

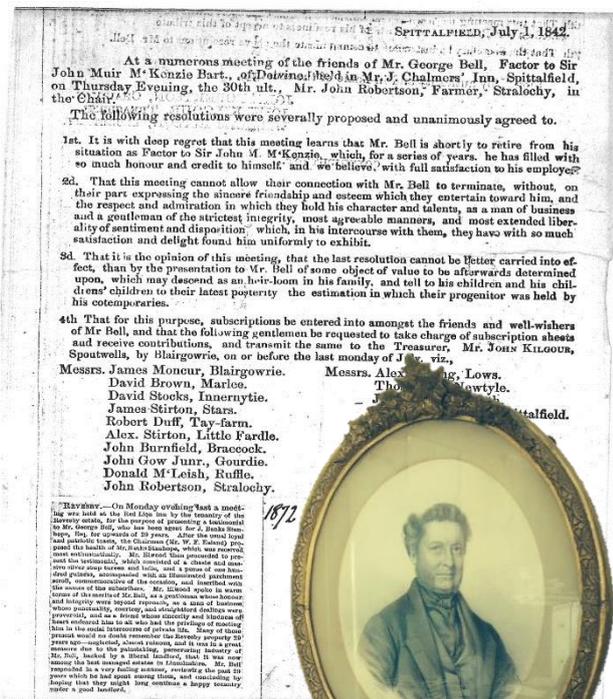
ROBERT BELL & COMPANY

CHARTERED SURVEYORS
AUCTIONEERS
LAND & ESTATE AGENTS

LINCOLN (01522) 538888
WOODHALL SPA (01526) 353333
CONINGSBY (01526) 344434
HORNCastle (01507) 522222

AUCTIONEERING

My name is Robert Lawrence Hay Bell and all but the Lawrence (which was my maternal grandfather's name) followed my father's and grandfather's names. I have followed in their footsteps, as an auctioneer so I am going to tell you a bit about our family history first.



My great-great-grandfather George Bell, was a factor on the Mackenzie Muirs' estate at Delvine on the banks of the River Tay in Scotland. His father had also been a factor (or land agent) in Scotland. In 1842 when James Banks Stanhope succeeded at Revesby, George Bell was persuaded to move to be the resident land agent. When he left Delvine, the tenants and friends raised money for a gift of a silver tea kettle and stand (which I still have), (incidentally, this tea-kettle was stolen after George Bell's death, but the local bobby thought he knew who would have done it, and the kettle was discovered in the thatch of some lambing pens.)

Presented

to Mr. George Bell

on the occasion of his retiring from the *****

of Factor on the ESTATE OF DELVINE

A testimony of the esteem entertained for him by the

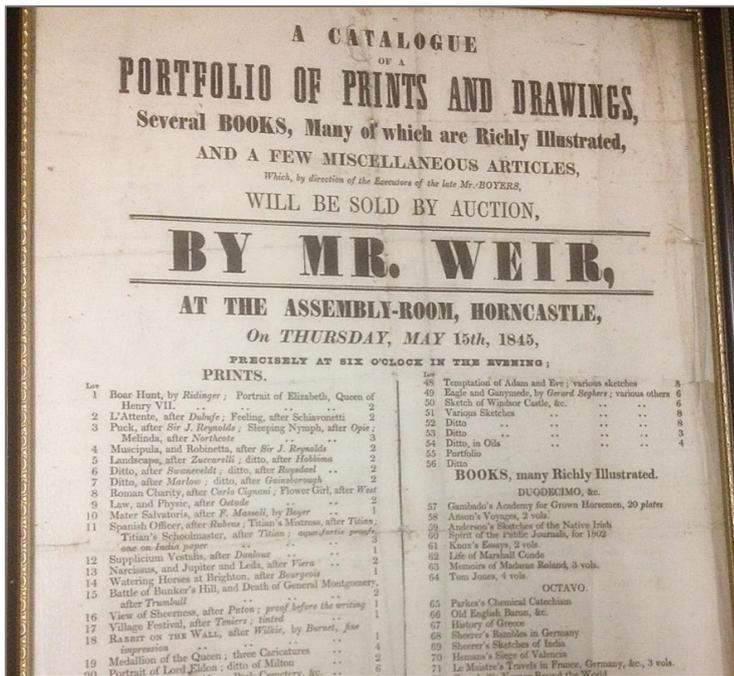
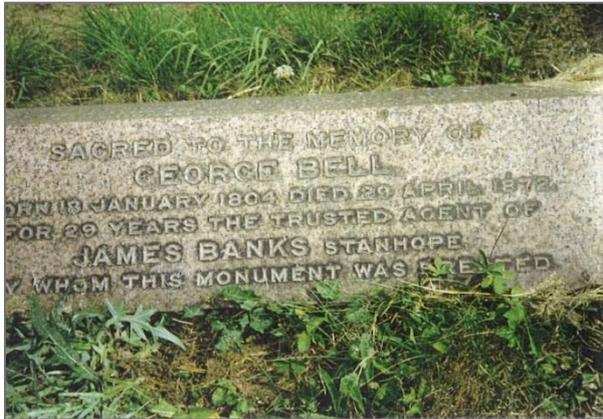
Tenants and a numerous circle of friends

in the surrounding districts

1842



Revesby was a large estate of 8000 acres and very prestigious having been the home of Sir Joseph Banks. George Bell and his family (he lost 3 children in 1841) came down on horseback and he oversaw the building of the new "Revesby Abbey" and lots of other investment in the Revesby Estate. Some of the house roofs from that time have rows of curved slates similar to those at Delvine. George was land agent at Revesby for 29 years and is buried in the church yard with a tomb of red Scottish granite. When my father Robert Hay Bell died in 2007, he was buried at Mareham Grange, with a similar gravestone of Scottish red granite.



The Revesby Estate owned at that time much of Horncastle including the market square, the cattle market and our office at Old Bank Chambers. The tenant at Old Bank Chambers in 1872 became Mr. Walter Booth Parish, land agent and auctioneer. I wonder if Mr Parish had negotiated the tenancy with George Bell, but suspect it would have been with his successor. Mr. W. B. Parish's father had acquired the business in 1856 from Mr. Weir, whose family had practiced in Horncastle prior to 1800.



Mr. W. B. Parish.

Parish.—WALTER BOOTH PARISH, Stanhope Terrace, Horncastle; son of the late Joseph Parish, auctioneer, of Horncastle; born at Horncastle, September 2nd, 1850; educated at the Grammar School, Horncastle, and the County School, Cranleigh, Surrey. Partner in the firm of Parish and Stafford Walter, auctioneers, valuers, and land agents; in 1855, his father succeeded the late George Weir, whose family had carried on the business of auctioneers prior to 1799; joined his father in 1871, and took over the business on the death of his father in 1875; in 1897 Mr. Stafford Walter became partner with him; appointed Valuer, under the Finance Act of 1894, for the Lindsey Division; member of the Board of Guardians, of the Managers of the Savings Bank, and of the Burial Board. Married Mary Ann, daughter of the late Robert Pigg, farmer, Beauchamps, near Buntingford, Herts, and has issue one daughter, born 1895.



George's son Robert Henry Bell was a farmer and farm bailiff at Ranby, dying early at the age of 54 (after a short "retirement" as landlord to the Red Lion Inn at Horncastle). His son Robert Hay Bell, (1881 -1969), my grandfather, was articled in 1897 to Mr.W.B.Parish in the office in which we still trade. I have a copy of his articles of apprenticeship. It includes

many covenants an employer would not be able to include today - such as "not contract matrimony", "not play at dice or tables" and "not haunt taverns".



This Indenture witnesseth that Robert Hay Bell a boy of the age of fifteen years with the consent of his Father Robert Henry Bell of Ranby in the County of Lincoln Farmer doth put himself Apprentice to Walter Booth Parish of Horncastle in the County of Lincoln Auctioneer Valuer and Land Agent to learn his Art and with him after the manner of an Apprentice to serve from the And day of April One thousand eight hundred and ninety seven unto the full end and term of three years from thence next following to be fully complete and ended During which term the said Apprentice his Master faithfully shall serve his secrets keep his lawful commands everywhere gladly do He shall do no damage to his said Master nor see to be done by others but to his power shall tell or forthwith give warning to his said Master of the same He shall not waste the goods of his said Master nor lend them unlawfully to any He shall not contract matrimony within the said term nor play at Cards or Dice tables or any other unlawful games whereby his said Master may have any loss with his own goods or others during the said term without the License of his said Master shall neither buy nor sell He shall not haunt taverns or playhouses nor absent himself from his said Masters service day or night unlawfully But in all things as a faithful Apprentice he shall behave himself towards his said Master and all his during the said term And the said Walter Booth Parish in consideration of Thirty one pounds and ten shillings paid to him by the said Robert Henry Bell on the execution hereof the receipt whereof he hereby acknowledges and of the further sum of Thirty one pounds and ten shillings to be paid to him by the said Robert Henry Bell as hereinafter mentioned and in consideration of the services of his said Apprentice hereby covenants to pay to his said Apprentice three shillings and sixpence per week during the first year of the said term five shillings per week during the second year of the said term and the sum of seven shillings and sixpence per week during the third year of the said term and his said Apprentice in the Art of an Auctioneer Valuer and Land Agent which he useth by the best means that he can shall teach and instruct or cause to be taught and instructed And the said Robert Henry

His father paid for this privilege and "Hay Bell" was tutored in the finer arts of the business. This included auctioneering as well as agricultural tenantry, valuations, forestry and building. He was obviously a bright chap and by 1910 was taken into a partnership with the firm now styled Parish, Stafford Walter and Bell.



My grandfather helped sell at the August Horse Fairs. The fair was held for 2 weeks in August but numbers dwindled as horses became superseded by cars and tractors and the last annual fair was held in 1948.



In 1939 my father sold the first cattle over the new weighbridge at the cattle market. He was dressed in his army uniform looking very smart. It was fitting therefore that he should also sell the last beast to go through the market in the year 2000. Closure of abattoirs and concentration of trade in only a few supermarkets reduced the number of buyers and BSE and Foot and Mouth imposed movement restrictions and passports for cattle so that numbers dwindled. Now there is only one cattle market left in the County from about 30 existing 100 years ago.



1995 Awe Sale.

Being brought up in an auctioneering family, I was expected to help in the business. My father took me to annual valuations where I was meant to check the additions and to auction sales - typically to run sheets. We would meet the various clients and have an understanding of the extent of farms and estates - who farmed well and what the woods were like.

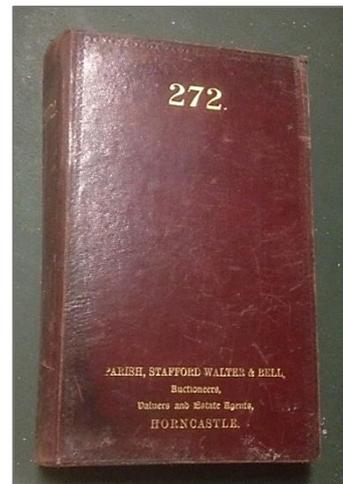


Dec 2000 last XFSS.



My first auctioneering was when I was 17. I was working on Ben Baxter's farm at Greetham but father had a Saturday sale at Belchford for which I was to book. He handed me the baton with little warning and I had to struggle with the gavel and patter - no time for nerves. When people laughed because I called a mangle (or wringer) a "wrangle" because I knew a mangold was a turnip like vegetable - so the mangle must be differentiated), I laughed with them.

I still have the old valuation books from 1871. Typically they were bound in red leather and scribed and numbered in gilt. They were meant to be kept as a record - very different to our typed throw-away computer age. There are also ledgers, bill books and letter books similarly bound and inscribed. All were written up neatly by hand. There were three copies of each letter - the original in the letter book, top copy for the client, middle copy for the file. Each firm had its own code, so that opposing valuers could compare notes without compromising their initial thoughts on values. Parish S Walter and Bell used a complicated form of hieroglyphics. The principle was to use a word (such as HORNCASTLE) with ten letters, all different and ascribe a value to each:-



H O R N C A S T L E

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

In the 19th and 20th centuries, auction was commonly used for farm dispersal sales. Many farms changed hands at Lady Day, or in October. There were many small farms. When I started work, there were three other workers at Greetham House Farm, all living in the village, plus Jack Swinn at Black Horse Farm, Harry Swinn at Jolls Farm, Ted Coney at the Beech Farm, the Mason brothers down Jolls Lane, Eric Barlow at the Glebe, Michael Brown at White House Farm, plus various other farm workers all living in the village and providing good support for the church and local festivities. Over the last century we have seen large farms amalgamated right across the country, with the emphasis on cereals rather than mixed farming, responding to economies of scale and financial pressures.

The outgoing farmer would have a dispersal sale of his livestock, feeding stuffs, farm machinery and sometimes the household furniture. Sales would attract all the local neighbours and populace, so many tales would be told whilst the auctioneer rattled away in the background. After the sale, the auctioneer and staff were often invited in to tea. We have in our archives many catalogues for dispersal sales as well as farms and complete estates.

Now, auctions are commonly held on a collective basis at a central saleroom, rather than on one person's holding. There will be many vendors. The sale might encompass specialist farm machinery, agricultural bygones, or household chattels. We hold monthly collective furniture sales on the last Wednesday at Horncastle's Town Hall.

