



ABOUT BELLS

Church bells are cast from an alloy of copper and tin. This special alloy enables the bell to produce a resonant sound and at the same time makes it strong to withstand being struck with a clapper.

A ring of bells in a tower usually ranges from 6 to 12. The lightest bell is called the treble and the heaviest is called the tenor. The heaviest tenor bell in the Association is hung at Southwark Cathedral and weighs 48 cwt (2440kg).



INTERESTED IN LEARNING TO RING?

Tower bands are always keen to welcome back lapsed ringers and to teach new recruits. Learning to ring is fun, and once the basics of bell handling have been mastered, you will have a skill for life.

Most people have the ability to become a good ringer. Great strength is not required and people of any age from about 12 upwards are welcome. Training sessions are regularly held by the Surrey Association to teach new recruits and help lapsed ringers who think they may be a bit rusty.

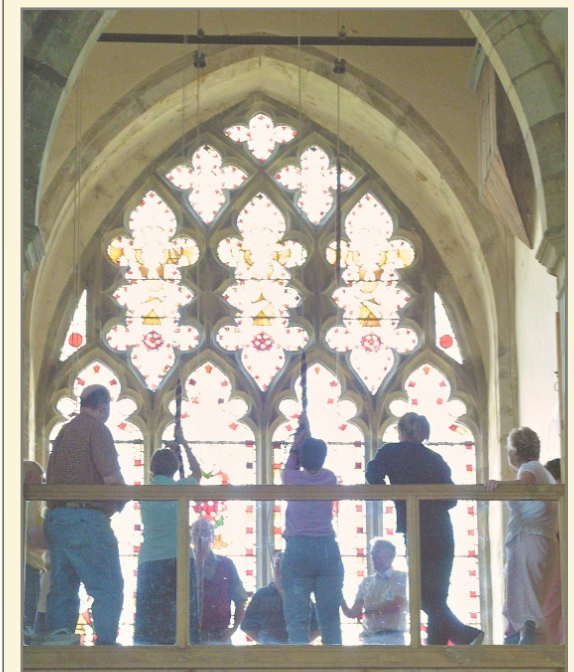
For more information about church bell ringing and to find out where you can learn to ring, visit our website:

www.surreybellringers.org.uk

or contact the General Secretary:

gensec@surreybellringers.org.uk

The
SURREY
ASSOCIATION



**ALL ABOUT
CHURCH BELL
RINGING**



ABOUT BELL RINGERS

Bell ringers are a true cross section of society. All ages, backgrounds and occupations are represented and bound together by their common interest in ringing.

There are many different aspects to ringing. Most enjoy the social side of meeting friends at the weekly practice and often in the pub afterwards.

Many towers arrange ringing outings, a day out to visit and ring at several churches in another part of the country. There are Association events to go to, quizzes, dances, BBQs and ringing meetings with spectacular "ringing teas".

Some ringers try to ring at as many towers with bells as they can. Others specialise in ringing peals, a long performance of the ringers' art.

WHY CHURCH BELL RINGING?

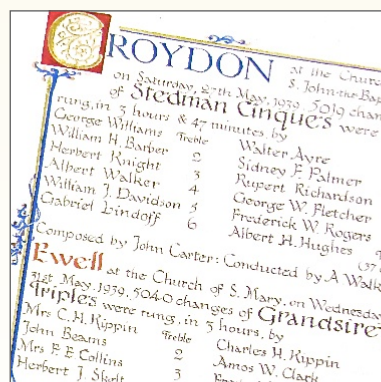
Church bell ringing is a thriving ancient English activity that plays an important part in community life today.

About 600 people in the Surrey Association of Church Bell Ringers regularly ring for Sunday services and special occasions such as anniversaries and weddings. Our geographical area extends across the old county boundary of Surrey which is now South London and East Surrey. There are 66 churches with rings of bells and most are always looking for new recruits. Everyone is welcome to learn regardless of whether you attend church or not.

A SHORT HISTORY

English Bell Ringing has its origins during the reign of Henry VIII when churches began to restore bells that had been lost or destroyed during the dissolution of the monasteries. Before this, bells were chimed randomly, as still happens on the Continent. However, a new mechanism was introduced at that time. Bells were mounted with full wheels which allowed them to rotate through an entire 360 degrees to produce each sound.

This revolutionary change meant that bells weighing several hundredweight could be controlled very precisely with minimal physical effort.



This heralded the start of change ringing, the ringing of bells in pre-defined patterns of changes called methods. Many methods composed then are still rung today, such as the two recorded in this peal book entry.

So whenever you hear bells ringing, think of the sound as a continuing tradition which dates back many hundreds of years.

HOW A BELL IS RUNG

Initially the bell mouth faces downwards. By pulling on the rope, the bell is gradually swung higher and higher. When the bell swings round so far that the mouth faces upwards, it can be brought to rest, or "stood". Now the bell is said to be "up" and is ready for ringing.

With each pull of the rope, the bell rotates a full circle, first one way and then the other. At the end of each revolution the bell sounds once.

CALL CHANGES TO METHODS

The bells start by ringing down a scale starting with the lightest bell, called the treble, and ending with the heaviest bell, called the tenor. This is called Rounds. To vary the tune, a conductor calls a change in the order of the sequence, known as Call Changes.

Over the years, ringers have devised patterns such that each bell changes its position one place every time it rings. This is called Method Ringing.

There are many methods from the simple to the very complex. Ringers memorise these methods by learning the pattern of changes. The maximum number of changes possible on 5 bells is 120, which takes about 5 minutes to ring. On 12 bells there are 479,001,600 different changes. To ring all these would take about 37 years. So you can see that method ringing can present some interesting challenges!

