

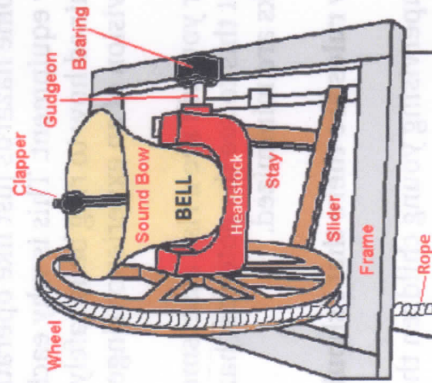
What do I see when I look at the bell?

The bells are up above in the belfry. The ladder on the side of the wall goes to the belfry.

In between the belfry and the ringing chamber (where we pull the ropes) is a dead space.

There are eight bells and there is a model in the ringing chamber to demonstrate how they work

Names used for different parts of the bell mechanism:



What is a bell made of?

are cast from a special alloy of bronze (typically copper and 20% tin) to strengthen two otherwise metals. The alloy has excellent resonant qualities.

Is it an expensive hobby?

No, it is free, and if you ring for a wedding you get paid a small amount. Donations are always welcome of course, and there is a collection box in the tower.

Once you are a ringer you will join the Sussex Association, costing a small amount annually. The fee also covers insurance whilst in ringing chamber.

Welcome and Social Activities

There are about 40,000 ringers in over 6,000 towers all over the UK and abroad who warmly welcome ringers who visit their tower. Drop in on holiday or business trip, or when you go to college/university or start a new job.

A big part of what we enjoy is our friendships and going for walks, outings, meals, quizzes and lots of other stuff outside normal ringing.

Young ringers in West Sussex also meet regularly and enter ringing competitions.

Commitment

We feel it is a privilege to ring the bells of St Marys' Church. Bellringing is more than a hobby. You are contributing to your community and ensuring the art of bellringing continues.

Contact: Kathy (secretary) 01403 782995



Learning to ring bells at St Mary's
Billingshurst

A guide for young people and their
parents

What is bell ringing? It's..... • ringing church bells using a rope • fun • friendly and sociable • an opportunity to work as a team • makes you use your brain • a way to keep you fit (especially by climbing the tower steps!) • ringing for church services to call people to church • a wonderful sound • easy to learn the basics but takes a lifetime to master, there is always something new	Once you master the basic technique, there is always something new and exciting to learn and improve, which is part of the challenge and sense of achievement. What if I have come to the belfry and I am under 16? All young ringers need to have permission from their parents to learn to ring. The secretary will provide permission forms. Ideally parents/guardians should visit the tower to understand how bellringing is organised. The tower follows the safeguarding children policy of the church. Do ringers need to be strong? No, despite their heavy weight, most people of average build (age 10 upwards) will be physically capable of ringing church bells. Heavier bells can need a bit more strength, but good technique is much more important. You can ring and control a bell many times your own weight. Most first-time bellringers comment on how they expected to have to pull harder on the rope.	When can I ring for services and weddings? Once you can control your bell and can ring rounds and call changes without too many errors you are invited to ring at services and weddings How do you make sure ringing is safe? Ringng a church bell is safe if you follow instructions. There are some hazards just like operating any other heavy equipment. This is why each person is carefully trained how to ring bells safely under close supervision of an experience ringer. In the tower you will see a risk assessment on the wall. Look at this to see the potential hazards and how the risks are minimized.
How long does it take to learn to ring? It varies – some people are quicker to learn than other people. The basic technique is taught with 1-to-1 tuition in small steps, and can take anything from 5 to 40 hours to learn, spread over several weeks. Tutors are experienced ringers and teach you at your own pace and are patient, friendly and encouraging....		What safety rules are there that I should follow? If you are supervising young children they should be sat on your lap or next to you. They must not move about the tower while the bells are ringing. Sit with your feet firmly on the floor. Do not touch a rope unless invited by an experienced ringer.