

## A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL IN 100 OBJECTS

### THE BELL

Size: From lip to crown c. 20in / c. 50cm. Diameter of mouth c. 23in / c. 57cm.

Description: The bronze bell has an iron clapper with a ring, and on its waist is a plate, welded to the side with the inscription

A & T BURT LTD  
FOUNDERS  
DUNEDIN  
1903



Discussion: A & T Burt Limited was established in Dunedin by brothers Alexander and Thomas Burt in 1862. They started as plumbers and gas fitters but soon branched into manufacturing drinking fountains, fire-fighting systems, rabbit-extermimators, brewing and distilling equipment, passenger and goods lifts, boilers and bells.



Our bell was first used by the Mount Albert Fire Brigade. It sat atop a tower and as there is a ring under the clapper there must have been a rope to pull it.

It was donated to the School by Mr J.H. Kinnear, presumably after the Fire Brigade developed a more modern system. Mr Kinnear was the father of L.F. Kinnear (a 1922 original from Auckland Grammar School). Les Kinnear played in the 1924 First XV, the first team to win the Auckland Championship. Les's sons Alan and Bob are also Albertians.

The bell arrived in 1927 and its arrival was reported in *The Albertian* of that year, pp 17-18 by A.F.B., V.B (AF Budd). "Early in the first term, on our arrival at School one morning we were rather horrified to see the carpenter erecting what appeared to be a scaffold in the quadrangle ... after several days of eager expectations we were at last relieved to see ... a rather unfeeling piece of metal ... possessed of a sonorous voice." The report goes on to say that as it was rung by small boys it was padlocked.

The Headmaster in his 1925 report noted that: "Several benefactions have come to the School this year ... A School bell which will be in keeping with the fine building has been presented by J.H.Kinnear, Esq., to whom also we have been indebted for much previous help."

Initially it was used only once or twice a day and the end of periods were still marked by a hand bell (now lost). The new bell was later used to announce a fire drill, an echo of its original use.

At the beginning the bell was rung by the janitor Tom (Tooley) Walker, and, as Russell Stone reported in *Tradition and Change* (pp 26-27) "Sometimes, with rhythmic tread and swinging arms he would march across to ring the bell ...". He would have marched across the quadrangle from the tuck-shop which was housed in a small room at the south end of the shelter shed (demolished to make way for the library building).

In later years it was rung in some years by prefects and in others by fourth form "bell boys". It was replaced in the 1980s by electric bells. In April 2009, 82 years after it was installed and 106 years since it was cast, the bell was removed for cleaning. It was returned a few weeks later. It is now used on rare ceremonial occasions. When it was in common use the sound carried a great distance in air. It could be clearly heard in the upper floors of the research building (built for the DSIR) on Mount Albert Road. People living nearby were well aware of the structure of the school day.

Brian Murphy