

St Mary's Bell Ringers, Ruabon

Annual Report - 2017



The bell ringers of Ruabon continues 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 need new bell ringers.

Like the majority of towers nationwide we are struggling to recruit new bell ringers. We have one new recruit but ideally could do with half a dozen additional people if we are to keep the bells ringing for the next ten years.

As I mentioned in last year's report, we have resources that will 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**

- Our resident clock winder, Daniel Thomas, has moved out of the area. Thank you to Daniel for looking after the clock for several years. Callum Edwards has stepped in for clock winding duties. Thanks Callum.

- **Fun activities**

- **Village Fete**

- It was great to be able to play our part again in ringing for the start of the village fete.

- **Striking Competition**

- Striking competitions are where different teams of bell ringers compete to see who can ring the best. We retained the North Wales Association of Church Bell Ringers' Wrexham Maelor Branch striking completion shield; thankfully. The competition was held at Ruabon and it would have been a bit embarrassing if we hadn't have won (having the home advantage).

Ringling across the Branch is improving and we're finding other towers are very close on our heels.

Some residents of Ruabon may complain about us bell ringing but they can count themselves lucky that the village has some of the best bell ringers in North Wales.

- **Teddy Terror**

- The bell ringers continued, for a second year, to terrorise the teddy bears of the Parish by launching them down the tower on an aerial runway. Over £100 was raise in the process as part of the Church Fete.

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- **Visitors**
 - We have had several groups of visitors during the year, four groups of visiting bell ringers from across the UK and a couple of the village's youth groups. It's great having visitors up the tower as the bell ringers are proud of the heritage that we use and maintain.

Maintenance:

There isn't a huge change this year compared to last year's report.

- **Tower**
 - The louvers are in a poor state of repair and will need repairing. Some of them have already slipped from the tower and as others are becoming loose. This has safety implications should they fall from the tower.
 - Thanks to E. Clarke and Sons (Funeral Directors) we have been able to replace the ringing room carpet with carpet tiles.
- **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.
- **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.

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 historically British sound, the sound of pealing church bells.

Gordon Richardson

Tower Captain