

Bells have rung out over Wokingham for hundreds of years - the voice of the church speaking to the community.

They remind everyone who hears them that the church is alive.

They ring regularly to announce that worship is taking place.

They ring for weddings and sometimes for funerals.

They ring for festivals, and they mark local and national events.

Bells rung 'full circle' in the English style have a unique sound that has become part of our cultural heritage.

The two oldest bells were cast in 1703 and 1704 by Knight of Reading. In 1903, the bells were augmented from six to eight with new and recast bells by Whitechapel Bellfoundry, and hung in a new iron frame by Webb and Bennet of Kidlington.

The current project began in 1999, with four aims:

To improve the handling of the bells

To ensure they do not need major work in the foreseeable future

To improve the quality of sound

To improve the climate in the ringing room

The first phase of the project, now completed, has achieved the first three objectives. Whitechapel Bellfoundry provided four replacement bells and tuned the remainder to modern standards. Whites of Appleton provided a complete set of modern fittings and rehung the bells in the original frame. The replaced bells have all been found homes as part of restoration projects in other churches, via the agency of the Keltek Trust.

The second phase of the original project, to meet the fourth of the original objectives, will follow after the result of a wider investigation of the church heating system, and the completion of urgent repairs, including the external tower walls and the tower roof.

But now, we give thanks for what has been achieved so far, thanks for the hard work, dedication and generosity of so many people, and we rejoice in the richer, fuller, glorious sound of the restored bells sounding out over Wokingham.

Rededication of the Bells

by Rt. Rev'd. Stephen Cottrell

Bishop of Reading



All Saints' Church, Wokingham

Sunday 23rd January 2005

at 3-30 pm

Order of service

Welcome

The Rector, Rev'd. David Hodgson

Hymn: Angel Voices ever singing (Tune: Angel Voices)

Angel voices ever singing Round thy throne of light, Angel harps for ever ringing Rest not day nor night: Thousands only live to bless thee And confess thee – Lord of Might.	Yea, we know that thou rejoicest O'er each work of thine; Thou didst ears and hands and voices For they praise design; Craftsman's art and music's pleasure For they pleasure – all combine.
Thou who art beyond the farthest Mortal eye can scan Can it be that thou regardest Songs of sinful man? Can we know that thou art near us And wilt hear us? – Yea, we can.	In thy house, great God, we offer Of thine own to thee; And for thine acceptance offer All unworthily, Hearts and minds and hands and voices In our choicest psalmody.

Honour, glory, might and merit
Thine shall ever be,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Blessed Trinity!
Of the best that thou hast given
Earth and heaven render thee.

Exhortation (*Congregation standing*)

Brothers and sisters, we are met here to commit to God the work which these bells, now rehung and to be hallowed in our tower, shall do in the years to come, to ask God's blessing on all who shall ring them, and to ask that all who hear them shall lift up their hearts to God.

Let us thank God for the craftsmen who during the centuries have cast and hung bells in this, and other towers throughout the land; for the ringers who in times past have rung these bells: let us pray also for the ringers throughout this land and overseas, that through their art, we may in faith be one for evermore.

Let us pray that the message of the bells may bring joy to the sad, penitence to sinners, and encouragement to the faithful and all who seek truth. In the song of these bells, may we find peace in our souls.

These prayers and praises we humbly offer up to God in the words which Christ taught us, saying:

The Bells shall ring

Please join us in the Cornerstone for refreshments after the service.

The Ringers' Prayer (*All ringers present*)

Gracious Lord, source of all skill and beauty, who hast entrusted to us the ringing of thy bells, give unto us the needful skill and grace for the faithful performing of our art, that the sound of the bells may awaken in the hearts of all who hear them the desire to worship thee in spirit and in truth: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: Unchanging God (Tune: Belfry Praise)

Unchanging God who livest, Enthroned in realms on high, To men the power thou givest Thy name to magnify. We raise the bells for ringing With ready mind and will, And come before thee bringing Our hearts, our strength, our skill.	By union free and willing The work of God is done; Our Master's prayer fulfilling, We would in him be one. One, as the Church, our Mother Would have her children stand, Befriending one another, A strong and steadfast band.
We call from tower and steeple Upon the day of days, All faithful Christian people To worship, prayer and praise. We ring with joyous gladness When man and wife are blest, We peal in muffled sadness For loved ones laid to rest.	Our lives, like bells, when changing An ordered course pursue; Through joys and sorrows ranging, May all our lives ring true. May we, through Christ forgiven Our faults and failures past, Attain our place in heaven, Called home to rest at last.

The Blessing and Dismissal

The Lord's prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory
For ever and ever. Amen

Lesson

1 Chronicles, Chap 29, Verses 9-17

Read by John Smith, Church Warden

Psalm 150

Minister: Praise God in his temple
Praise his strength in heaven

All: Praise him for the mighty things he hath done
Praise his extreme greatness

Minister: Praise him with trumpets
Praise him with the harp and lyres

All: Praise him with the drums and dancing
Praise him with the harps and flutes

Minister: Praise him with the cymbals
Praise him upon the loud cymbals

All: Praise the Lord, all living creatures;
Praise the Lord

All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever.
Amen.

Lesson

1 Corinthians, Chap 12, Verses 4-11

Read by John Harrison, Tower Foreman

Hymn: Set them nobly in the steeple (Tune Hyfrydol)

Set then nobly in the steeple, And when evening shadows soften
Let our bells be rung on high. Chancel, cross and tower and aisle;
There fulfil their heavenly mission, They shall blend their vesper summons
Midway twixt the earth and sky. With the day's departing smile
As the birds sing early matins Christian people hear them sounding
To the God of nature's praise: In their toil or in their rest,
These their ring of changing music Joyful that in one communion
To the God of grace shall raise. Of the church they too are blest.

Till the days of sheaves in-gathering,
Till the harvest of the earth;
Till the Saints rise in them order,
Glorious in them second birth,
Christ to Thee, the world's salvation,
Father, Spirit, unto Thee
Low we bend in adoration
Ever blessed One in Three.

During the hymn, the Bishop, The Rector, The Churchwarden and Ringers move to the ringing gallery for the re-dedication, the congregation turning to face the tower.

Dedication

The Rector:

My Lord Bishop, we ask you to dedicate to the Glory of God, the restored bells hanging in the tower above.

The Bishop:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we offer to thee all the work that has been undertaken to restore these bells – Bless, Sanctify and Hallow all that has been done in this tower, Bless with thy grace and skill all who ring here, and grant that the message of the bells may lift the hearts of all who hear them, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Grant, O Lord, that whosoever shall be called by the sound of these bells to this House of prayer may enter into Thy Gates with thanksgiving and into Thy Courts with praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Rector shall hand a token bell rope to the Bishop:

The Bishop, receiving the rope shall say:

In the faith of Jesus Christ, I do solemnly set apart and dedicate these bells to the Glory of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

The Bishop shall then hand the token rope to the Rector, saying:

Receive these bells that have been set apart from all profane uses, as a sacred trust committed to you as the appointed Minister of Christ in this church; remember that they have been set apart to ring out to the glory of God, and therefore take care that they be ever used in God's service and for his glory.

The Rector shall reply:

I will, the Lord being my helper.

The Rector shall hand the token rope to the Tower Foreman.

Then shall rounds be rung by the Wokingham ringers.

Hymn: Now thank we all our God (Tune: Nun Danket)

During the hymn, all shall return to their places

Now thank we all our God	O may this bounteous God
With hearts and hands and voices	Through all our lives be near us
Who wondrous things hath done	With ever joyful hearts
In whom the world rejoices;	And blessed peace to cheer us;
Who from our mothers' arms	And keep us in his grace
Hath blessed us on our way	And guide us when perplexed
With countless gifts of love	And free us from all ills
And still is ours today.	In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given
The Son and him who reigns
With them in highest heaven
The one eternal God,
Whom heaven and earth adore,
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

Address:

The Bishop