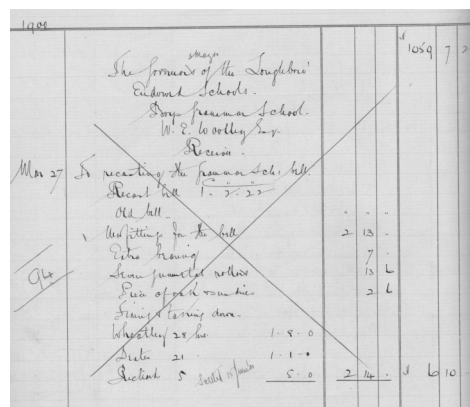
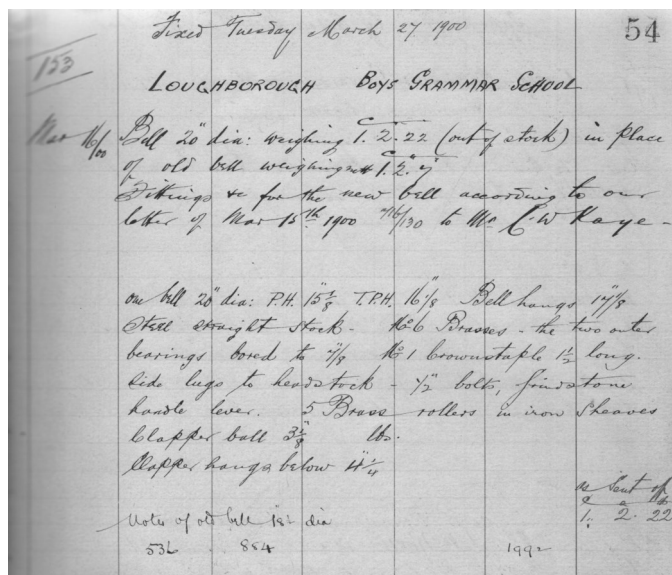


The School's Bells

All of a sudden one Saturday an email appeared from Chris Pickford who is the official archivist for Taylor's Bell Foundry. He had come across my booklet on the 'Houses of Burton Walks' on the digital archive which features E.Denison Taylor living in 'Buckland' from 1913 to 1947. I replied and mentioned that the School had educated not only E.Denison (LGS 1872-79) but also his brothers John (1861-69), Pryce (1872-79) and Owen (1876-83).

More than that I also pointed out that in the *Loughburian* of May 1900 the following was written.

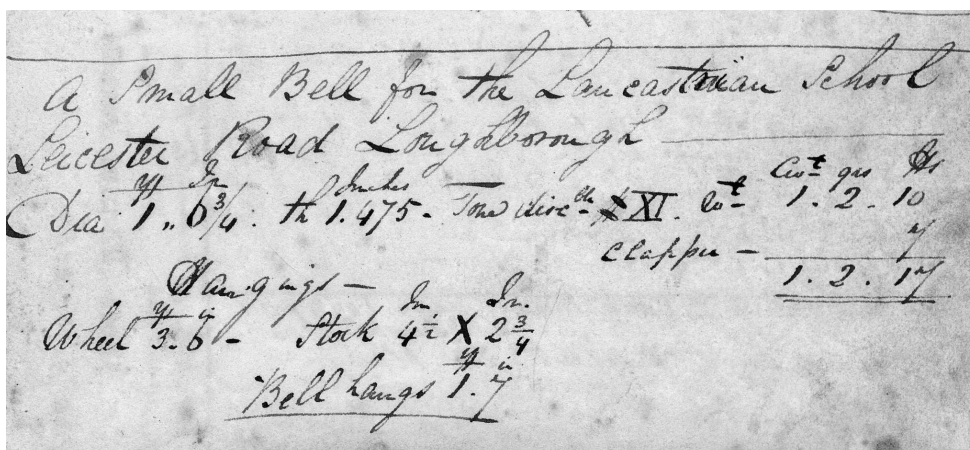
'Messrs J. Taylor and Sons have very generously presented us with a new School Bell in remembrance of their long connection with the Grammar School. It is a very decided improvement on the old one, and even Old Boys who must so often have welcomed the dulcet tones of the vanished bell will not regret its disappearance when they listen to its successor.'



He replied with the invoices for the bell, so initially it looked as if the Taylor's had not been as generous as we thought! A little later a further email appeared.

'I've also looked again at the daybook entry for the 1900 replacement, and they only charged for the fittings. There is no charge for the bell (nor any allowance for the old metal). So honours is exonerated!'

So it was fixed on Tuesday March 27th and was 'straight out of stock' not cast specially. We can see that the cost of fitting was £6 10s.



He added:-

'I've checked the records and it looks as though Taylors did supply the original bell in 1852 – for the Lancasterian School, Leicester Road (copy of entry attached). Without the clapper it weighed 1-2-10'

You will see that this bell was not particularly large, it is described as a small bell, but it had an interesting history as when John Colgrove resigned as Headmaster in 1893, effectively forced out over a dispute over the introduction of German, he took the bell (along with boys, staff and cups!) with him to set up a rival School in Burton House across the road. That bell was later recast by Taylor's, returned to the school and since 1993 has resided on the wall of the Burton Hall.



During World War One the *Loughburian* of January 1915 records:-

'Mid-day is recognised as the time when prayer is to be offered for our soldiers, our sailors, and our allies, and for those in any sorrow, anxiety, or distress on account of the war.

During this term a few strokes will be rung on the school bell just before noon. When the bell is heard, the boys in each classroom will stand and silence will be kept for a minute to give opportunity for us to join our prayers to those offered throughout the empire.'

That was to continue not just for the Easter term in 1915 but for the whole war with the school bell being replaced by the clock and chimes at mid-day from January 1917.

However in World War Two it was slightly different. The *Loughburian* of May 1940 reports:-

'The School bell has once more resumed its duties, suspended during last term on account of the war. The authorities now permit its use "with discretion ". We could wish that the School syren behaved with equal discretion, but we are getting used to its occasional whims.'

Apart from that brief period in 1940 the bell you hear today has rung continually for 120 years. When I arrived in 1978 it was still being physically pulled by boys, under the 'supervision' of a prefect, at the end of breaks with the rope dangling down in the corridor between the entrance to the tower and G1. As you can imagine this was not a very efficient system as the ringers of it were notoriously unreliable when the rope wasn't stuck the rope was nearly always stuck so it couldn't be rung in the first place!

The question of electrification of the bell and clock was first raised in 1946 by the Old Boys:-

'A war Memorial Sub-Committee has been formed...at the moment the Committee have two proposals before them. Firstly the provision of a deep toned bell for the School Clock to chime the hours and electrification of the clock.'

Fortunately they went with their second proposal for a Memorial screen in the Burton Chapel in the Parish Church.

Thus electrification didn't take place and so in 1978 like the School Bell everything was done manually. The three "trains" of the clock ("going" [the bit that drives the time], "striking" [hourly] and "chiming" [quarterly]) were all wound by hand by Walter Stock who was the Physics lab technician. Originally it was just a short walk from the L block but when the new Science Block opened in 1963 he used to cycle up the Quad, climbed the stairs and did the winding with the winding handle (not unlike a canal lock key only bigger). He also used to get the clock to keep correct time by adding or removing the odd penny from the pendulum to compensate for temperature change. It is rumoured that the clock stopped at the exact time he died.



In the late 1980's dry rot was discovered in the whole of the L Block and the Tower and all the floors in the Tower had to be replaced – which meant moving the clock out of T2. When everything was restored, the clock was put back in and the case in which it is today was built round it. An added complication the clock could no longer have weight chains hanging between floors as used to be the case (winding up manually) because of more recent fire regulations about openings between floors. Hence the installation of shorter chains and automatic electrical re winding. There were two motors, one for clock and one for chimes. Because the chains were only short, the rewinding happened frequently and and-winding was a thing of the past!

Sadly, the auto-rewind motors and their controls began to show their age and by 2001 the clock rarely showed the right time. At the same time Peter Sergeant had the idea of putting a clock face on the South side of the Tower so that the boys playing on the field in the summer had no excuse to be late for lessons! Smiths of Derby, the original makers of the clock, came and confirmed that the two clock faces would be able to show the correct time by installing an identical electric clock mechanism. In 2002 the Queen celebrated her Golden Jubilee and to mark this the Parents' Association offered to fund the second clock face and which was installed in 2003.

At the same time the question was asked as to whether the School Bell could also be mechanised, to which the answer was 'Yes' and so an electro-magnetic hammer (as opposed to a clapper) was installed adjacent to the bell and the striking of the original 1900 bell is now controlled by a computer which resides in the clock cabinet.



But what about the original clock and chimes?

The *Loughburian* of January 1917 explains:-

'By the time this is in the hands of our readers a clock with chimes should have been fixed in the tower of the school buildings. It has been given to the School by the headmaster and Mrs Bingham Turner in memory of their elder son, Roger Bingham Turner, who was killed in action in Mesopotamia on April 9th 1916.

The clock has been constructed by Smith and Son of Derby, makers of the new great clock for St Paul's, the four bells have been cast by Taylor's. The dial, a skeleton one of 4ft 6in in diameter, will be fixed just below the battlemented top of the tower, on the western face, and into the framework is worked the family motto: "Vive ut Vivas: Live (now) so that you may live (hereafter)." The escapement will be of the modern 'pin-wheel' type which is capable of keeping very accurate time.

The bells will be placed on the roof of the tower, and are four in number, the heaviest of about 5 ½ cwt. Being that on which the hours will be struck. It bears the inscription:

"In Piam Memoriam

R.B.Turner

Qui Mortem Orbiit

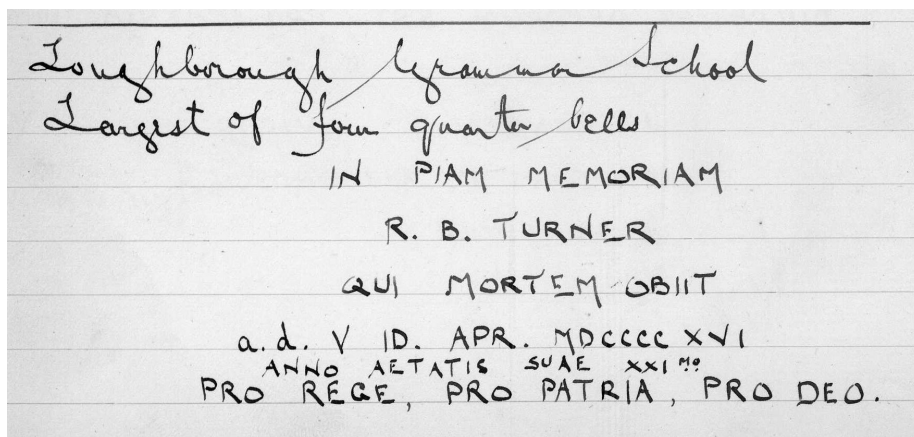
a.d.V.ID.Apr. MDCCCCXVI

Anno Aetatis Suae XXI mo

Pro Rege, Pro Patria, Pro Deo"

It is tuned to C and the other bells are tuned to A. G.F., and upon these the four quarters of the Cambridge Chimes will be struck. An addition to the mechanism of the train of wheels arranges for the striking part to be thrown out of gear during the night, or any twelve hours desired, so that even in war time it will not be necessary to be without the chimes during the day.'

Roger had been a pupil here, briefly, from May 1905 to April 1906 but was well known to the boarders in particular having been four when father became Headmaster and so grew up in School House. He then went to Charterhouse and was studying at Jesus College, Cambridge – also his father's old college – when he joined the army. Hence the choice of the Cambridge Chimes.



Now being in contact with Chris I was able to see what Taylor's had concerning the four bells that make the chimes on the clock. He replied with that inscription (above); the 'job sheet' which shows how they were cast and tuned and the invoice showing the cost at £113 3s 11d and a photo of the bells in the foundry before they were hung (at the end).

223		9/11			
LOUGHBOROUGH				GRAMMAR SCHOOL	
As Bells were set					
Di.	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.	Ch.
1.	1-6	1835.2	8-266	1-0-15	1-1-0
2.	1-5	1835	8-224	1-0-15	1-1-16
3.	1-4	1456.6	8-265	1-0-15	2-1-16
4.	2-6	1091.2	8-213	1-0-15	5-1-0
				11-1-0	
As Bells were set					
Di.	Ch.	P.H.	T.P.H.	As found	As set off
1.	1-6	1-15	1-15	1-0-25	1-0-17
2.	1-5	1-15	1-15	1-0-25	1-0-16
3.	1-4	1-15	1-15	1-0-25	2-1-16
4.	2-6	1-15	1-15	5-1-15	5-1-15
				11-0-16	
As Bells were set					
Di.	Ch.	P.H.	T.P.H.	As found	As set off
1.	446.5	446	1176	1456	1447
2.	426	896	1022	1253	1102
3.	380.5	767	906	1156	1503
4.	256	552	652	870.5	1152
As Bells were tuned					
Di.	Ch.	P.H.	T.P.H.	As found	As set off
1.	458.5	917.6	1091.2	1374.5	1835.2
2.	408.7	817.5	972.1	1224.2	1835
3.	364.1	728.3	866.1	1091.2	1456.6
4.	272.5	545.6	649	817.5	1091.2
When Tuned					
Di.	Ch.	P.H.	T.P.H.	As found	As set off
1.	459.75	918.5	1095	1364	1837
2.	409.25	818.5	974	1219	1834
3.	364.25	729	876	1094	1455.5
4.	273.25	546	652	822.5	1092.5

Completed 10th Jan 1907

Work was completed on 10th January 1917 and the May Loughburian starts:-

'The Turner Memorial Clock which was fixed in the Tower during the Christmas holidays has proved most useful already. It keeps excellent time now that it has been regulated, and the bells are audible for a good distance from the School.'

246					
Jan 10					
Set of four bells for Cambridge chimes for the new clock in the School House					
acc to quot: 24 Oct 1916 - 62/250					
1 st q:	1-0-17				
2 nd "	1-2-18				
3 rd "	2-1-3				
4 th "	5-1-15				
	10-1-25				
@ 9-15 per cwt:					
Adding the four bells & fixing to ground acc to quot: 23 Dec 16 47/250					
Inscription 95 letters at 2"					
Total 5-11-10					
102	2	3			
9	10				
1	11	8			
113	3	11			

There is one bell I have been unable to trace. The July edition of *The Loughburian* of July 1944 reports:-
'The School is indebted to Mr W.J.Tucker (OL) and the family of Mr and Mrs W.T.Tucker of 'Park Side' Charnwood Road, for the gift in memory of their parents of a handsome bell, cast originally for Leeds Cathedral in 1905 at Taylor's bell foundry. IT was acquired by Mr W.T.Tucker and used by him in the early days of amateur wireless transmission as his call signal.'

The lack of bells throughout the School to mark ends of lessons is something that all new staff and pupils find peculiar and is very rare in Schools. Headmasters, of course, have a different view. the most famous of which was Norman Walter.

Peter Hopkins, Head of English, takes up the story. 'The bell incident took place in the very early 1960s, when John Kitching (JBK) was still on the staff. I had a ringside seat!

The Hodson Hall was still only on the drawing-board and at that time the main staff room (CR1) was upstairs in the Barrow block (there was also a CR2, which was even smaller, down behind the swimming pool, used when you were teaching in the South block area). I think Short Break was then only 15 minutes, so some colleagues didn't reach the CR until perhaps 1047, but Norman Walter was always irritated about people not departing at about 1058 to be in their classes by 1100.

One morning, some earlier arrivals were puzzled to see that a bell-push had appeared on the CR wall, literally overnight. At break, everyone was chatting away or sipping tea as usual at 1058, when suddenly a (very loud!) bell shrilled out. There was sudden dead silence. "Your classes are waiting, gentlemen!" said Norman, and we all stumbled out into the quad, too surprised to speak!

But Norman had timed it badly. There was a staff meeting that very afternoon. When it came to AOB, John Kitching – a good linguist with a fiery personality – raised the matter with characteristic aggression: "Could we be told the **PURPOSE** of this . . . this **BELL** which we heard this morning?" Of course, the question was rhetorical – or at least disingenuous – because, like all of us, Kitch knew the answer. Norman was immediately on the defensive. However, he had not anticipated the ensuing barrage from the Heavy Artillery: to a man, all the most senior members of staff were against it. It was the only time I ever saw total staff unanimity: this ranged from the likes of Harry Murray and Frank Srawley to the Marxist Art master, Len Major – who spoke of "a breakdown of understanding between Management and Shop Floor" and enlivened things by ironically suggesting the fitting of a factory hooter on the Tower!

Norman Walter climbed down immediately, though I suspect we were thereafter a bit more conscientious about time-keeping as a result – at least for a while! Subsequent rumour had it that Norman removed the bell with his own hands that very same evening.'

Subsequent Heads have had similar ideas but have never been so brave as to even try to implement bells throughout the School.

There are two bells that, of course, are very close to my heart. The first is the Cricket Pavilion Bell, which is rung to indicate that the players need to get onto the field. That was presented by A.Deakin (LGS 1902-1909) who obviously liked bells as recalling his time at the school in *The Loughburian* in July 1969 wrote:-

'When Sports Day drew near, a boy named Fairfax Scott, who walked each morning from his home at Mountsorrel, would wait at the Cemetery gates until he heard the school bell. Then sprint his way to school before (he hoped) the bell stopped!'





Secondly no piece on School Bells could be complete without reference to the hand bell given to me by Mr Starkings that I rang at the end of every lunchtime for 11 years. It was not the first handbell to be used. *'The handbell in use in the School for many years past having cracked, a new one with a clear and stirring tone has been presented by Mr J.W.Taylor of the famous Bell Foundry. We hereby express our gratitude for his kindness.'* (Loughburian Sept 1911) I felt very humble when it was given to me, suitably inscribed, on my retirement in 2016. It resides in my lounge and just occasionally I take it into the garden to ring...where, with a northerly wind, I can also hear the Dixon chimes and more importantly the School Bell.

In January 1917 the local press printed a letter from 'An Old Resident' living in Park Road. Part of it reads:- *'When one realises that the clock and its chimes will tell out the time, not only to this generation, but probably to many future generations, that the musical tones of its bells will echo along the lanes of time long after this sad war and its horrors have ceased to be, also that in the near future the sound of its chimes will cause many of us to cast a backward thought to the gallant lad in whose memory it has been erected.....No better inspiration could have been offered to the future scholars of this fine old School, and one cannot help but realise that Loughborough is richer in more ways than one.'* I think we would all concur with that.

The bells today show the effects of the past 100 years and are certainly not as shiny as they were before installation by Taylors, with whom the School has had a lasting association ever since the School moved to its present site.

