

## What is Bell Ringing?

For centuries church bells have sounded, calling people to worship, in celebration of special occasions, in remembrance and to mark special events. In the very early days, the bells were “chimed” to make a sound but the ringers had little control over the order in which the bells sounded and therefore the “music” they played.

The origins of what we call **change ringing** lie in the sixteenth century when church bells began to be hung with a full wheel enabling the bell to swing in a full circle and back again. This gave ringers control of their bell, which allowed sets of bells (rings) to be rung in a continuously changing pattern. Music is created by moving bells up and down the ringing order to a defined sequence known as a method. Bellringing is a team activity that stimulates the brain and helps keep you fit... it also makes a glorious sound! Many consider ringing to be their contribution to church life, others do it for the pure pleasure it brings.



The bells are tuned to a normal (diatonic) scale and it is usual to start with ringing down the scale, a sequence which ringers call “rounds”. The order in which the bells sound is then altered to give different sequences called “rows” or “changes”.

Changes may be called out individually by the conductor, and this style is known as call-change ringing. Alternatively, the changes may be made to a pre-set pattern or “method”, and each ringer must learn that method in order to know when his or her particular bell must sound in each row. This style is known as method ringing.

Call changes and a few standard methods are rung in most towers and this makes it very easy for ringers to visit and ring with other bands. There are many more advanced methods which provide a continuing challenge as ringers gain proficiency over time.



Bells have rung out for many years at All Saints, Kempston, calling people to prayer and worship.

The bells at All Saints Kempston are mostly rung:

- for church services
- for weddings
- for special occasions
- In remembrance
- for ringers' practice and pleasure



## Could I become a ringer?

“Almost anyone can ring. And you can learn to the level you are personally happy with. Ringers might be unmusical, might be bad at maths, might not be very strong physically, and some might have mental and/or physical disabilities of some sort – it is really such an inclusive activity!”

Ringling is well within the capabilities of most people. The initial learning takes several weeks, after which you can begin to ring with the rest of the band (that's what we call a team of people who ring together). Most ringers practise once or twice a week and ring before or after church service on Sunday.

Ringers come from all walks of life and learn at different ages.

## Why learn to ring?

***“Learning to ring is much like learning to play any musical instrument – it takes practice and there are countless levels of skill to explore”***

- Make friends around the world
- Develop a lifelong learning experience
  - Maintain a traditional skill
- Provide a service to the church and the general community, as well as for those getting married, celebrating another special occasion, and saying goodbye to a loved one in a very special way
  - Take part in a team activity
- Share stories and receive support (not just about ringing) and friendship after practice
  - Have a great mental workout
- Have the opportunity to visit amazing places



## How do I get involved?

Listen for the bells at Kempston today. If you are over the age of 8 and under 16 you can come up the tower with a responsible adult. If you are over 16 you are welcome to come up the tower and see us ring. Please be aware if we are ringing you will not be able to enter the tower until we have stopped ringing.

If you are unable to come up the tower today, you are welcome to come and have a look when we are ringing on a Sunday morning.

Beware! Once you've got the bug, you may find it hard to give up:

We practice on Wednesday night from 7.45 – 9pm

Young Ringers Practice can be arranged at earlier time.

You do not pay for lessons; your only commitment is that if you learn to ring, you must ring regularly on Sunday mornings and attend the practices.

If you would like more information, please contact Sarah Ward

[Kempstonbellringers@gmail.com](mailto:Kempstonbellringers@gmail.com)

We are looking forward to meeting you.

Kempston Bell Ringers



# Bell Sunday

## May 18<sup>th</sup> 2025

You are invited to visit the ringing room at

# All Saints Kempston

from 10am-10.55.

Please note:

Please be aware that some of the stairs are narrow and uneven, so unfortunately, not suitable for persons with limited mobility or children under the age of 8 years.

Children under 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

If you require any more information, please contact the

Tower Captain

Sarah Ward

[kempstonbellringers@gmail.com](mailto:kempstonbellringers@gmail.com)



# Bell Song

A  
bell  
is a being,  
its body a bowl.  
Its heart is a clapper,  
the ringing—its soul.

A bell sings a song:  
“You’re never alone.  
The hand that woke me  
could clasp your own.”

A bell sends its love  
down mountains, through snows.  
Where comfort is needed,  
the bell song goes.

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