# Political Engines: The Emotional Politics of Bells in Eighteenth-Century England[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Abstract:** This paper asks how and why bells maintained their central place in political culture between 1660 and 1832. This can be best understood from the perspective of histories of the emotions and senses. Bells were central to a binary emotional regime that centred on joy and sorrow. Often believed to ‘speak’, bells allow us to extend the concept of ‘emotives’ to encompass material culture. The joy and sorrow which bells expressed and created were central to perceptions of deference, community, and national feeling. But they could also be inverted and used a form of resistance. For those outside the religious or political status quo, bells could instantiate forms of emotional suffering. Tracing the ‘listening public’ of which bells were part demonstrates the importance of the freedom to hear in the eighteenth-century public sphere. The ascription of material and emotional agency to bells was a useful rhetorical tool in this context. Its deployment in newspaper reports of ringing, which served to encourage certain ways of listening, points to the importance of both text and sound in creating a ‘listening public’. But this public was also marked by forms of emotional suffering and exclusion which question the place of practices of celebration in any nascent ‘English’ or ‘British’ identity.

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In 1681, during the Bristol election, a band of bell ringers were fined for a riot in the belfry of St Mary le Port. The minister was unwilling to give up the key to the church so that the men could ring in support of their candidate. The ringers therefore picked the locks and barricaded themselves inside the belfry. The Magistrates ordered them to open the door but ‘the rabble only lookt down and laught at them for their pains’. In the end the door was forced open and the ringers imprisoned until a fine was paid.[[2]](#footnote-2) One-hundred-and-forty-five years later, during the 1826 election at Retford, a similar scene took place. It was a fraught contest. One candidate, Sir Henry Wright Wilson, had whipped up anti-popery feeling against the two other candidates, William Battie Wrightson and Sir Robert Lawrence Dundas, who had refused to oppose a Catholic relief bill. When Battie and Dundas visited Retford on the 16th of February, the *Hampshire Telegraph* reported:

A contest took place between the opposite electioneering parties for the possession of the bells; the church was scaled by ladders, the belfry door broken open, and those who were ringing forced out. The vicar interfered, and a most atrocious riot, in defiance of the civil power, closed a scene never surpassed within the precincts of a place of religious worship.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Conflicts over bells were not uncommon in the period between 1680 and 1832. Why, at the beginning and end of the long eighteenth century, did bells remain so politically important that they were worth fighting over? Current work on the auditory culture of eighteenth-century England fails to help answer this question. If there is a dominant emotional tenor studies of soundscapes it is annoyance. A focus on the boundaries of the tolerable and intolerable has led to a concentration on an increasing sensitivity to noise, especially of an urban variety.[[4]](#footnote-4) The emotional power of sound in eighteenth-century England went far beyond this. Bells offer a pertinent example. They were rung to celebrate, to mourn, and to make community felt.

Church bells dot the historiography of partisan politics, crowd actions, and religious conflict in eighteenth-century England. They appear in cases of Jacobite sedition in the 1720s, in celebrations of radical victories in the 1760s, and in food riots in the 1800s.[[5]](#footnote-5) Yet, despite pioneering work on the celebratory calendar of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, historians of the eighteenth century have yet to explain why bells maintained such political power.[[6]](#footnote-6) This article argues that an approach combining sensory history and the history of emotions can help do so. The eighteenth-century’s political emotions have been side-lined by influential work which has sought to rationalise forms of political decision making and identity – for example, Linda Colley’s assertion that the growth of a patriotic national identity in the period was ‘more an appeal to the mind that the emotions’.[[7]](#footnote-7) Whilst recent work has examined the passions of the American Revolution, historians of emotion have yet to engage with eighteenth-century English politics.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Ringing and listening to church bells were part of a series of practices of feeling that mobilized, communicated, and regulated the political emotions.[[9]](#footnote-9) They therefore provide one response to the recent call for historians to trace the mobilization of emotions in the early modern period.[[10]](#footnote-10) It was the emotive power of bells and their ability to communicate multiple, layered, meanings to listeners, that made them such a powerful political resource. Work on the eighteenth-century public sphere has frequently discussed the freedom to meet, to talk, to speak, and to share ideas.[[11]](#footnote-11) Interpreting and responding to the sound of bells also made eighteenth-century individuals part of a listening public in which listening to sound, not just making it, was a political act.[[12]](#footnote-12)

One of the best sources for records of bell ringing, used throughout this article, are newspapers. These frequently published advertisements for future ringing, recorded instances of bell ringing for posterity, or detailed campanological conflicts in their pages. Previous scholarship on sound has argued that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries sounds had provided a meaningful semiotic system in which urbanites located individual, communal, and corporate identities. By contrast, during the eighteenth-century visual codes - especially maps, newspapers, timetables, street signs, and house numbers – all replaced the soundscape and relegated it to the status of meaningless noise.[[13]](#footnote-13) This aural-to-visual narrative has built on a long-established ‘audio-visual litany’ that differentiates hearing and sight as opposites.[[14]](#footnote-14) Undergirding this is an ostensible hierarchy or ratio of the senses: the idea that if vision rises in that hierarchy this means hearing or sound fall by the way side.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Work on orality and literacy has demonstrated that a simple transition from orality to textuality misrepresents the complex interrelationship between the two.[[16]](#footnote-16) The relationship between auditoryand the visualhas received less focus. Newspaper reports of ringing demonstrate the way in which sound and text worked together: by publishing instances of ringing, national and local newspapers were widening the scope of a potential hearing public. Previously dismissed as repetitive and formulaic, their subtle shifts in descriptions of ringing have much to tell us.[[17]](#footnote-17) They are an example of the way in which print increased the resonance of public celebration and crowd actions, by replaying them to readers.[[18]](#footnote-18) Newspapers were implicated in managing practices of political listening. They attempted to stabilise the meanings of bells in the ears of readers by explaining why they had been rung or adjudicating between auditors. Previous historical work on the political use of sound has stressed its ability to create and control communities through ‘affirmative resonance’: a ‘practice or event when a group of people communally create sounds that resonate in a space, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of their group and its identity patterns’.[[19]](#footnote-19) Bells could be used in ways that marked the acoustic dominance of church and state. But we should not automatically assume the transparency and inescapability of that dominance. The resonance of bells with listeners was not always guaranteed.

This article begins by setting out the role of bells as emotives within the emotional regime of eighteenth-century English politics, centred on a binary of sorrow and joy. The next section illustrates how discussions of ringing in newspapers created fictions of emotional authenticity, spontaneity, and representativeness. In the third section we see that this created contests over how representative of the feelings of a community ringing was. The binary of joy and sorrow which bells invoked could often split along several lines. As the next section shows, this binary allowed for practices of inversion that could mark individual, group, or communal disapprobation for people, policies, or events. Bells were emotives that could be interpreted in different ways by listeners and it was this that often gave them their political power. Newspapers helped manage these practices of listening. The last section then traces the impact of different forms of denominational loyalty on the emotive deployment of bells. It argues that the use of bells by church, state, and subjects attempted to control a soundscape in which communities beyond the established church were often caused emotional suffering.

## RINGING JOY AND SORROW

The long eighteenth century, from the Restoration to the Queen Caroline affair, was the apogee of political bell ringing. It was a moment when church bells proliferated. In the 1600s around 350 new sets of bells were cast in England, during the 1700s the comparable figure was 1,350, during the 1800s it was 1,200.[[20]](#footnote-20) Between 1660 and 1820 a binarism of joy and sorrow constituted the emotional community of English political celebration. The association of loud peals with joy and muffled peals or tolling with sorrow were the ‘norms of emotional expression’ within that community.[[21]](#footnote-21) By the end of the seventeenth century a calendar had developed in which rejoicing was central. Communities drew from a shared list that included royal anniversaries such as birthdays, accessions, and coronations; deliveries from popery including Gunpowder Treason and William III’s landing at Torbay; customary celebrations such as May Day, Rogationtide, and New Year’s Day; and the holidays marked in the *Book of Common Prayer*.[[22]](#footnote-22) By 1700 Ronald Hutton has described a ‘silent majority’ of parishes that failed to ring on many major days of celebration. Yet this argument, based as it is on extensive samples of parish accounts, assumes that ringers were always paid, and that payment always came from the parish coffers.[[23]](#footnote-23) With the rise of ringing societies and the tendency for individuals to pay ringers directly, it is difficult to sustain these assumptions. The calendar of celebrations and the bell-ringing that accompanied them survived, with many local variations and shifts in regularity, throughout the long eighteenth century.

In the late seventeenth century, a shift occurred from seeing celebration as a commemoration of the monarchy to understanding it as a progress report on the government.[[24]](#footnote-24) This depended on an, as-yet unobserved, emotional regime in which both happiness and joy were implicated. At the Georgian court the happiness of the royals and their retinue were perceived as a barometer of national health.[[25]](#footnote-25) Documenting the happiness of subjects was more difficult, though it was the often-stated goal of eighteenth-century government.[[26]](#footnote-26) This was frequently discussed in terms of wealth and population.[[27]](#footnote-27) The feeling of happiness was conceived of as an underlying, internal, and individual one: ‘a state in which the desires are satisfied’. Joy on the other hand was demonstrative, communal, and often fleeting: ‘the passion produced by any happy accident’.[[28]](#footnote-28) To make happiness visible it had to be connected to joy.

In long eighteenth-century texts joy was described as *adding* to general happiness.[[29]](#footnote-29) It could also be described as a sympathetic response to *witnessing* the happiness of others.[[30]](#footnote-30) But joy and happiness were also temporally distinct. Joy was described as only ‘small happiness’ that ‘shortly must expire’, whilst ‘substantial happiness’ was contrasted with ‘transient joy’.[[31]](#footnote-31) For a political example one might compare the discursive effervescence of ‘joy’ at the Restoration in 1660 with panegyrics on the current and future ‘happiness’ promoted by England’s commercial growth in the 1680s.[[32]](#footnote-32) Whilst happiness was an individual feeling, joy was something ‘diffused’ to others.[[33]](#footnote-33) Joy might be felt at the achievement of, or reflection on, longer lasting happiness.[[34]](#footnote-34) The emotional regime of celebration built on the mutual causal interaction of joy and happiness: ‘with what joy and gratitude must every Englishman reflect on the happiness of his own nation’.[[35]](#footnote-35) The act of bell ringing, especially at times of national celebration, was a means of inducing, demonstrating, and diffusing a joy at underlying happiness.

Within this regime bell ringing was a key emotive that both expressed emotion and made it felt by auditors: ‘Bells generally stir, animate, and excite the feelings, and seem rather to fit them for active engagement’.[[36]](#footnote-36) Emotives have been conceptualised as speech acts or bodily gestures: saying ‘I feel great joy’ both expresses your joy and helps you feel joyful.[[37]](#footnote-37) But objects can speak, and this was especially true for bells. Across seventeenth- and eighteenth-century print culture bells were described as having voices and their clappers were often compared to tongues. The inscriptions on bells only encouraged these associations. They spoke of their founders, those that had funded them, the quality of their sound, and the tasks to which they were put. For example:

At Proper Times my Voice Ile Raise

 And Sound To My Subscribers’ Praise.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Altho I Am Both Light & Small

I will be Heard Above You All.[[39]](#footnote-39)

To honour both our God and King

Our voices shall in consort ring.[[40]](#footnote-40)

The difference between a bell and a voice was twofold. Firstly, a bell reached far beyond the hearing of speech, extending its emotive power: ‘by speaking they’l make all the Town to hear’.[[41]](#footnote-41) Secondly, bells spoke on behalf of a community and not an individual. In the case of bells, we can extend the idea of the emotive to encompass material culture that speaks and understand emotives as a form of communal expression.

Fittingly, bells were understood during the eighteenth century as both a way of expressing feeling and creating it in in others. Bell ringing was an ‘expression’ or ‘demonstration’ of joy.[[42]](#footnote-42) When news of Queen Caroline’s acquittal reached Monmouth in November 1820 it ‘diffused a general joy, and the bells of the church confirmed the feeling of the inhabitants by merry peals, long and loud’.[[43]](#footnote-43) The eighteenth century saw growing anxiety about the division between an inner self and outer identity, inner political belief and outward political action.[[44]](#footnote-44) Bells helped allay these anxieties. The joy they inspired was an outward and public demonstration that ‘praise sounds in the mouths *and* loyalty reigns in the *hearts* of all men of sense’.[[45]](#footnote-45) But bells also diffused and made joy. Days of celebration were ‘ushered in with ringing of bells’.[[46]](#footnote-46) Bells set the emotional tone of a day and inculcated the proper affective state in subjects. On news of a peace treaty with the U.S in January 1815, ‘the ringing of the bells… essentially contributed to heighten the general joy’.[[47]](#footnote-47) Subscribers for new bells at Norwich cathedral in 1774 praised peals for ‘adding to that joy which public and domestic occurrences frequently call upon them to celebrate’.[[48]](#footnote-48) Church bells were described as ‘joy bells’ and resonating, sonorous, joy as ‘resounding’.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Ringing thus worked within a radial, material, understanding of emotions: feelings were carried by objects, spaces, and bodies; they diffused outward, circulated around, and flowed from them.[[50]](#footnote-50) For eighteenth-century writers the vibrations of sound were a good way of comprehending the fact that, as a correspondent to the *Universal Magazine* noted in 1754, ‘all the passions, but especially those of the social kind, are contagious’. Individuals were, the article went on,

like certain musical instruments… set to each other, so that the vibrations or notes, excited in one, raise correspondent notes and vibrations in others… the joy, that vibrates in one, communicates itself to the other also.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Bells both made feelings public and made public feelings.

They could also express funereal sorrow, the opposite side of the affective binary of eighteenth-century politics. Joyful peals involved change ringing that used all the bells in the steeple. Ringers controlled the speed of ringing so that the bells would fall in shifting sequences each time they were rung. The result would be the sound of several bells ringing in quick, alternating, succession. Tolling usually involved the slow ringing of a single bell, by the end of the eighteenth century often at intervals of a minute. During the long eighteenth century, despite reformation assaults on funereal tolling, a short tolling of the bell was permitted after death, before the burial, and at the end of the funeral ceremony.[[52]](#footnote-52) Full peals were rung to mark the funerals of major local or national figures. However, to mark sorrow instead of joy the bells were muffled and rendered ‘dumb’.[[53]](#footnote-53) This involved wrapping cloth or leather around the clapper of the bell, to create a ‘most doleful and mournful sound’.[[54]](#footnote-54) From 1700 onwards a political culture of sensibility developed that valued the demonstration of shared, public, and physically affecting grief at moments of national sadness.[[55]](#footnote-55) Dumb, muffled, peals were the auditory element of this culture.

The relationship between sorrowful, muffled, tolling and peals of joy was most visible at the death of a monarch and the accession of a new one. National mourning quickly shifted to joy at the arrival of a new head of state. The swift change was satirised in a mock biblical ‘book of corruption’, printed in an 1831 election poll book: ‘the bells rang merrily and tolled mournfully; so that the grief was equal to the joy and the joy equal to the grief for twenty-one days’.[[56]](#footnote-56) The parallel death of Nelson and victory at Trafalgar in 1805, the mingling of joy and sorrow in alternate pealing and tolling could exert a powerful effect.[[57]](#footnote-57) But authorities were aware of the potential hazards created by mixed emotional messages and attempts were made to prevent them. After the death of George II in 1760 the Court of Common Council agreed there should be no ringing of bells or other ‘outward shew of rejoicings’ on the Lord Mayor’s day: this would be ‘unseasonable’ when the ‘whole nation’ was ‘so sensibly afflicted with sorrow’.[[58]](#footnote-58)

It is difficult to track the affective responses of individuals to bells, but letters and diaries suggest that individuals did partake of the general joy and sorrow initiated by bell ringing. During 1759, a period of major British military victories, Catherine Talbot wrote that ‘nothing could be cheerfuller than… innumerable rings of bells’.[[59]](#footnote-59) Not all auditors felt the same affections. In June 1815 Dorothy Wordsworth lamented that ‘joy of victory is indeed an awful thing, and I had no patience with the tinkling of our Ambleside bells’.[[60]](#footnote-60) However, in newspaper reports the emotions that bells inculcated and expressed were frequently presumed to be the spontaneous, authentic, response of the whole community.

## SPONTANEITY AND DEFERENCE

Newspaper reports of bell ringing depended on a fiction of emotional spontaneity and authentic deference. This obscured the payment ringers often received for their work and assumed a uniform emotional response from a community. The proliferation of bells in eighteenth-century England was partly the product of the rising popularity of change ringing.[[61]](#footnote-61) Local ringing societies were part of the outburst of associational culture that characterised eighteenth-century England.[[62]](#footnote-62) They competed to see who could ring the highest number of peals, with the least mistakes, in the shortest time, feats that were often reported and contested in newspapers.[[63]](#footnote-63) During the eighteenth century the proliferation of ringing societies – with their own rules, fees, and rituals – were frequently employed to ring peals. These ringers were sometimes paid by the churchwardens, especially if they rang peals for summoning parishioners to services. But in the eighteenth century they were frequently paid directly by those who wanted the bells rung.[[64]](#footnote-64)

Bells were rung at the request of particular individuals or groups, but ‘The rich and poor alike can feel the influence of their power’.[[65]](#footnote-65) Eighteenth-century England was a society in which the hum of electronic and automotive noise today was absent. The soundscape was populated by a wider range of frequencies that could be heard over a more extensive area. Records by eighteenth-century auditors suggested that the sound of bells could carry multiple miles into the countryside surrounding towns and villages.[[66]](#footnote-66) The density of parish churches in urban conurbations meant that, if rung at the same time, bells could cover whole towns and cities with ease.[[67]](#footnote-67) Bells were highly important as legible, meaningful, sensory impressions that could convey information and emotion.

But if the capacity to hear bells was widespread, the ability to set them ringing was more restricted. From many newspaper accounts readers might imagine that the English public sprung into acts of joyful deference at the slightest cause for celebration. The fact that payment was usually expected meant that instances where ringers performed ‘at their own expense’ or from ‘spontaneous feeling’ were unusual enough to be worth noting.[[68]](#footnote-68) Such examples are notable for their rarity. The absence of payment from most newspaper accounts of ringing gave them an air of emotional spontaneity.

Bells were also instruments of deference, rung to celebrate the birthdays, coming of age, and even mere local presence of aristocrats and other worthies as they travelled across the country.[[69]](#footnote-69) Ringing was a ‘publick expression of respect’ due to the monarch, politicians, and clergymen.[[70]](#footnote-70) It was a demonstration of ‘satisfaction’ by ‘grateful’ subjects or tenants.[[71]](#footnote-71) An excerpt from the *West Briton*, dated the 25th of January 1828, dramatizes this spontaneity:

The following is a correct copy of a note sent last week by a farmer who resides not twenty miles from Liskeard, and who is the chief of the ringers of his parish, to a gentleman who was there on a visit of a few days: 'The peppel of st c-r are verry appey to yer that mr d. is in st. c-r and in good ealth and the arr now giving him a pele'.[[72]](#footnote-72)

But this deference was hardly organic and was usually paid for.[[73]](#footnote-73) At the 1825 election the three St Alban’s candidates spent over £120 on ringing.[[74]](#footnote-74) The bells themselves were also subsidised by and dedicated to local politicians, aristocrats, and members of the royal family.[[75]](#footnote-75) One satirical letter from a member of parliament complained that he had paid for new bells for his county town which now ‘stun me with their noise’.[[76]](#footnote-76) A ballad celebrated the 3rd Duke of Rutland in 1760 after he purchased a new bell for Baslow church. It would now ‘eccho from Rocks and Hills’ and ‘publish the Fame of the Duke’, whilst his tenants would now ‘feel the kind Acts of his Will’ in the sound of the bell.[[77]](#footnote-77) The two sides of eighteenth-century society – on the one hand polite, commercial, and socially mobile, yet on the other hand conservative, deferential, and hierarchical – came together in ringing.[[78]](#footnote-78) Bells spoke deference, but money made them talk.

In ignoring the payment behind ringing, newspapers simply reported that ‘the bells rang’, ‘rang merrily’, and ‘rang incessantly’ – omitting the action of ringing altogether by imagining the bells as actants – or merely reported that ‘the bells were rung’.[[79]](#footnote-79) The presence or entry of notable figures into a parish or town, including at elections, was ‘welcomed with ringing of bells’, ‘saluted by ringing of bells’, or the bells were described as ‘ringing all the time of [the person] continuing in the town’.[[80]](#footnote-80) This created an image not just of spontaneous emotion but of spontaneous deference and approbation. The idea that bells were like voices, their clappers like wagging tongues, only helped further de-emphasise the pecuniary process behind their ringing.

Despite this, newspapers did occasionally raise questions about the emotional authenticity of ringing. After the silence of a local belfry on New Year’s Eve the *Maidstone Journal* lamented that ‘the ringers [do not] have national feelings on such occasions unless they are paid.’[[81]](#footnote-81) Anxieties were frequently voiced about the ‘rapacity of ringers’ who rang the bells ‘at the request of any one who may choose to give them 10s 6d to disturb the peace of the neighbourhood’.[[82]](#footnote-82) Ringers were keen to establish patriotic passions as their main motivation. The ringers of Newport-Pagnell wrote to the *Northampton Mercury* in 1793 to make it ‘publicly known… that on every occasion that does honour to our king and country, we come forward as Britons, without any solicitation whatever’.[[83]](#footnote-83)

Worries about mercenary ringers were a symptom of the social imaginary in which bells were embedded. The eighteenth century witnessed a growing concern about the capacity of print and performance to communicate emotional authenticity.[[84]](#footnote-84) The joy and sorrow that bells were said to express and to inculcate must be understood with these anxieties in mind. The late eighteenth-century also witnessed the emergence of a slow privatization of urban public space and the commercialization of politics. In the name of improvement and good order, local civic elites increased their control of squares, parks, and marketplaces.[[85]](#footnote-85) The letters to newspapers quoted above suggest that this commercialization and privatization could generate anxieties about the cheapening of political emotions. But ignoring the fact that ringers were paid for their duties, as most newspaper reports did, helped stabilise the image of bells as a transparent, spontaneous, conduit for the political feeling of a community.

## COMMUNITY AND CONTROL

Bells marked the emotional boundaries of parish, corporate, and civic communities: their geographical limits and moments of temporal opening and closure.[[86]](#footnote-86) Joyful peals were rung to mark the beginning of elections,[[87]](#footnote-87) the entry of candidates into towns,[[88]](#footnote-88) and the announcement of results.[[89]](#footnote-89) They marked the opening of divisions in the community and the eventual reharmonization and ‘satisfaction’ of interests at the end of the election.[[90]](#footnote-90) Peals had civic significance: they marked the appointment officials,[[91]](#footnote-91) the progress of processions,[[92]](#footnote-92) and the entrance or departure of figures from the community.[[93]](#footnote-93) Joyful peals summoned subjects to celebrations of locally significant legislation, legal victories, and new infrastructure.[[94]](#footnote-94) By the late eighteenth century subscribers from a town or parish often clubbed together to pay the ringers on occasions of celebration.[[95]](#footnote-95) The joy or sorrow of bells expressed the satisfaction or otherwise of communities. The relative popularity of election candidates was associated with the sound or silence of bells.[[96]](#footnote-96) In Middlesex in 1820 Mr S. C. Whitbread was met with ringing but at the appearance of his opponent Mr Mellish ‘the bells were muffled and rung backwards’.[[97]](#footnote-97) This was marker of communal sorrow at Mellish’s arrival that built on the reverse ringing also used at moments of civic alarm such as fires or invasion. Ringing expressed and moulded the community’s emotional disposition towards candidates.

The communities of feeling encouraged or represented by bells were not just local but national. Hearing bells on days of national celebration with a sense of joy made one part of the English national community. As the *Gloucester Journal* put it in 1817:

on all occasions of public joy, a good Englishman finds a peal of bells in unison with the best feelings of his heart. There is a purity, a cheerfulness, and a tender melancholy, even in their sound, peculiarly expressive of that pious gratitude which must always rejoice with trembling.[[98]](#footnote-98)

The joy induced by bell ringing was made all the important by its links to the emotional content of loyalty. Loyalty, especially from the 1740s onwards, was understood as a personal, emotional, attachment to the monarch and nation, which was crafted through individual agency and feeling.[[99]](#footnote-99) The reports of bell ringing (or chiming) for joy on days of national celebration in Ireland and, especially during the years of the Jacobite threat, Scotland was a testament to the loyalty of Celtic subjects too.[[100]](#footnote-100)

Joy at the sound of bells was part of the expected habitus nurtured by the loyal British subject. Inscribed bells remarked that, ‘Whilst thus we join in cheerful sound, May love and Loyalty Abound’.[[101]](#footnote-101) Joy was frequently deployed in public political debate. Claims about the goodness of policies or events were buttressed by claims about the joy that should be felt in the heart of every ‘good’, ‘true’, or ‘un-corrupt’ ‘Englishman’ or ‘Briton’ at their coming to pass.[[102]](#footnote-102) The power of bell ringing depended on a series of expectations about the appropriate emotional response of a good ‘Englishman’ or ‘Briton’. Conflicts over bell ringing centred on attempts to adjudicate the appropriate times, places, and occasions for the expression of joy. These conflicts over whose feelings came first were therefore about the content of citizenship itself and the proper emotional disposition of the British subject.[[103]](#footnote-103) Claims about feeling and listening were therefore central to debate in the public sphere. It took more than agreement on norms of emotional expression – about joyful peals and sorrowful tolls – to constitute an emotional community.[[104]](#footnote-104) Testing the boundaries of communities formed by emotion depended on seeking out agreements about what the proper objects of those expressions were.

The early eighteenth century saw hot-headed electoral contests between Tories and Whigs, high church Anglicans and their low church opposition. Stories circulated of losing sides in elections removing the clappers and ropes of bells or hiding the keys of belfries.[[105]](#footnote-105) Loosing factions refused to countenance a communal expression of joy in which they could not partake. This opened questions about who had the right to ring – communities, ringers, churchwardens and ministers, or the representatives of the government. These tensions were especially visible at two points. One was the popular celebrations surrounding John Wilkes’ campaign against the government in the 1770s. At Wilke’s release from prison bells were rung across the country, including rings of 45 peals to match the number of the *North Briton* which had landed him with a libel charge.[[106]](#footnote-106) For those opposed to Wilkes this was a misuse of bells that insulted the monarch. Onelamented that ‘when I heard bells ringing for King Wilkes’s birth day, every peal sounded in my ears like the doleful clank of manacles and fetters’.[[107]](#footnote-107) In some towns representatives of the ministry, churchwardens, and ministers attempted to prevent access to the belfry or silence ringing bells.[[108]](#footnote-108) Ringing was central to contests over the proper object of political rejoicing.

A second major conflict over the ability to control the political soundscape and its attendant emotion occured during the Queen Caroline Affair. When the Bill of Pains and Penalties was dropped against Caroline in 1820 celebrations erupted across the country, accompanied by loud peals. Religious issues were central to the affair: whether George IV could divorce Caroline by parliamentary bill, whether her name should be contained in the *Book of Common Prayer*, and whether she should be crowned in Westminster Abbey. Ministers and churchwardens were vociferous in their condemnation of such ringing, which they construed as a misuse of church property. Bell ropes were removed, keys to belfries were withheld, church-doors were broken down by celebrants, and ministers ordered ringers to desist.[[109]](#footnote-109) Ringers and parish clerks who aided them were dismissed by ministers.[[110]](#footnote-110) Newspapers debated who the bells really belonged to.[[111]](#footnote-111) But this question was soon resolved by resultant cases in the ecclesiastical courts. In 1821 Doctors Commons set up precedent, for joint control of the bells by churchwarden and minister, that would lead to firmer clerical control of belfries.[[112]](#footnote-112)

This failed to prevent further controversy. In 1821 John Ambrose Williams, writer for the radical *Durham Chronicle*, was tried for libel after he accused Durham’s cathedral and its six churches of failing to toll their bells for Queen Caroline’s death. The prosecution defended the clergymen who were ‘not so loud in their grief, being, perhaps, the more sincere, and because their bells were not tolled, but suppressed their emotions’.[[113]](#footnote-113) A rhetorical sleight of hand separated the agentive bells own emotions from those of the clergymen and equated sincerity with a stoic silence. The cross-examination of witnesses made similar distinctions. They were asked whether the bells kept ‘to themselves’, ‘suppress[ed] their emotions’, or whether they acted ‘the hypocritical, or frank part’.[[114]](#footnote-114) Here the defence used the rhetoric of agency in a different way. By ascribing bells their own emotions and voices the prosecution proposed that the clergy had actively silenced them. Material agency was a rhetoric used to make claims about the hidden politics of the soundscape. Bells were comprehended as an autonomous expression of communal feeling. But attempts to set and represent the emotional tone of the community were open to contestation along a whole series of political and religious lines.

## INVERSION AND RESISTANCE

Within the emotional regime of ringing emotives could be turned to modes of resistance through practices of inversion. They were a cultural resource, to be drawn upon and mobilized to invest different occasions with different feelings. Whilst the emotives remained the same (the connection of peals to joy or dumb peals to sorrow) the objects of emotion may not have aligned with those prescribed by the emotional regime.[[115]](#footnote-115) How individuals listened was crucial. Bells were public addresses to an indeterminate number of people, but they required active participation to function.[[116]](#footnote-116) How individuals listened to these calls-to-feel varied.

One way of re-appropriating bells was to ring them for joy on occasions that should not, according to the status quo, be joyful. This was apparent in the use of bells by Jacobite sympathisers. Days of joyful national celebration encouraged alarm, doom, and disgust in Jacobites. In Edinburgh in October 1699 the King’s safe return to England was celebrated and ‘that which fretted the Jacobites most was that the Musick-Bells were set to play an old Scotch Tune, call'd, Willie is welcome Home to me’.[[117]](#footnote-117) Hearing the bells of London from Kennington common in 1705, a countryman saw a group of five Jacobites, ‘walking after a most disconsolate manner’ away from the sound and towards a set of gallows.[[118]](#footnote-118) Hearing peals celebrate a Marlboroughian victory in 1704, one writer imagined a Jacobite wrapping ‘his Head in the Blankets, to keep the Noise of the Bells out of his Ears’ but ending up ‘Dead of the Ding-Dongs’.[[119]](#footnote-119) In some cases Jacobites attempted to prevent ringing. In Dundee in 1715 a crew of Jacobites invaded the bell-chamber of the local church and stopped the bells from ringing for George I’s accession.[[120]](#footnote-120) For Jacobites joyful bells produced sorrow, putting them in a position of emotional suffering.

One response was to listen to ringing differently. The non-juring Jacobite Thomas Hearne was a vehement opponent of the Hanoverian accession. He also listened to the bells of Oxford with musical and mathematical interest. His notebooks contain many records of his listening, recording the numbers of errors in peals.[[121]](#footnote-121) When Hearne listened to ringing on Hanoverian anniversaries he heard disharmony. On George I’s birthday in 1715 the bells were only ‘jambled’ and their sound was ‘little taken notice of (unless by way of ridicule)’. On the anniversary of George I’s accession in August, Hearne noted that the bells were 'only jambled, being pulled by a parcel of children and silly people ... there was not so much as one good peal rung in Oxford'.[[122]](#footnote-122) Hearn heard distasteful disorder in the bells of pro-Hanoverian ringers – he listened to them differently. His record of ringing was a form of composure, fitting the sounds of peals into a narrative and emotional order that made sense to him. Rather than assuming the affirmative resonances created by sound, Hearne’s response suggests an ability to listen creatively in the face of acoustic dominance.[[123]](#footnote-123)

Jacobites returned the favour by joyfully ringing bells on days that celebrated the Pretender. This ringing produced fear in the hearts of government supporters, who attempted to put a stop to it.[[124]](#footnote-124) Peals at Leeds on the Pretender’s birthday in 1715 produced a flurry of letters to newspapers that debated who had ordered the bells to be rung and whether they were representative of the city’s feelings.[[125]](#footnote-125) In 1723 a churchwarden from Hambledon ended up in the consistory court for allowing ringing on the Pretender’s birthday.[[126]](#footnote-126) But the seditious nature of ringing was up for debate because discerning the intention behind it was difficult. When Chesham in Buckinghamshire rang its bells on the Young Pretender’s birthday in 1745, the *Daily Advertiser* described it as an ‘audacious act of impudence’ that could not be ‘too severely punished’.[[127]](#footnote-127) But one correspondent argued that, though the bells had rung, the population were not Jacobites in sentiment and their ‘stupidity’ meant that they seemed ‘scarce capable of knowing one day from another’.[[128]](#footnote-128)

Sedition, sorrow, or joy were thus in the ears of the listener. A Stuart sympathiser who knew their Jacobite calendar might find joy in bells on the 10th of June, but for those who treated the day as a normal one like any other the connection might not be made. At Bath in September 1715 a Lady, offended that the bells had rung so vociferously for the arrival of the Jacobite Sir William Windham into the town, decided to play a trick:

she sent for the Ringers on the 18th at Night, and told them, if they wou’d ring an Hour she wou’d give ‘em a Guinea. They accordingly went and rung a very good peal, and came back to the Lady, who told them that she had caused them to ring in Remembrance of King George’s happy Arrival on that Day,and taking quiet possession of his kingdoms.[[129]](#footnote-129)

The ringers were discomforted that they had created a joyful atmosphere on an anniversary they felt little joy in. A combination of ringing technique, calendrical knowledge, and the disposition of the listener determined how bells might be interpreted and whether they created emotional suffering.

Ringing could be used as a form of political resistance in other ways too. Bells expressed sorrow at the actions of authorities by producing a dumb peal in their (dis)honour. Unpopular members of parliament were saluted with dumb peals or backward peals of alarm as they passed through the towns within their constituency, replacing respectful peals of joy.[[130]](#footnote-130) Dumb peals ‘insulted’ defeated military and naval leaders on their return to England.[[131]](#footnote-131) Muffled peals also demonstrated communal opposition to specific policies, especially taxes. When William Pitt introduced the Shop Tax in 1785, dumb peals rang out across the country. The ‘dire toll’ marked the ‘sinking’ of the nation’s trade. Pitt’s dinner at a London tavern was interrupted by dumb peals from the surrounding churches. The bells not only ‘tolled out the grievances of the people’ but were the ‘passing-bell of the popularity of the minister’: the inhabitants of Southwark tolled a minute-bell for the mock funeral of an effigy of Pitt.[[132]](#footnote-132) Dumb peals expressed the sorrow of shop owners and created at auditory atmosphere of public mourning.

Dumb peals could elicit debate in the newspapers. In 1763 the Peace of Paris ended the Seven Years War. Many Londoners had opposed the agreement, but despite the best efforts of Pitt and Beckford, Bute’s peace was signed in February. The Court of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London marched to St James in procession to provide an address, congratulating his Majesty on the peace. In response both St Mary le Bow and St Bride’s rang a dumb, muffled peal as the procession made its way past.[[133]](#footnote-133) The dumb peals were a very clear statement of opposition. A satirical print depicting the procession was accompanied by the lines ‘While Bow and St Bridget to show approbation/ Have muffled their bells on this joyful Occasion’.[[134]](#footnote-134) A letter to the *Public Advertiser* asked ‘Why were the bells of St Bride’s muffled’ when the procession went past? The *Advertiser* gave the answer that those responsible obtained entrance to the belfry by ‘base and low impostion’ upon the sextonness, who had not been aware of their intentions. Another letter suggested that a gentleman had sent the parish officers a bank note of twenty pounds to be divided between the bell ringers if they rang the dumb peal. Another letter, this time to the *London Chronicle,* asserted that the £20 was a charitable donation with no connection to the muffled peal at all. A final letter on the 14th to the *Gazeteer and London Daily Advertiser* responded to murmurings about St Mary le Bow’s dumb peal, by explaining that it was ‘on account of the death of the sextoness of the parish’ and therefore merely coincidental.[[135]](#footnote-135)

A similarly problematic peal was sounded in November 1770. The *General Evening Post* reported that on the anniversary of John Wilke’s birthday, a dumb peal had been rung on the bells of St Martins in the Fields. A furious group of Wilkes’ supporters marched to the church, where they were told by a ringer, ‘Alas! Gentlemen, one of our best ringers died this morning, and we ring this peal in his memory’.[[136]](#footnote-136) Dumb peals demonstrated how contested and fluid the meanings of bells were. Their messages could be highly nuanced. At a Worcestershire parish in 1763 the bells were half-muffled on Thanksgiving Day, resulting in a half-dumb peal. This was ‘to express not only their joy, on account of the peace; but also their great sorrow and concern, at the late woeful TAX on Cyder’.[[137]](#footnote-137) The complex, overlapping, meanings of bells could generate miscommunication. But the political offence caused by the dumb peal was partly formulated in the ears of the listener, often unconnected to the intentions of ringers or their paymasters. Newspapers were central to mediating these forms of listening by suggesting the possible reasons for ringing and allowing auditors to responded – with joy or sorrow – to the sound of bells.

A final approach was to refuse to ring the bells at all – to demonstrate a lack of joy or a refusal to impart it. This was a tactic deployed by Jacobite sympathisers who refused to ring bells for Williamite or Hanoverian successes so that they were ‘obstinately dumb and spoke not’.[[138]](#footnote-138) But bells could also remain silent for more local reasons. In 1767 it wasreported that the bells of St Brides, Fleet Street, were never rung on the anniversary of the King’s birthday, because two ringers had been tried and executed, despite a petition for clemency, in the reign of George I.[[139]](#footnote-139) Refusal to ring became a mark of parochial contempt for a monarch who it was felt had failed in the performance of justice.[[140]](#footnote-140) By the end of the period refusals could be found on the part of ringers themselves who, even with payment, declined or complained vociferously when asked to ring for politicians they disliked.[[141]](#footnote-141) Silence bespoke a contemptuous refusal to rejoice.

Silencing or muffling bells, so that they were struck dumb or dumbly struck, was a deliberate infringement of the messages inscribed on them. These were not hidden away in belfries. Single sheet prints and newspaper articles widely publicised the inscriptions on new rings of bells. Readers and listeners would have been aware of bells’ anthropomorphic desire to ‘honour both our god and king’ or their call to ‘all, who hear me ring, Be faithful to your God and king’.[[142]](#footnote-142) Bells that failed to ring could thus be described as ‘su’d for High Crimes’, ‘Impeach’d for Misdemeanours’, or ‘drawn into petty-treason’.[[143]](#footnote-143) An awareness of the inscribed voices on bells meant that silencing or muffling their tongues conveyed a powerful message.

## SUFFERING

Silence could be a form of resistance. But it could also be a form of suffering that came with the inability to express joy. In 1732 the inhabitants of Ealing and Old Brentford wrote that they were ‘griev'd at heart, that they could not express their loyalty by ringing their bells on her majesty's birthday; their old decay'd church and steeple falling some years since’.[[144]](#footnote-144) Yet outside the established church suffering in silence was the norm. Bells marked the acoustic dominance of the Church of England. The emotional regime they reinforced was experienced as emotional suffering by dissenters, Methodists, and Catholics.

Dissenters had little joy in the sound of bells. The use of a single bell to summon congregations was acceptable, ‘like the use of the Silver Trumpets’ under biblical law.[[145]](#footnote-145) Many seventeenth and eighteenth-century dissenting chapels had a small bell in a cupola above the front entrance.[[146]](#footnote-146) Yet other forms of ringing were derided as superstitious. A distaste for ringing became a signifier of dissent. In a 1707 a London churchwarden was accused of being a dissenter because he had argued that ‘hee Knew of noe occasion they had for bells to ring people to Church for ev[er]y body knew how to goe to Church at ten a Clock in the morning without bells’.[[147]](#footnote-147) Failing to ring bells for moments of national celebration indicated a puritanical bent of mind. On the anniversary of Queen Anne’s birthday in 1721 bells rang across the City of London. Yet St Mary le Bow remained silent. The ringers were stopped, the *Weekly Journal* reported, ‘by a puritanical churchwarden in Cheapside, who very spitefully told them, that rather than suffer any ringing he would cut the ropes or break the bells’.[[148]](#footnote-148)

The use of bells in celebrating national victories and anniversaries, during a period when dissenters were second-class citizens, encouraged dissenters to feel ‘that a Ring of Bells are fitter to be hung in a Market-place, than in a Church, because they are Political Engines, whose loud Tongues are often-times employ'd to proclaim Falsities’.[[149]](#footnote-149) Dissenters were anxious to separate the religious and civil uses of bells. The death of a member of society was an ‘occurrence in which the community is interested’ and should therefore be admired ‘only as a civil regulation’. Dissenters would thus ‘prefer the sounding of a bell fixed on the town hall, or in some part of each parish remote from the church’, to prevent superstitious associations.[[150]](#footnote-150) The sound of church bells on days of national celebration was a loud reminder for dissenters of the imbrication of church and state which led to their exclusion from the full rights of citizenship. This distaste also derived from a different attitude to joy. In contrast to the Anglican emphasis on corporate, public, joy, dissenters emphasised the private discovery of joy which came through personal ordeals and inner battles.[[151]](#footnote-151) In this context bells did not have the same emotional value.

The right of non-Anglicans to use the bells of their local parish church was also contested. In the 1780s the dissenters of Market Harborough had argued that by paying the church rates they acquired the rite to have the bell of the parish church tolled at their funerals. The answer of the churchwardens was that bells were only to be tolled for ‘the offices of the church’ or at the discretion of the ‘minister and churchwardens’.[[152]](#footnote-152) Some churchwardens were uncertain whether they had to ring the parish bell for dissenter funerals or not and so sought advice from the church hierarchy.[[153]](#footnote-153) By the 1830s a belief circulated that dissenters did not disown bells out of choice but because they were forced to give them up by law.[[154]](#footnote-154) This resulted in further attempts by Anglican clergymen to prevent the tolling of bells at dissenter funerals. This was a form of emotional suffering. A speaker to a large meeting of the ‘Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty’ in May 1825 lamented the ‘bigotry’ that led a clergyman to refuse dissenters the ‘kindly’ tolling of the bell and thus stopped it from lulling ‘as it vibrates on the ear… some of the sad, sad feelings which at such a moment rend and desolate the heart’.[[155]](#footnote-155)

This did not stop non-Anglicans from using the sound of bells for their own purposes: their wide audibility made it difficult to control how others used them. Catholics had long been refused bells and steeples, to underline the privacy in which they were forced to worship. Yet some Catholics used local parish bells to time their meetings. In 1713 the staunch anti-Catholic clergyman Samuel Peploe was angered that Preston Catholics went ‘Publickly to their Meetings as we go to Church, and on Sabbath Days they go by *our* Bells’.[[156]](#footnote-156) The ban on Catholic steeples did not go away in the late eighteenth century and was entrenched in the 1791 Catholic Relief Act.[[157]](#footnote-157) When the Catholics of Edgton Bridge built their Chapel in 1797 they added a turret nicknamed ‘the Pope’s head’, but their provocation did not stretch to putting a bell in it.[[158]](#footnote-158) Some used hand bells instead. The minister of Croxdale, Durham, complained about a Catholic chapel because ‘they often ring a hand-bell, at ye time of my congregations coming out of ye Chapel, as if in defiance’.[[159]](#footnote-159) The attempt to prevent dissenters and Catholics from setting up bells or using those of the parish testified to a desire to control the religious soundscape. Not having bells made worship less public, harder to time, and more dependent on the bells of the local parish church.

The single bells that were used by dissenters could be the focus of attack by Church and King mobs. In Manchester in 1715 the Presbyterian meeting house was destroyed and the rioters ‘brought off the bell which they hung up in the pillory’.[[160]](#footnote-160) Rioters presented a mock execution of the voice that summoned dissenters to worship, suggesting they were better summoned to the gallows than their meeting house. Bells were also rung to drown out Methodist sermons and force preachers out of central urban public spaces and on their peripheries. In 1743 George Whitefield was interrupted in Kidderminster by ‘some unkind men’, who rang the nearby church bells throughout his discourse. In 1745 John Edwards was interrupted in preaching by ‘bells and horns’, made more audible when the mob broke the windows of the venue in which he was preaching.[[161]](#footnote-161) Bells could be used to make claims to public space and invade supposedly private gatherings.[[162]](#footnote-162)

Sound was crucial to the perception and practice of Methodism. Forceful preaching and enthusiastic hymn singing were two of its central traits. Meetings, particularly later revivalist meetings, could be noisy affairs.[[163]](#footnote-163) Contemporaries believed that the government were unwilling to counter the subversive potential of Methodism.[[164]](#footnote-164) Attempts to drown preachers out were therefore a local way of opposing it. For Methodist preachers there was triumph in overcoming these auditory assaults. In July 1756 John Wesley preached in Pocklington, in the East Riding. The ‘good churchwarden hired men to ring the bells’ but ‘still the bulk of the congregation heard’.[[165]](#footnote-165) This was not only an effort to control whose bells spoke, it was also part of a competition over who was heard. This use of bells – big and small – sometimes overlapped with forms of rough music. Dissenters were chased to the edges of parish boundaries by instrument-bearing mobs in ways that evoked the sounds of church bells and hand bells in rogation-tide processions.[[166]](#footnote-166) Sound helped defined the boundaries of the parish and those who were not welcome within them.

Bells were also used to direct and assemble the mobs that attacked meeting houses and Catholic chapels throughout the eighteenth century. Riots against dissenters in Newcastle-under-Lyme during 1715 commenced with ringing.[[167]](#footnote-167) In the 1791 Priestley Riots, witnesses claimed to have seen the town crier William Shuker ringing his bell and shouting ‘Damn the Presbyterians, down with them, burn them’.[[168]](#footnote-168) Ringing church-bells marked High-Church control of the streets, creating fear in the hearts of dissenters. After the acquittal of Dr Sacheverell in 1710 bells were rung in many towns, where they signified that it was ‘not safe for any dissenter to appear in the streets’.[[169]](#footnote-169) Sometimes the threat was made explicit. When two low-church election candidates arrived at Taunton in 1710, the high church faction ordered ‘two passing bells to be rung, as if the two gentlemen had been dead’.[[170]](#footnote-170)

Ringing could be described as form of symbolic violence again dissenters. When Dr Sacheverell visited Worcester in 1710 the Whig magistrates stopped the bells of all the churches in the area from ringing by removing the bell-ropes. In response high church mobs burst into steeples and chimed out their joy using hammers. The bashing of the bells was a proxy for beating dissenters:

Compell’d to Non-Resistance

And Sovereign-Mob’s Allegiance,

 Prohibited Bells

 Were bang’d into Peals,

And thump’d into Obedience.[[171]](#footnote-171)

Anti-Methodist and anti-Catholic mobs were also brought together by local church bells. In 1746, Wesley’s arrival in Devizes was greeted by ringing the church bells backwards in a statement of alarm.[[172]](#footnote-172) During the Gordon Riots the mob removed the bell of Newgate Prison and used it to direct rioters.[[173]](#footnote-173) A proclamation published in the wake of the riots advertised a reward for anybody who could identify those who had used bells to aid rioters.[[174]](#footnote-174) This use of bells produced a climate in which the joy invested in bells by the dominant Anglican regime produced emotional suffering for other denominations.

This was reinforced by vindictive, celebratory, ringing when attempts to remove religious disabilities failed. In Derby in 1735 the failure of an attempt to repeal the corporation and test acts was greeted with orders for ringing in each of the parish churches.[[175]](#footnote-175) Later in the eighteenth-century, after another failed attempt at repeal, bells were rung across the country ‘especially where Dissenters lived’, more to ‘mortify dissenters, than to gratify’ their high church opponents.[[176]](#footnote-176) Vindictive ringing was also deployed against Methodists. In 1807 Methodists took up the case of a Sapcote-based co-religionist who had been killed when her cottage was intentionally destroyed (with the old Methodist widow still inside it) by the local lord of the manor. When he was acquitted ‘the Sapcote people nearly pulled the bells down in ringing’ to spite the Methodists.[[177]](#footnote-177)

By the 1820s the establishment were becoming aware of the possible resentment that ringing could cause among those who heard it differently. The newspaper response to the twists and turns of the Catholic relief bill are indicative of shifting attitudes. The annual ringing on the 5th of November was a reminder that Catholics were treasonous fifth columnists. At the rejection of a Catholic relief bill in the House of Lords in May 1825 bells were rung across the country.[[178]](#footnote-178) But not every individual that heard the ringing described it as harmonious. The *Derby Reporter* was indignant at the church bells being rung for such an illiberal act: ‘as if some great victory were obtained over the enemies of the nation’.[[179]](#footnote-179) In the House of Commons Sir John Newport argued that in having ‘set the bells ringing as in triumph at the defeat of the Catholics’ the clergymen of England had been ‘ringing the death-knell of England’ by making a large portion of its subjects ‘discontented with their government’.[[180]](#footnote-180) This even extended to criticism of the 5th of November. A letter to the *Liverpool Mercury* from a ‘Protestant against invidious observances’ complained of twenty-four-hour ringing at his local church that memorialised the gunpowder-treason. The bells were a ‘dismal clangor of discord and strife’ in the ears of all Christians and failed to ‘hush the turbulent passions into peace’.[[181]](#footnote-181) Such complaints had little effect. When the Catholic relief bill finally passed, bells continued to voice communal opposition. In Leeds on the date of George IV’s birth, ‘the bells were thrown so much "out of order" by the passing of the roman catholic relief bill that they could not utter a sound’.[[182]](#footnote-182) The bells continued to ring for gunpowder treason in many parts of the country well into the nineteenth century.[[183]](#footnote-183)

In the emotional regime that connected bells with joyful celebration or solemn melancholy, dissenters, Methodists, and Catholics were forced into forms of emotional suffering and divested of their place in the Anglican-dominated soundscape. They were prevented from ringing bells for the funerals of their co-religionists and thereby less able to mark the appropriate emotional tenor of such occasions. But bells were also implicated in a politics of listening and hearing. Ringing drowned out the voices of Methodist preachers and its absence for dissenters and Catholics marked the privacy expected of those who worshiped outside of the state-sponsored church. Bells of joyful celebration encouraged fear and resentment among these men and women – a reminder of the disabilities they suffered. The emotional politics of bells therefore depended on the way one listened, a set of expectations about who would listen with joy and who would hear with sorrow.

## CONCLUSION

The political importance of ringing was not to last forever. From the 1820s onwards clergyman clamped down on access to steeples and asserted their rights to restrict ringing with renewed vigour. Clerical complaints suggest that by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century some parishioners were ignorant of the meanings of church bells or uninterested in learning them.[[184]](#footnote-184) By the 1830s and 1840s ballads associated bell ringing not with urban or rural politics but with the quietude of an older, rural, merry England. Others sardonically replaced the church bell with the factory bell.[[185]](#footnote-185) Campanological cultures were changing. The postman’s bell, which had accompanied letter carriers since 1705, was removed from service by the Post Office in 1846. London’s dustmen and muffin-boys lost their bells in the early 1840s. The town crier’s bell became a ceremonial sound that invoked images of an old England rather than serving a useful official purpose. Bells remained important to daily life well into the twentieth century, but the two decades between 1820 and 1840 were a point at which their uses and meanings significantly changed. The full story and character of this shift has yet to be revealed.[[186]](#footnote-186)

But a study of the long-eighteenth-century’s political culture of listening has rich methodological implications. Much has been made of the affective potentialities of objects in histories of material culture and emotions.[[187]](#footnote-187) This article has offered one possible way of integrating material objects into the theoretical frameworks deployed by historians of emotions. Bells had voices that both expressed and altered the emotional states of auditors. Bells were, in eighteenth-century culture, conceptualised in ways that match closely to the emotives described by William Reddy. Bells’ tongues were comprehended as an extension of both individuals and communities that both created and spread emotion in their reverberated peals. Bells give us one opportunity to examine objects that spoke, not only in a metaphorical or theoretical sense but in a way that was comprehended, discussed, and taken seriously by eighteenth-century subjects themselves. Understanding material objects as emotional prostheses that supplemented and intensified emotional states offers a potent way of thinking about material culture and emotions. This is especially true in the eighteenth century, when objects were often configured as ‘supplements of the human’.[[188]](#footnote-188)

But bells also demonstrate the fact that material agency could be a useful *rhetorical* tool. By displacing agency onto bells, the roles of ringers and their paymasters were hidden. This served to obscure the pecuniary politics behind peals. This is a useful insight into how historians of emotions and things might frame their approach to agency. Rather than only trying to understand the agency of objects, historians might better address how the *rhetoric* of agency and the anthropomorphising of things have been deployed to underscore individual or communal identities and reinforce or obscure the workings of power.

The agency granted to bells also intensified the sense that they were authentic expressions of communal feeling. It is possible that eighteenth century understandings of bell ringing drew on an analogy with the concept of virtual representation. Just as the representatives of a smaller number of towns and counties legislated for the whole nation, the ringing of bells paid for by the few were held to represent the broader view of a town or parish to itself. This analogy seems stronger when we consider that bells were frequently rung (with joyful approbation or, if in opposition, in sorrow or alarm) when members of parliament or local grandees visited or left localities. Ringing or silence presented a report on the feelings of a community towards local bigwigs or parliamentarians.[[189]](#footnote-189) As a popular inscription on bells had them say ‘Tho’ much against us may be said, To speak our minds we’re not afraid’.[[190]](#footnote-190) Bells, in their role as autonomous voices of communal feeling, could be invested with a form of masculine independence.[[191]](#footnote-191) This was a period when assessing the political feeling of English subjects was difficult but desirable. The roll of bells in representing the joy enabled by an underlying state of happiness was important in building the legitimacy of the ministry and monarch in a climate when authority was not as expansive or effectively exercised.[[192]](#footnote-192) Bells of joy were more than a theatrical and symbolic illusion used to pacify the minds of plebeians. They fashioned emotional atmospheres conducive to loyalty and reassured rulers and ruled that all was happy in ‘the ringing isle’.[[193]](#footnote-193) If early modern political thought emphasised the importance of controlling the passions, bell ringing put this into practice.[[194]](#footnote-194) Bells demonstrate the centrality of passions and their management to the politics of representation and legitimacy in eighteenth-century England.[[195]](#footnote-195)

Recent work on eighteenth-century political participation has cautioned against over-emphasising the accessibility of the English public sphere and stressed that the period saw a more mediated, vicarious, experience of politics and governance.[[196]](#footnote-196) The main interest of this work has been in who gets to speak. But when satirists responded to attacks on political freedoms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century they portrayed not only locked jaws but imprisoned ears.[[197]](#footnote-197) Viewing the public sphere through the medium of *listening*, as a form of sensory access, offers us a new and different vantage point.[[198]](#footnote-198) Bells were an address to the ears of a listening public that encouraged them to feel in particular ways. Debates in newspapers and fights in belfries demonstrated that listening and feeling were highly politicised acts. Attending to the loudest means of auditory communication in the eighteenth century, cannons excepted, gives a different spatiality to publicness, since the sound of bells could be heard across the parish, town, or city and into the countryside.

A plural understanding of a listening public helps to make sense of the early-seventeenth-century proverb ‘as the fool thinketh, so the bell clinketh’: the tendency for listeners to interpret bells in the way they saw fit rather than the way prescribed by ringers or their paymasters.[[199]](#footnote-199) That newspapers made claims about the joy that should be felt in ringing suggests that this could not always be taken for granted. The inversion and play produced in different uses of bells shows that their meanings were far from fixed and dependent on the individual’s place, calendrical knowledge, and political disposition. Where some might hear harmonious peals, others argued that they heard disorder. This should caution scholars working on the politics of sound to attend more closely to the politics of listening, rather than presupposing the efficacy of acoustic domination. That newspapers played a role in stabilising certain forms of political listening illustrates that the presumption of visual triumph over annoying noise in eighteenth-century culture and communication should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Finally, this article has also shown that listening and feeling were implicated in the politics of citizenship and national belonging. Linda Colley’s description of the emergence of a British national identity forged in opposition to a Franco-Catholic Other has received much criticism, including from scholars who have argued for a more inward-focussed and incorporative model of identity formation.[[200]](#footnote-200) The flexibility of bells as auditory signs and the politics of listening in which they were implicated suggest that we should be cautious in subscribing solely to either incorporating or othering forms of national identity. Certainly, bells rung in celebration of victories on the continent would have raised feelings of national pride in opposition to the superstitious campanological cosmology of Catholicism and, later, the widely reported melting down of bells by France’s revolutionary armies. But they also encouraged feelings of alarm, distaste, or fear on the behalf of those outside of the Church of England, which threatened a sense of national unity. Bells could remind listeners of their incorporation in the English (sometimes British) nation, but they were also a daily reminder for many subjects of their second-class place within it.

The conflicts over bell ringing traced in this article show how bells could be turned to oppositional uses and were themselves the focus of debate about appropriate forms of patriotic joy and sorrow. The affective atmospheres which bells generated could thus be as othering as they were incorporating. Supporters of the national-identity-through-war narrative frequently read celebrations on the surface, taking them as a simple expression of patriotism.[[201]](#footnote-201) This would be to take the rhetoric of newspapers at face value. Attending to the complicated meanings behind these celebrations and their emotional content offers historians a picture in which the relationship between Englishness, Britishness, and Otherness was frequently muddied by conflicting emotions and mis-hearings, intentional or otherwise.

This has contemporary implications. Whilst recent calls have been made for a radical politics of collective joy, the response to eighteenth-century bell-ringing should sound a cautious note against sentimentalising the emotional content of festive cultures past. The deployment of ringing in support of the Church of England and in mockery of its enemies illustrates the propensity for collective rejoicing to shade into a vindictive schadenfreude.[[202]](#footnote-202) This suggests that more work is needed on the emotional history of eighteenth-century politics. The binary of joy and sorrow in which bells were implicated was only one part of this history. Further work is needed to place bells within a far broader politics of the passions.

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2. *Observator in Dialogue*, April 26, 1681. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, February 20, 1826. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise & Stench in England, 1600-1770* (London, 2007); David Garrioch, ‘Sounds of the city: the soundscape of early modern European towns’, *Urban History* 30, no .1 (2003): 5-25; for a more nuanced approach, see Bruce Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (Chicago, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), 28, 37, 52, 132, 137; Paul Kleber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge, 1993), 35, 166, 169, 170,173, 183, 212; John Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances in England 1700-1832* (London, 2014), 129, 290; Robert Shoemaker, *The London Mob* (London, 2004), 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
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7. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1992), 371. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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57. Gatty*, The Bell,* 87-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
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66. William Cobbett, *Rural Rides* (London, 1830), 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
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70. *London Gazette*, May 31 - June 4, 1683; *London Evening Post*, September 12 - September 14, 1765. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. *Morning Post and Gazetteer*, January 14, 1800. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. *West Briton*, January 25, 1828. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
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80. *London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post*, December 31, 1760; *General Evening Post*, February 5-8, 1780; *London Evening Post*, August 18-21, 1750. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. *Maidstone Journal*, January 2, 1827. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. *Wakefield and Halifax Journal*, December 13, 1816; *Bury and Norwich Post*, June 28, 1826; *Bath Chronicle*, December 31, 1795; *Kentish Gazette*, January 29, 1802. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. *Northampton Mercury*, 17 August 1793. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
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88. J. Noble and J. Clark, *A Sketch of the Boston Election* (Boston, 1830), ix, xii, xvi, xvii; Frank O’Gorman, ‘Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meanings of Elections in England 1780-1860’, *Past and Present,* 135 (1992), 86, 95; *London Evening Post*, May 24-27, 1735; *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, April 3, 1780. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. *Post Boy*, August 19-22, 1710; *St. James's Chronicle*, March 7-9, 1775; *The Morning Post*, March 17, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Post Boy*, February 6-8, 1701. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. *St. James's Chronicle*, February 1-3, 1780; *General Evening Post*, September 20-23, 1735; *London Evening Post*, January 19-22, 1740; *Public Advertiser*, January 10, 1770. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, May 10, 1740; *The Morning Post*, July 13, 1815; *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser*, July 13, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, August 27, 1720; *Daily Journal*, October 7, 1730; *London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post*, December 31, 1760; *London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post*, April 27-29, 1775; *The Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, June 1, 1805. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. *Daily Journal,* March 3, 1725; *London Evening Post*, November 22-25, 1735; *General Evening Post*, November 22-24, 1750; *Public Ledger or The Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence*, March 31, 1760; *General Evening Post*, February 12-15, 1785; *The Examiner,* August 5, 1810. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. *Owen's Weekly Chronicle and Westminster Journal*, June 23-30, 1770; *Lincoln, Rutland, and Stamford Mercury*, June 10, 1803; *Norfolk Chronicle*, August 21, 1813. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. *Daily Gazetteer*, Wednesday, July 30, 1735. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. *The Morning Chronicle*, March 13, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. *Gloucester Journal*, June 9, 1817. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Matthew McCormack, ‘Rethinking ‘Loyalty’ in Eighteenth‐Century Britain’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (2012): 407-421. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. *Flying Post or The Post Master*, June 11-14, 1715; change ringing failed to take hold in Scotland until later in the eighteenth century, partly due to the dimmer view taken of bells by the Kirk. Instead the ‘musick bells’ were chimed; *General Evening Post,* November 9-12, 1745. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. 5th Bell of St Mary Islington, 1808, see John Nelson, *The History, Topography, and Antiquities of the Parish of St Mary Islington* (London, 1811), 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. For examples see, William Dodd, *An account of the rise, progress, and present state of the Magdalen Charity* (London, 1763), 99; Benjamin Victor, *Original letters, dramatic pieces, and poems,* vol. 1 (London, 1776), 53; William Windham, *A plan of discipline, composed for the use of the militia of the county of Norfolk* (London, 1759), vii; *The life and political writings of John Wilkes* (Birmingham, 1769), 339. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. This builds on Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh, 2014), 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. They are therefore about more than the agreed ways of feeling suggested by Rosenwein’s, *Emotional Communities*. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. *Observator*, May 23-26, 1705; *Observator,* June 6-9, 1705. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. *London Evening Post*, April 24-26, 1770; On the significance of 45 more generally see, John Brewer, 'The Number 45: A Wilkite Political Symbol', in *England's Rise to Greatness, 1660-1763,* ed. Stephen B. Baxter (London 1983), 349-375; for further examples of Wilkesite ringing see *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty*, May 5-8, 1770; *Public Advertiser*, May 2, 1770; *London Evening Post*, April 26-28, 1770. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. *General Evening Post*, February 10-13, 1770; for similar see *London Evening Post*, March 20-22, 1770. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. *Independent Chronicle*, April 27-30, 1770; *Public Advertiser*, May 2, 1770; *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty*, April 21-24, 1770; *London Evening Post*, April 21-24, 1770; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, March 18, 1769. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. *The Bury and Norwich Post*, November 22, 1820; *Liverpool Mercury*, December 1, 1820; *Liverpool Mercury*, December 1, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. *The York Herald, and General Advertiser*, November 25, 1820; *The Morning Chronicle*, December 11, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. *The Bristol Mercury*, November 27, 1820; *The Examiner*, December 10, 1820; *The Bristol Mercury*, December 23, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. William Henry Pinnock, *The Law and Uses of the Church and Clergy* (Cambridge, 1855), 500-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. John Ambrose Williams, *Trial of John Ambrose Williams, for a Libel on the Clergy* (Durham, 1823), 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. *Trial of John Ambrose Williams,* 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. This draws on Roger Chartier, ‘Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France’, in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Steven Kaplan (Berlin, 1984), 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Lacey, *Listening,* 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. *Flying Post or The Post Master*, October 28-31, 1699. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. *Observator*, February 7-10, 1705. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. *Observator,* August 23, 1704. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. T. B. Howell, *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason,* vol. 17 (London, 1813), 765-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Thomas Hearne’s Diaries, Rawlinson MS 169, 71-7, Bodleian Library; Private Accounts of Thomas Hearne, Rawlinson MS 186a, 10-13, Bodleian Library. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Jonathan Oates, ‘The Rise and Fall of Jacobitism in Oxford’, *Oxoniensia,* 68 (2003), 94, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Listening was a tactic in the sense described by Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. Steven Rendall(London, 1984), 96; this is contrast to the more Durkheimian dominance described by Birdsall, *Nazi Soundscapes,* 62, 191fn100. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. *The Post Master*, June 18-21, 1715; *Norwich Gazette or Loyal Packet*, July 13, 1717; John Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances in England 1700-1832* (London, 2014), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. *Flying Post or The Post Master*, June 18-21, 1715; *Flying Post or The Post Master*, June 28-30, 1715; *Flying Post or The Post Master*, July 2-5, 1715; *Flying Post or The Post Master*, July 9-12, 1715; *Flying Post or The Post Master*, July 12-14, 1715. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origins of the Black Act* (London, 1975), 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. *Daily Advertiser*, June 14, 1745. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. ‘James Collier to John Collier, 18th June 1745’, SAY 1867, East Sussex Record Office. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. *Flying Post or The Post Master*, September 29 – October 1, 1715. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. *London Evening Post*, Thursday, August 14, 1755; *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty*, April 14-17, 1770; *General Evening Post*, August 21-23, 1770; *York Courant*, August 21, 1770. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. 'Achievements of Admiral Hawke', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 30 (1760), 52-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, June 15, 1785; *Whitehall Evening Post*, June 23-25, 1785; *General Advertiser*, July 2, 1785; *Whitehall Evening Post*, July 5-7, 1785; *Whitehall Evening Post*, July 9-12, 1785; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, August 2, 1785. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. *The Scots magazine*, 25 (1763), 293. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Jeffereyes Hamett O'Neale, ‘An exact representation of a certain wise body without a head in the East going to pay a visit to a certain great body in the West’, London, 1763, etching on paper, no. 31512i, Wellcome Library, [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. *London Chronicle,* May 12, 1763; *Public Advertiser*, May 14, 1763; *London Chronicle*, May 14, 1763; *Gazeteer and London Daily Advertiser*, May 14, 1763. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. *General Evening Post*, November 3, 1770. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, May 12, 1763. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. *London Evening Post*, October 11-14, 1740; *St James' Evening Post*, March 5, 1728; *Norwich Gazette*, November 19, 1743. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. *London Evening Post*, 6th June 1767. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. For another example in Preston see, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, October 4, 1769. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. *Brighton Gazette*, May 5, 1831. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. *Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, January 4th, 1772; *The mottos upon the eight bells for St. John's Church, Manchester* (London, 1768); The 5th bell at Rye in 1775, see William Holloway, *The History and Antiquities of the Ancient Town and Port of Rye* (London, 1847), 513. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
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144. *St James Evening Post*, March 4, 1732. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
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148. *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, February 11, 1721. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. *The Dissenters Conciencious Objections Against the Episcopal Church* (London, 1705), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. T. Drummond, *Letters to a young dissenter on the general principles of nonconformity* (London, 1812), 27-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Potkay, *The Story*, 89-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. W. H. Gatty, ‘A sketch of the history of the parish of St. Mary-in-Arden, and the Township of Marker Harborough’, *Transactions of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society,* 3 (1874), 167-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. ‘Answers to enquiries from Denton concerning nonconformists and church bells, 1706’, DN/MSC 2/19, Norfolk Record Office; ‘Letter from John Elliott, Minister of Randwick, Gloucestershire, May 30th 1826’, P263/IN/4/2, Gloucestershire Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
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155. ‘Religious Intelligence’, *The Congregational magazine*, 1 (1825), 330-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
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157. 31 Geo III C.32.6.9 [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Margaret M. Turnham, *Catholic Faith and Practice in England, 1779-1992* (Woodbridge, 2015), 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
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160. *Flying Post or The Post Master*, July 12-14, 1715. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Rev. L. Tyerman (ed.), *The Life of the Rev George Whitefield,* vol 2. (London, 1877), 82, 73, 110, 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. For similar see, *An Account of the Infancy, Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke* (London, 1833), 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Phyllis Mack, ‘The Senses in Religion: Listening to God in the Eighteenth Century’, in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Anne C Villa (London, 2016), 94-7; David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (London, 1984), 93; *Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Entwistle* (Bristol, 1846), 133, 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
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173. *General Evening Post*, June 8-10, 1780; *London Chronicle*, July 4-6, 1780. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
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175. *Derby Mercury*, March 18, 1735-6; for similar see, *World*, March 10, 1790. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. A *Letter to the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, Esq., from a Dissenting Country Attorney* (Birmingham, 1791), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. ‘Letter from Mary Burrough, Carleton Hall, Drigg, Cumberland to John Frewen’, 27th June 1807, FRE/1757, East Sussex Record Office. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. *The Morning Post*, May 26, 1825; *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser*, May 26, 1825; *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, May 23, 1825; *The Ipswich Journal*, May 21, 1825; *Coventry Herald*, May 20, 1825. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. *The Morning Chronicle*, May 26, 1825. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. *The Morning Chronicle*, May 27, 1825. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. *Liverpool Mercury,* December 2, 1825. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. *Leeds Mercury*, August 15, 1829. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. *The Derby Mercury*, November 10, 1830; *The Standard*, November 6, 1833; *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, November 7, 1833; *Liverpool Mercury*. November 8, 1833; *The York Herald, and General Advertiser*, November 12, 1842; *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, November 9, 1844; *The Morning Post*, November 7, 1849; *The Preston Guardian*, November 9, 1850; ‘Saffron Walden, Bell Ringer’s bills, 1821-1848’, D/B 2/PAR13/37, Essex Record Office. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. *Letter to the inhabitants of Sheffield* (Sheffield, 1798), 4, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. See the much reprinted ‘The Merry Bells of England’, London, 1828, John Johnson Collection, Harding B 16 (148b), Bodleian Library, Oxford; ‘The Factory Bells of England’, Leeds, 1855, John Johnson Collection, Harding B 16(83b), Bodleian Library, Oxford. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
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