

Tales from the Tower October 2021

Life seems to be picking up again, doesn't it! Church services, concerts - so good to be able to enjoy them again - and the bells ringing again for weddings. There is hope in the air all around us.

We do still have to be careful, of course. We still wear masks while we are in the tower, either ringing or not ringing, and pretty uncomfortable it is too. But it's all - along with using hand sanitiser when we arrive and if we change bells, so handle a different rope - part of taking care of each other, and of ourselves. And we are not all vaccinated yet, so as some of us feel either personally vulnerable - through age or by having vulnerable family members - or don't wish to risk passing the dreaded virus to the unvaccinated ringers, we don't all ring together. That's why, on some Sunday mornings, you may not hear the full ten bells ringing as you so often used to do, and nobody knows quite when that may change.

Nevertheless, we are all still active and, as in the past, a number of us ring at other towers in the area - Lamerton, Sampford Spiney, Peter Tavy, to name but three, and we still have members of the Exeter Cathedral band among us. You can't keep a good ringer down!

Some events are taking a little longer to re-establish themselves. The Deanery Ringing Festival, so long a fixture on the last Saturday in October, will be missed again this year, certainly in its form of ringers from all the Deanery towers going round to ring at any participating church they wish, and meeting together at one host church for a service and tea. People are still understandably cautious about either visiting other towers or having visitors to theirs. There is talk of a much lower key event, just to say we tried, but at this moment I don't know whether anything will happen. Perhaps it's best to look forward to a real celebration next year.

This is not to say that ringing outings in themselves are not happening. We have a visiting team coming to St Eustachius from Paignton at 5.30 pm this very Saturday - our first since sometime in 2019. So as we are also ringing for the ordination service earlier on Saturday afternoon, there will be plenty of cheerful and celebratory bell music to listen to then.

I hope that by the time you read these words, you will have heard and enjoyed it all, and that it will not be too long before we can all join together again and ring, as we used to do, without masks, without fear or even caution - but maybe still sanitising our hands? That seems quite a good habit to continue!

Donna Baker