

The **Bellringers' practice night** is on Thursday – we ring [from 7.30–9.00pm](#).

If you are interested in having a go, or just want to see what goes on, please ring the Tower Captain, Meg Morton on [01943 461836](tel:01943461836) or email meg.morton@icloud.com

If you come to the 10am service you might have become aware that the church bells are sounding more augmented than 2/3 years ago. Whether it is sounding more glorious we leave you to be the judge!

Meg and Tom Morton have been ringing at Otley All Saints for 33 years having been taught by **Les Cooper** and **Ron Warford** who some of you may remember. Meg is '**tower captain**' and seems to manage all sorts of bell maintenance as well as teaching.

Two years ago now 6 new ringers joined the All Saints band and I think it can be fairly said that our enthusiasm is boundless! We all supplement our regular Otley practice on a Thursday evening by joining practice nights in other local towers and we have even been asked to ring at other Sunday services and weddings in other churches.

There have been church bells at All Saints since 1748 when 6 bells were installed for a grand sum of £230!! A few years later in 1782 these were replaced by 8 new bells which were cast in London for a scary £395! In 1788 a chiming barrel was added to ring tunes on the bells, one for each day of the week at 4 hour intervals. Many people in Otley can remember '**Home Sweet Home**', '*The last Rose of Summer*' and on Sundays, '*Oh Worship the King*' sounding out around the town. Unfortunately the mechanism broke down in the 1960's and is sadly now lying in pieces in the tower. (Any mechanics out there?)

Some years on, The York Herald of Saturday 2nd May 1840 reported the following which – if you will excuse the pun – chimes rather with current events at All Saints:

THE PARISH CHURCH.—*Great alterations are about to be effected in the parish church, Otley, by considerably enlarging the organ, and by adding to the present peal of bells two more trebles, which will then make the number to ten. Great exertion on the part of the churchwardens, have been used in bringing the above forward. We understand the ringers and singers have signified their intention of sacrificing their salaries for two years, in order to aid the above. A good round sum has already been raised, so that, ere long, the above will be completed.*

It seems that although there may have been alterations to the sanctuary no new bells were added. Perhaps the '*ringers and singers*'

rebelled!

Come 1922 however all 8 bells at Otley were recast by Gillett and Johnson of Croydon – this time for £900 although records recall that donations for the project amounted to nearly twice this sum. History does not record however what happened to the surplus although one clue may be in an earlier report of the Leeds Intelligencer Tuesday 11th June 1782 reporting that after ringing the bells the ringers '*were met in the Churchyard by the Gentlemen in Otley, who had made a Contribution, and plentifully regaled them with Liquor and a good Supper!*'

The church bells have rung over the years for many occasions apart from Sunday services – weddings, funerals, coronations, and special birthdays and to see in the New Year. Last year we rang with other towers in the valley for the Tour de France.

In 2015 we held two '*Open Tower*' days and many local people climbed up the tower to find out more and to share information about relatives who used to ring at All Saints. We will be planning more of these this year and in the next few weeks we will hopefully be ringing a '*Devon Peal*' to help raise funds for the church reordering.

We are very fortunate to have in the bells at All Saints what are generally considered in the bell ringing world to be a beautiful ring of bells. We hope that as you come to worship at All Saints you might cast an ear in the direction of the tower to what we hope is a joyous welcome to church – and if occasionally it sounds like an accident – we're doing our best!

We are awaiting the delivery of new bell ropes as many of ours are becoming very worn. There are several makers of bell-ropes around the country; ours are being made by Avon Ropes of Bristol. Otley is one of the few towers still using 'Yorkshire tail-ends' – an extra stripy bit at the end of each rope rather than the usual plain rope loop – and we are rather proud of them!

Fundraising on our own account is due to begin very shortly. After ringing faithfully for 94 years, our bells are in dire need of a major overhaul, which is likely to cost in the region of £30,000. So please watch out for our special Bells Fund events – we will be truly grateful for your support. All details will be released as soon as they are available.