

24 to be converted into bells'. Sakers were small muzzle-loading cannon. These sakers were made of bronze, an alloy of copper and tin called gun metal and this name survives today for a particular alloy of copper and tin. Bell metal was of course a bronze, with copper and tin roughly in the proportions of 13 parts of copper to 4 parts of tin.

Several bells were cast for the castle in the next few years and one of them survives. It hangs in St. Mary-in-Castro on a wooden frame, bearing the date 1639 and the initials I. G.

With the coming to an end of the Stuart line of kings the castle ceased to be a royal residence and became instead a military barracks. No rector was appointed to serve the church there after 1690, and the church fell into ruin and its bells were silent.

And now the story of the bells in the Pharos takes a new twist with the emergence of a character called George Rooke. He came of an old county family whose country seat was near Canterbury. He entered the Royal Navy, achieved rapid promotion, became a vice-admiral and was knighted. Turning his attention to politics he was not however as successful. To bribe the electors of Portsmouth, whose votes he solicited, he got official permission to transfer the bells from the Pharos to a church in his desired constituency in Portsmouth.

This gave rise to the old local saying that 'the bells of Dover Castle can be heard in Portsmouth'.

There are two tail pieces to this story. Vice-Admiral Sir George Rooke was indeed elected to parliament from Portsmouth but there his success ended. After a period he lost his seat there and retired to the family estate. The second concerns the small bell still in St. Mary-in-Castro. Why was it not also sent to Portsmouth? Perhaps it got lost at Dover when the others were sent away? Or did some unwilling old Dovorian hide it under a pile of rubbish in silent protest at the stealing of the other bells? We shall never know, but a few years ago this old bell was discovered under a pile of rubbish and was restored to its place at the church to which it rightfully belongs and where we can still see it today.

In 1724 Samuel Knight, a famous early 18th century bell founder re-cast the six bells of St. Mary-the-Virgin into eight tuneable bells and these are the ones we still hear today. Samuel was perhaps the leading bell founder of his time and many of his bells still sound out across the rolling acres of the county. In the eastern part of the county we have perhaps the three finest sets of his bells which survive. They are at Whitstable, Wingham and, of course, in Dover.

STOP PRESS – 2

A busy year for Dover's BLACK WATCH

THE BLACK WATCH is the newest acquisition of FRED OLSEN LINES and joins the *BLACK PRINCE* in making Dover its Home Port. Unfortunately she has encountered several problems before setting off on her maiden voyage — due to start on 15th November for a 21-day cruise in the Mediterranean.

Thereafter she has an exciting programme of itineraries. The brochure shows that after two shorter cruises in December to Spain and the Canaries, she embarks, on 4th January 1997, on her longest cruise of the year, a 64-night trip around Africa, returning to Dover on 9th March at 08.00. On the same day at 18.00 she leaves again for the Caribbean.

In the summer she alternates between the Mediterranean and the Norwegian fjords, then has a 24-night cruise to Canada and New England in the fall.