

All the Bells heralds the start of London Olympics 2012



This morning, people across the UK ushered in the 2012 Olympic Games with a fanfare almost entirely made up of bells.

The project, descriptively entitled *All the bells in a country rung as quickly and loudly as possible for three minutes*, was conceived by Turner Prize winning artist Martin Creed, and the general instruction was being followed all over the UK.

Creed grew up in the West of Scotland, and his solo exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery during the 2010 Edinburgh Art Festival is still cited as one of the gallery's most successful. Creed was also commissioned to design and develop the Scotsman Steps regeneration, funded through the Art Festival and the Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund. The work was unveiled in 2011. Each step on the staircase is covered in different marble gathered together from the farthest flung corners of the globe, giving the corridor a stately ambience and cheerfully striped floor.

As one would expect from such a name, *All the Bells...* invited people to ring any and every bell they could to kick off the Games celebrations. Bells were rung across the UK, and in regions as far flung as South Africa and even Antarctica. In the UK, the reverberations were heard in churches, schools, theatres and neighbourhoods as well as The Scottish Parliament, Welsh National Assembly, and Parliament of Northern Ireland. In London, even the distinctive tones of Big Ben tolled out. This is reportedly the first time it has been rung outwith its normal schedule since the death of King George VI in 1952.

Fittingly, Edinburgh's citizens gathered at Creed's Scotsman

Steps to ring in the Games. Some 200 people were in attendance. Residents gathered together this morning, some of them arriving at 7am to stake their claim to certain positions. By around 8, it was shoulder to shoulder up most of the 104 stairs. The clamour felt similar to the good natured jostling and shuffle of a large family wedding portrait.

And at 8:12am precisely, everyone began to ring with gusto. Turn the volume up but beware it is really loud!!

[listen to 'All the bells Edinburgh' on Audiobook](#)

A tumbling mass of residents of all ages took part. Babes in arms jangled their rattles while their ears were stuffed with cotton wool, grannies brought grandchildren, and whole families made the jaunt into the city centre with bells of all shapes and sizes.

There were wind chimes and tambourines, trinkets and heirlooms. One woman had borrowed the last call bell from her local pub at the 11th hour. A secondary school pupil had managed to unearth a tiny neck-bell from one of last Christmas' Lindt chocolate reindeer. It was rather like a Dr Seuss extravaganza, with bells of all shapes and sizes ringing out against the clear sky.

A tumultuous mix of jubilant noise burst on the bright July morning, and no matter how groggy they were on arrival, most folk left breathless and wide awake after three minutes of bell ringing. The noise caused such a commotion, some of the staff of the Scotsman Hotel (positioned at the top of the steps) leaned over the railings to watch bemusedly and take pictures on their phone.

At the end, the smiling crowd let out a raucous cheer and then retired to the Fruitmarket Gallery for complimentary coffee and pastries.

And at 20:12 tonight, exactly twelve hours after All the

Bells... commenced, the Olympic Games are due to officially start; beginning with Oscar-winning filmmaker Danny Boyle's Opening Ceremonies.