

All Saints Wokingham - Tower visits - Guide notes

These notes are in three parts:

- Notes on organising and planning visits (mainly for the officer in charge)
- Important notes on safety (everyone should read this)
- Information for all stewards
- Information about each of the places that we show to visitors

1 Organising and preparing

Format for visits

These notes cover two types of event: **Group visits** and **Open Days**. Quite a bit is common but there are some important differences.

Group visits typically last for an hour and a half. If there is time (and suitable weather) visitors are normally shown things of interest in the churchyard and porch before going up the tower.

After an introduction in the ringing room, parties (up to 21) are split into three groups, with one group going to each upper level. They then rotate between different locations until they have all seen: Clock room, Bell chamber, Tower roof.

Larger parties (up to 28) can be split into four groups, with the churchyard and porch included in the rotation. (This is harder to co-ordinate.) Small parties may be handled in fewer groups.

Open Days are organised differently. The number of visitors is much larger, and they come in a continuous flow over a period of several hours. Visitors still move in groups (up to 7) through the whole tower, with entry controlled to ensure no more than one group at each level at any one time.

Manning

For an **Open day** (steady stream) you need a minimum of one person for: Porch (to welcome visitors, control the rate of entry and give initial briefing), stairs (to coordinate movement safely), Ringing room, Clock room, Bell chamber, Roof, ie 6 people (7 if you also take groups outside). Ideally the roof would have two stewards, one to talk to visitors and one to watch for safety, making 7 (or 8) in total. Since open days normally last for several hours, so you need to allow for people doing limited shifts and then being relieved by someone else. There should be a copy of the rota in the porch.

For a **Group visit** (rotation) you need one person per group going to the upper levels, plus an extra ringer in the ringing room to ring the 6th when required, and to ensure safety in case anyone else should come in. The number that can be accommodated in the bell chamber is only 7, so with a party of 21, you need 4 people while the visitors are split into groups (ie after the initial introduction). For smaller parties that reduces to 3 people for 14 visitors or 2 people for 7 visitors. For 28 visitors (including the churchyard as one group) you need 5 people.

Access

When planning a visit, make sure that the organiser understands that visitors will need to climb (quite a lot of) spiral stairs, and that you know about anyone who might be nervous climbing long stairs, going on a high roof, or entering the bell chamber, where there is limited room for movement.

Preparation on the day

Before the visit, make sure that all spaces to be used are tidy and clear of obstructions. Unless it is a very small party, open all spaces in advance. The bell chamber door is awkward for groups moving between the bell chamber and the roof. It can be lifted off its hinges, though it is a bit fiddly to do so. Swing it part way out and lift. There is a cut-out in the stone arch that makes this possible. You can stow it temporarily next to the bell frame between the 3rd and the wall. Sweep any dust from the wall by the walkway, since visitors tend to press against the wall. Close the shutters. To make it easier for visitors to walk in and out of the bell chamber, there is a board (normally kept next to the bell frame) that fits across the end of the 3rd pit. Get it the right way round (there is a cut-out to let it clear the wheel) and make sure it is fitted securely in place. It has a sally attached as a safety measure to ensure that you remove it before locking up after the visit. Lay the sally through through the door along the right hand side, so it doesn't get trodden on. For an open day, make sure that all key stewards have each other's mobile phone numbers (in case of emergency). If possible, tie red and white plastic tape all round the roof, across the gaps between crenellations. Check that the lightning conductor is lying flush across the flat part of the roof, and if necessary cover it with coloured sticky tape or a ringing mat.

2 Safety and risks

While visitors are in the tower, you all share the responsibility for their safety. You are familiar with the tower but they are not. Be vigilant, and ensure that no one does anything that could cause themselves or someone else harm. Pay particular attention to anyone who appears frail, timid, boisterous or erratic. Parties of young people (eg scouts) come with their own 'minders' who will co-operate with you in co-ordinating movements, and help with any boisterous or timid visitors.

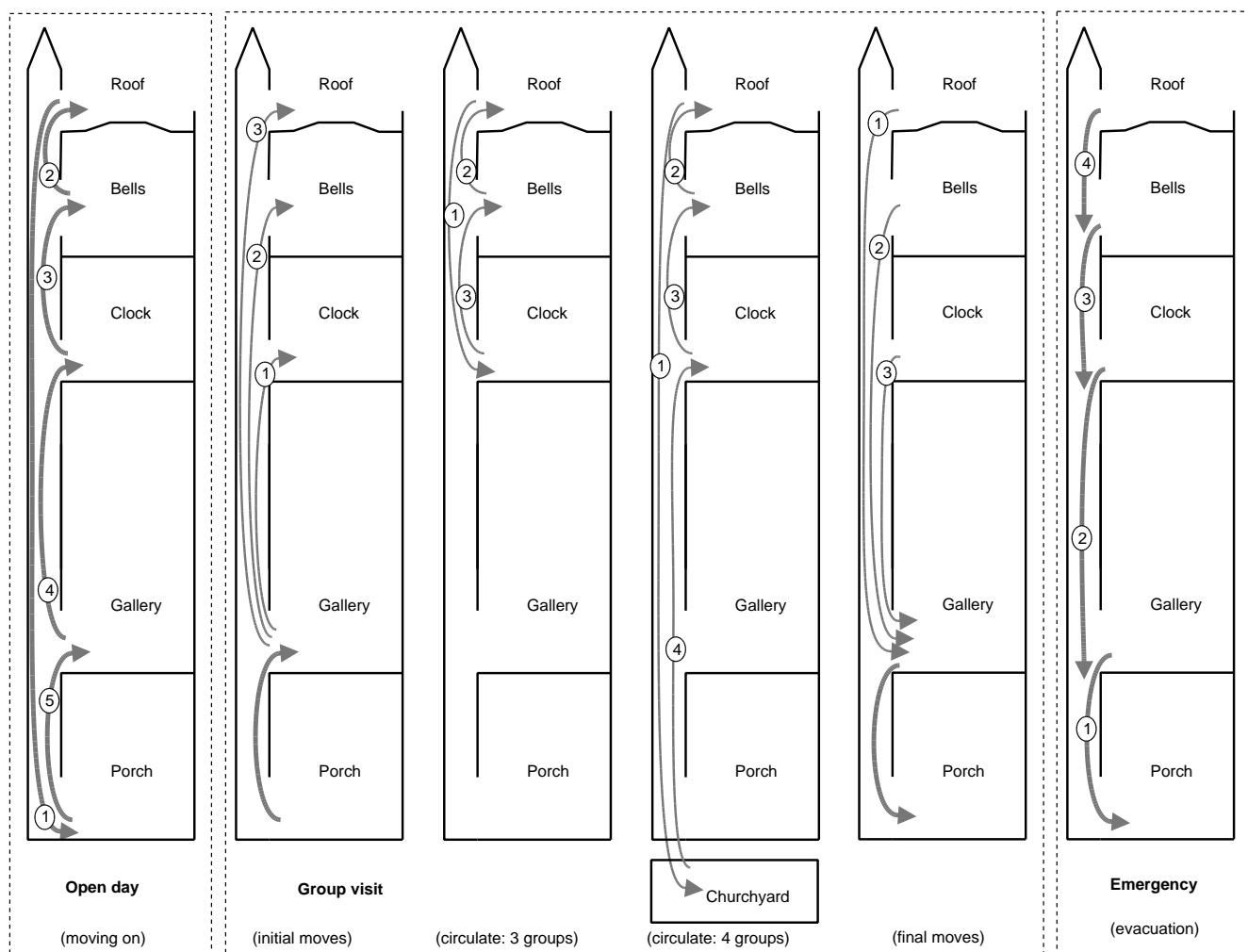
We have identified five key risks that we must manage while visitors are in the tower. Please make sure you understand each potential risk, and how to cope with any problems that might arise.

a Visitors moving on the stairs

Spiral stairs are difficult for anyone not familiar with them. Anyone falling could injure themselves, and possibly other people. With a lot of people moving up and down, if anyone slips or panics, there is scope for a major problem. Please apply these principles:

- Avoid people moving up and down at the same time. Co-ordinate with stewards at other levels (see below) before visitors move up or down. Move people up and down according to the sequences shown in the diagrams below.
- If you have to move a visitor against the flow, move the other people on the stairs into the clock room or the ringing room and ask them to wait until those moving the other way have passed.
- If some visitors to the bell chamber can't (or won't) go inside, then move them up onto the roof before the group on the roof comes down.
- If you need to move past visitors on the stairs, make them stand on the outside, while you (carefully) go on the inside, holding the rope.
- After the group has left your level, it may help for you to go to the level below you to bring the next group up. (On an **Open day** the stair steward will organise movements.)

On an **Open day**, there is a roving stair steward (in addition to those in each level) managing movement on the stairs, who can help anyone who has difficulty. For a normal visit there might not be, so whoever is nearest should do so.



b Visitors fear of the bell chamber

A small minority of visitors become frightened when they see in the bell chamber. It may not be expected, and is not in any way limited to the frail, the old or the very young. Some of these people will enter the bell chamber with reassurance and a helping hand – let them move to the ledge where they can sit down. Sometimes a family member or close friend can sit next to them for comfort. Some will not come inside at all – ask them to stand on the steps just past the door, while the others enter, and then either come just inside the door, or stand outside and look through.

Always explain what will happen before you ask for the 6th to be rung (regardless of any nervousness) and advise visitors to put their hands over their ears. Explain that it only lasts a few seconds. If anyone expresses concern, reassure them, but if they can't be reassured, let them leave. (Ideally have them escorted if there is a spare steward.)

c Communication between stewards

This is vital for managing movement of visitors between levels, and especially if there are any problems or an emergency. Unaided voice can work fairly well between the bell chamber, clock room and ringing room, but stewards should if possible have a mobile phone with them for use if voice is inadequate. Before you start, make sure that all stewards have the number of the person in charge in their phones, and if appropriate of other key people as well, eg the stewards on the door and on the stairs on an **Open day**.

d Movement

If you are the steward on the roof, then you should initiate the move between levels, because the visitors on the roof need to move down before the others move up.

On a **Group visit** those on the roof will move down to the Clock Room, with those in the bell chamber moving to the roof and those in the clock room moving to the bell chamber.

On an **Open day**, those on the roof will have finished their tour and will move all the way down, with those at lower levels moving up one and a new batch being allowed up from the porch to the ringing room. The steward on the stairs will normally initiate and co-ordinate this larger cycle of moves.

e Visitors footwear

Anyone wearing unsuitable shoes should either be advised not to go up the tower, or to take extreme care. Shoes with very high heels and/or tenuously attached to the feet may be a hazard on the stairs, in the bell chamber and on the roof. Anyone with stiletto heels must not be allowed on the roof, because they could damage the lead. If visitors offer to remove unsuitable shoes, warn them about dust, and the possibility of splinters on bare wooden floors.

f Emergency evacuation

The chance of needing to evacuate the tower is extremely remote, but if it did happen all stewards must work together to ensure that it is done quickly and safely. The officer in charge will tell the other stewards the tower is to be cleared. Visitors will leave in the order shown in the diagram at the right of page 2. The aim is to clear the tower quickly, but to avoid congestion on the stairs. The departure of visitors from each level must therefore be co-ordinated as follows. Those in the gallery and the clock room will begin leaving immediately. The lower stairs should be clear by the time those from the clock room get down. Visitors in the bell chamber will begin leaving when the clock room is half clear. Visitors on the roof will begin leaving when the bell chamber is clear.

- Ringing room steward – tell visitors to leave and go outside but remain until the other stewards confirm that the upper tower is clear. Then lower the 6th and leave.
- Clock room steward – when the clock room is clear follow the visitors down.
- Roof steward – when the roof is clear, follow the visitors down.
- Bell chamber steward – after sending visitors down remain until the roof steward arrives and go down together, checking that the clock chamber is clear. Inform the ringing room steward that the upper levels are all clear and it is safe for him/her to lower any bells that are up.
- Porch steward – Clear the porch of waiting visitors. Direct them and other visitors coming down the tower to muster in the churchyard at a safe distance from the tower.
- Stairs steward – (Depending on where you are when the decision to clear is taken) accompany visitors down, and then assist the porch steward directing visitors to muster in the churchyard.
- Last steward to leave the tower – Lock the tower door to ensure no one can re-enter (making sure that you or someone else present has a key to get back in, and has not left it in the tower).
- All stewards – When all visitors are mustered, take a count of people who were in each level, and confirm that they are all accounted for.

3 Information for all stewards

All stewards share in the responsibility to ensure that visitors have a safe, enjoyable and informative time in the tower.

Before you start

- Make sure you know which part of the visit you are responsible for.
- If it is an open day, make sure you know what time(s) you are on duty, and where.
- If you will be talking to visitors, make sure you have the necessary information (see section 4).
- Read the information about safety and risks (see section 2)
- Make sure your mobile phone number is known to the organiser, and that you have the number of the person in charge and any other key stewards in your phone.

While visitors are in the tower

- Be alert to any problems that might be caused by visitors being unfamiliar with the tower (see below) and act if necessary.
- Pay particular attention to the safety issues in 'your area' (see Safety Notes).
- If you are talking to visitors, feel free to add extra information from your own knowledge, as well as what is in the notes, especially if prompted by questions.

Briefing to visitors before entering the tower

If you are responsible for welcoming visitors to the tower, always explain what is involved, and give the advice below:

- On the stairs, keep your feet on the outer (wider) part of the steps.
- On the stairs keep a hand on the centre pillar, and ideally hold the rope loosely
- Be careful when stepping on and off the stairs.
- Don't touch anything unless told to do so. Especially don't touch the ropes.
- On the roof, don't lean over the parapet.
- Go where directed, and if you have any problems ask for help.

If you are a steward in any part of the tower, and you see anyone not complying with this advice, please remind them to do so.

Porch steward (Open Day)

On an **Open day** there is a steward in the porch, responsible for welcoming visitors and regulating the flow of visitors into the tower.

There will be posters in the porch with safety information. Encourage visitors to look at it while waiting.

You will have a supply of numbered tickets. Give each visitor the next ticket in sequence as they arrive. This will determine the order they go into the tower, and if there is a queue it will allow them to look at other things in the church or churchyard without losing their place while waiting. Tell them the time when they will be going into the tower (based on the current queue length).

Under normal conditions no more than 7 visitors must be at each level in the tower, so up to 7 people will go into the tower every 15 minutes. They will spend 15 minutes at each level so their tour will take an hour.

If the queue becomes too long, ask the stairs steward to reduce the time at each level to 12 or 10 minutes.

Work closely with the steward managing the stairs to ensure timely moves between all levels.

4 Information about what we show, by location

Churchyard

You can vary the order and amount to suit the time available, the interest of the visitors, the weather, etc. Things below are in no fixed order.

Rev FE Robinson's grave: Next to the wall running East from the Cornerstone, under the large cedar tree. Two related graves side by side – easy to spot because I keep them clear of weeds.

- Does anyone know who FE Robinson was? (They can read it on the headstone!)
[Explain that a lot of ringing guilds were founded in the late 19th century.]
[For adults, explain that it was related to 'belfry reform' which came in the wake of the 'Oxford movement' in the church.]
[Robinson spent most of his ministry at Drayton in Oxfordshire. There is a Blue Plaque there commemorating him. One of our former ringers, who is now a priest, had Drayton as her first parish.]
- Why are there so few weeds on the grave?
[For the last twenty years, one or other ringer has been pulling them up.]
[Also, being under the cedar tree, the weeds don't grow quite as strongly as elsewhere.]
- Why is one grave broken?
[The heavy snow in 2010 broke off many branches from the tree, one of which fell on it.]

The Cornerstone

- How long has it been there?
[Tell the story: what was there before, how we used to have two halls, how good it is ...]
- How much did it cost to build?
[£1.2 million – the biggest part of Celebrating Community. Bell restoration was £55k].

The tower (from a distance)

- Where does the sound come out?
[Point out the louvres. Explain how the downward sloping slates keep out rain, but the sound can go through the gaps between them.]
- Why are they so high in the tower?
[To help the sound to travel further, because it can go over the top of buildings.]

The South Gate

- What is unusual about the brown stone round the archway?
[It is Puddingstone – with large pebbles stuck together with 'rust'. (For adults it is a form of conglomerate.)
- The tower is built of Puddingstone, so why doesn't the tower look brown?
[It used to, but Puddingstone doesn't weather very well, and pebbles kept falling off, so it has been covered with render to stop it eroding any more. The previous rendering was removed in the 1860s. The render is covered with limewash, and the colour was chosen to match the yellow stone of the rest of the church. Look up and you can still see puddingstone along the clerestory. That will be rendered in due course.
- The original rendering on the tower was removed during the restoration of the mid 1800s. Can you guess how we know?
[When the clock faces were removed for restoration, the workmen found the original render behind them – obviously the dials were left in place when they stripped it off.]

The tower (close up)

- Does anyone know what the grey-white stone is that forms the edges of the tower?
[Limestone. It has a fine grain and so can be dressed (stonemason's term for cutting and shaping) to more accurate shapes. (Look at limestone close to.) Can anyone see tiny fossils in the stone? (No spectacular ones, just tiny circles or fragments of shell.)]

Porch (inside)

For a tower visit, the porch may be shown before going up the tower or as part of the cycle with the upper levels (usually along with the churchyard).

The door:

- Can you see anything unusual about the doorway? (Someone might notice the slots in the stonework, and the rotted beam end in one of them) (Not visible when both doors are wide open) [At some time there must have been a beam used to barricade the doors. (Point out the pockets in the stone at both sides. Let someone pull out the stump to look at it).
- (Someone might notice that the doors don't close properly at the top) [The door hinges hang from two large metal pins on each side. Over the years, the pins, and the holes they fit in, have worn, letting the doors sag, so their tops are too close together. Forcing the door catch to close, so the doors could be locked, while the top can't get fully shut, has twisted the left hand door.]

The clock weight shaft:

- What is the cupboard in the corner for? (someone might say keeping brooms in) [That's all it was used for for decades. Show the weight chute leading down into it. Tell the story of how it was extended.

Memorials on the floor:

- Can you see any memorials? (Someone might spot stones on the floor) [Point out complete memorial stones running under the inner door, and also fragments by the south wall.] [If someone notices the notice on the south wall, explain (as below) and say they will see the bell in the bell chamber]

The service bell rope:

- (If not already covered) Can the bells be rung from down here? [(Point out the rope) The main bells can't, but there is a small one that can be swung safely by a non ringer for services when there are no ringers present.]

The ceiling

- How did the bells get up the tower? [The centre square of the ceiling lifts out to let them through.]

On an open day people may spend some time waiting in the porch, so the above can provide interest while they do so. There may be other material on display, for example about the history of ringing at All Saints. Draw visitors attention to this, and answer any questions about it.

Nave (inside)

Stand near the platform and look towards the gallery.

- Can you see where the ringers are when they ring? [If not, show them.]
- Can you see the glass in the archway? Why do you think it is there? [If it wasn't, the ringers wouldn't be able to hear the bells to ring them properly when loud music is played in the church.]
- Can you guess another benefit of having the screen – if I tell you it is to do with heat? [Unlikely to guess without prompts such as: 'hot air rises', 'ringing a bell is a physical activity so it's better to be cool than too warm'. Explain that the church is heated by flooding the upper part with hot air that leaks down to keep people warm. Show the two large inlet ducts (along the north wall). Above about 8 feet you are in the hot air, and the gallery is well above that.]

Ringling room – Before visitors see upper levels

Before visitors arrive, all ropes except 6th should be up on the spider. 6th will normally be down, but if up for any reason, should be set at backstroke for safety.

Encourage visitors to sit or stand round the edge of the room, away from the 6th.

Welcome them, and ask them not to touch any ropes while in the tower.

Introduction

- History (Omit this if the visit is associated with a separate talk)
[English style ringing originated in England about 400 years ago and has spread around the world. There are over 6000 towers with bells hung for full circle ringing. Around 280 are in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, around 130 in the the Commonwealth and the USA, and the rest in England.]
- The gallery
[This is where we stand to ring the bells. They are about 50 feet above us, on the other end of the bellropes.]

Bells

- (For young children) How many bells are there?
[Count the ropes]
- How a bell works (Show model bell)
[The bell hangs from a headstock - like an axle - that lets it turn through full circle. Normally it hangs mouth down, which is safe, but when ringing, it swings from mouth-up one way, all the way round to mouth-up the other way, and back again (demonstrate). The rope is fastened to the wheel. At one end of the swing, it winds nearly all the way round the wheel (demonstrate) and at the other end of the swing, it winds the opposite way underneath the wheel, but not as far. full circle.]
- Show the stay
[Having swung the bell into the ‘up’ position, it is possible to ‘park’ it. The stay (point) rests against the slider (show it) with the bell just beyond the vertical. The slider moves a little to let the bell go beyond the vertical in both directions (show it).]

Ringling

- Demonstrate bell being raised and rung
[(NB lots of ringing terminology here, explain things in lay language): Coils absorb spare rope to start with – Bell swings a little higher with each pull – Sally starts to bounce as garter hole passes pulley, and rope starts to wind under the wheel – When swinging full circle ringer goes to full reach holding tail end at backstroke, and full reach holding sally (the fluffy bit at handstroke.]
- Demonstrate setting bell at hand and backstroke
[When bell goes beyond the balance point, it can be rested on the stay. (Set bell at handstroke). The same can happen on the other stroke (Set bell at backstroke) and leaving it like this is safer, because there is no ambiguity about whether the bell is up (dangerous) or down (safe).]

To see the upper levels:

Split visitors into groups. Suggest that the fittest start with the roof (they go up first), and the least fit start with the clock room (they go up last).

Ringling room – After all groups have seen the upper levels

(This only applies to tower visits. On open days, visitors normally go straight down from the roof to the porch, since another group will already be in the ringing room.)

Some of what follows can be either during the initial session, or after the visitors return from seeing the upper levels, along with answering any general questions.

Photographs & peal boards

- (Show picture of FE Robinson)
[There are pictures like this in many towers throughout the Diocese.]
- (Show picture of 1902 band)
[The band that rang for Edward 7th's coronation was all; male, whereas modern bands are more or less equal male and female)
- (Show peal board rung for F E Robinson's funeral)
- (Show peal boards on North wall)
[There was an upsurge in peal ringing after the bells were augmented in 1903, up to the First World War. These were all rung for the Rector's birthday, not something that would justify a peal board nowadays.]
- (Show peal boards for Wokingham peal and first peal on the rehung bells)
[There was a resurgence of peal ringing after 1980. This was rung in 1990 when the church celebrated its 800th anniversary. We chose a method that hadn't been rung before, so we could name it Wokingham. (The first band to ring a method to a peal has the privilege of naming it.)]

Stone plaques

- Why were these plaques placed in the ringing gallery?
[They weren't. Look at the dates. They were here before the gallery was installed in the 1860s. That was also before the archway was opened up to the nave, so they would have been high on the wall, visible high up from the floor of the porch.]

The environment

- (Point to the open archway)
[Many ringing rooms are sealed in, and not open to the church. Being able to see the congregation, and being seen by them, is very good, but there are drawbacks. When the organ is playing loud, we can't hear the bells, and when we are ringing the choir can't practice very well.]
[The church heating, replaced some years ago, is very good – fast, efficient and effective, but when it is comfortable at pew level up here it can be sweltering. It is also hot and sticky when the sun streams through the unopenable window in hot weather.]
[The solution will be a glass sheet in the archway to act as a sound and heat barrier. We can then use a heat pump to cool or warm the ringing room.]

Other questions

- (Whatever they want to know ...)

Clock room

When they come in, make sure they don't touch the ropes. Don't even let them stand near the rope of the bell that is up (if one is).

Things to show, and questions to ask (for young children):

The walls

- Why are the walls covered in carpets?
[The sound inside the tower was too reverberant (explain word for kids?). The carpets dampen the sound on its way from the bells to the ringers, so they can hear the bells striking more clearly, without lots of reverberation.]

The clock. (The side flaps are normally left up so it is visible.)

- How old is it (guess)?
[1817 made by Thwaites and Reed - point to brass plaque saying so]
 - How many clock faces are there?
[Two - point to the two driving shafts going out through the walls on South and West (over the window behind the clock) - In fact the clock is designed to drive three faces, with bearings for a third shaft on the North, but we don't know why.]
 - What drives the clock (guess & observation)?
[It's driven by weights, and the weights are wound up by the (blue) electric motors at each end. They were installed in 2005.]
 - What wound the weights before the motors were fitted?
[See the two winding spigots on the front of the clock, like giant clockwork key shafts – NB this is of course 'clockwork'.
[Rope wires coming out of clock, over pulleys and down onto weight shaft]
Weight shaft itself - how many noticed floor to ceiling wooden shaft in ringing room?
[Show them winding handle]
- Why is winding handle so big?
[The old weights are very heavy, because they had to keep it going for many days. The two weights together weighed about 100 kg (2cwt in imperial).]
 - What time is it? (Someone should know)
[Point to the adjustor dial.]
Is that what the dial says?
[The numbers go backwards on that dial, because it is on the back of the drive shaft – like looking at the clock face from behind. The dial is used to set the correct time.]
 - How do you know the clock is going? (Someone might spot it – or even hear the tick)
[Point out pendulum for anyone who hasn't spotted it.]

Old bolt hole in the floor (finger sized with dark oil stain round it, below and to the left of the clock as you face it.

- Can anyone guess what it was for? (They won't be able to)
[One of the wires for the clock weight used to come down to a pulley screwed in it, and then back up to the top of the weight shaft.]
[Most church clocks run for eight days, so they can be wound once a week. So did ours originally, and the weights went down to the ground floor. When the gallery was replaced in the 1870s, it stopped the weights going below it, so we had a five and a half day clock. During the 1903 restoration, with plenty of unused cable, someone found it convenient to run it down to the floor. For over a century, the clock had to be wound twice a week. In the mid '80s, we realised what had happened, and extended the weight run again.]

The trap door

- Does anyone know what it is for?
[Getting the bells into and out of the tower. The boards above them also lift out, and there is another trapdoor under the carpet in the ringing room.
[For adults, you can show how to lift the (loose) board at the east side of the trapdoor in order to reach through to change the light bulb.
[You can tell the story of when the support for the previous light – a spotlight – broke. It swung several inches sideways and its heat melted through the nylon cord holding the rope spider.]

Roof beam (in the top of the alcove on the E wall)

- What is this? (Someone might guess)
[Part of the roof of the nave. Point out how big it is. It is not the ridge though, which is higher.]

Metal bosses (Floor and ceiling on the 5th rope)

- Why does this rope have metal bosses in the holes, and not the others?
[The ropes need to hang in a reasonable circle in the ringing room. Where they leave the bell frame depends on where the bell wheels are. The position can be moved a little with the pulleys under the bell wheels. For most that is enough, but for that bell (no 5) it isn't. The smooth metal bosses let the rope to pull slightly sideways without the friction that would occur if it was just left to rub against the wood where it goes through the floors.]

Sound control cords (point to them)

- Can anyone guess what they are for? (They won't unless they have already been in the bell chamber)
[Show them going through the ceiling and tell them to remember to look and see where they go when they are in the bell chamber.
[If they have already been in the bell chamber, they might need reminding!]

General question

- What else is this room used for?
[Tower store room. Point out different things, eg dustbin for Christmas tree, black poly bags containing tree decorations, etc,]
- What is in these? (wooden box)
[Open them and show our tools, eg giant spanner, ear defenders, inspection light]
- Why do we need giant spanners?
[The nuts and bolts on the bell installation are big. When the bells were mounted on timber headstocks, the nuts attaching the bells and fittings all needed tightening regularly, because the timber expanded and shrank with the weather. Now we have metal headstocks, we don't need to do that. - (explanation will vary depending on whether they have already been in the bell chamber, or are about to do so).]
- What is in this? (metal chest)
[Open it to show spare rope. Let them feel difference between top end (pre-stretched polyester) and tail end (natural fibre).]

Bell chamber

Stand by the door as visitors enter. Tell them that it is safe to hold anything they like (the beams above them by the door, the Treble stay and the Tenor wheel are most useful).

Offer advice on where to put feet and hands if necessary. Offer a helping hand to any who need it.

Encourage visitors to move right along the walkway so that everyone can get in.

Make sure they are all feeling reasonably comfortable before you begin.

Walk around the frame as required to demonstrate things, but only as far as you feel comfortable, and don't go near to the 6th.

To demonstrate some things below, you need to climb into a pit. If you are not happy to do this, then you can just omit it.

The bells

- How many bells are there? (some will say 8, others might say 9)
[8 bells hung for full circle ringing. (Point and count) 1, 2, ... 8.]
[(point to service bell) This one is separate from the others, it is just swung with a lever (point) and rung from the porch for services when there are no bellringers]
- Look at the way the bells are hung
[(Show bell supported on headstock) Prior to restoration these were huge lumps of elm, with lots of bolts that needed tightening as the wood contracted in dry the weather.]
- Show the way the bells swing full circle
[Most of the bells are mouth down – the safe position to leave them. The 6th (point) is mouth up – how we need the bells in order to ring them full circle.]
- Show the stay
[This is what allows us to 'park' the bells when they are mouth up, between spells of ringing. When the bell is mouth up, the stay is down below, and rests against the slider, with the bell just beyond the vertical. To be able to rest the bell at both strokes, it has to go just beyond the vertical in both directions. That is why the stay rests on a slider, and not a fixed stop. (Climb in Treble pit and move slider around so they can see it. Reach through and move 3rd slider for any in the doorway who can't see Treble's).]

The frame

- Look at the frame
[There is a pit for each bell. This frame is fairly unusual. It was made by Webb & Bennett of Kiddlington, who rehung the bells in 1903 when they were augmented to 8. Conventional metal frames have two cast side frames for each pit, linked together with metal bars. This frame is a bit like Meccano, and entirely made from forged iron bars. Webb & Bennett were blacksmiths before they took up bellhanging! It is a pig to paint, as found when we painted it in 1988. – Try getting your wire brush between the bars to remove the rust (point)!]
- Look at the way the bells swing
[Half of the bells swing East-West and half North-South to spread the forces on the tower.]
[When a bell swings full circle, it exerts peak vertical force of 4x its weight downwards, and 2x its weight sideways, so every 2 seconds, the Tenor (3/4 ton) puts 1.5 ton that way - 1.5 ton that way ...)
- Look at each pair of bells
[The ropes are on opposite sides, so they swing opposite ways, which also helps balance the force]
- Look at where all the ropes are
[By choosing which side of the pit the wheel is, and which side of the wheel the rope is, they are roughly in a circle. (Point and count) 1, 2, 8.]

Ringling a bell

- Would you like to hear what a bell sounds like? (Assume yes, unless anyone is genuinely frightened – which has only happened to me once – in which case leave this until last and let them leave before doing it)
[(Suggest they put fingers in ears, because it is loud.) The rope creaks a little as it tightens. Once past the balance point, the bell will swing right round and strike.]
[(Shout or give arranged signal to person in ringing room. Cover your ears.)]
- (After the bell has set again) Did you notice which side the clapper strikes the bell?
[It strikes the leading edge – the bell stops and the clapper keeps going – so it strikes opposite sides at each stroke.]

Tuning

- Why is the inside of the bell shiny?
[It is tuned by removing metal at different places to bring the different frequencies into line with each other, and the other bells. A new bell is made deliberately thick – it is easier to remove metal than stick it back on!]
[The 6th is a new bell, shiny all the way up. About 1cwt was removed in tuning, 10% of its weight. If you look inside an old bell that has been re-tuned, there are separate bands where metal has been removed. Only 1/2 cwt was removed from the Tenor, which weighs 15.5cwt, so only about 3%]
- Did you notice the hum after the bell stopped ringing?
[The Tenor hums even more since it was re-tuned. Climb into Tenor pit, reach under and pull clapper to strike the bell gently.)]

Sound control

- See how we control the sound that goes out (point to shutters)
[When the church was built, the whole openings were open. Many years ago, these three (point to S, W, N) were bricked up to just above the current lintel to reduce the sound level for the neighbours.]
[In the late '70s / early '80s, we still had complaints, but we needed more practice time with a growing band, so in 1982 we installed the sound control. The area of the openings is roughly the same as the area above the previous brickwork.]
[The shutters are open when ringing for services and other public ringing, and closed for practices and so on.]
- Do you want to hear how effective they are?
[Listen carefully. (Lift one shutter a bit). See the traffic noise has suddenly appeared, (close it again) and now it's gone away.]
- (If someone asks how loud the bells are with shutters closed)
[If there is traffic going past, you don't hear them. If it is quiet, you can hear them, but they are very quiet]

Other things

- How old is the roof? (Some might see 1702 on N-S beam, few will see 1613 on E-W)
[1702 was just before the ring of 6 was hung (including current 7 & 8)]
- (If you can see any butterflies on the roof timbers, point them out)
[Butterflies often survive in the towers, usually tortoiseshell.]
- What is that post for? (Point)
[It is the base of the flagpole.]
- What is that wire for? (Point) It comes up from the clock room and goes to the roof?
[It operates the clock bell.]

Tower roof

Warn people of slippery surface, especially on sloping bits or if wet. Discourage leaning over the wall. Take especial care with the very deep step onto and off the roof from the stairs.

You may find it convenient to stand on the raised platform in the middle.

Things to show, and questions to ask:

Clock bell:

- What is it for? (likely to get various responses)
[Clock bell]
- Does anyone know how often the church clock strikes?
[Only strikes hours. Some clocks strike half hours and/or quarter hours too, but ours doesn't. Some public clocks don't strike at night, but ours strikes all through (except that the clock is currently not going!)]
- Who wants to know what it sounds like?
[(Pull level to lift hammer a few inches and let it drop) Not a very nice sound is it! Good job it hides behind the wall, so it is not too loud for people living across the road.]
[Having a separate clock bell on the roof is rare for a church with bells. Normally the clock strikes on the Tenor bell (which has a much deeper tone).]
- What would happen if the church clock didn't strike?
[Depends on answers, but talk about previous generations, with different lifestyles being more dependent on public clocks.]

Flag pole:

- Does anyone know what flag the church flies?
[St Georges flag for church occasions like Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, ...]
[The union flag for state occasions, like the Queen's birthday, ...]
- How far up the pole does the flag go? (someone might get both answers)
[To the top for most occasions]
[Half way up for sad occasions like remembrance day or the death of someone famous.]
- Why is the rope round the pole instead of coming straight down?
[To stop it flapping against the pole when the wind blows.]

Roof:

- How would you describe the condition of this roof? (pretty good)
[That's because it was renewed in 2005. The old lead was cracking, and in places it had slid down the slope and wrinkled, so it let in water.
[The new roof is slightly higher round the edges than the old one, so there are bigger steps for the water to drain down. That also makes it wider and easier to walk round, but means a much higher step to get over as you come out from the stairs]

Ask:

- Who can see a weathercock? (Some smart Alec might see the one on the town hall)
[Point to the turret above the stairs] [That was also renovated when the roof was done.]
- Can you see the line running round the turret?
[There was a crack there that you could see daylight through!]

Walls

- Does anyone know why there are coloured patches on the walls?
[They were test patches for resurfacing the tower. The puddingstone was eroded, but is now covered with render to protect it. Which colour do you like best?]
[Mention finding render behind clock faces – see churchyard notes.]

The view from the roof

Nearby:

- The cornerstone – Built in 2004 to replace both out previous halls – the Annex that stood there, and Church House in Easthampstead Road. It has more space, modern facilities, and is used by more community groups than church groups.
- Rest of the churchyard – Show its extent - the largest green space in central Wokingham. It goes beyond the dividing wall.
See the variety of trees including the cedar over FE Robinson's grave (the bigger one behind).
The cedar, nearer to the Cornerstone was cut where it was storm damaged (not to make space for the Cornerstone).
The churchyard is being developed over the many years to include better paths, quiet areas for sitting and wild areas for nature.
(If someone asks where the World War 2 concrete bunker is, it is in the far corner next to London Road, hidden behind the conifers.)

Over the town (lots of trees!) – going clockwise:

- Roman Catholic church (rectangular brick building just visible)
- Salvation Army (gable roof just visibly by pale yellowish tree)
- Metal tower next to fire station
- Town Hall with clock
- Old Tesco building (Erfstadt Court) behind town hall with flagpole on the roof
- Waitrose (pyramid roof)
- The Old Police Station (turret on the building and radio mast behind)
- The spire of St Paul's (just visible over the trees when standing in the southwest corner).

Further away:

- (N) Chilterns - Bowsey Hill (near Wargrave) Ashley Hill (behind Knowl Hill on A4)
- (E) The radio mast on Coppid Beech Hill, tall buildings in Bracknell
- (S) Conifer woods (Crowthorne) with watch tower, Broadmoor, Wellingtonia Avenue (Redwoods near Finchampstead Ridges (skyline), Finchampstead church (L of pylons)