The Ringing Of Bells.

It was the 31st of October 2019; the ex-church-warden could hear the ringing of the door bells getting louder and closer as children with their mothers were working their way along the street doing their trick or treat thing. He put on his coat and went out the back door, down the garden path and along the back walkway that led to the church. He had a key to the church because he was once one of the church wardens. The key had been lost but he came across it the other day in an old pair of overalls. He put the key in the lock and turned it. He opened the door quietly and closed it even more quietly behind him. He locked the door, put the key back in his pocket and walked to the tower where the bell ropes were tied to the hooks on the wall. He untied a bell rope, raised his arms and grabbed hold of the sally and pulled. The bell started to toll. It was the most soulful toned sounding bell in the tower and he pulled on the rope again making the tone sound sinister. He knew that the other key holders were staying outside the village because they didn’t like Halloween. They thought it was the most pagan festival in the calendar and wanted no part in it. The ex-church warden knew where he could hide should anyone enter the church. And he could do that very quickly by walking in his stocking feet up the tower to the balcony and into the cleaner’s cupboard where there was a secret partition where he could hide. The bell he was tolling wasn’t used at all as it was deemed to be too pitiful a sound for today’s Christians.

 What the church warden didn’t realise was that the particular sound he was creating and repeating was waking up the dead. Ghostly figures started to rise out of their graves and were just hanging around. As the ringing of the bell continued the risen started to disperse. The children and their mothers thought that the ringing of the church bell was someone trying to bring that extra bit of atmosphere to Halloween. Soon there were so many ghostly figures walking around that the villagers started to notice. At first, they just thought it was the mist in the air, but as the risen from the dead wandered closer and their clothes somehow seemed strange, they grew suspicious and shivered.

The Children became afraid and were taken home. Some of the parents had their friend’s children with them and had to take them back home too. Subsequently, the streets became empty of the living and the bell still kept ringing.

The men folk didn’t do the trick or treat thing with their children they left that task to their wives. They were almost to a man watching an international football match on the television. They weren’t very happy when their wives and children appeared and started to raise what they had just witnessed just as a goal was being scored.

The household of Mr. and Mrs. Brown was no exception in that respect, Mrs. Brown and their two children, who were ten and eleven were trying to explain what they had seen in the village when there was a knock at the back door. Mrs. Brown went to answer it. When she opened the door she screamed and fainted. The two children ran to their mother and screamed. Mr. Brown hurried to the back door as his two children went running upstairs to their bedroom. Mr. Brown saw him. He recognised him because he had found some photographs of the previous owner in a hidden cupboard under the stairs. It was the previous resident of the house. His name was Mr. Rogers and he had been dead for the past twelve years. Mr. Rogers came in and went to the fireplace and sat down on an easy chair.

 Mr. Brown tried to revive his wife as she lay motionless on the floor.

 “Where am I? What happened?” she asked softly.

“Now, don’t you worry; I’m here to help you.”

 Mr. Brown took hold of his wife and helped her up; he led her into the sitting room. She took one look at the easy chair by the fireplace and promptly fainted again. She had seen Mr. Rogers sitting on her chair.

 Mr Brown lifted his wife onto the settee and put her feet up. He wasn’t sure what he would do if she turned her head and saw Mr. Rogers sitting quite calmly, resting as he faced the television. There was a roar from the football crowd as another goal was scored. Mr. Rogers was facing the television and seemed to be engrossed in the game.

 Suddenly there was a louder toll of the bell followed by a strange sequence of bell tones before the bell stopped ringing. Mr. Brown was trying to catch the score at the top of the screen but it didn’t make any sense to him. He didn’t notice Mr. rogers as he stood up and walked out of the house. Mrs. Brown came to and her husband took her upstairs. She was so upset that he had to stay with her. She asked him to check on the children, which he did. The two of them were in the same bed huddled together with the duvet pulled over them. Mr. Brown couldn’t find any words to console them so he left them to comfort each other and returned to his wife.

It wasn’t until the next morning that anyone could find a church warden with a key. Mr. Carter was the first to arrive from his day, or should I say, night in self-imposed exile. When he opened the door and walked into the tower, he found the ex-church-warden on the floor, dead,

 Mr. Carter looked up and saw the end of the bell rope dangling twenty-five feet above the body. He immediately realised what must have happened, the bell had broken through its stay , and spun over and over again, shortening the bell rope with each turn and lifting the slender frame of the ex-church-warden off the stone floor. Holding onto a bell rope when this happens is very dangerous. The ex-church-warden could have died on impact as he fell on the stone floor, or from a heart attack. That he had locked himself in the church seemed very odd to Mr. Carter, , not to mention being there ringing the bell as he did, awakening the dead.

It was also noted by the church wardens that bell ringers are frequently reminded of this possibility and told in no uncertain terms to let go immediately. The ex-church-warden could not have paid any attention to these warnings as he was often called upon to ring a bell or two during weddings and funerals, thus his comeuppance was inevitable, or that is what most of the villagers said when they heard the news and circumstances surrounding his death.

However, that was not the end of the story. Mr. Brown was so incensed by the ex-church-warden’s actions as their effects prevented him from watching the goals being scored during the football match - it was after all an international game between England and France. So incensed was he that a couple of days later he stole into the church somehow using the ex-church warden’s key. He untied the bell rope and pulled, ringing the same bell with that unholy tone. So unholy was it that it awoke the body of the ex-church-warden which was lying in the crypt. As Mr. Brown caught sight of the deceased walking towards him he had a heart attack. Luckily for him the vicar came rushing in followed by half a dozen choirboys. Mr. Brown was clutching his chest and was finding it difficult to breathe. She sent a choirboy to summon the doctor and gave her parishioner as much first aid as she had learned during her ordainment procedure. Doctor Marsh was soon on the scene and performed the resuscitation exercise he had been taught at medical college. An ambulance duly arrived and Mr. Brown was taken to the local hospital.

Mr. Brown recovered and was persuaded to adhere to a dietary regime to help him to lose weight, not that his experience drew any sympathy, it didn’t. The ghost of the ex-church-warden appeared a number of times around the village. Every time his spirit was exorcised it reappeared somewhere else.

I’m not going to say where all this took place because the villagers are fed up of ghost hunters wandering around the village at the dead of night. Mind you, some villagers claim that there aren’t any ghost hunters just the ghost of the ex-church-warden himself.

The End.