

## Willersey Bellringers' Tower Captain's Report 2021

I am pleased to present my report for 2021.

As we all know, the country was in full lockdown at the start of the year so no ringing activities were possible until April. From April 1st the outside 'rule of six' enabled us to meet six at a time to ring handbells outdoors, which we practiced every week until September. From 18th April we sometimes rang the handbells before Sunday service in the churchyard. I was also pleased to have been able to toll the Willersey tenor half-muffled for the passing of The Duke of Edinburgh on April 17th.

From 20th May some very limited tower bell ringing could recommence, the social distancing rules initially only allowing 3 and subsequently 4 bells to be rung at a time. At this time we alternated between handbells and tower bells for the Sunday service ringing.

From July 22nd the lockdown rules were further lifted and full tower bell ringing could start again at last, after a very long absence.

I am pleased to say that every one of our ringers continued to participate, to varying extents, in the ringing that we were able to do during lockdown, and that nearly all of them have returned to the activity in full in July. Two new recruits - Robert Pitt and his daughter Rekha - both started to learn to ring in July and have made excellent progress and are already fully part of the band. A third recruit - Charlotte Boyle - began to learn in November and is also progressing well.

I am delighted to say that, despite the obvious hiatus caused by the pandemic, the social cohesion of the bellringers has proved stronger than ever. The quality of the ringing returned to its pre-pandemic level very quickly, and I believe has continued to improve during the second half of the year. The band entered a team in the annual Four Shires Guild striking competition and were commended as the most improved band taking part (though we did not win!).

We rang the bells also on the day of the Willersey Fete, 30th August, both from the tower and also on handbells - a fitting celebration of ringing in our village as we emerged from the hardships of lockdown. The handbell ringers were also invited to perform for the Wednesday club on October 27th.

My thanks as ever go to all my fellow ringers at St. Peter's - for their unstinting dedication, enthusiasm, commitment and friendship during this most strange of years. It has been my absolute privilege to be a part of this community over the past year and to continue to share in it over the years to come.

My particular thanks to our Deputy Tower Captain, Bob Topp, who has supported me so well in running the ringing throughout.

Robert Chadburn, May 20th, 2022.

