



Photography Guide

Capturing the Story Behind the Bells

A great photograph tells a story before a single word is read. Whether you're promoting your Heritage Open Days event, sharing updates on social media, or sending images to your local newspaper, strong photography can help bring your tower to life and encourage more people to visit.

The best photographs don't just show bells, they show the people, the atmosphere and the experience of bellringing.

Tell a Story

Think beyond photographs of the tower or the bells alone.

Instead, capture:

- Bellringers in action.
- Visitors enjoying a tower tour.
- Children and families taking part in activities.
- Volunteers explaining how bellringing works.
- Conversations between visitors and ringers.
- Moments of curiosity, laughter and discovery.
- People learning something new.

Authentic moments are always more engaging than posed photographs.

Show the People Behind the Bells

The theme of this campaign is **Behind the Bells**, so make people the focus.

Good subjects include:

- Smiling volunteers.
- New learners.
- Experienced ringers teaching beginners.
- Families ringing together.
- Multi-generational groups.
- Church volunteers welcoming visitors.

- Tower guides sharing stories.

People help others imagine themselves taking part.

Capture the Experience

Think about photographing each stage of a visitor's journey:

- Arriving at the church.
- Climbing the tower.
- Seeing the bells for the first time.
- Watching a demonstration.
- Meeting the bellringers.
- Looking out across the local landscape.
- Enjoying refreshments.
- Asking questions and exploring displays.

These images help tell the complete story of your event.

Look for the Details

Small details can be just as powerful as wider scenes.

Consider photographing:

- Bell ropes and colourful sallies.
- Historic bells and inscriptions.
- Bell wheels and frames.
- Hands holding a rope.
- Tower staircases.
- Bells in motion.
- Old ringing books.
- Historic photographs and artefacts.
- Church architecture.

Detail shots work particularly well on social media.

Composition Tips

A few simple techniques can make a big difference.

- Photograph at eye level whenever possible.
- Fill the frame with your subject.
- Keep backgrounds tidy and uncluttered.
- Use natural light where available.
- Capture genuine expressions rather than asking people to pose.
- Take both landscape and portrait photographs.
- Include a variety of close-up, medium and wide shots.

Don't be afraid to take lots of photographs, you can always choose your favourites later.

Photographing Bellringing

Bellringing is a dynamic activity.

Try to capture:

- The movement of the ropes.
- Ringers concentrating.
- Teamwork across the ringing circle.
- The rhythm and energy of a practice.
- Visitors watching demonstrations.
- The atmosphere within the ringing chamber.

Images showing action are often the most engaging.

Taking Photos for the Media

Local newspapers and community magazines usually prefer photographs that include people.

Aim to include:

- Friendly faces.
- Activity rather than posed line-ups.
- Different ages where possible.
- A recognisable church feature.
- Plenty of space around the subject for cropping.

Where appropriate, provide a caption identifying the people in the photograph from left to right.

Photography Permissions

Before taking and sharing photographs:

- Ensure you have appropriate permission to photograph participants.
- Follow your church's safeguarding policies, particularly when photographing children and young people.
- Respect anyone who prefers not to be photographed.
- Obtain any necessary consent before sharing images publicly.

If in doubt, ask before taking the photograph.

Create a Photo Checklist

Before your event, prepare a simple shot list.

- ✓ Church exterior
- ✓ Welcome team
- ✓ Visitors arriving
- ✓ Tower tours
- ✓ Bellringing demonstration
- ✓ Meet the Bellringers
- ✓ Detail photographs
- ✓ Families taking part
- ✓ Refreshments
- ✓ Group photograph
- ✓ Views from the tower
- ✓ Smiling volunteers

Having a checklist helps ensure you don't miss those key moments.

After the Event

Your photographs can continue telling the story long after Heritage Open Days has finished.

Use them to:

- Thank your volunteers.

- Celebrate your visitors.
- Share your event on social media.
- Submit articles to parish magazines and local newspapers.
- Promote future open days.
- Encourage new people to learn to ring.

A carefully organised collection of photographs also becomes a valuable record of your tower's history.

Remember...

The most powerful photographs capture curiosity, friendship, teamwork and the warm welcome that visitors receive when they step **Behind the Bells**.

Every image you take helps tell the story of a living tradition and inspires others to discover it for themselves.