

Draft

Bell Ringing Report 2021

***“Dear bells! how sweet the sound of village bells When on the undulating air they swim!”
Thomas Hood***

2021 was another very disrupted year due to Covid, but the ringers continued to ring throughout, both on line and in the tower whenever possible, contributing to worship at St Bartholomew's

A total of 124 Zoom ringing sessions were held during Covid restrictions, the 100th being celebrated on March 4th with cake, thanks Sheila G!

Education about bell ringing and attracting new ringers is essential to ensure that we continue to have an enthusiastic band of ringers and attract new learners. A range of approaches are being used, including broad use of social media. The revamped website was launched, with many video clips of our ringing. Phillip made a Zoom presentation on “Life in the Tower” to an international audience on 8 April. This proved very popular, overrunning its expected time, and with many questions. A promotional video was launched on May 21st, and a QR code on posters allows access to a clip of ringing in the tower. We borrowed the Association mobile bell for the Gransdens Societies Fair on 24th July, allowing many people of all ages to try ringing a bell for the first time.

The ringers continued with their individual development under the guidance of Phillip and Sheila. As well as regular practices there were 23 SIM training sessions.

Ringling restarted on June 3rd as restrictions eased. Everyone was very enthusiastic to be back in the tower, though bell handling skills were a little rusty after a long lay-off. 120 call changes were rung on 27/7 to help build stamina. The bells were half muffled for ringing for Remembrance Sunday, a lovely effect and very fitting for this special service. Unfortunately a covid upsurge meant that Christmas ringling had to be cancelled, much to everyone's regret.

There were several opportunities for celebration ringling during the year. The local band rang for weddings in September and December. Martin and Michael Prest (who were taught to ring by Phillip and Sheila) joined Sheila, David, Phillip and Sheila on two occasions to ring 120 call changes to celebrate their weddings to Katie Hastings and Adrienne Brayman respectively. 120 changes were also rung to celebrate the birth of Dylan to Michael and Adrienne. We rang for the church fete on 28 August which was held in the adjacent Old Vicarage. The tradition of “firing” the bells (striking all six simultaneously) was honoured on our practice nearest to Nov 5th, producing a splendid noise and great fun for the ringers. There was only one quarter peal rung during the year, on 9 August.

On a sombre note, the tenor was tolled on April 10th, following the death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

We were fortunate to enjoy two social events while restrictions were eased. An evening of pizza and beer in the Chequers on 29 April, and the Ringers and Singers safari supper on 3 July. Social activities are an important part of being a ringer, it was great to be able to meet again.

Unfortunately the striking mechanism for the clock became damaged in September. While the clock continued to work there were no hourly striking or chimes for the rest of the year. Please see next year's report for the outcome!

Ringling at St Bartholomew's could not continue and flourish without the fantastic support and commitment from Sheila and Phillip. All of the ringers are very grateful – thank you!

As usual, updates about the bells and tower activities are on the website, <https://gransdenbells.org/> and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/greatgransdenbellringers/> and we can also be found on Twitter and Instagram. If you are interested in learning to ring please get in touch – all are welcome!