



Newsletter 130 June 2023

Ringling for the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla



Photo courtesy Chris Jackson

The Coronation took place on Saturday May 6, with the service at Westminster Abbey starting at 11:00. This gave plenty of opportunity for ringing. Some elected to ring before the service, so that they could follow the service on television afterwards, others rang immediately after the service, or later in the afternoon. There were more opportunities on the Sunday and Monday (which was declared a Bank Holiday) and even in the days following. Here are a few comments, pictures and ringing details from around the county. Unfortunately lack of space makes it impossible to include all the details of the ringing, for which I apologise.

Sidmouth

On Saturday afternoon 6 May Sidmouth ringers arrived in the tower which had been previously decorated with bunting and union flags to ring to mark the Coronation of King Charles III.

Along with the regular ringers were five of our six new recruits, very excited and maybe a bit apprehensive as they were to join us in ringing rounds – two of them had briefly rung rounds the previous week and three had never rung rounds. We rang several rounds to give them all a go, then call changes followed by Stedman Doubles for the other Sidmouth ringers.

To celebrate this milestone and of course to mark the Coronation of a new King we had to crack open a couple of bottles of fizz and cut a Coronation cake!!



Some of the Sidmouth ringers who rang on May 6

Anne Bailey



'New' ringers who rang for the King: Richard, Sarah, Jonathan, Cheryl and Mary

Axminster



The Axminster band did sterling work for the King and his Coronation over the weekend with two excellent 10-bell performances here as well as our ringers supporting other towers across East Devon.

Anne Bailey

Kilmington

After enjoying the Coronation service of King Charles III and Queen Camilla (on television!) most of our band, with some ringers from neighbouring towers, met in the afternoon to ring out in celebration of the historic event that had just taken place. There were ten of us in total and everyone took their turn at making a joyful sound. Roger Lovegrove also rang but left just before the photograph was taken.



The Kilmington band

Celia Dunsford

Rung for two Coronations

The number of bands that had members ringing for their second Coronation is probably few, but Hemyock is proud to be one of them.

Les Stevens, who is approaching his 91st birthday shared his earlier experience with the rest of the Hemyock band where he now rings. He was for many years tower captain at Feniton.

Brian Samuels

Combe Raleigh Coronation Chime

On the Sunday after the Coronation, when the village had its celebratory tea, the Combe Raleigh Ringers invited people in to chime a bell, 'Ring for the King'. Nineteen took up the offer, or challenge. They ranged in age from how shall I describe them? Perhaps the polite answer is from the more mature down to pre-schoolers. The older ones came up to see what happens in the ringing chamber and the younger element were mostly interested in making a noise on the largest and loudest musical instruments they are ever likely to meet.

Even with the boxes that are used to stand on by shorter ringers the youngest could not reach the sally. The problem was overcome by Dad holding him up while he held the sally and Lisa held the rope and actually made the bell chime. The moment the bell struck, his face lit up like the sun emerging from behind a cloud and he could not have been happier. In a few years we hope he will remember the excitement of that moment and come back to learn the art and become a proficient ringer.

Some of the more mature visitors quickly grasped the technique following Lisa's tuition while others failed entirely. Actually we wouldn't let that happen and with suitable prompts from Trevor they were able to chime a bell so that they could now claim, 'I rang for the King'.

This is the second time we have offered this and it does help with recruitment. The last time for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee we gained two new ringers. This time we gained another learner. Not actually because she came up to chime a bell, but over tea, having asked what the chimes were for decided she would try to learn. Progress I understand is going well. This is a simple thing to set up and can be a lot of fun, the visitors like it and our experience shows it as a good recruitment aid.

Trevor Hitchcock

Troyte Ringing Centre

Members of the Troyte Ringing Centre were busy over the first weekend in May with special ringing for the Coronation of King Charles III. At Bampton, prior to the service held in Westminster Abbey on the morning of Saturday 6, eight of the Bampton ringers rang touches of call changes and Plain Bob Doubles. Among the ringers was Simon Bartlett, Bampton's



Ringling at Bampton

Town Crier, who joined the ringing after making his Coronation proclamation in the town. Details of the ringing are on BellBoard: <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1619587>

In the afternoon the two medieval bells dating from about 1300 at Petton church were swing-chimed and in the evening general ringing (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1619398>) and also an extent of 720 changes of Plain Bob Minor was rung at Huntsham (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1619417>). Further ringing took place in the afternoon at Bampton for a wedding being held the same day as the Coronation (<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1619387>).



Ringling at Huntsham

In addition to the activities on Coronation Day itself several members joined in ringing events both before and after the event. Peals were rung at Huntsham on Thursday 4 May (Rutland Surprise Major) and the Thursday following (New Cambridge Surprise Major). Further afield, Mike Hatchett rang a peal of Cambridge Surprise Royal at Shepton Beauchamp on Coronation Eve, thereby ringing peals on Coronation Eve 1953 for Queen Elizabeth II and on Coronation Eve 2023 for King Charles III. He also rang in two 6-bell peals in Wiltshire in the weeks before and after the Coronation. Other members were involved in ringing a quarter peal in Tiverton on the Sunday and ringing in the villages around Tiverton – Cruwys Morchard, Upton Pyne and Witheridge - on the Monday Bank Holiday.

Les Boyce, TRC Chairman

Uffculme



On the morning of Coronation Day our ringing at Uffculme included rounds, call changes and our version of the 'Coronation March' as suggested by the Association of Ringing Teachers.

We had handbells available in the church to help explain the call change sequences to our non-ringing visitors and our youngest ringer was able to ring creditable rounds on eight for the first time, watched by her family.

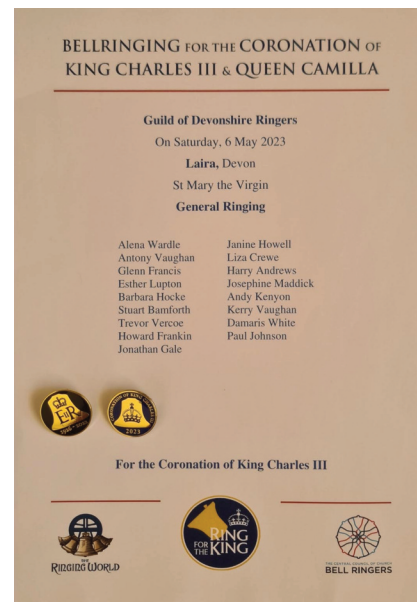
This was the finale to a busy time which had been prompted by a contact from a BBC journalist received via the Guild Publicity Officer, Nicola Jones. After much toing and froing and messaging via our tower WhatsApp group, we provided a short recording of us practising a Mexican Wave (part of the 'Coronation March') along with some answers to questions suggested by the journalist. If you were listening to BBC Radio Devon at around 8.15am on the morning of the Coronation you may have heard the end result!

John Martin

South West Branch

Laira

Laira has not got its own band, but a lot of ringers turned up to ring for the Coronation.



The old and the new: commemorative badges for Queen Elizabeth II's funeral and the Coronation of Charles III on a certificate for Laira, Plymouth.



Plymouth, Laira

Sampford Spiney

Seven ringers, six of whom are Guild members, rang on the moors at Sampford Spiney.



Sampford Spiney

Plympton St Mary

On Saturday we rang changes on both eight and six bells. Later two of our ringers went to ring 'toy' handbells at Longbrook care home to allow the residents to participate.



Plympton care home

In the church we rang both rounds and call changes, including coronation and orb and sceptre. This was a first for Bel (our 'Ring for the King' learner), ringing changes on eight and named call changes on six. One of our ringers composed, called and rang 'Royal Family', a piece featuring Kings, Queens, Princes and Princesses. This was also the first ring in years for Mike, a lapsed ringer. The band ranged in age from teens through to 70's.



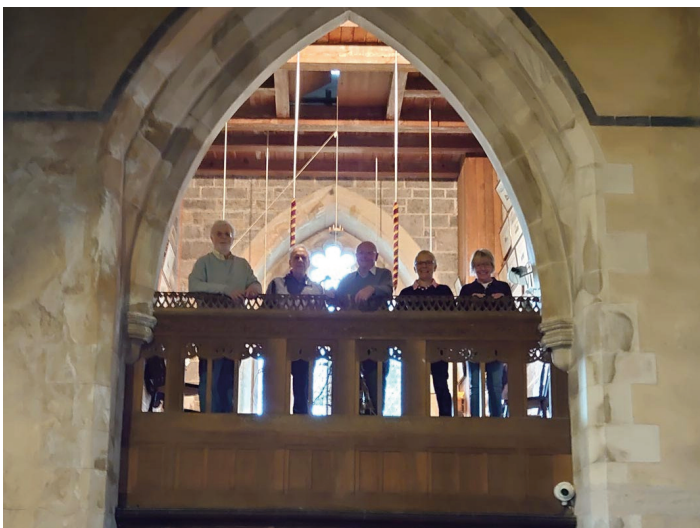
Plympton St Mary

Over the weekend some of our band rang in several towers and took part in quarter peals and peals for the Coronation. At our tower we rang four times over the weekend in celebration.

Gabrielle Stooks

Yealmpton

The Yealmpton ringers rang the Coronation - 48 changes at 10am on the day.



Yealmpton

Tavistock

We numbered 20+, including our 'Ring for the King' beginners. A quarter peal of Grandsire Caters was rung on Sunday evening as a further celebration.



Tavistock

More Photographs



Bere Ferrers



Cornwood



Ermington



The Minster Church of St Andrew, Plymouth



St Budeaux, Plymouth



Emmanuel, Plymouth



Stoke Damerel, Plymouth



Galmpton



Malborough



Salcombe

Mid Devon

This was a phenomenal effort by ringers throughout the country but particularly in our branch area. All towers are to be congratulated on all the hard work put in before but particularly on the day. This could turn into a long list of references to *The Ringing World* but suffice to mention branch area towers –

Abbotskerswell, Bickington, Bovey Tracey, Berry Pomeroy, Buckfast Abbey, Coffinswell, Combeinteignhead, Dawlish, East Oggwell, Highweek, Ilsington, Kingskerswell, Lustleigh, Manaton, Moretonhampstead, St Leonard's Tower, Teignmouth (St James and St Michael simultaneously!), Upton, Stokeinteignhead St Marychurch and Wolborough. My apologies if I have missed any. Much of this ringing included those trained for 'Ring for the King' – again a superb effort by so many. Full details of ringers taking part can be found by reference to BellBoard <https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/>. There is also a double issue of *The Ringing World* print copy and supplement available at £5.00.

A few comments –

Teignmouth

Roger Treweek: The highlight for us was having 17 ringers available on the morning of the Coronation including one returning (Doug Eltham) and one recent learner (John Brett, ringing for an 'event' for the first time), which meant that I was able to split the band into two groups, enabling us to ring a variety of call changes on eight at both St Michael's and St James's simultaneously. No one seems to know when this last happened – but it is probably over twenty years ago!

Julia Brett: We even had an audience at St James's because they opened the church and had a big screening of the Coronation. We were able to do a PR promo job at the same time! Roger worked hard to arrange it!

Kingskerswell and Coffinswell

Philip Stevens: The week before the Coronation, I was asked if two children from the school could 'Ring for the King'. I arranged for them to come to the tower the day before the Coronation, when they were able to master back strokes extremely well. Bella and Jakub duly came on the day, and both rang back strokes to some very good rounds. They have both been given certificates and will get badges when I receive them. It is hoped that Bella and her mum will come back to learn to ring.



Kingskerswell



Coffinswell

St Marychurch

At St Marychurch we were pleased to include returning ringer Sherene, who was able to participate fully in the ringing, and new ringer Becky who rang some backstrokes to rounds with assistance. As always many thanks to the loyal supporters for their help.



St Marychurch

Bovey Tracey et al

The ringers of the moorland group did a phenomenal job. Not only had they done an amazing job in recruiting and training new ringers but they were able to make sure that all the towers in their area rang at some time on the day. They must have been happy but exhausted at the end of the day, so very many congratulations to you.

Thorverton



Martin Spencer-Thomas, Sue Sawyer, John Foster, Jane Flaxington, Liz Rendell and James Kingdom.

First Peal

A peal of mixed Doubles was rung at St Budeaux, Plymouth for the Coronation of King Charles III. The three heavyweights of the ringing community on the back bells enabled first timers Jinny Jeffery, Chris Harris and Barbara Hocke to achieve their first peal in 2 hours 50 minutes. A fabulous experience!

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

St Budeaux, Devon, St Budeaux

Sunday, 7 May 2023 in 2h 50

5040 Doubles (7m/v)

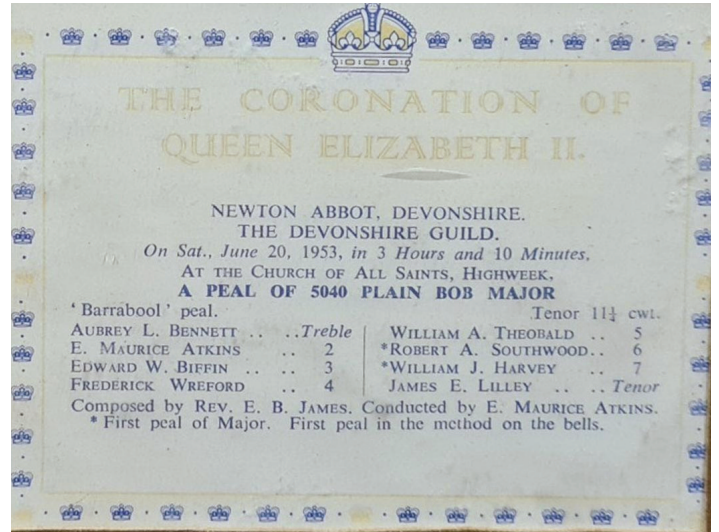
6 extents each of Reverse Canterbury, Plain Bob, Southtrepps, Clifford's Pleasure, Kennington, April Day, and Grandsire

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Jinny Jeffery | 4 Christopher H Wardle |
| 2 Christine Harris | 5 Fergus M S Stracey (C) |
| 3 John C Mitchelmore | 6 Barbara M Hocke |

1st peal: 1, 2 and 6

Barbara Hocke

Celebrating the peal from 1953



The 1953 peal details

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Highweek, Devon, All Saints

Monday, 29 May 2023 in 2h 47

5184 Highweek Village Delight Major

Composed by Robert D S Brown

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Ian W Avery | 5 Robert D Law |
| 2 James Kirkcaldy | 6 John R Martin |
| 3 Peter L Bill | 7 Robert D S Brown (C) |
| 4 Charlotte A Boyce | 8 Michael E C Mears |

Rung to mark the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla and especially arranged to commemorate a peal rung 70 years previously for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. At the conclusion of the peal the band was met by William J Harvey who rang the 7th in the 1950s peal. He is the only surviving member of that band.

First peal in the method.



L to R: Rob Law, James Kirkcaldy, Rob Brown, Mike Mears Bill Harvey, Charlotte Boyce, John Martin, Peter Bill, Ian Avery

Rob Brown

First peal in the tower



The bells at Widworthy (near Honiton) are very rarely rung so a couple of us went to the tower the week before to tighten up the frame and fittings as much as possible, although not much is possible as the frame is held together with wooden pegs and no bolts or tie-rods, and to dowse the bearings in oil. They were then re-oiled just before we started the peal. It took over a week for the blisters to die down!

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Widworthy, Devon, St Cuthbert
Tuesday, 9 May 2023 in 2h 51
5040 Doubles (11m)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Robert D S Brown | 4 David Hird |
| 2 Ian V J Smith | 5 Michael E C Mears (C) |
| 3 Ian L C Campbell | |

For the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.
First peal on the bells.

Ian Campbell

First quarter peal since returning to ringing

Congratulations go to Siân who has returned to ringing after a very long break.

Exeter, Devon, St Michael and All Angels, Heavitree
Saturday, 6 May 2023 in 55m
1260 Grandsire Triples

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Siân Barns | 5 Michael Cannon |
| 2 Peter Bill | 6 Andrew Digby |
| 3 Wendy Campbell | 7 Ian Campbell (C) |
| 4 David Hird | 8 Susan Illing |

Rung by Sunday service ringers to mark the Coronation this day of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.



L to R: David, Michael, Wendy, Andrew, Peter, Ian, Siân, Susan

Other News

Guild AGM

Devon Ringers' Council Competitions 2023

The Devon Ringers' Council competitions are open to everyone, including Guild and Association members. They were held on Saturday 22 April with the results as follows. Thanks to all who took part, the organisers and especially Ian Avery for coordinating the event.

Buckfast Abbey - 10 Bell

Position	Rang	Team	Faults
1st	Peal no. 5	Wednesday Ringers - Team 2	16
2nd	Peal no. 3	Wednesday Ringers - Team 1	25
3rd	Peal no. 2	Kingsteignton	28
4th	Peal no. 4	Tavistock	32
5th	Peal no. 1	Buckfast Abbey	60

Buckfastleigh - 8 Bell

Position	Rang	Team	Faults
1st	Peal no. 3	Wednesday Ringers - Team 2	22
2nd	Peal no. 1	Wednesday Ringers - Team 1	35
3rd	Peal no. 4	Kingsteignton - Team 2	38
4th	Peal no. 2	Kingsteignton - Team 1	73
5th	Peal no. 6	Georgeham	82
6th	Peal no. 5	East Anstey	89

Bickington - 6 Bell

Position	Rang	Team	Faults
1st	Peal no. 9	Wednesday Ringers - Team 2	24.5
2nd	Peal no. 10	Kingsteignton - Team 2	28
3rd	Peal no. 8	Down St Mary	29.5
4th	Peal no. 2	Wednesday Ringers - Team 1	48
5th	Peal no. 7	Bow	52
6th	Peal no. 1	Stoke Gabriel	65
7th	Peal no. 6	Georgeham	65.25
8th	Peal no. 4	East Anstey	91
9th	Peal no. 5	Kingsteignton - Team 1	117
10th	Peal no. 3	Bovey Tracey	167

Ian Avery would like to gauge the level of interest in staging a Devon Ringers' Council striking contest on Lundy Island either in 2024 or in 2025 - more information available here: <https://devonringers.org.uk/news-events/2023/drc-lundy>. Please respond directly to Ian (ianwavery@gmail.com) as soon as possible.

Obituaries

Peter Sawyer

Peter was born in Ipswich and learnt to ring at Maldon, Essex, in February/March 1969, ringing his first peal – Plain Bob Minor at Maldon – in December that year. He immediately became involved in peal ringing, with nineteen the following year including several of Surprise Major – clearly he was a quick learner.



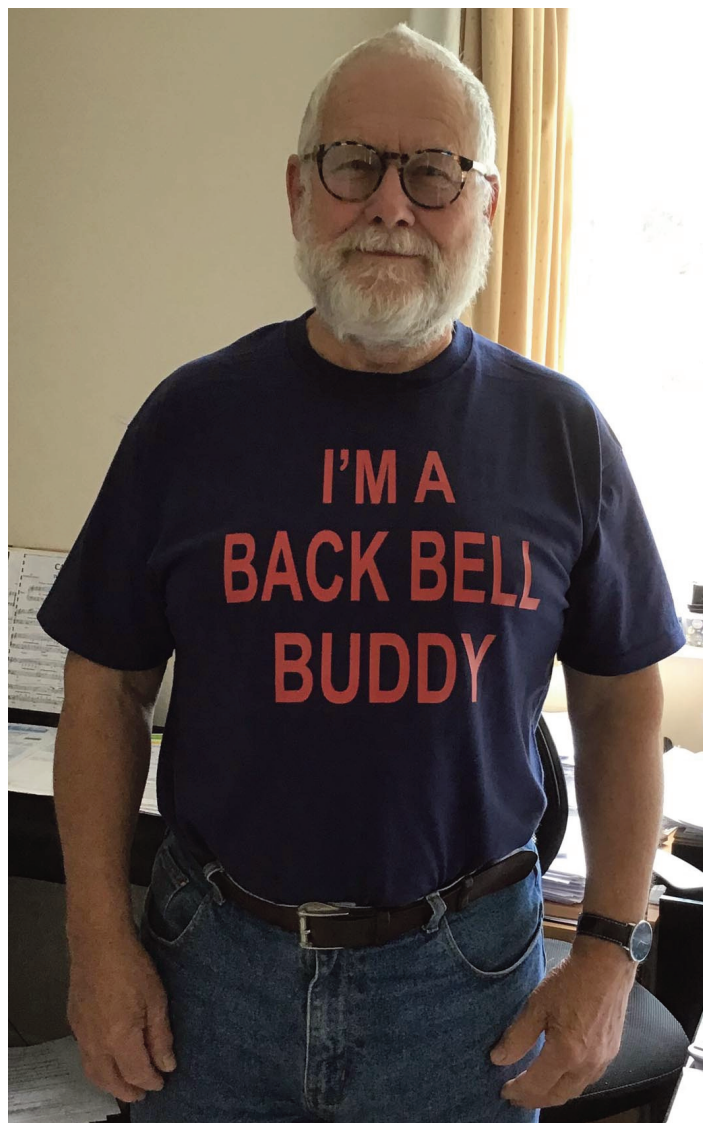
He moved to Exeter in 1972 and rang at Heavitree, St Mark's and the Cathedral. During this time, he served as Exeter Branch Ringing Master and Guild Peal Secretary. He also helped train a band at Cheriton Fitzpaine, and took part in the Guild's first peal of Spliced Surprise Major in 1973 at Woodbury. Stories about Peter usually involve excess, such as for instance the famous potato eating contests with John Longridge and John 'Womble' Hutchings. On one occasion, they visited the Ganges Restaurant where Peter complained that the last curry that he ate there was not hot enough; needless to say the chef enjoyed a challenge.

Peter moved to Andover in 1976, to Reading in 1979, and Tilehurst in 1983, and came to ring at the Tuesday practice nights at St Peter's, Caversham soon after moving to Reading. In the pub afterwards Pete was always good company and entertained the ringers with his stories and conversation, telling us about the sort of activities that went on in his field of work in Quantity Surveying. He rang with the Liss Campanile Youths, including two peals on the tenor of the ceramic bells, one of Little Bob and one of Cinques.

He moved back to Devon in 1988, and bought a house in Shobrooke parish, from which he ran a business, Abbey Builders; the name was chosen simply so that it would be at the beginning of alphabetical listings in Yellow Pages. He rejoined the Cathedral band and encouraged it to take part in the National Twelve Bell Competition. He provided immeasurable support for the augmentation of Thorverton to ten, offering not only his practical skills but also his trailer when the bells were brought ceremoniously into the village for their blessing. He called the first peal on the ten bells (Cambridge Royal) in 1994, and they were by far his leading tower for peals. The augmentation also led to his foundation of the Whitechapel Friendly Society, which rang a collection of peals that more traditionalist members of the Guild might have frowned upon, such as Major on the middle eight at Thorverton, and a peal of Cambridge Minor at Brampford Speke in under two hours (the 'Goldfinger' peal).

David Brown remembers a memorable peal at the Cathedral in 1994: 'Peter asked me if I would call a peal of Stedman Cinques at Exeter Cathedral for him as he wanted to ring the tenor single-handed. Privately I was a bit sceptical about whether he would do it but I agreed. I couldn't have been more wrong! He not only rang it but rang it superbly well and with no signs of flagging energy. It was one of my best peals at Exeter. I vividly recall asking him after we came into rounds - half in jest - whether he wanted to go straight down in peal. He did and it was a memorable end to a fine peal.' Equally memorable is the video that was taken of his performance, and the frequently-made offer to show it.

He left Devon again in 1995, and lived on a narrowboat from 1997 to 2002, when he emigrated to Soucé in France, acquiring a dilapidated barn, which he converted to a home of a beautifully high standard and then installed a mini ring in the garage. Visitors were always welcome, and the first tower-bell peal of Grandsire Triples in mainland Europe was



More like we usually saw him

rung there by the Guild in 2008, with Peter on the tenor. Although he entered whole-heartedly (did he ever do anything half-heartedly?) into local life, his knowledge of French remained minimal, but the villagers seemed to enjoy – and understand – his attempts to speak English in a schoolboy French accent, straight out of 'Allo, 'allo.

He moved to Norfolk in 2010, together with the mini-ring which he later sold to Simon Rudd; initially he lived at Lyng, and then Norwich where he became very involved in local ringing and was steeple-keeper at Mancroft for a while. The mini-ring was well used at Lyng, and Peter rang seven peals there, including a couple with the Devon ringers.

He moved back to Devon in 2015 and bought in a flat in Torquay (which of course needed refurbishment), with magnificent views over the bay. Once more he got heavily involved in the local ringing scene; he foolishly mentioned to Mike Mears that he had never rung fifty peals in a year, such that in 2017 he rang 59. In his final year of ringing he achieved 115! In total he rang 819 peals, including 19 for the SRCY, 107 for the Norwich DA and 439 for the GDR. He called 19 peals and rang a range of methods, including 23-Spliced Surprise Major and 6-Spliced Surprise Maximus.

Peter suffered a cardiac arrest while attempting a peal at Shepton Beauchamp in early 2020 and was resuscitated thanks to the quick thinking of the other members of the band. He claimed that he had actually died then and been brought back to life; he never returned to ringing after that. At the beginning of this year he was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer from which he sadly died in the Rowcroft Hospice in Torquay in April.

David Brown writes, 'My first impressions were of a man who didn't take life too seriously and was possessed of an impish sense of humour. I recall a lengthy discussion between Peter and Frank Mack about which were the best peals of bells in the country, and Frank maintained that a certain eight were the best from outside the tower of any ring of bells. Much to Peter's delight he became increasingly annoyed with Peter's ridiculing of this position on the basis that the sound outside the tower is pretty irrelevant if you are actually ringing the bells!

Others will probably testify to different areas of his life, but I was always struck by what a capable and practical person Peter was. As a craftsman building or repairing things, his work was always meticulous and



Peter looking very smart – with his usual pint

extremely competently done. He was a generous man who would always offer to help with practical jobs that those of us less blessed with DIY skills were not able to accomplish!

So, as Doug Beaumont from Caversham said, 'We remember having some good ringing and good laughs with Peter'. Everyone is very sorry to have heard of his death.

Seven peals were recorded in Peter's memory, including one at Huntsham, one at Sabarat in France on the mini ring Peter previously owned, and this one, which was in a method specially composed and named.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Bovey Tracy, Devon, Wobbly Bob's Campanile

Tuesday, 11 April 2023 in 1h 53

5088 Sawyer Delight Major

R D S Brown

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Peter C Richards | 5 Peter L Bill |
| 2 Oliver C Bates | 6 Michael J Wigney |
| 3 Michael E C Mears | 7 John A Foster |
| 4 Robert D S Brown | 8 David Hird (C) |

1st peal in the method.

Rung in memory of Peter J Sawyer.

Brian V Mountjoy wishes to be associated with this peal.

With thanks to Doug and Joe Beaumont, Rebecca Cox, David Brown, Ian Smith, Graham Tucker, and Lester and Pat Yeo

Brian V Mountjoy 1949-2023



Brian was a native of North Devon and he learnt to ring at Bideford in the 1960s, when there was still quite a strong call-change band there. Brian, however, was keen to try method ringing and such was his enthusiasm that he travelled regularly to Stratton to get his opportunities. He rang his first peal in August 1969 at Tawstock, and soon became a regular member of John Longridge's monthly peal band, which was just starting to get into Surprise Major.

When Brian left school he went to work in the milk factory at Great Torrington and in the mid-1970s he was transferred to the factory in Wells, living and ringing in Glastonbury. This was when he really started to make great strides with his method ringing, discovering the delights of Surprise Minor and ringing different Surprise Major methods with Tony Cox's peal bands. Even though he lived in Bath and Wells territory, he still kept strong links with his Devon roots and his five leading peal ringers were all Devonians. He was a regular participant in St Brannock's Society peals when they were at their strongest and he returned to Devon to ring his 1000th peal, at Thorverton in 2006, with a largely Devon band.

In all Brian rang 1340 peals, of which 469 were for the Guild, and he conducted 540. He was a talented composer, especially of Grandsire Caters, with well over 30 compositions credited to him. He rang his last peal in 2018 but suffered from ill health for the last few years which restricted all his ringing and other activities.

Brian was a very steady, reliable ringer and no mean conductor. He was a quiet, modest man but had a keen sense of humour and was always good company. He will be greatly missed.

Nine peals and quarter peals have been recorded in his memory (three in Devon), including:

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Huntsham, Devon, All Saints
Thursday, 25 May 2023 in 2h 38
5040 Vaught Alliance Major
Composed by Robert D S Brown

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Michael Hatchett | 5 Lesley A Knipe |
| 2 James Kirkcaldy | 6 Revd Christopher Renyard |
| 3 R Nicholas Lawrence | 7 Robert D S Brown (C) |
| 4 Richard H Johnston | 8 Michael E C Mears |

First peal in the method

Rung in fond memory of Brian V Mountjoy

Mike Mears

Pam Anthony 1941-2023

Pam passed away unexpectedly at home on Thursday March 30. She learned to ring in Bushey, Hertfordshire, but also kept busy with lace making, archery and many other crafts. She returned to ringing in Dawlish where she became a member of the Mid-Devon Branch and progressed from a very competent rounds ringer to Plain Bob Doubles and Triples. Due to constant chest infections she missed a lot of ringing during the winter but was always willing to help out with weddings and other special occasions.

Pam was always the life and soul of any gathering and was there to help anyone who needed a friend. Those of us who went to a murder mystery evening organised by John Martin treasure the memory of her depiction of a sexy, desperate middle-aged lady in a VERY short dress, fishnet tights and wig!

Her memorial service in Shaldon on April 21 was full of her neighbours and bell ringing friends who filled the church and enjoyed lovely memories of her.

Fiona Rock-Evans

Jane Doidge

I have just been informed of the sad news that Jane Doidge has passed away. Jane was a long-standing tower captain at Whitchurch as well as being a former branch treasurer. A fuller obituary will be published in the September issue of *RRD*.

Trevor Vercoe

East Devon Branch

East Devon Branch Meeting, Kilmington, 23 May



St Giles' church welcomed some 30 bell ringers from across East Devon on a beautifully sunny afternoon in May to hold the Guild of Devonshire Ringers' quarterly meeting, ring our bells and enjoy a homemade tea. It was a first visit to Kilmington for some members and a chance to ring in a different tower to their own.

I am grateful to Mary, Margaret, Ann and Penny who made cake or biscuits and for helping me serve tea: thank you.

It was a very pleasant way to spend the afternoon and I understand some in the village flung open their windows to listen to the ringing.

Celia Dunsford

News from St Andrew's, Feniton

Feniton ringers had a lovely afternoon and evening out on Sunday 23 April, with ringing at three towers followed by an AGM and dinner at the White Horse Inn in Woodbury. There were fifteen ringers, which presented the organisational challenge of ensuring that everyone had a fair go, and two non-ringing partners who joined us for dinner. It was wonderful to have our two newest ringers with us for the outing: Colin Gibbins, who used to ring as a lad and is redeveloping his skills, and Mike Whitcombe, who is completely new to ringing. Both started in January and took part in 'Ring for the King' in May – we hope that they will soon become keen members of the Guild too.

Over the course of the afternoon, we visited and rang on the eight bells at Littleham (Exmouth), the six at Otterton, and the eight at East Budleigh. Many thanks to those towers for welcoming us and ensuring that we were properly briefed. We rang up and down, rounds, call changes, Plain Hunt, Plain Bob and Grandsire, and everyone rose to the challenge of ringing unfamiliar bells.

At our AGM we re-elected Lesley Oats as tower captain and reconfirmed others in their roles: Tim as ringing master, Shân as deputy ringing master, Mike as steeple keeper, and Barbara as secretary – and I seem to have officially landed the role of publicity officer. We don't normally have as many as 15 on practice nights, but all are very welcome on Fridays for chat, chocolates, and a bit of ringing: 7.00pm for beginners, and 7.30pm for those with more experience. Do come along if you would like to visit and ring with us!



Thirteen of the ringers (from the left): Richard Shere, Sue King, Barbara Hemsley, Shân Allen, Kathy Matthews, Susie Adams, Lesley Oats, Tim Bayton, Mike Whitcombe, Ian Tucker, Colin Gibbins, Lesley Houghton, Roger Algate. Missing from the photo: Janet Reynolds and Roz Withrington.

Roz Withrington

Bell Sunday at Sidmouth, May 14

May proved a very busy month for ringing. No sooner had we started to recover from the Coronation celebrations than Bell Sunday was upon us. This came about as a result of a collaboration between the Church of England and the CCCBR to mark the contribution of bells and bellringers to the life of the church. It is also linked to St Dunstan who is the patron saint of bellringers (amongst other things), mainly due to his interest and expertise in bell founding. St Dunstan's Feast Day is 19 May. Jon Rose liaised with Matt, our very supportive Vicar, on the format for the day's services and subsequently found himself involved in all three services!

Taking the 8am service Jon's address was based on St Dunstan, bells and bellringing. At the 10am service he gave a short address and then introduced Marion Baker. Marion described learning to ring on the old Sidmouth bells 74 years ago when her father Percy Davies was tower captain. In those days the clock chimed every quarter of an hour so the hammers had to be lifted out of the way before ringing and the clock had to be wound manually twice a week! These bells were recast in 1972 to a tuneful ring of 8 which were much easier to ring. The clock chimes were removed and the clock is now wound automatically. Following a generous bequest this lovely ring of bells was augmented to a sonorous ring of 10 – one of the finest in Devon. Sadly Marion is no longer able to climb the 45 steep spiral staircase to the ringing room but she uses the internet to ring with other ringers and so keep in touch.



Marion Baker in front of a display for Bell Sunday

The bell themed Evensong opened with a short piece of handbell ringing, on six bells by Sue King, Kathie Matthews and Delie Perry.

The service included a selection of rousing hymns all with a church bell related theme. Including 'Ring Out Ye Bells Below' and 'Ye Joyful Bells, ring out your Praise' and a third hymn to the well-known tune 'Old 100'. This tune is usually associated with the words 'All people that on Earth Do Dwell'.

The new words to this wonderful old tune were:

**Grant to us Ringers, one and all,
Whom to Thy Service Thou dost call,
That with the grace that comes from Thee,
We may Thy faithful servants be.**

This sums up what, for many of us bell ringers, is at the heart of all church tower bell ringing - that the ringers are ultimately there in service to God, ringing before Sunday services to call anyone who hears them to come into the church regardless of whether they have a Christian faith, other faith, or no faith at all.

During Evensong the choir led the singing which was enthusiastically joined by the congregation - many of whom were bell ringers. The choir also sang 'The Bell Anthem' by William Purcell, which had a long introductory sequence of descending notes imitating the sounds of bells ringing 'rounds'.

The service concluded with a fantastic rousing piece of organ music by French organist and composer Louis Vierne. His piece - Carillon de Westminster - was composed after Vierne had heard the chimes of the clock at Westminster Abbey. As indicated by the title, the piece is a fantasia on the Westminster chimes which sound from the clock tower at the Palace of Westminster. The chimes have played four notes in the key of E major: G#, F#, E, and B in various patterns every fifteen minutes, since 1858. Vierne's piece was a fitting and fantastic end to a very special Evensong service - the first ever Bell Sunday honouring the patron saint of bell ringers, St Dunstan.

Anne Bailey and Sue King

East Devon Ladies Meetings 29 March and 17 May

East Devon ladies have continued their six-weekly meetings; in the first of these we rang at Shute and Axminster. The meeting was well-attended and we rang a variety of methods and call changes. However, we were grateful for the help of David Barrance and tower captain, Peter Simpson, when it came to ringing the heavier back bells at Axminster. However we managed some respectable call changes on all ten and attempted Grandsire Triples on the back eight. Regardless of the ringing, the highlight of the morning had to be a visit to the Waffle House in Axminster for coffee, and in some cases, the try of a waffle for those who were on their first visit.



Lisa and Trevor at The Waffle House Axminster

At the second of these meetings, on a glorious day in May, we visited Offwell and Cotleigh. Again the meeting was well attended and we rang call changes along with a variety of Doubles and Minor methods.



Offwell start of ringing delayed due to unexpected items in road!



Cotleigh Church



Cotleigh L to R: Trevor, Maureen, Sue, Janet, Jan, Delie, Katherine, Wendy

These enjoyable, friendly meetings not only involve ringing methods that we would not necessarily ring in our own towers but also give us the opportunity of visiting parts of rural East Devon that we have not necessarily come across before. We owe much to the organisational skills of Maureen Davey: thank you Mo.

Anne Bailey

Bell handling course at Combe Raleigh in East Devon

Saturday 20 May was the last session of our nine-week course for new learners. Some had never touched a rope before but most were at various stages of learning bell handling.

Mary Boulton had acquired at least eight new learners in the space of a few months (how on earth did she achieve that?!) and, with the best will in the world, there's only so much time anyone can spend teaching new recruits without limiting them to a few minutes each before a practice.

To ease the pressure on her, I suggested we run a series of handling lessons based on Tim Bayton's Ringing Remembers model five years ago, also at Combe Raleigh, on tied bells using the simulator. Nine learners signed up: three from Offwell, three from Gittisham, two from Cotleigh and one from Branscombe.

I was delighted that Anne Bailey was on board, with the rest of the pool of teachers comprising Mary and Shân Allen (both having attended the ART Module 1 course last year), Derek Ballard and myself. We would typically have three one-hour sessions with one teacher per learner each week. We worked hard but it was so much fun. We've met some lovely people and hope that they will ring for a long time to come. Good progress was made as several learners took part in ringing for the Coronation. Well done to all the learners and I'd like to thank the teachers very much for making it possible.



Here are some of our regular learners and teachers

Lisa Clarke, Combe Raleigh

Exeter Branch Bank Holiday Train Outing



Some of the group enjoying the ferry over the river Dart

The traditional Bank Holiday train outing was arranged for May 29. The day dawned wonderfully sunny – but a little colder than might have been expected. A select group travelled from various locations by train to Paignton, and then on to the steam railway to Kingswear. Unfortunately it was not possible to ring on the three bells at Kingswear so we went straight on to the ferry over the river to Dartmouth.

Ringling at Townstal had been cancelled at short notice because of problems of access to the church, so we had a free morning in Dartmouth to enjoy the sun and the river scene before lunch and ringling on the eight at St Saviour's. A number of visitors to the area came to watch us ring, including several ringers who joined us and then followed us to St Petrox near the castle. The ferry to the castle was not running because of the strong wind, so most of us walked there instead, with just a couple of senior members resorting to taking a taxi.

Following a leisurely walk back to the ferry and a break for an ice cream, we were in good time to catch the steam train to Paignton and then onwards to our various destinations. Thanks go to Peter Richards for making all the arrangements.

Ian Campbell

Mid-Devon Branch Philip Stevens celebrates 80 years

Many congratulations to Philip Stevens who reached 80 years old on April 24. Philip has successfully led the team at Kingskerswell/Coffinswell for over 30 years and his enthusiasm is undiminished after all this time – possibly even greater since the amazing transformation of the bells and ringling experience at Kingskerswell. As both Philip and Mo have birthdays on the same day (she is much younger than him – a year!) they had a joint open house afternoon the day before when it was great to catch up with a few faces not seen for some time.

On the actual birthday a well-struck quarter peal of Plain Bob Major was rung at Kingskerswell with Philip's daughter and her husband included in the band. Afterwards it was back again to Priory Avenue to help eat up some of the goodies from the day before.

Kingskerswell, Devon, St Mary
Monday, 24 April 2023 in 46m
1280 Plain Bob Major

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Simon Chant | 5 Robert Law |
| 2 Carole Chant | 6 Michael H Tompsett |
| 3 Philip Stevens | 7 Tim King |
| 4 Ian W Avery | 8 Martin G Mansley (C) |

To celebrate Philip's 80th Birthday today as well as Mo Stevens, Pauline Lawrence and Jean Strong. Also birthday compliments to Simon Chant and David Moate.



The quarter peal band

Due to the conductor being on holiday there was a brief interval before a celebratory peal could be rung but a well struck peal of Cambridge Surprise Major was dedicated also to the Coronation. Not only was this in part a birthday peal but it allowed Philip to complete another milestone – 64 consecutive years of peal ringling.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Kingskerswell, Devon St Mary
Wednesday, 3 May 2023 in 2h 45
5088 Cambridge Surprise Major
D F Morrison (No 7925)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Philip Stevens | 5 Martin G Mansley |
| 2 Peter L Bill | 6 Ian V J Smith |
| 3 Ian W Avery | 7 David Hird |
| 4 Revd Christopher Renyard | 8 Michael E C Mears (C) |
- 80th birthday compliment to Phil Stevens, who has now rung peals in 64 consecutive years.

So, many congratulations to Philip, with a big thank you for all the work you have done and the unfailing hospitality from both you and Mo. We wish you many more years of peal ringling.

Martin Mansley

80th anniversary of the bombing of St Marychurch

Most people will be aware that the present church, apart from the tower, is a rebuild following the destruction by enemy action on 30 May 1943. This was part of a raid which killed a total of 40 people across Torbay. It was a massive tragedy for St Marychurch as 21 children and three teachers were killed as they assembled for Sunday School. Many more were injured.

The scars of that day are still deeply felt in the community, so it was fitting to mark the anniversary appropriately. From the practice on May 23 the bells were half-muffled and on the following day a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples was rung prior to the school service attended by the Bishop.

Torquay, Devon, St Mary the Virgin
Wednesday, 24 May 2023 in 54m

- 1260 Grandsire Triples
- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Michael H Tompsett | 5 Simon Glanfield |
| 2 Robert Law | 6 Tim King |
| 3 Ian Avery | 7 Martin G Mansley (C) |
| 4 Don J Roberts | 8 Graham Crouch |

With the bells half-muffled before the school service marking the 80th anniversary of the bombing of St Marychurch with the loss of 26 Sunday school children and three teachers on 30 May 1943.

On Monday 29 May general ringling preceded a very moving vigil. Among several readings and memories Jeanette Thompson read out a

passage written by her father who was chief choirboy at the time but had decided to miss Sunday School to watch Arthur Askey making a film at Petitor. He never got there as he was a witness to the destruction and went with his father to help in the rescue mission. A Babbacombe dance group of children performed a specially choreographed dance superbly, and some specially composed music had been written and recorded by a lady who was six weeks old at the time of the bombing and later moved to New Zealand.

On 30 May the church held a requiem mass and at 2.40pm a peal of Grandsire Caters started at the exact anniversary of the bomb. After 3 hours and 8 minutes of fine ringing we heard the 'that's all' which finally brought the proceedings to a close. Throughout the time there was a wonderful display of knitting by the local 'yarn fairies' which was very much admired as a fitting memorial.



Some of the decorations in the churchyard

Martin Mansley

Babbacombe - An Interest Morning

Not many years ago Babbacombe was a Guild tower and an active member of the Mid-Devon Branch. Sadly, in recent times, a combination of events has led to the bells falling silent.

A chance meeting between Branch Treasurer Nicola Jones and one of the Babbacombe churchwardens at a Christmas Market led to a conversation about how it might be possible to get the bells ringing again. Nicola mentioned that by coincidence we were scheduled to hold a branch practice there in January and that the warden might like to come and meet us and discuss what we might be able to do to help. He was very keen and promised to seek out potential recruits from the congregation. This led to a group of nine expressing an interest in learning! Although we are a small branch with limited resources and manpower, we felt the best way forward was to run an interest morning to see how serious everyone was and if it really was going to be possible. Following a close look at the branch programme we found a space on the morning of Saturday April 1.

So it was that following several weeks of planning, Nicola had put together a team of five teachers and five helpers ready to meet up with the group of recruits at the church. The plan was that following a general introduction to what being a ringer involves, the group would take turns to climb the tower and with the help of our experienced teachers have a go at ringing some backstrokes so as to get a feel for what's involved. We also booked the Guild demonstration bell and display boards.



Meeting outside the church

The day began promptly at 10am and as it turned out there were 11 recruits on the day! Branch Secretary Nigel Birt gave a welcome and a brief introduction, making it clear that ringing was a big commitment and very much a group activity, but something which brings great rewards. This, I'm pleased to report, didn't put anyone off and the recruits were split into two groups. Half made their way up the tower whilst the remainder stayed downstairs for a demonstration and discussion time. It was great to have Guild Vice-president Don Roberts join us for the morning and amaze the group with his revelation of having learnt at Babbacombe and being a ringer for over 72 years!

A coffee break at 11am saw much chat and conversation, following which the two groups changed round, with the second group making their way up the tower. Following everyone having a go, the groups were taken outside to listen while the teachers upstairs rang a short call change peal and 120 Grandsire Doubles, much to the delight of the recruits.



Everyone was happy to leave us an email address and plans were made to begin teaching bell handling at the tower on April 12. Two 30-minute sessions were run between 6pm and 7pm, with three teachers (plus two helpers) and five recruits per group. The longer-term plan is once the recruits are handling safely, we will begin by supporting a new practice night until such time as they can ring rounds and simple call changes confidently, and then it will be up to them! A worry at the moment is there is no tower captain. That is something we need to look at and try to recruit from within the group at some time in the future. For the moment, the difficult task of getting a silent tower with no experienced ringers ringing again has begun.



Good use was made of the Guild demonstration bell

Nigel Birt

North-East Branch Eddie's level 2 certificate and Guild Certificate Awarded



Eddie being awarded his certificate by Sheila Scofield

Eddie was awarded a level 2 certificate and badge on February 27. He is seen receiving this at the Bampton practice early in March. He has since gained the Guild certificate on 14 March. Eddie is now ringing the treble to touches of Plain Bob Doubles, St Simon's Doubles and St Martin's Doubles. He is a useful member to the band at Bampton, part of the Troyte Ringing Centre. He received the Guild certificate and a copy of *The New Ringer's Book* on Wednesday 5 March.

Margaret Shackleton

Just for a second or two! Uffculme's Lucky Escape

As only a novice ringer, I have had a few discussions in the pub after practice about the physics of the ways the bells are hung and maintained. I have had a few trips into the tower to see the bells and mechanics of the way they are fixed and rung. All this has reassured me that, despite ringing beneath them, we as bellringers are completely safe at all times. However, on a recent practice night for just a brief second or two I thought the lot was coming down on us.

I arrived at practice in plenty of time and whilst waiting for the rest of the band to arrive, a couple of ringers shot up into the tower, for what I later learned was to wind the clock.

While waiting I was reading the noticeboard in the corner when I began to hear wood splitting very loudly. I remember running just a couple of steps to the doorway with an arch above for safety. I glanced up and all was well, but at that moment there was more wood splitting and a huge crash a foot or two from me as the clock weight crashed to the floor. Very luckily or, more likely, well designed, it was blocked in so didn't fall loose into the bottom of the tower. It was close but there were no injuries and the blocked section did its job. It turns out the hook holding the weight had snapped, but for just a second or two I thought a lot worse ...



The clock weight trying to escape...

Tony Collins (Uffculme Ringer)

A new Devon mini-ring

‘The complete ringer should be competent on bells of all sizes, large or small’: Tom Chapman



The campanile at Pig-le-Tower, the original home of the bells

A Ringing World ‘Learning Curve’ article from March 2000 explains how Tom and Margaret Chapman installed a mini-ring at their home in Marston Bigot, Somerset in 1996. These bells were cast by Richard Bowditch and Matthew Higby and were hung in a purpose-built garden building named Pig-le-Tower. Tom and Margaret’s house was named Piglet-in-the-Wild and the campanile was furnished with a wide range of Piglet themed memorabilia.

One of the regular ringers there in the early days recalls it took a while to work out how to ring the very light bells but they quickly became a popular peal ringing venue with a number of bands visiting regularly.

Between 1996 and 2018 almost 800 peals were rung on the bells, including nine in a day (comprising one peal of each of the standard eight Surprise Major methods and one of eight-spliced) and 52 peals in excess of 10,000 changes (a long length). More long length peals have been rung on the Pig-le-Tower bells than any other ring of bells anywhere in the world!

Margaret’s declining health and a move to be closer to her family resulted in the bells falling silent in 2018. In autumn 2021 a social media post from Matthew Higby advised that the bells were to be sold and we made an offer to purchase them. We were already planning to move and the list of requirements for the new house were swiftly modified to include a ‘space for mini-ring’.



The new location for the Piglet Ring – not quite as exotic as it appears!

Although we moved into Uffculme in spring 2022 it was autumn before our thoughts turned to sorting out a space for the mini-ring with the work being complete early in the New Year. In April Matthew was able to bring the refurbished bells to hang in their new home and a try-out took place on Friday 21 April, which included a quarter peal.



The tryout



The bells

Uffculme, Devon, Piglet Ring
Friday, 21 April 2023 in 31m (20lb 11oz)
1250 Yorkshire Surprise Major

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 James Kirkcaldy | 5 Graham Tucker |
| 2 Susan M Sawyer | 6 P Wendy Campbell |
| 3 Charlotte A Boyce | 7 John R Martin (C) |
| 4 Ian L C Campbell | 8 David Hird |

First quarter peal on these bells since 2018 and first in their new location.



The quarter peal band: Graham, Wendy, Ian, John, Charlotte, David, James, Sue

The first peal was rung on Saturday 20 May and associated with the memory of Tom and Margaret Chapman, pioneers of mini-bell ringing.

Guild of Devonshire Ringers
Uffculme, Devon, Piglet Ring
Saturday, 20 May 2023 in 2h 1
5088 Yorkshire Surprise Major
P B Hunter, arr D L Thomas

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Ian W Avery | 5 James Kirkcaldy |
| 2 Charlotte A Boyce | 6 Robert D S Brown |
| 3 Timothy M Bayton | 7 John R Martin (C) |
| 4 Matthew R T Higby | 8 Michael E C Mears |

First peal on the bells in their current location and first on the bells since 2018.

Remembering Tom and Margaret Chapman, pioneers of mini-bell ringing.



The Peal Band (L to R): Ian, James, Charlotte, Robert, John, Tim, Mike, Matthew

We look forward to welcoming you to the Piglet Ring in due course.

John Martin and Charlotte Boyce

Tiverton St Peter's Annual Dinner

Tiverton St Peter's band and friends enjoyed their annual dinner at Mumbai Kitchen on 18 February. It was an excellent social event at a favourite venue in town.



Margaret Shackleton

Skittles and Games Night – May 20

The Branch held a skittles and games night at the Half Moon Inn, Tiverton. The skittles match was the Culm Valley vs the Exe Valley, with the latter winning (but only just). Uno Flip was played with the same energy as happens every Sunday morning in Costa Coffee after the ringing at Cullompton. And Jenga saw us reach around 29 levels. Meanwhile 'Guess Who I Am' brought a lot of fun and laughter.



A pause in the skittles match



Uno Flip



Jenga

Margaret Shackleton - Culm Valley

A Second Childhood

'Tis awful getting older
I often hear folks say
As they talk about their aches
And pains, that will not go away

But it's useful to remember
When considered overall
If we didn't reach old age
Us wouldn't be yer at all.

Doug Nicholls – Sidmouth

Regretfully, I seem to have reached the age Doug had in mind, when he wrote his little rhyme. I don't recall anything I've done to deserve this, but I've been banned from the belfry. It seems that now I'm well into my ninth decade I have to be looked after like a small child. The fact that I climbed down among the bells to fix the clapper ties and then struggled to get out again is being held against me. I was only trying to save the LLTC (lovely lady tower captain) a job, she does enough already, goodness knows. And I did get out safely, unaided.

Friends of ours had a similar experience when arriving home rather late after a dinner party, they were greeted by the younger daughter sitting at the top of the stairs saying, 'and what time do you call this?'

Yes, the old bones are starting to creak a bit and I'm not as flexible as I once was, but please don't write me off just yet as there's a lot of things I'd still like to do. When I can no longer climb the stairs I'll know it's time to stop, but for now this ban has just inspired me to go on. I'm not angry, it's really nice to think somebody is looking out for me and I do appreciate her concern, I just wish it didn't make me feel so old. Middle age is a few years older than me, it always has been and always will be!

Trevor Hitchcock

South-West Branch Raising and Lowering in Peal Branch practice, Brentor, April 15



Climbing the hill to Brentor church

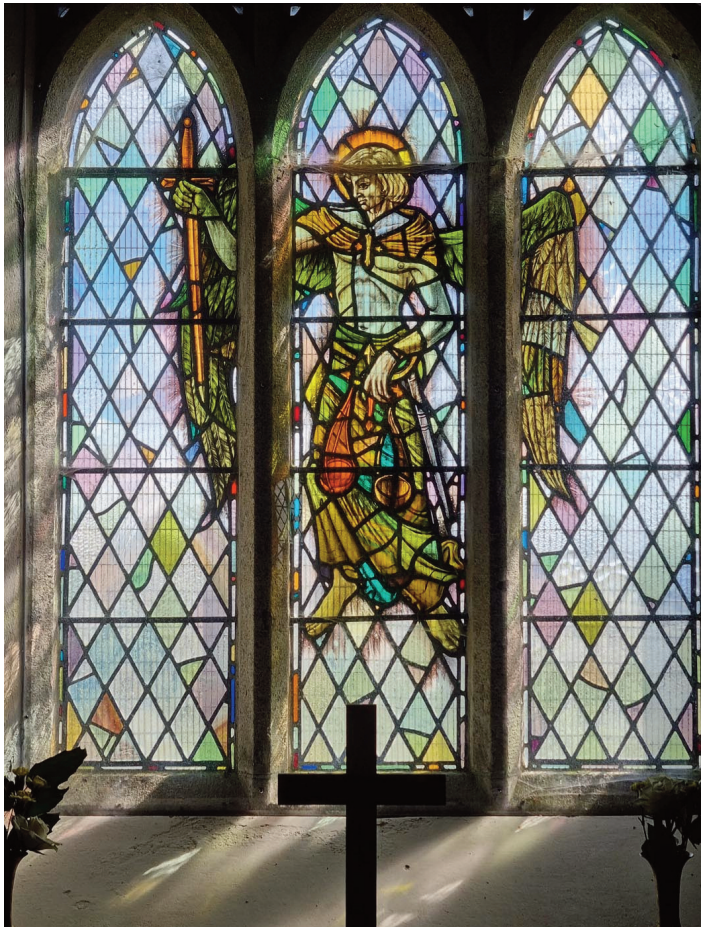
As an 'improver' I am keen to grab every opportunity to master raising and lowering in peal. How could anyone not want to ring at Brentor! This tiny parish church is set atop an 1100 feet volcanic plug with far reaching views to the bleak mass of Dartmoor to the East, Cornwall to the West and Plymouth Sound to the South. The steep grassy path, up which many a wedding party has struggled with dresses brushing the wet grass and snagging on the furze, is shorn by sheep and rabbits. Think of the difficulty delivering the bells, the team of horses straining in their harness, iron-shod hooves struggling to find grip on the wet turf.

The tiny church was beautifully decorated with freshly cut camellia, a striking image of St Michael in the east end window. The rock is hard and the graves shallow up here. Rabbits have been known to disturb the incumbents' rest.

The bells had started to ring as we pushed open the graveyard gate. The five bells ring light but sonorous. The far views were breath-taking. Everyone was smiling. Phil Dunn and his team of helpers were kept busy marshalling the improvers two at a time into the circle. Fifteen times in two hours the bells were raised and lowered. Advice and feedback was readily given, encouragement and even some praise was heard. Everyone's face shone with happiness. Ringing is good for the heart and soul. Thank you all for enabling the day!



John Bowler at Brentor



Stained glass window showing St Michael at Brentor

Jonathan Gale

Bell Handling Clinic St Eustachius, Tavistock

On a sunny April Fool's Saturday morning, a dozen ringers attended the South West Branch's bell handling clinic at St Eustachius' church in Tavistock.

Ten lovely bells (24-0-5) and two training bells were connected to a ringing simulator to protect the market goers from the sound of our practice.

In the next two hours we all had plenty of time to practise some basic handling of the bells and also the raising and lowering of a bell under the watchful supervision of the four expert tutors, each giving helpful and



constructive advice. Following that we had the opportunity, for those that wished, to practise many times the lowering of the bells in peal.

Raising the bells in peal seems to be a challenge for a simulator so they were raised individually.

Our grateful thanks go to Phil, Ian, Christine and Chris for a fun, light-hearted and informative morning. It really was worth the effort to go to a new tower to experience the enthusiasm and dedication of a different band.

Andy Kenyon

General Practice at Lamerton



Spring was (at last) in the air for Lamerton on Saturday 18 March

General practices are for everyone and the mix of 27 ringers in beautiful Lamerton church mirrored that. Ranging from ringers who joined for 'Ring for the King' to experienced peal ringers, all abilities were present. Anything from rounds to a touch of Cambridge rang over the village. Special thanks go to the Lamerton band for having us, together with the delicious homemade cookies and flapjacks!

Barbara Hocke

The five towers

SW Branch Spring outing May 13

On a gloriously sunny day about thirty ringers of various abilities visited five towers in and around the South Hams. Representation came from Emmanuel, St Andrew and St Budeaux in Plymouth, St Mary, and St Maurice from Plympton, Plymstock, Cornwood, Sampford Spiney, Yealmpton and Tavistock. With Sue popping in from Sidmouth and Maurice visiting from Leeds, this completed the band for the day.

The churches were all a joy to visit and provided plenty of interest when not tackling the bells.



Ermington was our first stop - six bells in a crooked tower. I am always quite nervous when venturing out to try new bells, so was happy ringing rounds while others embraced methods and call changes with gusto. The carving in this church is particularly fine, executed by the Pinwell sisters as part of the restoration of this church in the late nineteenth century, organized by their father, the Vicar.

Next was Modbury, beautifully situated at the top of the hill - also six bells and no climbing to reach them. A lunch break at this point gave us energy for the last three towers.

Ugborough, in the centre of the village, surprised us by having eight bells. But the church of St Peter is known as the Cathedral of the South Hams for a reason. We had to queue outside a very small door to get into the tower to ring the newest bells of the outing, having been recast in 2018. This beautiful angel is situated just below the bell tower platform, adding its own musical accompaniment to our bells.



Off we went again to South Brent, home of a flourishing band of ringers who have in the past won the Devon Major Six Bell final. I stuck to rounds and thoroughly enjoyed these bells but hoped that my contribution was not too heavy on the ears of the locals.

The final tower was Ashburton with its perilous ascent to ring the eight bells. These bells proved a little challenging as the ropes were very long and I found that for once I did not have to have any form of elevation available. Finally it was time for home after a good time had been enjoyed by all.

Liza Crewe

Training and Education

East Devon Practices

As many of those in East Devon know, we stopped the monthly Surprise Major practices as there weren't sufficient attendees. Having given this some thought since I became Ringing Master, I'd like to try a slightly different approach on the first Saturday of each month as follows:-

Saturday 3 June 1400 - 1530 - Triples and simple Major at Honiton
 Saturday 1 July 1330 - 1500 Surprise Major - venue tbc
 Saturday 5 August 1030 - 1200 - Caters and Royal at Axminster
 Saturday 2 September 1330 - 1500 Triples and simple Major at Colyton
 Saturday 7 October 1030 - 1200 Surprise Major - venue tbc
 Saturday 4 November 1330 - 1500 Caters and Royal at Lyme Regis
 Saturday 2 December 1030 - 1200 Triples and simple Major - venue tbc

The idea is to give people the chance to ring Plain Bob/Grandsire/Stedman Triples and Caters, simple Major and Royal or Surprise Major, depending on the event. Other methods such as Erin and St Clement's can be added as required. The opportunity will also be given

for call changes and hopefully the chance for conductors to call touches which perhaps they can't at their own towers. Ringers from all branches will be welcome.

Ian Rees

What are the personal benefits of change ringing?

ChatGPT, an advanced artificial intelligence chatbot, replies ...

Change ringing is a traditional English bell ringing method, in which bells are rung in a set sequence, with each bell being rung in a different order for each sequence. Change ringing is considered a form of exercise for the mind and body, as it requires coordination, concentration, and mental focus.

Physical exercise: Change ringing is a form of physical exercise that works the whole body. The bellringers use their arms, shoulders, back and legs to pull the ropes and control the bell's motion. This type of exercise can help to improve cardiovascular health, increase muscle strength and endurance, and reduce the risk of injury.

Mental exercise: Change ringing requires a high level of concentration, mental focus, and problem-solving skills. Ringers must remember the sequence of the bell ringing and make decisions quickly to ensure that they are ringing the bell at the right time. This mental exercise can help to improve memory, cognitive function, and problem-solving skills.

Social interaction: Change ringing is a social activity that brings people together. Bellringers often form close-knit communities and bond over the shared experience of ringing the bells. This social interaction can help to reduce stress and improve mental well-being.

Sense of accomplishment: Change ringing is a challenging activity that requires skill and practice to master. Once a ringer has mastered the art of change ringing they will feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in their abilities. This sense of accomplishment can boost self-confidence and self-esteem.

Sense of tradition: Change ringing is a tradition that has been passed down for centuries. Bellringers often feel a sense of connection to the past and a sense of preserving a tradition that is important to their community. This sense of tradition can give a person a sense of purpose and belonging.

Stress relief: Change ringing is a meditative activity that allows a person to focus on the present moment and forget about their worries. The repetitive motions and the sound of the bells can help to create a sense of calm and tranquillity. This can help to reduce stress and improve mental well-being.

Teamwork: Change ringing is a team activity that requires coordination and communication. Bellringers must work together to ring the bells in the correct sequence and in time with one another. This teamwork can help to build trust and improve relationships among the bellringers.

Community service: Change ringing is often used to mark special occasions and events within the community. By ringing the bells, bellringers are providing a service to the community and contributing to its cultural heritage. This can give a person a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

In conclusion, change ringing offers many personal benefits, both physical and mental. It is an activity that requires skill and practice to master, which can help to boost self-confidence and self-esteem. Change ringing also offers a sense of tradition, community service, and teamwork. It is a meditative activity that can help to reduce stress and improve mental well-being. Overall, change ringing is a unique and rewarding activity that can offer many benefits to those who participate in it.

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Recruitment – is it that easy?

Ring for the King - a local perspective based on true life...

Eight prospective ringers - needed to ring on Sunday

One will get in touch - but never does
Then there were seven

One has to look after children
Then there were six

One returning ringer can't get up in the morning
Then there were five

One new learner is away at a conference
Then there were four

One ex-ringer hoping to return squashes her finger in the car boot
Then there were three

One prospective new learner is held up on the motorway coming home from Crufts and changes her mind about ringing
Then there were two

One returning ringer decides to go to a different tower instead
Then there was one

One new learner actually turns up for a practice night and even comes to the pub afterwards - but then decides that it is not for her :(
Then we were back to how we were before!

Anon – with apologies to Agatha Christie

Mon 10 19:30	Surprise Minor branch practice, Offwell	East
Thu 13 19:30	Plain Hunt etc, Sidbury	East
Sat 15 10:00	Branch practice: Plain Hunt to PB Doubles, Week 3, Tavistock	South West
Fri 21 19:30	Surprise Major practice, St Mark, Exeter	North East
Tue 25 19:00	8-bell practice, Teignmouth St James	Mid Devon

AUGUST

Tue 1 19:30	Triples and Major practice, St Peter, Tiverton	North East
Sat 5 17:00	Joint practice with Dunster Branch (Dunster to host), TBC	North East
Thu 10 19:30	Plain Hunt etc, Sidbury	East
Sat 12 19:00	10 bell joint practice with SW Branch, Tavistock	Mid Devon
Sat 12 19:00	Joint branch practice with Mid-Devon, Tavistock	South West
Mon 14 19:30	Branch practice, Clyst Honiton	Aylesbeare
Mon 14 19:30	Surprise Minor branch practice, Offwell	East
Fri 18 19:30	Surprise Major practice, Pinhoe	North East

SEPTEMBER

Sat 2 09:30	Branch training - raising and lowering in peal East Ogwell	Mid Devon
Sat 2 10:00	Open branch practice, TBC	North East
Tue 5 19:30	Triples and Major practice, St Peter, Tiverton	North East
Sat 9	Branch Autumn outing, TBC	South West
Sat 9 10:00	Branch practice, Sowton	Aylesbeare
Mon 11 19:30	Surprise Minor branch practice, Offwell	East
Thu 14 19:30	Plain Hunt etc, Sidbury	East
Fri 15 19:00	St Peter's Shield competition, Kentisbeare	North East

Editorial

Firstly I need to apologise for a few typographical mistakes in the last issue. In particular the front page article on the ringers' carol service was written by Janet Ritterman and not as stated.

This issue is swamped by ringing for the Coronation. It is great to see how many of you managed to make a joyful (I hope!) noise. For once, everyone would have known why the bells were ringing! The 'Ring for the King' initiative seemed to have an enormous number of responses all over the county. Even though it was rather short notice to train up ringers from scratch, a number of learners were able to ring for the King. Congratulations go to them and also to their teachers, some of whom must have put in a large amount of time. I had a call from a tower where they had learners who wanted to learn, but no one who felt able to teach. This is somewhere that the Guild can make a lot of difference in initial teaching and later support. The article from Babbacombe illustrates this perfectly.

Conversely I came across a number of potential learners who didn't stay around very long. I hope it was not my teaching style that put them off! However, there are also returning ringers who have stuck with it and are now contributing to the regular ringing.

Because of the large number of ringing sessions recorded on Bellboard I have not been able to include full details of all sessions here. I hope you are not too disappointed.

It is rare for a new peal of eight bells to be installed close to where you live. I was privileged to be asked to the tryout (and first quarter peal) on the Piglet ring, now installed in Uffculme. I am sure that any tours around that way will be welcomed by John and Charlotte if they want to try their hand at a new mini-ring, although they are not really new and have a history going back to 1996 (see article).

You may be having difficulty keeping up with the latest developments in artificial intelligence. As I understand it ChatGPT is a software robot (a computer program) that will take a question and attempt to answer it based on information that it can find on the Internet. So when I saw the article reproduced above ('What are the personal benefits of change ringing?'), which was apparently written by ChatGPT, I was surprised not just that it could produce a meaningful article, but also that the information in it was highly relevant and of interest, especially if you are trying to attract new ringers.

It was heartening to see so many of you at the Guild AGM at Fremington on June 17. It is especially important that we support the North/North-West branch as they have rather few members at the moment.

Ian Campbell

The Guild Master



David Hird enjoying himself in France

Calendar of Events

JUNE

Thu 15 19:30	6-bell practice, Abbotskerswell	Mid Devon
Fri 16 19:30	Surprise Major practice, Broadclyst	North East
Sat 17 10:00	Guild AGM, North/North West Branch	Guild

JULY

Sat 1 10:00	Open branch practice, Broadclyst	North East
Sat 1 10:00	Branch practice: Plain Hunt to PB Doubles, Week 1, Sampford Spiney	South West
Tue 4 19:30	Triples and Major practice, St Peter, Tiverton	North East
Sat 8 10:00	Branch practice: Plain Hunt to PB Doubles, Week 2, St Budeaux	South West
Sat 8 14:00	Branch striking competition, Offwell	East
Sat 8 TBC	Car outing, Torrington area	Mid Devon
Mon 10 19:30	Branch practice, Withycombe Raleigh	Aylesbeare

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