

St. Peter & Holy Cross Church, Wherwell

The tower holds a peal of five bells originally cast by William and Rob Cor in 1707 with a tenor weighing 7cwt. These were transferred from a Norman church previously on the site which due to its dilapidated state was replaced in 1858 with a church designed by Henry Woodyer. This church was described by Pevsner as being lively, with a rather Scandinavian bell-turret with spire! For reasons that are not clear the bells when re-rung were placed in a two tier frame which ultimately became the problem and resulted in the peal deemed to be unsafe for full circle ringing, with the last full peal rung on 18th April 1993.



In 2012 major works were undertaken to replace the nave roof and renew the spire. At the same time the Victorian bell frame was repaired and strengthened ahead of a further drive to bring the bells back to full circle ringing. However money became a major issue and this was put on hold. However, with the advice and help of Alan Hughes of Whitechapel Bell Foundry, the Ellacombe Chimes were manufactured and installed so that the village would again be able to hear, as described by the incumbent, the *'voice of the church'*.



We now have a team of nine chimers who, before the pandemic, met regularly to practice every second Tuesday and then chime for the Sunday services and on special occasions. To date we have rung at over 40 weddings.

We enjoy the flexibility that the Ellacombe offers with Call changes, Double method ringing and a varied selection of hymns particularly over Christmas and Lent composed for chiming by our church organist, who also composed the 'specials' such as 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' and 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' for the Armistice Day commemoration in 2018. We also participated in the Martin Creed Olympic Composition of 'Five Ring Doubles'.

David Etchells