

Bellringing at All Saints Wokingham

Information for neighbours of the church (2010)

All Saints church has had bells for around 500 years. The oldest two still ringing were cast in 1704 (in Reading, not at the Wokingham Bell Foundry, which closed in 1620). English style ringing is part of our cultural heritage, and today's ringers at All Saints are proud to be continuing the ancient tradition. Throughout the centuries, our bells have marked events national and local, religious and secular – from Nelson's victories to royal weddings, as well as the celebrations of Wokingham people.



Bellringing is a skilful activity, and All Saints is fortunate to have an active band of ringers (currently 18 of us) who are dedicated to keeping alive the art of ringing in Wokingham, as did many hundreds of other Wokingham ringers throughout the ages.

Change ringing is probably the most quintessentially English sound, though most people have no idea of the skill, the craftsmanship and the heritage behind it. People love to hear the bells ringing, and of course the bells are there to be heard.

All Saints actively manages the sound of the bells in order to balance the need for public ringing against the fact that, for the few people who choose to live very close to the tower, the sound can be rather loud. Not all ringing needs to be public, which is why the tower is fitted with sound control shutters that can be closed for practices, training courses, and so on. With shutters closed, the sound is very quiet – quieter than noisy traffic. Of course the shutters are always open for all public ringing.

Regular public ringing – We ring for services (twice on Sunday and occasionally weekday evenings, with extra at Christmas and Easter). Sometimes a special performance extends service ringing from the normal 30-40 minutes to an hour. We also ring for a dozen or more weddings a year, mostly on Saturday afternoons.

Special public ringing – To mark special events we may ring a *quarter peal* (approx ¾ hour) or a *peal* (approx 3 hours). At New Year, we ring about 10 minutes just before and just after midnight, and also sometimes a *date touch* (1¼ hours) during New Year's Day.

As well as public ringing, we regularly ring for practices, training, and so on, with the sound control shutters closed.

Our policy is to ring in public (ie with shutters open) for events of community interest, providing:

- Peals are only rung open during the daytime.
- Public evening performances end before 9pm (apart from Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve).

The next public peal, on 30th October, is to mark All Saints tide.

Keeping you informed

Our website has full details of ringing times in the **tower diary**, and we list special public performances under **forthcoming events**. See:

www.allsaintswokinghambells.org.uk/diary/

and

www.allsaintswokinghambells.org.uk/calendar/

During public peals, we post a notice outside the church saying what the ringing is for, and how long it will last.

If you would like personal advance notification of any long periods of ringing, send me an e-mail (see below). We won't pass your address to anyone else or use it for any other purpose.

Finding out more

We are happy to answer questions about ringing at All Saints, or any other aspect of English style bellringing. Contact us, or alternatively browse the extensive information on the tower website:

www.allsaintswokinghambells.org.uk/

Finally, if you would like to see the bells, or to see ringing in action, you would be very welcome to visit the tower.

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