

## Bellringing Through COVID

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### Who said "The bells won't ring out at Christmas?"

We have the bells, we have the ringers, we have the enthusiasm! Last year we had the brilliant Clapper Chaos with us – this year we have *Chaotic Clappers*.

We used to think our little cosy tower was friendly, warm and welcoming....untill this year! With no window, little ventilation, little space between ringers and open to the rest of the congregation we have sadly only been able to ring one bell when we could ring at all. This didn't stop us though – all those who could have a ring had a go and surprised themselves that they hadn't forgotten how to!

However, we then got closer to Christmas and the thought of just one bell ringing out at Christmas didn't really appeal. You can't stop the Lytchett Matravers band though, so we put our heads together, found a group of keen ringers, located the Branch Handbells and decided to give it a go. We have never rung handbells before so Debbie had a couple of lessons from Alan and Kathy Bentley and got as far as trying out a few patterns such as Queens, Kings etc and even progressed to ringing the first and last pairs for Plain Hunt. These skills now had to be urgently passed on to the rest of the Lytchett ringers.

We were now beyond the first Lockdown and managed to get 4 ringers in the garden to learn the technique of ringing hand and back and then one more session with a different 4 still putting together a medley of ringing patterns. Then the second lockdown came...thank goodness for Ringing Room where some of us were able to have a couple of practices but then it was mentioned that it might be nice to ring some carols. Well that's all well and good – we found some music but though we have a lovely set of 13 bells the majority of them are sharps and we know we could only ring one bell at a time and not cords as we didn't have the skill or time to practice. No point checking our music on Ringing Room as the notes there are different to our bells so a fair amount of time was spent checking the tunes, trying to ring the bells with one person as we were all locked down and eventually we collected together 5 carols which didn't sound too bad though one of them has a very strange note. Hurray, lockdown lifted and we managed 2 more practices but this time with all of us and having to learn a new skill in ringing tunes as it sounds better if you don't do the hand and backstroke – something we learned after we studied the ringing of the brilliant Clapper Chaos.

We were motivated and we were keen to be able to ring for the Christmas services. Five of us **DID** ring before the **Carol Service on 20<sup>th</sup> December** and four of us rang for the **Christmas Day service**. You can hear some of these on the links below and you MIGHT even recognise a carol or two....or you might not. Whatever you hear it will at least be more than one tower bell and we have had such fun and so many laughs along the way.

“ Who said “The bells wouldn't ring out for Christmas?”

In December we rang more bells than we've rung all year!