

Flitwick Bell Ringers

The bell ringers practice regularly and ring the bells for Sunday services, weddings and other special occasions.

Adults and children wishing to learn to ring are welcome to join us at one of our practice evenings which are held at Flitwick Parish Church every Friday from 7.45pm until 9.15pm.

For further details please contact:

Ian Holman
01525 716258

Lisa Swannell
01525 714228



The bell ringers in the ringing chamber

Flitwick Bells Refurbishment

For the latest information on the progress of our project to refurbish the Church Bells at St. Peter & St. Paul Flitwick, please visit our blog site at:

<http://www.flitwickbells.blogspot.com/>

Donations

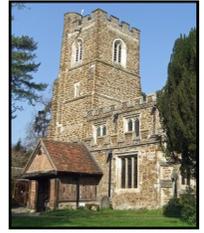
We hope that you find this leaflet and our blog site informative and we would really appreciate any and all donations to help us undertake this exciting project. You may donate online using the PayPal button on our blog site or can send a cheque made payable to "Flitwick Parochial Church Council" to:

Flitwick Church Bell Fund, c/o 3 Kestrel Road, Flitwick, Bedford, MK45 1RB



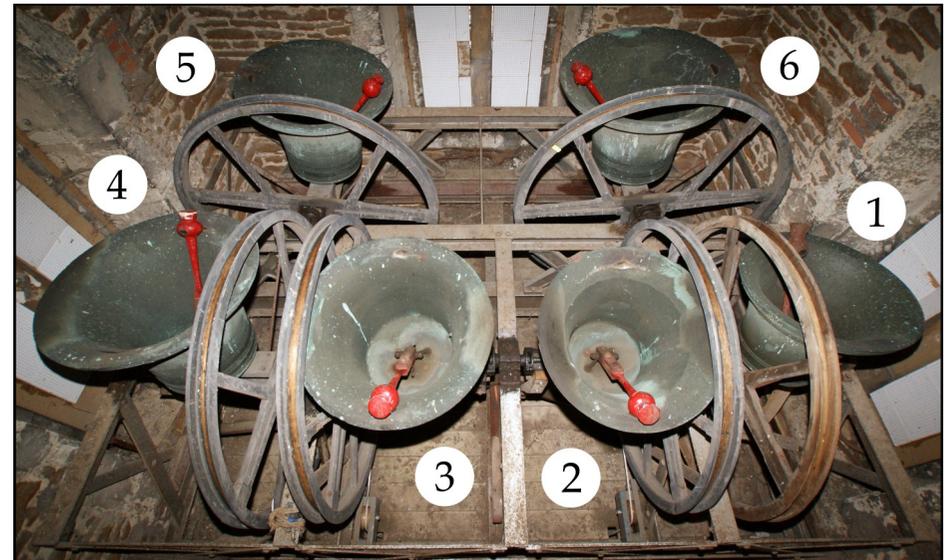
St. Peter & St. Paul Flitwick Bells Information & History

www.flitwickbells.blogspot.com



The Bells

There are six bells in the tower, five of which date from the 17th century with the heaviest (the tenor) weighing approximately 10.5 cwt (475 kg). The bells are hung in a lowside fabricated steel and cast iron frame on one level. The bells are in a conventional 6 bell 4:2 arrangement with bells 1-4 swinging East-West and bells 5-6 in a North-South direction. This frame and the fittings on bells 2-6 were supplied by Alfred Bowell of Ipswich in 1909. The lightest bell (the treble) weighs just under 5 cwt (225 kg) and was added in 1957.



The inscriptions on the bells tell us something about their history:

- 1 Lower waist: MEARS 1957 LONDON
- 2 GOD SAVE OUR KING 1637. Upper waist: RECAST BY JOHN TAYLOR & Co. 1867.
- 3 ★ Johannes Clarke hanc fecit Campanam 1608. Bells by this founder are rare.
- 4 + GOD SAVE OUR KING 1631 IK. IK stands for James Keene, bell founder of Woodstock.
- 5 MILES ❖ GRAYE MADE ME 1653. Miles Graye was a founder from Colchester.
- 6 MILES ❖ GRAYE ❖ MADE ❖ ME 1654.

Bells 2-6 are hung on rolled steel joist (RSJ) headstocks fitted with gudgeon boxes and plain bearings. The treble is hung on a cast iron box section headstock fitted with fixed steel gudgeons and ball-bearings. All the bells are fitted with plain S-type stays and sliders with traditional wheels. The stays on bells 3-6 are as originally supplied in 1909.

Bells 2-6 have had their canons and iron staples removed and have been quarter turned. The treble was cast with a flat top. All the bells have a wooden pad between the head of the bell and the headstock. The headstocks are attached with four bell bolts, two of which support the clapper fixings. The wrought iron clappers on bells 2-6 are hung from wooden baldrics with off centre fixings; all of which were refurbished in 2002.

With the exception of the treble, subjected to modern tuning by lathe, the other bells exhibit old style tuning. The 2nd has been scratch tuned on the sound-bow. The 3rd is untuned except for considerable edging (some of the edge of the bell has been removed). The 4th is edged slightly and scratch tuned on the soundbow. The 5th is edged. The tenor is untuned and has a considerable amount of scabbing on the inside of the bell. The bells are roughly tuned to the key of G.

As it has been over 100 years since the re-hanging of the bells, and as many of the current fixtures and fittings still date from that time, we are now embarking on a major refurbishment program. We are currently raising funds and obtaining the necessary permissions for the work to be carried out so that we enjoy the sound of the bells ringing out for Sunday services, weddings and practices for the next 100 years.

Bell Information

Bell	Weight	Norminal	Note	Diameter	Cast	Founder
1	4-3-20	1365.5 Hz	E	27.63"	1957	Mears & Stainbank
2	5-2-24	1234.5 Hz	D	29.75"	1867	John Taylor & Co
3	5¾ cwt	1073.5 Hz	C	31.00"	1608†	John II Clarke
4	6¾ cwt	999.0 Hz	B	33.75"	1631	James Keene
5	8 cwt	877.0 Hz	A	35.25"	1653	Miles III Graye
6	10 cwt	803.0 Hz	G	39.25"	1654	Miles III Graye

† Bell identified by the Church Buildings Council as being of historical significance

Source: <http://dove.cccb.org.uk/>

Ringling History

Prior to 1906, the original five bells were rung from the ground floor. In 1909 the bells were raised to their current position higher in the tower and a new frame installed to allow the addition of a sixth bell. The position of the original wooden frame can still be seen in the current ringing chamber, the bell frame was let in to the wall and the doorway, now blocked in, marks the entrance to the old bell chamber. In 1957 the treble was added to make the ring up to six.

Records show that a number of peals have been rung on the bells at Flitwick, one being on five bells prior to the augmentation in 1957:

- 1 31 August 1955, Doubles (11 methods), 2hrs 36mins
- 2 19 June 1958, Minor (7 methods), 2hrs 43mins
- 3 11 August 1984, Minor (4 methods in 7 extents), 2hrs 41mins
- 4 2 December 1989, Minor (4 methods), 2hrs 48mins
- 5 23 January 1993, Yesittiz Surprise Minor, 2hrs 26mins
- 6 2 March 1996, Spliced Surprise Minor (31 methods), 2hrs 37mins
- 7 22 March 1997, Surprise Minor (7 methods), 2hrs 40mins
- 8 17 April 1999, Minor (3 methods), 2hrs 42mins
- 9 4 September 1999, Spliced Surprise Minor (44 methods), 2hrs 35mins
- 10 6 March 2004, Surprise Minor (7 methods), 2hrs 40mins
- 11 20 November 2004, Doubles (21 methods), 2hrs 46mins
- 12 5 February 2005, Spliced Treble Bob Minor (29 methods), 2hrs 49mins
- 13 9 June 2007, Surprise Minor (10 methods), 2hrs 36mins
- 14 22 November 2008, Surprise Minor (9 methods), 2hrs 47mins

A peal board in the tower commemorates the significant achievement by the local band at Flitwick in ringing the peal on 20 November 2004. This was notable because it was the first peal on the bells to be rung by the local band, and involved three of the ringers undertaking such a continuous length of ringing for the first time.

St Andrew's Bell

This small bell, weighing approximately 0.75 cwt (38 kg), used to hang in the old St Andrew's Mission Church in Windmill Road. It was saved prior to the demolition of the old Church and is now preserved in the tower alongside the six main bells.

It was cast by Alfred Bowell of Ipswich in 1909, the same year that they re-hung the five original bells in the tower. It is still attached to its original wrought iron headstock fitted with a lever.

Inscription above soundbow: A. BOWELL. 1909.

