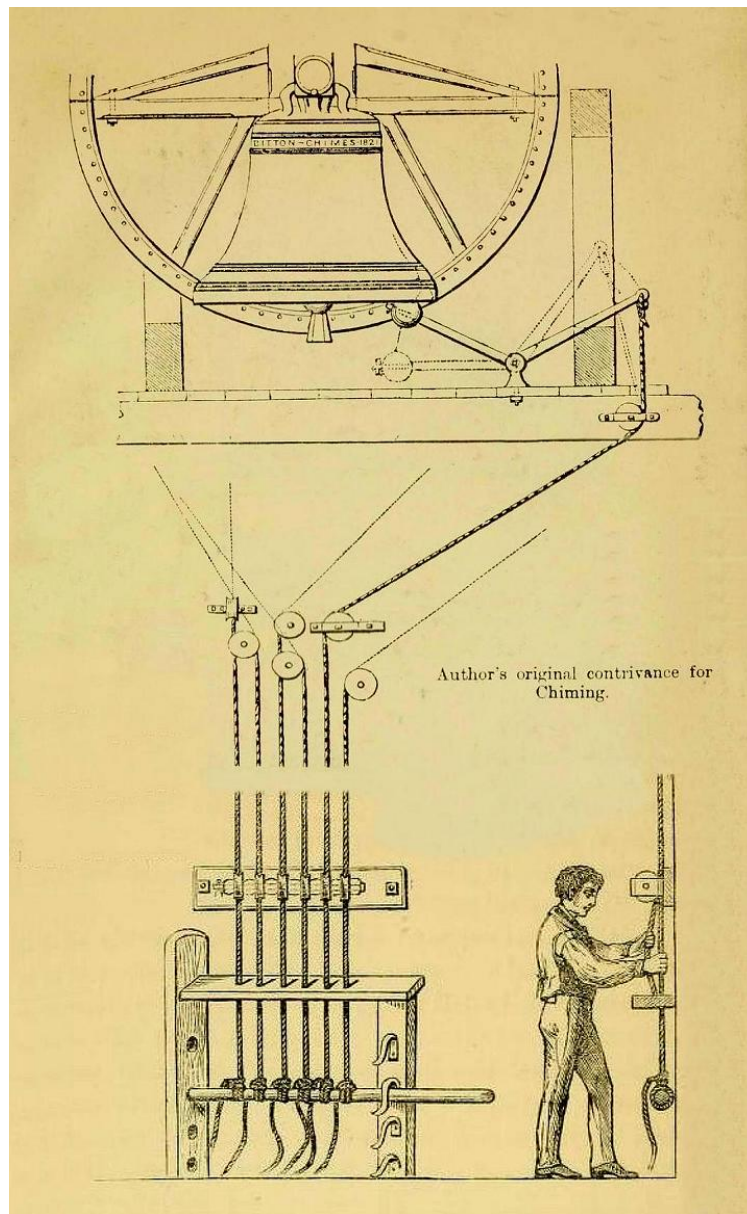


Ellacombe Chimes

The Ellacombe Chiming frame is a device that enables one person to ring all the bells. It was invented in 1822 by the Revd. Henry Thomas Ellacombe and his “clever workman” in the Parish of Bitton, located between Bristol and Bath. It is said that Revd. Ellacombe devised the mechanism so that all the bells could be rung by one trusted person without involving a band of unruly and perhaps drunken ringers.



The Revd. Ellacombe's complete book is available online in [Archive.org](https://archive.org/details/practical-remarks-on-belfries-and-ringers) at...
[Practical Remarks on Belfries and Ringers](https://archive.org/details/practical-remarks-on-belfries-and-ringers)

Many church towers have had Ellacombe Chimes in the past, however lots have either been completely removed (leaving just the holes in the ceiling), or have not been maintained so can no longer be played. We are lucky to have a fully working set, looking remarkably like the one illustrated.

The device is in two parts: "counter-balanced under-hammers" that strike just inside the rim of each bell and a wall-mounted rack in the ringing chamber with ropes that go up to the bell chamber via a series of pulleys.

The images of frames on the web indicate that no two are the same in size and shape. The ropes on most are designed to be pulled outwards, as ours is, as shown on Revd. Ellacombe's original drawing, but some are pulled downward.







A range of chiming and music styles can be performed on the Ellacombe Chimes:

Rounds

This is the simplest and most familiar form of bell ringing, consisting of a sequence starting with the highest note and descending to the lowest.

Change Ringing or Call Change Sequences

During change ringing the positions of bells are interchanged to create a melodious sequence. When chiming, the well known sequences can be played directly, without going through the intermediate steps of changing the position of the bell. The sequences can also be interchanged at random.

Chords and carillon style sequences

Sounding two bells together accidentally during full-circle ringing causes a discordant noise. However, two bells can be struck together as a chord on the chimes to add a degree of harmony to sequences and to music. The sound produced is similar to a carillon.

Hymns and Carols

Hymns and carols are perhaps the most appropriate music to play on an Ellacombe chimes. The music has relatively simple timing and is familiar.

Most of the well known hymns and carols have been adapted to play on eight bells and it is amazing what can be played with only five or six bells.

Methods on the chimes

Plain Hunt and other more complex methods are very difficult to play from memory on Ellacombe Chimes, and the tendency is to ring too slowly to be effective when reading the lines from a sheet. A simple alternative is to ring random notes and finish with the tenor bell and then a pause. When chiming there is no reason to stick to a cycle based on the number of real bells in the tower, as repetition is possible and it is easy to perform rapidly, can be repeated many times and is pleasing and very acceptable to those unfamiliar with methods.

[For further information about the Ellacombe chimes see <https://sites.google.com/site/ellacombechimes/> from which this piece has been abridged and adapted.