

ASCOTT BELLS

The bells of Ascott Church were first mentioned in 1526 when Richard Tayler made a bequest of a sheep towards the cost of the bells. Documents from a Dr Rawlinson dated 1720 noted that the tower at Ascott had three bells. Two further bells were added, probably between 1722 and 1744. Today we have six bells, the lightest known as the treble, was added in 1905 as a gift from the Cornbury Estate.

It was in 1905 that the last major work was carried out on the bells when they were all rehung on a steel frame. Since then only minor repairs, servicing and safety checks have been carried out. Very few mechanical devices continue operating for over one hundred years without major repairs.

Our bells have rung for nearly five hundred years, calling the faithful to worship, celebrating feast days and important events local and national and rejoicing at weddings.

We are very fortunate in having a band of six ringers keeping the ringing tradition alive in this Parish, but we are now facing some problems!

After one hundred years all of the six bells are in need of restoration and refurbishment and one bell, the tenor (which weighs 7 1/2 cwt or 381 kilos) is becoming very difficult to ring. Except for one forthcoming wedding we will restrict our ringing to five bells.

In order to repair the tenor bell and at the same time strengthen the frame which holds all the bells to prevent it moving when the bells are rung we need to raise £13,000 plus 20% VAT. There are grants available for some of the cost, but this will still leave a substantial sum to be raised locally.

At this early stage we are not seeking cash donations, rather we want to ascertain the level of support that we might expect from members of the Parish.

IF YOU ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT THE COST OF REPAIRING OUR ASCOTT CHURCH BELLS PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PLEDGE FORM AND RETURN IT TO ME by email: stuart.john.fox@gmail.com or post to 27 London Lane, Ascott-under-Wychwood, OX7 6AN or deliver it to the Village Shop and ask them to place it in my tray.

PLEDGE TO HELP FINANCE ASCOTT CHURCH BELLS

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