

Chapter 1 : Fish & Chips! - Review of Nicholson's, London, UK - TripAdvisor

Nicholson London Big Ben Map Out of Print--Limited Availability. This London map features public buildings, shops, shopping streets, colour-coded underground stations (indicating which tube lines run from them), hotels, cinemas, theatres, newspaper offices, hospitals, places of interest, museums, galleries and bus routes.

It is actually the name of the largest of the five bells which hang within this famous clock tower. The correct name for the tower is now the Elizabeth Tower, since it was re-named in honour of Queen Elizabeth during her Diamond Jubilee year in June. However, the whole tower is commonly referred to as Big Ben. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in May and it has a long and fascinating history. The story of Big Ben begins in 1834 with the devastating fire which destroyed the Old Palace of Westminster. A competition was announced to find the best design for a new Palace of Westminster, also known as the Houses of Parliament. The successful architect was Charles Barry and as part of his design, he included a landmark clock tower that was to be the largest in the world at that time. Charles Barry was the chief architect of the Perpendicular Gothic style Palace, but he enlisted the help of Augustus Pugin to design the clock tower. Troubled Construction The building of a clock tower should have been a straightforward task for an architect well versed in building churches, assisted by Edward John Dent, one of the best clockmakers in the world. However, the building of the clock tower to house Big Ben was fraught with disasters and took over 28 years to complete. It included such farcical problems as: The completed clock not fitting into the tower it was designed for The death of the clockmaker just one year into the project and his nephew hastily changing his name in order to continue the work An error in the mould resulting in the bell being cast two tons over its intended weight The great bell cracking irreparably before it was even hung Big Ben cracking a second time when the same over-heavy hammer continued to be used The bell having to be recast to fit in the wooden crate which raised it up the inside shaft The hands being too heavy for the clock to operate them and the replacements being even heavier! There were also countless hostilities, disputes and lawsuits between the parties involved. In short, the building of Big Ben must have provided London newspapers with headlines and scandal for decades! The building of the clock tower began in 1843 with the laying of the foundation stone and it took 13 years to complete. It is 311 feet high with masonry to the height of the belfry topped with an iron framework. The tower leans slightly to the north west by 8 inches. Within the tower there are three shafts. The clock shaft houses the weights which hang below the clock room. The second shaft was designed as a ventilation chimney and the third shaft contains the staircase with steps. The lower part of the tower has several rooms including, for some reason, a prison cell. Unfortunately he died in 1842 and his nephew was hastily drafted in to complete the work. His name is inscribed on the frame of the clock. The clock mechanism was completed in 1851 but could not be installed as the tower was incomplete. The frame measures 16 feet long and the whole clock movement weighs five tons. The largest of the driving weights, the chiming weight, weighs 1. The clock originally had to be hand wound and took two men five hours for each of the three trains. Since the chiming and striking trains have been wound by a motor, but the going train is still wound by hand. Constructing a clock that would be accurate feet above the ground in freezing temperatures or strong winds was quite a challenge. The Clock Face Augustus Pugin undertook the detailed design of the clock face and the decoration of the dials. He also persuaded Charles Barry, the principal architect, that 30 feet in diameter would be too large for the clock to work at all and it was scaled down to 23 feet 7 inches. The white face is made up of individual pieces of white glass put together rather like a jigsaw so that the clock fingers can be maintained from inside the tower by removing various parts of the face. Those "tiny" Roman numerals are actually 2 feet high. From time to time the four clock faces have to be cleaned and the job is done by abseilers who descend from the balcony above. The largest of the five bells was completed in 1858 but ended up weighing a massive 16 tons, rather than the required 14 tons, due to a miscalculation. A quick solution was arrived at and the ball hammer was also increased in size to compensate, increasing from 4 to 6 cwt. The bell was nicknamed Big Ben, possibly after Sir Benjamin Hall, the project commissioner who was apparently quite a large gentleman himself. The four accompanying quarter chiming bells weigh 1 ton, 1. It was regularly struck for the benefit of

the public. Unfortunately after just a year it cracked beyond repair. He produced a new bell in , weighing a more manageable The bells were installed in the tower in and the clock mechanism was then installed beneath them. However it was no longer possible to hoist the bells up the outside of the tower and Big Ben had to be hoisted up the central shaft. This meant that the bell had to be recast to unusual dimensions so that it would fit into the wooden cage. It took 36 hours to finally hoist Big Ben up on its side and position it. The Clock Hands The next problem was that the clock hands, which were 14 feet long, were simply too heavy for the clock to work them. Barry had to have the hands remade, but when they came back they were even heavier than the original ones and still would not function. The minute hands are 14 feet 4. Inauguration Finally the clock was inaugurated in July The celebrations were short lived when the bell known as Big Ben cracked again in September, and hardly any wonder. It was being struck with the same 6 cwt hammer that had cracked the first bell! An acrimonious dispute over blame and legal proceedings between Mears, the second bell founder and Denison, the project referee, meant that Big Ben was unused for the next two years. Finally the cracked bell was given a quarter turn to reposition the fault, a lighter hammer was installed and in "normal" service was resumed. A microphone allowed the live chiming of the bells to serve as a time signal over the radio. It was particularly significant during World War II as it was often followed by wartime news and somber announcements from the Prime Minister, but it became a source of comfort to many. Big Ben continued to chime almost without mishap until when the shaft broke and almost destroyed the chiming mechanism completely. A new chiming train had to be constructed and repairs took almost a year. There are steps up to the clockroom and a total of steps to the belfry Since the construction of the Underground Jubilee Line extension, Big Ben clock tower leans 8. It chimed in the New Year 10 minutes late! On 5th August as the clock chimed 3. Some of the machinery flew upwards with such force it penetrated to the room above. Reconstruction took almost one year. On 27 May the clock stopped twice, possibly due to the hot weather. On Radio 4, birdsong replaced the usual chimes! On 11 August the clock was stopped for 6 weeks to replace the striker and the bearings in the going train The People Charles Barry was the architect of the Palace of Westminster Barry was assisted by Augustus Pugin who designed the clock tower and the dials in Gothic Revival style The contract to build the clock was awarded by Edward John Dent.

Chapter 2 : Online Map of the Area in and around Westminster, London

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Chapter 4 : Nicholson's Pubs - Home

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Chapter 5 : London Attractions Map | Visit A City

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Chapter 6 : Big Ben on calendrierdelascience.com

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