

Newsletter 131 September 2023

**Women's Institute Bellingring Interest Day
Buckfast Abbey**



School room with Martin Mansley, Nigel Birt and the WI ladies

As a result of all the 'Ring for the King' publicity, I (Nicola) was approached by the Women's Institute in Devon to see if it would be possible for their ladies to have a go at bell ringing.

As Guild Publicity Officer, I thought this would be an effective way of building on the good work of the Coronation ringing, continuing to raise awareness of bell ringing in Devon and helping with our ongoing recruitment.

So Buckfast Abbey (thanks in particular to Geoff Pring) very kindly agreed to host an interest day there on Tuesday 1 August. We chose this day so we could make use of the Bowerdon bells which would be set up in a marquee ready for the Abbey's Summer Fair later that week.

It proved to be very popular, with over 130 ladies applying for the 40 places available, which meant a ballot had to be held. In the end we were delighted to host ladies from all over the county.

The day began in the Abbey school room at 10am sharp with an interactive talk given by Martin Mansley, who presented the ladies with a brief history of bell ringing, a history of the Abbey bells, how bell ringing supports the Church and how to become involved in ringing. There was also an opportunity for some of the ladies to 'walk' plain hunt with handbells. The session ended with questions and answers.



Buckfast Abbey ringing room live streamed



Michael Wallis



Martin Mansley



Mike Tompsett

Teachers at Holy Trinity, Buckfastleigh

Following on from this, the Abbey bells were rung for the 12 noon Mass by an experienced band, which included a service touch of Grandsire Caters. The ringing room was live streamed via the Abbey website to a TV screen in the school room so all the ladies could see the ringers in action and hear the bells from inside as well as outside. There was also the opportunity for any who wished to attend the service.

Thanks to all the ringers who rang the Abbey bells: it was a treat to hear all twelve bells being rung.

Lunch was taken either in The Grange or picnicking in the gardens before we reconvened for an afternoon of hands-on practical sessions.

In the marquee the ladies were able to have a go on the Bowderdon mini-ring as well as on handbells. They were then organised into six groups and each group was given a 20 minute slot at nearby Holy Trinity,

Buckfastleigh where they were able to learn to ring backstrokes with the help of several experienced Guild teachers. As it turned out, three of the ladies from Buckland Brewer were already learner ringers and the day helped to reignite their passion for ringing and their determination to progress.

The day concluded with two quarter-peals rung in the marquee on the Bowerdon bells, during which we were able to explain in more detail the intricacies of ringing, what the conductor was calling and how many different changes were being rung, which was a constant source of amazement.

The day was a great success, with a lot of positive feedback from the ladies, and news of the event has spread throughout the WI in Devon. As a result of the day we successfully recruited two learners and a returning ringer and we are in touch with the three Buckland Brewer ringers who may join in with future Guild training events.

Being able to hold the event at the Abbey was a delight and part of the reason the day was so popular with the ladies, so we are extremely fortunate to have their support. We are hoping to run another interest day there in October when we will offer those who were unsuccessful in the first ballot another chance to attend.

In closing, I think it is important to recognise that an event of this scale was dependent upon the goodwill and support of over twenty ringers and helpers who travelled from all over the Guild. Without them, this would not have been possible.

The Bowerdon Peal, Devon, Buckfast Abbey

Tuesday, 1 August 2023 in 30m

1296 Cambridge Surprise Minor

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 Lester Yeo | 4 Michael Mears |
| 2 Roger King | 5 David Hird |
| 3 Peter Bill | 6 Ian Smith (C) |

Rung on location at Buckfast Abbey as part of the Women's Institute Ringing Taster Day.

The Bowerdon Peal, Devon, Buckfast Abbey

Tuesday, 1 August 2023 in 30m

1296 Surprise Minor (2m)

720 Norwich, 576 Beverley

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 Roger King | 4 Ian Smith |
| 2 Peter Bill | 5 Lester Yeo |
| 3 Michael Mears | 6 David Hird (C) |

Rung for the WI 'taster' day of ringing

*Nicola Jones (Guild Publicity Officer)
and Nigel Birt (Mid Devon Branch Secretary)*



Bowderdon mini-ring in the marquee at Buckfast Abbey

WI taster day at Buckfast Abbey – view from an instructor

So, how do you aim a talk about bells and ringing to 40 members of the Women's Institute? This was my dilemma after an invitation from Nicola Jones, Guild Publicity Officer. She had got together with Geoff Pring of Buckfast Abbey to arrange a day for WI members to learn about ringing. My task was to give them an introduction lasting about 45 minutes.

I decided to incorporate the use of my mobile bell simulator and other visual aids. Starting with a brief history of bells I explained early forms of bell founding by itinerant founders and outlined modern bell casting and tuning. Next was an introduction to English bell ringing, moving on to explaining rounds and call changes. Six ladies were persuaded to stand with a handbell each and a number hanging from their necks while they 'walked' call changes up to Queens and managed to ring some very respectable changes.

Next was a look at method ringing and six ladies came forward to each take over a handbell and number so that they could 'walk' Plain Hunting whilst the 'audience' wrote down the changes on their worksheets. This proved to be by far the most popular part of the morning. It was then time to answer some questions before watching and listening to the Abbey bells. A band of ringers from across Devon proceeded to raise the bells and give a demonstration while the ladies watched via a screen in the school room.

Following lunch, the group was split into two and one half visited Buckfastleigh church for a taster session. Three tutors coped manfully with a stream of ladies keen to have a go, with abilities ranging from reasonably competent existing ringers through returners with some knowledge to complete beginners. Halfway through the afternoon the groups changed places, at which point a short halt was called as the temperature in the ringing room had become a little humid. Eventually the stream of aspiring ringers came to an end and all went back to the Abbey. There were opportunities to try the Bowerdon mini-ring that had been set up in a marquee and the helpers eventually demonstrated ringing at the end of each group by ringing quarter peals. A final short 'washing up' session brought the proceedings to a close.

It was very clear that the day had been much enjoyed by the ladies and that another similar day was needed as the demand far outstripped the available places. Many thanks to Nicola for the organisation, to all the helpers who gave up their time to assist and, of course, Geoff and the Abbey authorities for allowing the use of their excellent facilities.

Martin Mansley

AGM of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers (CCCBR)



The waterfront at Ipswich

The Central Council AGM took part on Saturday 2 September. The four representatives from the Guild (Alena Wardle, Barbara Hemsley, Charlotte Boyce and James Kirkcaldy) were all present at the meeting and at the Ringing World AGM which preceded it.

The meeting has recently been preceded, on the Friday, with various ringing opportunities for local ringers to progress. Two of us, plus Charlotte's bagman, had volunteered to help with the ringing courses. In the end, the train strike meant that James joined a quarter peal tour of

some of the Ipswich towers.

There was open ringing at St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich in the evening followed by an opportunity to meet and socialise with other representatives at a local pub.

Saturday morning started at 09:30 with registration and a chance to engage with members of the CCCBR workgroups. This was followed by the Ringing World AGM which passed uneventfully.

Saturday afternoon saw the CCCBR AGM start at 14:00. The business of the afternoon proceeded until the proposal to reduce the number of representatives for Societies. This had been described as turkeys voting for Christmas! A long debate then occurred which resulted in the AGM having to be brought to a swifter conclusion than expected, as the venue was needing to lock up for the day. The result was that the presentations to the retiring President and Deputy President took place on the steps outside.

The AGM was followed by a further social event at the former St Peter's church with beer (and other drinks including Devon ciders!) supplied by the local Briarbank Brewery and food supplied by a local Indian Restaurant, the latter being prepared on site, not a takeaway!

Sunday morning ringing was at pre-arranged local towers. This was followed by a presentation on future strategy given by Simon Linford (retiring President) and Tina Stoecklin (President). Sunday afternoon saw a number of further courses held for local ringers.

A zoom meeting will update the membership with the decisions made at the AGM.

James Kirkcaldy



Simon Linford ready for the proposal to reduce the number of representatives

Devon Ringers' Council

The following events have been arranged by the Devon Ringers' Council (DRC) for members of both the Guild of Devonshire Ringers and the Devon Association of Ringers.

Day trip to Lundy Island



The church of St Helen's on Lundy Island

The tower with its ten bells has been booked for Saturday 12 July 2025. The original idea of this trip was to hold the annual 10, 8, and 6 bell competitions at St Helen's as part of the Guild's 150th and the Association's 100th year celebrations. For various reasons a competition is not viable, but a day trip is doable and open to all. The format for the day will depend on numbers attending and sailing times. Watch this space.

Ian Avery

Carol Service 2023

This year's carol service will take place at St Marychurch, Torquay on Saturday 9 December at 4pm. The bells will be available from 3pm and after the service. Mulled wine and mince pies will also be available in the church after the service. There is plenty of on-street parking available in and around St Marychurch, and there is also a public car park nearby in Hampton Avenue, TQ1 4PR.

The 2024 carol service will be held at Crediton on Saturday 14 December at 4pm.

Devon Bellringers' Carol Service



Saturday
9th December 2023
4.00 p.m.



ST. MARYCHURCH, TORQUAY
by kind permission of Father Nick Debney

Bells available from 3pm and after the service – ALL WELCOME
Mince pies and mulled wine available after the service

Ian Avery

Striking Competitions 2023

Saturday 21 October

The 2023 striking competitions will be hosted by the Aylesbeare Deanery Branch. The rules for each competition can be found on the Guild web site.



Withycombe Raleigh, Exmouth

Morning

Clyst St George: 6 bell inter-tower competition for JP Fidler Cup

Refreshments: Available
Parking: In the lane outside the church
Toilets: Available

Littleham, Exmouth (back 6): 6 bell novice competition for John Longridge Plate

Refreshments: Available if enough teams entered (donations requested)
Parking: Available on the roads around the church
Toilets: Available in NND room

Withycombe Raleigh (middle 8): 8 bell novice competition for David Willis Plate

Refreshments: Hall available from 12 noon (the hall is booked by another group in the morning)
Light lunch available from 12.30pm onwards in the church hall
Parking: Available within the church grounds or the surrounding roads
Toilets: Available from 11am (do not enter main hall)

Afternoon

Withycombe Raleigh (back 8): 8 bell inter-branch competition for the Andrews Trophy

Touches - 168 Single Oxford Bob Triples or Hunslet Bob Triples (see Guild website for compositions)
2pm: Results in church from the morning competitions, followed by the draw for the afternoon ringing
Refreshments: Available in the hall all afternoon
Parking: Within the church grounds or surrounding roads
Toilets: Available in the church hall

John Martin (Secretary)

150th Anniversary of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Next year marks the 150th anniversary of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers. You may say, 'so what?' Well, the Devon Guild was the first society of ringers to be formed in the country – in fact, in the world. The only older groups were the London-based associations such as the Ancient Society of College Youths and the Society of Cumberland Youths and other very local groups.

This means that Devon was at the forefront of a new way of looking at ringers. Before this many bands of ringers were considered to be ruffians who used the bells for their own ends – often including gambling and drinking. The Guild of Devonshire Ringers was an attempt to make ringers respectable and respected. It was mainly led by clergy and landed gentry who had encountered ringing at the major universities and saw it as an intellectual exercise.

Once the Guild started its work the wider ringing 'world' soon caught on and other regional societies of ringers were formed. This eventually led to the ringing landscape that we see today with regional associations and guilds covering the whole country and several overseas as well.

We hope this background explains why next year is so important. At the end of September the Guild committee is going to debate ways of marking this event. Suggested events include a dinner to be held in the Exeter area on Friday 15 March. Other events will be held the following day as well.

The Committee meeting will decide the format of all these events, including the venue for the dinner. The main thing at present is that you have these dates in your diary and are ready to join in, if possible.

Later in the year (September) the Central Council will be holding their annual meeting in Devon and, no doubt, there will be opportunities to join in the proceedings and help out as required. The September Committee meeting will discuss this as well.

So, a very exciting year in prospect and really something to look forward to.

If you have any questions about this, either speak with Guild officers or have a look at:

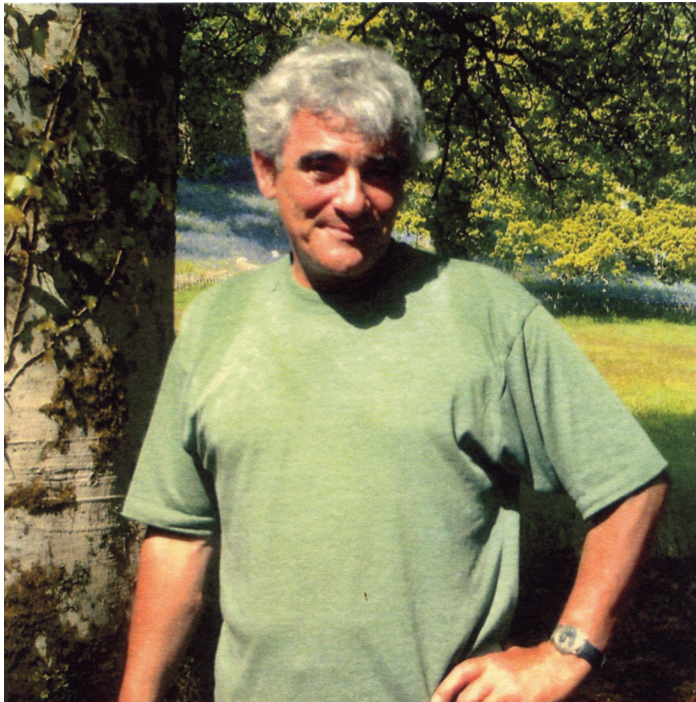
<https://devonringers.org.uk/guild/guild-150th-anniversary>

Martin Mansley

Obituaries

Andrew (Andy) Stevens

2 June 1945-1 July 2023



We are sorry to have to report the death of Andrew Stevens following a long illness. Andy was born in Merriott, Somerset, with the family settling in Bognor Regis in Sussex in 1947. He was educated at Felpham Primary School, St Petroc's School in Bude, and Steyning Grammar School and then graduated in Music from Bulmershe College (now merged with Reading University) before dedicating his working life to music education. He was an inspirational teacher and many of his students went on to study music and music technology both professionally and as a hobby.

Andy moved to Exeter to a new job as Head of Music at St Thomas' High School from January 1979 and took early retirement in 1997. There is not enough room here to describe his musical attributes in full but he worked tirelessly as a teacher, encourager and enabler in all that he did. He remained heavily enthused and involved with the county music ensembles for schoolchildren long after retirement. Teaching was his great strength, as witnessed by the many people he patiently and diligently taught to ring.

Andy learned to ring at Steyning in Sussex, but most of his ringing was done at Chichester Cathedral with elder brother Philip. He rang eight peals for two societies between 1963 and 1967. From information gleaned in GDR annual reports, we believe he first joined the St Thomas, Exeter band in 1983 and became tower captain in 1985. He retired from the post and gave up ringing because of poor health in 2020.

We have tried to identify anecdotes to flesh out a snapshot of Andy and his ringing activities, and in every case the reply came back: 'Ringing teas!' because Andy would generously provide all manner of refreshments every practice night at St Thomas. A table would be set up in the entrance lobby below the ringing room and a delightful spread laid out for those attending: dips, crisps, nibbles, fizzy pop . . . and jam sandwiches!

John Staddon of Alphington has kindly supplied some one-liner comments from those who knew Andy well through his support of the bands at Kenn and Powderham:

AR: *'He was amazingly welcoming at St Thomas and a fantastic teacher. He kept us loyal by cooking fabulous food for us to have in the tower every week during our ringing session.'*

NB: *'It was always a treat to go to St Thomas on a Thursday evening, not only for the ringing, but also to taste and enjoy some of the wonderful food that Andy took so much time and trouble to prepare.'*

SR: *'Andy thought about more than just teaching ringing, he made sure there was sustenance for the team and ensured they would never leave. More caviar and olives anyone?'*

R&JT: *'A very kind, gentle and patient man who made the most fantastic, huge pasties ever! Happy memories of ringing with Andy.'*

The RRD editor has come across a short film of Andy, taken in an unidentified churchyard with immaculate call changes heard in the

background. In it Andy is miming to a non-ringer (real or imaginary) exactly how ringing a bell is done: his expansive gestures and facial expressions capture the process perfectly and it makes for entertaining viewing. Here is the link: <https://devonringers.org.uk/gdr-media/photos/news/2023/Andy-Stevens.mp4> or use this QR code:



A clip from the video

You might spot a couple of other ringers that you recognise!

Philip Stevens and Wendy Campbell

Meg Way

24 January 1941-24 June 2023



Meg moved to Devon from Oxfordshire with her husband Ron over twenty years ago and very soon became a familiar face in the West Devon and North Cornwall ringing scene.

She learnt to ring at Ashted in Surrey as a teenager, and continued until three years ago when her health dictated otherwise. She rang for many years in the Home Counties, and was honoured to have been a member of the Curfew Tower (Windsor Castle) band, only retiring from that when she moved to Devon. She rang in the region of 40 quarter peals at Curfew, including one for the marriage of Prince Charles and Diana.

When living near Oxford, she was a regular visitor to many local towers as well as her home tower of Chinnor. She rang countless quarter peals, and quite often was out ringing every day in the week. The tower captain of Benson recalls that she rang with him in a peal one day, and turned up for a quarter the next day wearing cotton gloves as her hands were so sore.

Following her move to Devon, she joined the band at Northlew, but soon discovered the method ringers at Marhamchurch and was a regular at their practice, and a familiar face at Bridgerule and surrounding towers. She was a member of the St Brannock's Society, which enabled her to keep her hand in with 8-bell methods (mainly Triples), and ring in many quarter peal attempts for that group. She joined the monthly Surprise practices at Okehampton and extended her repertoire to include Yorkshire, although she was only happy if she had a 'minder'.

Her map reading skills were legendary, and really came to the fore on the many Bank Holiday outings organised by Henry Trewin. She would spend hours working out the routes to the, sometimes obscure, towers that Henry needed to 'mop up'. I was always happy to drive, knowing that we would not get lost. When Satnav came along, I turned it on once just for interest. Meg had a one sided discussion with it, but we still went her way. It was switched off after that tower!

She and Ron were regulars on the Taw, Torridge and Tamar group days out, and although she no longer rang, she still came each month to catch up with her many friends. It was on one of these days out that she was taken ill and made her last trip to hospital. A great shock for all those present.

Her funeral was at South Molton, and was attended by many of her ringing friends. Sadly ill health, and the distance involved, prevented some old friends from attending. At Ron's request, the bells were rung open before and after the service. The service touch was rung by a band representing all the groups that she rang with, and ended with diminishing rounds Where the bells stand gradually one by one until only the tenor is left. A very moving sound.

I was lucky to have known Meg since the late 1980s when we lived in the same village in Oxfordshire. She will always be remembered as a very kind and loyal lady, and will be missed by so many.

Meg and Ron would have been married for 59 years in September, and in all that time she couldn't persuade him to learn to ring. They have two sons (Robert and Tony), their wives Caroline and Jan, and granddaughter Esmé. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them all.

Louise James

Aylesbeare Branch Woodbury Outing



The glorious grounds at Nynehead Court

This year the Woodbury (and friends) fourth outing left Devon to take in four towers and a pub in a compact, easily-cycled route in the Wellington area of Somerset. In the end three of us cycled the 8.5 miles, starting and finishing at the last tower. In addition to regular helpers from the Aylesbeare Branch we were pleased to be joined at various stages by John Hill and Ian and Wendy Campbell. After ringing at St John the Baptist, Wellington (1949 Taylor 8), we made our way through the food festival crowds via a coffee shop to All Saints, Rockwell Green (1908 Taylor 6). It turns out that the local ringer who met us is a regular at Exminster practices.



St John the Baptist, Wellington

Despite a wonderful lunch at The Martlet Inn, Langford Budville, and after some difficulty finding the way in, we had some very good ringing on the six at St Peter, only 200 yards up the road, with beautiful views of the Vale of Taunton Deane and the Quantocks. Highlights included Stedman Doubles, Cambridge Minor and St Martin's Doubles. Our last tower was the six at All Saints, Nynehead set in the picturesque grounds of Nynehead Court. Once a large private house, it now functions as a residential care home. We had a very appreciative audience and one lady told us it had made her week. Her late husband had been taught to ring by David Purnell at South Petherton. Hearing and seeing us had reminded her of the fun and companionship that bell ringing had offered them both for many years. They would definitely welcome more visiting bands.



All Saints, Nynehead



Roger, Thomas and Oliver at Nynehead

Oliver Coldrick

East Devon Branch Back to the 1820s

I think Covid set us all back a bit, and it certainly upset the rhythm of life. Lack of ringing did little to improve things and once the restrictions were lifted many towers were reluctant to have visitors they weren't too sure of. Our usual annual activities of a ringers' dinner went out the window as did all our plans for a ringing tour, so what could possibly replace them? What about a cruise along the Jurassic coast?

As soon as it was possible, early in the season before things got too busy, we tried it out. The cruise didn't go far because the sea was deemed



Combe Raleigh ringers and friends

too rough and we returned to the estuary. This seemed on the face of it to be a disappointment, but some of us had taken part in dinghy racing in our younger days before we became embroiled in church bell ringing. To us it was fascinating to see how much the estuary had changed over the years and with a cream tea on board we could recommend it. Thus later in the year, on a lovely sunny day, we cruised along the coast.

How do we follow that was the next question to be answered? Well, quite obviously, with a cruise on an inland waterway. So it was that thirteen of us made our way to the Grand Western Canal at Tiverton for a cruise in a horse-drawn barge. Our guide gave an interesting introduction including, of course, what to do in an emergency. It was only later that he told us the water was only two to three feet deep! Quietly flowing along the canal gave us the chance of a glimpse into some superlative gardens on the water's edge and close-up views of the wildlife. Soft pink water lilies graced the waterway at one point, quite beautiful. Children had great fun feeding the ducks as we went along: these must be the best fed ducks in Devon. On the return journey we were all requested to keep silent and listen. Listen to what? The children all ceased their excited chatter and even the adults became silent. There was nothing to hear save for the rippling water and sounds of the wild life while up ahead the gentle clip-clop of the horse's hooves. It was almost dream-like, or at least, much as it must have been in the 1820s when the canal opened. If you haven't been, I recommend you try it: we all enjoyed it.

Trevor Hitchcock

Never Strikes Twice

Well, it is said that lightning never strikes in the same place twice. Anyone who believes that and shelters under a tree that has already been struck once may be in for a nasty surprise.

After weeks of fine dry sunny weather, inevitably, as the day of the East Devon striking competition approached, it became unsettled. The day before was fine, but on the day down came the rain as the weatherman warned of thundery showers, heavy at times. Shortly before the start time rather than showers it was more like being under a waterfall. When it eased slightly there was a mad rush to get into the church. I felt for our judge, sitting in the nearby primary school porch. He hadn't the warmest or driest spot in the world. Fortunately, as the afternoon wore on it became warmer and a lot drier and the threatened thunder and lightning passed us by.

We were warmly welcomed by the Offwell ringers who had arranged for a plentiful supply of food and drink to sustain us throughout the afternoon, laid on in the church and for which many of us were truly glad.

It was good to see so many gathered in the church and in the end we had ten teams entered. This led to a minor shock for our judge as he had been told to expect eight teams and after the eighth had rung he was quietly packing up when a ninth team and then a tenth team began to ring. It is always good to have an adaptable judge: thank you, David. We have two categories, one for regular tower bands and one for bands of any make-up. Between them they rang call changes, Grandsire, Plain Bob, plain hunt or Norwich Surprise Minor to suit their mood. While bands can choose whatever method they like, it must add to the difficulty for the poor judge. Our judge (David Hird) dealt with the vagaries of the weather and various methods/changes with equanimity. In presenting the results he gave each team valuable advice on how they might improve.

By winning Class 1 and the Edward Summers Memorial Shield **Honiton St Paul** repeated their triumph of last year, (so lightning does strike twice), with some superb ringing of Grandsire Doubles which was a joy to listen to. In second place were **Feniton**, the relative newcomers as far as the competition goes, ringing call changes. Clearly the Guild President has

trained them well and they were an excellent example of what can be achieved. I congratulate them.

In Class 2 it was really no surprise that the winners of the Alan Tucker Memorial Bell were the **It's a Surprise** team ringing Norwich Surprise Minor. To my untrained ear this was an excellent piece of ringing, even if the judge did detect a method mistake. It has been a long time since any team in the competition took up such a challenge. In second place were the **Jurassic Ladies Orange** team ringing Plain Bob Doubles. It should be pointed out that they were only a whisker behind the winners of their class so you can conclude it was another excellent piece of ringing.

Everyone who took part deserves our thanks and congratulations and I look forward to next year's competition with more tower bands taking part. The class winners need to watch out; the challengers are close behind you.



East Devon Ringing Master, Ian Rees and Branch Chair, Trevor Hitchcock



It's a Surprise! Winners of the Alan Tucker Memorial Bell
Trevor Hitchcock, Patricia Slade, David Hird (judge)



Winners of Class 1, Honiton
 Theo Millard, Anne Burn, Kirsten Hawkins, Ian Rees, David Brewer,
 Kathy Matthews

Trevor Hitchcock

Hats off to East Devon ladies!



L to r: Jan, Delie, Anne (Sidmouth), Sarah, Trevor, Trish, Maureen, Lisa, Margaret,
 Judith, Anne (Axminster)

On 19 July 2023 East Devon Ladies celebrated ten years of ringing together! In a slightly different format, once again brilliantly organised by Maureen Davey, we met for morning ringing at Seaton, with methods



The brave few: Delie, Lisa, Sally, Ruth



Ladies who lunch! (after ringing)

including Grandsire, Plain Bob and some call changes. This was followed by a lovely bring and share lunch on Seaton beach and for those brave enough a bracing swim!

Anne, with photos by Patricia Slade

Collaboration between East Devon Guild and Association members

Two recent events in East Devon have involved both Association and Guild members, working together for the benefit of both.

22 August: Fourteen 'Andy's Angels' visited five towers in East Somerset

Andy's Angels is a group of call change improvers and more experienced ringers who meet regularly at towers in East Devon with the aim of developing good listening and handling skills. It is envisaged some members will continue with call changes, some will ring method and some will ring both. The outing, brilliantly organised by Lisa Clarke, visited Curry Mallet, Drayton, Aller, Langport and Broadway. A very enjoyable day was had by all. Thanks go to Lisa and our great driver Steve from TRIP Community Transport.



Rose at Broadway Church



A great day out

L to R: Andy, Donna, Janice, John, Lindsay, Janice, Rose, Anne, Dee, Maureen,
 Lisa, Grace, Delie, Crispin

26 August: A ringing day in Musbury to support their bell appeal

Bands from Musbury, Axminster, Honiton, Uplyme, Colyton, Exminster and The Jurassic Ladies each had an hour slot throughout the day. Although the bells are not the easiest to ring at present there were some lovely call changes, some general ringing and two well-rung quarter peals.

The day, organised by Musbury ringer Lindsay Smitham, also involved cream teas and cakes in her lovely garden and raised £1641.30 towards the bell fund. I'm sure Lindsay would welcome any further donations if they were forthcoming. Her e-mail is lindsaysmitham77@gmail.com.

Musbury, Devon, St Michael
Saturday, 26 August 2023 in 42m
1260 Plain Bob Minor

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Lisa Clarke | 4 Patricia Slade |
| 2 Kirsten J Hawkins | 5 Peter G Simpson |
| 3 Theo Millard | 6 Ian J Rees (C) |

Rung as part of the Musbury Tower Ringing Day, and to congratulate Theo on his 'A' level results.



Plain Bob Minor band

Patricia Slade, Theo Millard, Peter Simpson, Kirsten Hawkins, Ian Rees, Lisa Clarke

Musbury, Devon, St Michael
Saturday, 26 August 2023 in 45m
1260 Doubles (2m)

780 Grandsire, 480 Plain Bob

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 Judith Reynolds | 4 Delie Perry |
| 2 Maureen Davey | 5 Anne Burn |
| 3 Lisa Clarke (C) | 6 Patricia Slade |

Rung by the East Devon Jurassic Ladies as part of the Musbury Ringing Day - the first fund-raising event for the restoration of the bells.



Jurassic Ladies Doubles band

Maureen Davey, Delie Perry, Lisa Clarke, Patricia Slade, Judith Reynolds, Anne Burn

Anne Burn

Exeter Branch

Exeter Cathedral Broken Clapper



It never seems to be the wooden part of the composite clapper that breaks – only the metal part of the ball breaking off, as happened to the 11th clapper on July 23. This is not the first time the clapper has broken but the old SG clapper has been temporarily refitted while decisions are made what to do about it.

Ian Campbell

Exeter St Mark's summer barbecue



In what is now becoming an annual event, the St Mark's ringers were invited to a barbecue at Matt Hilling's house. It was good to catch up with some friends that we don't often see, including Rob Franklin and Gareth Gill. Having eaten our fill the entertainment was provided by Alice Hilling, who challenged us to a skipping game.



David Hird rose to the challenge

Ian Campbell

Crediton Outing

On Saturday 12 August 17 ringers plus one or two 'extras' set off early and met at the first tower, Staplegrove, on the outskirts of Taunton. The weather there was very kind to us and we were able to take advantage of their regular Saturday morning coffee shop sitting outside in glorious sunshine. This was welcome as the (ground-floor) ringing room was very small, just adequate for those ringing, but no more.

After 45 minutes ringing we were off to Broomfield, about a 15 minute drive away. We thought we were locked out as the key safe refused to disgorge its contents, but then someone tried the church main entrance door and it was open!

Another 45 minutes and it was time to disperse for lunch. Adjacent to Broomfield was Fyne Court, a National Trust venue, largely gardens and woods as the house had burnt down in 1894. Some of us went there for a picnic or the café, but most importantly to make use of the loos, always a problem on outings!

We all met up again at Holford on the north east side of the Quantocks, followed by a lovely drive over the hills to Crowcombe, nestled under the western side of the hills. It was a steep climb up to the ringing room above the organ and we had to compete with a rehearsing organist.

Our final tower was meant to be Bishops Lydeard but at the last minute it was changed due to potential instability of the tower there and so we went to Combe Florey, and another steep climb up narrow and very worn steps.

After our drive home most of us went to Cairney's Bistro in Crediton where Jim provided us with his usual excellent fare.

Thanks are due to Bob Lunnon for organising the trip and selecting five churches with very good bells to ring. Also to Geoff Sparling, our hard-working tower captain, for making sure everyone had the chance to ring at every tower.

These outings are not just enjoyable but an excellent way for those at the early stage of their ringing careers to experience different bells. We were very fortunate to have along with us three very experienced ringers from Exeter who were able to lend their expertise. Particular mention should be made of Josh Lobb, our least experienced learner, who coped extremely well with what can be a nervy experience and undoubtedly he will benefit hugely from his first outing.

Robin Lavery



Outside Crowcombe church (photo: Paul Lobb)

Mid-Devon Branch

Future Events

Plans are underway to hold another two bell ringing taster days at Buckfast Abbey for the WIs in Devon. We've had a good response so far from those who weren't able to attend the event in August, so we are anticipating enough interest to warrant holding two sessions. This time the numbers will be limited to 30 for each session so that it is a little easier on the bell handling teachers in the afternoon.

These taster days will be held from 12 noon to 5pm on Thursday 19 October and Thursday 26 October. Any offers of help would be appreciated by the Guild Publicity Officer publicityofficer@devonringers.org.uk.

Nicola Jones

Buckfast Fair 2023

Buckfast Fair was held during the first week of August. There were fifty interesting craft stalls, artisan food and snacks, choirs, singers and instrumentalists, Morris dancers, beekeepers and of course, bell ringers.

The Bowerdon mini-ring was one of the top attractions for children at the Fair, beaten marginally by the small armadillo brought along by the

animal man. Children seemed to understand from a very young age that pulling the ropes made a noise and pulling two ropes at once an even better noise! Several planned demonstrations by ringers were delayed as more groups of children appeared just as we were about to start.

We gave two demonstrations of the 'big bells' at the Abbey, both call changes and method. I remained supervising the mini-ring at those times and it was lovely to hear all the compliments from the listening audience. Particularly rewarding was seeing the faces of two newish ringers from Ashburton, a father and son, who arrived at the opportune moment to go up to the Abbey tower and try the big bells: for the son, having only ever rung at the one tower and mainly on one bell, it made his day.

It was a shame that forecasts of high winds cancelled the third day of the Fair because although the mini-ring and marquee were OK, the smaller tents and traders might have struggled. Despite the shortening, we succeeded in handing out many leaflets with QR codes and email addresses and we can only hope that some people will investigate ringing as a potential activity. It was most encouraging that several of our own learners came along to try the mini-ring and we are hoping some of them will become Buckfast Abbey bell ringers in time.

Many thanks to Geoff Pring for organising the Fair and including the bell ringers. Also to all the ringers who both rang and minded the mini-ring. Looking forward to another one next year!

Katie Law

Mid Devon Mini Outing, July 8



Our tour began with the church of St Giles in Little Torrington, once described in an 1887 gazetteer as 'ancient but good'. The current ring of six includes a tenor weighing in at 11½ cwt, four others installed by John Pennington in 1804 and a more recent treble of 1906.

We then moved onwards to Great Torrington. The current ring of 8 bells (14cwt) was hung in 1934 and more recent changes created a very pleasant first floor ringing area with a sturdy modern wooden staircase.

After Torrington we made our way to St Giles in the Wood. Here were six bells, 10 cwt.

High Bickington, our fourth tower is a lightweight eight which are easy enough to ring despite the long Devon-style ropes. They consist of a 9cwt tenor, six cast in 1753 but augmented and rehung in 1911 in a cast iron frame by Taylor.

Our final stop was Burrington, with bells that challenged most of us in one way or another. Six bells with an 11cwt tenor, cast in 1788 but with a new fifth bell in 1983.

It was a most enjoyable afternoon. Thank you to Rodney and Sheila for the planning and organization.

After this some of the team went on to The Devonshire Dumpling for some supper. It was an ideal venue for supper and we had a very warm welcome with the food orders being dispensed early as we arrived in good time. The food was excellent as was the friendly service – a very suitable end to an enjoyable outing.

Katie Law (photo by Julia Brett)

Extracts from Mid-Devon Tower Talk

Branch 6 bell practice at Abbotskerswell

On a very warm evening the rather small ringing room at Abbotskerswell was perhaps not the best choice for a practice. At the same time, we attracted several visitors and managed to keep the bells going for most of the evening. We were pleased to meet Julia from Ireland, who was staying with Mike and Jill Wigney, and Helen Mansley with partner Matt. As usual, a good variety of methods was rung from rounds and call changes to 4-spliced Surprise Minor and it was good to see Nigel back on the end of a rope for this one.

We have to admit that the heat got to us eventually but altogether it was a very enjoyable evening. Thanks to Abbotskerswell ringers for the warm welcome.

Branch 8 bell practice at St James, Teignmouth

When there is a branch practice on the same night as a tower practice, the latter is often cancelled in favour of the former. Thus St Marychurch practice was cancelled to allow members to attend Teignmouth. In fact, two tower captains found themselves with an evening off ringing master duties as the practice was run by branch assistant ringing master, Mike Wigney. He was kept very busy in the churchyard rounding up the next team to ring. Several attempts were made to ring the method of the evening (Double Norwich) and eventually it came round. This allowed several ringers a chance to ring it after a long break and indeed this was very much the pattern for the evening with many people attempting something they don't often get the chance to tackle. Several touches of Grandsire Doubles were rung along with Plain Bob Triples. For many the highlight of the evening was a very well-struck touch of Stedman Triples, even if it did get off to a slow start when no-one could work out who was conducting!

As always, very many thanks to the Teignmouth ringers for a warm welcome and we do hope you all enjoyed it as much as the rest of us did.

Doubles Variations

There is a wonderful notice in Stokeinteignhead tower: 'We don't make mistakes, we ring variations'.

In fact, the word variation is a technical term in ringing. Although it can refer to any number of bells, it is most common in Doubles ringing. Basically, a variation is when we ring a base method but use a call which is not standard to that method. This 'variation' has a separate name from the base method. A popular example is April Day. The base method is Plain Bob but the call is a Grandsire Single. This is an example of a variation where the alternative work takes place over several changes. For this reason the call needs to be made earlier than normal for Plain Bob. Some popular variations are

- April Day – Plain Bob with a Grandsire Single
- Kennington – Plain Bob with a Reverse Canterbury Bob
- Southrepps – Reverse Canterbury with a Plain Bob bob
- Old Doubles – Plain bob with an Old Single
- Norfolk – Plain Bob with an Old Single and a Plain Bob bob

An Old Single is 123 at the lead end instead of 125 as in a plain lead of Plain Bob. The bell making 2nds is unaffected and the bell dodging 3-4 down makes thirds and back out. The other two bells plain hunt.

The Central Council has struggled at times with the naming of variations and the 1980 collection of Doubles methods decided that an Old Single was just a different call for Plain Bob and not a variation. Recently the CC workgroup dealing with methods has gone back to naming Old Doubles and Norfolk as proper variations. You can make your own mind up on that one!!

Joint 10 bell practice with South West Branch at Tavistock

Many thanks to Rodney Horder for this report – sadly, your scribe was unable to attend – just occasionally life gets in the way of ringing!!!

Just three of us from the Mid Devon Branch attended, braving a foggy Dartmoor for the drive over. Fortunately, there was good support from the South West Branch, and Sue King, Guild Education Officer, had come all the way from Sidmouth, making a total of 20 ringers present. Ringing included Plain Bob and Grandsire Caters, Stedman Triples, and a significant amount of rounds and call changes.

We have found in the past that August is often a poorly attended practice so many thanks to the host branch for keeping the ball rolling. Looking forward to next year when it is our turn.

Raising and Lowering morning Saturday 2 September



The sun was shining and the view across South Devon to Dartmoor was stunning as we drove down the hill into the 'other' (much older) East Ogwell. Janet and Katie were already hard at work and tea and coffee were efficiently dispensed. It was great to meet some new faces and to have such an enthusiastic group of helpers.

East Ogwell ringing room is a little cramped, so we soon got both windows open and did a bit of 'shift' work. Then it was off to a routine of raise – feedback – lower – feedback for the rest of the morning. It soon became clear that not everyone was used to the Devon raise (start on the third swing) and we also needed to define how we wanted to finish the lower – sadly no-one resorted to the old Devon captain's method of Stamped Foot!

All these things caused very useful debate and we did manage one 'Bristol fashion' raise. After about an hour we trooped back downstairs where bacon rolls were dispensed courtesy of Janet. This seems to have become a very welcome tradition for these mornings. Then it was outside for the regulation photo kindly taken by Mike, the new church warden.

It was also pleasing that four participants asked to join the Guild and were duly elected. We do hope to see you at future practices and events.

Once more back up the tower for a final session and it was clear that quite a bit of progress had been made already. We finally finished a few minutes early and, strangely, there seemed very little enthusiasm when it was suggested we carry on again in the afternoon!

Very many thanks to all. To the students for working so hard and taking our constructive criticism so cheerfully. To the helpers for so willingly filling in for bands and passing on their ideas. To Janet and her team for the refreshments and to Mike and the East Ogwell congregation for the warm welcome and the cakes. We did leave a few for the congregation for the next day. Raising and lowering in peal is definitely not easy but on the other hand, as we found several times, it is very satisfying when you get it right!



Martin Mansley

North-East Branch New Branch Secretary

I'm very pleased to be able to welcome Mike Shipton as our new branch secretary, who has kindly agreed to take over this role from Jenny Jones. Mike is currently doing the handover of the email address and other documentation with Jenny and will I'm sure be in touch once that is complete.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Jenny for all her work during her time as secretary and for staying on whilst her replacement was found.

John Martin

Troyte Ringing Centre Young Ringers' achievements

The young ringers at Bampton have been busy recently.



Fergus achieved level 5

Fergus rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Minor, on an inside bell, on 2 June at Huntsham, thus completing level 5 of the 'Learning the Ropes' Scheme. Fergus began ringing in 2015 with the Bampton After School Bell Club. To complete the scheme to this last level he has rung more than the required six quarters and he has already started working through the 'Learning the Ropes Plus' achievement logbook. He is currently viewing university placements that have bell ringing societies.

Huntsham, Devon, All Saints

Friday, 2 June 2023 in 44m

1260 Plain Bob Minor

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Michael Hatchett | 4 Sheila Scofield |
| 2 Charlotte Boyce | 5 Leslie Boyce |
| 3 Fergus Kettleborough | 6 John R Martin (C) |

Fergus completes Learning the Ropes Level 5 with this quarter peal. Also a 70th birthday compliment to Sheila.



The quarter peal band



Eddie rang his first quarter peal

Eddie learnt to handle a bell with the Bampton After School Bell Club in 2018 and has recently returned to ringing. He has made good progress during the last six months and rang inside to Plain Bob Doubles on the Piglet bells at Uffculme on 7 July for his first quarter.

Uffculme, Devon, Piglet Ring

Friday, 7 July 2023 in 35m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Sheila J Scofield | 4 Leslie E Boyce |
| 2 Eddie Grabke | 5 Fergus Kettleborough |
| 3 John R Martin (C) | 6 Charlotte A Boyce |

First quarter, rung at the first attempt – 2



Jonah achieves level 1

Jonah asked last summer if he could learn to ring at Bampton, having missed the opportunity at the After School Bell Club due to closure during COVID. He has recently achieved level 1 Learning the Ropes and was awarded his certificate and badge, along with 'The Ringers Guide to Learning the Ropes', at Bampton on Thursday 29 June.

Sheila Scofield

NE Young Ringers Summer ringing

With limited time available when a number of the young ringers in the branch were available we managed a few sessions this summer. On Wednesday 16 August we were welcomed by Phil at Stoodleigh. With the treble bell now back in place, it was an ideal tower to visit with a young band. Gil and Jonah rang call changes and some Kaleidoscope, while Eddie, Red and Thomas were able to ring courses of Plain Bob Doubles.

On Monday 21 August we ventured into the Aylesbeare Branch for Fergus to conduct his first quarter peal. Thanks to Thomas for stepping in at the last minute to ring the tenor when Eddie was unwell.

Clyst St George, Devon, St George

Monday, 21 August 2023 in 45m

1260 Plain Bob Doubles

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Tom Mitchell | 4 Leslie Boyce |
| 2 Mandy Burnett | 5 Fergus Kettleborough(C) |
| 3 Sheila Scofield | 6 Thomas Selley-Steer |

First quarter as conductor at first attempt

Sheila Scofield

North East Branch Young Ringers

The Famous Five go wild on Exmoor!



The youngsters' picnic

Eddie, Fergus, Gil, Jonah and Thomas had a great time on the branch young ringers' outing. A mix-up over access to the bells at Winsford led them to an intense game of 'hunt-the-key', although this began to pall after 20 minutes. With the help of a church neighbour's phone (no mobile signal in Winsford) and local ringer Colin Wilkins, we finally got to ring their majestic sounding bells.

A picnic on the village green led later to some exploits which had definitely not been covered in the risk assessment! Then on to Exford for some good call changes, Mexican wave and Plain Bob Doubles. For some of us the draw of ice cream from the village stores afterwards was irresistible. All in all, good weather, good scenery, good bells and good company.



Eddie and Mandy on the swings, Sheila blackberrying

Les Boyce

NE Branch Young Ringers

Five NE Branch young ringers had a good morning's practice at Stoodleigh on Wednesday 16 August. We rang rounds, call changes, Kaleidoscope (place making), Plain Bob Doubles and finally 'whole pull and stand'. Thanks to all the parents for supporting this event and to Phil Turner for use of the bells.

ART Level 1 certificate awarded



We've been teaching new learners since autumn last year using the ART programme and were delighted to be able to award a Level 1 certificate to Isabelle who rang rounds on eight with some assistance for the first time on Coronation Day. The Level 1 award followed a couple of weeks later after some further training and a very determined effort on Isabelle's part to master the elements of bell handling to pass the assessment.

Margaret Shackleton

Isabelle is already making good progress towards Level 2

Bells, Brass and Cream Teas



Some well-known Devon ringers joined the 70 people attending this tea and concert event at St Peter's, Tiverton. The Kingston St Mary's Handbell Ringers performed a selection of popular tunes on handbells, ranging from Handel's 'Arrival of the Queen of Sheba' to pieces by contemporary composers. In between the handbell sets, ringers Tim Bayton and Sam Massey played an equally varied range of duets for horn. The afternoon ended with cream teas and a sumptuous selection of cakes at the back of the church, where a craft stall, raffle and displays also proved popular. We were also pleased to welcome Janet and Neil Deem who were representing the Devon Church Bell Restoration Fund. St Peter's has applied to the Fund for a grant toward work in the tower. Our picture shows the performers taking a bow after the concert.

The event raised over £700 for the church's bell restoration appeal. St Peter's ring of eight by Taylor's is celebrating its centenary this year. To mark the anniversary the opportunity is being taken to overhaul the bells, replace damaged bird netting in the belfry windows and repaint all the iron and steel work of the bell frame.

The total cost of the project is about £25,000 and an active appeal to raise money is underway. If you would like to support it, follow the link at: <https://www.stpeterstiverton.org.uk/church-groups/bell-ringers/> About £11,000 has been raised so far.

Our next publicity and fundraising events will be a tower open day with tours of the clock, bells and roof of the tower on Saturday 16 September as part of Heritage Open Days. The same evening Tiverton Town Band will

be supporting the appeal with a concert at St Peter's which will also raise money for the Motor Neurone Disease Association. We are planning a celebration weekend for the bells in March 2024 marking the anniversary of their re-dedication in 1924 as well as further fundraising events.

Les Boyce

Strictly Prohibited at Dulverton

The joint practice at Dulverton with the Dunster branch of the Bath and Wells Association was well attended with a fair representation from the North East Branch. Ringing ranged from rounds and call changes, through plain hunting on seven bells to Stedman Triples and Yorkshire Surprise Major. There were also lots of cakes and cheese scones to sample along with plenty of tea and an opportunity to socialise with our ringing colleagues from the Somerset side of Exmoor.



One of the pleasures of visiting other towers is spotting unusual or historic objects and I spotted this sign on the wall in the ringing chamber; I wonder what event led to the first prohibition listed!?

John Martin

The sign dates from the era of 'Belfry Reform' (1860-1914), when clergy were actively seeking to improve the morals of working class bell ringers. Heavy drinking (poor hanging and plain bearings made ringing hard physical work back then) and coarse language were the norm. So was betting between individuals. Clergy hated these things, especially in church.

Betting was then common in all social classes, and for men it was linked to competitiveness and banter. 'I bet Fred sixpence he can't ring the next touch without a mistake'. 'Course I can' and the bet was made. It likely raised standards!

Betting at ringing competitions was also the norm, and indeed betting at competitions where the outcome seemed unfair sometimes led to violence. This goes a long way to explain the intense hostility of Belfry Reformers to striking competitions, and there are still ringers who object to them, despite the fact that they are good for raising standards.

Richard Johnston

Village fete fun at Uffculme

When the ringers were approached about becoming involved in this year's Uffculme church fete we thought it would give us an opportunity for a ringing demonstration and hopefully talk to some potential recruits. The fete would be held in the village hall and we were fortunate that the Guild demonstration bell was available, as were the Troyte Ringing Centre display boards.

We located the demonstration bell right outside the entrance to the refreshment area and so were able to engage with plenty of people who were coming and going. Tony was a natural at handling the demonstration bell while engaging in a conversation!

We spoke to a couple of lapsed ringers and handed out leaflets to potential recruits while the sun shone all afternoon.



John Martin

South-West Branch Competition

A band from St Mary's, Plympton, a dual membership tower, participated in the recent Ivybridge and Plymouth Deanery call change competition at Yealmpton.

Bel, our 'ring for the King' learner, who started only in February, and Frank both managed to win in the Novice category. Frank's name will appear on the cup immediately beneath his grandson's, who won in 2019. Well done to both.

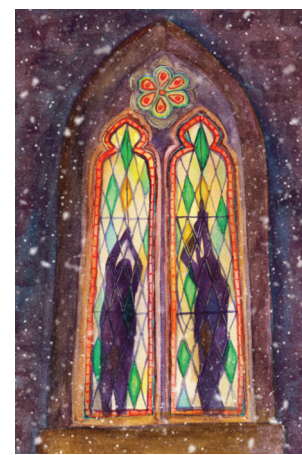
Barbara Hocke

Christmas Card Design

After working on some artwork for next year's Ringing World Calendar I was delighted to also be commissioned to create a Christmas card design! I have worked hard on the artwork and I am now very pleased to share a sneak peek of the final design, which will be going on sale through the Ringing World 'shop' in time for Christmas.



Design in Progress



The finished product

When coming up with a design I decided to capture the warm feeling that I have experienced ringing around Christmas time, particularly when it's cold and dark outside but the ringing chamber is cosy and the bells sound so joyful. I've used watercolour and gouache to build the scene of ringers silhouetted in the stained-glass window of a fictional tower. I hoped that the snow would make the ringing chamber seem even more inviting. I hope you like my design as I really enjoyed creating it!

Elena Brake

Flower Festival in Cornwood

Theme for 2023: Going for Gold

St Mary's, Plympton ringers were delighted to be able to ring at Cornwood as part of the celebrations for their flower festival. Delicious teas, coffees and cakes were enjoyed afterwards! Thanks to Barbara from Plymouth Emmanuel for coming out to help.



Cornwood Flower Festival

Christine Harris

**Goodbye for now...
to Christine Harris of St Mary's, Plympton**



Chris, a former Guild Education Officer, is taking her excellent and intrepid ringing to Jersey. Ringers from Plympton and Plymouth celebrated her eight years in Devon with a lunch. Obviously they didn't miss the opportunity for some education and introduced new-ish ringers to ring with at least one hand bell.



Handbells after lunch

Barbara Hocke

**Training and Education
Troyte Ringing Centre - Autumn
Programme**

Bookings are now open for the TRC's autumn training events. Extended practices cover:

- Raising and Lowering in Peal
- Plain Hunt on 5

There will also be a short course on 'Moving on from Plain Bob Minor'. Details are available at <https://troyteringingcentre.org.uk/> and bookings can be made with Les Boyce. Please book right away if you are interested in an event as numbers of places are strictly limited at each.

Margaret Shackleton

Public Guild Facebook page

The Guild has a public social media presence on Facebook which can be used to advertise, publicise and report events and ringing of general interest to a wide audience.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064056644366>

If you have items you would like to publicise our Guild Publicity Officer (Nicola Jones - publicityofficer@devonringers.org.uk) will be able to help you get your message out via the public page.

I've also attached a QR code which could be used or displayed at your event to allow members of the public to sign up to 'following' our activities.

John Martin (Guild Secretary)



Other Items

Kenn Church Fete - Saturday June 10

The fete was organised by two of our newest ringers with some of their friends and opened with several short call change peals totalling about 40 minutes. In the hope of encouraging new ringers to join our Kenn Deanery group we borrowed the Guild demo bell and erected it at the back of the church. This was to show anyone interested in becoming a ringer how it works, before coming into the ringing chamber to 'have a practice pull' under tuition. Unfortunately only two adults ventured across from the fete but are coming back on a practice night.



The Kenn ladies with the Guild demonstration bell

The ringers had a stall at the fete with a video of bells being rung in the church which had a lot of interest and 'promises' to come to a practice night. They have all been contacted via email in the hope of encouraging them to come along.



Manning the stall at the Fete

John Staddon, Kenn Tower Secretary

Church Services for everything?

I have seen church services held for bells, and for bell ringers, but never before for Belfry Maintenance!



Ian Campbell

Nine Towers in North Cornwall

Sue's Cornish Ringing - August 2023

Pictured are some of the 9 towers I visited and "caught hold" at whilst on "dog sitting" duties in North Cornwall. Plus some of the local bands.



Top Row, L to R:- St Breward, St Mabyn, St Mabyn Ringers
Middle Row: Lanhydrock. Lanhydrock Ringers, St Mabyn Ringers
Bottom Row: Blisland Ringers, Blisland Tower, Blisland Interior



Page 2... Top Row, L to R - St Kew, St Kew ringers, St Tudy
2nd row, L to R - St Tudy ringers, Lanlivery, Me
3rd row, L to R - Lanlivery ringers, Bodmin, Bodmin band
4th Row, L to R - Lanteglos, Lanteglos band, Lanteglos.

I have been down in North Cornwall for the past ten days. Forget The Nine Tailors - I've been to nine towers. St Breward, St Mabyn, St Tudy, St Kew, St Julitta (at Lanteglos), St Petroc's (Bodmin) plus St Protus & St Hyacinth (Blisland), Lanhydrock (St Hydroc) and Lanlivery (St Brevita). What a cornucopia of Cornish saints!

These are all places I know well from my time living in St Mabyn, Blisland and Lostwithiel and where I have attended services, or sung, but

never rung. All but Bodmin and Lanteglos were ground floor rings. Some very tall towers and very long ropes. Lanlivery was the tallest of the nine, at 97 feet.

I felt moved to pen a poem (actually a song) about my experiences:

The Cornish Bell Towers Song - by Sue King (To be sung to the tune of the 'Ringers of Egloshayle')

Come all you jolly ringers, come listen to my wheeze,
 Tis of the towers I visited, whilst looking after Breeze,
 I came and stayed at Esther's house, in the summer of twenty-three,
 We had such fun, became as one, that springer Breeze, and me.

Whilst staying down at Longstone, I started for to mope.
 I needed to get about a bit - to try and grab a rope.
 So off I set, on that first night, up high St Breward's hill,
 And found her church, right on the edge, and met her captain, Bill.

Bill Hill he was the Captain, at high St Breward's tower,
 Paul Tucker was at San Tudy - they were a merry shower,
 St Mabyn had no boss at all - they were a democracy,
 Ken Godden from St Kew was gone - steam engines for to see!

I went down to Lanlivery, 'twas on a Monday eve,
 On Sunday rang at San Tudy, and likewise at St Kew.
 St Mabyn was on Wednesday night, St Breward on Tuesday too!
 But Blisland was the best of all, the bells rang sweet and true!

Not forgetting Blisland's Keith - a Masters, through and through.
 Blisland man, born and bred, who knew Gwen Masters, too.
 Bryce was the boss at Lanhydrock, plus Martin and Adam too.
 Their sallies were so fine and grand - in Cornish colours, yew!

Next Tuesday will be Bodmin tower, St Petroc's is her name,
 Might ring some methods, we shall see - t'will make a lovely change.
 For rounds and changes rule the day in most of Cornwall's towers,
 With their long ropes, and ground floor rings, they'll ring for hours and hours.

These Cornish bands are fine and grand, do such a welcome give,
 Hand round the wine gums, and make tea, they do know how to live!
 They've been the kindest they could be, and welcomed me, maid and man,

No wonder it's my favourite place, this wondrous Cornish land.

Sue King - August 2023

Who was St Dunstan?

St Dunstan c909-988, Patron Saint of bell ringers

St Dunstan's feast day is on May 19, but who was he? He was sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, and also a hermit near the church of St Mary in Glastonbury. The story goes that while living in his little hovel, he contributed to the abbey coffers by working as a scribe, artist, musician, and metalsmith. It was for that reason he was adopted as the Patron Saint of Bell Ringers. It also accounts for this strange little poem about him...

Saint Dunstan, as the story goes,
 Once pulled the devil by the nose,
 With red hot tongs, which made him roar,
 That he was heard three miles or more.





This photo is of two panels of the amazing medieval rood screen at St Michael's church, Alington showing St Dunstan wearing his bishop's mitre pinching the nose of the devil.

Michael Cannon

Competition

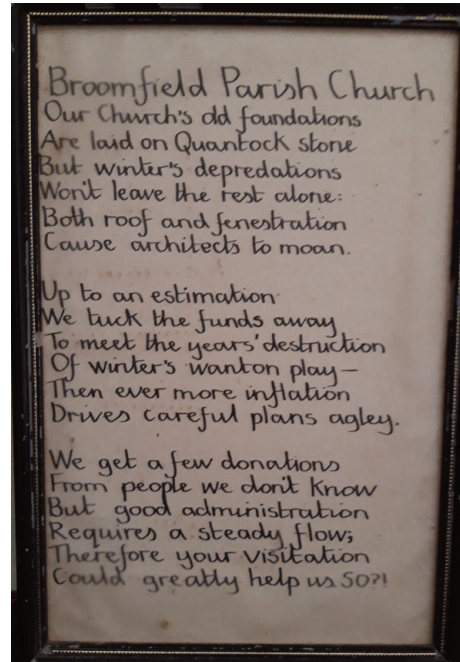
Glory to God in the High Street?



Can you identify the church whose stained-glass window in the ringing chamber advertises 'Glory to God in the High St'? I am not sure that this is what was intended by the artist!

Ian Campbell

Seen in Somerset Church



Broomfield Parish Church

Our church's old foundations
Are laid on Quantock stone.
But winter's depredations
Won't leave the rest alone.
Both roof and fenestration
Cause architects to moan.

Up to an estimation
We tuck the funds away
To meet the year's destruction
Of winter's wanton play -
Then ever more inflation
Drives careful plans agley.

We get a few donations
From people we don't know
But good administration
Requires a steady flow.
Therefore your visitation
Could greatly help us so?!

Ian Campbell

Something a bit different

Lesley and I visited family in New Zealand during February and March this year. I did manage some ringing (and some heritage steam railways as well!) whilst we were there but I thought the readers of RRD might enjoy something a bit different.



This bell was found underwater in Auckland but I was unable to find any more details



This clock tower on Manawhera Quay in Greymouth was built in 1992. It houses four bells from Taylors, all hung dead, that strike the quarters. Greymouth boasted a fine clock tower that formed part of the Post Office and was built in the Edwardian baroque style. Sadly the original clock tower was destroyed during the Murchison earthquake of 1929 and the building, although made safe, was finally demolished in 1989. This current clock tower was built to replace the one that was lost.



This photo is one I took in Wellington Botanical Gardens and is simply a fairly modern bell sculpture which was quite a surprise when we turned a corner in the gardens and there it was; it stands about 40 feet high.

Michael Cannon

Notable Ringing Performances

Excursion to the South Hams

In October last year the Guild bell advisors were asked to report on the state of the bells at East Portlemouth. Having found very little wrong we thought it would be nice to ring a quarter peal on the bells and found them a delight to ring on, both tonally and as regards their handling. The only problem is getting there! The village is miles (Devon miles!) off the beaten track – and don't follow the coast road if the tide is in! Following the quarter peal we were invited to ring a peal for the start of the village fair this summer (see below) and were well provided with sustenance afterwards.



The band in order

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

East Portlemouth, Devon, St Winwalloe Onolous

Saturday, 5 August 2023 in 2h 58

5040 Surprise Minor (7m)

1 extent each - London, York, Bourne, Beverley, Norwich, Surfleet, Cambridge

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Martin G Mansley | 4 | Ian L C Campbell |
| 2 | P Wendy Campbell | 5 | Ian V J Smith |
| 3 | Peter L Bill | 6 | David Hird (C) |

Rung for East Portlemouth Village Summer Fayre and as a 93rd birthday compliment to Don Roberts of Torquay.

Ian Campbell

Called a peal on every date of the year

Guild of Devonshire Ringers

Exeter, Devon, St Mark

Friday, 8 September 2023 in 2h 37

5040 Surprise Minor (7m)

1 extent each - Carlisle, London, Bourne, Norwich, York, Beverley, Cambridge.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 James Kirkcaldy | 4 Ian V J Smith |
| 2 Ian L C Campbell | 5 John A Foster |
| 3 P Wendy Campbell | 6 David Hird (C) |

Completes all the dates of the year as conductor - 6.

12. A bag of assorted muffles, whose straps will all break at 10:30 on Remembrance Sunday.

13. A couple of mouldy hassocks, used in place of a solid wooden box if the rope is too short for one of the ringers.

14. A broken stay, mended with metal straps, kept 'for emergency use'.

15. An old computer, brought up to the ringing room in the hopes that it could be turned into a ringing simulator, but now gathering dust under the bench due to lack of anyone with the technical know-how.

16. (Additional item) A blurred photocopy of a blurred photocopy of a 'Fifteen Useless Things' article from a 1980's *Ringling World*.

Anon

Guild Secretary tries out Demonstration Bell



How many can you find in your tower?

1. Last year's wedding list.
2. An out of date *Ringling World* calendar
3. A pre-war carpet sweeper which puts more dust back on the carpet than it removes.
4. A pile of 20 *Ringling Worlds*, all the same, dated 1974, which feature the tower on the front page.
5. An old bell rope, much spliced, which is now too short to be of use, but kept 'just in case'.
6. A tin of solid grease, guaranteed to stop any bell dead in its tracks if put in the bearings.
7. A box which used to contain handbells, now just used as a dump for odds and ends (the handbells were 'borrowed' by the tune ringers ten years ago and never returned).
8. A pile of last year's unwanted Guild reports.
9. A wall chart showing blue lines of the standard eight Surprise Major methods. The local band can manage Plain Hunt Doubles on a good day.
10. An old conical fire extinguisher saying 'purchased in 1954' on it and not serviced since.
11. Half a roll of wire netting left over from the latest attempt to exclude the pigeons.

Calendar of Events

October

Tue 3	19:30	Triples & Major practice, St Peter, Tiverton	North East
Sat 7		Branch outing, Dorset	Mid Devon
Sat 7	10:00	Service, ringing, AGM & members' forum Uffculme	North East
Sat 7	10:30	Surprise Major branch practice, Sidbury	East
Sat 7	15:00	Guild Library opens, St Petrock, Exeter	Guild
Sun 8	14:00	Devon Young Ringers meet-up & practice Pinhoe	Young Ringers
Mon 9	19:30	Surprise Minor branch practice, Offwell	East
Thu 12	19:00	Branch AGM, Topsham	Aylesbeare
Thu 12	19:30	Plain Hunt etc., Sidbury	East
Sat 14	14:30	Autumn ringing & meeting, Axminster	East
Tue 17	19:30	10-bell practice, St Marychurch	Mid Devon
Fri 20	19:30	Surprise Major practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 21		Guild striking competitions, Aylesbeare Branch	Guild

November

Sat 4	10:00	Open branch practice, Bampton	North East
Sat 4	13:30	Caters & Royal branch practice, Lyme Regis	East
Tue 7	19:30	Triples & Major practice, St Peter, Tiverton	North East
Thu 9	19:30	Plain Hunt etc, Sidbury	East
Sat 11		Branch 104th anniversary service and dinner, tbc	South West
Sat 11	15:00	Guild Library opens, St Petrock, Exeter	Guild
Sun 12	14:00	Devon Young Ringers meet-up & practice, Pinhoe	Young Ringers
Mon 13	19:30	Surprise Minor branch practice, Offwell	East
Fri 17	19:30	Surprise Major practice, Huntsham	North East
Sat 18	14:00	Exeter Branch AGM, Pinhoe (tbc)	Exeter
Sat 25	10:00	General branch practice, Galmpton (tbc) and Salcombe	South West
Sat 25	15:00	Branch AGM, Stokeinteignhead	Mid Devon

December

Sat 2	10:00	Open branch practice, TBC	North East
Sat 2	10:30	Triples & simple Major branch practice, Ottery St Mary	East
Tue 5	19:30	Triples & Major practice, St Peter, Tiverton	North East
Sun 10	14:00	Devon Young Ringers meet-up & practice, Pinhoe	Young Ringers
Mon 11	19:30	Surprise Minor branch practice, Offwell	East
Wed 13	19:30	8-bell practice, Dawlish	Mid Devon
Thu 14	19:30	Plain Hunt etc, Sidbury	East
Fri 15	19:30	Surprise Major practice, tbc	North East

Editorial

Many thanks go to all those of you who have contributed to this edition and those who have helped in the production and distribution. It was unfortunate that the June edition was too late to be distributed at the Guild AGM but I hope that you all got your copies eventually. Even the on-line version was delayed because the PDF file was too large and broke a number of limits trying to get it installed. Thanks go to Matt Hilling (webmaster) for sorting it all out.

Those of you who remember Tom Waterson, who now lives in Bristol with his wife Katie and daughter Chloe, will be delighted to hear of the arrival of their son Jacob Dennis on 6 September. The birth was celebrated with a peal at St Michael, Cornhill in London.

I look forward to meeting some of you at the Guild striking competitions and later at the carol service in Torquay. Details are all in this issue.

Ian Campbell

Photos from the Guild AGM



Kent Treble Bob Major was run on handbells during the service at Fremington



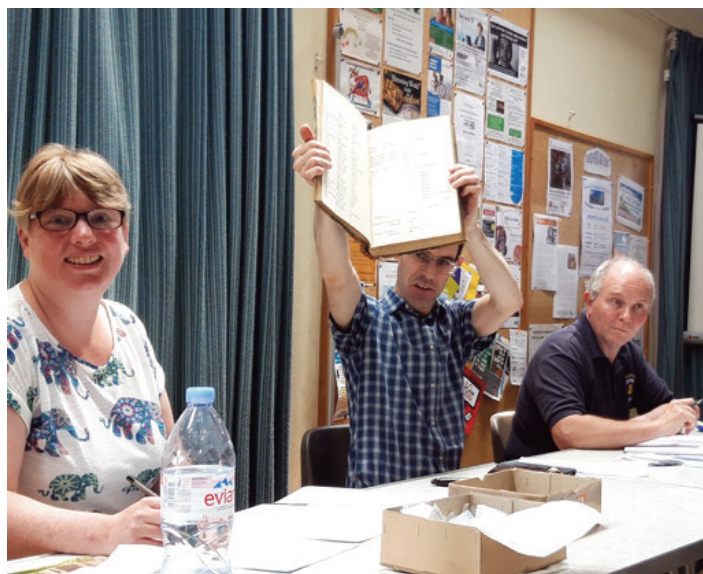
The new Master (David Hird) receives the badge of office from the retiring Master (Michael Cannon)



The bells left to the Guild by Frank Mack were on sale at the meeting



We all needed to cool off afterwards, including Daisy



Charlotte (Treasurer), Tim (President) holding book recording all those ever awarded a Guild certificate, and John (Secretary)



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