City again for the first time on April 2nd, 2018 proclaiming the most important festival of the Christian year: Easter Day

Ringling into the Future

Joe Hardcastle's journal records how his band of bell ringers were hard to replace and his fears that there may not be enough people to continue ringing; it tells of the first woman joining the ranks in 1916 and as he continues to write, he records several new male and female 'young' ringers 'learning the ropes' at the Cathedral. By the time Joe retired from bell ringing, as a result of an accident in 1951 when he was aged 81, the next generation of bell ringers were already enjoying ringing the changes. When Joe died in 1958 at the age of 88, he knew that the Memorial Bells and the future of bell ringing at the Cathedral were safe.

However, sometimes history repeats itself. Here and now in the 21st Century, the Cathedral once again is seeking new bell ringers; age, gender and experience unimportant, people of all faiths and none welcome. All that is needed is a desire to continue Joe's legacy, ensuring that the Memorial Bells still call to people across the City, ringing out in remembrance of sacrifice and in gratitude for victory, peace and freedom and welcoming all to Bradford's Cathedral, an ancient place of Christian worship and civic pride.



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