

Addendum No 2 to *Musical Handbells*

A RECENT DISCOVERY



I was recently shown this shop bell which has the initials IP on the waist inside the bell. It looks like a late eighteenth, or early nineteenth century casting which has been fitted with a wire clapper and a solid iron ball. It is easy to tell it had been a shop bell; it still has the remnants of the spring attached to the argent!

The bell is quite small, being only 52 mm in height from the lip to the shoulder and 77 mm in diameter. As may be seen from the photograph, it has three rings near the exterior lip and a button under the argent. The number 4 on the crown is interesting. It is unusual to have



such a large vertical serif at the end of the horizontal stroke.



The initials on the interior waist are 11 mm high, again with very broad serifs. At first sight the second letter appears to be an F but the rubbing clearly shows it to be the letter P. As with most shop bells, both the interior and exterior have been left as cast.

I·P

A search of the existing literature gives a choice of three possible founders with these initials. The first of these is John Peele, of London, who was casting up till 1752. The second is J Pyke, of Bridgewater, whom one reference suggests was active between 1726 and 1781 whilst another considers he was working between 1776 to 1806. The third possible founder is John Pennington IV, who was at Stoke Climsland between 1766 and 1823. Of course, it might not be any of these men!

I have never seen any reference to small bells being made by the Pennington dynasty who cast so many tower bells for Cornwall. So, if I had to select one of these three I would favour J Pyke, of Bridgewater, mainly because other Bridgewater founders cast shop bells, servant's bells and handbells. The most important of these was John Kingston; to whose handbells and shop bells I refer to in *Musical Handbells*, pages 40 and 41. You can obtain more information on him from the book!