

Trouble in the Bell Tower (clapped out)

Some of you may have noticed that the Over Wallop church clock has not been striking for the last few weeks.

The clock strikes on the largest bell, the Tenor. This is the oldest bell and is approximately 500 years old (around the time when Henry VIII came to the throne); it was cast at a local foundry in Salisbury and weighs about 6-7 cwt.

The years have taken their toll and the Tenor has recently developed a crack which means it has had to be taken out of service, so it cannot be rung in a peel with the other bells by your local bell-ringing team. It also cannot be struck by the clock hammer.

We have a small but very keen and active team of local bell-ringers who are currently looking into repair options and costs in coordination with the PCC.

Costs are considerable, due to the age of the bell and the need for expert bell-hangers to remove it carefully from the bell tower for repair by a specialist bell repair company.

In the meantime the bell-ringers are continuing to ring with four bells to support church services and weddings. We know as bell-ringers that it is not quite the same with only four bells and we eagerly await the tenor being repaired and returned to service. Those of you used to hearing the more tuneful sound of five bells are asked please to bear with us.

We are approaching various charities to help us fund this repair and any contributions from villagers would be wonderful. The church treasurer has set up a restricted fund so that if you make a cheque payable to the Over Wallop PCC (click on the page "Contributing") and say that it is to be used for the bells, your donation will not be used for any other purpose.

Ken Porter