

RINGERS TO HAVE STAND AT COUNTY SHOW MAY 2010

After last year's success the Devon Churches have asked the Ringers' Council if they would like to join them on their stand for May 2010. The display of ringing in 2009 attracted crowds to the Churches stand. If you do wish to take part or have any queries please contact Ian Avery who has been asked to co-ordinate the event again. The Show is hard work but there is something for everyone to enjoy. There are plenty of farm animals, fantastic local food and drink, great entertainment all day long. Dates are 20, 21 & 22 May 2010.

The 2009 Show will be a tough act to follow. Over 91,000 people attended with plenty of children arriving on Saturday, where they all had free entry.

In 2009 the Bellringers rang each morning to announce the 9 am service and gave ringing demonstrations throughout the day. Visitors were able to watch and learn about bellringing in Devon and talk about the development and heritage of bell ringing. This was a marvellous opportunity for people to discover the fascinating history and unique music of this ancient British art.

SOUTH DEVON STEEPLEKEEPER'S DAY

In October 2008 thirteen steeplekeepers joined James Clarke for a few hours at Chittlehampton, to discuss how best to look after towers and bells. Following this, James, the Diocesan Bell Adviser, ran a further and very informative tower maintenance day at Ipplepen and Ashburton on 13 June 2009. The day started at Ipplepen at 10.30 with coffee, a handout and a talk. The group of eight participants followed a checklist running through items of safety and then of maintenance for a timber frame and for a steel frame. Detailed information was given about the bells, the headstocks, bearings, wheels etc. followed by an inspection of the iron frame. The group met again at Ashburton after stopping for lunch. There was an inspection of the wooden frame and floors. This very useful meeting finished a little later than planned due to the number of questions. The group felt far more knowledgeable and James was thanked for giving up so much time and for travelling from North Devon. James has promised further maintenance days and if you are interested in joining him, please do not hesitate to contact him direct. No particular venue has yet been decided for 2010 and James has stated that he is happy to run the event in the north or south again, if there is demand.

THE DENMISCH SIMULATED CAMPANILE TO BE AN EIGHT

In the home of Mischa Thompson, whose late husband Denis was responsible for installing, is the campanile that has already been 'quartered' five times. Two more wheels are to be added to make a ring of eight. 32 groups, and not all from Devon, have visited the Okehampton home to try out the simulated campanile similar to the six 'bell' Saxilby Simulator at the last Ringing Roadshow however Mischa's set is installed in a garage. The present arrangement is six wheels with 1 cwt weights hung in the loft and the ropes falling through to make a nice circle. An Abel computer programme provides the sound, each wheel having a sensor, and the installation handles as a ring of 3 cwt rather than a mini-ring. Groups have found them easy to ring with fun on the range of notes at the click of a mouse. Having the Abel technology also means an individual 'bell' can be rung to any method with the computer providing other bell sounds, for any number of bells. Mischa is keen to have more visitors to her simulator and to try the eight out when installed. Please contact Mischa by e-mail mischa@mdthompson.me.uk

CLIMATE CHANGE

Paul Bodenham, a ringer and founder member of Operation Noah, the British campaign for churches on climate change stated that, bells have been used throughout history to sound the alarm. Climate change is the biggest threat we face today – the pace of warming we are seeing today because of human activity is unprecedented in history. He had asked ringers to play the same part again on 13 December 2009, mid-way through the summit.'

FROM CCCBR WEBSITE

Virtual Belfry

What it runs on

PCs running ME, 2000, XP, Vista. (More details about system requirements can be found on the Virtual Belfry website.

What it does

Virtual Belfry features a ring of eight bells viewed from above and animated using hundreds of photographs, with an alternative rope view featuring sallies that move up and down with smooth graphics and realistic motion linked directly to the physics of the swinging bells. The belfry view is great for open days and other similar occasions, or simply for enjoying at home, watching the bells ringing from a rarely-experienced perspective while listening to excellent striking. The rope view is designed for method and ropesight practice. Several innovative aids have been developed for helping develop ropesight, including a game for testing your ability to spot the next rope (you score points by pointing your mouse at the correct rope before it is highlighted). The bells will ring any method, composition or call change sequence you choose (from the program's built-in lists, or by entering your own). You can also call touches or call changes manually. Compositions are stored in formats that closely match their normal written forms so it is easy to add more to the list. Virtual Belfry supports half-lead calls and splicing, both manually and within compositions, with ease. You can ring any combination of bells (including just one); change the speed of the ringing; watch a graphical display of place notation (hard to explain - see the website for more on this one); enjoy the sound of half-muffled ringing and whole-pull changes; fire the bells and more.

What it costs

£35, or AUD\$80 if purchased within Australia.

Where to get it and/or more information

The program can be purchased via the Virtual Belfry website, www.belfryware.com. The normal payment method is with a credit card, following PayPal links on the site. Delivery is by CD through the post. Full details about the program are also available on the website.

FROM THE BBC WEBSITE

Kenton bell ringers had their open day listed under "The Guide" on the BBC Devon Website and immediately got new recruits. The article gave notice of the open day held on 28 November.

The current set of bells at All Saints in Kenton have rung out for 262 years and a recent refurbishment should ensure they chime for another 262. Whether there will be any bellringers left to ring them, however, is another matter. There aren't enough ringers in the area to go around, which means the teams of Kenton and Exminster band together. On one Sunday they'll ring at Kenton and the next at Exminster. They also ring the bells at Powderham, too. Mike Adams has been bellringing for 55 years and is tower captain at Grade I listed All Saints Church, which dates back to the 1370s. There are 44 steps to the ringing room at All Saints. He was just 11-years-old when he started and said he had little choice in the matter really: "My father was a bellringer, my maternal grandfather was a bellringer and his father was a bellringer too," said Mike. "My brother Colin is a ringer at Exminster. So you could say it's in the blood." Mike teaches bellringing and only recently trained up four more people - but more are needed to learn the ropes. On Saturday 28 November 2009, Kenton is holding a bell tower open day from 10am to noon for people to try it out. "There are six bells at Kenton and eight at Exminster," said Mike. "We don't have enough regular ringers to do both so we have to alternate. Powderham doesn't have a ringing team so we ring the bells there as well. "I have taught dozens of people in my career - the youngest was 10 and the oldest was in their 70s, and I've taught both men and women. So there's no barrier." The current bells at Kenton were cast in 1747 by Thomas Bilbie. In 2000, the bells were sent away for retuning at a cost of £24,000 and are now as good as new. All Saints Church dates back over 630 years. The ringing room is halfway up the bell tower - 44 steps up, to be precise. "I'm 66 and have been going up there since I was 11 and it hasn't done me any harm," said Mike. "You don't have to be superfit or strong." The Kenton ringers are CRB checked (Criminal Records Bureau) so are able to work with children, who are needed for the future of bellringing. "We don't have any real youngsters at the moment," said Mike. "I would encourage them to come along with their parents. "We wouldn't turn anyone away. It's difficult to teach more than two or three at a time but if 10 turn up, we'll give it a go. "I suppose it's a bit like fishing really - you'll either be hooked or it won't be for you at all." Mike believes village life just wouldn't be the same if the bells fell silent: "For over 250 years, church bells have been a central feature of village life. "They ring for joyful and sad occasions and mark significant local and national events. "England would be poorer without the sound of church bells."

St George's Day

This is a letter addressed to the Secretary by **Libby Alexander**, England's Day Ltd

Dear Secretary,

Earlier this year I was involved with a project to promote the ringing of a peal of bells from our churches on St. George's Day, the 23rd April, at midday and contacted all the Bishops. An article appeared in The Mail and The Mail on Sunday covering this letter. Only a handful were positive from the outset amongst whom, most importantly, was The Archbishop of York who wrote to me personally endorsing the project.

As a result of this involvement I had a most encouraging meeting last Friday with Robert Lewis, Editor of The Ringing World, who is very much behind the project. You may recall his Editorial in the April edition which referred to my involvement in the National Press.

I put to him my aim of knitting the entire country together in this wonderful act of a peal to ring out midday on the 23rd April. We both felt that the time was ripe for an acknowledgement of a national celebration. I discussed with him a list of cities that I thought appropriate to start the idea rolling. The purpose was to choose churches that were in a commanding position within the cities and so have maximum impact on midday shoppers etc. Obviously this would be most of the Cathedrals but those that did not, then it would be best to be as near a shopping hub as possible.

I am very aware that all this effort is performed by volunteers some of whom already ring out for St. George's Day. It is because of this that the other aim is to encourage the public to participate by learning more of your wonderful skills of Campanology, encourage them to come and watch, and perhaps inspire them to join you.

A way of creating an even larger audience could well be a project to create a competition to compose a peal especially for St. George's Day. This would be a perfect item to encourage the national media to cover all your excellent work and wondered whether you might place this additional request before your committee.

I do so hope you are in agreement with all of the above and look forward to hearing from you. My Best Regards.

Scilly Bells

Bell ringing has had more prominence in "An Island Parish". The first quarter rung on the bells of St Mary's, Isle of Scilly was on 25 October 2009. To see an informative web site and pictures of the bells and further information go to: <http://scillybells.co.uk/>

Health & Safety in Bell Towers: A Guide to Good Practice

The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has published several pamphlets on work in bell towers. More action is being taken locally with a course in Fire Safety in Towers, a mini-seminar. This was a guide to fire safety awareness in towers and how to carry out a fire risk assessment.

The event held on Saturday 5th December 2009 at Silverton Church from 10:45 to 12:45 was led by Chris Southcombe, a former fire officer and now fire risk assessor with Crammer Safety. Chris has acted as a consultant to the Diocese on several safety matters. The seminar aimed at Tower Captains, their deputies and steeplekeepers or anyone who may be required to carry out a fire risk assessment in their tower to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Under this all churches must carry out a fire risk assessment exercise and take any "reasonable and practical" measures that may be necessary.

For more information about health and safety visit www.cccbr.org.uk.

Ringing Holidays

A group of Devon Change Ringers have an annual bell ringing holiday by coach and in 2010 they will be going to Bedford. The Ringkly Ringers coach holiday will be 5th to 9th July (Monday to Friday) staying at the Barnes Hotel, Bedford. Ringing will take place every day and this includes going up and coming back down. The cost will be £240 per person sharing or £264 single occupancy. For more information or to pay a deposit please contact John Staddon.

A further holiday is likely to be available later in 2010. This will replace Arthur and Jean Fidler's Autumn Tour for Mid Devon Ringers that was traditionally held in October and has run for 36 years. Arthur and Jean now wish to stand down as organisers however I believe they will be eager to join in, health permitting.

Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund

The following grants have been agreed:

Stoodleigh	£5,000
Kilmington	£850
Sheepstor	£2,800
Dodbrooke	£3,200
Meavy	£280

Approaches for assistance have been received from Hawkchurch, Brentor and Coffinswell, though no formal grant applications have been received.

Assuming that all of the agreed grants are taken up, the Fund will be over committed by **£443**.

Devon Ringers' Carol Service

The carol service this year will be held at Buckfast Abbey 12 December at 3pm along with the Ockment Valley and Exeter Cathedral Handbell Ringers. There will be open ringing from 1.30pm and after the service.

President of the Association

At the Association AGM in November John Kelly BEM succeeded John Conibear as President, a role that lasts until the next AGM. John started ringing in 1948 at Moretonhampstead and moved to Paignton in 1952 and has been ringing there ever since. He was vice captain in 1957 and has been captain of the Paignton bell ringers since 1958. John, also the leader of the hand bell team since 1956 where the team rings hand bells in hotels, pubs and clubs over the Christmas period is responsible for collecting over £60,000 for Dame Hannah Rogers Trust over those years as well as for other charities. John Kelly was awarded the British Empire Medal on 31 December 1990 due to his dedicated and loyal services and was highly commended for the prestigious Beacon Prize in 2003 for his philanthropic endeavours.

John, on his 72nd birthday, a few years ago, invited ringers from all over Devon to ring at various churches using the Paignton and Dartmouth Steam Railway train, ferry and bus service tickets had been kindly donated by Barry Cogar, Director General Manager of the Steam Railway to John Kelly as a birthday gift and for his loyal service to the railway for 40 years. The ringers, in thanks for this kind gesture, made donations to Dame Hannah Rogers Trust, Ivybridge, a school that deals with severely handicapped children.

ASSOCIATION COMPETITIONS FOR 2010

Novice	TBA	13 March
8 Bell	Great Torrington	24 April
6 Bell	Qual South Slapton	8 May
6 Bell	Qual North Bow	8 May
Minor Final	Ilington	22 May
Major Final	Littleham	12 June

DEVON CHURCH BELL RESTORATION FUND

The Association, at the AGM, elected to pay £4,200 to the DCBRF. This is an increase from previous years and is due to the extra money raised through the raffle.

OFFICERS OF DEVON ASSOCIATION OF RINGERS

President – John Kelly BEM
Chairman – Ryan Trout
Secretary – Jereme Dart
Assistant Secretary (N) Margaret White
Assistant Secretary (S) James Kerslake
Treasurer – John Barnes

West Buckland

Margaret White reports that on Friday August 7th six members of the Devon Association were proud to ring a muffled peal at West Buckland Parish Church at the full Military Funeral Service for Christopher King, a young 20 year old soldier who was killed by an explosive device on July 22nd while serving in Afghanistan with the 1st Battalion Cold Stream Guards. We rang a peal of sixty on thirds before and after the service.

Treble Margaret White (Mortehoe)
2nd Peter Crook (West Buckland)
3rd Alfie Stevens (Bishops Tawton)
4th Fred White (Mortehoe)
5th Colin Dudley (Marwood) and
Tenor Rupert Hartley (West Buckland)

The space in the church was limited but we were lucky enough to have seats in the ringing chamber where we took part in this very moving service. Outside the church was a large crowd who had come to pay their last respects to Christopher who had grown up in West Buckland.

For more information of Christopher see:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/MilitaryOperations/GuardsmanChristopherKingKilledInAfghanistan.htm>

Are you in touch with your community?

From the articles in this edition we hear that bell ringing is a sound to alert the community as to a certain event. Many bell ringers join in with the local community and ring the bells to announce the local or national events. One such tower is Bampton where the bells will ring to call the people to the town centre for a community Christmas event. Most ringers will recognise that they do not wait to be asked but take the initiative to promote community events. It is important to recruit ringers from within the local community so that they can hear about events and hopefully support them. It may happen that with ringing for so many events, other people who hear the bells will be encouraged to take up ringing and be able to play their part in ringing for the local community.

Many towers have to borrow ringers to ring for events and it is better for more ringers to come from the local community. Recruitment of new ringers is the responsibility of us all and hopefully mentioned often. It is wonderful to hear that churches across the country are ringing for National events. The latest was ringing on Wednesday 11 November for Remembrance Day. Our local team was able to ring half muffled at 11:02 whilst members of the Royal British Legion were gathered around the War Memorial. It was a moving experience. *Michael Webster.*

Interchange is published as part of both Guild and Association newsletters. Any opinions expressed in Interchange do not necessarily represent those of the Guild, the Association or the Devon Ringer's Council. Please send items for the next issue to Roger King 215 Exeter Road, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 3DZ.

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