

St Mary's Bell Ringers', Ruabon

Annual Report - 2018



The bell ringers of Ruabon continue to play their part in village and church life, ringing for regular church services as well as for weddings, funerals and local and national occasions. Although we have an active band of ringers our numbers continue to deplete.

The main points of the year are as follows:

- **New Ringers**

- We have had one new bell ringer start this year but it does not go anywhere near where we need to be if bell ringing is going to continue within the Parish. Being **optimistic**, at the current rate our bells will be silenced within the next five to ten years due to the lack of ringers.
- After last year's Remembrance Day commemorations the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers launched a campaign to recruit 1400 bell ringers to replace the 1400 killed during the Great War. It would be fantastic if the Parish could add a couple of bell ringers to replace the 1400. All new ringers recruited during the campaign will be formally recognised by the Central Council.
- We have resources that enable us to visit community groups to give interactive talks should they wish, or they can visit us for a tour of the tower.

- **Activities that are taken for granted**

- **Flying the flag**
 - We continue to fly a flag on top of the tower for Church and National occasions, all thanks to John Griffiths. The Church flag is flown for major church events and saints' days, and we fly the Union Flag for Remembrance Sunday and significant State occasions.
- **The Church Clock**
 - Callum Edwards is doing a sterling job with regard to keeping the church clock going. Generally the clock is accurate within thirty seconds (depending on the weather); not bad considering it's over 130 years old.

- **Fun activities**

- **North Wales Association Bell (Wrexham Branch) Ringing Trip**

A few members of the band went on the NWACBR Wrexham Branch's bell ringing trip to Merseyside. We visited St Fancis Xavier (one of only a few dedicated Roman Catholic churches with full circle ringing bells), Childwall, Mossely Hill, Garston and Halewood

- **Teddy Terror**

The bell ringers continued, for a third year, to terrorise the teddy bears of the Parish by launching them down the tower on an aerial runway. As part of the afternoon there was a tour of the tower that included a talk about church bell ringing. The tour and talk will happen again this year.

- **Visitors**

We have had several groups of visitors during the year with several bands already booked in for this year.

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Maintenance:

- **Tower**
 - The louvers are in a poor state of repair and will need repairing. Some of them have already slipped from the tower and others are becoming loose. This has resulted in birds nesting in the tower. I reported this in my report last year and I now class this as a serious concern. I would recommend the Church's architect is engaged for a formal report. Thankfully we were able to put netting across the louver frames before the birds became a problem.
- **Clock**
 - Built in 1884, the clock continues to keep good time and is only one of a few in North Wales that is fully mechanical. There are no issues of maintenance to report.
- **Bells**
 - There aren't any major concerns with regards to the state of the bells although as mentioned in previous reports, it has been identified that the clapper bushes for the six bells need replacing. This isn't an urgent piece of maintenance but something I am keeping an eye on.

Social Responsibilities:

We are very conscious of our neighbours and aware that we play some of the largest and loudest musical instruments available to man (and in these days of equality, to women too). As a result, it is difficult to hide our practice activities. We try to reduce our impact by having a silent practice for new ringers, but this isn't always possible.

Our published ringing times are:

Practice night: Thursday 7pm – 8:30pm

Sunday morning: 9am – 9:30am

Christmas Eve: 10:45pm – 11:30pm (depending on service times)

Please also expect us to ring for other services and special events; and occasionally we also have visiting bell ringers wanting to experience the bells of Ruabon.

Great War Commemorations

As part of the national commemorations of the end of the Great War we will be ringing half muffled for this year's remembrance Service at 11am (providing we have enough ringers) but we will also be ringing at 7:05pm as part of the nation's celebration of the end of the war.

Thank you

I would like to offer my thanks to the bell ringers for their support. Without them the village would lose a unique and historic British sound, the sound of pealing church bells.

Gordon Richardson

Tower Captain