

THE RINGERS



*The St Mary's Cathedral
Bellringers*

The ringing and care of the bells is entrusted to the St Mary's Basilica Society of Change Ringers, a small group of men and women of various ages and backgrounds. Both Catholics and non-Catholics are members of the Society and have been since the bells were first rung in 1844.



Bell	Note	Weight (kg)
0 <i>St Thomas</i>	A#	281
1 <i>St Francis</i>	G#	301
2 <i>St Benedict</i>	F#	332
3 <i>St Patrick</i>	E#	335
4 <i>St John the Baptist</i>	D#	365
5 <i>St Joseph</i>	C#	394
6 <i>Ora Pro Nobis</i>	B#	415
6b <i>St James</i>	B	417
7 <i>Mary Mother of God</i>	A#	456
8 <i>Nomen Jesu Christi</i>	G#	559
9 <i>St Edward</i>	F#	753
10 <i>Our Lady Help of Christians</i>	E#	902
11 <i>St Michael</i>	D#	1248
12 <i>St Bede</i>	C#	1741



Visitors Welcome

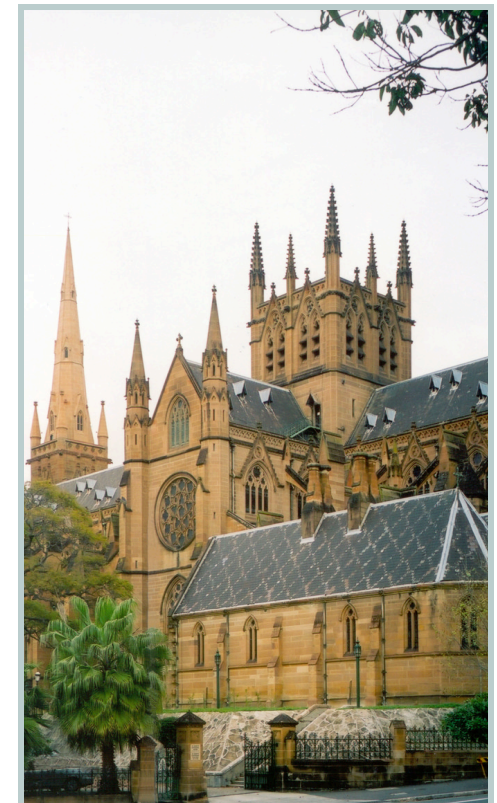
Practice Night
Thursday 6-8 pm

Service Ringing
Sunday 10-10.30 am
Wednesday 12-1 pm

If you would like to see the bells,
or if you are interested in learning to ring,
please contact the Cathedral office
during business hours on 9220 0400

The bellringers gratefully acknowledge
the assistance of the City of Sydney

The Bells of St Mary's Cathedral Sydney



**St Mary's Basilica
Society of
Change Ringers**

THE BELLS

The Cathedral bells have a unique place in Australian history. There have been three separate rings and the first ring of 8 bells was the first ringing peal in the continent. This ring was cast in Whitechapel, London (as were the following rings) and rang for the first time on New Year's Day 1844.

These bells were replaced in 1882, and a century later an entirely new ring was ordered, this time a total of 14 bells in a steel frame. These bells rang for the first time in 1986.

This fine peal of bells is the most comprehensive modern ring in Australia. Twelve is the maximum number of bells rung at any time and the two additional bells give at least eight distinctive, different rings: majestic heavy rings of 12, 10, 8 and 6 bells; medium-weight rings of 10, 8 and 6; and a light 6. This means that ringers of all standards can join in.

The bells are housed in the central tower of the Cathedral and are rung from a room directly below, where the sound is at a comfortable level. The 10 m² ringing chamber is 40 m above the floor of the Cathedral and is reached by a spiral staircase of 111 steps.



The bells of
St Mary's Cathedral

The bells are rung regularly before Solemn Mass on Sundays and on major Feast Days, and from noon to 1 pm on Wednesdays. The bells are also rung by arrangement for weddings and funerals and to mark important civic occasions. The bells of St Mary's were heard leading the ringing that marked the centenary of Australian Federation.

BELL RINGING

The bells are rung in the English tradition. Each bell is attached to a wheel, and by pulling on a rope (when the bell is in the mouth-up position) the bell can be rotated back and forth through a full circle. This ensures that the clapper strikes the bell only once per rotation, giving the ringers precise control over the sound of the bells.

As a bell rung in this manner takes about two seconds to strike, it is not possible for the same note to ring out quickly in succession as would be required in tunes. Hence the bells ring what are known as *changes*.

In change ringing, each ringer rings a bell one after another. The ringing begins with the bells being rung down the scale, a change known as *rounds*. The order of the bells is then varied, either by a conductor calling one ringer to ring after another, or by some preordained series of changes. The ringing returns to rounds before ending.

The series of preordained changes memorised by ringers are known as *methods*. Methods progress from rounds and back again with none of the changes in between being repeated—that is, the bells are never

rung in the same order. The complete number of changes that can be rung on 7 bells is 5040. An extent of this length is known as a *peal* and can take over three hours to ring.

The sequence of changes opposite is a method for six bells, called *Plain Bob Minor*. A ringer needs to memorise the blue line that runs through the method, which is the path that each bell follows. There are hundreds of methods, all differing in complexity, for varying numbers of bells.

While some of the bells at St Mary's are heavy (up to 1741 kg) no great physical strength is needed to ring them. However, ringing does require a mastery of the correct technique, along with developing concentration and a sense of rhythm. Learning to ring will bring you years of enjoyment and satisfaction.

