

## Belfry Report 2021

It has been a long time since I did a report on the ringing at Saint Michael's. A lot has happened since 2019.

In 2019, 65 quarter peals were rung, 5 peals were rung, plus the tolling for Notre Dame Cathedral.

2020 started as a normal year. Between January and March 15<sup>th</sup>, 14 quarter peals were rung. Then on March 16<sup>th</sup>, we were locked down for six weeks. All churches were shut, little did we know that there would be no normal ringing for 14 months! When churches were allowed to be open Mark, Lottie and Dylan kept the bells ringing for Sunday services and tolled the bells for many notable occasions. 16 performances of tolling for funerals, in memory of lots of eminent people and important dates. My thanks to the Elvers Family for doing all this and for keeping the bells in such good working order.

In May 2021, we were finally able to ring 6 bells and bell practice started again in July 2021. From July 2021 to the end of March 2022, 46 Quarter Peals have been rung and 2 Peals.

The bells are now fully back in action with fortnightly practices and quarter peal attempts on alternate Fridays and every Sunday afternoon. We have a lot of ringers who come from all over Kent to ring in these attempts.

Sadly, we now have only four members. Five have been lost: two through death, one has moved away and two are still shielding due to COVID. We rely on All Saints' ringers and visitors for Sunday ringing but we have rung every Sunday since June 2021.

Lottie has made great progress and now is a full member of the KCACR. She is now learning change ringing. During lockdown as a maths project she composed a new method. This was rung for the first time and named Charlotte Bob Triples in October 2021. She has composed another one which has yet to be rung.

At long last we were able to give Tom the ringing send-off he deserved for his long service to the ringing community and to the church. Two Peals were rung simultaneously at the church: one in the tower and one on the new handbells in the Ascension Chapel. The 20 handbells (two sets: one of 12 and one of 8) were dedicated at Mass in January 2022 and now belong to the Kent Young Ringers whom Tom keenly supported.

Ringers are always needed and you don't have to be strong! Our tower members range in age from 9 to 75. There are still a few in their nineties ringing. We will try to ring for all important church dates, people's birthdays, anniversaries and of course, in memory of.

Jacqui Barlow  
Tower Captain