

# St Botolph's Church Saxilby

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting - May 2024

### **Tower Captain's Report for 2023**

Another busy year for our small but enthusiastic band of bellringers. Thanks to their dedication the bells rang out over Saxilby every week letting the parishioners know that the church was still in business and calling them to worship. They were rung for 47 Services, 45 practice nights and 3 Weddings. There were also five other special occasions including the traditional ringing in the New Year and tolling the tenor bell 33 times on Good Friday.

On 21<sup>st</sup> January, Saxilby played host for the AGM to the West Lindsey Branch of the Lincoln Guild of Church Bellringers, with approximately 40 ringers on the bells in the afternoon (6 at a time!), followed by a very enjoyable tea and then the meeting in the Church Hall. A week later we were delighted to have Peter Watson back with us in the tower after a 36-year break. Peter learnt to ring in 1973 and was a regular band member until 1987.

Before the Service on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May a Quarter Peal was rung to mark the coronation of King Charles 111 and the following weekend the tower was opened to the public on the Saturday afternoon for the West Lindsey Churches Festival Weekend.

At the '1940's Event in the Recreation Field on 4<sup>th</sup> June, the ringers put on a display, with ringing demonstrations on the one-bell 'wombel' loaned from the West Lindsey branch, generating a lot of interest but sadly no new recruits.

Some ringers from the North Notts area visited the tower for a ring on the bells on 16<sup>th</sup> September. The following month on 12<sup>th</sup> October we were treated to some excellent ringing by a very experienced band of ringers from Herefordshire – it was a joy to listen to them.

Our annual coach outing on 7<sup>th</sup> October took 13 ringers and 23 supporters to churches in Cambridgeshire and South Lincolnshire. Four churches in all; Stanground (St John the Baptist), Whittlesey (St Mary), Glington (St Benedict) and Baston (St John the Baptist). At Whittlesey we had the chance to ring on eight bells. The other three churches had six bells with ground floor ringing, allowing the non-ringers a chance to see us in action; Baston was particularly interesting and challenging as it had a very unusual anticlockwise ring. With a lovely lunch time break in Whittlesey and a very welcome evening meal together in 'The White Horse' opposite the church in Baston, the whole occasion was thoroughly enjoyable and a good experience for the ringers.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December I reached a very important milestone in my ringing career with the privilege of having been Tower Captain at Saxilby for 50 years, and the occasion was celebrated with a memorable tea party in the Church Hall, with 60 friends and family in attendance. The following evening the ringers rang a Quarter Peal to celebrate, including Helen Wright in her first Quarter Peal.

At the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, it was a real pleasure to have Stuart Mellor, one of our former ringers (1987 – 1996) join us for a ring.

We ended the year with a celebration social in the tower after a shortened practice on 28<sup>th</sup> December.

With just eight of our own ringers to call upon, it was a challenge to keep all the bells ringing in 2023, but we were fortunate in having regular support from Richard Sutton (South Scarle) on a Sunday morning as well as Shawn Lewis (Stow) when not needed at Stow. A former tower member, Martin Mitchell, also helped on many practice nights.

Whilst the bells generally remained in good order, it was a struggle at times with the excessively wet weather causing the bell stays to swell and distort. This made the bells difficult to handle and required regular checks; I am grateful to Christopher Rainthorpe and Peter Watson for taking on this duty.

St Botolph's Saxilby is indeed blessed with a very happy band of ringers who work well together and do their very best to keep the bells ringing. It was a pleasure to be their Tower Captain for another year.

***David Turner (Tower Captain)***