

Tower report (Sheila Scofield)

In April 2021, although services had started, we were unable to ring as a team due to Covid rules. Sheila & Les were able to ring 2 bells for services and also rang a bell half-muffled for the death of HRH Prince Philip and again for the civic ceremony. During the early months of 2021 a group of us were using an online programme called *Ringin' Room* for practice, so we were ready for the great return.

From 18 May we were able to ring 6 bells, resuming practices on Tuesday with the same band on Sundays. We rang all 8 from 25 July onwards following Covid guidance, gradually increasing local visitors to join us. We rang for all the Christmas services and 'rang out the old, rang in the new' on 31 December at midnight after a buffet at Jenny's.

From January this year we have gradually got back into the 'normal' ringing routine. We have been pleased to gain 2 new experienced members to the band who are able to join us some Sundays. We have been teaching 3 new ringers since mid-January, holding 2 bell-handling sessions per week on the silenced bells. One of the learners will be joining our band and has just started to join our Tuesday evening open bells practice.

In October 2021 we entered the Guild 6 bell striking competition, held at Laira, Plymouth, accomplishing 4th place. This was Elaine's first competition. In November we held our AGM, in the chancel, followed by a buffet in the Half Moon. Our thanks to Bill for acting as Chair. Dates in the diary for the coming year include bellringers service, outing and St Peter's Shield competition.

We have resumed our monthly Quarter Peal attempts since the new year with some success. During the last 12 months our successful QPs were for Robert Gordon's farewell (23 July), in memory of Jean Parkinson (31 October), 23 January celebrating the Queen's 70th year and Les's 70th birthday (6 February) and Gill & Mike's Golden wedding (24 April). Other events we were pleased to ring for were a wedding (31 July) and Roy Webber's funeral (26 July).

We held a successful Open Day (as part of the Heritage Open Days 2021) on 11 September, when we took 50 visitors on a tour of the tower. The views were the clearest ever, many were enamoured with the clock, enjoyed the refreshments and the demonstration ring. During that weekend we also held a craft sale, raising £180 for the bell fund.

On 14 December we welcomed the Guild Bell Advisors to inspect the bells and fittings, with a view to the 100th anniversary of the installation of the recast bells in 1923. They are due for a centenary overhaul, and we wanted an idea of the work & expense involved. The advisors gave a very comprehensive report which was complimentary of the care that our steeple keepers have given to the bells over the years. We will be putting out tenders in the near future to bell hangers to do the work. The PCC have been given a copy of the report.

A band of visiting ringers rang an excellent peal at St Peter's on Saturday 2 April, and we have since had a request for another band to ring later in the year. Ringing is at last beginning to return to the new normal.

I would like to thank Bill, Gill and the PCC for being supportive to the ringers. We feel as much part of the Church as other groups despite being less visible to some, though very audible at times. I also wish to thank the members of the band for their continued support to St Peter's. It has not been easy for many during these last few years but we are pleased to serve the church in our own way.