**PRESS RELEASE:**

12:30pm on 22nd January, 2018

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Last Friday evening, 19th January, during the weekly ringing practice at St Helen's Church in Abingdon, there was a rare and unfortunate accident involving one of the ringers. A key piece of the bell safety mechanism (the “stay”) unfortunately broke and the seventeen year old holding on to the end of the rope was carried up. When he let go he fell to the floor, somewhere between 10 and 12 feet. The paramedics were called and decided it was best to enlist the help of the Fire Service who were able to lower him through the trapdoor in the floor to ground level.

This youngster was treated for a dislocated shoulder at the hospital and was later discharged. He is now resting at home, with further investigations being done today to assess the state of his injuries.

Our sympathy is with the boy and his family and we wish him a good and speedy recovery.

**Note to Editors:**

* A stay is a part of the mechanism of a bell hung for change-ringing and is designed to prevent the bell from turning over full circle and to break under sufficient force.
* The help of the Fire Service was called for because of the difficulties involved in getting an injured person down from the bell tower. Normal access involves the use of a tight spiral staircase which would be difficult for a stretcher and its bearer to negotiate, hence the use of the trapdoor.
* Accidents in bell ringing are rare – Dr O’Mahony, the President of the Central Council of Church Bellringers said “there are only 1 or 2 accidents per year in bell ringing internationally”.