

Humble Mrs. Thorne left us no photograph. Can anybody help?

## The First Lady of the First WW1 Memorial Carillon

First things first, Mrs. Anna Elizabeth Thorne was the wife of the 'War Mayor' of Cape Town, Mr. William Thorne (Junior) 1918-1920. She was also the daughter-in-law of the other, older Mayor, Sir William Thorne (senior) 1901-1904. Yes, both father and son had been competent mayors of the Mother City of South Africa, Cape Town.

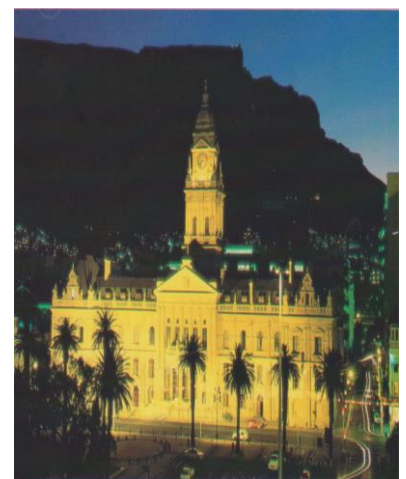


It does not often happen that a father and son who share the same name and surname are both elected as the Mayor of a principal city like Cape Town. It happened in the Thorne family. Both gentlemen were in office during difficult and trying times. William Thorne (senior) served during the Anglo Boer War and William Thorne (junior) during World War One. Both men were competent, successful and were much appreciated by the citizens. The elder Mr. William Thorne was even knighted by King George V to become Sir William Thorne. The saying "behind every successful man, stands a successful woman" was proved correct in the case of Mrs. Anna Thorne. She was remarkable. Mrs. Thorne was the 'belle' of the bells of the Cape Town's memorial carillon and the first in the world to think of the idea as well as to place an order for a War Memorial Carillon.

### Father, Sir William Thorne

It was during her father-in-law's term of office as Lord Mayor that the City Hall, Cape Town, was built. The corner stone was laid on 29 August 1900 and the building was officially inaugurated on 25 July 1905. While the City Hall was under construction Mr. and Mrs. William Thorne (junior) watched the progress with interest especially when the clock mechanism plus the 5 original bells (that peal the Westminster Chime) were installed. In 1904 a proposal had been made for the installation of 12 bells but an order for only 5 bells was placed (the current number 3, 5, 10, 12 & 14 with J B Joyce & Co. These 5 bells were intended to sound the Westminster Chime and clock strikes. The installation of the clock mechanism and bells was done on the precise instructions of Lord Grimthorpe who had installed the same mechanisms, clock and carillon bells in the tower of Big Ben to sound the Westminster Chime over London. It is also interesting to know that the clock face in the City Hall, Cape Town, is half the size of the one of Big Ben.

In 1918 Mr. William (junior) and Mrs. Anna Thorne became the Mayoral couple. By 11 November 1918 when the Armistice came into effect Mrs. Thorne had already thought of increasing the number of bells to form a Memorial War Carillon dedicated to the memory of the soldiers (Springboks), who had died in WW1 including the Municipal staff members who had fallen. A "Carillon Fund" was started and Mrs. Thorne as Mayoress had a proposal published in the Cape Times and the Cape Argus on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1918. The idea of the carillon was the first carillon worldwide that had been conceived as a war memorial. The idea appealed to the many war weary citizens who were then in a state of jubilation because the fighting had stopped.



Miss Dorothea Fairbridge, another leading lady of Cape Town at that time expressed the following sentiments during the appeal for funds:

“Let us take our thoughts forward to the centuries to come, through which the bells of Cape Town will keep alive and proclaim to all comers the deep and humble gratitude of her women in this year of 1918 towards those knights of God who laid down their lives in this the greatest of all the crusades. Our sick and wounded soldiers, the lonely and the desolate have been cared for, and will be a holy charge for years to come. But when they and we have passed away, the bells will still remain to cry aloud to all the world our thankfulness, to ring out the Mother City’s gratitude for the great and noble spirit of those men who died that others might be free.”



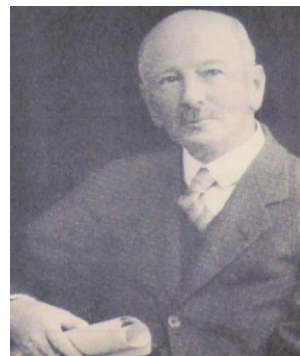
Dorothea Fairbridge

Requests for price quotations were posted to different bell foundries. A request to the celebrated Taylor Foundry in Loughborough, England was the successful one.

It took years to realize the project with many people and organizations contributing in different ways. On 18 September 1923 Mr. and Mrs. Thorne went to England to actually be present and watch the casting of the two bells, G & D Natural. The inscriptions on these bells are:

G Natural: Mayor W J Thorne and  
Anna E Thorne. CBE  
Mayoress made me.  
Peace – Thanksgiving, 1918.

D Natural: Delville Wood – July 1916  
To commemorate the valour of  
The South African Brigade.  
The praise of the City is the  
Praise of these men, for they  
Made her great.

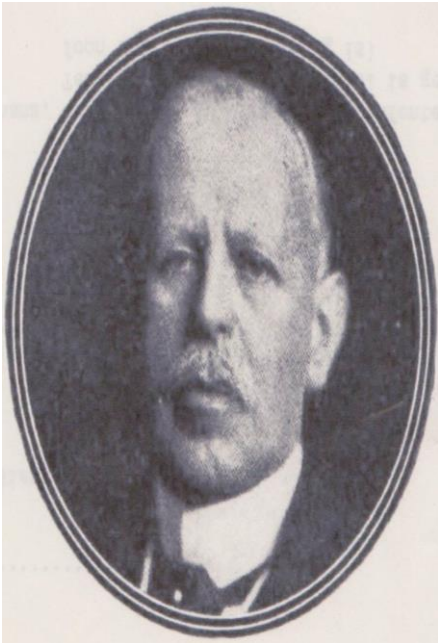


**Sir William Thorne’s son, W. J Thorne, was appointed managing director of Stuttafords and became Mayor of Cape Town. He was noted for his excellent public work.**

The comment entered in the relevant book at the foundry as to the donor of the Delville Wood bell reads: “The gift of a lady citizen.” Mrs. Anna Elizabeth Thorne was at the foundry when this particular bell was cast and the War Memorial Carillon was her dream so....? Draw your own conclusions.

See the inscriptions of the other bells as well as the sentiments of the donors, at the end of the article. The names of the fallen Springboks (South African soldiers) from Cape Town as well as the Municipal staff who lost their lives in World War One are engraved “in stone” (marble) on the interior walls of the City Hall.

It was planned that by 1925 the War Memorial Carillon would be inaugurated, while welcoming HRH the Prince of Wales to Cape Town at the start of his official visit to the Union of South Africa. Mr. William Thorne the by then, retired Mayor but still the Managing Director of the most successful store, Thorne & Stuttafords, knew exactly who to contact and how to go about helping his wife to get the bells installed in time for the inauguration of the carillon to welcome HRH The Prince of Wales on 30 April 1925.



Lord Kysant, chairman of the Union Castle line and Associate Companies

Mr. Wm Soper of Messrs Davis & Soper Ltd., the Corporation Agents in London and South Africa, donated their services.

Lord Kysant, chairman of the Union Castle Line, shipped the 32 additional, new bells from the United Kingdom to Cape Town, free of charge.

The Chief Collector of Customs at the docks in Cape Town did much to speed up the delivery of the 32 new bells.

The City Council paid all costs involved with the installation of the bells by local craftsmen.

The Standard Bank handled all matters concerned with the Carillon Fund.

Mr. Brees, the world famous carillonneur from Antwerp, was invited and played the carillon to the delight of all as well as that of HRH the Prince of Wales when the peal sounded from the Clock Tower of the City Hall, Cape Town on Inauguration Day, 30 April 1925.

During World War Two a mere 14 years later, in January 1943, Mrs. Anna Thorne must have been thrilled to be present when the Springbok soldiers were welcomed home on leave after the great Commonwealth victory at El Alamein. The Mayor, Mr. James Walter, made his speech of praise and gratitude before the **World War One Memorial Carillon** pealed out over the Grand Parade where all were gathered, pealing a joyous hero's welcome.



W. F. Thorne

As a mother Mrs. Thorne must have been over-excited to welcome back her own soldier-son William Eustace (W E) Thorne, as well as young Richard Stuttaford who had joined the South African Second Anti-Tank Regiment in 1939. Mrs. Thorne also knew most of the returning Municipal employees who had enlisted.



R. B. Stuttaford

During WW2 Mrs. Thorne, the retired Mayoress, was the staff officer of SAWAS and in charge of all canteens in the peninsula. She was also the prime mover of the special canteen in the Mayor's Garden, located in a square behind the City Hall. While working there she would have heard the peal of the World War One Memorial Carillon clearly and regularly. The Mayor's Garden where refreshments for soldiers was served, was so busy that 70,000 eggs were consumed in a month but Mrs. Thorne continued working and the bells continued pealing.

Two of South Africa's top musicians, the composer Christopher Torr and his wife, the singer Laurika Rauch combined their talents to produce their musical 'Message of Hope'. A song called "Hot Gates". In this song the sounds of a ticking clock as well as that of a carillon of bells, are clearly identifiable. The composer's father had survived World War One so it is wonderful to know that the bells of the Memorial Carillon in the tower of the City Hall, Cape Town can sound the tune "Hot Gates". The words set to the tune are in both English and Afrikaans and are a tribute to Christopher Torr's grandfather, other veterans and the Springbok soldiers who fell in World War One.

Chorus:

"I can see a fiery, fiery glow  
Even as the sun is sinking low  
I can see a horseman on the run  
Oh my daughter, Oh my son.



Laurika Rauch

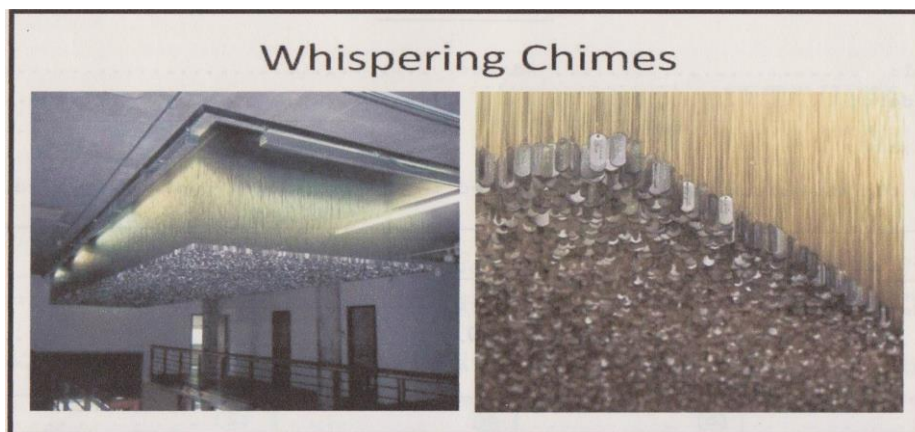
"Refrein:

"Sien jy hoe die bloedrooi son verdwyn  
Sien jy daardie ridder op die plein?  
Hoop is net die donder wat so dreun  
O my dogter, O my seun.

There's another song that will be sung  
There's another bell that must be rung  
There's another city I've been told  
Where the streets are paved with gold.

Hoor hoe lui die klokke keer op keer  
Môre sal ons nuwe liedjies leer  
Liedjies van 'n stad soos die van ouds  
Maar die strate is van goud."

The novel idea, of a **War Memorial Carillon of bells** in Cape Town's City Hall was as creative an idea in 1918, as the **Memorial Whispering Carillon of 58,226 dog tags** installed in the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago, USA in 2001. This memorial carillon, is dedicated to the memory of 58,226 American soldiers who died while fighting in Vietnam, a hundred years and many wars later. Long may creative ideas be encouraged and long may those who fought and died for the causes in which they believed, be remembered.



The National Veteran's Art Museum in Chicago's work of art – the dog tags of 58 226 service men and women who died in the Vietnam War, were hung from the ceiling on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2010. The metal dog tags move and chime with shifting air currents. Museum employees use a laser pointer to help visitors locate the exact dog tag with the imprinted name of a lost friend or relative.

The bells and inscriptions on the 39 bells of the Women’s Memorial Carillon in the City Hall, Cape Town, are as follows:

Bell 1.B natural: “Cecil John Rhodes.  
Alles sal recht komen.”

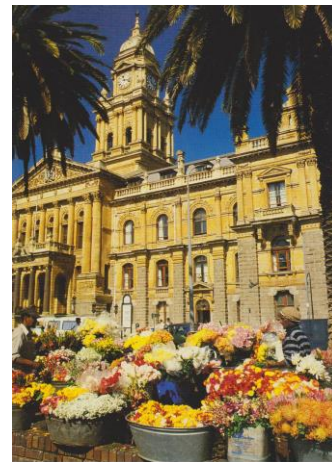
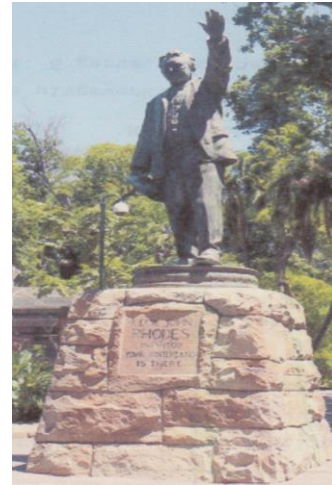
The gift of the Rhodes Trustees.

Bell 2. C natural: In Honoured Memory of  
The Members of the Staff  
Of the Municipality of  
Cape Town who gave their  
Lives in the Great War  
1914 – 1918.

Abbott. C.A.	Mason. T.
Bossenger. W. P.	Munnik. W.
Breetvelt. J.	Parkes. T.
Carstens. A. K.	Polden. J.J.
Carstens. J. R.	Purcell. R.
Costello. G. P.	Schou. C. J.
Dauids, W. G.	Semark. S. C.
Edwards. P. T.	Smith. M.
Eyden. F.	Sparkes. A.
Fellows. H.	Steimel. M.
Hall. L.	Towler. J. W.
Hendricks. T. J.	Warren. J.
Hill. R.	Webb. M.
Horwood. J.	Wrennail. W.
Johannes. J.	also of
Jones I.	Ex-Councillor
Julius J.	McGregor. W.

Their name liveth for  
Forevermore.”

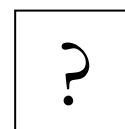
Municipal Employees Association.



Contributions by Cape Town’s

Bell 3. D Flat: \_\_\_\_\_Original Bell of City Hall’s Westminster Chimes...no inscription

Bell 4. D Natural: Delville Wood – July 1916.  
To commemorate the valour of



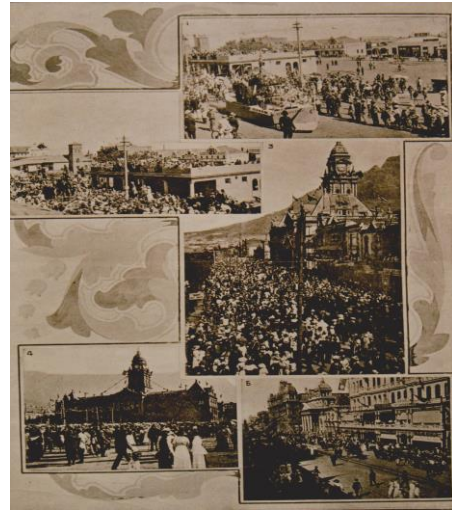
The South African Brigade.  
The praise of the City is the  
Praise of these me, for they  
Made her great.

**Humble Mrs. Anna Thorne?**

The gift of a lady citizen.

Bell 5. E Flat: \_\_\_\_\_Original Bell of City Hall’s Westminster Chime...no inscription.

Bell 6. E Natural: “The Memorial Committee  
 Made and dedicated me to the  
 Immortal honour of the South  
 Africans who made the Supreme  
 Sacrifice in the Great War  
 1914 – 1918.



The gift of the Cape Town War Memorial Committee.

Bell 7. F Natural: “The League of Remem-  
 brance and Help made me in  
 Memory of the South Africans  
 Who fell during the Great War  
 1914 – 1918.

There is neither speech nor  
 Language, but their voices are  
 Heard amongst them.”

The gift of the League of Remembrance  
 And Help.

Bell 8. G Flat: Woman’s Peace Memorial.  
 1918.

The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.

Bell 9. G Natural: **“Mayor W. J. Thorne and  
 Anna E. Thorne, C. B. E.  
 Mayoress, made me.  
 Peace-Thanksgiving, 1918.”**

**The gift of W. J. Thorne, Esq. and  
 Mrs Thorne C.B.E. during their  
 term of office as Mayor and  
 Mayoress of Cape Town 1918-1920.**

Bell 10. A Flat: \_\_\_\_\_Original bell of City Hall’s Westminster Chime....no inscription.

Bell 11. A Natural: “Victoria League.  
 Cape Province.  
 Ring out the thousand years  
 Of old.  
 Ring in the thousand years  
 Of peace.”

The gift of the Victoria League,  
 Cape Province.

Bell 12. B Flat: \_\_\_\_\_Original bell of City Hall’s Westminster Chime...no inscription.

Bell 13. B Natural: “Earl Haig.  
Armistice Day. 11 Nov. 1918.  
Peace and Goodwill to all  
Mankind.”



The gift of the Earl Haig Reception Committee. The inscription was chosen by Field Marshal the Rt. Hon. Earl Haig. K.T.G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E.

Bell 14. C Natural: \_\_\_\_Original Bell of City Hall’s Westminster Chime. ..No inscription.

Bell 15. D Flat: “Jutland, 31 May, 1916.  
They put their lives in the  
Balance against their country’s  
Glory.”

The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.

Bell 16. D Natural: “Jan C. Smuts.  
In Thy will is our peace.”

The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.  
The inscription was chosen by Lieut-

General the Rt. Hon. J C Smuts. P.C., C.H., K.C., M.L.A. Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.

Bell 17. E Flat: “Union.  
Vervuld met liefde tot ons land  
Gaan uij eendrachtig hand  
Aan hand  
In voorspoed en in druk.  
Als broeders staan welkaar  
Terzij  
In eer en trouw: zoo stichten  
Wij  
Het zekerst volksgeluk.”



The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.

Bell 18. E Natural: Egypt. 1916. The gift of Councillor W. Coldicott Gardener and Mrs. Gardener, during their term of office as Mayor and Mayoress of Cape Town. 1920 – 22.

Bell 19. F Natural: “Louis Botha.  
Volg die weg van eer en pligt.” This inscription is a quotation from a Passage of an address given by General, The Rt. Hon. Louis Botha P.C., M.L.A., Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, to his Commandants in August, 1914, and again used by him in his last speech at Bloemfontein on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1919 – seven days before his death. The inscription was chosen by Mrs. Botha.

The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.

Bell 20. G flat “Pax, e8 June, 1919.  
Grace a Dieu.”

The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.

Bell 21.	G natural	“Cape Town War Memorial East Africa.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 22.	A flat	“Cape Town War Memorial. Damaraland, 1914 – 1915.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 23.	A natural	“1 <sup>st</sup> Cape Corps. Palestine, 1918 – 1919. Geduld en moed.”	The gift of the Cape Corps Memorial Fund.
Bell 24	B flat	“Cape Town War Memorial. Marrieres Wood, 1918.”	
Bell 25.	B natural	“Cape Town War Memorial. Mesopotamia.”	
Bell 26.	C natural	“La Cateau.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 27.	D flat	“Menin Road.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 28.	D natural	“Ypres.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 29.	E flat	“Armetieres”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 30.	E natural.	“Spre;-le-Grand.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 31.	F natural	“Amiens.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 32.	G flat	“Passchendaele.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
.Bell 33.	G natural	“Messines.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 34.	A Flat	“Arras.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 35.	A natural	“Warlencourt.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 36.	B flat	“Longueval.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.
Bell 37.	B natural	“Beaurevoir.”	The gift of the Women’s Carillon Fund.

Bells 38. & 39. were added in 1953 at the request of J. G. Vermaak, one of the City Carillonneurs. The five original bell cast before 1905 and that chime the Westminster Chime have no inscriptions.



City Hall, Cape Town



*J. C. Abrahams (Tannie Mossie)*

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