



## **Sleigh Bells - 1996.043.001**

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**In the spirit of the holidays, The Museum on Tower Hill brings you sleigh bells. These sleigh bells would have been strapped to a horse drawn carriage in order to signal its presence as it ventured down the winter roads. The leather strap is adorned with 15 globular brass bells and would have included a strap to secure the assembly to a horse's back.**

**Our earliest knowledge of bells worn by horses' dates back to Ancient Rome. During this time, they were used for both practical and decorative purposes. The bells would not only signal the presence of an approaching horse drawn vehicle but were also thought to bring good luck, ward off evil and act as a symbol of wealth and status. With their increased use over time, their appeal grew and sleigh bells began to be used for recreation, adorning horses participating in sleigh races or those pulling carriages for people's enjoyment in the winter months.**

**The chiming bells quickly became a favourable sound, and due to their use within winter, became a symbol that has been increasingly tied to Christmas and the holiday season. This connection has further been developed through the numerous Christmas songs that incorporate ringing sleigh bells, such as the well-known song "Jingle Bells."**