

Bell Ringers

The tower was completed around 1460, and an inventory of 1553 shows 4 bells. In 1747 the older bells were recast to form five new bells by the Wolverhampton foundry of Matthew and James Bagley, and a 6th bell was acquired from the London foundry of Charles and George Mears in 1849. The number of bells was only augmented to eight after the First World War in 1923 when the renowned foundry of John Taylor of Loughborough replaced 2 of the 1747 bells and added 2 more.

The final change to the bells took place in 1995 when 6 new Taylor bells were cast, with the four 1747 and 1849 bells being dispersed to Stoughton in Sussex, Tividale in the West Midlands and to Hillsborough, North Carolina. This has provided the Cannock ringers with a very musical and easy-to-ring peal of 10 bells.

Inscriptions on the Current Bells

Founder	Date	Diameter	Weight (cwt)	Notes
John Taylor & Co.	1996	23½"	3-1-4	Augmented to a ring of ten through the efforts of ringers and friends 1995.
John Taylor & Co.	1996	24½"	3-2-11	Given by Peter Barker, tower captain, 1966 - 1980, Geoff and Linda pick, ringing masters from 1974.
John Taylor & Co.	1923	25½"	3-3-8	1914 - 1918, in memory of those who fell, I call to prayer and praise.
John Taylor & Co.	1996	26¾"	4-1-0	Given by Cannock Conduit Trust.
John Taylor & Co.	1996	28"	4-2-6	'The Walstell Bell', given by the swift family of Walstell Garage.
John Taylor & Co.	1996	29½"	4-2-6	'The Chad Varah Samaritan Bell', given by the Knight Family.
John Taylor & Co.	1923	32"	5-3-26	Ioseph Willington gentleman, John Tyrear William Maston M, and I B: J747, recast in 1923.
John Taylor & Co.	1996	34"	7-2-8	Given by the Linford Family.
John Taylor & Co.	1923	38"	9-3-6	William Eginton Curate, George Blythe, Thomas Taylor Churchwardens: M and I B J747, recast 1923.
John Taylor & Co.	1923	42½"	14-0-10	In memoriam 1914 - 1918, grant peace on Earth and after we have striven peace in thy Heaven. * * * L. J. Price, M.A., R.D., Vicar WM. E. Jackson Saml. Watkiss C. Warden S.

Campanology

Church bell ringing is a mystery to all but those practiced in the art. To the uninitiated it can appear to be an unskilled physical process consisting of swinging about on ropes producing

random noise. Bell-ringing in Britain developed in the 16th century from a process of "swing chiming", when the bells were swung either directly or by ropes from side to side. Swing chiming is still common in continental Europe (with certain notable exceptions such as Northern Italy). The current British system is known as "full circle ringing" in which the bells are rung through a full arc of 360 degrees and the bell strikes its note when the mouth of the bell is facing heavenward. The process of full circle ringing produces the richest possible sound and in skilled hands is remarkably precise (to within milliseconds), requires little physical effort on any bell weighing less than an about 1 ton and allows bell-ringers to indulge in the complex system of change ringing.

The art of change ringing (campanology) is unique to Great Britain and its prior colonies. It is based on a principle of ringing the bells in unrepeated permutations. For example, the maximum permutations on six bells is 720 and on eight bells is 40,320. Mathematical systems known as "methods" have been composed over the last four centuries to allow these permutations to be reproduced in literally thousands of ways.

Churches vary in the number and weight of the bells they have. Full circle ringing takes place on modest rings of 3 bells, right up to 12 and now even 16 bells in the larger churches and cathedrals. Bellringers are generally interesting, inquisitive, personable, friendly, sociable, fascinating, fascinated, enthusiastic and of course highly intelligent. They practise frequently as this ancient art is continuously challenging, and they tour other belfries on a regular and social basis. Some have even been known to visit public houses after ringing to discuss their art at length!

The St. Luke's Ringers

At present, May 2023, St Luke's has a band of 7 ringers. We have an annual outing, usually joint with ringers from other towers. We regularly enter the local area Striking Competition having come 2nd the last 2 years.

We carry out our main purpose in ringing for Sunday Service between 9:00 and 9:30 each week. We practice every Wednesday evening between 19:30 and 21:00.

Visitors are always welcome and we are able to provide support with methods varying from touches on 5 bells for the less experienced to more advanced methods using all 10 bells. Quarter peals are frequently rung on Sunday evenings or during the week.

We are always on the lookout for learners.

If you would like more information, please contact Malcolm Quimby on 07932 849900 or at malcolmquimby@gmail.com