

A Brief History of Ringing at Rowley

The first Church, a chapel of ease to Clent, was built in the late 12th century. Five bells were cast locally and installed in 1684 by William and Mathew Bagley. They remained in use until 1840 when the church was demolished and the second church was built. The five bells were then installed in the new church. In 1881, a bell cast by W Blews & Sons of Birmingham replaced the tenor bell. We can only presume the old bell had become cracked. To celebrate Queen Victoria's golden jubilee, J Barwell of Birmingham added three new bells in 1887. The bells only remained in this church for a few years when the church was demolished in 1900 due to subsidence. The third church opened in 1904 but was destroyed by fire in 1913. Luckily the bells survived undamaged and were re-hung in a steel frame when the 4th church was built in 1923. In 1952 bell 4 cracked and had to be recast. The bells were not a good match and in early 1980's it was decided to raise money to have remedial work done to improve the ring. In 1984 the bells were again taken from the tower and sent to John Taylor's at Loughborough for the necessary work to be done. Bells 4 and bell 5 were reused as bells 6 and 7 of the new ring. The tenor bell (8) was purchased from a redundant church in Worcester. The new front five bells were cast by John Taylor who also supplied all the new fittings and wheels. The bells were removed and subsequently re-hung by the local band and have become the fine ring we have today.

From the 1900's the bells have been rung regularly by a local band as they are today for Sunday services, weddings, the, occasional funeral and to celebrate national events whenever possible.

What is bell ringing and could I become a ringer

In its simplest form it is ringing the bells in an order that produces a tune. This tune can then be altered by, moving one or more bells to produce a different tune. In its simplest form a conductor tells the ringer of a bell to ring after a different bell, this is called call changes. When you have mastered call changes you can move onto another way of ringing the bells called change ringing. Here the ringers remember a pattern and they follow this pattern and ring over a different bell each time they pull the rope.

Anyone can become a ringer and you can learn to the level you are happy with. You don't have to be able to read music and the only maths you require is being able to count. Strength is not needed. If you can climb the stairs to the ringing chamber you are fit enough to ring. Most ten year olds are big enough to ring a bell and there are ringers that are eighty plus. Ringing is well within the capabilities of most people. The initial learning takes several weeks, after which you will be able to ring with the rest of the band. The more times you can practice the quicker you will be able to ring unassisted. It is not male dominated has there are now probable slightly more women, than men ringing. They come from all walks of life, name a profession you will find a ringer, we even have MP's and Life Peers who are ringers.

Another plus to bell ringing is its social side. Ringers often visit other local towers were they are always made welcome whether beginner or experienced. When you go on holiday you will be made welcome at any of the local towers and invited to go with them afterwards for refreshment. All Dioceses have a ringing society, which you can join if you wish. These societies are usually broken down into areas/branches and they organise meetings at different churches, quiz, skittle and other events.

Anyone interested in learning to ring or just finding out more about ringing then please come to our practice night on a Monday. We start ringing at 7-45pm till 9-00pm. The, door to the church will be open from 7-40pm till 8-00pm.

For more information on ringing please go to <https://cccbr.org.uk>