

HOLY TRINITY WESTBURY-ON-TRYM

There has been a ring of bells in the Church for at least 500 years and they have called people to Sunday services and other special occasions regularly. Even those who only pass by outside hear the sound of the bells.

“The one loud noise that is made to the Glory of God”

Dorothy L Sayers

They ring out telling the glad tidings and sometimes the sad news.

The Bells

Holy Trinity tower houses a ring of six bells in the key of C that are the heaviest six in Bristol. Out of 2,612 rings of six in the country, there are only about a dozen that are heavier. They date from 1774 and range in weight from a small bell weighing 7cwts 3qtrs 20lbs (403kg) to the largest – the Tenor bell weighing 21cwts (1067kg).

The bells are hung in a cast iron frame capable of housing eight bells behind the louvers which can be seen high up in the tower which is 75 feet (23 metres) high to the parapet. Each bell is rung by one ringer.

In 1991 the entire ring was removed from the tower to Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London where they were re-tuned and fitted with new headstocks and wheels.

Change Ringing

“England alone in the World has perfected the art of change ringing and the true ringing of bells by rope and wheel”

Dorothy L Sayers

A number of features combine to give change ringing in the English style its distinctive sound and appeal to its practitioners.

The bells must first be rung up or turned upside down so that just a small pull will allow a single ringer to turn it full circle. No great strength is required and ladies and young people are numbered in the band here.

The challenge to a new ringer comes in two parts, firstly learning to make the bell do what you want it to do and at the correct time, and secondly the mental challenge of learning the way a given bell moves through the others in well ordered plans known as methods.

Whilst ringing may be pursued to even higher levels, by ringing more and more complicated methods, great pleasure may be derived by ringing something simple very well. So there are great benefits to ringers of all abilities.

Change ringing may be carried out as a “touch” for service or practice lasting a few minutes or for longer periods, occasionally in excess of three hours, for a full peal of 5040 changes. (This is the full number of changes that can be rung on five bells)

Tune ringing is not part of English Change Ringing but that does not mean that Change Ringing is not musical. The various methods used are selected to produce the most musical combinations of sounds.

The Bellringers

Bellringers work together and team work is essential.

Six bells need six ringers.

When less than that number is available for the ropes it follows that fewer bells are rung.

There is a great sense of comradeship among Campanologists everywhere. Visiting ringers will be welcomed in most towers. Ringers form themselves into associations. Holy Trinity is a member of the Gloucester and Bristol District of Church Bellringers. These associations come together under the Central Council of Church Bellringers.

Although Holy Trinity has an active band of ringers it is necessary to recruit new members to learn to ring and carry on the tradition.

This leaflet is published to encourage new learners to come forward. A beginners group will be started for all who would like the traditional change ringing to continue here.

Those who come will be stimulated mentally and physically and may well find themselves fascinated by the intricacies of the various combinations of methods and numbers.

All those who are interested and would like to know more should contact:

The Vicar

or

The Ringing Master

Patrick Harris
0117 9508644

Early Steps in Change Ringing

When the novice bellringer has made some progress in handling a bell, he/she will be invited to join the other ringers for a 'touch' on practice night.

Almost invariably this will be to ring 'rounds' where the bells are rung in sequence usually going down the scale. The new ringer follows the bell on his/her right and will eventually learn to time the 'striking' of his bell accurately so that the sound from the bells in the belfry above is pleasant and rhythmical. The next stage is to move onto 'call changes' where the Conductor or Ringing Master chooses the sequence of bells. Each tower has its own favourites. A popular one is 'Queen's' where the bells go in the sequence 1,3,5,2,4,6 : 1,3,5,2,4,6.

Then comes the move into change ringing.

The simplest method is "Bob Minimus" sometimes known as 'Four and Twenty' as this is the maximum number of different changes that can be rung on four bells. The method provides a good introduction to change ringing and the novice learns to adjust the striking of his bell either going more quickly or slower as the bell progresses through the course of the method. This also develops 'rope sight' as the new ringer must observe not just the bell to his right as in rounds but watch what the other bells are doing.

From then on there is a wide range of options. The different methods Plain Bob Doubles, Bob Minor, Grandsire Doubles, Stedman Doubles and many more may be attempted as the learner's handling of the bell improves and his aptitude to grasp the methods is realised.

So from these simple beginnings there is plenty of scope to develop with this absorbing and enjoyable hobby that provides not only physical but also mental recreation.

Greetings

The bells of Holy Trinity ring out each Sunday morning and evening to call worshippers to service.

The bells of Holy Trinity also ring out on Christmas Eve as they have over the centuries to remind people of the true meaning of Christmas.

We welcome you and trust that you will find your visit to our Church rewarding in many ways.

Times of Ringing

Sunday Service ringing takes place from 9:30am to 10:00am and from 6:00pm to 6:30pm.

A weekly practice is held on Tuesdays from 7:30pm to 9:00pm and on Fridays from 7:30pm to 9:00pm for beginners.

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BELLS AND BELLRINGERS

To continue the age's old tradition of Church Bellingringing at Holy Trinity Church within the Diocese of Bristol new recruits are needed and will be welcomed.

Would you like to try bellringing – the ancient art of campanology?

If you would like to know more please contact one of the officers listed in this leaflet.