



# Worcester Cathedral

Guild of Bellringers

## The Clock Chimes

After being declared unsafe in Oct 2018 we have waited over two years to have the quarter chimes restored. It was the plan to have these done with the other recent work but funds have not been available. Hopefully it will not be too long before they are heard again.

The chimes will be –

<b>15 mins</b>	4 5 6 <sup>b</sup> 9
<b>30 mins</b>	6 <sup>b</sup> 4 5 9 – 6 <sup>b</sup> 5 4 6 <sup>b</sup>
<b>45 mins</b>	4 6 <sup>b</sup> 5 9 – 9 5 4 6 <sup>b</sup> – 4 5 6 <sup>b</sup> 9
<b>Hour</b>	6 <sup>b</sup> 4 5 9 – 6 <sup>b</sup> 5 4 6 <sup>b</sup> – 4 6 <sup>b</sup> 5 9 – 9 5 4 6 <sup>b</sup>

Quarter

Half

Three Quarter

Hour

These are not the actual notes of the Worcester bells (which are C#, B, A and E) but of those at Westminster – however it is the relationship between the notes that matters.

This is a set of five phrases played twice through the hour, alternately finishing on the dominant (9<sup>th</sup>) and the tonic (6<sup>b</sup>) notes, derived from Handel's 'Messiah', and first used in Cambridge, though well-known and famous for being used at Westminster, the hour bell there being 'Big Ben'.

The hammers used to be on bells 7-8-9-12. However, the quarters were not originally planned for these particular bells. When the 1869 twelve was put in a 5# was included as a 'quarter' bell, at the insistence of Edmund Denison (later Lord Grimthorpe), so that the quarter chimes would mimic those for 'Big Ben' at Westminster, designed by him 18 years earlier. He was very keen that the tonic note of the hour bell should be an octave below the last note of the four phrases used at the hour. (In ringers' terms this makes the chiming bells 1, 2, 3, 6, 10 of a ring of ten). In 1928 the bells were recast to a different key, and the hour bell was retuned, but the ring still contains the

same relative bells. The quarters planned then and what has recently been installed are –

Planned 1869			To be installed 2021	
5#	D	Mediant	4	C#
6	C	Supertonic	5	B
7	B <sup>b</sup>	Tonic	6 <sup>b</sup>	A
10	F	Dominant	9	E
Hour	B <sup>b</sup>	Tonic	Hour	A

In the event, Denison changed his mind and the quarters were put on 7-8-9-T, leaving the 5# functionally useless until the carillon, along with a further two semitone bells, was installed in 1874.

Position of clock hammers when work is completed

