

It is thought that Ruislip may have had at least one bell in its first Norman church. That the church possessed a set of bells in 1463 is shown by the will of Thomas Bettz, who left £26 13s 4d - a vast sum in those days - "for mending Ruislip bells", suggesting that they had already been in service long enough to need repair.

A new bell chamber housing the bells at their present height was added to the church tower in Tudor times, with the ringing chamber up a narrow flight of stairs. In 1801-2, the bells were recast by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry at a cost of £149. The new Tenor bell was blessed with 75 gallons of strong beer, which must have occasioned a fine parish party. In 1868, these six heavy bells were replaced with a lighter ring of eight, three of which were recast in 1922.

Today, Ruislip has eight bells in F#. The lightest weighs 4 cwt and is known as the Treble bell. The Tenor bell is the heaviest at 12 cwt but despite its weight it is not difficult to ring. All the bells except the treble and the second have inscriptions.

The bells are now rung from the ground floor. The current band comprises 7 active members of varying ages - 4 women, one man and 3 teenagers. Ringing is not difficult to master and we welcome all those interested in learning, from 11 to 70.

We practice on Wednesday evenings from 7:45 to 9:15 and ring most Sunday mornings from 8.45am - 9.15. More ringers would enable us to ring for later services.

Tower captain

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BELL RINGING IN RUISLIP



Ruislip Bell Ringers

St Martin's Church

Ruislip

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Bell ringing is an ancient art, heard by many but understood by few. It is associated with times of joy - coronations, weddings, victories: and with times of sorrow - funerals, warnings of danger. Most frequently, however, bells are rung on Sundays to announce that a church service is about to begin.

Bells are rung worldwide, but ordered ringing stems from the time of the Reformation and is uniquely British in origin.

In England alone there are over 5,500 peals of five or more bells. Ruislip has eight bells, St. John the Baptist, Hillingdon, has ten and St. Paul's, London, has twelve. The heaviest bell that is used for 'normal' ringing is at Liverpool Cathedral and weighs over 4 tons. Ruislip's heaviest bell weighs 12 cwt (0.6 ton).

Overseas there are over 100 peals of bells: Australia leads the way with 47 followed by the USA with 34. Many of these overseas peals were exported from redundant churches in England.

Come and Join Us



Bellringing is:

- Sociable - Ruislip ringers are very friendly and you'll be welcome in any of the 5500+ towers in England.
- Satisfying - well-rung bells make a wonderful sound; you can be part of that team.

Bellringing does not:

- Require great physical strength.
- Require a degree in maths or computing!

Bellringing does:

Require perseverance and practice.

Stages of Learning to Ring

1. Rope/Bell control

The start position for church bell ringing is with the mouth of the bell uppermost. One pull on the rope spins the bell through 360° and it strikes once. This is the hand stroke. Pulling a second time returns the bell to its start position and the bell strikes once again; this is the back stroke. Stage 1 of learning is to learn how to pull the rope straight and catch the fluffy part (the sallie) at the right moment (about 6 x 1hr lesson).

2. Ringing in a team

When the learner has mastered bell control s/he is ready to ring with others by ringing 'rounds' - when each bell rings in regular succession from the lightest to the heaviest. This requires a sense of rhythm and good timing (3-9 months).

3. Ringing Methods

At the final stage ringers learn how to follow simple or complex patterns of change ringing called 'methods'. (12-36 months).