



# Big Ben: The Bell, the Clock and the Tower

*Peter MacDonald*

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## **Big Ben: The Bell, the Clock and the Tower** Peter MacDonald

Big Ben is perhaps the most famous clock in the world. This new book tells its story, from its conception in the 1830s, after fire destroyed the ancient Palace of Westminster, to its establishment as the national timepiece and the symbol of Britain up to the present day. Big Ben is a character, an icon known to millions through the film *The Thirty-Nine Steps* - in which one of the protagonists clings to the hands as he swings above London - but above all a masterpiece of horological engineering intended to set the time for Parliament. Designed and built by the most forward thinking of clockmakers, it represents the pinnacle of turret clockbuilding. While the music of the bells is mellow and harmonious, its history was not. It took 25 years of bitter rivalry, backbiting and legal proceedings before the clock was finished. This engaging book tells in anecdotal style the story of the clock, reveals how it was named; how the music was composed; and how it was cast and how it is maintained up to the present day.

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